ABSTRACT

Baptist Environmentalisms:
A Comparison of American Baptist and Southern Baptist Attitudes,
Actions and Approaches Toward Environmental Issues

Aaron Douglas Weaver, Ph.D.

Mentor: Charles A. McDaniel, Ph.D.

This dissertation articulates how and why Southern Baptists and American Baptists have addressed environmental issues during the critical second and third waves of environmental history. With the birth of the modern environmental movement as a logical starting point, Southern Baptist and American Baptist attitudes and actions concerning key environmental questions in American political and environmental history are examined. These include: population explosion (1960s), energy crises (1970s), environmental backlash (1980s) and international ecological concerns (1990s to present).

This dissertation argues that Southern Baptists and American Baptists, while enjoying some similarities along the way and despite their shared Baptist heritage, have adopted and promoted very different environmentalisms. The findings from this comparative study reveal that these dissimilar environmentalisms are due to four factors relating to ethics, political engagement approaches, the regulatory role of government and attitudes toward advancements in science and technology. First, Southern Baptists and American Baptists have embraced disparate environmental ethics. Second, Southern

Baptists and American Baptists have taken distinct political engagement approaches due to differing theological commitments. Third, Southern Baptists and American Baptists have adopted different attitudes about the appropriate regulatory role of government regarding environmental issues. Fourth and finally, Southern Baptists and American Baptists have held contrasting perspectives on prevailing scientific viewpoints and advancements in technology. These four factors offer answers to how and why these two related historic Protestant denominations have taken such divergent paths with regard to care of the environment or God's creation.

Nearly forty years after the first-ever Earth Day on April, 22, 1970, Southern Baptists and American Baptists had come to embrace radically different environmentalisms. American Baptists preached and practiced an environmentalism that sought strict environmental regulations and was defined by an eco-justice ethic emphasizing the interconnectedness of humans with their environment. Meanwhile, Southern Baptists were preaching and practicing a distinctly different environmentalism. Southern Baptists abandoned the ethic of previous decades and replaced it with a decidedly more conservative ethic that continued to utilize the language of stewardship but was increasingly anthropocentric and strikingly development-focused. Also, an anti-regulation philosophy and skepticism of prevailing scientific viewpoints characterized their environmentalism.

Baptist Environmentalisms:
A Comparison of American Baptist and Southern Baptist Attitudes,
Actions and Approaches Toward Environmental Issues

by

Aaron Douglas Weaver, B.A., M.A.

A Dissertation

Approved by the J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies

_____
Robyn L. Driskell, Ph.D., Interim Director

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of

Doctor of Philosophy

Approved by the Dissertation Committee

_____
Charles A. McDaniel, Ph.D., Chairperson

_____
William L. Pitts, Jr., Ph.D.

_____
William A. Mitchell, Ph.D.

_____
Stephen M. Sloan, Ph.D.

_____
Perry L. Glanzer, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Graduate School
May 2013

_____
J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

*Page bearing signatures is kept on file in the Graduate School.*

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS x

DEDICATION xi

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION TO STUDY 1

Introduction 1

Overview of Argument and Methodology 3
*Ethics* 5
*Political Engagement* 11
*Government* 15
*Science and Technology* 16

Justification for Study 19

Outline of Study 21

2. LITERATURE REVIEW 24

Introduction 24

American Environmental History: An Historiographical Introduction 24

Christian Environmentalism: An Historical Overview 34

Literature Review: History of Christian Environmentalism 46

Baptist Environmentalisms: A Brief Introduction 52
*Southern Baptists* 53
*American Baptists* 56

Literature Review: Baptists and Social Action 59
*Southern Baptists* 59
*American Baptists* 64

Conclusion 66

3. SOUTHERN BAPTISTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT (1965-1972) 68

Introduction 68

Population in American Politics and Society 69

Southern Baptists and Population 72

Southern Baptists and Pollution 79

Denominational Agencies and the Environment 84
*Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention* 84
*Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* 94

Southern Baptist Environmentalists 96
*Eric Rust the Theologian* 96
*Henlee Barnette the Ethicist* 101

Analysis and Conclusion 109
*Science and Technology* 109
*Government* 113
*Political Engagement* 115
*Ethics* 119
*Conclusion* 122

4. AMERICAN BAPTISTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT (1964-1973) 124

Introduction 124

Early American Baptist Environmental Concern: Population and Pollution 125

Development of American Baptist Environmentalism 133
*Jitsuo Morikawa and "New Evangelism"* 133
*Board of National Ministries and Eco-Justice* 142

Implementation of Denominational Eco-Justice 153

Comparative Analysis and Conclusion 166
*Science and Technology* 166
*Government* 168
*Political Engagement* 170
*Ethics* 173
*Conclusion* 178

5. THE 1970S ENERGY CRISES (1973-1979) 181

Introduction 181

The Energy Crisis of 1973-1974: An Overview 182

Baptists and Oil: Part 1 186
*Southern Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1973-1974* 186
*American Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1973-1974* 191

The Energy Crisis of 1976-1977 and Federal Energy Policy 193

Baptists and Natural Gas 195
*Southern Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1976-1977* 195
*American Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1976-1977* 201

The Energy Crisis of 1979: Iranian Revolution and Three-Mile Island 205

Baptists and Oil: Part 2 208
*Southern Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1979* 208
*American Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1979* 212

Comparative Analysis and Conclusion 219
*Science and Technology* 219
*Government* 221
*Political Engagement* 224
*Ethics* 227
*Conclusion* 233

6. THE 1980S: A NEW ERA AND ENVIRONMENTAL BACKLASH 236

Introduction 236

Rise of Ronald Reagan and Environmental Regulation 237

Rise of the New Religious Right and Government Regulation 240

Rise of Southern Baptist Republicanism and a "Conservative Resurgence" 244

Southern Baptists and Environmental Regulation 249

Mainline Protestants and the Reagan Administration 253

Mainline Protestants and Environmental Engagement in the Reagan Era 255

American Baptists and Environmental Engagement 258
*Corporate Responsibility* 258
*Hazardous Waste* 262
*Environmental Justice* 266

Comparative Analysis and Conclusion 270
*Science and Technology* 270
*Government* 271
*Political Engagement* 272
*Ethics* 274
*Conclusion* 275

7. EARTH DAY, KYOTO AND CLIMATE CHANGE (1990-2008) 276

Introduction 276

Earth Day 1990: An Overview 277

Southern Baptist Conservatives Enter Environmental Arena 279

American Baptist Environmental Advocacy in 1990s 289

Climate Change: An Historical Introduction 299

Baptists and Climate Change 301
*Southern Baptists* 301
*American Baptists* 307
*Southern Baptists Revisited* 317

Comparative Analysis and Conclusion 334
*Introduction* 334
*Ethics* 335
*Political Engagement* 339
*Government* 342
*Science and Technology* 346
*Conclusion* 351

8. CONCLUSION 354

Introduction 354

Science and Technology 354

Government 356

Political Engagement 358

Ethics 360

Concluding Thoughts 361

BIBLIOGRAPHY 365

Primary Sources 365
*Books, Book Chapters and Journal Articles* 365
*Newspapers and Magazines* 370
*Archival Collections* 372
*Denominational Reports and Resolutions* 373
*Other Sources* 381

Secondary Sources 381
*Books, Book Chapters and Journal Articles* 381
*Dissertations and Theses* 391
*Baptist Periodicals* 393
*Newspapers and Magazines* 397

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all those who encouraged and challenged me throughout the course of my doctoral studies. I am especially grateful to Dr. Charles McDaniel who served as my supervisor on this project and mentored me throughout my graduate work. Dr. Bill Pitts was a great teacher too. His courses had a very meaningful impact on my developing research interests and inspired my passion for history.

I must thank Dr. Stephen Sloan and also Dr. Perry Glanzer for serving on my committee. Dr. Sloan was a wonderful help introducing me to great books on environmental history. Dr. Glanzer's course—my first as a doctoral student—piqued my interest in this topic. It was in his class where I wrote my first paper on Baptists and the environment. I also want to express my appreciation to Dr. William Mitchell. As the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies was undergoing much change, Dr. Mitchell offered a calming presence and provided tremendous leadership. His help assisting me through the end of this program is much appreciated.

Finally, I want to acknowledge a few family members. First, thank you to my wife, Alexis, who flipped through many old, dusty Baptist periodicals for countless hours at various libraries and archives across the South. A special thank you goes to my dad, Dr. Doug Weaver, for giving me scholarly advice and sharing much fatherly wisdom during my entire educational journey. And saving the best for last, a loving thank you to my son, James Oliver, whose birth interrupted my progress on this project for a handful of months. But what a wonderful, life-changing interruption!

To Oliver and Grandma

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction to Study

### *Introduction*

In February 2006, an alliance of evangelical Protestant leaders calling themselves the Evangelical Climate Initiative released a declaration urging environmental concern titled "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action." Many of the signatories were prominent Southern Baptist academics, megachurch pastors, and college presidents. In fact, David Gushee, the principal author of the controversial document, was a Southern Baptist. Calling on fellow evangelicals to respond to the problem of global warming "with moral passion and concrete action," the declaration implored the United States Congress to adopt legislation that would mandate decreases in carbon dioxide emissions.[1] This declaration, featuring such high-profile evangelicals as Rick Warren and Jim Wallis, made national headlines and was discussed and debated widely on cable news programs, talk radio and on the Internet.

The Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, quickly countered the declaration a few short months later with a resolution warning that environmentalism was "threatening to become a wedge issue to divide the evangelical community and further distract its members from the priority of

[1] Evangelical Climate Initiative, "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action," http://christiansandclimate.org/learn/call-to-action (accessed August 9, 2011). See also Bob Allen, "Evangelicals Divide Over Global Warming," *Ethics Daily*, February 9, 2006, http://www.ethicsdaily.com/evangelicals-divide-over-global-warming-cms-6949 (accessed August 9, 2011).

the Great Commission."[2] As the national media continued to print articles about evangelical efforts to be more environmentally-conscious or "go green," Southern Baptists hit back again in 2008 with a second resolution which, as the Associated Press related, "questioned the prevailing scientific belief that humans are largely to blame for the phenomenon" of climate change.[3] After the adoption of this resolution, the SBC's Second Vice-President, Wiley Drake, described to the media the message that the resolution was trying to convey as "We don't believe in global warming."[4] Not long after this controversial resolution was highlighted in newspapers and magazines across the nation, the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC, led by Richard Land, helped launch a campaign to get one million supporters behind a form of environmentalism that downplayed concern about global warming. The "We Get It!" campaign warned that "knee-jerk reactions with good intentions can harm more than help."[5]

Meanwhile, American Baptists in 2008 sponsored and took part in a national event called the New Baptist Covenant that promoted climate change action and

---

[2] Southern Baptist Convention, "On Environmentalism and Evangelicals," http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1159 (accessed August 9, 2011). This chapter uses the terms climate change and global warming interchangeably to refer to human-induced changes in the climate. This environmental challenge will be detailed at greater length in a later chapter.

[3] Eric Gorski, "Baptists question human role in global warming," *USA Today*, June 14, 2007, http://www.usatoday.com/weather/climate/globalwarming/2007-06-13-baptists-warming-vote_N.htm (accessed August 9, 2011). See also Southern Baptist Convention, "On Global Warming," http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1171 (accessed August 9, 2011).

[4] Bob Allen, "Southern Baptists Reject Scientific Consensus About Global Warming," *Ethics Daily*, June 14, 2007, http://www.ethicsdaily.com/southern-baptists-reject-scientific-consensus-about-global-warming-cms-9058 (accessed August 9, 2011).

[5] Bob Allen, "Christian Right Leaders Push Back Against Concern for Global Warming," *Ethics Daily*, May 16, 2008, http://www.ethicsdaily.com/christian-right-leaders-push-back-against-concern-for-global-warming-cms-12657 (accessed August 9, 2011). See also The Institute on Religion and Democracy, "'We Get It' Campaign Kicks Off Campaign for a Million Signatures," May 15, 2008, http://www.we-get-it.org/press/Press_Release_-_IRD.pdf (accessed August 9, 2011).

encouraged environmental stewardship. At this diverse gathering, American Baptists heard from fellow Baptist, Al Gore—former United States Vice President—who urged the coalition of Baptists to embrace "Creation Care," "reason together" and "tell one another truth, inconvenient though it may be, about the [climate] crisis, including the opportunity that we now face."[6] Not surprisingly, American Baptists were receptive to the message of America's most popular (and hated) environmentalist as American Baptists were one of the first Christian denominations to address the issue of global warming. They addressed global warming seventeen years prior to the New Baptist Covenant in 1991.[7] Considering the amount of attention in both the media and in the academy on environmentalism and Christian environmental engagement, this comparative analysis of American Baptist and Southern Baptist attitudes, actions and approaches toward environmental issues is a timely subject and a much needed scholarly project.

*Overview of Argument and Methodology*

This dissertation articulates how and why Southern Baptists and American Baptists have addressed environmental issues during the critical second and third waves of American environmental history.[8] With the birth of the modern environmental

---

[6] Bob Allen, "Gore Urges New Covenant Baptists To Take Up Mantle of Creation Care," *Ethics Daily*, February 1, 2008, http://www.ethicsdaily.com/gore-urges-new-covenant-baptists-to-take-up-mantle-of-creation-care-cms-10040 (accessed August 9, 2011). Poverty and immigration reform were also considered at the New Baptist Covenant meeting.

[7] American Baptist Churches USA, "American Baptist Resolution on Global Warming," http://www.abc-usa.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=0JpsQst6Agw%3d&tabid=199 (accessed August 9, 2011).

[8] Environmental history is a subfield of history which seeks to understand human beings in light of their relationship with the rest of nature. The field of environmental history became a distinct scholarly discipline in the 1960s and early 1970s during the era which gave birth to the modern environmental movement. See J. Donald Hughes, "Environmental History," in *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and*

movement as a logical starting point, Southern Baptist and American Baptist attitudes, actions and approaches concerning key environmental questions in American political and environmental history are examined. These include: population explosion and pollution (1960s), energy crises (1970s), environmental backlash (1980s) and international ecological concerns (1990s to present).

Southern Baptists and American Baptists, while enjoying some similarities along the way and despite their shared Baptist heritage, have adopted and promoted very different environmentalisms.[9] Findings from this comparative study reveal that these dissimilar environmentalisms are due to the following four factors: ethics, political engagement approaches, the regulatory role of government and attitudes toward advancements in science and technology. First, Southern Baptists and American Baptists embrace disparate environmental ethics. Second, Southern Baptists and American

---

*Philosophy*, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman (Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), 1:332-333. The different waves of environmental history will be described and discussed in detail in the second chapter.

[9] Environmentalism refers to an ideology, informed by a set of values, beliefs and behaviors concerned with the quality and continuity of life. This environmental concern is expressed through (but not limited to) resource conservation, wilderness preservation and land use, public health reform, population control, ecology, energy conservation, anti-pollution regulation, and occupational health. See Mark Dowie, *Losing Ground: American environmentalism at the close of the twentieth century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 24. In *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*, Robert Gottlieb defined environmentalism as a "complex set of movements with diverse roots, with the capacity to help facilitate profound social change." See Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington DC: Island Press, 2005), xv. Like "environment," the term environmentalism came into popular usage in the 1960s during the emergence of the modern environmental movement. Those who advocated on behalf of environmentalism came to be referred to as environmentalists, a person who works or engages in activities that are designed to protect the environment.

I maintain that there is not one environmentalism but multiple environmentalisms. In "Beyond Borders: Transnational Politics, Social Movements and Modern Environmentalisms," Brian Doherty and Timothy Doyle noted that there exists a "diversity of environmentalisms." Doherty and Doyle continue, "Not all those engaged in environmental action are necessarily part of the same social movement." Indeed, as this dissertation will demonstrate, the environmentalism of Southern Baptist conservatives is distinctly different and often diametrically opposed to the environmentalism of American Baptists. Thus, Baptist environmentalisms rather than Baptist environmentalism is the most appropriate descriptor. See Brian Doherty and Timothy Doyle, "Beyond Borders: Transnational Politics, Social Movements and Modern Environmentalisms," *Environmental Politics* 15, no. 5 (2006): 704, 697-712.

Baptists take distinct political engagement approaches due to differing theological commitments. Third, Southern Baptists and American Baptists display different attitudes about the appropriate regulatory role of government regarding environmental issues. Fourth and finally, Southern Baptists and American Baptists hold contrasting perspectives on prevailing scientific viewpoints and advancements in technology. These four factors offer answers as to how and why these two related historic Protestant denominations have taken such divergent paths with regard to caring for the environment or God's creation.

This comparative study, comprised of eight chapters, utilizes a historical method and is organized chronologically. A thematic approach within each environmental theme is required by this project. Each chapter of this study analyzes the aforementioned four factors and is put in the context of the history of environmental politics, the history of Christian environmentalism and Baptist history. The following four sub-sections introduce these four factors.

*Ethics*

Differences and commonalities between the environmental ethics of Southern Baptists and American Baptists are assessed using sociologist Laurel Kearns' popular three-fold typology of Christian environmentalism. Kearns argued that three eco-theologies reflect contrasts and tensions across the Christian theological spectrum: Christian stewardship ethic (evangelical Protestants), eco-justice ethic (mainline Protestants) and Creation spirituality ethic (liberal/unchurched ecumenical).[10] While

[10] See Laurel Kearns, "Saving the creation: Religious environmentalism," (PhD diss., Emory University, 1994).

Kearns' Creation spirituality ethic does not apply to either group of Baptists, the first two categories of stewardship and eco-justice are relevant to this project and provide a helpful starting point.[11] From this starting point, a new typology is developed to provide greater understanding of the ethics and ethical strategies of Southern Baptists and American Baptists to environmental issues.

The foundation of the Christian stewardship ethic, as articulated by Kearns, is the Bible. This foundation brings to light the appeal of the stewardship ethic to evangelical

---

[11] This project relies on the widely accepted argument of historian James Leo Garrett in "Southern Baptists As Evangelicals" that Southern Baptists are indeed evangelical Protestants. Within American evangelicalism, Garrett argued that Southern Baptists should be classified as "Denominational Evangelicals." Justifying this classification, Garrett concluded that Southern Baptists "belong to and exemplify the great heritage of Scriptural authority, Christocentric doctrine, gospel proclamation, experience of grace and evangelistic endeavor which is Evangelicalism." See James Leo Garrett Jr., "Southern Baptists as Evangelicals," *Baptist History and Heritage* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 10-20. Garrett's conclusion, which was the product of a high-profile scholarly debate in the 1980s, is consistent with the popular definition of "evangelical" later put forward by historian David Bebbington. Bebbington defined "evangelical" as those Protestants committed to biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism and activism. These four qualities "form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of evangelicalism," according to Bebbington. See David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989), 2-3.

This project identifies American Baptists as mainline Protestants. Historians and sociologists alike have long classified American Baptist Churches USA as one of the six major denominations that comprise the mainline Protestant tradition. These include the Episcopal Church, United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church USA, and the United Church of Christ. Sociologist Robert Wuthnow noted that while these six mainline denominations have distinct theologies and ecclesial structures, they share much in common too. Wuthnow demonstrated that mainline Protestant denominations followed similar trajectories beginning in the last half of the nineteenth century by developing national denominational structures and identifying increasingly with progressive social issues, movements (Social Gospel) and ecumenical endeavors (National Council of Churches). Consequently, mainline Protestants came to be viewed by many evangelical Protestants such as the National Association of Evangelicals as "liberal." See Robert Wuthnow, "Introduction," in *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*, eds. Robert Wuthnow and John Evans (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 3-5.

Historian Peter Thuesen traced the history of mainline Protestantism in *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*, edited by Robert Wuthnow. He noted that in addition to sharing an ideological inheritance from the Protestant Reformation, mainline Protestants have employed an "increasingly institutional model of social activism" that is characterized by three main features: "a reasonable tolerance of ethical differences, a thoroughgoing commitment to ecumenical cooperation and an all-embracing conception of the church's public role." These characteristics, according to Thuesen, have served to define American Baptists and distinguish mainline Protestant denominations from other major Christian denominations including their evangelical Protestant brethren. See Peter Theusen, "The Logic of Mainline Churchliness: Historical Background since the Reformation," in *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*, eds. Robert Wuthnow and John Evans (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 27-53.

Protestants for whom the principle of biblical authority is a cornerstone theological commitment. Also in traditional evangelical fashion, this stewardship ethic emphasizes that ecological crises are a result of human sinfulness. In other words, contrary to the claims of prominent historian Lynn White and others, Christianity is not to be blamed for environmental degradation.[12] Instead, Christians who have not been true to their Christianity should share the blame. Christian stewardship advocates stress that this Bible-based directive to take care of God's creation is grounded in the Genesis 2:15 command to keep the garden and to be good stewards. While humans are given "dominion" over this earth," dominion is interpreted as a "divine charge to be good stewards and to take care of and to protect (but not rule or perfect)" the Earth. As proponents of this ethic often point out, one of the earliest commandments that God gave to humans was stewardship.[13]

Other scholars have formulated typologies that seek to further define Kearns' Christian stewardship ethic. Glen H. Stassen and David Gushee outlined several different Christian ethical approaches that incorporate stewardship in *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context*. Stassen and Gushee illustrated how some Christians have taken an anthropocentric approach that places humans at the center of environmental concern while others have embraced a more balanced theocentric

[12] White put forth the popular argument that the "historical roots of the ecologic crisis" lay in Christianity's doctrine of human dominion over nature. White's arguments and perceived role in spurring Christians to address environmental issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

[13] Kearns, "Saving the creation: Religious environmentalism," 211-212. See also Laurel Kearns, "Saving the Creation: Christian Environmentalism in the United States," *Sociology of Religion* 57, no. 1 (1996): 58-60. Laurel Kearns, "Noah's Ark Goes to Washington: A Profile of Evangelical Environmentalism," *Social Compass* 44, no. 3 (1997): 353-355. According to Kearns, the unofficial motto of this stewardship ethic is: "to be saved means saving the earth." This ethical approach which stresses individual sin and the need for individual redemption is consistent with the individualistic nature of evangelicalism. It must be noted, however, that proponents of this ethic generally recognize that environmental degradation has both individual and social implications.

perspective that is less anthropocentric and rejects utilitarianism.[14] Gushee and Stassen highlighted positively the "earthkeeper stewardship ethic" which they describe as being "partly anthropocentric, in that human interests and responsibilities are central, and partly theocentric, in that humans are mandated by God to care for creation." This ethic, according to Stassen and Gushee, recognizes limits to economic growth and the desire for an "economic reorganization" that is "sustainable and just" meaning a system which "meets the needs of the poor while preserving the resources of the earth and living within its carrying capacity." Stassen and Gushee listed two Southern Baptists—Eric Rust and Henlee Barnette—as the pioneers of this particular stewardship ethic.[15] Rust and Barnette were leading Southern Baptist environmental thinkers during the 1960s and 1970s. These scholars are closely examined in chapter three.

In "Evangelical Protestants, The Ecological Crisis and Public Theology," James Ball broke down the Christian Stewardship ethic into a four-part typology (Wise Use, Anthropocentric Stewardship, Caring Management, Servant Stewardship) written from the perspective of a theologian.[16] Ball's typology delivers useful insight into the diversity

---

[14] Glen H. Stassen and David P. Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 435-440.

[15] Stassen and Gushee, 439-440.

[16] James Ball, "Evangelical Protestants, The Ecological Crisis and Public Theology," (PhD diss., Drew University, 1997), 96-101. Ball explained that the "wise use" form of stewardship referred not to Gifford Pinchot's popular utilitarian conservation ethic but to the ethic of anti-environmentalists such as James Watt. This ethic states that God's creation enjoys no moral status and unrestricted economic growth and free market economics trumps all environmental concerns. Anthropocentric stewardship, in Ball's view, is a "legitimate ethical stance" popular among evangelical Protestants. It stresses that "the rest of Creation was created for the welfare of humanity." Whereas the Wise Use ethic promotes exploitation, according to Ball, the Anthropocentric ethic advocates a conservation approach to meeting the needs of future generations. The Caring Management ethic rejects the strong anthropocentric emphasis of the previously described ethical categories. This ethic posits that the "rest of Creation" has intrinsic value and "deserves our respect and care." Ball's last category, Servant Stewardship, describes the ethic of a small but loud contingent of evangelical Protestants. It emphasizes both the intrinsic value of all of God's Creation and cosmic redemption. This ethic aims to emulate Christ in servanthood per Philippians 2:6-11 with regard to environmental attitudes and behaviors.

of stewardship ethics. Nonetheless, a more accessible and simpler typology is needed that considers how Christian proponents of environmental stewardship have articulated and actually implemented their ethic in the public square. A new stewardship typology which builds on Kearns' contributions and takes into account the contributions of Stassen, Gushee and Ball is offered to supply a greater understanding to what Southern Baptists have meant by "stewardship" in terms of both faith and practice.

The eco-justice ethic, Kearns noted, is based on a theology of social concern for issues of human justice. Popularly referred to as "social justice," this theology of social concern has its roots in the early twentieth-century Social Gospel Movement which emphasized the realization of the kingdom of God through the redemption of social and political structures. Proponents of social justice stressed that the church had a central role to play in public life as well as a strong role for the state. Not surprisingly, this ethic is most popular among mainline Protestants for whom social justice is a necessary theological commitment. This ethic connects environmental issues with "already established church perspectives on justice issues." Whereas the Christian stewardship ethic views human sinfulness as the cause of environmental crises, the eco-justice ethic judges injustice and inequality in society, institutions and economic systems as the root causes of these crises. Dissimilar from the evangelical orientation of the Christian stewardship ethic, Kearns contended that an ethic of eco-justice puts most of its emphasis on the environmental attitudes and behaviors of society as a whole. This is different from the more individualistic approach of the stewardship ethic.[17]

[17] Kearns, "Noah's Ark Goes to Washington," 351-352.

As with the Christian stewardship ethic, other scholars have presented their own articulation of eco-justice as an environmental ethic. In *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology*, theologian Willis Jenkins described the "strategy of ecojustice" as organizing Christian environmental ethics around the "theological status of creation" in order to "integrate environmental issues into frameworks of obligatory respect." By putting great weight on the integrity and worth of nature itself, this ethic is able to argue that Christians "must give the Earth its due" with regard to their treatment and interaction with the environment or what Kearns and Ball refer to as the "rest of God's creation."[18] Jenkins observed that the groups that tend to practice an eco-justice ethic are mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics.[19]

The editors of *Ecology, Justice, and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature*—Peter W. Bakken, Joan Gibb Engel and J. Ronald Engel—have also helped to define the eco-justice ethic. They reasoned that eco-justice is "the moral claim that ecology and justice belong together, that there is an overarching moral imperative for human beings to pursue what is ecologically fitting and socially just, and to do so in such a way that each is supportive of the other."[20] Other scholars such as sociologists Mark

---

[18] Willis Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 61. Jenkins also noted that evangelical Protestants tend to make stewardship arguments.

[19] Ibid., 20.

[20] *Ecology, Justice, and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature*, eds. Peter W. Bakken, Joan Gibb Engel and J. Ronald Engel (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), xvi. Ecology is commonly defined as the study of the complex way organisms and their environment —"the sum of conditions affecting a particular organism, including physical surroundings, climate and influences of other living organisms"—interact with one another. The term is believed to have been coined by Ernst Haeckel in 1869. See Benjamin Kline, *First along the river: A brief history of the U.S. environmental movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 178. This discipline or field of study is very broad with numerous subdivisions including conservation ecology, population ecology and ecological economics. See Eugene Odum, "Ecology as Science," in *The Encyclopedia of the Environment*, ed. Ruth A. Eblen and William R. Eblen (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1994), 171.

Shibley and Jonathan Wiggins have sought to chronicle the advocacy and activism efforts of eco-justice advocates within mainline Protestantism. In "The Greening of Mainline American Religion," Shibley and Wiggins argued that the eco-justice ethic deserves further attention especially with regard to mainline Protestants.[21] This dissertation helps fill this scholarly void by giving attention to the eco-justice ethic of American Baptists and comparing it with the Christian stewardship ethics of Southern Baptists.

*Political Engagement*

American Baptists and Southern Baptists have addressed environmental issues in the public square through different political engagement approaches. In assessing these approaches, the underlying theology guiding the political engagement of both groups of Baptists is considered. Mark Toulouse in *God in Public: Four Ways American Christianity and Public Life Relate* spotlighted four ways (Priestly, Iconic, Public Christian, Public Church) that Christians have related their faith in public life. His last two categories—Public Christian and Public Church—are especially relevant to this dissertation. These categories are based on different theological affirmations and differing understandings of the public mission of the church.

Toulouse described the Public Christian position as the theological perspective that "the church, first of all, must tend to salvation and not to politics." This does not mean that individual Christians should be apolitical or uninvolved in public life. To the

[21] Mark Shibley and Jonathon L. Wiggins, "The Greening of Mainline American Religion: A Sociological Analysis of the Environmental Ethics of the National Partnership for the Environment," *Social* Compass 44, no. 3 (1997): 333-348. Although Laurel Kearns did briefly articulate the eco-justice ethic in her typology of Christian environmentalism, most of her writings focused solely on the Christian stewardship ethic and the Christian spirituality ethic. Little attention has been given to the eco-justice ethic—in terms of both belief and practice —other than Kearns' brief mention of eco-justice activism in the 1980s and the research by Shibley and Wiggins on mainline Protestants.

contrary, Christians as individuals should be good citizens and become personally involved in the political process. Christians are free and encouraged to vote, run for office, and even lobby the government but congregations are not, however.[22]

Toulouse rooted the Public Christian approach in Augustine's conception of "two cities." In his classic *City of God*, Augustine stated that there exist two cities: an earthly city and a heavenly city. These two cities are separate from one another and serve disparate purposes. The church in Augustine's analysis, according to Toulouse, is to be understood as the "eschatological church" and exists solely for God and the worship of God. The church is to be an example of the kind of community that awaits Christians after history ends. Consequently, the church "does not act publicly or politically except as a witness to the truths associated with faith." Toulouse interpreted Augustine to advocate that the individual Christian should not be worried with saving society but with how to serve society in the here and now.[23]

Toulouse's primary example of the Public Christian approach of relating Christianity to public life is renowned evangelical scholar Carl F. Henry. Toulouse maintained that Henry, the former editor of the popular evangelical magazine *Christianity Today*, advocated for a contemporary version of Augustine's two cities. Toulouse pointed out that Henry "did not include a major social role for the church, except as teacher."[24] In *Aspects of Christian Ethics*, Henry wrote, "The Church's primary duty is to expound the revealed Gospel and the divine principles of social duty, and to constrain

---

[22] Mark G. Toulouse, *God in Public: Four Ways American Christianity and Public Life Relate* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 108.

[23] Ibid., 108-116

[24] Ibid., 121-122.

individual Christians to fulfill their evangelistic and civic responsibilities."[25] Politics is not the role of the church but the church should help equip individual Christians to meet their responsibilities as Christian citizens. Political decisions should be based on biblical imperatives. These views comprised what Henry referred to as an "evangelical philosophy of politics."[26]

Although the Public Christian approach preaches that the primary mission of the church is evangelism or bringing lost individuals to Jesus Christ, the Public Church approach insists that the church's mission "includes the use of political wisdom, effective methods, and critical reason to establish a greater degree of relative justice in American public life."[27] In other words, the Public Church approach expects churches to be politically active and work in the public arena to accomplish social change "especially wherever political realities exploit human beings or deny them justice."[28]

Toulouse added that the Public Church approach understands sin to be systemic in nature. Evil resides within both institutions and individuals. Therefore, God judges individuals and institutions alike. Consequently, the Public Church position insists that Christians and churches are both obligated to work to attain both social redemption and individual redemption. Political engagement is required to accomplish the former. Additionally, the Public Church approach rejects Augustine's "two cities" analysis and does not draw a line of demarcation between the earthly and heavenly. Toulouse

---

[25] Carl F. H. Henry, *Aspects of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 10.

[26] Ibid., 129.

[27] Toulouse notes that the adjective "relative" is important as Christians "recognize that absolute justice is impossible in our world."

[28] Ibid., 136.

explained that adherents to the Public Church approach believe in a "unity of God's kingdom." God and his Kingdom are "concerned with all aspects of what it means to be human." Categories such as "secular" and "religious" are of little value.[29] Well-known Public Church advocates such as Martin Luther King Jr. and the National Council of Churches, according to Toulouse, have been deeply influenced by the writings of American Baptist theologian Walter Rauschenbusch. Rauschenbusch is regarded as the father of the Social Gospel Movement. These proponents of the Public Church approach to political engagement assert that the reality of social injustice requires churches and individual Christians to become intimately involved in the political arena.[30]

The Public Christian and Public Church positions are helpful models of understanding why Southern Baptists and American Baptists have generally taken different political engagement approaches when addressing environmental issues. Southern Baptists have, more often than not, adopted and advocated on behalf of the Public Christian position. However, it should be noted that Southern Baptists have affirmed this political engagement approach not because of the influence of Augustine's "two cities" model but due to their denomination's historic emphasis on individualism, specifically the primacy of individual salvation. Similar to other evangelical Protestants, Southern Baptists have tended to propose individualistic rather than structural solutions to social questions. This commitment to individual salvation has, without a doubt, colored the approach to political engagement of Southern Baptists.

---

[29] Ibid., 135-138.

[30] Ibid., 139-164.

Conversely, American Baptists, like other mainline Protestants, have accepted and promoted the Public Church approach to political engagement. This should come as no surprise given the more theologically liberal outlook of American Baptists and in light of the deep influence of respected American Baptist and social gospel leader Walter Rauschenbusch. These diverging commitments are explored later as this dissertation seeks to articulate how these theologically-based approaches to political engagement have served to shape the distinct environmentalisms of Southern Baptists and American Baptists.

*Government*

This project assesses the different views among Southern Baptists and American Baptists on the role of government in American society. In *The Restructuring of American Religion*, sociologist Robert Wuthnow argued that "American religion has undergone a major restructuring" in the post-World War II era. This restructuring has resulted in an increasingly polarized religious landscape along conservative and liberal lines. Wuthnow argued that the external force that has contributed the most to shaping these competing religious outlooks is government. Since World War II, government has enjoyed a vast expansion, according to Wuthnow, as the state has taken on more social functions that had previously been the primary purview of churches and other private and religious organizations. Wuthnow elaborated, "Only in the twentieth century, and particularly in the decades since World War II, has government begun to penetrate nearly every aspect of American life."[31]

[31] Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 6-7.

Wuthnow stressed that as the state expanded its regulative functions following World War II, some sectors of the religious community responded positively while others mobilized to oppose the expansion of government.[32] How then have Southern Baptists and American Baptists responded to the growing role of government since the 1960s? More specifically, how have the views of Southern Baptists and American Baptists concerning the proper role of the state and the extent of permissible government regulation influenced their environmentalisms? As with the aforementioned political engagement approaches, the answers to these questions provide much needed insight into the attitudes of evangelical and mainline Protestants, as represented by Southern Baptists and American Baptists respectively, toward the regulative role of government on environmental issues.

*Science and Technology*

The relationship of Southern Baptists and American Baptists to science and technology is also assessed. As this dissertation shows, these two denominations of Baptists have often reacted to the findings of science and technological advancements in differing ways. How then have Southern Baptists and American Baptists responded to prevailing scientific viewpoints (e.g. international environmental concerns) and technological advances (e.g. population control methods)? How have these views toward science and technology shaped the environmentalism of Southern Baptists and American Baptists?

American Baptists have readily embraced, with some limitations, the findings of science and advances in technology since the late 1960s. As stated earlier, American

[32] Ibid., 315.

Baptists like other mainline Protestants have a more liberal theological outlook than Southern Baptists and other evangelical Protestants. This is due to the influence of modernism and liberal theological movements such as the Social Gospel Movement. These movements made inroads within mainline Protestantism beginning in the late nineteenth-century. In *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism*, historian William Hutchison chronicled how mainline Protestants attempted to make Christianity more compatible with scientific developments. Hutchison concluded that modernistic principles such as the adjustment of religious beliefs to modern science became a central component of mainline Protestantism.[33] Relying on arguments put forth by Hutchison, historian Barry Hankins noted that theological modernism is best defined as "(1) the adjusting of religious ideas to modern ways of thinking (2) the idea that God is immanent (meaning close to humans) and is revealed in cultural development; and (3) the belief that civilization was progressing toward the kingdom of God."[34] Consequently, American Baptist reliance on and acceptance of scientific progress is—to a large degree—due to these theological influences and the place of American Baptists within mainline Protestantism.

During the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, Southern Baptist leaders also welcomed advances in the fields of science and technology.[35] In *The Restructuring of*

---

[33] William Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 1-12.

[34] Barry Hankins, *American Evangelicals: A Contemporary History of a Mainstream Religious Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2008), 19. This dissertation will prove that while American Baptists have accepted the findings of science, they have not been reluctant to criticize man's misuse of science and technology to the detriment of the environment.

[35] Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 282, 287, 291.

*American Religion*, Robert Wuthnow wrote about the "myth of technology." Wuthnow explained, "Though scarcely a religion, [technology] presents itself with religious force, combining seemingly inevitable developments in the social infrastructure with belief in the unassailable sanctity of these developments." Citing opinion polls, Wuthnow highlighted the strong faith of Americans in science and technology. Wuthnow observed, "American confidence in scientific technology, indeed seems to be more widespread than in any other Western industrialized country." He argued that technology becomes a "self-legitimating ideology" that "limits our ability to think about social problems in the terms set by technology." Wuthnow shows how Americans, religious and nonreligious alike, have come to believe that "only technology itself" offers solutions to social problems including environmental problems that are caused—to a great extent—by technology. This project evaluates whether American Baptists and Southern Baptists—like most Americans—have embraced this belief in a "technological fix" with regard to pressing environmental concerns.[36]

This generally cozy relationship with science took a skeptical turn in the 1980s with the rise of fundamentalists to leadership positions in the Southern Baptist Convention. Historian Mark Noll in *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* wrote that the "intellectual disaster of fundamentalism" caused evangelical Protestants in the twentieth-century to prefer a warfare model between science and religion rather than attempting to find harmony between the two. Noll pointed to the promotion of creation science (and rejection of theistic evolution) by evangelical Protestants as proof of this "intellectual

[36] Wuthnow, 282, 287, 291.

disaster."[37] The increasing skepticism of Southern Baptists toward scientific developments with regard to the environment is closely examined. The writings of leading evangelical scholars such as Mark Noll and George Marsden aid in understanding the basis for this skepticism which profoundly shaped the environmentalism of today's Southern Baptists.

### *Justification for Study*

This dissertation aims to make a significant and unique interdisciplinary contribution to several fields of scholarship such as the study of American religious history and more specifically the study of evangelical Protestantism and mainline Protestantism, American environmental history, history of Christian environmentalism and Baptist history. Over the last forty years, hundreds of books and thousands of articles have been published by theologians from around the world on environmental topics. Several extensive bibliographies have been compiled to chronicle the wealth of scholarship devoted to the exploding fields of environmental ethics and environmental theology. However, as the next chapter details, despite this immense interest in the relationship between Christianity and ecology, very little has been written dealing with this relationship and Christian environmentalism from a historical perspective. Religious, social and political historians have written hundreds of books and articles in recent decades analyzing the public involvement of Christians in the civil rights and anti-abortion movements. However, historians have largely ignored Christian environmental

[37] Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 109-145. Noll elaborated, "Creation science has damaged evangelicalism by making it much more difficult to think clearly about human origins, the age of the earth and mechanisms of geological or biological change. But it has done more profound damage by undermining the ability to look at the world God has made and to understand what we see when we do look." See Noll, 196.

concern and engagement on vital environmental issues. Moreover, the few works that have dealt with the history of Christian environmentalism have focused exclusively on special interest groups. Denominations have been routinely ignored. This study helps to fill this huge void.[38]

In addition to contributing to the study of the history of Christian environmentalism, this project adds to the field of religious history and especially the study of Baptists. The number of writings about mainline Protestants has dwindled in recent years with evangelical Protestants receiving the bulk of scholarly and popular attention. Although some attention has been given to the social action and political involvement of Southern Baptists (none that discuss ecology), there have been few in-depth studies covering the post-World War II era that include American Baptists. As the next chapter demonstrates, historians have paid little attention to the post-World War II social attitudes, advocacy and activism of American Baptists.

Additionally, this dissertation serves to offer a much needed correction to the popular notion put forth by numerous scholars that Lynn White's controversial critique of Christianity awakened the Christian tradition to environmental issues. This study contends that this often repeated claim is false as White's essay was not the Silent Spring for environmental theology and activism of Southern Baptists and American Baptists. The environmentalisms of both groups predated White's essay. Correcting this glaring

[38] As the Southern Baptist Convention is the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, the environmental attitudes and actions of Southern Baptists deserve scholarly attention. Similarly, American Baptist Churches USA is the nation's second largest Anglo Baptist group and considered a leading mainline Protestant denomination. A study focused on these important and related Protestant denominations can begin to fill the void created by scholars of Christian environmentalism who have de-emphasized and often outright ignored the environmental engagement and environmentalisms of denominations.

error helps put the origins of Christian environmentalism in a more proper and historically accurate place.

*Outline of Study*

This dissertation is comprised of eight chapters. This first chapter has already provided an introduction to the project. An overview of the argument and methodology of this project was given along with a detailed examination of the four factors to be considered. A justification for this study was also provided. The second chapter of this study provides a brief introduction to the history of American environmental politics with a focus on the second and third waves of American environmental history. An overview of the development of Christian environmentalism as well as a review of all relevant literature concerning the history of Christian environmentalism is offered. A brief introduction to Southern Baptist and American Baptist engagement with environmental issues is also presented. Finally, the second chapter assesses the scholarship dealing with the social history and political involvement of Southern Baptists and American Baptists. Similar to the first chapter, key terms and concepts are defined.

Chapter three analyzes the development of environmental attitudes, advocacy and activism in the political arena of Southern Baptists during the late 1960s through the early 1970s. Pollution and population were the two twin ecological issues which received the most attention during the beginning years of this second wave of American environmental history. Consequently, Southern Baptist engagement with these two issues is closely examined. In addition to highlighting their response to these then pressing environmental issues, this third chapter traces the emergence of a stewardship ethic of Southern Baptists. The fourth chapter proceeds to analyze the environmental

attitudes, actions and approaches of American Baptists and the emergence of the eco-justice ethic during this same time period. A conclusion section compares the environmentalisms of American Baptists and Southern Baptists during this period based on the findings of the third chapter.

The fifth chapter looks at the 1970s, dubbed by historians as the “environmental decade." Chapter five focuses specifically on how both American Baptists and Southern Baptists addressed the 1970s energy crises sparked by instability in the Middle East. Unlike the population crisis of the late 1960s, the impact from the energy crises could be felt directly by Baptists, Baptist churches and Baptist groups. American Baptists and Southern Baptists confronted these energy challenges albeit in different ways. The ways in which both groups faced these challenges and dealt with questions concerning the regulatory role of government and limits of growth are compared and analyzed.

Chapters six and seven compare the environmental attitudes, advocacy and activism of American Baptists and Southern Baptists during the third wave of American environmental history. This wave began with an environmental backlash that coincided both with the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s and the "conservative resurgence" within the Southern Baptist Convention. The sixth chapter details and analyzes this tumultuous decade. Chapter seven analyzes the renewed interest in environmental issues among Southern Baptists, leading up to and immediately following the twentieth anniversary of the inaugural Earth Day in 1990. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the drastic shift of Southern Baptists from a traditional ethic of environmental stewardship to a new stewardship ethic characterized by what other scholars have dubbed anti-environmentalism. This new, distinct form of environmentalism loudly rejected

government regulatory solutions and displayed hostility to Christian environmentalists. The seventh chapter also details the continued environmental advocacy of American Baptists especially with regard to international environmental concerns.[39] A short eighth and final chapter summarizes all arguments from the preceding six chapters and offers a concise comparative analysis of these findings to conclude this project.[40]

The following chapters offer a comparative analysis of American Baptists and Southern Baptist attitudes, actions and approaches to different environmental issues over the past forty years. These attitudes, actions and approaches comprise the respective environmentalisms of both groups alike. This project reveals that different environmental ethics, political engagement approaches, attitudes toward the role of government and views toward science and technology have significantly shaped their increasingly dissimilar environmentalisms. With the intense focus on environmental issues in public life and in the academy but very few writings on Christian environmental engagement from a historical perspective, this dissertation hopes to offer a unique and needed contribution.

---

[39] This form of environmentalism, dubbed anti-environmentalism, as defined by other scholars, is discussed in the next chapter.

[40] Chapter two provides a further introduction to the different environmentalisms of Southern Baptists and American Baptists.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Historical Overview and Literature Review

### *Introduction*

This second chapter begins with a historiographical introduction to American environmental history. The popular three-wave model of understanding American environmental history, as articulated by Mark Dowie, is introduced and adopted. With a focus on the evolution of the modern environmental movement, this historiographical introduction provides a concise and necessary overview of environmental politics in American history since the 1960s. The chapter continues with a historical overview of Christian environmentalism which surveys its development beginning with contributions of Joseph Sittler and the Faith-Man-Nature group. A literature review of the history of Christian environmentalism is also provided and relevant literature from this small but important field of study is chronicled and examined. Next, a brief introduction to Southern Baptist and American Baptist engagement with environmental issues is presented. Finally, this second chapter concludes with a review of the literature relating to Baptists and social action.

### *American Environmental History: An Historiographical Introduction*

American environmental history is often divided into three periods or waves. The first wave began in the late nineteenth-century and spanned six decades. This wave, which coincided with the closing of the frontier, was characterized by an impulse for

conservationism and preservationism.[1] Historian Thomas Wellock explored the relationship of these two movements and their effects on the first era of American environmental history in *Preserving the Nation: The Conservation and Environmental Movements, 1870-2000*. During this wave of American environmental history, conservationists championed the efficient management of natural resources for production purposes. Wellock contended that conservationists were motivated by two values: efficiency and equity. He explained that the goal of efficient management was equity which he defined as the "ideal of being just, impartial and fair."[2] Meanwhile preservationists sought to preserve scenic and wilderness areas from being developed. Both movements, according to Wellock, emerged in response to the depletion of natural resources and damage done to land in rural areas.[3]

A new view of nature appeared during this wave which coincided with the Progressive Era.[4] Americans began to react against the excesses and wastes of the industrial age. Progressives came to believe that shared values were being eroded away by materialism, unrestricted economic growth and resource exploitation. Unlike the Progressive Era, the government generally ignored environmental issues during the

---

[1] For more on the three-wave environmental history model, see Mark Dowie, *Losing Ground: American Environmentalism at the Close of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996).

[2] Thomas R. Wellock, *Preserving the Nation: The Conservation and Environmental Movements, 1870-2000* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson Publishing, 2007), 5.

[3] Ibid., 1-3. The three most prominent figures during this era of conservation/preservation were John Muir, Gifford Pinchot and President Teddy Roosevelt. Wellock described these three men as a "dysfunctional Holy Trinity" in the "canon of the conservation movement." Additionally, it should be noted that there was a great deal of overlap between the conservation and preservation movements.

[4] The Progressive Era was a period of significant social reform in American society covering roughly 1890-1920. For a survey of the Progressive Era see Lewis L. Gould, *America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1914* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1974).

1920s. However, government began to take a more direct role in preserving nature and regulating natural resources in the 1930s and 1940s. Wellock argued that the success and popularity of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs helped grow the constituency for conservationism and consequently set the stage for the grassroots environmental movement that took off two decades later.[5]

Following World War II, American culture experienced fundamental social and economic changes. In *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*, Adam Rome detailed that this was a period of mass consumption, affluence, modernization, suburbanization and scientific discovery.[6] Similarly, Hal Rothman in *The Greening of a Nation? Environmentalism in the United States Since 1945* stressed that World War II "kicked off the conceptual transformation of American society." According to Rothman, Americans "wanted more, and they wanted it faster."[7] J. Brooks Flippen in *Nixon and the Environment*, noted that rising standards of living allowed more time for recreation and greater disposable income in the immediate post-war period. Environmental historians such as Rome, Rothman and Flippen have agreed that consumerism was a driving force behind this radical transformation of American society.[8]

---

[5] Wellock, 3. These were a series of economic programs passed by the United States Congress and signed into law by President Franklin Roosevelt between 1933-1936 in response to the Great Depression.

[6] Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[7] Hal K. Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation?: Environmentalism in the U.S. Since 1945* (London: Harcourt Brace, 1998), 7, 12.

[8] J. Brooks Flippen, *Nixon and the Environment* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 5-10.

Over time, Americans became aware of the environmental consequences of unrestricted post-World War II growth and unregulated industrial expansion. Americans, with their increased time for leisure, developed a greater appreciation of environmental amenities. Flippen showed that Americans quickly became aware of the unforeseen environmental consequences caused by the growing economy, population boom, massive suburbanization and widespread use of the automobile. As a result of this new awareness, a new popular concern for nature emerged in America based again on a consumerist impulse for improved environmental quality.[9]

In *Beauty, Health and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States*, noted environmental historian Samuel Hays described the three central elements of this new popular environmental concern: beauty, an aesthetic desire for a better quality of life; health, the search for environmental well-being; and permanence, a broadly-defined ecological perspective requiring a more balanced relationship between developed and natural systems. Hays argued that these environmental values reflected the new orientation of the leading sectors of social change in post-World War II America.[10]

The consumer-drive for a healthy, aesthetically-pleasing and well-balanced environment coalesced into a broad, inclusive grassroots reform movement. This "modern environmental movement" marked, according to Mark Dowie, the second wave in environmental history. Dowie demonstrated that the environmental movement brought together advocates of resource conservation, wilderness preservation, population control,

---

[9] Ibid. According to Flippen, the greatest threat to air quality was not urban decay but the widespread use of the automobile which was essential to the success of suburbanization.

[10] Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1-11.

ecology, energy conservation, pollution regulations and occupational health reform. Environmentalists were concerned with a plethora of quality-of-life issues ranging from pollution to pesticides to population growth to ecological preservation.[11] Benjamin Kline, in *First Along the River: A Brief History of the US Environmental Movement*, described environmentalism as an "integral part of the social protest movements of the '60s generation." Kline expounded, "Rising from the cult of materialism in the 1950s and the turbulence of the 1960s, the environmental movement found its place in every part of American life—political, economic, generational, urban and rural."[12]

Historians differ on the starting point for their account of popular, modern American environmentalism. Many begin with the first Earth Day celebration in 1970. Mark Dowie pointed out that Earth Day 1970 is "the most common and least imaginative of the starting points."[13] This assertion echoes Samuel Hays who has suggested that "Earth Day was as much a result as a cause" as it followed at least a decade of evolution in environmental attitudes and actions.[14] Hays and other environmental historians rightly began their accounts with the decade preceding the first Earth Day. This decade marked the beginning of the second wave of American environmental history.

The 1960s witnessed the publication of two influential and controversial books that helped to give birth to the modern environmental movement and popular environmentalism. Just one month before the Cuban Missile Crisis, Rachel Carson

---

[11] Dowie, 23-24.

[12] Benjamin Kline, *First Along the River: A Brief History of the U.S. Environmental Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 82.

[13] Dowie, 23.

[14] Hays, 52.

published *Silent Spring* (1962), a groundbreaking exposé on the environmental hazards that pesticides pose to the environment. Carson's powerful critique of technological progress and her efforts exposing the dangers of popular pesticides such as DDT served as a major catalyst for the new interest in urban environmental issues such as air quality, water pollution and solid waste disposal. Pollution control had become a major priority of a large portion of American society by the mid-1960s.[15] J. Brooks Flippen emphasized the significance of Carson's book, claiming that *Silent Spring* "arguably opened the eyes of the American public to the problems that accompanied the prosperity of the postwar world."[16]

By the late 1960s, however, environmentalists had begun to realize the complexity of environmental problems. Tackling the pollution problem alone was inadequate. Pollution was related to other environmental concerns such as the global population explosion. Population as a national environmental issue reached its apex of popularity following the publication of Stanford University professor Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* in 1968 by the Sierra Club, the nation's leading conservationist organization. Ehrlich chronicled the environmental costs of overpopulation and downplayed the possibility of a technological solution. Instead, Ehrlich proclaimed, with alarmist rhetoric, that only substantial compulsory reductions in population could prevent the mass starvation that would inevitably ensue due to overpopulation. Ehrlich insisted

[15] Dowie, 1. Dowie noted that the word "environment" to describe an expansive category that includes both humans and natural habitats was not popularized until Carson used the term in *Silent Spring*.

[16] Flippen, 4.

that the United States bore the greatest burden as its population consumed over half of the world's resources.[17]

Historians Roy Beck and Leon Kolankiewicz have stressed that Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb,* which sold over three-million copies, ignited a national movement. Zero Population Growth, a national population control organization, was founded the year Ehrlich's book was released in order to capitalize on the publicity it generated. Hundreds of ZPG chapters were formed almost immediately in cities and on college campuses across the nation. The population issue would be a central theme at Earth Day "teach-ins" throughout America. [18]

The first Earth Day celebration on April 22, 1970 put environmentalism front-and-center in American society in a very visible way. With over twenty million Americans participating in this environmental awareness effort, Earth Day displayed the grassroots popularity of environmentalism. According to Thomas Wellock, the success of popular environmentalism during this second wave of American environmental history was due largely to its unifying nature. As the nation was caught up in cultural turmoil over civil rights and the Vietnam War, environmentalism provided issues to which Democrats, Republicans and Independents alike could get behind and support to some extent.[19] The embrace of an environmental agenda by President Richard Nixon, a Republican, and a Democratic-controlled Congress demonstrated the bipartisan and

---

[17] Wellock, 168-169. See also Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1971).

[18] Roy Beck and Leon Kolankiewicz, "The Environmental Movement's Retreat from Advocating U.S. Population Stabilization (1970-1998): A First Draft of History," *Journal of Policy History* 12, no. 1 (2000): 134-136.

[19] Wellock, 183.

unifying nature of environmentalism in the late 1960s through the early 1970s. The years immediately following the first Earth Day witnessed a surge of environmental legislation and initiatives.[20] Hal Rotham argued that the environmental movement was institutionalized during this era as major legislation "enshrined environmental values within local, state and federal bureaucracies."[21]

New environmental laws designed to protect nature and the public from environmental hazards related to industrial growth passed by Congress and signed by the Nixon Administration included the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Toxic Substances Control Act, Endangered Species Conservation Act, Water Quality Improvement Act, Resource Recovery Act, and Clean Air Act amendments. Additionally, Nixon issued an Executive Order creating the Environmental Quality Council to coordinate with the White House on environmental policy questions. Nixon also signed legislation creating the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, a commission which promoted zero population growth.[22] Historian Benjamin Kline posited that the most significant environmental legislation of this era was the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970. NEPA required federally-funded construction projects to conduct environmental impact statements and also established the Environmental Protection Agency to enforce new environmental statutes.[23]

---

[20] Flippen, 79.

[21] Rotham, 57-60. According to Benjamin Kline, memberships in environmental organizations increased dramatically following Earth Day 1970. More than 200 new national and regional groups as well as over 3,000 local groups were formed. See Kline, 84-85.

[22] Flippen, 76. Zero population growth is the idea that the nation's birth rate should not exceed its death rate. See also Kline, 93.

[23] Kline, 92.

Despite the environmental movement's early successes, the increasingly anti-corporate message of environmentalists soon turned off Republican leaders who were moving in a more conservative direction and beginning to publicly oppose government regulatory solutions to environmental problems. Enthusiasm for environmental causes began to wane as a result of economic concerns and the growing perception that environmentalists were more focused on narrow ecological themes to the exclusion of the needs of humans. Benjamin Kline stressed that domestic problems such as the energy crises of the 1970s and fears associated with rising inflation during the presidential administration of Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter undermined the environmental movement and severely weakened its momentum. By the close of the decade, the "heyday of the environmental movement was over," according to Kline.[24]

The conservative resurgence of the 1980s ushered in the third wave of American environmental history. The early years of this third wave were characterized by a period of anti-environmentalism led by President Ronald Reagan.[25] Reagan depicted environmentalists as extremists and expressed open hostility to the environmental movement. He attempted to frame environmental values as the province of the wealthy and elite who sought to restrict the economic freedom of the middle class. Viewing government as the problem rather than a solution, Reagan sought to roll back environmental gains. He used the Office of Management and Budget to drain power

---

[24] Ibid., 99. According to Kline, the environmental movement was considered by the end of the 1970s just one of many "special interest" groups alongside women's organizations, gay rights groups and lobbies for seniors. See Kline, 91.

[25] Brooks Flippen, paraphrasing Samuel Hays, observed that the anti-environmental backlash of the Reagan era represented "the culmination of the backlash to environmentalism that had been growing since Nixon's initial retreat." See Flippen, 220-221. The reasons for the emergence of this environmental backlash and accompanying cultural shifts are discussed in chapters six and seven.

from regulatory agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency. Reagan also selected anti-environmentalist critics of regulation such as Department of the Interior Secretary James Watt to lead regulatory agencies.[26]

The environmental movement continued to battle anti-environmentalists when Reagan's two terms expired. Thomas Wellock argued that popular American environmentalism developed a split personality during this third wave of environmental history. In response to the anti-environmentalism that characterized the Reagan years, the environmental movement became both more part of the political establishment and more radical. While the radical side of the environmental movement had little political influence to exert, the more "establishment" side chose to pursue a new, less-confrontational and less-controversial approach that sought to cooperate with corporations. The previous approach of relying exclusively on traditional tactics such as litigation, lobbying and protests were deemed insufficient. [27] Historians such as Mark Dowie have insisted that this thoroughly pragmatic approach of cooperation with corporations limited the effectiveness of the environmental movement in achieving its original environmental objectives as laid out in the preamble to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970.[28]

---

[26] Flippen, 220-232.

[27] Wellock, 238-239.

[28] Dowie, 32-33. The preamble of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 declared its purposes: "To declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation; and to establish a Council on Environmental Quality." See "National Environmental Policy Act of 1969," National Environmental Policy Act, http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/nepa/nepaeqia.htm (accessed July 7, 2011).

Following in the footsteps of Reagan, President George W. Bush pursued an agenda of environmental deregulation during his two terms from 2001-2008. Like Reagan, Bush eschewed regulatory solutions and attempted to undo the efforts of his predecessor President Bill Clinton who had adopted a market-based moderate approach to environmental issues during his two terms from 1993-2000. Throughout his tenure as president, Bush waged a public battle with scientists and environmentalists over global warming, attempting to downplay its public health impacts and the role of humans in causing climate change.[29]

This section has provided a concise historiographical introduction to American environmental history using Mark Dowie's helpful three-wave model. The birth and development of Christian environmentalism coincided with the second and third waves of American environmental history. The subsequent two sections offers a literature review and overview of the history of Christian environmentalism and supplies the necessary context needed to understand the environmentalisms of Southern Baptists and American Baptists.

*Christian Environmentalism: An Historical Overview*

In *Ecology, Justice and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature*, editors Peter W. Bakken, Joan Gibb Engel and J. Ronald Engel argued that Lutheran theologian Joseph Sittler's address titled "Called to Unity," delivered at the third assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961, marked the beginning of the post-

[29] Kline, 155-168.

World War II effort to "integrate ecology, justice and the Christian faith."[30] With this address, Sittler offered a theological basis and rationale for an environmental ethic and urged the global ecumenical movement to take up the cause of integrating ecology and justice.[31] Several years after Sittler's historic address, a group of Christian theologians, scientists and denominational leaders formed the Faith-Man-Nature Group in the mid-1960s. This marked the first organized ecumenical effort concerned uniquely with the environment. Although the group existed for less than a decade, it was successful in fostering relationships between Christian leaders, scientists and environmental activists. Fred Van Dyke pointed out in *Between Heaven and Earth: Christian Perspectives on Environmental Protection* (2010) that several theologians active in the Faith-Man-Nature group, such as H. Paul Santmire, Philip Joranson, Richard Baer Jr. and Frederick Elder, would go on to become well-known mainline Protestant environmentalists.[32]

Notwithstanding the efforts of theologians such as Sittler and the Faith-Man-Nature Group, the environmental engagement of Christian leaders, churches, and denominations remained extremely limited. In fact, it was confined almost exclusively to a small segment of the predominantly mainline Protestant ecumenical movement and a

---

[30] Peter Bakken, Joan Gibb Engel, and J. Ronald Engel, *Ecology, Justice, and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 7.

[31] Fred Van Dyke noted that Joseph Sittler was one of the first modern theologians to seriously address ecological issues. See Fred Van Dyke, *Between Heaven and Earth: Christian Perspectives on Environmental Protection* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Publishing, 2010), 132-133. Robert Booth Fowler contended that Sittler's essays "A Theology for Earth" (1954) and "Ecological Commitment as Theological Responsibility" (1970) have influenced other Christian environmental thinkers. See Robert Booth Fowler, *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 14. See also Joseph A. Sittler, "Ecological Commitment as Theological Responsibility," *Zygon* 5 (June 1970): 172-181. Joseph A. Sittler, "A Theology for Earth," *The Christian Scholar* 37 (1954): 367-374.

[32] Bakken, et al, 6. See also Fowler, 15.

tiny corner of the evangelical Protestant academic community.[33] This would soon change.

On December 26, 1966, at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, historian Lynn White Jr. delivered the keynote speech. White asserted that in order to effectively address environmental crises, individuals must closely examine, analyze and alter their attitudes toward nature. White held that the human capacity to wreak havoc on the environment grows out of Western technological and scientific advances informed by the Christian tradition. He alleged that the "historical roots of the ecologic crisis" lay in Christianity's doctrine of human dominion over nature. Describing Western Christianity as "the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen," White argued that the overemphasis on anthropocentrism allowed for the exploitation of nature since "nature has no reason for existence save to serve [humans]." Therefore, Christians "bear a huge burden of guilt" for contemporary environmental crises, according to White.[34]

White's keynote address was published at least four times over the next year, most notably in the March 1967 issue of *Science* magazine.[35] Not surprisingly, White's widely-read and much talked about essay set off a firestorm of controversy. Historians such as Dwight Thomas have credited White with awakening Christian denominations

---

[33] Kenneth David Larsen, "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals confront environmentalism, 1967-2000," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 75. An early expression of evangelical Protestant environmental concern came from the American Scientific Affiliation who as scientists recognized, earlier than other evangelicals, environmental harms such as pollution.

[34] Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science*, March 1967, 1203-1207. For analysis of White's article, see David Livingstone, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis: A Reassessment," 26 (1994): 38-55. White defined Western Christianity as Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

[35] Dwight Thomas, "An environmental legacy: Lynn White and Francis Schaeffer on Christian Responsibility to the Environment," *Faith and Practice* 2 (1996): 45.

and Christian theologians to critical environmental issues.[36] Evangelical theologian James Ball wrote in his dissertation "Evangelicals Protestants, the Ecological Crisis and Public Policy" that there was "almost a ritualistic quality to the invocation of Lynn White's essay, as if any article about Christianity and the ecological crisis could not proceed without mention of White in the introduction."[37] Historian Robert Booth Fowler explained, "White's perspective has been both a challenge to the greening of Protestantism and a powerful stimulant spurring it on."[38] The number of books and articles discussing environmental ethics and theology doubled between 1967 and 1969 and increased by 600 percent in 1970. Many of these publications were, without a doubt, at least partially in response to White. Due to the role that it is perceived to have played in helping to birth Christian environmentalism, White's essay is often referred to as the *Silent Spring* for Christian environmental engagement.[39] Like Rachel Carson whose critique helped kick-start the modern environmental movement, Lynn White has been credited with provoking Christians to seriously consider their impact on the earth.

As decades have passed, White's essay has retained its important status. Sociologist Laurel Kearns noted in 1994 that twenty-five years after publication of White's essay "hardly a treatise on religion and ecology is written without reference to

---

[36] Ibid.

[37] James Ball, "Evangelical Protestants, The Ecological Crisis and Public Theology," (PhD diss., Drew University, 1997), 64.

[38] Fowler, 20.

[39] As previously noted, historians have credited Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* with helping birth the modern environmental movement.

White."[40] Another scholar pointed out that, in this same period, White's arguments were the subject of over 200 books and articles. White's ideas appeared in *TIME Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *The Boy Scout Handbook* and the *Sierra Club Bulletin*.[41] While other books and events served as a great influence on some Christian groups (as will be explored later), it is beyond question that the publication of Lynn White's controversial essay was a watershed event in the history of Christian environmentalism.

Biologist Richard Wright of Gordon College was one of the early Christian voices to offer a formal response to Lynn White. His reply was published in *BioScience* in 1970 after *Science* magazine, which published White's essay, refused to print Wright's counterpoint response. In his article, "Responsibility for the Ecologic Crisis," Wright argued that eastern cultures, like western cultures, had equally exploited the environment. He stated that present-day scientists "would consider it absurd to attribute the basic credit for their activity and discovery to Christianity." Wright continued, "I submit that it is just as absurd to hold Christianity responsible for crises that have arisen from the present-day applications of science just because several hundred years earlier science began with a Christian framework. Why not hold scientists responsible for their own activities?"[42]

Two years later, Francis Schaeffer, another well-known evangelical voice, offered a more comprehensive response to White and others who implicated western Christianity as the cause of the ecological crisis. Schaeffer's short book titled *Pollution and the Death*

---

[40] Laurel Kearns, "Saving the Creation: Religious Environmentalism," (PhD diss., Emory University, 1994), 1.

[41] Shannon K. Barry, "'To Till It and Keep It': Engaging the American Christian Community in the Environmental Movement," (master's thesis, Tufts University, 2006), 12-13.

[42] Richard Wright, "Responsibility for the Ecological Crisis," *BioScience* 20, no. 15 (August 1970): 851-853.

*of Man: The Christian View of Ecology* (1970) was read by many, going through eleven printings between 1970 and 1980.[43] Schaeffer rejected White's argument that Christianity in the West needed to abandon its anthropocentrism and belief that humans have dominion over the rest of nature. Pantheism was not a solution to the ecological crisis, according to Schaeffer. He stressed that humans were created in the image of God and therefore superior to the rest of creation are entrusted with a moral responsibility to treat God's creation with integrity, caring for it and forming a covenant with it (Genesis 9:8-17). Schaeffer reasoned that this moral responsibility is destroyed when, as with pantheism, humans and the rest of creation are considered equally divine. He argued that categories separating God from humans and humans from the rest of God's creation as necessary to avoid pantheism.[44] White's praising of Saint Francis of Assisi for having "tried to substitute the idea of the equality of all creatures, including man, for the idea of man's limitless rule of creation" convinced Schaeffer that White was promoting pantheism.[45] For Schaefer, any theology that critiqued anthropocentrism and differed from his own interpretation of Genesis and the dominion mandate resembled pantheism. This critique of perceived pantheism would become an important component of the environmentalism advanced by theologically conservative evangelical Protestants especially Southern Baptist conservatives.[46]

---

[43] Van Dyke, 45.

[44] Francis Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian View of Ecology* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale Home Publishers, 1970), 6-11.

[45] White, 1206-1207.

[46] This will be discussed in a later chapter.

During these early years of the second wave of American environmental history, theologians and biblical scholars responded to Lynn White's essay with articles and books emphasizing the Bible's explicit demands on Christians to care for God's creation. These theologians and ethicists formulated an alternative ecological theology to help correct the increasingly common perception that Christians were hostile to environmentalism and the budding environmental movement. Some Christians, especially evangelical Protestants, even insisted that Christianity offered the best solution to environmental crises.

Beginning in the late 1960s, many Christian denominations and ecumenical bodies responded with official statements expressing environmental concern. The American Lutheran Church issued a statement titled "The Environmental Crisis" in 1970 chronicling the most urgent environmental problems and calling Christians to be responsible stewards of God's creation.[47] Other mainline Protestant denominations, including the United Methodist Church, Episcopal Church and Disciples of Christ, passed resolutions affirming many of the goals of the environmental movement. Prominent ecumenical partnerships such as the National Association of Evangelicals and the National Council of Churches approved resolutions urging ecological concern and action in the immediate years following the first Earth Day.[48] Several denominations, according to historian Robert Booth Fowler, such as the United Church of Christ went a step further with the development of environmental advocacy programs. The establishment of these programs marked the point in the history of Christian environmentalism in which

[47] Thomas, 135-136.

[48] Ibid. See also Larsen, 4.

denominations began to travel a more activist path. Prior to this period surrounding the first Earth Day, Christian environmental engagement had tended to take a more academic approach, characterized by the Faith-Man-Nature Group. [49]

David Kenneth Larsen noted in his dissertation titled "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals Confront Environmentalism, 1967-2000," that numerous popular evangelical magazines published articles enthusiastic about environmentalism and the environmental movement as the nation celebrated the first Earth Day in 1970.[50] Evangelical Protestant interest in environmentalism soon dropped off significantly. Most evangelical publications stopped addressing environmental issues after 1971. The flagship evangelical magazine *Christianity Today* continued to address environmental themes through 1976. Some politically liberal evangelicals were slow to embrace environmentalism in the 1970s. These evangelicals felt that environmentalism distracted Christians from traditional social justice priorities like poverty and hunger.[51] For example, Richard John Neuhaus, then an outspoken liberal evangelical voice, rejected environmentalism with harsh rhetoric. Neuhaus depicted environmentalism as a secret fascist and racist attack on the poor and minority communities of the United States.[52]

Conversely, environmental concern did not wane among mainline Protestants following the first Earth Day. In 1972, church leaders represented these denominations at

---

[49] Some denominational advocacy programs were primarily educational in nature while others emphasized legislative lobbying in addition to educational advocacy. See Fowler, 16.

[50] Larsen, 3.

[51] Ibid., 117-118.

[52] Richard J. Neuhaus, "In Defense of People: A Thesis Revisited," in *Environmental Quality and Social Justice in Urban America: An Exploration of Conflict and Concord among Those Who Seek Environmental Quality and Those Who Seek Social Justice*, ed. James Noel Smith (Washington DC: The Conservation Foundation), 59-72.

the seminal International Conference on the Human Environment sponsored by the United Nations in Stockholm, Sweden. The Stockholm Conference and the fledgling environmental movement inspired many mainline Protestant clergy and leaders to make ecological issues part of their social mission at local, state and national levels. Education advocacy and legislative lobbying were central components of these denominations' environmental efforts.[53]

Mainline Protestants were especially active on energy issues during the 1970s. Mainline denominations focused much of their attention on educating Christians and churches about energy conservation and potential solutions to the energy crises. The Three Mile Island nuclear meltdown (Dauphin County, Pennsylvania) in 1979 ensured that these Protestants would tackle pressing environmental and safety questions concerning nuclear energy. The toxic waste scandal at Love Canal (Niagara Falls, New York) led mainline denominations to hone in on the public health consequences of environmental hazards.[54]

Mainline denominations garnered much attention in the political arena in 1981 by joining with major environmental groups to fight President Reagan's appointment of anti-environmentalist James Watt as Secretary of the Interior. Historian Michael Moody chronicled how environmental activism hit a high point in 1983 with the founding of the

---

[53] Michael Moody, "Caring for Creation: Environmental Advocacy by Mainline Protestant Organizations," in *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*, eds. Robert Wuthnow and John H. Evans (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 239.

[54] The meltdown at the Three Mile Island reactor near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania is known as the worst atomic power accident in United States history. See Kline, 91. From 1930 to 1952, an old canal bed near Niagara Falls, New York was used as a dumping ground by the Hooker Chemical and Plastics Corporation. A school and housing tract were later built on this same land in the 1950s. In 1971, toxic liquids began to leak through the once-sealed dump. The area was contaminated resulting in an extremely high birth defect and miscarriage rate along with a high incidence of nervous disease among children in the neighborhood. See Kline, 181.

Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches in his chapter titled "Caring for Creation: Environmental Advocacy by Mainline Protestant Organizations." The Eco-Justice Working Group was formed to engage churches on key environmental issues and to form partnerships with leading environmental groups. The working group sought to get environmental lobbies to recognize the social and economic justice aspects of various environmental issues in hopes of broadening their agenda. Three decades later, the Eco-Justice Working Group remains the primary interdenominational mainline Protestant organization confronting environmental issues. [55]

Evangelical Protestants "reentered" the environmental arena in 1980 with the formation of the Au Sable Institute for Environmental Studies. Kenneth Larsen emphasized that while James Watt "widened the gap between evangelicals and environmentalists, some evangelicals attempted to bridge this divide." Formed by a small yet influential group of reformed evangelical academics and theologians, the Au Sable Institute articulated an environmental theology that defined dominion as "service to the Earth."[56] This new institute became the leading source of evangelical environmental thought during the 1980s. The Au Sable Institute promoted to evangelical Protestants, especially evangelical college students, the importance of environmental stewardship from a theologically conservative or "biblical" perspective.[57] Historian Robert Booth

---

[55] Moody, 240-241. Bakken, 13. William Somplatsky-Jarman, "The Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches," in *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, eds. Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Reuther (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 573-578.

[56] Larsen, xi.

[57] Ibid., 181. Located in northern Michigan, the Au Sable Institute was founded as an environmental education organization under the leadership of early prominent Christian environmental theologian Cal DeWitt.

Fowler, observed that a "pronounced and remarkable expansion of evangelical engagement with the environment began in the 1980s."[58]

By the end of the 1980s, leading up to the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day in 1990, environmental concern among evangelical Protestants had found support outside of the small reformed academic community from which the Au Sable Institute was birthed. Larsen elucidated that environmentalism had moved beyond the province of politically liberal evangelicals and was becoming more mainstream within evangelicalism.[59] This flowering of environmentalism among evangelical Protestants during the 1990s resulted in a significant increase in the number of publications by evangelicals on environmentalism. Additionally, new advocacy organizations promoting Christian environmentalism were launched such as Green Cross (1992), Evangelical Environmental Network (1993) and Target Earth (1997).[60]

Not surprisingly, the increased popularity of environmentalism among evangelical Protestants prompted a backlash within evangelicalism and the larger conservative Christian community. Evangelical Protestants and other Christians aligned with Religious Right organizations appropriated terms such as "environmental stewardship" and "creation care" for themselves. These terms were redefined and applied to serve a political agenda opposed to environmentalism and government regulation. Consequently, the Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship was formed by Religious Right leaders to combat the growing influence of Christian environmentalism. Led by Calvin

---

[58] Fowler, 39.

[59] Larsen, 221.

[60] Ibid.

Beisner, ICES proposed an environmentalism founded on the principles of free market economics. Beisner's environmentalism encouraged increased consumption and population growth. Larsen concluded that Beisner's suggested course correction for ecologically concerned evangelicals "had the effect of turning evangelical environmental theology on its head." Thus, the 1990s marked both the flowering of evangelical environmentalism and the emergence of a new distinct and coherent environmentalism, popularly described as Christian anti-environmentalism.[61]

Meanwhile, mainline Protestant denominations continued to expand their environmental agenda throughout the 1990s and into the twenty-first century. Mainline Protestants joined forces with evangelical Protestants in 1993 with the founding of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE). NRPE was created in response to an appeal by a group of acclaimed scientists, including paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, for religious organizations to lead the way on environmental issues. With strength in numbers, NRPE successfully blocked attempts by Congressional Republicans to weaken the Endangered Species Act in 1996.[62]

---

[61] Larsen, 310-313. See also E. Calvin Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997). The environmentalism of Southern Baptist conservatives will be described as anti-environmentalism as these Southern Baptists have rejected the environmentalist and environmentalism labels and stand opposed to the basic aims, goals and methods of the most popular form of American environmentalism identified with the modern environmental movement. Evangelical environmental scientist Richard Wright has used the term "anti-environmentalist" to describe those Christians who helped to spur and encourage the environmental backlash which began in the 1980s. Wright has described Christian economist Calvin Beisner as one of the leading Christian anti-environmentalists. As discussed in a later chapter, has interacted with and influenced the environmental thinking of Southern Baptist fundamentalists. See Richard Wright, "Tearing down the green: environmental backlash in the evangelical subculture," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 47 (1995): 80-91. In her popular article "Noah's Ark Goes to Washington," sociologist Laurel Kearns mentioned the "growing Christian anti-environmentalism" popular among some evangelical Protestants. See Laurel Kearns, "Noah's Ark Goes to Washington: A Profile of Evangelical Environmentalism," *Social Compass* 44, no. 3 (1997): 349-366.

[62] Moody, 246-250. See Mark Shibley and Jonathon L. Wiggins, "The Greening of Mainline American Religion: A Sociological Analysis of the Environmental Ethics of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment," *Social Compass* 44, no. 3 (1997): 336-337.

Following this successful effort, mainline Protestants turned their attention to the issue of global warming. As a result, mainline denominations became more environmentally active on the international stage, participating in both the United Nations-sponsored Kyoto and Rio summits on the Earth. Mainline denominations also invested much time and energy into lobbying the Clinton Administration to take steps to limit greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change. Evangelical Protestants have also turned their attention to international environmental concerns in the last ten years.[63]

*Literature Review: History of Christian Environmentalism*

Over the last forty years, hundreds of books and thousands of articles have been published by theologians from around the world on environmental topics. Several extensive bibliographies have been produced to chronicle the massive wealth of scholarship in the exploding field of environmental theology. For example, Joseph Sheldon of the Au Sable Institute compiled a nearly 300-page bibliography titled *Rediscovery of Creation: A Bibliographical Study of the Church's Response to the Environmental Crisis* in 1992. Sheldon's bibliography included theological works concerned with a diverse array of environmental issues and topics.[64] Three years later, Greenwood Press published an annotated bibliography that described over 500 eco-theology books and articles titled *Ecology, Justice and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature* (1995).[65] Without a doubt, the emergence of the modern environmental

---

[63] Ibid.

[64] Joseph Sheldon, *Rediscovery of Creation: A Bibliographical Study of the Church's Response to the Environmental Crisis* (Metuchen, NJ: American Theological Library Association and Scarecrow Press, 1992).

[65] Bakken, et. al.

movement helped cultivate an immense interest among Christian theologians in the relationship between religion and ecology.

Despite this immense and sustained interest, very little has been written dealing with the relationship between Christians and ecology from a historical perspective. Theologian Dieter Hessel made this important point in the foreword to *Ecology, Justice and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature*.[66] Few books or journal articles have carefully analyzed the attitudes and approaches of Christian groups to environmental issues. In 1994, sociologist Laurel Kearns completed a dissertation, supervised by Nancy Ammerman, titled "Saving the Creation: Religious Environmentalism" which delineated three distinct environmental ethics prevalent in American Christianity. More specifically, Kearns examined the types of Christian ethics developed in response to Lynn White's controversial accusations. Kearns subsequently published several articles based on her dissertation. However, Kearns' fine contributions to the study of Christian environmentalism have all been written from a distinctly sociological perspective.

In 1995, James Ball—who would later become a high-profile evangelical environmentalist—penned a dissertation titled "Evangelical Protestants, The Ecological Crisis and Public Theology." Written from a theological perspective, Ball closely reviewed the theological responses of evangelical Protestants to ecological crises beginning in the late 1960s. Similar to Kearns, Ball offered a set of categories for understanding the dominant environmental theologies popular within American

[66] Dieter Hessel, foreword to *Ecology, Justice, and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature*, eds. Peter Bakken, Joan Gibb Engel, and J. Ronald Engel (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), xiii.

Christianity. He chose to limit his study strictly to evangelicalism whereas Kearns surveyed the entire Christian environmental landscape.

There have been, however, very few writings that detail the history of Christian environmentalism from a historical perspective. Three writings from a historical perspective—a book, book chapter and a dissertation—are unique contributions and deserve to be mentioned in any discussion of the history of Christian environmentalism. These include Robert Booth Fowler's *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (1995); Michael Moody's "Caring for Creation: Environmental Advocacy by Mainline Protestant Organizations" in *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism* (2001); and David Kenneth Larsen's "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals Confront Environmentalism, 1967-2000" (2001). The contributions of Fowler, Moody and Larsen to the history of Christian environmentalism stand out as the few works on the history of Christian environmentalism by historians and from a historical perspective.

In *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (1995), Robert Booth Fowler traced the extent to which ecological concerns permeated Protestant theology in the twenty years following the first Earth Day in 1970. Fowler focused specifically on the environmental theology of Protestant academics and the activism and advocacy efforts of Protestant institutions. Like Kearns, Fowler was concerned uniquely with the environmental engagement of non-denominational Christian special interest groups. He largely ignored the environmental advocacy and activism of denominations.[67]

[67] Fowler, 175-176.

Fowler highlighted the influence of Lynn White on shaping much of the environmental discussion among Protestants from 1970 onward. He also emphasized that Christian environmentalism, much like secular environmentalism, often takes a pessimistic tone "endlessly proclaim[ing] that the environment is in terrible crisis." Fowler contended that Christian environmentalism rarely gives way to despair and instead commonly embraces hope—hope that Christians can solve environmental woes.[68] He maintained that there exists a "considerable consensus on the necessity of action by Christian people to address the environment."[69] What this public action specifically should look like in the view of Christians is a vitally important question left unanswered by Fowler.

Michael Moody, on the other hand, did not ignore denominations in his chapter, "Caring for Creation: Environmental Advocacy by Mainline Protestant Organizations," in *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism* (2002). Moody's chapter briefly described the environmental advocacy and activism of the six major mainline Protestant denominations as well as that of the National Council of Churches, the leading ecumenical organization of Christian denominations in the United States. Like Fowler, Moody observed that mainline Protestant environmentalists often sound much like secular environmentalists. However, according to Moody, mainline Protestant environmentalists "have also sought to offer an explicitly religious voice on environmental problems."[70] Moody posited that mainline

---

[68] Ibid., 20-21.

[69] Ibid., 168.

[70] Moody, 238.

Protestant environmental advocacy has attempted to "frame environmental issues in a religious way" by utilizing the language of "God's creation" rather than references to the "earth." He pointed out that mainline advocates do not avoid using a Bible-based vocabulary in secular political arenas. Instead, mainline Protestant advocates found biblical appeals to be more persuasive and a more effective public policy approach.[71]

Moody showed how mainline Protestant denominations have worked to connect ecological concerns with other traditional concerns of social justice and human health. The goal of these efforts is eco-justice, a Christian ethic that Laurel Kearns aptly defined and described in her aforementioned dissertation. Moody concluded that a review and analysis of the environmental advocacy of mainline Protestant denominations revealed their influence in the political arena in public policy discussions and debates. Mainline denominations have been "quietly influential" in the national political arena, according to Moody.[72]

The most recent in-depth treatment of the history of Christian environmentalism is Kenneth David Larsen's dissertation titled "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals Confront Environmentalism, 1967-2000," supervised by noted church historian Martin Marty. Like James Ball's dissertation, Larsen's work focused exclusively on American evangelicalism. Similar to the earlier writings of Ball and Kearns, Larsen examined the environmentalism of evangelical Protestant elites and evangelical Protestant special purpose groups. Environmental advocacy and activism by denominations were largely ignored. Like several of his predecessors, Larsen

---

[71] Ibid., 259-260.

[72] Ibid., 260-261.

emphasized the defensive reaction of evangelical Protestants to Lynn White's charges.[73] However, Larsen claimed that evangelical Protestants took up environmental issues "as much by their concern about the harmful effects of pollution as they were by a desire to refute White."[74] Additionally, Larsen highlighted the backlash within evangelicalism sparked by the rise of evangelical environmentalism in the 1990s. Larsen pointed to individuals such as Calvin Beisner and organizations like the Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship who adopted the language of "environmentalism" and "stewardship" but denied most of the central tenets and basic assumptions of mainstream Christian environmentalism and the larger environmental movement.[75]

The remaining two sections of this chapter introduce the environmentalisms of Southern Baptists and American Baptists and offer a review of relevant literature pertaining to the social involvement of these Baptists. An introduction and literature review will serve to provide the relevant historical background and academic framework for a study of the environmental attitudes, advocacy and activism of Southern Baptists and American Baptists. As these sections reveal, both Baptist groups have a lengthy history of social and political engagement deserving of further, more detailed scholarly critique and consideration.

---

[73] Larsen, 72.

[74] Ibid., 74. Larsen offered a needed correction to the popular Christian environmentalism narrative that overemphasized the role of Lynn White. In the case of Baptists, as this dissertation notes later, Larsen's correction is incomplete and deserving of additional analysis. Additionally, Larsen was incorrect to suggest that the only book length evangelical response to environmentalism in the 1970s was put forward by Francis Schaeffer in 1970. Leading evangelical publisher William Eerdmans published *The Church and the Ecological Crisis* by Southern Baptist ethicist Henlee Barnette in 1972. Barnette's book was twice the length of Schaeffer's book.

[75] Ibid., 333-334. These assumptions were mentioned earlier. For example, these evangelicals have promoted a free-market ideology opposed to environmental regulation while championing increased consumption, more development and unrestricted population growth.

*Baptist Environmentalisms: A Brief Introduction*

One hundred and seventy-five years after Roger Williams helped form the first Baptist church in America (1639), the first national organization of Baptists in the United States was formed with the Triennial Convention of 1814.[76] This organization united Baptists around the cause of foreign missions and evangelism. Several decades later in 1845, a majority of Baptists located in the South withdrew from the Triennial Convention and formed the Southern Baptist Convention. This split was over the issue of the right to appoint slaveholders as missionaries.[77] Baptists in the North continued to work together through various missions societies. For purposes of better coordination, these Baptists formed the Northern Baptist Convention in 1907. No longer content with being regionally identified, the Northern Baptist Convention became the American Baptist Convention in 1950 and renamed itself American Baptist Churches USA in 1972.[78]

Southern Baptists and American Baptists have a long, rich and diverse history. Evangelism has been at the forefront of Southern Baptist and American Baptist life since the days of the Triennial Convention. However, traditional evangelism, popularly referred to as "soul-winning," has not been the exclusive focus of these Baptists bound by a common heritage. Their history is replete with examples of political involvement and social action on a plethora of issues. Not surprisingly then, Southern Baptists and American Baptists have both addressed environmental issues.

---

[76] C. Douglas Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 90-92.

[77] Weaver, 110-112.

[78] Ibid., 120-122, 180-182. See also H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 563-564.

*Southern Baptists*

During the second wave of American environmental history, which witnessed the emergence of the modern environmental movement, Southern Baptists were primarily concerned with the twin ecological issues of pollution and population. Pollution was a special interest of Southern Baptists located in states with large industrialized cities. For example, Southern Baptists in Texas lobbied on behalf of strict government regulations to combat pollution throughout the late 1960s and into the early 1970s.[79]

Overpopulation was another environmental issue on the minds of Southern Baptists during this period. A year prior to Paul Ehrlich's widely-read *The Population Bomb* (1968), the Southern Baptist Convention passed a resolution warning that the rapid growth of the global population could result in mass starvation.[80] Consequently, Southern Baptist leaders, agencies and entities at both the national and state levels heavily emphasized "planned parenthood" and "family planning." This emphasis on limiting population growth and "planned parenthood" led to heated debates about the legal status and morality of abortion and contraceptives.

Southern Baptists began to respond in the late 1960s to the ecological crisis with appeals to the "biblical concept of stewardship" especially in the months leading up to the first-ever Earth Day celebration in 1970. Books, pamphlets and other educational resources were published to draw attention to environmentalism and promote the stewardship of God's creation. At the 1970 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist

---

[79] Christian Life Commission,"1967 Report of the Christian Life Commission," in *Annual of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (Dallas, TX: BGCT, 1967), 16-19. See also Christian Life Commission, "1970 Report of the Christian Life Commission," in *Annual of the Baptist General Convention of Texas* (Dallas, TX: BGCT, 1970), 93-95.

[80] "Resolution On Population Explosion (June 1967)," Southern Baptist Convention, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=799 (accessed July 6, 2011).

Convention, a resolution was passed urging "Christians everywhere to practice stewardship of the environment and to work with government, industry, and others to correct the ravaging of the earth."[81] Southern Baptist state conventions also issued similar introspective resolutions promoting environmental stewardship and calling for government action. For instance, Southern Baptists urged legislators to pass an equitable national energy policy in response to the Arab Oil Embargo of 1973 that helped usher in a serious energy crisis and period of economic unrest.[82]

The 1980s were a decade of turmoil and perpetual conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention sparked by cultural changes in American society.[83] During this tumultuous time, Southern Baptist conservatives gained control of the denomination and espoused conservative positions on a host of social issues such as abortion and family planning services. Political scientist Oran Smith chronicled this transition or "conservative resurgence" in his book aptly titled *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism*.[84] As the denomination was moving in a decidedly more theologically and politically conservative direction, an anti-environmentalism began to emerge within the Southern Baptist Convention. This hostility to the environmental movement was consistent with the conservative backlash to environmentalism that has characterized the third wave of American environmental history. As Mark Dowie explained, this third wave began with

---

[81] "Resolution On the Environment (June 1970)," Southern Baptist Convention, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=452 (accessed July 6, 2011).

[82] "Resolution On Energy and Natural Resources (June 1977)," Southern Baptist Convention, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=483 (accessed July 6, 2011).

[83] These cultural changes that served as the background and impetus for the denomination's conflict in the 1980s is detailed at length in chapter six.

[84] Oran Smith, *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism* (New York, N: New York University Press, 1997).

Ronald Reagan's election victory over President Jimmy Carter in 1980. Like President Reagan, Southern Baptist conservatives were especially antagonistic to environmentalism. Conservatives began to steer the SBC in a different direction on environmental issues in 1983 with a resolution urging corporations to "impose upon themselves" standards to protect and preserve nature. Previous resolutions had offered unwavering support for government regulations.[85] In 1991, Richard Land, director of the SBC's Christian Life Commission, convened a roundtable seminar on environmental stewardship. This event, however, focused exclusively on the individual's stewardship responsibilities and rejected government regulatory solutions.[86]

Throughout the 1990s, conservative leaders continued to depict environmentalists as pagan nature-worshippers. Richard Land and the CLC (renamed the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission) lobbied against environmental regulations and supported deregulation efforts on Capitol Hill. As environmental issues such as global warming gained popularity among evangelical Protestants, the SBC launched an attack on Christian environmentalists. In 2006, the SBC passed a resolution warning that environmentalism was "threatening to become a wedge issue to divide the evangelical community and further distract its members from the priority of the Great Commission." This strongly-worded resolution made the newsworthy declaration that "the scientific community is divided on the effects of mankind's impact on the environment."[87] The

---

[85] "Resolution On Care of our Environment (June 1983)," Southern Baptist Convention, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=455 (accessed July 6, 2011).

[86] *The Earth is the Lord's: Christians and the Environment*, edited by Richard Land and Louis Moore (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992). Land's book was a product of the aforementioned Christian Life Commission seminar convened.

[87] "Resolution On Environmentalism and Evangelicals (June 2006)," Southern Baptist Convention, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1159 (accessed July 6, 2011).

succeeding year the SBC again passed a resolution expressing global warming skepticism. This resolution alleged that government regulations on carbon dioxide would lead to "major economic hardships worldwide."[88] These statements resulted in a SBC-sponsored advertisement campaign to downplay concerns about global warming among Southern Baptists and other Christians.[89]

*American Baptists*

American Baptists were at the forefront of efforts by mainline Protestant denominations to bring attention and awareness to ecological crises and to articulate an environmental theology. Following the inaugural Earth Day in 1970, the Board of National Ministries of the then American Baptist Convention led a strategic plan to develop denomination-wide support and commitment to eco-justice. American Baptist leaders also participated in the International Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972. Through their involvement in the National Council of Churches, American Baptists sought to educate Christians about a vast array of environmental issues. The culmination of these endeavors was the founding of the Eco-Justice Working Group in 1983. American Baptist Churches USA has remained an active participant in this ecumenical environmental effort.[90]

The individual most responsible for galvanizing American Baptist environmental engagement was Jitsuo Morikawa. As Director of Evangelism for the American Baptist

---

[88] "Resolution On Global Warming (June 2007)," Southern Baptist Convention, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1171 (accessed July 6, 2011).

[89] Tom Strode, "'We Get It!' environmental campaign launches with goal to be biblical, factual," *Baptist Press*, May 16, 2008, http://www.sbcbaptistpress.org/bpnews.asp?id=28076 (accessed July 6, 2011).

[90] Moody, 239-240.

Convention in the late 1960s, Morikawa redefined "evangelism" for the denomination. Morikawa promoted a "holistic evangelism" which understood salvation in cosmic terms meaning that Christ, through his death and resurrection, set loose redemptive powers that would save not only individuals but the entire world including political and economic structures.[91] With this neo-Social Gospel definition of evangelism, Morikawa helped craft a new vision for American Baptists called Evangelistic Life Style. Central to this vision of Evangelistic Life Style were the twin issues of ecology and justice. Consequently, the social ethic of American Baptists became grounded in the concept of eco-justice.[92] Eco-justice, a term coined by American Baptist leaders, would come to serve as the cornerstone of mainline Protestant environmental theology and activism.[93]

Subsequent to the formation of a task force on ecology and justice and a three-year denominational emphasis on Evangelistic Life Style, American Baptists began to draft resolutions and policy statements on pressing environmental issues. Over the next twenty years, American Baptists would adopt nearly two-dozen such statements. Utilizing the language of eco-justice, American Baptists called on Christians to exercise responsible use of natural resources during the energy crises of 1973 and 1979. Throughout the 1980s, American Baptists addressed the dangers associated with the

---

[91] Jitsuo Morikawa, quoted in *Footprints: One Man's Pilgrimage, A Biography of Jitsuo Morikawa* (Oakland, CA: The Jitsuo Morikawa Memorial, 1990), 89.

[92] Jitsuo Morikawa, "An Evangelistic Life Style in an Unjust Universe," *Foundations* 18, no. 3 (July-September 1975): 275-276. See also Jitsuo Morikawa, "Theological Meaning of Ecojustice Through Institutional Change," *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (1974): 100-101.

[93] Moody, 239-240.

disposal of hazardous and radioactive wastes. This led American Baptists to confront the issue of environmental racism and support the Environmental Justice Movement.[94]

In addition to passing resolutions and policy statements, American Baptists expressed a commitment to eco-justice through education advocacy. American Baptists published numerous environmental-themed books for popular audiences, journal articles for academics and magazine articles and other literature for use in local congregations. Environmental issues were also addressed in the political arena through involvement in the National Council of Churches' Eco-Justice Working Group. Much like other mainline Protestant denominations, the political efforts of American Baptists were heightened during the third wave of American environmental history. These more intense efforts were due to the widespread anti-environmentalism that characterized this third wave or era. Since the mid-1990s, American Baptists have been extremely active in bringing awareness to the challenges posed by international environmental concerns, specifically global warming.[95]

---

[94] For a complete listing of American Baptist policy statements and resolutions see "Policy Statements and Resolutions," American Baptist Churches USA, http://www.abcusa.org/Resources/ABCResources/PolicyStatementsResolutions/tabid/199/Default.aspx (July 6, 2011). See also *Adopted resolutions of the American Baptist Convention 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA: ABC-USA, 1996).

[95] Moody, 237-264. This chapter which overviews the environmental advocacy of mainline Protestant denominations is one of the few publications to mention the environmental engagement of American Baptists.

*Southern Baptists*

Over the last forty years, a growing field of scholarship has emerged that deals with the political involvement and social action of Southern Baptists. These scholars have all agreed that the history of Southern Baptists is inextricably tied to southern history and southern culture. Rufus Spain, in his pioneering 1967 study *At Ease in Zion: A Social History of Southern Baptists, 1865-1900*, explored the social attitudes of Southern Baptists during the last half of the nineteenth-century. With a history of being suspicious of new and innovative religious activities, Spain stressed that Southern Baptists were naturally leery of the northern Social Gospel Movement which promoted radical, sweeping social change through political involvement. Spain argued that Southern Baptists did develop a degree of social awareness "[modifying] their denominational program to accommodate in many practical ways the new emphasis on social religion."[96] Spain found that Southern Baptists, during this period, had "supported and perpetuated standards in society at large."[97]

Five years later, John Lee Eighmy attempted to further substantiate Spain's thesis in *Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists* (1972). Eighmy declared that Southern Baptists have tended to reflected the values held by southern society in the first-half of the twentieth-century. Simply put, according to Eighmy, Southern Baptists have often found themselves in cultural captivity. Eighmy

[96] Rufus Spain, *At Ease in Zion: A Social History of Southern Baptists, 1875-1900* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 212.

[97] Ibid., 210-211.

demonstrated that as the South became more industrialized, Southern Baptists began to feel that their traditional values and lifestyle were under attack. As a result, Southern Baptists became more involved in the political arena.[98] Eighmy also uncovered numerous socially progressive Southern Baptists influenced by the Social Gospel Movement who had refused to be in "cultural captivity."[99] This revelation allowed Eighmy to correct the popular misinterpretation put forth by noted historian C. Vann Woodward in his widely-read *Origins of the New South* (1951). Woodward asserted that the Social Gospel Movement had not influenced the South.[100]

In *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity, 1900-1980* (1986), John Storey followed the lead of his mentor Rufus Spain and John Lee Eighmy in rejecting C. Van Woodward's thesis that Southern Baptists lacked a social ethic for political engagement. However, Storey disputed Eighmy's contention that the political attitudes of socially progressive Southern Baptists were developed largely in response to the influence of the northern Social Gospel Movement. Storey acknowledged that the writings of social gospel thinkers such as Walter Rauschenbusch, Washington Gladden and Josiah Strong significantly influenced J. M. Dawson, T. B. Maston and other

---

[98] John Lee Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1972), 61-62.

[99] Ibid., 40.

[100] C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 450. Eighmy maintained that Southern Baptists were introduced to the social gospel ideology through their political involvement in support of Prohibition. He stressed that despite barriers to cooperative church-led social action (individualism, theological conservatism, decentralized authority), the Social Gospel Movement made serious inroads into the life and thought of some Southern Baptists by the end of the Progressive Era (1900-1920). Southern Baptists through their seminaries and denominational agencies began to give greater attention to pressing social concerns such as war, race relations and the economy. While the influence of the Social Gospel Movement did not send Southern Baptists down the path of theological liberalism, it did divide Southern Baptists regarding the proper role and responsibility of the church to society, according to Eighmy.

socially-conscious Texas Baptists. Storey insisted that the influence of the Social Gospel Movement had very little to do with Southern Baptist support of orphanages, hospitals, educational institutions and Prohibition. He held that Southern Baptist concern for these specific aspects of society's well-being was independent of and in many cases pre-dated the Social Gospel Movement.[101]

Storey claimed that Eighmy's use of the term *social gospel* to discuss Southern Baptists is inappropriate because it connoted a social engagement grounded in a theologically liberal outlook. Unlike the leaders of the Social Gospel Movement, Texas Baptists were wedded to a conservative theology that emphasized original sin, the transcendence of God and was extremely skeptical of human progress and reason. Furthermore, Social Gospel activists strove to reform institutions while Southern Baptists viewed individual salvation as the ultimate cure for all societal problems. Thus, Storey reasoned that the term *social Christianity* more accurately described the political engagement of socially-progressive Southern Baptists.[102]

Resisting the "cultural captivity" motif, Edward Queen in *In the South the Baptists are the Center of Gravity: Southern Baptists and Social Change, 1930-1980* (1991) argued that the Southern Baptist Convention has not simply mirrored the attitudes

---

[101] John Storey, *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity, 1900-1980* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 1-14

[102] Ibid. Sharing John Storey's critiques of Rufus Spain and John Eighmy, Keith Harper built upon Storey's argument in *The Quality of Mercy: Southern Baptists and Social Christianity, 1890-1920* (1996). Harper posited that Southern Baptists displayed a strong commitment to social Christianity between 1890 and 1920. According to Harper, this social Christianity represented a synthesis of evangelical outreach with social concern. Because Southern Baptists viewed their primary obligation as evangelism ("soul-winning"), they were not proponents of institutional reform. Instead, Harper explained, Southern Baptists sought to improve society by providing it with better (converted) people. Through this approach, Southern Baptist leaders were able to mobilize those in the pews to support the creation of hospitals, orphanages and schools. See Keith Harper, *The Quality of Mercy: Southern Baptists and social Christianity, 1890-1920* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1996).

of white Southerners but has instead done much to create the "moral ethos of the South" and the "Southern value system." Queen suggested that it would be difficult to find a religion that has not been used to affirm the cultural life of its members and particular society. He stated that what most critics have really meant when they employed the "cultural captivity" motif is that Southern Baptists have not responded to social change in the ways they wish it had.[103]

Oran Smith's *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism* (1997) essentially picked up where Queen's study left off: 1980. A political scientist, Smith saw a connection between the increasingly conservative nature of the new Southern Baptist leadership and the increasingly Republican South during the 1980s. In fact, Smith concluded that not only are the Republican Party and the Southern Baptist Convention in firm alliance, but they are "sometimes indistinguishable from each other."[104] Based largely on the presence of Southern Baptists in elected office at the state and national levels during the 1980s and 1990s, Smith found that Southern Baptists still serve as a "barometer of Southern culture and politics" with their own brand of conservatism. He parted ways with Eighmy's popular "cultural captivity" thesis and sided more closely with Edward Queen in acknowledging the significant role that Southern Baptists have played in shaping their culture.[105]

---

[103] Edward L. Queen, *In the South the Baptists are the center of gravity: Southern Baptists and social change, 1930-1980* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Press, 1991), 4-5.

[104] Smith, 2.

[105] Ibid., 22. Mark Newman also modified John Lee Eighmy's "cultural captivity" thesis in *Getting Right with God: Southern Baptists and Desegregation, 1945-1995* (2001). The argument that Southern Baptists have been the captives of a generally racist southern culture is only partly true, according to Newman. Like Edward Queen, Newman saw this history as more complicated. While being influenced by southern culture, Southern Baptists also played a major role in shaping southern culture. See Mark

Like John Eighmy and John Storey, David Stricklin accented the role of social progressives in Southern Baptist life in *A Genealogy of Dissent: Southern Baptists in the Twentieth Century* (1999). Stricklin revealed and analyzed the long-existing progressive wing of the Southern Baptist Convention. He showed that a "genealogy of dissent," a small faction of Southern Baptist individuals, had rebuffed their culture's values, refusing to be, as Rufus Spain once wrote, "at ease in Zion."[106] Stricklin, like Queen, observed that Southern Baptists had "contributed greatly to the ways that [southern] society was structured, the ways it operated, and the ways people understood it. They had done much to create that society, and they liked it the way it was."[107]

In *Uneasy in Babylon: Southern Baptist Conservatives and American Culture* (2001), Barry Hankins maintained that factors such as burgeoning pluralism had brought instability to southern culture following World War II. As the south ceased to be Zion and came to resemble the rest of the nation, Southern Baptists, feeling as if they were losing control over culture, mobilized to seize control of the largest Protestant denomination. Hankins documented how, in response to the perceived cultural crisis plaguing the south, Southern Baptist conservatives formed a coalition of intellectuals, activists and preachers to defend themselves against an American culture perceived to be hostile to conservative religion, especially evangelicalism.[108]

---

Newman, *Getting right with God: Southern Baptists and desegregation, 1945-1995* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2001).

[106] David Stricklin, *A Genealogy of Dissent: Southern Baptist Protest in the Twentieth Century* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 19-22.

[107] Ibid., 11.

[108] This point is similar to one made by historian Bill Leonard in *God's Last & Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention* (1990). Leonard argued that pluralism and the influx of non-southerners threatened southern culture southern culture resulting in vulnerable denominational

*American Baptists*

While over a dozen books and countless articles have been written that deal with the political involvement and social outlook of Southern Baptists, little attention has been given to the post-World War II social attitudes, advocacy and activism of American Baptists. Renowned historian Samuel Hill offered a brief profile of American Baptists which focused on then recent denominational demographic statistics in *Baptists North and South* (1964).[109] Several years later, Norman Maring penned a short book titled *American Baptists: Whence and Whither* (1968) that briefly mentioned the social views of American Baptists.[110] Baptist sociologist Tony Campolo authored *A Denomination Looks at Itself* (1970) which presented a statistical analysis of research related to the demographics of the American Baptist denomination.[111] Two decades later, Rodney Stark and Roger Finke devoted several pages to American Baptists in *The Churching of America* (1992).[112] Similar to Campolo, Stark and Finke were ultimately concerned with the membership statistics of American Baptists. Both books essentially ignored the strong social impulse of the denomination.

---

coalitions. These coalitions had previously kept the denomination intact. However, the coalitions were now unable to resist the advances of ideologues due to this loss of cultural stability. Thus, Leonard concluded, these transitions and changes in southern culture significantly contributed to the fragmentation of the SBC and the rise of the conservative movement that eventually seized control of the denomination.

This project will build upon the aforementioned field of scholarship especially the contributions of Stricklin and Hankins. While Stricklin focused largely on war, race and gender issues, Hankins' emphasized abortion, sexuality and church-state relations. Neither historian, however, covered Southern Baptist involvement in environmental issues.

[109] Samuel S. Hill, *Baptists North and South* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1964), 36-47.

[110] Norman H. Maring, *American Baptists Whence and Whither* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1968), 75-79.

[111] Anthony Campolo, *A Denomination Looks at Itself* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1971).

[112] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press), 170-173.

Historian William Brackney has published extensively on Baptists from the north. In his seminal work *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought*, Brackney devoted multiple chapters to influential American Baptists in the realm of theological education.[113] Leon McBeth gave nearly fifty pages to American Baptists in his book *The Baptist Heritage*. These pages concentrated on American Baptist trends in theology and the organizational development and restructuring of the denomination.[114] Several other works that mention American Baptists were concerned almost solely with organizational developments and denominational schisms. These include William Brackney's *The Baptists* (1994), Howard Stewart's *American Baptists and the Church* (1997) and James Dick's "American Baptist Polity and Practice: Our Historical Development and Some Inadequacies in our Present Legislative Structure."[115]

Bill Leonard dedicated several pages to the "public morality" of American Baptists in both *Baptist Ways* (2003) and *Baptists in America* (2005). Leonard's *Baptists in America* highlighted American Baptist social views toward women and homosexuality.[116] Doug Weaver in *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story* (2008), gave an entire chapter to the social and political involvement of American

---

[113] William Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 202-384.

[114] McBeth, 563-608.

[115] William Brackney, *The Baptists* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 83-84. Howard R. Stewart, *American Baptists and the Church* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997), 85-93. James Dick, "American Baptist Polity and Practice: Our Historical Development and Some Inadequacies in our Present Legislative Structure," *American Baptist Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1982): 4-15.

[116] Bill Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2005), 93-97, 216-217, 241-242. Bill Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 2003), 409-411.

Baptists since the 1950s. Weaver underscored American Baptist efforts on behalf of ecumenism, women's leadership and civil rights.[117]

Pam Durso and Keith Durso in *The Story of Baptists in the United States* (2006) provided a chapter overview of American Baptist history. This overview, which synthesized previous scholarship, surveyed early key American Baptist leaders such as Helen Montgomery and Harry Emerson Fosdick as well as intellectual influences such as Walter Rauschenbusch. As a synthesis of scholarship on American Baptist history, it is no surprise that the Dursos' chapter featured little mention of the social attitudes and political involvement of American Baptists.[118] As this brief literature review of American Baptist historical scholarship has revealed that historians have failed in the way of offering a cultural or social-political analysis of post-World War II American Baptists.

### *Conclusion*

Scholars of Southern Baptist history should be careful not to uncritically accept John Lee Eighmy's "cultural captivity" thesis. Clearly, as Edward Queen and others have convincingly argued, Southern Baptists have not simply reflected the social or political perspective of white southern culture. Instead, Southern Baptists have played an instrumental role in shaping that culture. This role has not ended. As Oran Smith demonstrated in *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism*, Southern Baptists—despite much controversy and changes within the denomination—have continued to shape their conservative culture, in firm alliance with the Republican Party and serving as a "barometer of Southern culture and politics."

---

[117] Weaver, *The Baptist Story*, 180-185.

[118] Pamela R. Durso and Keith E. Durso, *The Story of Baptists in the United States* (Brentwood, TN: Baptist History & Heritage Society, 2006), 163-165.

Although a much smaller denomination, American Baptist Churches USA also has clearly played an important culture-shaping role. As noted previously, very little has been written on the post-World War II social outlook and political involvement of American Baptists. However, as Robert Wuthnow and contributors noted in *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*, American Baptists—like other mainline Protestant denominations—have had a quiet but important influence on American society and politics in recent decades. American Baptists have made addressing social issues a central mission of their denomination. The remaining chapters of this dissertation explore and analyze the quiet and not-so-quiet responses of American Baptists and Southern Baptists to critical environmental issues in United States history. Chapters three and four examine and compare the emerging environmentalisms of these two related denominations during the formative years of the modern environmental movement and the second wave of American environmental history.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Southern Baptists and the Environment (1965-1972)

### *Introduction*

This third chapter analyzes and details the early environmentalism of Southern Baptists during the late 1960s and early 1970s. As mentioned in chapter two, the emergence of a Southern Baptist environmentalism coincided with the formative years of the modern environmental movement and the critical second wave of American environmental history. This analysis of the development of environmental attitudes, actions and approaches of Southern Baptists begins with a brief introduction to the population problem or "population explosion" in American politics and society during this period. The chapter continues with a comprehensive look at how Southern Baptists confronted the population issue and an in-depth examination of Southern Baptist engagement with another pressing environmental problem: pollution.

After chronicling Southern Baptist engagement with the twin environmental concerns of population and pollution, the environmental advocacy and activism of Southern Baptist denominational agencies are considered. This section focuses on the work of the two agencies entrusted with the responsibility of tackling important social and political questions: the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. An additional section describes and discusses the environmental theology and ethics of Southern Baptist academics and environmentalists Henlee Barnette and Eric Rust. A final section brings this third chapter to its conclusion with a careful analysis of

Southern Baptist environmental engagement with regard to the four factors detailed in the first chapter that shaped and defined the environmentalism of Southern Baptists during this era. These include attitudes toward science and technology, the regulatory role of government, political engagement approaches, and ethics.

### *Population in American Politics and Society*

Between 1900 and 1960, the population of the world nearly doubled. An estimated 1.6 billion people occupied the Earth in 1900. Sixty years later, the world's population had climbed to three billion. Consequently, a growing number of natural scientists and social scientists in the post-World War II era began to suggest that the planet might not be able to sustain this rapid population growth.[1] Fifteen years prior to the debut of Rachel Carson's groundbreaking bestseller *Silent Spring* (1962) on the dangers of pesticides and other pollutants, two bestselling books—Fairfield Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet* and William Vogt's *Road to Survival*—put forward an early environmentalist message. This message stressed the limits of population growth and helped make population a national issue.[2]

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, new organizations were formed to lobby the government and raise awareness about population growth. Groups such as the Population Council, Planned Parenthood, Population Crisis Committee, Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation were extremely active in pressuring elected officials to address the

---

[1] Derek S. Hoff, "'Kick that Population Commission in the Ass': The Nixon Administration, the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future and the Defusing of the Population Bomb," *Journal of Policy History* 22, no. 1 (2010): 23.

[2] Thomas Robertson, "The Population Bomb: Population Growth, Globalization, and American Environmentalism, 1945-1980," (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005), 5.

subject of population.[3] While President Dwight Eisenhower and President John Kennedy dodged this inevitably controversial political issue, President Lyndon Johnson carefully confronted the population issue. During his 1967 State of the Union address, Johnson warned that "next to the pursuit of peace, the really great challenge of the human family is the race between food supply and population." Johnson funded family planning programs through existing federal agencies and signed into law legislation that mandated specific federal expenditures for family planning. The purpose of these family planning initiatives was to slow down the rate of population growth in the United States and abroad.[4]

Population became a bipartisan issue during the late 1960s.[5] Unease over population growth reached a new level in 1968 with the publication of Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*. This book from the outspoken Stanford University biologist was an immediate bestseller, selling over one million copies in just two years. Ehrlich employed apocalyptic rhetoric and depicted doomsday scenarios to convince his readers that millions of people across the world would starve to death unless drastic population

---

[3] Donald Critchlow, "Birth Control, Population Control, and Family Planning: An Overview," in *The Politics of Abortion and Birth Control in Historical Perspective*, ed. Donald T. Critchlow (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 8-9.

[4] Donald T. Critchlow, *Intended Consequences: Birth Control, Abortion and the Federal Government in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 50.

[5] Robertson, 86. Republicans and Democrats alike pushed for increased funding of family population planning measures. Congress held a series of hearings on the relationship between population and economic development from 1965 to 1968. As his Democratic predecessor had done, President Richard Nixon, a Republican, continued the emphasis on family planning. In a special message to Congress in 1969, Nixon described population growth as "one of the most serious challenges to human destiny in the last third of this century." One scholar noted that population concern formed the centerpiece of Nixon's aggressive environmental agenda. See Robertson, 5.

control measures were immediately implemented.[6] Echoing Fairfield Osborn and William Vogt, Ehrlich contended the presence of too many people was the ultimate cause of contemporary environmental problems. For early environmentalists like Ehrlich and many Earth Day activists, the population issue was foundational to their environmentalism.[7]

Many Americans took seriously Ehrlich's alarmist message and population control advocacy organizations such as Zero Population Growth began to emerge across the nation and gain a large grassroots following. The influence of Ehrlich was on display in a *New York Times* editorial in July 1968 which asserted that the "population explosion" threatened "to plunge the world into hopeless poverty and chaos." Over 300,000 flyers on Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* were distributed to demonstrators during the inaugural Earth Day where population and pollution were the two most emphasized environmental issues. The public quickly came to view the "population explosion" as a pressing problem of grave significance thanks to the efforts of environmentalists like Paul Ehrlich, Earth Day organizers, government officials and especially the media. A poll in 1970 confirmed the success of the media and environmental groups, finding that 70 percent of Americans believed that the United States was overpopulated and 88 percent trusted that the world overall was overpopulated.[8]

---

[6] Patrick Alitt, "American Catholics and the Environment, 1960-1995," *The Catholic Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (April 1998): 263-280. See also J. Brooks Flippen, *Nixon and the Environment* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico, 2000), 37-38.

[7] Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (Cutchogue, NY: Buccaneer Books, 1997), 44.

[8] Robertson, 3-4.

*Southern Baptists and Population*

In 1961, ethicist Henlee Barnette was one of the first Southern Baptists to publicly express concern about the threat of global overpopulation.[9] However, the population issue did not receive regular attention from Southern Baptists until the mid-1960s. Early references to population were routinely couched in statements of concern for an individual's spiritual welfare. Traditional evangelism or "soul-winning" remained the primary and often exclusive consideration of most Southern Baptists. The fate of the planet and the future of humanity was a secondary worry. Harold Sanders, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, lamented in a 1965 editorial that Southern Baptist evangelistic efforts were not "keeping pace, let alone making significant headway" in light of the "population explosion" in the United States and around the world.[10] Later in 1965, Kentucky pastor Earl Hohman referred to the global population explosion as a "soul explosion" that required Southern Baptists to devote more resources to evangelism.[11]

Beginning in 1967, Southern Baptists began to speak about the "population explosion" in a way that acknowledged its social and environmental implications. The subject of population was front-and-center at the 1967 annual meeting of the Southern

---

[9] Henlee H. Barnette, *Introducing Christian Ethics* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1961), 158. Barnette was especially controversial in the 1960s due to his civil rights activism.

[10] Harold G. Sanders, "Yours and His," *Western Recorder*, January 7, 1965, 8. The Kentucky Baptist Convention is one of the many state conventions that affiliate with the Southern Baptist Convention.

[11] Earl Hohman, "One Way Out," *Western Recorder*, November 8, 1965, 5, 9. Southern Baptist ethicist Willis Bennett argued in a 1966 journal article that the "population explosion" could be seen in America's increasingly crowded cities. Bennett called on denominations to carefully plan for an expansion of facilities, services and churches in order to meet the demands caused by the population explosion. See G. Willis Bennett, "The City's Challenge to the Church," *Review and Expositor* 63, no. 3 (Summer 1966): 249-261.

Baptist Convention held in Miami, Florida. At the pastor's conference, George Schweitzer, a scientist at the University of Tennessee, blasted his fellow Southern Baptists for failing to address the population issue. He urged the crowd of 10,000 pastors to educate themselves and to take action. Schweitzer declared, "We have a responsibility to plan for our planet's future, to look ahead and not just for our children but for the children of the world." The Southern Baptist scientist stressed that while modern science and technology helped cause the population crisis, science and technology offered the best hope for a solution.[12]

Southern Baptists welcomed Schweitzer's message as the SBC passed a resolution just a few days later titled "On Population Explosion." This resolution highlighted the benefits of medical science and suggested the dire possibility of mass starvation due to global overpopulation. "On Population Explosion" was a historic resolution as it put the SBC—a denomination known for its conservative morality—on record approving scientific advancements in reproductive technology and in favor of a broad array of birth control methods.[13]

Despite George Schweitzer's call for Southern Baptists to take action and the population resolution warning of the devastating social consequences of global overpopulation, some Southern Baptists remained wary of wading too deep into

---

[12] Dallas Lee, "News Release," *Baptist Press*, May 27, 1967, 30. All *Baptist Press* citations in this dissertation through 1996 may be found online at the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives website. See Baptist Press Archives, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, http://www.sbhla.org/bp_archive/index.asp (accessed September 30, 2012).

[13] "On Population Explosion," Southern Baptist Convention," June 1967, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=799 (accessed August 14, 2011). The resolution, however, only commended birth control methods for married couples. The Southern Baptist consensus with regard to sex and single adults was reflected in an editorial in *Home Life*, a monthly magazine of the SBC Sunday School Board, published two months after the 1967 annual meeting. This editorial offered "pre-marital chastity" as a step toward solving the population problem. See Editorial, "Procreation and the Explosion," *Home Life*, July 1967, 4.

environmental waters. SBC president Franklin Paschall in his address to the convention highlighted the "population explosion" as an important problem that should concern Southern Baptists. However, he reminded Southern Baptists that social concern must remain secondary to the primary task of evangelism.[14]

Southern Baptists linked the population issue with evangelism in various denominational publications throughout the late 1960s. Converting individuals to Christianity was, more often than not, explicitly announced as the primary motivating factor for addressing the "population explosion." For example, a 1968 editorial in the *Biblical Recorder*, the newspaper of Southern Baptists in North Carolina, opined that hungry individuals do not make good candidates for conversion. Combating overpopulation, a cause of hunger, would ultimately aid the evangelistic efforts of Southern Baptists, according to the editorial.[15] Southern Baptist ethicist William Pinson underscored, in the first detailed analysis of the population problem in a denominational publication, the serious challenge that the growing global population posed to "evangelical missions."[16] Similarly, SBC president W. A. Criswell, regarded as the father of Southern Baptist fundamentalism, warned that the "population explosion" was

---

[14] Roy Jennings, "Roundup for Wednesday," *Baptist Press*, May 30, 1967, 30. Paschall stated, "Government seeks to change man by changing his environment; churches seek to change man by changing his heart."

[15] Editorial, "What Are Baptists Doing About This Critical Problem," *Biblical Recorder*, April 6, 1968, 3.

[16] Pinson noted the challenges faced by the SBC's missions organizations—Foreign Mission Board and Home Mission Board—due to the global population boom.

hindering the evangelism duties of Southern Baptists in regions like Latin America with a rapidly increasing population.[17]

When population was not being tied closely to evangelism, Southern Baptists were focused on the ability of science and technology to provide solutions. In an article in *Review and Expositor*, the academic journal of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ellis Fuller wrote glowingly of the accomplishments of science and technology in controlling disease and lowering the death rate.[18] Meanwhile, ethicist William Pinson offered in *Toward Creative Urban Strategy* (1970) a more tempered assessment, concluding that "technology, coupled with human sin and folly" had contributed to the environmental challenges facing urban areas. Pinson insisted that strict government regulation was needed to ensure that technology was directed toward the good and not the harm of man.[19]

*Home Missions* magazine was one denominational publication that addressed environmental issues, including population, more regularly than any other SBC periodical. Led by progressive editor Walker Knight, *Home Missions* magazine was a monthly publication of the Home Mission Board, the agency responsible for missionary work in the United States. Not surprisingly then, the link between the population and evangelism was not ignored. Evangelism, however, was clearly not the main consideration motivating the environmental engagement of *Home Missions*. Knight used *Home Missions* to challenge the status-quo and provoke discussions about the social

---

[17] "Criswell Praises Southern America Crusade Enthusiasm," *Baptist Press*, September 11, 1968, 30.

[18] Ellis Fuller, "The Challenge of Biology of Traditional Theology," *Review and Expositor* 67, no. 1 (Winter 1970): 31-41.

[19] William M. Pinson, Jr., "Issues and Priorities," in *Toward Creative Urban Strategy*, ed. George A. Torney (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970), 53-54.

implications of environmental problems. At times, *Home Missions* published extremely provocative articles on the population issue. These provocative articles prompted intense responses from *Home Missions* readers.

Knight devoted the magazine's entire August 1967 issue to the "population explosion." Describing the SBC's 1967 population resolution as a "timid step in the direction of the world's number one problem—rampant reproduction," Knight urged Southern Baptists to listen to and learn from other Protestant groups. He suggested that Southern Baptists as individuals and churches advocate on behalf of greater access to birth control and stressed the need for family planning education and services. Knight urged churches to allow Planned Parenthood clinics to use their facilities and lobby elected officials to liberalize laws on voluntary sterilization in public hospitals.[20]

Although Knight's issue on population was well-received by Southern Baptist readers, an article he printed the following summer of 1968 set off a firestorm of controversy. This article from Southern Baptist professor Edgar Chasteen was provocatively titled "Should the government limit births?" Chasteen answered with a loud, emphatic yes. Rejecting voluntary birth control as a possible solution, Chasteen contended: "Only legislation which prohibits more than a given number of children per family, based on the ability of the family to provide for them and on the utility of the child for society, will be effective." He continued:

---

[20] Walker Knight, "Rampant Reproduction," *Home Missions*, August 1967, A4. Knight also included an article profiling a Southern Baptist church that sponsored a Planned Parenthood clinic as one of their local ministries. See Sue Brooks, "To Extinguish the Fuse: Planned Parenthood Clinic," *Home Missions*, August 1967, A13-A15. Another article in this issue of *Home Missions* asserted that unless birth control accompanied any other solution such as increased food production, then the current rapid global population growth "may well make Malthus theory of too many mouths and too little food a worldwide reality." See Harold W. Osborne, "The Fuse is Short: A Commentary on the Population Problem and What It Portends," *Home Missions*, August 1967, A6-A9.

> Just as laws now punish adults for contributing to the delinquency of a minor, so will they soon come to punish them for contributing excessive population growth. It is the duty of the state to protect women against pregnancy as it protects them against job discrimination and smallpox. And for the same reason—the public good. No longer can be tolerated the doctrinaire position that the number of children a woman has is a strictly private decision carrying no social consequences....The time has now come to react to prolific parenthood as we act toward other types of environmental contaminants.[21]

Chasteen rested his argument on the principle that the basic purpose of government is to protect the individual from danger. In this case, the government had a duty to enact a national population policy aimed at a zero rate of growth that would limit family size. Chasteen advocated for a policy that would make all forms of birth control available to every American including contraceptives and legalized abortion. He also put much faith in the ability of scientists to develop technical solutions and medications in order to achieve zero population growth.[22]

Chasteen's depiction of people, specifically children, as environmental contaminants did not sit well with Southern Baptists. Many angry readers penned letters to Knight in response to Chasteen's controversial proposal. One letter described Chasteen's article as "blasphemy...an affront to man whether Christian or not."[23] Another reader called the article "the most pagan I have ever read in an SBC publication...about as Christian as was that of Hitler and his followers."[24] A different but similarly disgusted Southern Baptist layman characterized the article as "sickening and intolerable" and

---

[21] Edgar Chasten, "Should the government limit Births?," *Home Missions*, July 1968, 21-23.

[22] Ibid. The July 1968 issue of *Home Missions* magazine featured a brief profile of Chasteen who was a professor of sociology at Southern Baptist-affiliated William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. Chasteen had co-founded a nationwide organization called ESCAPE (Every Student Concerned About the Population Explosion). See Sue Brooks, "Operation ESCAPE," *Home Missions*, July 1968, 23.

[23] Harold C. Holser, "Letters," *Home Missions*, October 1968, 3.

[24] Cole Brown, "As Christian As Hitler," *Home Missions*, September 1968, 3.

called on "responsible Southern Baptists" to "immediately and unmistakably repudiate this professor" and the "editorial folly" of Knight.[25]

Knight acknowledged the outrage of *Home Missions* readers in the October 1968 issue. He did not apologize though for publishing Chasteen's article. Instead, Knight emphasized that Southern Baptists had been largely apathetic towards the population question and needed to hear Chasteen's radical proposal to start thinking about viable solutions. Noting that Chasteen's proposal completely "ignored individual freedom," Knight applauded rather than repudiated Chasteen for at least offering a solution to the problem. He pointed out that the Pope had also "ignored individual freedom" with his 1968 encyclical opposing artificial birth control but had failed to offer a solution to the "population explosion." Clearly, Knight desired more meaningful environmental engagement from his fellow Southern Baptists.[26]

Despite the outrage and threats of subscription cancellations, Knight allowed Chasteen an opportunity to reply to critics in the December 1968 edition of *Home Missions*. Responding to critics who had characterized his population policy as totalitarian, Chasteen maintained that a policy of compulsory birth control was actually necessary to avoid totalitarianism. In fact, Chasteen contended that a compulsory birth control policy would protect freedom. "Complete freedom is anarchy," declared Chasteen. Population growth, according to Chasteen, restricts and limits freedom: "the more people there are, the less freedom there is."[27]

---

[25] George A. Peters, "Letters," *Home Missions*, September 1968, 3.

[26] Walker Knight, "Churches and Crisis," *Home Missions*, October 1968, 6. Knight offered one short criticism of Chasteen.

[27] Edgar Chasteen, "Big Brother and Birth Control," *Home Missions*, December 1968, 2.

Chasteen continued to promote his radical proposal for a national population policy of birth control outside of Baptist settings. His proposal appeared in the January 1970 issue of *Mademoiselle* magazine and was republished in the 1971 edited volumes *Readings in Human Population Ecology* and *The American Population Debate*.[28] Later in 1971, the major educational publisher Prentice Hall Inc. released a book by the Southern Baptist professor titled *The Case for Compulsory Birth Control*. These later articles and widely-read book were based largely on the arguments that Chasteen had originally presented in his two articles in *Home Missions* magazine. During these years, Chasteen became one of America's leading population activists and served on the national board of Paul Ehrlich's Zero Population Growth.[29]

*Southern Baptists and Pollution*

Southern Baptists were not only worried with the "population explosion." Pollution was also a popular environmental issue among Southern Baptists beginning in the late 1960s. United States Senator Gaylord Nelson, heralded as the "Founder of Earth Day," vividly depicted the pollution problem during this period in his book *Beyond Earth Day: Fulfilling the Promise*:

> It was a time when people could see, smell and taste pollution. The air above major cities such as New York and Los Angeles was orange, Lake Erie was

[28] Edgar Chasteen, "The Case for Compulsory Birth Control," *Mademoiselle*, January 1970. See also Edgar Chasteen, "The Case for Compulsory Birth Control," in *The American Population Debate*, ed. Daniel Callahan (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971), 274-278. Edgar Chasteen, "The Case for Compulsory Birth Control," in *Readings in Human Population Ecology*, ed. Wayne Davis (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1971), 218-221.

[29] Edgar Chasteen, *The Case for Compulsory Birth Control* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Inc., 1971).

> proclaimed dead, and backyard birds were dying from a chemical known as DDT.[30]

Nelson underscored that signs of environmental degradation were on public display including polluted oceans, rivers, lakes, beaches and air. Two notable environmental disasters helped to bring the pollution problem to the nation's attention. In January 1969, an oil tanker spilled off the shore of Santa Barbara, California. The American public was left with images of dying sea birds soaked in oil. At the time, this was the largest oil spill in United States history. Five months later, the oil slick and debris in Ohio's Cuyahoga River caught fire. The image of the polluted river on fire was featured on the front-page of newspapers and the covers of magazines across the United States.[31] These images were burned into the minds of many Americans.

Without a doubt, these national environmental catastrophes inspired Southern Baptists to confront the pollution crisis. Unlike their engagement with the "population explosion," Southern Baptists were, by and large, late to speak out against widespread pollution of the air, land and water. For Senator Nelson, Earth Day 1970 was the product of a seven-year anti-pollution effort. Meanwhile, Earth Day 1970 was the starting point for the SBC's anti-pollution effort. There are, of course, several examples of Southern Baptists whose concern for pollution was on display years prior to the first Earth Day. However, Southern Baptists only began to give sustained attention to the pollution crisis in the aftermath of the Santa Barbara oil spill, Cuyahoga River fire and the inaugural Earth Day.

---

[30] Gaylord Nelson, *Beyond Earth Day: Fulfilling the Promise* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 6.

[31] Ibid.

Denominational publications as well as state convention newspapers highlighted pollution. In an editorial just weeks after Earth Day 1970, Chauncey Daley, editor of the *Western Recorder*, the newspaper of Southern Baptists in Kentucky, applauded students for their environmental involvement and concern. Daley declared, "More power to these young people. Shame on the rest of us if we don't join in their concern." He characterized pollution as a "sin against nature's Creator" because "whatever harms men is contrary to God's will." Similar to how Southern Baptists often linked the population problem to evangelism, Daley related pollution to obscenity and sex. While encouraging his readers to tackle environmental pollution, Daley warned them not to neglect the problem of "moral pollution" and the "filth and immoral litter" found in magazines, movies and on television. More so than perhaps any issue other than gambling and alcohol, Southern Baptists had loudly voiced opposition to depictions of what they deemed sexual immorality in American society.[32]

Other Southern Baptists echoed Daley's view of pollution as sin. Robert Dean of the SBC's Sunday School Board argued in an article titled "Does the Bible Teach Pollution?" that men have exploited nature in the name of "what they thought was the Christian religion." Contrary to the claims of Lynn White who blamed the environmental crisis on western Christianity, Dean insisted that polluters "were guilty of

---

[32] Chauncey Daley, "Two Kinds of Pollution," *Western Recorder*, May 2, 1970, 4. Following the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, the Southern Baptist Convention polled nearly 700 pastors and Sunday School teachers on the question of pollution. The poll asked: "How should a local Southern Baptist church be involved in attempts to solve the problems of air and water pollution?" The overwhelming majority of pastors and Sunday School teachers (81.2% and 76.3% respectively) answered that a local Southern Baptist church should lead individual church members to become involved personally and urge the government to solve the problem of pollution. A small number of pastors and Sunday School teachers (4.4% and 3.6%) reported that a church should preach and teach on the subject of pollution but "refrain from encouraging active involvement." Finally, a minority of pastors and Sunday School teachers (7% and 13.5%) declared that the issue of pollution was "none of the church's business." See Kenneth Hayes, "Baptist Leaders Speak Out on Pollution Problems," *Baptist Press*, December 8, 1970, 10.

misunderstanding and misapplying the teachings of Scripture." Like a number of Southern Baptists before him, Dean interpreted "dominion" in the first chapter of the biblical book of Genesis to mean that man was to be a responsible trustee or steward of God's creation. Lynn White and others were incorrect, in Dean's view, to interpret the dominion command as a license to exploit the earth. This article marked one of the first formal rebuttals to Lynn White by a Southern Baptist.[33]

In addition to emphasizing pollution in denominational publications, Southern Baptists also adopted resolutions on pollution at both the national and state levels. Just two months after Earth Day 1970, Southern Baptists passed a resolution titled "On the Environment," at their annual summer meeting in Denver. The resolution asserted that God has created man who "needs clean air, pure water, and an environment which contributes to his general health" but that man "has created a crisis by polluting the air, poisoning the streams, and ravaging the soil." Consequently, the resolution called on churches to help "remedy this environmental mismanagement" by "practicing and proclaiming a positive awareness that," citing Psalms 23:1, "the earth is the Lord's." Individual Christians were urged to practice environmental stewardship and "work with government and businesses to solve the pollution problem." No specific environmental goals or policy objectives were included in the resolution.[34]

---

[33] Robert J. Dean, "Does the Bible Teach Pollution," *People*, February 1971, 34-36.

[34] Southern Baptist Convention, "On the Environment, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/am Resolution.asp?ID=452 (accessed August 29, 2011). The Radio and Television Commission of the SBC responded to the denomination's 1970 resolution and produced a film on population for use in Southern Baptist churches. This documentary titled "Home" depicted pollution as an evil resulting from sin. It was broadcast nationwide on ABC and internationally in England and Germany and received awards from film festivals in the United States and Europe. See "Pollution is topic of SBC TV program," *Western Recorder*, February 19, 1972, 6. "Home Earns American Film Festival Award," *Baptist Press*, May 30, 1972, 3. "East Germans Broadcast Baptist-Produced Film," *Baptist Press*, December 28, 1973, 2-3. "Two Southern

Southern Baptists in Virginia, Mississippi and Kentucky adopted reports on pollution in the months following Earth Day 1970. The Baptist General Association of Virginia issued a report calling on Virginia Baptists to work together to suggest steps of action for both individuals and churches to achieve a "wholesome environment."[35] The Kentucky Baptist Convention affirmed a report that urged Southern Baptist churches through education programs to develop a course of action to confront the pollution problem. Notably, the Kentucky convention concluded: "Only through government can much be done to regulate and control the principal polluters of our air and water. Adequate legislation will not be passed or enforced unless there is strong support from citizens."[36] Meanwhile, Southern Baptists in Mississippi traveled a different path by encouraging only individual Christians to personally practice environmental stewardship and work with government and business to prevent pollution. The Mississippi convention offered no directive for the participation of local congregations in the search for solutions to unrestrained pollution.[37]

---

Baptist TV Shows Accepted By Armed Forces," *Baptist Press*, August 20, 1973, 1. "International Film Festival Honors Two Baptist TV Shows," *Baptist Press*, November 7, 1972, 1.

[35] Baptist General Association of Virginia, "1970 Report of the Committee on Town and Country Churches," in *Virginia Baptist Annual* (Richmond, VA: Williams Printing Co, 1971), 133. Virginia Baptists continued to highlight pollution in recommendations to the convention. In 1972, the Virginia convention adopted a report that spoke of the "urgency in the ecological task today." See Virginia Baptist Convention, "1972 Report of the Committee on Town and Country Churches," in *Virginia Baptist Annual* (Richmond, VA: Williams Printing Co., 1972), 97.

[36] Kentucky Baptist Convention, "1970 Christian Life Committee Report," in *Annual of the Kentucky Baptist Convention* (Louisville, KY: Executive Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, 1970), 223. Kentucky Baptists adopted this quote from the 1969 report of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

[37] Mississippi Baptist Convention, "1970 Christian Action Report," in *Annual of the Mississippi Baptist Convention* (Jackson, MS: Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 1970), 99.

*Denominational Agencies and the Environment*

The Christian Life Commission was the agency of the Southern Baptist Convention assigned the primary responsibility of addressing social issues. With the motto "Helping changed people to change the world," the CLC had two functions: education advocacy and activism. The agency was tasked with helping Southern Baptists understand and respond to social issues from race relations to hunger to economics to the environment.[38]

Similarly, the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas sought to help Southern Baptists in Texas to apply Christian principles in society and the political arena. Formed in 1950, just three years after the SBC CLC hired its first full-time employee, the Texas CLC also emphasized both education advocacy and activism.[39] After years of focusing mostly on education advocacy, the commissions began to take a more activist approach in the 1960s as the nation simultaneously faced significant cultural upheaval relating to the struggle for civil rights, the war in Vietnam and the ecological crisis. The SBC CLC and Texas CLC were attentive to environmental issues, specifically population and pollution, beginning in the mid-1960s.

*Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention*

The SBC CLC's first serious engagement with the population issue began in 1966. That year, the CLC invited ecumenical theologian Richard Fagley, author of *The Population Explosion and Christian Responsibility* (1960), to address the commission's

---

[38] H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 656-657.

[39] David Stricklin, "An Interpretive History of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1950-1977" (PhD diss., Baylor University, 1981), 72-73. The Texas CLC has been regarded as the most active and influential ethics agency at the state convention level.

annual conference. During his address, Fagley called on Southern Baptist leaders to promote birth control and family planning to confront the "population explosion."[40] The CLC heeded Fagley's call to action and mailed nearly 53,000 Southern Baptist pastors a complimentary resource book to assist in dealing with social issues including population, birth control and abortion.[41] While multiple perspectives including that of the Roman Catholic Church were included, the vast majority of sources and organizations featured in the book promoted population control through a diversity of means.[42] By juxtaposing various pro-population control books and organizations against a Catholic alternative, the book effectively capitalized on Southern Baptist fear of Catholicism to persuade readers of the need for education advocacy and activism to confront the "population explosion." There was a widespread belief among Southern Baptists that Catholicism posed a grave danger to freedom and the American way of life. Southern Baptists were convinced, according to historian Andrew Manis, that Catholicism was "as totalitarian, and as

---

[40] W.C. Fields, "Peace Terms Key World Issue at Baptist Meeting," *Baptist Press*, March 31, 1966, 30. A conference on Christians and the family sponsored by both the Texas CLC and SBC CLC in 1961 marked one of the earliest occasions in which either commission made mention of the population problem. At this conference, Southern Baptist speakers stressed the importance of birth control and sex education along with the work of the family planning organization Planned Parenthood as viable ways to avoid overpopulation. Attendees were encouraged to read Richard Fagley's *The Population Explosion and Christian Responsibility*. See Loftin Hudson, "Birth Control and Planned Parenthood," in *Christian Answers to Family Problems: Addresses from Conferences at Glorieta and Ridgecrest* (Nashville, TN: SBC, 1961), 83-90. See also David Mace, "Birth Control and Planned Parenthood," in *Christian Answers to Family Problems: Addresses from Conferences at Glorieta and Ridgecrest* (Nashville, TN: SBC, 1961), 75-82.

[41] "Resource on Social Issues Provided for SBC Leaders," *Baptist Press*, June 27, 1968, 30. The book, compiled by Southern Baptist ethicist William Pinson, featured writings representing different perspectives and contact information for further study for organizations such as the Association for Voluntary Sterilization, Planned Parenthood, Population Council and the Population Crisis Committee. Foy Valentine, Executive-Director of the SBC CLC, characterized the distribution of this resource guide as "one of the most potentially significant things ever done by this agency to help Baptists in the area of applied Christianity."

[42] William M. Pinson, Jr., *Resource Guide to Current Social Issues* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1968), 181-187.

threatening, as Communism."[43] The CLC used this approach on a regular basis. Issues pertaining to population such as abortion and artificial contraception were framed as dueling perspectives: Protestant versus Catholic.

The twin environmental concerns of population and pollution were highlighted at CLC conferences throughout the early 1970s. At the 1970 conference, James H. Cavanaugh of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare pressed Southern Baptists to participate in the national dialogue on population control and pollution. Cavanaugh emphatically stated his disagreement with population activists such as Edgar Chasteen and Paul Ehrlich who advocated a compulsory rather than voluntary approach to the population issue. While emphasizing the personal nature of reproductive decisions relating to family size, Cavanaugh contended that governments along with the scientific and religious communities had an important role to play in raising awareness about the relationship of population growth to other environmental problems such as pollution.[44]

In addition to conferences, the CLC promoted environmental education advocacy and activism through lectures, articles in denominational publications and the development and distribution of resource papers and pamphlets on environmental issues. During a 1971 lecture-dialogue at the SBC's Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

---

[43] Andrew M. Manis, *Southern Civil Religions in Conflict: Civil Rights and the Culture Wars* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002), 71.

[44] James H. Cavanaugh, "Population and Public Health," in *Toward Authentic Morality for Modern Man: Proceedings of the 1970 Christian Life Commission Seminar* (Nashville, TN: SBC, 1970), 43-45. See also Jim Newton, "Baptists Examine Authentic Morality in Debate Crucible," *Baptist Press*, March 19, 1970, 5-6. The next year, Bill Moyers, a Southern Baptist and former White House official in the Johnson Administration, delivered the keynote address at the CLC's 1971 conference titled "National Priorities and Christian Responsibilities." Moyers observed that the government had devoted millions to space exploration but "does not know what to do with 300 million tons a year in garbage." Moyers also placed blame for the pollution problem on churches: "the church has failed to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comforted." See "Moyers says priorities wrong, churches 'in bed with culture'," *Baptist Press*, March 2, 1971, 2.

in San Francisco just prior to the second annual Earth Day, Harry Hollis, director of special moral concerns for the CLC, described the "ecological crisis" as "the most important and controversial social issue we face today." Hollis implored Christians as individuals to lobby for pollution control legislation. He also exhorted churches to refuse to invest in and do business with companies that pollute the air and water. "The earth is the Lord's and we must translate these words into concrete actions," declared Hollis. More specifically, Hollis urged the audience of mostly Southern Baptist seminarians to take notice of politicians who "talk a good anti-pollution game" but "vote for loopholes to allow special interests to continue to ravish the environment." However, Hollis warned that legislation and technology by itself could not solve the ecological crisis. A "theology of ecology" was needed, according to Hollis, to reorient the priorities and values of Christians.[45]

During the weeks leading up to the first-ever Earth Day, the CLC also published and distributed to thousands of pastors and laity two separate pamphlets on the environment. Titled *Pollution* and *Population Explosion*, these pamphlets were sold at over thirty different Baptist Book Store locations. Southern Baptist state conventions

[45] "Theology of Ecology Urged at Seminary Lecture-Dialogue," *Baptist Press*, April 6, 1971, 1-2. Hollis noted that any "theology of ecology" must be based on the "biblical teaching that God is Creator, that creation is good, that man should respond to God's creation with stewardship, that God will judge man for misusing the earth, that the whole creation is moving toward completion with a divine purpose, that God is redeemer, and that man must respond to creation and redemption with love." Hollis had previously championed pollution control legislation and a "theology of ecology" in other settings. In the weeks following the inaugural Earth Day (1970), Hollis preached a sermon at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary titled "Can We Prevent an Ecological Armageddon." This sermon was later adapted and published in the October 1970 issue of *The Baptist Program*, one of the most widely read SBC publications. Hollis declared that Christians must respond to the ecological crisis by ending the battle between science and religion. Hollis explained that science was needed to find remedies to the crisis while Christianity was needed to share its ethical insights with science. See Harry Hollis Jr., "Can We Prevent an Ecological Armageddon," *The Baptist Program*, October 1970, 7-8.

used the pamphlets as well. For example, the Texas CLC created and distributed study guides to be paired with both pamphlets.[46]

The *Population Explosion* pamphlet portrayed the "population crisis" as a "religious crisis, for it has to do with man's stewardship of the earth and his concern for his fellowmen." The pamphlet explained, "The real problem is not too many people, it is too many people for the limited room and resources of Spaceship Earth." Paul Ehrlich first put forth and popularized the term "Spaceship Earth." Ehrlich's population writings undoubtedly influenced how the CLC articulated the population problem. However, it should be noted that the CLC did not embrace Ehrlich's radical solutions such as an enforced two-child national policy and compulsory birth control.[47]

Much of the pamphlet accented the responsibility of Christians to take action to "defuse the population bomb." Individual Christians were asked to become informed and educate others about population issues and to voluntarily limit their family size to two children (excluding adopted children). Additionally, the pamphlet exhorted Christians to actively support family planning clinics such as Planned Parenthood and vote for candidates with "responsible views on the population crisis." A national population policy was recommended as well. The CLC held that a suitable policy would mandate family planning and population education, birth control research, foreign aid for population control programs and tax reforms in the United States to encourage small families. Most notably, individual Christians were invited to be "open to new insight on

---

[46] "CLC Report of 1971," in *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1971), 208. "How to Use These Pamphlets" *Christian Faith in Action*, Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives, CLC Texas 1970s, CLC AR 138-2.

[47] Christian Life Commission, *Issues & Answers: Population Explosion* (Nashville, TN: Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1970).

controversial subjects related to population limitation" such as sex education, abortion, sterilization and contraceptives to the unmarried.[48] Southern Baptists had previously only affirmed, per the 1967 population resolution, contraceptives for married couples.

Individual Christians were, without a doubt, the primary target of these suggested practical actions. The CLC pamphlet did, however, call on churches to become involved in population education advocacy. Churches were encouraged to collectively study population problems, promote smaller families and include support for a family planning clinic as one of the congregation's ministries. No political action in any form was proposed.[49]

Unlike population control, pollution control was not the least bit controversial among Southern Baptists. Not surprisingly then, the CLC's pamphlet and lengthier resource paper on pollution was met with positive reviews from many Southern Baptists.[50] Similar to the population pamphlet, these pollution resources employed

---

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid. The population pamphlet suggested that mothers with large families should not be "singled out for praise on Mother's Day." Southern Baptist churches—like many other Evangelical Protestant congregations—had a longstanding tradition of honoring mothers on Mother's Day. This recommendation gained national attention four years later thanks to Southern Baptist pastor and anti-abortion activist Bob Holbrook. Holbrook, who led a small but loud organization called "Baptists for Life," charged that the pamphlet was "an insult to every Baptist mother whom God has blessed with a large family." He accused the CLC of promoting the "killing of unborn children" and "government control of family size. These accusations were reported in various newspapers including the *Dallas Times Herald*, *Dallas Morning News*, *The Tennessean* and the popular fundamentalist publication *Sword of the Lord*. The CLC swiftly refuted these claims. However, Holbrook's efforts put a spotlight on the increasing discontent and frustration of Southern Baptist conservatives with the SBC's social positions, specifically abortion and birth control. W. A. Reed, "SBC Tract Called Un-Christian—Not So, Says Agency," *The Tennessean*, May 8, 1974, 7. Holbrook founded Baptists for Life following the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*. Frank Taggart, "Large-family insult: Baptist group charges Mother's Day affront," *Dallas Times Herald*, May 7, 1974, 3, 15. Helen Parmley, "Baptists Reaffirm Motherhood Support," *Dallas Morning News*, May 11, 1974, 14. Bob Holbrook, "Press Release," Baptists for Life, May 5, 1974. John Rice, "Do Southern Baptists Endorse Abortion & Government Limiting Families," *The Sword of the Lord*, May 31, 1974, 1, 13.

[50] See Adiel J. Moncrief, "It's not all Trash," *Home Missions*, March 1971, 47. Moncrief expressed his appreciation for the February 1971 issue featuring the CLC's resource paper. Moncrief's letter to the

Ehrlich's "Spaceship Earth" metaphor to communicate the ecological threats to individuals and communities posed by unrestricted pollution. Highlighting the role of chemical plants, paper companies, steel mills and other industrial operations, the CLC argued that modern technology bore much blame for the pollution problem. Corporate polluters were not to be blamed alone. Humans were stuck with some blame for failing to understand and foresee the environmental repercussions of many technological developments. The pamphlet stated that human greed and selfishness—both sins—contributed to the pollution problem too.[51]

The CLC's pollution resource paper urged national legislation to restrict pollution. Clearly, the commission recognized that the post-World War II approach of relying on local communities to control pollution was not effective. The paper noted, "Combating pollution requires more than an individual or local effort....Local action has not solved, and furthermore it cannot solve the pollution problem." Therefore, federal regulation was needed to control pollution. The CLC emphasized that federal pollution control legislation should reward businesses which, on their own initiative, had taken steps to curb pollution.[52]

The CLC based its arguments for a national pollution control policy on the biblical admonition to care for God's creation. Pollution was incompatible with this command to practice stewardship of the earth. The paper concluded:

---

editor is but one example of praise from Southern Baptist readers for *Home Missions* emphasis on pollution control.

[51] Christian Life Commission, *Issues & Answers: Pollution* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1970).

[52] "Pollution: A Christian Life Commission Resource Paper," *Home Missions*, February 1971, 1-8.

> Pollution, therefore, is sin. It is sin against God. It is sin against nature. It is sin against humanity. And modern knowledge concerning the damage of pollution makes it even more heinous sin.[53]

To confront this sin, the CLC implored churches and individual Christians alike to study the pollution problem through bible study and church-wide discussions. In addition to education advocacy, individual Christians were invited to become politically involved and lobby for a national policy of pollution control.[54]

The CLC took its own advice and was actively involved in the political arena. CLC director Foy Valentine lent his name and that of the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, to efforts to solve the population problem. On July 18, 1969, President Nixon, in a presidential message on population, proposed the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future to develop recommendations to achieve population stabilization. The United States Congress established the commission in March 1970 and philanthropist and respected population activist John Rockefeller III was selected to chair the commission.[55]

Released two years later in March 1972, the commission's final report called for population education and sex education in public schools, greater access to contraception, enforcement of existing immigration laws, passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and

---

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid. The CLC also published a second resource paper in *Home Missions* two months later on the subject of urbanization. This paper featured a one-page section on ecology and concisely summarized many of the points made in both pamphlets and the pollution resource paper. This paper encouraged churches and individual Christians to participate in environmental clean-up projects in overcrowded urban areas. See Christian Life Commission, "Urban Crisis: A Christian Life Commission Resource Paper," *Home Missions*, April 1971, 1-8.

[55] Hoff, 25-26. Congress also passed the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act in 1970. Signed into law by President Nixon, the Family Planning Act amended the Public Health Services Act. Grants were dispersed to states to establish family planning services through this amendment known as Title X. Targeted toward low-income persons, these federally funded services were intended to decrease the number of unintended pregnancies. See Critchlow, 90-91.

various measures to promote geographic redistribution of the American population. The commission's two most controversial recommendations urged the liberalization of state laws restricting abortion and federally-funded family planning services for minors.[56]

Coinciding with the report's release, a group of Protestant and Jewish leaders that included the CLC's Foy Valentine issued a statement that "welcomed" the commission's recommendations and asked President Nixon to give it "serious consideration." The group called the report "an important contribution to the search for solutions to the growing ecological crisis facing all nations today." The statement expressed regret that the report had met immediate condemnation from some Catholic leaders. Earlier, a spokesman for the United States Catholic Conference had stated that the Rockefeller-led commission was leading the United States "into an ideological valley of death" due to its endorsement of liberalized abortion laws.[57] Valentine's activism in this instance further reveals how the CLC was attempting to lead Southern Baptists to more aggressively confront the population problem in the political arena.

Valentine and the group of religious leaders also penned a private letter to President Nixon which asked for an opportunity to meet and discuss the commission's recommendations. Nixon declined to meet with the group.[58] Instead, Nixon reiterated his opposition to "unrestricted abortion policies" and to "unrestricted distribution of family planning services to minors." He ignored the remaining recommendations and put

---

[56] Ibid.

[57] "Take Population Study Seriously, Leaders Urge," *Baptist Press*, March 31, 1972, 1-2. See also "Church Heads Welcome Study on Population," *The Tennessean*, March 30, 1972. "Nixon Urged to Study Population Control Report, Ignore Catholic Criticism," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1972.

[58] Jessma Blockwick, "Letter to Foy Valentine," April 14, 1972, Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives, CLC Resource, CLC AR 138-2. Bishop John Wesley, "Letter to Richard Nixon," April 14, 1972, Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives, CLC AR 138-2.

distance between himself and the commission. This politically-motivated decision came during the middle of his 1972 presidential re-election bid.[59] Nixon's campaign strategy entailed reaching out to blue-collar Catholic voters, many of whom opposed abortion rights and were in agreement with the Pope's 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae* which reaffirmed the Roman Catholic Church's opposition to all forms of artificial contraception.[60]

While the birthrate in the United States increased in 1968 and 1969, it declined from 1970-1972. By 1972, the birthrate had slipped below the replacement level of 2.1 births per woman. This declining rate of population growth undercut calls for population control and called into question the alarmism of Paul Ehrlich, Edgar Chasteen and others who had predicted various doomsday scenarios such as mass starvation. As a result, attitudes toward population growth began to change and some social scientists started to argue that zero population growth would actually hinder economic growth. It was in this context of a declining national birth rate, changing attitudes toward population growth and Catholic opposition to birth control that Nixon made his decision not to act on any of the recommendations put forward by the commission that he had established.[61]

---

[59] Marshall Green, "The Evolution of US International Population Policy, 1965-1992: A Chronological Account," *Population and Development Review* 19, no. 2 (June 1993): 303-321.

[60] Critchlow, 130. Following the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, there was considerable pressure among Catholic leaders to change the Catholic Church's official position against artificial birth control. Pope Paul VI's *Humane Vitae* which rejected the majority perspective of a papal birth control commission surprised many. Priests and laypersons in the United States immediately protested the encyclical. While the American Bishops affirmed the Pope's pronouncement, a large group of predominantly American theologians released a statement detailing their strong objections. Bishops in other nations including England, Canada, Austrian, Belgium and Germany also voiced their disagreement. See Daniel Callahan, "Contraception and Abortion: American Catholic Responses," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 387 (January 1970): 109-117.

[61] Hoff, 26.

*Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas*

Like the SBC CLC, the Texas Christian Life Commission was also politically engaged on environmental issues like population and pollution. Led by James Dunn, the Texas CLC had a long history of advocating on behalf of access to birth control and government support for sex education and other family planning services. In 1968, the CLC called upon Southern Baptists in Texas to "face realistically and study diligently the practical problems and the personal dimensions of the population explosion." The CLC lobbied the legislators at the Austin state capitol to make family planning services available to all residents regardless of socioeconomic status.[62]

The next year, the Texas CLC led the Baptist General Convention of Texas to endorse U.S. Senate Bill 2108.[63] This bill was the Senate version of what came to be known as the Family Planning and Population Research Act of 1970. After securing the convention's endorsement, Dunn represented the CLC and the convention before a United States Senate committee where he testified in support of S.2108. Dunn declared:

> Southern Baptists, the largest evangelical religious body in the nation, have long been involved in sponsoring planned parenthood clinics through our Home Mission Board, hospitals, and state convention agencies. However, all of the efforts made by the private sector are not enough. This is one of those tasks that in a complex, urban world can best be done by government.[64]

---

[62] "Christian Life Commission Report of 1968," in *Texas Baptist Annual* (Dallas, TX: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1968), 105-106.

[63] "Christian Life Commission Report of 1969," in *Texas Baptist Annual* (Dallas, TX: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1969), 89.

[64] United States Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Health, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, Statement of Dr. James Dunn, Executive Secretary, Christian Life Commission, Baptist General Convention of Texas, S. 2108, Session 91-1, 1969, 227-230.

Dunn told the Senators that any delay in combating the population explosion "would be downright immoral."[65] He also testified before the Texas legislature on behalf of family planning legislation as a remedy for the exploding population in 1969 and 1970.[66]

The Texas CLC was not unengaged on the pollution problem either. In fact, the Texas CLC's pollution control advocacy and activism predated that of the SBC CLC. In 1967, the Texas CLC became one of the first Christian groups to publicly call for reform of laws regulating pollution. Referring to current pollution regulations in Texas as "woefully inadequate," the Texas CLC called on individual Christians to "make whatever financial adjustments are necessary to provide a clean world for this and succeeding generations." If businesses refused to regulate themselves, Christians had a duty, according to the Texas CLC, to take political action to pass pollution control legislation.[67] The CLC repeatedly emphasized that government played the most important role in solving the problem of pollution: "Only through government can much be done to regulate and control the principal polluters of our air and water."[68] When spotlighting the need for government regulation, the Texas CLC always rooted its advocacy and activism in appeals to the "biblical concept of stewardship"[69]

---

[65] Ibid.

[66] "Christian Life Commission Report of 1970," in *Texas Baptist Annual* (Dallas, TX: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1970), 93-95.

[67] "Christian Life Commission Report of 1967," in *Texas Baptist Annual* (Dallas, TX: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1967), 18.

[68] "Christian Life Commission Report of 1969," 87.

[69] "Christian Life Commission Report of 1970," 94.

## *Southern Baptist Environmentalists*

Although nearly two-dozen different Southern Baptist scholars addressed environmental topics during the late 1960s and early 1970s, two stand out from the rest in terms of their commitment and contribution to Southern Baptist life. Eric Rust and Henlee Barnette, both professors at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the SBC's flagship theological school, spent more time and energy than any other Southern Baptist scholar wrestling with the theological and social implications of pressing environmental issues such as population and pollution. Barnette and Rust penned many articles and books on Christianity and the environment that reached a diverse audience. These two men were the earliest and most influential environmentalists in the Southern Baptist Convention. Their writings to a great extent shaped the environmentalism of the denomination during this formative period.

### *Eric Rust the Theologian*

Eric Charles Rust was described by one Southern Baptist scholar as "an apostle to an age of science and technology."[70] Born on June 6, 1910 in Gravesend, England, Rust was a professionally trained scientist with degrees from the prestigious Royal College of Science. He received his theological training at Oxford University. After pastoring several Baptist churches in England, Rust crossed the Atlantic to join the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1953.[71]

---

[70] E. Glenn Hinson, *Science, Faith, and Revelation: An Approach to Christian Philosophy*, ed. Bob E. Patterson (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1979), 13.

[71] Ibid., 13-25.

A theologian whose academic interests were in the fields of philosophy of religion and Old Testament theology, Rust was most concerned with reconciling Christian theology with the findings of modern science. Throughout his career, Rust maintained that science and Christianity provide complementary insights into reality. He taught that science offers knowledge of the causative and empirical structures of the cosmos while Christianity is concerned with the meaning of these structures. In fact, Rust preceded Lynn White in arguing that western Christianity had significantly shaped science.[72]

Unlike many of his Southern Baptist peers, Rust was a theologian whose scholarship was geared specifically for other theologians rather than a more popular audience of pastors and laity. As one of the most prolific writers in Southern Baptist intellectual life, Rust published ten books from 1962-1982. None of these books were published by Broadman Press, the publishing house of the Southern Baptist Convention. Although his publishers included notable names such as Oxford University Press, Westminster Press and John Knox Press, Rust contributed very few articles to denominational periodicals during these years.[73]

---

[72] Ibid. See also William Hardee, "The Christian Philosophy of Eric Charles Rust: A Critical Evaluation," (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1985), 171. Rust first delved into the science-religion debate with *Nature and Man in Biblical Thought* (1952). This book offered a technical, biblical study of the relationship between nature and man. Rust claimed that nature had a two-fold function. First, "nature provides a medium of communication and thus of fellowship for human spirits." Second, nature serves as "the medium of the divine revelation and communication to men." Rust would build off of this study in his later books and articles on environmental issues. See Eric Charles Rust, *Nature and Man in Biblical Thought* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), 289.

[73] Larry Gregg Sr., "The Method of Correlation in the Theology of Eric Charles Rust," (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991), 257-259, 278. Despite his lack of denominational publications, Rust often found himself at the center of various controversies in the Southern Baptist Convention. Conflict over the nature of the Bible and its interpretation erupted in the early 1960s with the "Elliot Controversy." Ralph Elliott, an Old Testament professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, published a book titled *The Message of Genesis* (1961) which asserted that an affirmation of the historicity of the first eleven chapters of Genesis was not necessary to express a strong affirmation of their theological truth. Southern Baptist conservatives accused Elliott of liberalism. It was known that Elliott had been influenced by Rust and learned from him the historical-critical method of interpreting the Bible. This method led Elliott to his controversial conclusions about the book of Genesis. Rust was even targeted by

Despite his reluctance to write for a specifically Southern Baptist audience, Rust was willing to share his environmentalism with Southern Baptist pastors and laity. Rust's greatest contributions to Southern Baptist environmental engagement came in the form of featured articles in 1971 issues of *Home Missions* and *The Baptist Student* magazines. These were the only two articles that Rust wrote for a SBC publication in the 1970s. Both articles were condensed overviews of his book *Nature—Garden or Desert? An Essay in Environmental Theology* (1971). This book was the first on the subject of the environmental crisis written by a Southern Baptist.

Rust laid out an accessible theology of the environment in these two articles. Rust's eco-theology began with six conclusions about the natural order. First, God rejoiced in his creation, declaring it to be good. Second, a covenant binds human beings and God which demands that nature be respected. Third, human beings are given strength and insight from God's creation. Fourth, human beings are part of nature and like nature are a part of God's revelation. Consequently, humans must "act responsibly...subduing the earth while protecting and developing its beauty." Fifth, humans in alienation from God, became alienated from nature. Rust explained, "In using nature without divine guidance, man ruined the gift of nature." Sixth, as Christ plays a central role in God's creation, the destiny of humanity is bound up in the destiny of the world.[74]

---

the Baptist Faith & Message Fellowship, a group in the SBC calling for conservative reforms, for his rejection of the doctrine of inerrancy in the 1970s. See Gregg, 257-259. I have previously written about the Elliott controversy in Aaron Douglas Weaver, "James Dunn and Soul Freedom: A Paradigm for Baptist Political Engagement," (master's thesis, Baylor University, 2008), 63-65.

[74] Eric C. Rust, "Christians and the Voyage of Spaceship Earth," *Home Missions*, February 1971, 18.

Rust held that the incarnation of Jesus Christ must be central to any Christian eco-theology because the incarnation is central to Christianity.[75] He wrote in his book *Nature—Garden or Desert?*, "We are concerned for nature because it, too, is God's creation. Furthermore, we are concerned for nature in hope because it is a participant in the redemption that the Christ has effected in his incarnate life, death, and resurrection."[76] Rust explained that the incarnation affirmed the value of the earthly existence of humans. Therefore, humans have a responsibility to God to affirm the value of the rest of God's creation. Rust elaborated, "In our new dimension of ethics, we need a reverence for nature."[77]

Rust contended that all contemporary problems including the ecological crisis had their roots in sin which he defined as "man's estrangement and alienation" from God. He noted, "Man could have transformed nature into a garden by cooperating with God, but he refused. Man took control of his life and turned his back on his Creator."[78] Stressing that "the guilt is ours," Rust chastised his fellow Southern Baptists who had not spoken out on environmental issues. He characterized their silence as a "slanderous, infamous attack on the Creator." Rust recalled the pattern of many Christians failing to forcefully speak out against racism and discrimination in previous decades. He urged "the church" to be the "conscience of the community." Churches, according to Rust, had failed in the

---

[75] Eric C. Rust, "From the Garden to the Desert: The Quest for a Theology of Ecology," *The Student*, January 1971, 12-13. Rust described the incarnation as "the affirmation that at one point in our human history God united one human life with his own and drew our world, with all its complex relationships, uniquely into his own life."

[76] Eric C. Rust, *Nature—Garden or Desert? An Essay in Environmental Theology* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1971), 140.

[77] Rust, "Christians and the Voyage of Spaceship Earth," 20, 24.

[78] Rust, "From the Garden to the Desert," 12.

past to be this "conscience of the community" due in part to having a preoccupation with personal evangelism. He expounded, "We have been so busy getting people out of hell and into heaven that we have neglected the all important fact that the Christian life must be lived here and now."[79] Rust pled with his Southern Baptist readers to embrace a social Christianity or "thisworldly" perspective and identify with the world (humans and nature) so that "Christ's redeeming love may flow through us to it."[80]

Rust ended both articles and his book by offering reflections on science, technology and political action. Rather than respecting God's creation, science and technology had, in Rust's view, been misused to rape and exploit the environment for economic benefit. However, Rust insisted that science and technology could be harnessed for good if Christians identified with nature and recognized their covenantal obligations and responsibilities to all of God's creation.[81]

With regard to political action, Rust appealed to Southern Baptists and other Christians to either get involved with existing environmental groups or organize new groups to translate Christian environmental concern into environmental action. Rust felt that Christians due to their covenantal relationship with God, had a moral obligation to take a leadership role in the environmental movement as opposed to following the lead of others. Rust's commitment to environmentalism was evident in his elevation of environmental issues above other social concerns. He argued adamantly that churches should actively support politicians who could "withstand the lobbying tactics of industrial

---

[79] Ibid., 11.

[80] Ibid., 14.

[81] Rust, "Christians and the Voyage of Spaceship Earth," 20.

interests and the pressures of political expedience." Christians must be united in their support of protecting the environment through environmental action which necessarily involved governmental regulation, according to Rust. Clearly, environmental preservation was a subject that Rust left little, if any room for honest disagreement among Christians.[82]

*Henlee Barnette the Ethicist*

Henlee Hulix Barnette was born August 14, 1911 in Alexander County, North Carolina. As a student at Wake Forest College, Barnette was introduced to scientific laboratory technique and the theory of evolution under the tutelage of Baptist scientist W. L. Poteat. He continued his education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. There, Barnette was mentored by Olin T. Binkley, a former student of renowned theologian and ethicist H. Richard Niebuhr. Binkley introduced Barnette to the Christian realism of Niebuhr and the social gospel theology of Walter Rauschenbusch. After beginning his teaching career at Baptist-affiliated Howard College in 1946, Barnette joined his mentor Otis Binkley as a professor in the Christian Ethics department at Southern Seminary in 1951.[83]

During his academic career at Southern Seminary from 1951-1977, Barnette earned a reputation as a leading Southern Baptist ethicist. According to Baptist scholar Ron Sisk, Barnette "more than any other individual...directly influenced the ethical formation of two generations of Baptist pastors and professors." In addition to his

---

[82] Rust, *Nature—Garden or Desert?*, 140-141.

[83] Ronald D. Sisk, "Henlee Hulix Barnette: Principalist in the Southern Seminary Tradition," in *Twentieth Century Shapers of Baptist Social Ethics*, ed. Larry McSwain (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 82-85.

academic reputation, Barnette earned a name for himself as an activist. He founded the Interracial Baptist Pastors Conference in Alabama in 1946. An early Southern Baptist proponent of racial equality, Barnette helped to bring Martin Luther King Jr. to seminary's campus in 1961. He marched for civil rights and actively participated in the struggle for open housing in Louisville. He also worked to integrate local churches and the faculty and board of trustees at the different seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention.[84]

Henlee Barnette was recognized as the SBC's leading expert on environmental issues.[85] The environment was a major area of concern in Barnette's social ethics. Known for his popular writing style and use of accessible language, Barnette's environmental ethic was developing as early as 1961. In his widely read book *Introducing Christian Ethics* (1961), Barnette briefly articulated a doctrine of creation. He explained that man is made in the image of God. This means that man has both dignity and dominion, according to Barnette. Proof of this dignity is "seen in the fact that he was made for fellowship with God." Thus, this fellowship implies that "God addresses man as person to person and that man has the capacity to answer." Barnette emphasized that man is responsible before God.[86]

Related to this concept of dignity and derived from the doctrine of creation is the concept of dominion. Barnette wrote, "The quality of dominion in man is seen in the fact that he shares in the sovereignty of God in the Earth." As God's representative in the

---

[84] Ibid., 85-87. Barnette also protested the Vietnam War beginning in 1968.

[85] See editorial comment accompanying Henlee Barnette, "Ecocide! Are We Committing Ecological Suicide?" *World Mission Journal* 45 (January 1971): 1-7.

[86]Barnette, *Introducing Christian Ethics,* 15-16.

world, man shares in his sovereignty. However, Barnette elaborated, man's pride and disobedience resulted in the "Fall" leaving man with a corrupt and wicked heart. Consequently, only God alone can redeem man and woman from their sin. These theological ideas would serve as the foundation of Barnette's environmental ethic.[87]

Barnette pointed to the problem of global overpopulation in *Introducing Christian Ethics* (1961).[88] He later devoted an entire chapter to the "population explosion" in *Crucial Problems in Christian Perspective* (1970). After describing the population problem and the various arguments for its causes, Barnette delved into a discussion of potential remedies. This was how Barnette typically dealt with social issues in his writings. Few pages were devoted to nuanced theological interpretation and analysis. Barnette's writings were more concerned with providing practical solutions and ethical strategies for action guided by Christian principles. In this instance, Barnette's list of potential remedies included: population redistribution, increased production of food, sharing food between nations through foreign aid programs and education.[89]

Barnette also underscored the important role of birth control in solving the population problem. Unlike Paul Ehrlich and fellow Southern Baptist Edgar Chasteen, Barnette defined birth control as a "voluntary limitation of births." Effective methods of birth control highlighted by Barnette included voluntary sterilization, legalized abortion and artificial contraceptives. Barnette believed that science alone could not solve the population problem. For this reason, Barnette championed "planned parenthood."

---

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid., 158.

[89] Henlee Barnette, *Crucial Problems in Christian Perspective* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1970), 82-93.

Barnette's theological justification for this ethic was rooted in the doctrine of creation. He reasoned:

> Man, made in the image of God, is commissioned in freedom to dominate nature, and human sexuality is a part of creation which he is to control. In other words, man is a steward of his sexuality and must exercise his procreative powers responsibly before God.[90]

Parents, argued Barnette, had a moral obligation to God of planning only for the number of children which they could adequately provide for. He was a firm believer that the practice of "planned parenthood," would help lower the birthrate.[91] While Barnette did not offer any specific public policy recommendations, his support for this "planned parenthood" suggested Barnette's opposition to state laws that restricted access to the birth control methods discussed in his writings.

Barnette was concerned almost exclusively with the environmental crisis during the first years of the 1970s. This focus was visible in his research, writings and activism. Barnette helped a group of students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary form an "Ecoclub" in 1970. Serving as the group's faculty sponsor, Barnette and the Ecoclub collected papers, cans and other items to be recycled.[92] Barnette also organized students in his ethics classes to participate in the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. He ensured that Earth Day was observed in the seminary's chapel. There, Barnette gave an Earth Day-themed prayer:

> We confess that we have not been good housekeepers of this lovely dwelling place. We have failed in our stewardship for we have fouled the air, poisoned

---

[90] Ibid., 100.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Henlee Hulix Barnette, *A Pilgrimage of Faith: My Story* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 161-162. See also Ronald Sisk, "The Ethics of Henlee Barnette: A Study in Method (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982), 60.

> the land and the lakes, polluted the streams and filled the air with ear-splitting sounds and sonic booms....Bless the Youth of our land who protest against the destructive exploitation of nature. May this 'earth day' be the beginning of a sustained and concerted effort on the part of all of us to create a cleaner world so that future generations will enjoy the beauty of the earth.[93]

During the Fall semester of 1970, Barnette taught an ethics course on the ecological crisis. Students read books about the population and pollution crises as well as works on "ecotactics" including *The Sierra Club Handbook for Environment Activists*. This was the first course of its kind at any Southern Baptist seminary.[94]

Barnette left Louisville in 1971 to take a research sabbatical and study with renowned environmentalist Howard Thomas Odum at the University of Florida. Odum was a respected ecologist and considered one of America's leading environmental thinkers. While studying with Odum, Barnette held the title of Visiting Professor in the university's Environmental Engineering department. He also taught a course on the ecological crisis at Southern Baptist-affiliated Stetson University in Deland, Florida.[95] As part of Barnette's course, Stetson students participated in several community clean-up projects.[96]

Although still on sabbatical, Barnette briefly returned to Louisville to give the prestigious Norton Lectures at Southern Seminary. His lecture titled "Ethical

---

[93] Barnette, *A Pilgrimage of Faith*, 161-162.

[94] "C.E. 597: Social Ethics Seminar," Fall 1970 Syllabus, Henlee Barnette Collection, Special Collections Department, Z. Smith Reynolds Library, Wake Forest University. The course syllabus described its purpose: "A study of the ecological crisis as to its roots, causative factors, and suggestions toward an ecological strategy for survival. Attention will be given to the ecological threats of technology, overpopulation, political expediency, pesticides and herbicides, affluency, consumerism, and anthropocentrism. An effort will be made to move toward a theology of ecology and an ecological ethic, along with suggestions as to the role of the church in ecological action."

[95] Sisk, "The Ethics of Henlee Barnette," 60. See also Barnette, *A Pilgrimage of Faith*, 163-164.

[96] "Stetson Ecology Class Puts Study into Action," *Baptist Press*, February 18, 1972, 30-31.

Dimensions of the Ecological Dilemma" called on Christians to become involved in seeking solutions to environmental problems. Barnette stressed that Christians must reassess the biblical imperative to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it (Gen. 1:28)." Barnette insisted that this command had already been fulfilled. As "stewards of God's creation," man must act responsibly toward nature and come to recognize nature "as an integral part of God's divine drama of redemption."[97]

Published by the evangelical William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, *The Church and the Ecological Crisis* (1972) was the final product of Barnette's research sabbatical. Although short in length, Barnette crammed his book full of concise ethical strategies for environmental action. In the introductory chapter, Barnette attempted to situate himself between environmental doomsayers like Paul Ehrlich and those who denied the need for environmental action. He believed the earth to be sick but rejected the idea that mass starvation, flooding and the end of civilization were around the corner.[98]

With his sights set on Lynn White, Barnette declared that it is a "fallacy to suppose that one single cause of the ecological crisis can be identified." Western Christianity alone is not to blame, said Barnette. He noted that the "exploitation of nature has characterized most nations and people who have ever inhabited the earth."[99] Similarly, Christians and non-Christians alike have been guilty of environmental misuse.

---

[97] "World May Become 'Environmental Pigsty,' Seminary Professor Says," *Baptist Press*, November 11, 1971, 30-31.

[98] Henlee H. Barnette, *The Church and the Ecological Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 14, 17.

[99] Ibid., 29.

Barnette concluded that other factors such as anthropocentrism, technology, consumerism and population growth have contributed to the environmental crisis.[100]

Barnette also sought to stake out a middle-ground or centrist position with regard to the role of technology in solving environmental problems. He affirmed that technology—"the handmaiden of science"—had provided many solutions to societal problems. Barnette, however, was adamant that technology had also contributed greatly to the exploitation of nature. Recognizing the need for technological progress and the permanent role of technology in the world, Barnette declared that technology "must be tamed and become an instrument for the improvement rather than the destruction of our environment."[101]

Barnette outlined an accessible but very brief ecological theology for his fellow Christians. This eco-theology rested on the basic belief that God is the creator and sustainer of the universe. Barnette believed God to be immanent (actively involved) in his creation and revealed most fully in the incarnated Christ. He repeatedly claimed that man enjoys a covenant relationship with God. Since this covenant extended to humanity and the rest of God's creation, Barnette's eco-theology viewed environmental abuse as sin. Barnette explicated, "To mistreat the land is to break covenant with God and may cause him to withdraw his presence and providence."[102] Barnette understood the biblical view of man as that of a caretaker or "steward" of the earth. "Steward," Barnette related, is the New Testament way of articulating man's appropriate relationship to the natural

---

[100] Ibid., 34.

[101] Ibid., 31.

[102] Ibid., 66-69, 72. Barnette also stressed the interconnection and interdependence of man and his environment: "Man is so intrinsically related to nature that when he sins against God, nature suffers; and when he obeys God, nature rejoices." Ibid., 37.

order. The first requirement of stewardship, according to Barnette, is faithfulness to God's command to responsibly exercise dominion over God's creation.[103]

From this simple eco-theology, Barnette put forth an environmental ethic. He argued that eco-ethics must "involve faith and facts, looking to science for the facts of social reality of *what is* and to God's revelation for what *ought to be*. Barnette championed a "holistic ethic" that features a biblical sense of adoration of nature—an attitude reflected especially in the Book of Psalms. Another element of Barnette's eco-ethic is reverence for all life. This reverence toward nature is required in order for man to enjoy a healthy relationship with his environment, according to Barnette.[104]

Barnette made environmental action the central component of his ethic. He presented a long list of "personal ecotactics" such as recycling, car pooling, use of biodegradable products and other lifestyle choices to limit pollution. However, Barnette insisted that personal ecotactics must be extended to collective social ecotactics. He concluded, "For all the value in individual ecotactics, political action is necessary if the ecological problem is ever to be solved." Consequently, Barnette urged ethical action in the form of political lobbying for greater government oversight and regulation of polluting industries and businesses including the military.[105]

Government and individuals are not alone in their responsibility to protect the environment, according to Barnette. He maintained that churches have a vital role to play too. He called on churches to place environmental issues at the top of their agenda.

---

[103] Ibid., 81.

[104] Ibid., 37-39.

[105] Ibid., 53-56.

Barnette encouraged churches to begin educational programs, host seminars, pass resolutions, participate in environmental organizations and take part in community clean-up projects.[106] In addition to taking environmental action, Barnette pressed churches to redefine their theology to "see love in terms of willing the welfare of all God's creatures and things" and embrace an understanding of stewardship that "transcends giving a tithe faithfully and sees a responsibility to the whole earth."[107]

## *Comparative Analysis and Conclusion*

### *Science and Technology*

Without a doubt, the attitudes of Southern Baptists toward science and technology greatly shaped the environmentalism of Southern Baptists during the second wave of American environmental history. Sociologist Robert Wuthnow explained in *The Restructuring of American Religion*, as discussed in chapter one, that Americans in the post-World War II era put much faith in science and technology. Wuthnow observed, "American confidence in scientific technology, indeed seems to be more widespread than in any other Western industrialized country."[108] He demonstrated how Americans of all faiths and no faith embraced the idea of a "technological fix" and came to believe that "only technology itself" offered solutions to pressing social problems such as pollution.[109]

---

[106] Ibid., 82-89.

[107] Ibid., 83.

[108] Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 287.

[109] Ibid., 290-291.

This chapter revealed that a minority of Southern Baptists adopted the idea of a "technological fix." George Schweitzer, a Southern Baptist scientist from the University of Tennessee, insisted that science and technology offered the best hope for a solution to the environmental crisis. Other Southern Baptist scholars such as Ellis Fuller shared Schweitzer's confidence in science and technology. The strong faith of Southern Baptists in science and technology was also reflected in the SBC's 1967 population resolution. This resolution highlighted the benefits of medical science and endorsed for married couples new and improved forms of medically approved birth control.

Most Southern Baptists who addressed the environmental crisis, however, rejected the popular notion that "only technology itself" offered the solution to ecological problems. These Southern Baptists still placed much faith in the ability of science and technology in helping to alleviate environmental problems. Although, as Southern Baptist pastor-scholar William Tuck contended in his article titled "The Church and Ecological Action," technology could provide short-term solutions for many environmental problems but not a permanent cure.[110] Biologist Wayne Davis elaborated in the same 1972 issue of the Southern Baptist academic journal *Review & Expositor*: "Technology can do a lot to help treat the symptoms of our disease, but it can do nothing toward solving our basic problems, for the real problem facing mankind today have no technological solutions." With regard to the population problem, Davis delineated that even effective (and accessible) birth control could only accomplish so much as long as the average couple desired to have more than two children.[111]

---

[110] William P. Tuck, "The Church and Ecological Action," *Review & Expositor* 69, no. 1 (Winter 1972): 67.

[111] Wayne Davis, "The Ecological Crisis," *Review & Expositor* 69, no. 1 (Winter 1972): 5-10.

The "real problem" in the view of many Southern Baptists including Davis was sin. Duke McCall, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote that technology was not the culprit since "technology is only as good or as bad as its users." Humans who lived by a philosophy of exploitation were the real culprit, stated McCall.[112] The SBC Christian Life Commission agreed and emphasized that humans had failed to understand the environmental repercussions of many technological advances. The CLC viewed the sins of greed and selfishness as major contributors to environmental problems. Formative Southern Baptist environmentalists including both Eric Rust and Henlee Barnette strongly believed that technology could be used, rather than misused, for the good of society. For this to happen, according to Rust, Christians must identify with nature and recognize and begin to fulfill their covenantal obligations to all of God's creation.[113]

While the popular idea of a "technological fix" was rejected, many Southern Baptists uncritically embraced technologies and scientific advancements without seriously considering the moral implications. For example, the SBC's 1967 population resolution judged birth control technologies solely by the standard of whether they were medically approved. The resolution did not consider whether such technologies were morally acceptable. As noted earlier, the CLC published a pamphlet which requested

---

[112] Duke McCall, "Editorial Introduction," *Review & Expositor* 69, no. 1 (Winter 1972): 3-4.

[113] Consequently, Southern Baptists were almost unanimous in rejecting Lynn White's claim that the "historic roots of the ecologic crisis" lay in Christianity's doctrine of human dominion over nature. Sin was the root cause of the crisis in the view of Southern Baptists. Henlee Barnette argued that Christians and non-Christians from alike around the world—both the East and West—bore the blame and were guilty of environmental abuse. However, Southern Baptists did tacitly acknowledge that White's argument was not completely inaccurate. For example, Barnette himself argued that anthropocentrism was one factor that had contributed significantly to the environmental crisis. Southern Baptists disagreed that this anthropocentrism was the sole cause of the crisis. Nor did Southern Baptists believe that traditional Christian theology, which cast humans as the focal point of the biblical story and as stewards of God's creation, allowed for the exploitation of nature.

Christians to be "open to new insight on controversial subjects related to population limitation" such as abortion, sterilization and contraceptives to the unmarried. This pamphlet, similar to other books and articles by Southern Baptists concerned with the population problem, did not delve into a discussion of the morality of certain technologies.[114]

Robert Wuthnow has alleged that technology often "limits our ability to think about social problems in terms set by technology." Surrounded by the alarmist rhetoric of population control advocates Paul Ehrlich and Edgar Chasteen, Southern Baptists, by and large, only considered the effectiveness and safety of the recommended technological solution. This tendency was on display in an article authored by Alan Guttmacher, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of American, published in the 1972 ecology issue of *Review & Expositor*. There, Guttmacher made the case for abortion as a "backup mechanism" in instances of "failed contraception or failure to use contraception." To the question of the morality of abortion, specifically whether abortion is murder, Guttmacher declared, "I am afraid the time does not allow us to make such agonizing decisions. It has become necessary to use a technique of birth control which is acceptable and effective." In his dissertation on the history of Southern Baptist responses to abortion, Paul Sadler noted that Southern Baptists had been almost completely silent on the issue of abortion prior to 1969.[115] Additionally, Southern Baptist leaders were silent on the Supreme Court's landmark *Griswold v. Connecticut* ruling which overturned a state law

---

[114] Christian Life Commission, *Issues & Answers: Population Explosion* (Nashville, TN: Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1970).

[115] Paul Sadler, "The Abortion Issue within the Southern Baptist Convention, 1969-1988," (PhD diss., Baylor University, 1991), 14-17. In 1969, some Southern Baptist leaders began to call for the liberalization of abortion laws.

prohibiting the use of artificial contraceptives. Baptist Press, the denomination's new agency, devoted a single descriptive news report to the ruling. The report suggested that for Protestants, including Southern Baptists, opposition to artificial contraception as immoral was a position of the past.[116]Thus, during the height of the population crisis in the late 1960s, Southern Baptists were unable to move beyond the terms set by technology and offer a moral critique of these scientific advancements.[117]

*Government*

Southern Baptists did embrace, however, the idea of a "government fix." Government was viewed as the solution to environmental problems. Southern Baptists stressed that greater government regulation was needed to ensure environmental amenities such as clean air and clean water. Southern Baptists in Texas were the first to call upon the government to regulate pollution. In 1967, the Texas Christian Life Commission demanded increased government regulation to limit pollution and in 1970, Kentucky Baptists declared that "Only through government can much be done to regulate and control the principal polluters of our air and water."[118] Henlee Barnette, the denomination's leading ethicist, agreed with his fellow Southern Baptists. Barnette maintained that additional government regulation was "necessary if the ecological problem is ever to be solved."[119] The SBC Christian Life Commission concurred and

---

[116] "Supreme Court Outlaws Anti-Birth Control Law," *Baptist Press*, June 11, 1965, 3.

[117] The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board conducted a survey in 1970 which identified the top moral concerns of Southern Baptists. Abortion did not make the list of the top seven moral issues. See "Race, War, Top Baptist Moral List," *Western Recorder*, January 3, 1970, 2.

[118] Kentucky Baptist Convention, "1970 Christian Life Committee Report," 223.

[119] Barnette, *The Church and the Ecological Crisis*, 55.

pointed out that local governments had not been able to solve and simply were not capable of solving the pollution crisis.[120] Southern Baptists also recognized pollution as a national problem that necessitated the need for the federal government to pass broad-sweeping pollution-control legislation.

A poll in 1970 surveying Southern Baptist pastors and Sunday School teachers found that 81.2 percent and 76.3 percent respectively trusted the government to solve the pollution problem.[121] Not surprisingly then, Southern Baptists refused to trust industry to regulate itself. Similarly, technology was not trusted either. Southern Baptist ethicist William Pinson contended that strict government regulation was needed to ensure that technology was directed toward the good and not the harm of man. Government oversight was needed to regulate and oversee man's use of technology, according to Pinson.[122]

Southern Baptist support of a "government fix" was consistent with the political mood of the nation. Pollution control and other environmental regulation received widespread support from both political parties. The plethora of legislation that was passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by the President during the late 1960s and early 1970s reflected the bipartisan nature of environmentalism. For example, the *Air Quality Control Act of 1967* which authorized over 400 million dollars for federal air pollution control efforts unanimously passed in both the House of Representatives and Senate.[123] Similarly, the *National Environmental Policy Act* and the *Clean Air Act*

---

[120] "Pollution: A Christian Life Commission Resource Paper," *Home Missions*, February 1971, 1-8.

[121] Hayes, "Baptist Leaders Speak Out on Pollution Problems," 10.

[122] Pinson, "Issues and Priorities," 53-54.

[123] "Air Pollution Control, 1967 Legislative Chronology," in *Congress and the Nation, 1965-1968*, 2 (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1969), 695.

*Amendments of 1970* gained the near unanimous support of Congress.[124] Legislation concerned with the population problem also received bipartisan support.[125]

During this period, there was little, if any, indication that Southern Baptists were concerned with the expanding role of government in American society. Southern Baptists did not speak out against the growing regulative functions of the federal government. Instead, they acknowledged and accepted the reality of an expanding government. A SBC CLC pamphlet urged the involvement of Christians. It stated that "much that affects our lives today is controlled by government....Nearly everything that happens in our lives is in some way related to what government has done or has failed to do."[126] When it came to important environmental problems, Southern Baptists were decidedly in favor of more government regulation and not less. They invested much faith in the government to "fix" the environment and spare the earth from polluters.

*Political Engagement*

Southern Baptists realized that political engagement was necessary to guarantee that the government take the lead in solving environmental problems. The environmental political engagement of most Southern Baptists during this era was consistent with the

---

[124] The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970 which targeted hazardous automobile emissions received only one dissenting vote in the House of Representatives. See "Air Pollution, 1970 Legislative Chronology," in *Congress and the Nation, 1969-1972*, 3 (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1973), 757. The National Environmental Policy Act passed unanimously in the Senate and 372-15 in the House of Representatives. See "National Environmental Policy Act, 1969 Legislative Chronology," in *Congress and the Nation, 1969-1972* 3 (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1973), 748.

[125] The *Family Planning and Population Research Act of 1970*, also known as S.2108, passed in the Senate by voice vote and passed in the House by a 298-32 roll call vote. As noted earlier in this chapter, this S.2108 expanded family planning serves and research programs. See "Family Planning Services, 1970 Legislative Chronology," in *Congress and the Nation, 1969-1972* 3 (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1973), 557.

[126] Christian Life Commission, *Why Christians Should Be Involved in Politics* (Nashville, TN: Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1976).

Public Christian approach articulated by historian Mark Toulouse.[127] As detailed in the previous chapter, this approach requires Christians as individuals to become personally involved in the political process. However, it holds that politics is not the role of the church. Instead, the Public Christian approach advocates that churches should assist and encourage individual Christians to meet their obligations in the public square.[128]

This has been the dominant political engagement approach of Southern Baptists. In 1970, Southern Baptist ethicist William Pinson contributed a chapter titled "Why All Christians Are Called Into Politics" to a denominational book which argued that Christians must be responsible, active citizens due to the "direct command of Scripture."[129] To support this claim, Pinson referenced the Apostle Paul's emphasis on citizenship responsibilities in the New Testament book of Romans and the example of the Old Testament prophets who advocated, according to Pinson, "justice and righteousness in the political order." Pinson even argued that Jesus himself was "far more involved in politics than most people gave him credit for."[130] The SBC's Christian Life Commission adopted this approach and frequently reminded its constituency that the "Bible calls every Christian to responsible citizenship." This meant, according to the SBC CLC, that

---

[127] What Toulouse called the "Public Church" position was a political engagement approach popular with a minority of Southern Baptists during this period. It is detailed in this section.

[128] Toulouse, 108-116, 121-122.

[129] William M. Pinson Jr., "Why All Christians Are Called Into Politics," in *Politics: A Guidebook for Christians*, ed. James M. Dunn (Dallas, TX: Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1970), 14.

[130] Ibid., 9-12.

Christians as individuals had a "sacred duty to be faithful stewards of the opportunities offered by democracy."[131]

Examples of the Public Christian approach have been mentioned throughout this chapter. For Southern Baptists, individuals have been, more often than not, the primary focus of suggested practical action on environmental issues. Individuals were called upon to become politically involved and lobby for national pollution and population policies. However, churches were not commended to take an active political role. In fact, the previously cited 1970 pollution poll found that over 75 percent of Southern Baptist pastors and Sunday School teachers believed that the proper role of the church was to lead individual church members to become involved personally on environmental matters.[132] This poll and a survey of Southern Baptist literature and statements confirms that the Public Christian position was the preferred political engagement approach on environmental issues of Southern Baptists during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Meanwhile, a small but influential group of mostly denominational leaders publicly embraced, on environmental questions, the political engagement approach that Toulouse dubbed Public Church. The previous chapter noted that Toulouse defined the Public Church approach as expecting that both churches and individual Christians be politically active for the betterment and redemption of society. James Dunn, director of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, was the most outspoken advocate of the Public Church approach during the late 1960s and early 1970s. In addition to calling individual Christians to participate responsibly in political affairs,

---

[131] Christian Life Commission, *Why Christians Should Be Involved in Politics*.

[132] Hayes, "Baptist Leaders Speak Out on Pollution Problems," 10.

Dunn urged local congregations to take action as well. In 1970, Dunn edited and contributed two chapters to a book titled *Politics: A Guidebook for Christians*. Dunn's chapter "How to get the Church into Politics," stressed that churches can respond to moral issues at the local and national levels unlike any other institution in society. He recommended that churches become involved in the political process by distributing educational resources on pressing social concerns and by hosting voter registration drives and get-out-the-vote campaigns to promote active Christian citizenship.[133]

This chapter has demonstrated how some denominational leaders used their platforms to preach the Public Church approach on environmental issues to fellow Southern Baptists. For example, Harry Hollis of the SBC's Christian Life Commission urged churches to refuse to invest in and do business with polluters.[134] Walker Knight of the SBC's Home Mission Board called on churches to allow Planned Parenthood clinics to use church facilities and also lobby politicians to liberalize laws on sterilizations in public hospitals.[135] Popular ethicist Henlee Barnette encouraged churches to participate in support groups such as the Izaak Walton League and Sierra Club that were influential in shaping environmental policy.[136] Most notably, respected theologian Eric Rust pressured churches to elevate environmental issues above all other political concerns and

---

[133] James M. Dunn, "How to Get the Church into Politics," in *Politics: A Guidebook for Christians*, ed. James M. Dunn (Dallas, TX: Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1970), 47-59.

[134] Theology of Ecology Urged at Seminary Lecture-Dialogue," *Baptist Press*, April 6, 1971, 1-2.

[135] Walker Knight, "Rampant Reproduction," *Home Missions*, August 1967, A4.

[136] Barnette, *The Church and the Ecological Crisis*, 82-89.

only support politicians committed to solving environmental problems plaguing the nation.[137]

Despite Barnette's encouragement to churches and Rust's pressure on churches, very few congregations adopted the Public Church political engagement approach. While calling upon churches and individuals alike to take action, these influential Southern Baptists had their most significant impact on individuals alone. Planned Parenthood clinics using church space for its operations were quite rare in Southern Baptist life. A local chapter of the Sierra Club meeting in a church building or a partnership between a church and the Izaak Walton League was—while less rare—far from common. Nonetheless, influential Southern Baptists such including Barnette and Knight encouraged these type of activities and arrangements. Ultimately, their Public Church perspective did not prevail during this era.

*Ethics*

Southern Baptists have adopted an environmental theology and ethic rooted in the concept of Christian stewardship. As mentioned in chapter one, Evangelical Protestants have historically embraced some form of the stewardship ethic. Sociologist Laurel Kearns has noted that the foundation of this ethic is the Bible. Kearns explained that this foundation reveals the appeal of the stewardship ethic to Evangelical Protestants for whom the principle of biblical authority is a cornerstone theological commitment. Stressing that ecological crises are a result of human sinfulness and that stewardship is one of the first commandments given to humans by God (Genesis 2:15), the stewardship ethic, as articulated by Kearns and others, greatly emphasizes individual sin and the need

[137] Rust, *Nature—Garden or Desert?*, 140-141.

for individual redemption. This emphasis is indeed consistent with the individualistic nature of evangelicalism.

Southern Baptists' most well-known and respected early environmental thinkers, Henlee Barnette and Eric Rust, developed an environmental theology and ethic on the concept of Christian stewardship. Barnette wrote, "Man, therefore, is a steward or custodian, and not the owner of the earth."[138] Rust argued that "As good stewards [Christians] have a responsibility to preserve the earth and to pass it on to future generations in usable condition.[139] Both Barnette and Rust urged Southern Baptists to understand that Christian stewardship, in the words of ethicist William Pinson, "covers more, much more than money."[140] Barnette stated, "Christian anthropology must come to an understanding of stewardship that transcends giving a tithe faithfully and sees a responsibility to the whole earth."[141]

This form of the Christian stewardship ethic was rooted in a generally conservative and basic evangelical theology. First and foremost, Barnette, Rust and other Southern Baptist environmental thinkers emphasized the doctrine of creation, that man is made in the image of God and enjoys dignity, dominion and the capacity to answer God and responsibility before God. Southern Baptist theologian Morris Ashcraft relayed the importance of the doctrine of creation to this ethic in a stewardship-themed book titled *Resource Unlimited* published in 1972 by the Stewardship Commission of the SBC.

---

[138] Barnette, *The Church and the Ecological Crisis*, 81.

[139] Rust, "Christians and the Voyage of Spaceship Earth," 25.

[140] William M. Pinson, "Stewardship of Total Resources and the Local Congregation," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* (1971): 50.

[141] Barnette, *The Church and the Ecological Crisis*," 81.

Ashcraft explained, "Christian stewardship must always be understood in the context of the doctrine of God as Creator since any other approach will lead to misunderstanding."[142]

This fundamental belief that man is "Imago Dei" (made in the image of God), referred to as the doctrine of creation, necessitates that a covenant binds man and God and demands respect for nature, according to Barnette and Rust. Southern Baptist theologian Ray Summers explained that this covenant relationship is due to man's "unique relatedness to God." Consequently, man "is to live in communion and cooperation with God" as he exercises his stewardship of the earth.[143] Additionally, this early stewardship ethic of Southern Baptists stressed God's sovereignty as the "creator and sustainer of the universe." This "ultimate truth," according to Barnette, "cannot be challenged by scientific theory nor established by scientific investigation."[144]

Christo-centrism and a reverence for nature are key theological commitments that undergird this stewardship ethic. Both Rust and Barnette contended that Jesus Christ must remain central to any Christian environmental ethic due to the central role of the incarnation of Christ to Christianity. Since the incarnation of Christ was an affirmation of the value of man, man has a responsibility to God to affirm the value of the rest of

---

[142] J. Morris Ashcraft, "A Theological Rationale for Christian Stewardship," in *Resource Unlimited*, ed. William L. Hendricks (Nashville, TN: Stewardship Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1972), 9.

[143] Ray Summers, "Christian Stewardship in the Light of Redemption," in *Resource Unlimited*, ed. William L. Hendricks (Nashville, TN: Stewardship Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1972), 73.

[144] Barnette, *The Church and the Ecological Crisis*, 67.

God's creation.[145] Reverence for nature was a key element of Barnette's eco-theology. He believed that it was impossible for man to enjoy a healthy relationship with the environment apart from a reverence for nature.[146]

Like the stewardship ethic of Evangelical Protestants depicted by Laurel Kearns, this early stewardship ethic of Southern Baptists treated sin as the root of all environmental problems. Therefore, ecological crises required a religious remedy. In other words, individuals must overcome sin and stop abusing nature through the practice of responsible Christian stewardship. Morris Ashcraft offered the toolkit needed to accomplish this task: "a personal experience of salvation and an informed understanding of the doctrine of creation."[147] Not surprisingly then, the early stewardship ethic of Southern Baptists was individualistic in nature, consistent with historic Baptist commitments to individual freedom also shared in the larger Evangelical Protestant tradition.

*Conclusion*

These aforementioned four factors have greatly shaped and defined the environmentalism of Southern Baptists during the all-important second wave of American environmental history. This third chapter has demonstrated that early Southern Baptist environmentalism began to emerge in the late 1960s while the nation, looking to rally around a common cause, was beginning to display environmental concern and support and participate in the environmental movement. Without a doubt, the Christian

---

[145] Rust, "From the Garden to the Desert: The Quest for a Theology of Ecology," 12-13. Rust, "Christian and the Voyage of Spaceship Earth," 20. Barnette, *The Church and the Ecological Crisis*, 70-72.

[146] Barnette, *The Church and the Ecological Crisis*, 39-40.

[147] Ashcraft, 19.

stewardship ethic of Southern Baptists, as reflected in the writings of Rust and Barnette, served as the foundation of this early environmentalism. This stewardship ethic was based on an environmental theology that emphasized the need for individual redemption and the covenant between man and God that was rooted in a commitment to the lived-out belief that man is "Imago dei." Out of this theological basis, the stewardship ethic preached both conservation (responsible use of resources) and preservation (protection of the earth). This stewardship ethic, of course, was not the only defining factor. Southern Baptist environmentalism was indeed friendly to science and technology, holding that technology could be used to the benefit of society and that sin (not Christianity itself contrary to Lynn White) was the root cause of the environmental crisis. Nonetheless, Southern Baptist environmentalism rejected the popular American idea of a "technological fix." However, this environmentalism did welcome with arms wide-open the idea of a "government fix." Government was viewed as the solution to the nation's environmental woes. Consequently, the environmentalism that Southern Baptists embraced championed greater government regulation to confront the "population explosion" and the "pollution crisis." Regulation was needed to oversee and check sinful man's use of science and technology. Finally, a political engagement approach that demanded the public involvement of Christians as individuals to participate in the political arena shaped Southern Baptist environmentalism throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## American Baptists and the Environment (1964-1973)

### *Introduction*

Chapter four analyzes and describes the environmentalism of American Baptists during the second wave of American environmental history. Similar to the previous chapter, the environmental attitudes, actions and approaches surveyed and studied in this chapter coincide with the formative years of the modern environmental movement. Therefore, this chapter covers the mid-1960s through the early 1970s and deals with the pressing environmental questions of that era.[1] Chapter four begins with an overview of early American Baptist environmental concern with a focus on pollution and population. Following this section is a critical examination of the development of American Baptist environmentalism in these formative years. Jitsuo Morikawa and the "New Evangelism" are detailed and discussed. Additionally, this section focuses on the emergence of the environmental ethic known as eco-justice and how American Baptists as a denomination implemented the eco-justice ethic. This section describes American Baptist efforts to apply the eco-justice ethic across the board to all denominational agencies, committees and boards. A final section offers a comparative analysis of American Baptists with Southern Baptists along the four factors detailed in the first chapter. These four factors—science and technology, government, political engagement and ethics—served to shape and define the environmentalism of Southern Baptists and American Baptists alike.

[1] Since the previous chapter included concise and comprehensive introductions to the "population explosion" and "pollution crisis" in American politics and society, this chapter does not offer a repeat of that background material.

*Early American Baptist Environmental Concern: Population and Pollution*

During the early 1960s, several notable American Baptist leaders began to publicly take notice of the exploding global population. In late December, 1964, R. Claibourne Johnson, then the sitting Vice-President of the American Baptist Convention, and Harry Emerson Fosdick, pastor emeritus of New York City's Riverside Church and an influential and widely respected American Baptist statesman, signed a letter to President Johnson warning of the threat of global overpopulation. The letter drew comparisons between the "Population Bomb" and the atomic bomb and called on President Johnson to place the population problem on the White House's agenda: "Mr. President, unless drastic measures are taken promptly, hunger, human misery and social tensions will undermine your Great Society. The population explosion will inevitably lead to chaos and strife at home and abroad." The Hugh Moore Fund, a prominent population advocacy organization, sponsored this letter and paid to have it displayed as an advertisement in the *New York Times*. In addition to Johnson and Fosdick, the letter featured the signatures of influential leaders from different sectors of American society including the former executives of the World Bank and Federal Reserve.[2]

Johnson and Fosdick continued to involve themselves in public campaigns that championed family planning programs as a means to confront the population problem. They endorsed a second letter sponsored by the Hugh Moore Fund and featured in the *New York Times* in December, 1966. This letter took aim at Catholic Bishops who were lobbying against taxpayer-funded birth control initiatives.[3] Again in 1969, these two

---

[2] Hugh Moore Fund, "Display Ad 189," *New York Times*, December 15, 1964, E5.

[3] Hugh Moore Fund, "Catholic Bishops Assail Birth Control As Millions Face Starvation," *New York Times*, December 18, 1966, E14.

respected American Baptists affixed their signature to another population advertisement in the *New York Times*. This advertisement urged President Nixon to translate his concern about population growth into concrete action.[4]

American Baptists as a denomination first expressed environmental concern in the mid-1960s. At the 1965 meeting of the American Baptist Convention, delegates adopted resolutions that addressed separately the twin environmental issues of population and pollution. The resolution titled "Family Planning" put American Baptists on record in favor of family planning programs. Meanwhile, the resolution titled "Conservation," declared:

> Whereas, the earth and its resources are a gift of God to sustain life, and whereas the conservation of our national resources is imperative in view of the pollution and misuse of land, water and air. Be it resolved that our churches voice concern for, and give support to, sound methods of conservation of our natural resources.

This short resolution did not, however, elaborate on what qualified as a "sound method" of conservation.[5]

Three years later, American Baptists passed two additional resolutions which again touched on the issues of population and pollution. One resolution called for international economic justice and offered non-specific support for "population control."[6] The second resolution focused on economic justice in the United States. It requested the federal government to give greater attention to environmental problems and asked

---

[4] Campaign to Check the Population Explosion, "Display Ad 229," *New York Times*, April 13, 1969, E9.

[5] "Resolution on Conservation," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1966-1967), 75. Each yearbook covers the year prior to the publication date.

[6] "Resolution on Economic Justice (International)," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1969-1970), 135.

industries to take into account the depletion of natural resources, environmental destruction and pollution with regard to business practices.[7] Like the previous ones, these resolutions lacked details and did not delve into what type of specific action American Baptists wished the government and businesses to pursue.

Several months after the inaugural Earth Day celebration in 1970, the American Baptist Convention approved a more in-depth environmental statement. This statement was part of a larger resolution titled "National Priorities." Here, the problems of population and pollution were emphasized equally. The statement warned that, "The rapidly increasing pressure of world population, coupled with massive technological capabilities, constitute an unprecedented threat to the survival of life and beauty on this planet." Pollution of the air, water and indiscriminate use of harmful pesticides were also cited. American Baptists rejected the popular notion of a "technological fix." Instead, the statement stressed that, despite its many capabilities, technology would never be able to create substitutes for water or air nor recreate extinct species. Every American Baptist pastor was mailed a copy of this statement. It emphasized that natural resources are limited and that all of creation is interrelated. Thus, "annihilation of any link threatens the existence of the whole."[8] As later sections will demonstrate, the idea of interdependence was a key component of American Baptist environmentalism.

This statement concluded with a charge to American Baptist churches and denominational units to take steps to reduce and eliminate pollution in homes, streets,

---

[7] "Resolution on Economic Justice (National)," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1969-1970), 130-131.

[8] "Resolution on Environmental Concerns—1970," in *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Churches USA, 1996).

parks and other public places. It also called upon American Baptists to back strong legislation and touch administrative action at both the state and federal levels to clean up the environment and control pollution. While this statement was lengthier than the aforementioned resolutions, it only offered few specifics pertaining to needed action. The statement also completely lacked a theological foundation and made no appeals to Christian principles or particular Bible verses.

In addition to resolutions, American Baptists began addressing environmental issues in the mid-1960s through its participation in ecumenical conferences and other initiatives. From its days as the Northern Baptist Convention, American Baptists, like other mainline Protestants, have been active in the ecumenical movement. The Northern Baptist Convention was a charter member of the Baptist World Alliance in 1905 and joined the Federal Council of Churches in 1908 and helped transform it into the National Council of Churches in 1950. The Northern Baptist Convention also became a member of the World Council of Churches in 1948.[9] Historian Leon McBeth has characterized American Baptists as having "played a leading role in both American and world ecumenical ventures throughout the twentieth-century."[10]

The American Baptist Convention sent delegates to the World Conference on Church and Society in Switzerland during the summer of 1966. Sponsored by the World Council of Churches, the largest global ecumenical organization, the conference studied and discussed pressing social problems such as the relationship between the food supply and global population growth. The Department of International Affairs of the American

---

[9] Albert W. Wardin, *The Twelve Baptist Tribes in the United States: A Historical and Statistical Analysis* (Atlanta, GA: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2007), 17-18.

[10] H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 563.

Baptist Convention was especially concerned with this relationship. As a result, the department organized several national seminars on the topic of food and population. Informational packets on the topic were also prepared and distributed to American Baptist pastors. Each packet included a study guide to help American Baptist churches better understand the consequences of global overpopulation.[11]

On the subject of pollution, American Baptists made use of the pollution pamphlet published by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. As discussed in the previous chapter, this pamphlet utilized Paul Ehrlich's "Spaceship Earth" metaphor to communicate the threats to the environment posed by an absence of strict pollution control laws. The Department of Christian Education of the American Baptist Convention made the SBC's pollution pamphlet available to thousands of church youth groups.[12] These are just a few notable examples during this period of denominational entities working to educate and raise awareness about environmental issues.

Following the first-ever Earth Day, the Division of Social Concern of the American Baptist Convention launched a coalition of mainline Protestant denominations to collectively confront various ecological problems. Named the Ecology Church Action Project, this coalition included the American Baptist Convention, the Lutheran Church of America, the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church. Environmental advocacy and activism among mainline Protestant denominations would eventually

---

[11] "Report of the Department of International Affairs," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1967-1968), 101-102.

[12] Christian Life Commission, *Issues & Answers: Pollution* (Nashville, TN: Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1970). Department of Christian Education, "To the Teachers: Why Pamphlets," Department of Christian Education Collection, American Baptist Historical Society.

crystallize over the next decade with the establishment of the National Council of Churches' Eco-Justice Working Group. From the beginning, American Baptists were involved in these ecumenical environmental efforts.[13]

The efforts of American Baptists and other mainline Protestants made the pages of the *New York Times* in 1971. Mainline Protestant denominations including the American Baptist Convention and the Episcopal Church had joined forces to halt a copper mining operation in Puerto Rico. Representatives from the different denominations testified at a hearing that the mining operation would cause significant ecological damage. The groups had standing to testify as stockholders in the American metal and mining company. This was one of the first attempts by American Baptists and other mainline Protestants to use their investments as leverage to persuade corporations to be responsible and adapt business practices in light of environmental concerns.[14]

Several American Baptist theologians began to address the "ecological crisis" during this formative period. Kenneth Cauthen, a professor of theology at American Baptist-affiliated Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, contributed an article in 1969 to the popular mainline Protestant periodical *Christian Century* titled "The Case for Christian Biopolitics." This article concisely laid out Cauthen's future-oriented theological vision for humanity in light of urgent ecological problems.[15] Two years later, Cauthen developed his article into a book titled *Christian Biopolitics: A Credo &*

---

[13] "Report of the Division of Social Concern," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1971), 37-38.

[14] Douglas Robinson, "6 Church Groups Fighting Mine Project," *New York Times*, February 9, 1971, 78.

[15] Kenneth Cauthen, "The Case for Christian Biopolitics," *Christian Century*, November 19, 1969, 1481-1483.

*Strategy for the Future* (1971). Cauthen argued that technological and political solutions alone were not sufficient to confront the "ecological realities of population, hunger, and pollution."[16] He contended that there must be a "fundamental transformation of ideas, attitudes, values, commitments and goals."[17] This fundamental transformation was needed, according to Cauthen, to ensure world survival. Consequently, Cauthen saw theologians as having a vital role to play in facilitating this transformation. Cauthen envisioned theologians working alongside "thinkers" from other disciplines including the sciences to develop a "creative strategy of evolutionary design" to accomplish the goal of saving the planet from an ecological doomsday.[18]

Phyllis Trible, a professor then at American Baptist-affiliated Andover Newton Theological Seminary, wrote about environmental problems in a different manner than Cauthen. Trible's writing lacked the doomsday tone and apocalyptic rhetoric of Cauthen's *Christian Biopolitics*. Nonetheless, Trible expressed much environmental concern. As a biblical scholar, Trible took issue with Lynn White's popular thesis that blamed the world's ecological woes on western Christianity. Trible set out to, in part, refute White in her journal article titled "Ancient Priests and Modern Polluters" published in a 1971 issue of the *Andover Newton Quarterly*.

Trible focused on interpreting the meaning of the biblical phrase "dominion over all the earth." Contrary to the claims of Lynn White, "dominion over the earth is not alienation from nature," according to Trible. She contended that dominion does not

---

[16] Kenneth Cauthen, *Christian Biopolitics: A Credo & Strategy for the Future* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1971), 19.

[17] Ibid., 35.

[18] Ibid., 183.

involve the antagonism or exploitation of nature. Trible stated, "Man over nature is not man against nature." She maintained that dominion allows nature to be manipulated only to serve the goal of goodness. In Trible's view, dominion sanctions use and censures abuse. Rejecting White's contention that Genesis 1 is an anti-environment text, she explained, "Genesis 1 translates not as an anti-ecological treatise but as a liturgy for ecology." According to Trible, there should exist no conflict between technology and dominion. However, as Trible noted, technology must be grounded in "liturgy for ecology" (Genesis 1) and must not harm the earth. Referring to pollution as the "fruit of our sin," Trible concluded, "We need to understand and affirm our dominion even as we seek forgiveness for our sins."[19]

These early expressions of environmental concern reveal that American Baptists were not disinterested in social issues. In fact, the opposite was true. More than any other individual, Jitsuo Morikawa was responsible for leading American Baptists to more fully embrace the social implications of the Christian faith. Thus, the history of American Baptist environmental engagement cannot be told apart from a discussion of the role of Jitsuo Morikawa in denominational life. It was because of the efforts and vision of Morikawa that American Baptists began a sustained programmatic denomination-wide emphasis on ecology and justice in the early 1970s.

---

[19] Phyllis Trible, "Ancient Priests and Modern Polluters," *Andover Newton Quarterly* 12 (1971): 77-79.

*Jitsuo Morikawa and "New Evangelism"*

Sociologist and popular Christian author Tony Campolo has described Jitsuo Morikawa as "the most dynamic and brilliant leader that American Baptists have had in the past fifty years."[20] After being ordained to the ministry in 1937 by Immanuel Baptist Church in Pasadena, California, Morikawa moved to Louisville, Kentucky to receive his theological training from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Upon graduation, Morikawa returned to the Golden State to serve Los Angeles-area Japanese Baptist churches. During World War II, Morikawa and his family were placed in an internment camp in Arizona alongside nearly 18,000 other Japanese-Americans. After two years in the war camp, Northern Baptist leaders were finally able to secure the release of Morikawa and his wife.[21]

With the war still raging in 1943, the historic First Baptist Church of Chicago, then a predominantly white congregation, called Morikawa to serve as pastor. Thirteen years later, Morikawa left Chicago to begin what would be a twenty-year career as an executive with the American Baptist Convention. Morikawa was selected in 1956 to replace the retiring Walter E. Woodbury as the Executive-Secretary of the Department of Evangelism of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies. For two decades, Woodbury had been in charge of the denomination's evangelism efforts. Through his

---

[20] Tony Campolo, *Can Mainline Denominations Make a Comeback?* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995), 13-14.

[21] Yeh Allen, "A Multiethnic and Prophetic Heritage in the American Baptist Churches, USA: Orlando E. Costas and Jitsuo Morikawa," *American Baptist Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 369-370. See also Hazel Takii Morikawa, *Footprints: One Man's Pilgrimage: A Biography of Jitsuo Morikawa* (Oakland, CA: The Jitsuo Morikawa Memorial, 1990). Jitsuo Morikawa, *My Spiritual Pilgrimage* (New York, NY: The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of the American Baptist Churches, 1973).

focus on visitation or "door-to-door" evangelism, Woodbury helped enlist greater participation of laypersons in the life of local churches and the denomination. Woodbury has been credited with helping rebuild the denomination during the post-Great Depression era.[22]

With the selection of Morikawa, American Baptist executives signaled an intentional change in direction. The American Baptist Home Mission Societies noted in its 1957 report that "the year 1956 may prove to be a turning point in the evangelistic history of the denomination when one notable era came to a close and a new era still uncertain began." The report continued, "The new era into which we have entered seems to point a searching finger in the direction of a needed recovering of a profound theology of evangelism."[23] As Woodbury's successor, Morikawa was tasked with recovering such a theology for American Baptists. This would be an extremely challenging and controversial task.

Morikawa was put in charge of organizing and overseeing the Baptist Jubilee Advance (BJA). The BJA was a five-year ecumenical effort (1959-1964) to unite the different Baptist groups in North America around the cause of evangelism. Participants in the BJA included American Baptists, Southern Baptists, Black Baptists and Canadian Baptists.[24] Morikawa and other organizers adopted a statement of purpose which characterized the BJA as "an attempt to quicken, in professed believers in Christ, a sense

---

[22] McBeth, 589.

[23] "Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention* (Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1957), 313.

[24] "Baptist Jubilee Advance Collection," Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives, AR 132.

of responsibility for carrying out all phases of the Great Commission with zeal and fervor." The BJA's first objective was "To win the lost to Christ."[25] Each year the BJA had a different emphasis and theme including world missions, Bible teaching and training, local church renewal, and financial stewardship. Renowned evangelist Billy Graham was the keynote speaker in 1964, the last year of the BJA. At this final gathering of the BJA, the Baptist groups celebrated the sesquicentennial of the first organized Baptist denomination in the United States known as the Triennial Convention.[26]

During the Baptist Jubilee Advance, Morikawa sought to redefine evangelism for American Baptists. He believed evangelism to be much more than traditional revivalism that was concerned only with individual conversion. Consequently, Morikawa promoted a "holistic evangelism" which understood salvation in cosmic terms meaning that Jesus Christ, through his death and resurrection, set loose redemptive powers that would save not only individuals but the entire world including political and economic structures. Morikawa explained:

> We have obscured the gospel, distorted the gospel by assuming that evangelism was primarily and fundamentally winning souls to Christ and saving them from eternal perdition. That is part of evangelism....We have been nourished for so long theologically from our traditions of revivalistic evangelism that has focused so exclusively on the salvation of the soul, that we have missed out on the larger horizon of the redemption of cosmos, the restoration of God's universe. So we have developed churches which look upon social action as a subsidiary to

---

[25] "Purpose of the Baptist Jubilee Advance," *Baptist Press*, May 5, 1956, 30. See also "Purpose of the Baptist Jubilee Advance," *Baptist Press*, May 5, 1956, 30."Jubilee Advance Reaches Baptists Around World," *Baptist Press*, March 7, 1960, 30.

[26] "Baptist Jubilee Advance Collection." Out of this effort, the North American Baptist Fellowship of the Baptist World Alliance was formed to serve as a continuation of the BJA and its emphasis on evangelism, missions, Bible study and education. The American Baptist Convention was one of the charter members of this organization which still exists today. See "Progressive Baptists Vote Fellowship Participation," *Baptist Press*, February 3, 1966, 4-5.

> evangelism, the primary task to save individuals one by one. But no individual can be saved into the wholeness of salvation except on the context of society.[27]

Morikawa elaborated, "Evangelism is primarily the activity of God, transforming this world, renewing this world, sustaining this world, persons, society, institutions, families, corporations, and social structures."[28] The mission of God is evangelism and the mission of the church is to participate in God's mission, according to Morikawa. Thus, he urged American Baptist congregations to participate in God's mission by being the "church in the world." Morikawa believed that the church is to serve as a witness to God's redemption in the effort to reform social structures and create a new society in order to see that "the Kingdom of this world becomes the Kingdom of Christ."[29]

Morikawa argued against a distinction between the sacred and the secular. In his view, there should be no distinction between Christian and non-Christian, the church and the world, because God, through his act of redemption, reconciles and unites all of creation. Therefore, the world must be affirmed rather than renounced, according to Morikawa. He insisted that the church has an important role to play in delivering to the world this reality of God's redemption.[30] Naturally then, Morikawa recommended greater ecumenical involvement on the part of American Baptists. He reasoned that churches could accomplish much more collectively than they could independently.[31] American

---

[27] Jitsuo Morikawa, quoted in *Footprints: One Man's Pilgrimage: A Biography of Jitsuo Morikawa* (Oakland, CA: The Jitsuo Morikawa Memorial 1990, 89.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Jitsuo Morikawa, *The Nature and Purpose of Mission* (St. Louis, MO: UCCF Publications Office, 1963), 6.

[30] Eldon G. Ernst, "The Baptist Jubilee Advance in Historical Context: An Analysis of American Baptist Evangelism in the Twentieth Century," *Foundations* 9 (January-March 1966): 16.

[31] McBeth, 590.

Baptists agreed and the Office of Ecumenical Relations was established in 1966 to make ecumenism more of a priority for the denomination.[32]

Additionally, Morikawa adamantly declared that social concern and evangelism could not be separated. Morikawa emphasized that evangelism necessarily is social because "faith and response never are solitary but social, always relational, relating one to God, to his neighbor to himself."[33] This redefinition of evangelism meant that evangelism encompassed everything related to the activities and relationship between God and humans. Those like his predecessor Walter Woodbury, who limited the task of evangelism to door-to-door visitation were promoting, in Morikawa's view, an "obsolete theology" that was "synonymous with a narrow, inadequate interpretation of the Scriptures."[34]

As the Executive-Director of the Baptist Jubilee Advance campaign for American Baptists, Morikawa contended forcefully for this comprehensive or "holistic evangelism" that stressed social action and active engagement in the world. The controversial nature of Morikawa's evangelism was on display at the final gathering of the BJA in 1964. There, a twenty-member panel composed of representatives from the seven participating Baptist groups presented a pamphlet on shared Baptist distinctives. At the presentation, Morikawa publicly lamented that the pamphlet devoted nearly two pages to the subject of baptism but only four lines to race relations. He stated, "This whole document is a preoccupation with the church. We need to be delivered out of preoccupation with the

---

[32] Ibid., 602.

[33] Jitsuo Morikawa, quoted in Ernst, "The Baptist Jubilee Advance in Historical Context," 19.

[34] Jitsuo Morikawa, *The Anguish of our Witness* (New York, NY: Division of Evangelism, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, 1964), 9.

church and bring Baptists into a relevant engagement with Christian service in the world." Morikawa called upon the Baptist groups to place more emphasis on the pressing social issues of the day. However, Morikawa received pushback from several Baptist leaders, most notably Herschel Hobbs, the former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Hobbs contended that theological issues such as baptism and biblical inspiration were not "dated" but instead highly relevant to every generation.[35]

Morikawa's new evangelism also stirred up controversy within the American Baptist Convention. When the staff of the Department of Evangelism realized that their boss would not be utilizing the more traditional evangelism methods of Woodbury, they resigned one by one. In their place, Morikawa hired theologians Richard Jones and the more well-known Harvey Cox to serve as consultants.[36] Morikawa's efforts as the denomination's evangelism executive to deemphasize individual conversion particularly bothered some American Baptists. Pastors accused Morikawa of being a universalist and not believing in individual salvation. Morikawa repeatedly rejected these claims. On numerous occasions, Morikawa testified to his own personal conversion experience and explained that his theology had simply been misunderstood.[37] Baptist historian Everett Goodwin has observed that Morikawa's new evangelism was indeed initially divisive but had "transforming results for American Baptist churches."[38] This new evangelism, with

---

[35] "Differences and Agreements Shared," *Baptist Press*, May 25, 1964, 2-3.

[36] Anthony Campolo Jr., "A Study of the Controversy in the American Baptist Convention over the Function and Structure of the Church," (PhD diss., Temple University, 1967), 127-128.

[37] "American Baptists Discuss Evangelism," *Baptist Press*, November 3, 1967, 1.

[38] Everett C. Goodwin, *Baptists in the Balance: The Tension Between Freedom and Responsibility* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1997), 389.

its focus on social change and activism, laid the theological foundation for the denomination's environmental emphasis beginning in the early 1970s.

One notable example of this "new evangelism" in action was the Metropolitan Associates of Philadelphia. In 1964, Morikawa and American Baptists spearheaded an ecumenical initiative to explore how churches could more effectively minister to men and women working in an urban context. This action-research program named received support and participation from six mainline Protestant denominations. Over 125 men and women, referred to as "lay associates," employed in education, arts, business and industry, politics and government, health and other sectors of Philadelphia were recruited to take part in the program.[39] The leaders and participants aimed, through reflection and action to develop close relationships with local, residential congregations. Those involved in the ministry also sought to better understand the challenges of urban life and work toward the renewal of the metropolis. This program of "experimental missionary action" lasted ten years and concluded in 1974.[40]

Eldon Ernst, an American Baptist academic and admirer of Jitsuo Morikawa, wrote that Morikawa recovered for American Baptists the "new evangelism" and social gospel legacy of Walter Rauschenbusch.[41] Regarded as the father of the Social Gospel Movement, Rauschenbusch, a Northern Baptist pastor and academic, had penned an article in 1904 titled "The New Evangelism" that was published in the popular weekly

---

[39] David L. Specht and Richard R. Broholm, "Toward a Theology of Institutions," in *Practicing Servant-Leadership: Succeeding Through Trust, Bravery and Forgiveness*, eds. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 169.

[40] "Report of the Division of Evangelism," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention* (Valley Forge, PA, 1966-1967), 275-276.

[41] Walter B. Pulliam, "Tribute to Jitsuo Morikawa," *American Baptist Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (June 1993): 108.

magazine *The Independent*. In that article, Rauschenbusch posited that a "fuller and purer expression" of evangelism has always been possible and desirable. He suggested that, "it is a lack of Christian humility to assume that our Gospel and the Gospel are identical."[42] Rauschenbusch argued that humanity must "reconstruct its moral and religious synthesis whenever it passes from one era to another."[43] He called for a barrier-breaking "new evangelism" that would recover the social emphases of ancient Christianity and "again exert the full power of the Gospel." Rauschenbusch's new evangelism stressed not only individual salvation but also social salvation. This new evangelism, according to Rauschenbusch, would awaken and equip Americans to confront its nation's social and economic sins caused by unregulated industrialization and unplanned urbanization. Rauschenbusch explained that this "new evangelism" would "give an adequate definition of how a Christian man should live under modern conditions and then summon men to live so."[44]

Clearly, Morikawa's evangelism which he referred to as "holistic evangelism" was very similar to the "new evangelism" promoted by fellow American Baptist Walter Rauschenbusch in the early twentieth-century. While Morikawa's vision and methods were new to many, if not most American Baptists, his efforts to redefine evangelism were not unique to mainline Protestantism. Protestants were largely united in the 1940s and into the 1950s around a program of traditional and often aggressive evangelism of personal conversion. Protestant denominations came together during this period for

---

[42] Walter Rauschenbusch, "The New Evangelism," in *American Protestant Thought in the Liberal Era*, ed. William R. Hutchison (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), 109.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., 115.

different evangelistic campaigns such as the United Evangelistic Advance (1949-1952). Historian Thomas Berg found that a source of this unity and common commitment to an evangelism of conversion was a "keen sense of immediate external threats, common enemies whose presence could draw together Protestants together who otherwise disagreed." These threats were Catholicism and Communism. Protestants attempted to maintain control over American culture and found disturbing the increased public influence and visibility of the Catholic Church and worried that communism would make in-roads in secular society.[45]

This fragile evangelism consensus began to crumble in the 1960s. Evangelical Protestant denominations such as the Southern Baptist Convention continued to preach the conversion model of evangelism. Meanwhile, the mainline Protestant denominations including the American Baptist Convention, began to redefine evangelism to involve social action. Berg pointed out that the mainline Protestant commitment to ecumenical dialogue led to improved relations with Catholics during the 1960s. Also, the attacks on the conversionist model of evangelism coming from theologians such as Reinhold Niebuhr definitely influenced mainline Protestants. These factors, along with a pronounced emphasis on social ministries in the "secular world," contributed to the breakdown of the Protestant consensus around evangelism.[46] Berg concluded that evangelicalism at the close of the 1960s was "more than ever before, a source of division rather than unity among Protestants."[47] It was in this context of rapidly changing

---

[45] Thomas Berg, "'Proclaiming Together'? Convergence and Divergence in Mainline and Evangelical Evangelism, 1945-1967," *Religious and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 55-56.

[46] Ibid., 63.

[47] Ibid., 66.

mainline Protestant attitudes toward the conversionist model of evangelism that Jitsuo Morikawa's work occurred to redefine and broaden the definition and practice of evangelism for American Baptists.

*Board of National Ministries and Eco-Justice*

With this social action-oriented and expanded definition of evangelism, Morikawa led the newly-named Board of National Ministries (formerly the American Baptist Home Mission Societies) on a three-year strategic planning process. He directed a research project to identify the leading social trends and reflect on the mission of the church in the world. The process launched as leaders in the environmental movement were planning the first-ever Earth Day celebration. As previous chapters noted, the popularity of environmental issues served to unite many Americans at a time when divisive issues such as civil rights and the Vietnam War were tearing the nation apart. Recognizing this popularity, Morikawa and the Board of National Ministries concluded that ecology and issues relating to human justice were of the utmost concern.[48]

Out of this planning process emerged the term eco-justice. American Baptists, specifically National Ministries' staff associates Richard Jones and Owen Owens, have been widely credited with coining this now popular term.[49] Morikawa, Jones, Owens and

---

[48] William E. Gibson, "Introduction to the Journey," in *Eco-Justice—The Unfinished Journey*, ed. William E. Gibson (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 10.

[49] Michael Moody, "Caring for Creation: Environmental Advocacy by Mainline Protestant Organizations, " in *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*, ed. Robert Wuthnow (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 240. Rich Schramm, "Ecology and Justice: The Ongoing Ministry of Owen Owens," *The Christian Citizen* 1 (2009): 5. Dieter T. Hessel, "Eco-Justice Ethics: A Brief Overview," Forum on Religion and Ecology, http://www.ecojusticenow.org /resources/Eco-Justice-Ethics/Eco-Justice-Ethics-(Brief-Overview).pdf (accessed December 10, 2011). William Gibson, "Eco-Justice: New Perspective for a Time of Turning," in *For Creation's Sake: Preaching, Ecology & Justice*, ed. Dieter T. Hessel (Philadelphia, PA: Geneva Press, 1985), 23.

others involved judged that issues of ecology and justice were interrelated and inseparable. Mainline Protestants agreed and within a short period of time many churches and denominations embraced this term. Eco-justice task forces were formed and spread across the nation in the early 1970s.[50] One such example is the Eco-Justice Project and Network. This initiative which aimed to integrate ecological ethics with justice issues was birthed in 1973 by an ecumenical campus ministry at Cornell University. Presbyterian social ethicist William E. Gibson would coordinate the Eco-Justice Project and Network for twenty years.[51]

American Baptists formed their own task force in 1971. In fact, the Board of National Ministries created two task forces. One task force was assigned the mission of researching issues of ecology while the other task force was to study issues of justice. Morikawa's team at National Ministries hoped that these separate task forces would provide insight as to how American Baptists as a denomination could help achieve both ecological wholeness and social justice. The reports of the task forces proved vital to the continuation of this denominational strategic planning process.[52]

The report of the Task Force on Ecology was released in the fall of 1971. With Owen Owens as the principal author, the task force identified four primary sources of environmental degradation in their report. These included rapid population growth, the concentration of population in metropolitan areas, increase in the gross national product

---

[50] Moody, 240.

[51] "Eco-Justice Ethics: A Brief Overview."

[52] "Report of the Office of Planning and Organizational Development," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1972), 244-245. Board of National Ministries, "A Scenario for Decision-Making: An Outline of Explanation and Information for Board of Managers," December 1972, American Baptist Home Mission Societies Collection, American Baptist Historical Society, 5.

(GNP) and lifestyle changes.[53] The task force reasoned that preserving the status quo was not an option as environmental disaster was a potential reality. The report stated, "Without drastically changing its priorities, world population will collapse in less than a century from the effects of pollution, food shortage, disease and war."[54] This reality of a massive crisis and the threat of imminent ecological doom demanded that American Baptists adopt and work toward the goal of creating a "just and ecologically whole world, for God sent Jesus that we might have life, and have it abundantly."[55] The church, particularly American Baptists, enjoys a "responsibility to bring about change to improve our quality of life," according to the report.[56] The report elaborated:

> The evangelistic task consists in so proclaiming Jesus Christ, that the Spirit of God touches we who bear the spirit of modern industrial civilization. Then rather than seeking life in the creation, men will be empowered to give life to it, expressing in corporate and personal being, love of God and love and respect for the creatures—human, animal, plant, and earth—for whom Christ died.

Not surprisingly, this task of creating a "just and ecologically whole world" was tied tightly to evangelism. Jitsuo Morikawa and his staff recovered and promoted this "new evangelism."

The task force explained that the fundamental assumption that served as the basis of its report was the root conviction of Christian ethics that "God wills the good of all." Consequently, the report noted, American Baptists have an obligation as Christians to further the common good at the intersection of ecology, which is concerned with the

---

[53] Donald Crosby, John Purdy and Owen Owens, "Salvation and Ecology: Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies Task Force on Ecology," Fall 1971, American Baptist Home Mission Societies Collection, American Baptist Historical Society, 1.

[54] Ibid., i.

[55] Ibid., v.

[56] Ibid., 1.

relationship of man and his natural environment, and justice which is concerned with the relationship between man and other men.[57] Due to this core conviction and Christian obligation, the report stressed that clear ethical teaching relating to ecology was desperately needed. The task force declared that American Baptists must retire the theological idea that man, because of his God-given dominion, enjoys the freedom to act irresponsibly toward nature. American Baptists were called on to repent and show self-restraint rather than promote the values of consumerism. The report emphasized that this restraint was necessary to move the nation toward a steady, just economy. According to the report, population control and a more equal distribution of goods were necessary in order to create a "just economy." However, the task force acknowledged that this eco-justice standard of living might be much lower than that to which many Americans had grown accustomed.[58]

The task force also offered a concise, simple restatement of the historic Baptist understanding of the doctrine of creation and called on American Baptists to "really believe our conviction" that each individual is made in the image of God and of infinite worth. To really believe this conviction, the report warned, "cannot mean affirming the social ethic that says convert a man's heart, and he will automatically do what is right in his economic and political activity." The task force viewed this ethic as an extremely

[57] Ibid., 10. The report continued, "Consequently, to deal with issues of justice apart from ecology would mean the destruction of the very life support base necessary for production. On the other hand, to deal with ecology apart from the justice issue would surely lead to an escape from historical responsibility." Ibid., 13-14.

[58] Ibid., 28.

unhealthy individualism. Despite this criticism, the task force failed to clearly articulate what comprised a healthy individualism.[59]

The report recommended new forms of action that American Baptists could collectively undertake as a denomination to achieve the goal of a "just and ecologically whole world." Lay ministry was included as a priority. Citing the example of the Metropolitan Associates of Philadelphia, the report announced that American Baptists needed to direct more of its efforts toward lay ministry. This focus was due to the perceived influence of the denomination on its members. In addition to educational initiatives to raise awareness about environmental issues, the task force suggested that each American Baptist-related institution develop standards, goals and guidelines for its programs to ensure ecologically responsible practices. The report also urged the development of alliances with corporations and other organizations to effect change. Policy and legislative efforts were also encouraged.[60]

Following the release of the Task Force on Ecology report, the Board of National Ministries staff prepared a study that combined the findings of both task forces. This study offered concise definitions of ecology and justice. Justice was defined as: "A redress to correct those points at which people are denied a sense of self-worth and the respect of their fellow men...participating in the decisions crucial to their existence...equity in the distribution of goods and services." Meanwhile, ecology was defined as "an inclusionst perspective with man being viewed as part of the 'web of life,' the inter-linked, interdependent, and inter-penetrating systems of living beings that make

---

[59] Ibid., 29. Additionally, the report rejected the notion of a "technological fix" to the nation's environmental problems.

[60] Ibid., 46-47.

up the biosphere of planet earth."[61] Both definitions were restatements from the separate task force reports.

With these definitions, the Board of National Ministries identified different points at which ecology and justice intersect. The Board found that the most crucial point of intersection was the concept of interdependence. Central to justice concerns, related the Board, is the belief that "all men are interdependent and that they are responsible to one another." Similarly, central to the concerns of ecology is a focus on the interdependence of man and nature or, more broadly, the interdependence among all life and the environment. Therefore, as the Board stressed in their study, a proper understanding of God's creation sees man as interdependent both with other men and with nature.[62]

The Board of National Ministries study also made use of Paul Ehrlich's "Spaceship Earth." This was a term invoked repeatedly throughout American Baptist literature on the environment during the 1960s and early 1970s. The study stated:

> Earth is indeed a spaceship. There are limits to how much food the land can grow. Rivers, lakes, and oceans can absorb only so much pollution. As raw materials become more scarce, more energy is required to get them and costs increase. As long as the demands on the life support systems of Spaceship Earth are not too great, the growth of industrial civilization can continue.[63]

The Board coupled their use of the "Spaceship Earth" metaphor with the popular argument of the day that there are limits to economic growth. The Board explained, "Beyond a certain point, growth and development no longer mean progress; they threaten

---

[61] American Baptist Churches USA, Board of National Ministries, "Ecological Wholeness and Justice: The Imperative of God," *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974), 134.

[62] Ibid., 135-136.

[63] Ibid., 138.

to destroy the very life support base necessary for production."[64] Unlike many denominational studies that lack specifics, the Board did offer an answer to the then popular question of how much economic growth and development was too much. The Board envisioned a "no-growth society" in terms of production, population size and metropolitan expansion A no-growth society was "worthwhile and necessary" in order to help bring the economic system into ecological balance. This would happen, according to the Board, through a radical reorientation of the nation's social priorities.[65]

The Board pointed out in its study that this reorientation of priorities would entail an increase in centralized government control and planning. In other words, the Board believed that the regulatory arm of the government was needed to put a halt to widespread environmental degradation and social injustices such as income inequality. While stressing that greater government regulation was necessary, the Board did acknowledge that a more powerful role for government "should not make us feel easy, however, since as Baptists we have been deeply committed to freedom of the individual." Due to this concern, the Board called on American Baptists to redouble their efforts to protect and preserve individual freedom. This meant, according to the study, that any increase in government regulation and control must be accompanied by an increase in individual freedom. The Board declared, "We Protestants who know the value of freedom of conscience must stand up for it as never before. Compulsion cannot, and must not be absolute."[66] No plan or specifics were given to demonstrate how the

---

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., 139.

[66] Ibid., 139-140.

government could or should simultaneously increase both government control and individual freedom.

Throughout this denominational planning process, the Board of National Ministries penned and published additional study papers that further elaborated on the relationship between ecological wholeness and social justice. A widely-distributed denominational white paper titled "A Scenario for Decision Making," offered a detailed definition of the term eco-justice. This paper underscored that eco-justice aimed to link together "different camps" of people, specifically environmentalists and social justice advocates. It also identified three primary characteristics of eco-justice. First, eco-justice stresses the previously mentioned concept of interdependence and rejects the view that man has the right to dominate nature in a destructive manner. The Apostle Paul's statement in 1st Corinthians 12 that we are "members of one another" was cited, in part, as the basis for this emphasis on interdependence. Second, eco-justice requires individuals and institutions to value natural resources and the rest of God's creation as "a trust for the sustenance of all creatures in all generations." Nature was not to be regarded as property merely to be consumed and exploited. The biblical basis of this second characteristic, according to the Board, was the emphasis on man as the steward of God's creation found in Mark 8:34-37.[67] Third and finally, eco-justice demands respect for

[67] "He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Mark 8:34-37 (New Revised Standard Version).

nature. The Apostle Paul was again cited. This time, the paper referenced the respect and reverence for all of God's creation evidenced in Romans 1:20.[68]

Owen Owens elaborated on the second characteristic of eco-justice in a separate denominational paper titled "Stewardship in a Transitional Era." Owens observed that the term stewardship had long been applied in a religious context to the use of resources, most often financial resources. He argued that Christians have a biblical obligation to be good stewards of all resources. Christians must become, according to Owens, "stewards of our planetary spaceship." He contended that in order to be a good steward, Christians must work for fundamental structural changes in American society. Structural changes were prerequisite, in Owens's view, to achieving both ecological wholeness and social justice. Owens referred to this stewardship as "eco-just stewardship" which he maintained is "essential to the future well being of all."[69] This eco-just stewardship demanded a radical reorientation of social priorities. It called for a fundamentally different lifestyle in which individuals and institutions alike consumed less resources, according to Owens.[70]

Morikawa, Owens and other National Ministries staff members used these documents to develop three denominational goal statements related to eco-justice. American Baptist offices, boards and divisions were to use these goal statements to

---

[68] Board of National Ministries, "A Scenario for Decision Making," 5-6. "Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse;" Romans 1:20 (New Revised Standard Version).

[69] Owen Owens, "Stewardship in a Transitional Era," 1972, American Baptist Home Mission Societies Collection, American Baptist Historical Society, 4-5.

[70] Owens, "Stewardship in a Transitional Era," 7-8.

evaluate and implement a denomination-wide eco-justice emphasis.[71] The first goal statement concerned eco-justice in the economic arena. It stated:

> The American Baptist Home Missions Society, as an expression of the church, has as its goal for mission to redirect economic institutions from emphasis on uncontrolled growth and inequitable distribution of profit toward a goal of dynamic equilibrium which expresses concern for the poor and recognizes that the earth's resources are finite.[72]

The Board of National Ministries developed and distributed a white paper to explain these statements. The paper articulated several ways that American Baptists could help make this goal a reality. The Board emphasized that the value of economic growth must be vigorously challenged when such growth is not eco-just. Second, the Board urged a new understanding of "profit" using a cost-benefit analysis approach that weighed ecological and justice concerns. Third and fourth, the Board encouraged a significant decrease in consumption and a socially-conscious investment strategy.[73]

The Board's second goal statement dealt with eco-justice in the political system. It stated:

> The American Baptist Home Mission Societies, as an expression of the church, has as its goal for mission to redirect, at all levels, the legislative, executive and judicial structures and procedures of government from the exploitation of human beings and resources of nature to structures and procedures which provide for responsible uses of the earth's resources, as well as enabling all voices of community interest, especially voluntary citizens' groups.[74]

---

[71] "Report of the Office of Planning and Organizational Development," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1973), 206.

[72] Board of National Ministries, "Structural Change of Cultural Institutions Toward Eco-Justice: An Outline of Board of National Ministries Action in a Region," December 13, 1972, American Baptist Home Mission Societies Collection, American Baptist Historical Society, 8.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

To accomplish this goal, the Board noted that American Baptists needed to develop coalitions to effectively lobby for legislation and other reforms. More specifically, American Baptists were asked to lobby for the reform of the judicial system to allow for increase arbitration to ensure that corporate practices meet eco-justice guidelines. However, the Board did not indicate what types of structural reforms of society and the political system were needed.[75]

The third and final goal statement concerned eco-justice in the cultural system. It stated:

> The American Baptist Home Mission Society, as an expression of the church, has as its goal for mission to redirect those institutions which define reality from an emphasis on value systems and life styles which misuse human and natural resources to the development of value systems and life styles which are based on interdependence with, rather than dominance of, nature and other human beings.[76]

This goal, according to the Board, required that American Baptists work to develop new structures and institutions not rooted in a commitment to gross materialism. Further, the Board emphasized that institutions in the advertising business commit to helping individuals and families become responsible stewards of the earth for the sake of all humanity. Ultimately, as the Board pointed out, this goal could not be accomplished absent a radical change in the basic values and perspectives of individuals and institutions in American society.[77]

---

[75] Ibid., 9.

[76] Ibid., 10.

[77] Ibid.

*Implementation of Denominational Eco-Justice*

Throughout much of 1972 and 1973, the different departments and offices of the newly renamed American Baptist Churches USA set out to emphasize eco-justice in their programs and projects. The eco-justice goal statement that the Board of National Ministries had adopted guided these American Baptist entities. For example, the Department of Finances of the Board of National Ministries formed the Social and Ethical Responsibility in Investments Committee in 1972 and developed investment guidelines based on social criteria.[78] Pollution of air and water and environmental degradation were listed as social criteria alongside race, sex discrimination and militarism in the new guidelines. The finance department aimed to do its part in working toward the goal of eco-justice through more environmentally-conscious and socially responsible investment practices.[79]

Meanwhile, the Office of Planning and Organizational Development hosted two eco-justice themed retreats in the fall of 1973 for staff members of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies. At these retreats, staffers studied the ecological crisis, justice issues and focused on the limits of economic growth. American Baptist staff members investigated these topics with the aid of Jorgen Randers, one of the authors of the popular and influential bestseller *The Limits to Growth*.[80]

---

[78] "Ronald E. Schlosser, "Chronology of the Board of National Ministries, 1817-1994" *American Baptist Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (June 1995): 150-153.

[79] Horace E. Gale, "Eco-Justice: A National Ministries Report," *The American Baptist*, June 1974, 27.

[80] "Report of the Office of Planning and Organizational Development," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1973), 206. The book, which sold more than thirty million copies and was translated into dozens of languages, was based on the findings of a two-year computer modeling study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It argued that there are limits to how much economic and industrial the world could sustain. Continued

The American Baptist Management Corporation, an organization which helped provide housing to low-income individuals and families, turned its attention to the impact of housing developments on the environment. Executives evaluated how to make ABMAC could better express its commitment to "justice and ecological wholeness." As a result of the evaluation, ABMAC began to discuss issues of ecology and justice with architects, planners, builders and others in the housing profession. Like the Department of Finance, ABMAC was concerned with promoting ethical business decisions and practices that did not contribute to the pollution and degradation of the environment.[81]

One of the early American Baptist entities to champion eco-justice was the financial planning services organization known as the American Baptist Extension Corporation (ABEC). ABEC provided loans to American Baptist churches for various different reasons and initiatives. Beginning in 1971, ABEC started encouraging congregations to recycle, emphasizing that in addition to glass, paper and aluminum cans, space could be recycled as well. This meant designing multi-purpose church buildings. ABEC assisted First Baptist Church of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in 1971 to "recycle space" in design of a new church building. ABEC explained its purpose, "It is our business to see that a church builds not to offend and rape its environment but to stay in harmony with it."[82] ABEC continued this emphasis on eco-justice in 1972 and 1973 through the provision of financial and planning assistance to churches. In its 1973 report, ABEC

---

exponential growth would eventually result in a worldwide ecological crisis. *The Limits to Growth* insisted that either an increase in the death rate or a decrease in the birth rate was necessary. See Donella Meadows, Dennis Meadows, and Jorgen Randers, *The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe Books, 1972).

[81] "Report of the American Baptist Management Corporation," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1973), 223-224.

[82] "Report of the American Baptist Extension Corporation," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1972), 255.

stated that it aimed to help churches design, support and maintain their facilities. It planned to do so via ecologically-minded "responsible stewardship which reflects justice both to the people of the church and people of the community."[83]

American Baptists also emphasized eco-justice in international missions programs. For example, American Baptist missionaries in Haiti were concerned with Haitian ecology. Out of this concern, the denomination purchased land and planted nearly 15,000 mahogany, pine and oak trees to help restore ecological balance in the impoverished island nation. Meanwhile, missionaries in both Haiti and Nicaragua confronted the world population problem through the provision of family planning services to residents. Birth control pills and devices were disseminated along with literature on family planning. American Baptist doctors and nurses also gave lectures at nearby hospitals on how to effectively use the birth control.[84]

The American Baptist Historical Society devoted an entire issue of its academic journal of history and theology titled *Foundations* to the subject of eco-justice. This issue included articles on eco-justice by American Baptist Bible scholar Phyllis Trible and denominational leaders Jitsuo Morikawa and Owen Owens. The issue also featured contributed articles from Methodist theologian John Cobb and Episcopal theologian Norman Faramelli. The opening editorial stated that the purpose and goal of the eco-justice themed issue was to serve as the starting point for an extended and in-depth discussion of eco-justice in American Baptist churches and institutions.[85]

---

[83] "Report of the American Baptist Extension Corporation," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1973), 220-221.

[84] "Report of the Division of Missions," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1972), 252-253.

[85] "Editorial: Ecojustice," *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974): 99.

Jitsuo Morikawa began the issue with a concise guest editorial that focused on the theological meaning of eco-justice. A central theological concern of eco-justice is salvation, according to Morikawa. He argued that salvation involves man's relation to God and nature. Morikawa asserted that each and every Christian is a "commissioned missionary" called as members of "the whole church, the whole people of God," to "catalyze and enable our whole constituency to become agents for renewal and redemption to the whole of mankind."[86]

Owen Owens followed Morikawa's lead with an article titled "Salvation and Ecology: Missionary Imperatives in Light of a New Cosmology." Owens' purpose was to articulate critical eco-justice values. He offered that the most important values which serve to define eco-justice are reverence, interdependence and stewardship. Owens explained that reverence is "an expression of a deep and overflowing love of the land and all creatures which live upon it—human and nonhuman." Describing reverence as an essential value that serves as an undergirding force for both interdependence and stewardship, Owens added: "Out of respect for the inherent rights of the others come both community and caring action."[87] Meanwhile, interdependence is the value that is depicted by the popular "Spaceship Earth" metaphor that many American Baptists including Owens referenced in eco-justice discussions. Owens defined interdependence as a factual reality that "shows us how completely everything is interconnected" and "appears when we truly respect and support the reality of the beings around us." This

---

[86] Jitsuo Morikawa, "Theological Meaning of Ecojustice Through Institutional Change," *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974): 100-101.

[87] Owen Owens, "Salvation and Ecology: Missionary Imperatives in Light of a New Cosmology," *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974): 113-114.

value of interdependence is then the opposite of dominance and exploitation.[88] Stewardship is the third value that defines eco-justice. Man displays this value, according to Owens, through his role as "manager" of the earth.[89]

These three values, which define eco-justice, demand a "participative community" that is committed to the idea of "distributive justice." Owens defined "distributive justice" as reduction of the distinction (and promise of elimination) between the "haves" and "have-nots" in society. Owens argued that a "participative community" requires increased involvement in the political arena. He reiterated the need for the power of government to become more centralized "to enable ecojustice management of our global village." He contended that environmental chaos should be expected in the absence of greater government regulation and a more powerful centralized international order.[90]

Morikawa and Owens both emphasized eco-justice through the denomination's involvement in Key '73, a national ecumenical evangelism initiative. Key '73 included the participation of most major Protestant denominations, the Catholic Church and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.[91] Three groups (Episcopal Church, United Presbyterian Church, United Church of Christ) chose not to participate due to the alleged "theological particularism" of the movement and the lack of "progressive social action goals." The goal of Key '73 was to ensure that each and every individual on the continent of North America was "challenged with the claims of Jesus Christ." Key '73 leaders

---

[88] Ibid., 114.

[89] Ibid., 114-115.

[90] Ibid., 119-120.

[91] William M. Newman and William V. D'Antonio, "'For Christ's Sake!': A Study of Key '73 in New England," *Review of Religious Research* 19, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 139-140.

sought to do this through a national media campaign, local Bible study groups and Bible distribution programs.[92]

American Baptist executives selected Morikawa to lead participation in Key '73 as Executive-Director of the denomination's new Evangelistic Life Style program. As the director of this new three-year initiative to coincide with and serve as a follow-up to Key '73, Morikawa continued to emphasize his "new evangelism." He saw ELS as an excellent platform to advocate and agitate for eco-justice. Not surprisingly, the themes selected for this three-year initiative were reverence, interdependence and stewardship. As previously noted, Owens and others regarded these concepts as the defining values of eco-justice.[93]

Morikawa maintained that Evangelistic Life Style was a "vision of hope about the nature of reality in Jesus Christ." This vision concentrated on the renewal of the earth and transformation of the cosmos. He preached that an evangelistic lifestyle embraced the "wholeness of salvation" which linked salvation to contemporary issues including ecology and justice. Morikawa announced in an article titled "Evangelistic Lifestyle in an Ecojust Universe," published in *Foundations*, that ELS "links the life of a single child and the fate and destiny of the planet." To live an evangelistic lifestyle or, more specifically, to live life in Christ, entailed, "[living] life as a fair and responsible steward of God, which means a new standard of living, a life of maximum meaning based on minimal consumption to insure equity of distribution and protection of future generations

---

[92] Ibid., 140.

[93] Board of National Ministries, "Minutes Meeting of the Board of Directors," December 1973, American Baptist Home Mission Societies Collection, American Baptist Historical Society, 4.

still unborn."[94] This quote concisely sums up the practical application of eco-justice for Morikawa: a life lived simply.

Eco-justice was also a focus of the Office of Governmental Relations. This American Baptist entity had an office located on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. There, the Office monitored issues before Congress and the White House. The Office took on the task of both education advocacy and activism. American Baptist leaders regularly met with elected officials and provided testimony on legislation before the United States Senate and House of Representatives. The Office also collaborated with the Washington offices of other mainline Protestant denominations and served in a leadership role with the Washington Interreligious Staff Council. The Office distributed press releases and other literature to keep American Baptists informed about governmental processes and decisions on a plethora of issues including the environment.[95] Their ultimate goal was to educate American Baptists on critical social issues and "find ways to influence public policy decisions in light of our historic concerns for justice, peace and liberation."[96]

In 1972, American Baptist executives Marcus Rohlfs and Elizabeth Miller joined Foy Valentine of the Southern Baptist Convention and other Protestant and Jewish leaders in urging President Richard Nixon to take action to solve the global population problem. As the previous chapter explained, these religious leaders were supportive of the recommendations of the Rockefeller-led Commission on Population Growth and the American Future. The commission's recommendations aimed to achieve population

---

[94] Jitsuo Morikawa, "Evangelistic Lifestyle in an EcoJust Universe," *Foundations* 18, no. 3 (July-September 1975): 275-276.

[95] "Eco-Justice: A National Ministries Report," *The American Baptist*, June 1974, 21-29.

[96] "Report of the Office of Governmental Relations," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1975), 201.

stabilization. Nixon ignored the findings of the commission and declined to meet with Rohlfs, Miller and the other Protestant and Jewish leaders.[97] This is but one example of how the Office of Governmental Relations (and its predecessor the Division of Christian Social Concern) addressed environmental problems in Washington D.C. during the early 1970s.[98]

American Baptists also emphasized eco-justice while addressing environmental issues on the international level. Since the founding of the United Nations in 1945, American Baptists as a denomination have given strong support to the international organization. In fact, former Minnesota governor Harold Stassen, a prominent Northern Baptist, was one of the signers of the United Nations charter. The denomination adopted a resolution in 1951 that reaffirmed its "belief in the United Nations and its specialized agencies responsible for preserving and extending human rights and fundamental freedoms." This resolution urged government officials "to work with and through the United Nations at every opportunity."[99] Without question, American Baptists considered

---

[97] Derek S. Hoff, "'Kick that Population Commission in the Ass': The Nixon Administration, the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, and the Defusing of the Population Bomb," *Journal of Policy History* 22, no. 1 (2010): 25-26. See also "Take Population Study Seriously, Leaders Urge," *Baptist Press*, March 31, 1972, 1-2. "Church Heads Welcome Study on Population," *The Tennessean*, March 30, 1972. "Nixon Urged to Study Population Control Report, Ignore Catholic Criticism," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1972.

[98] Elizabeth Miller was the Executive-Director of the Division of Christian Social Concern in 1972.

[99] "Resolution on the United Nations (1951)," in *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Churches USA, 1996). Denominational concern for "world affairs" can be traced back to the 1920s. During the 1920s and 1930s, Northern Baptists created special committees to consider social issues with international implications. The Council on Christian Social Progress succeeded these committees when it was launched in May, 1941. "A Historical Perspective on the Office of World Affairs," American Baptist Home Mission Societies Collection, American Baptist Historical Society, 1-8.

"world affairs" to be a significant priority and recognized the work of the United Nations to be of vital importance.

In 1946, American Baptists, then Northern Baptists, sent their first accredited representative to the sessions of the United Nations. When the United Methodists built a twelve-story building known as the "Church Center" at the United Nations in 1963, the denomination rented office space. There, the American Baptist Department of International Affairs was surrounded by the world affairs departments of other mainline Protestant denominations.[100] Consequently, American Baptist involvement in world affairs did much to foster ecumenical relationships with other denominations. Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, American Baptists, specifically the renamed Office of World Affairs, devoted much time and resources to coordinating and collaborating with other religious groups on pressing international concerns including both population and pollution. The presence of the Office of World Affairs at the Church Center enabled American Baptists to participate in international political discussions and lobby on behalf of eco-justice.[101]

In June, 1972, American Baptists sent an accredited delegation to Stockholm, Sweden to participate in the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. Regarded as a landmark event, this week-long conference marked the first time that executive-level officials from around the world convened to discuss environmental issues. One scholar described the historic gathering as "the first serious effort to cope

---

[100] "Church Center for United Nations Dedicated," *Christian Century*, October 9, 1963, 1229. "American Baptist Churches USA Program and Office of World Affairs," American Baptist Home Mission Societies Collection, American Baptist Historical Society, 1-3.

[101] "American Baptist Churches USA Program and Office of World Affairs," 1-3.

with the planetary crisis on a global scale." The conference featured delegations from 113 nations, twenty-one United Nations agencies, sixteen intergovernmental organizations and 258 nongovernmental (NGO) observers.[102] The American Baptist delegation, which included Elizabeth Miller and Owen Owens, was among the latter category of observers.[103]

The final product of this historic conference was a declaration of twenty-six principles relating to the environment along with an action plan for their implementation. The first principle declared that "Man has a fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations." Additional principles called for the safeguarding of natural resources and insisted that non-renewable resources be used in a way to "guard against the danger of their future exhaustion." Another principle emphasized that the environmental policies of nations "should enhance and not adversely affect the present or future development potential of developing countries."[104] This principle alludes to a tense debate that occurred during the conference between representatives of developed and developing nations. Leaders from poor, developing nations confronted and criticized environmentalists from rich, developed nations. These leaders from industrialized nations were criticized for advocating limits to economic

---

[102] Christopher C. Joyner, "Stockholm Retrospect: Progress in the International Law of Environment," World Affairs 136, no. 4 (Spring 1974): 347-348.

[103] "Objective 1," American Baptist Home Mission Societies Collection, American Baptist Historical Society, 1-2.

[104] "Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment," in Wade Rowland, *The Plot to Save the World* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1973), 140-141.

growth or in some instances "no growth" policies. Third World representatives accused their First World counterparts of condemning developing nations to a life of endless poverty. Scholars have noted that this controversy resulted in the Stockholm Conference participants producing a mild, timid environmental action plan. Most notably, because of these debates and divisions, the action plan intentionally and completely ignored the issue of population growth.[105]

Despite the perceived weaknesses of the declaration and action plan, the Stockholm Conference did result in the establishment of the United Nations Environment Program. This program was designed to oversee the implementation of the environmental priorities of the action plan.[106] Elizabeth Miller represented American Baptists at the first-ever meeting of the Governing Board of the United Nations Environment Program in Geneva, Switzerland. She was also involved in the founding of the North American Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations Concerned with the Environment (NAC). Owen Owens was a leader in this new committee as well. Owens and Miller led NAC to set up committees to address specific environmental issues and work with the United Nations Environment Program on those issues. Through these relationships with NGOs, American Baptists achieved greater access and were afforded more influence on the environmental efforts of the United Nations.[107]

---

[105] Joyner, 349, 355. See also William E. Gibson, "Eco-Justice: New Perspective for a Time of Turning," in *For Creation's Sake: Preaching, Ecology & Justice*, ed. Dieter T. Hessel (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985), 20-21.

[106] Patricia Scharlin, "The United Nations and the Environment: After Three Decades of Concern, Progress is Still Slow," *Ambio* 11, no. 1 (1982): 26.

[107] "Objective 1," 1-2.

Owens and Miller later reflected on their experiences and efforts at the Stockholm Conference in an article published in the popular denominational periodical *The American Baptist* in 1973. Here, the two American Baptist leaders weighed in on the controversy that erupted in Stockholm between developed and developing nations. Sympathetic to the woes of the developing nations, Owens and Miller declared that the "words of the developing nations cannot be turned aside lightly." They argued that forcing these nations to control pollution while they develop "places an additional burden on their development which makes that task seem even more hopeless."[108] This position articulated by Owens and Miller was at complete odds with the no-growth policy that Owens and the Board of National Ministries had previously proposed.

Two years after the Stockholm Conference, American Baptists sent a delegation in 1974 to the United Nations World Population Conference in Bucharest, Romania. Prior to and following the conference, the Office of World Affairs distributed a "Population Pack" to denominational staff and American Baptist pastors and churches. This pack of materials included background data on the population problem and information about the conference program. During the conference, the American Baptist representatives worked with non-governmental organizations to influence and shape the outcome of the proceedings. The delegates also served a communications role, issuing press releases that were distributed widely to American Baptists. Back in the United States, the delegates and Office of World Affairs staffers continued to speak in churches and at denominational events on the subject of population.[109]

---

[108] Owen Owens and Elizabeth Miller, "1,2,3,4,5," *The American Baptist*, February 1973, 10-13.

[109] "Objective 1," 2-5.

This was the first global conference to consider the relationship between population growth and development. During the previous decade, the United Nations had passed several resolutions on the problem of global overpopulation. Proposed by Western and Asian countries, these resolutions were met with resistance from developing nations. In each instance, after much debate, a final resolution was agreed upon representing a compromise position. Although the product of compromise, these resolutions served, according to scholars, to legitimize family planning services on the global level.[110]

Like the Stockholm Conference, the World Population Conference produced an action plan. Not surprisingly, this plan represented a compromise between developed and developing nations. Considered a "weak" document, the plan of action, according to scholars, "gained universal acceptance only because it included explicit safeguards of national sovereignty and deliberately refrained from prescribing any particular population policy to member governments."[111] Without a doubt, the World Population Conference at Bucharest did not live up to its lofty expectations as "potentially the most important international gathering ever held on the subject of population."[112]

Following the World Population Conference, the Office of World Affairs staff penned an opinion column published in *The American Baptist* which articulated their position on the subject. Calling for a "broad strategy of global justice," the staff insisted

---

[110] Jason L. Finkle and Barbara B. Crane, "The Politics of Bucharest: Population, Development, and the New International Economic Order," *Population and Development Review* 1, no. 1 (1975): 89-90.

[111] Ibid., 109.

[112] Ibid., 89. See also Carmen A. Miro, "The World Population Plan of Action: A Political Instrument Whose Potential Has Not Been Realized," *Population and Development Review* 3, no. 4 (December 1977): 421-442.

that efforts to lower birth rates and curtail population growth must be met with efforts to "build a more just and egalitarian framework." The staff elaborated, "Birth rates should not be reduced without improving social and economic conditions." The staff argued that it was the responsibility of the citizens of developed nations, specifically Americans, to consume less. The staff explained that the "consumption of a few is depleting the earth and fouling the environment, while the majority live at barely subsistence levels." Churches were also asked to become better informed and concerned with environmental issues such as population. From Stockholm through Bucharest, American Baptists were on record in support of population control in the developed United States and development free of strict environmental regulations abroad in developing nations.[113]

## *Comparative Analysis and Conclusion*

### *Science and Technology*

Relying on the findings of sociologist Robert Wuthnow, the second chapter noted that in the post-World War II era, Americans began to put much faith in science and technology. According to Wuthnow, "American confidence in scientific technology, indeed seems to be more widespread than in any other industrialized country." Due to this confidence, the overwhelming majority of Americans welcomed and affirmed the idea a "technological fix" to many pressing societal problems such as population and pollution.[114] This chapter has revealed, however, that American Baptists joined most

[113] "World Population Year—1974," *The American Baptist*, April 1974, 24.

[114] Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 287.

Southern Baptists in rejecting the notion of a "technological fix" while acknowledging that science and technology could help in the search for environmental solutions.

American Baptist theologian Kenneth Cauthen argued that new priorities were desperately needed. He called for a "fundamental transformation of ideas, attitudes, values, commitments and goals" to ensure world survival. Cauthen emphasized the need for technological and scientific advancement. He envisioned theologians working alongside scientists to save the planet from the kind of doomsday scenario that Paul Ehrlich predicted and depicted in his popular best-seller *The Population Bomb*. Jitsuo Morikawa also saw the need for a positive relationship between science and religion. Admitting the potentially positive power of science and technology in efforts to combat overpopulation, pollution and other environmental problems, Morikawa stressed that "both science and faith need each other."[115]

Like Cauthen and Morikawa, other American Baptists including theologian Phyllis Trible and denominational worker Owen Owens put forth a positive view of the future use of science and technology. Owens believed that technology had "gotten out of control."[116] Citing Victor Ferkiss, Owens believed that society needed a new "technological man" who "controls science and technology rather than being controlled by it."[117] Echoing Owens and Cauthen, Trible wrote that technology needed to become grounded in a "liturgy for ecology" (Genesis 1) and therefore must not harm the earth.[118]

---

[115] Jitsuo Morikawa, "A Theological Perspective on the World," *American Baptist Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (June 1993): 159-160.

[116] Owens, "Salvation and Ecology," 112.

[117] Ibid., 121. Ferkiss was the author of the popular book *Technological Man: The Myth and Reality* (1969).

[118] Trible, "Ancient Priests and Modern Polluters," 77-79.

Thus, while rejecting the then widespread American belief in a "technological fix" to the ecological crisis, American Baptists affirmed that technology, if essentially "Christianized," still had an important role to play in the environmental arena.

*Government*

Although American Baptists joined most Southern Baptists in rejecting the popular American belief in a "technological fix," they did not join Southern Baptists in embracing the idea of a "government fix." Emphasizing the need for a fundamental reorientation of individual and social priorities, American Baptists differed with Southern Baptists who had previously declared that "Only through government can much be done to regulate and control the principal polluters of our air and water."[119] However, American Baptists did not oppose government regulations. American Baptists recognized that government had a necessary and important role to play in the search for solutions to environmental problems. With two different resolutions in 1968, the denomination went on record in support of federal involvement in environmental matters. These resolutions asked the federal government to regulate or control both pollution and population.[120] Again in 1970, American Baptists adopted a resolution urging the federal government to adopt legislation to strictly regulate pollution. This time, American Baptists also called upon state and local governments to take action on environmental issues.[121]

---

[119] Kentucky Baptist Convention, "1970 Christian Life Committee Report," 223.

[120] "Resolution on Economic Justice (International)," 135. See also "Resolution on Economic Justice (National)," 130-131.

[121] "Resolution on Environmental Concerns—1970."

American Baptists were not only concerned with a greater regulatory role for government at the federal, state and local levels. Through their participation in the work of the United Nations, American Baptists urged the international community to take environmental action. At the United Nations-sponsored Conference on the Human Environment (1972) in Stockholm, Sweden and World Population Conference (1974) in Bucharest, Romania, American Baptist representatives lobbied the United Nations and its member nations to take steps to better regulate pollution and population. This international emphasis set American Baptists apart from their Baptist brethren in the South. Southern Baptists did not have an international focus when it came to environmental issues. This was due largely to the fact that Southern Baptists did not retain membership in ecumenical organizations such as the National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches. These groups did much to unite mainline Protestant denominations behind various pressing environmental issues during this period.

As the previous chapter noted, Southern Baptists did not raise questions or speak out against the growing regulative function of the federal government with regard to environmental issues. Instead, Southern Baptists encouraged more regulation and not less in this arena. American Baptists too encouraged a more expansive role for government. They did so, however, with some trepidation. For example, the Board of National Ministries "Ecological Wholeness and Justice" report noted the need for greater government regulation but acknowledged that a bigger, more powerful centralized government "should not make us feel easy."[122] The Board recognized, as previously discussed, the real live tension between individual freedom and government restraint.

[122] Board of National Ministries, "Ecological Wholeness and Justice: The Imperative of God," 139-140.

Additionally, the Board in its report offered a remedy to allow for both more government regulation and the preservation of individual freedom.[123] This realization and suggested remedy demonstrated the commitment of American Baptists to the Baptist principle of freedom of conscience.

*Political Engagement*

Similar to Southern Baptists, American Baptists recognized that political engagement was required to ensure that the governments take steps to preserve and protect the environment, popularly referred to by both groups as "Spaceship Earth." The previous chapter contended that the Public Christian approach, as articulated by historian Mark Toulouse, was the dominant political engagement approach of Southern Baptists during this second wave of American environmental history.[124] However, as chapter three detailed, a dissenting minority of Southern Baptists embraced the Public Church approach. This chapter has demonstrated that American Baptists should be viewed, alongside these Southern Baptist dissenters, as representatives of the Public Church approach to political engagement.[125]

Jitsuo Morikawa best represents the Public Church position. As this chapter described, Morikawa preached that American Baptists were to participate in God's mission of evangelism by being the "church in the world." He called on American Baptists to ensure that "the Kingdom of this world becomes the Kingdom of Christ."

---

[123] Ibid.

[124] To recap, the Public Christian approach holds that politics is not the role of the church. Instead, this approach advocates that churches assist and encourage individual Christians to meet their obligation to participate in the political process. See Toulouse, 106-116, 121-122.

[125] The Public Church approach, according to Toulouse, expected both churches and individual Christians to be politically active for the betterment and redemption of society.

Like fellow Baptist Walter Rauschenbusch who advocated for a "new evangelism" fifty years prior, Morikawa understood that this effort to redeem society required American Baptists to collectively confront social injustices in the public arena, in part, through political engagement.[126]

Unlike Southern Baptists, ecumenism was central to the political engagement approach of American Baptists. Seeking to be the "church in the world," American Baptists believed they were answering God's call to participate in the mission of evangelism through ecumenical partnerships with other mainline Protestant denominations. American Baptists began partnering with other Christian bodies on environmental issues in the mid-1960s. At the 1966 World Conference on Church and Society, American Baptists joined Christians from around the globe to address the perceived imminent threat that rapid population growth posed to the world's food supply. Together with other denominations, American Baptists sought social redemption through political engagement on the international (United Nations) and national (Washington DC) stages.[127]

The environmentalism of their counterparts to the South lacked an applied international focus. Without a doubt, Southern Baptists did realize the global nature of the ecological crisis. Despite this understanding, Southern Baptists did not have a presence in the international political arena. This lack of international political engagement should not come as a surprise. Christian environmentalism at the international level was almost always connected to ecumenical organizations such as the

---

[126] Morikawa, *The Nature and Purpose of Mission*, 6.

[127] "Report of the Department of International Affairs," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1967-1968), 101-102.

National Council of Churches and the larger World Council of Churches. The history of the Southern Baptist Convention reveals a denomination that was reluctant to partner with non-Baptist groups. Consequently, the SBC, like other evangelical Protestant denominations known for their theological conservatism, did not belong to either the National Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches. The SBC's only significant partnership on the international stage was as a member body of the Baptist World Alliance. The BWA, a coalition of Baptist groups from across the globe, was not actively engaged on environmental issues in the political arena at this time.[128]

This international focus which did much to shape the political engagement approach of the environmentalism of American Baptists distinguishes American Baptist environmentalism from Southern Baptist environmentalism during this period. Just as the Public Christian and Public Church categories put forth by Mark Toulouse are based on differing theological affirmations, the differences in the political engagement approaches of Southern Baptists and American Baptists are fundamentally theological in nature. Chapter two detailed that Southern Baptists have a long history of being suspicious (and rejecting) new or "modern" understandings of the Bible. While all but a small minority of Southern Baptists were extremely leery of the Social Gospel Movement, American Baptists had one of their own leaders—Walter Rauschenbusch—at the forefront of that early twentieth-century effort.[129]

The primary theological disagreement between American Baptists and Southern Baptists concerned the public mission of the church. Chapter three described the

---

[128] C. Douglas Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 178-179.

[129] Rufus Spain, *At Ease in Zion: A Social History of Southern Baptists, 1875-1900* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 212.

commitment of Southern Baptists to traditional evangelism. Numerous notable voices worried that environmental action would distract Southern Baptists from the denomination's primary task of evangelism. These Southern Baptists understood evangelism as "soul-winning" to be the mission of the church. Meanwhile, this fourth chapter showed that American Baptists shared with Southern Baptists the conviction that the public mission of the church was evangelism. What American Baptist leaders such as Jitsuo Morikawa meant by "evangelism" was certainly quite different from the "soul-winning" evangelism of their fellow Baptists in the South. Following in the footsteps of Rauschenbusch and consistent with trends in American Protestantism that separated evangelical Protestants and mainline Protestants, Morikawa redefined "evangelism" for the denomination. This "new evangelism" focused to a great extent on social change and activism. Different understandings of evangelism (mission of the church) explain why Southern Baptists, more often than not, embraced the "Public Christian" and American Baptists adopted the "Public Church" political engagement approaches during the second wave of American environmental history.

*Ethics*

Earlier chapters described and defined the environmental ethic known as eco-justice. This ethic remains popular among mainline Protestants. In “Noah’s Ark Goes to Washington,” sociologist Laurel Kearns explained that the eco-justice ethic connects environmental issues with “already established church perspectives on justice issues.” Different from the stewardship ethic of Southern Baptists and other evangelical Protestants, this eco-justice ethic sees social injustices as the primary cause of environmental problems and looks to solve environmental problems with structural

solutions. Therefore, the eco-justice ethic does not follow the stewardship ethic in offering an analysis focused solely on individual sin.[130]

American Baptists wholeheartedly embraced this ethic of eco-justice during the second wave of American environmental history. In fact, American Baptists were credited with coining the term "eco-justice."[131] The editors of *Ecology, Justice, and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature* defined eco-justice as "the moral claim that ecology and justice belong together."[132] This is the exact argument that American Baptists including Jitsuo Morikawa, Richard Jones and Owen Owens made during the denominational planning process that kicked off in the aftermath of Earth Day 1970. They declared that issues of ecology and issues of human justice were not only interrelated but also inseparable. At the heart of this eco-justice ethic was the core Christian conviction held by American Baptists that "God wills the good of all." Through this planning process, American Baptists came to acknowledge that they as churches and as a denomination had a biblical obligation to further the common good at the intersection of ecology and justice.[133]

Since this eco-justice ethic was based on what Kearns referred to as "already established church perspectives on justice issues," American Baptists did not feel compelled to offer a detailed biblical rationale based on Bible verses in support of its ethic of justice. Instead, the denomination's Board of National Ministries defined its eco-

---

[130] "Kearns, "Noah's Ark Goes to Washington," 351-352.

[131] Moody, 239-240.

[132] *Ecology, Justice, and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature*, eds. Peter W. Bakken, Joan Gibb Engel and J. Ronald Engel (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), xvi.

[133] Crosby, Purdy and Owens, "Salvation and Ecology," 10, 13-14.

justice ethic in terminology that all could accept, Christian and non-Christian alike. The task forces on ecology and justice stressed the importance of self-worth and respect for others and popular environmental concepts including equity and interdependence.[134] While American Baptists did not take a "proof-text" approach to justifying its environmental ethic, the Bible was not ignored either. For example, Owen Owens in a widely-distributed denominational paper offered the Apostle Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 12 that we are "members of one another" as the basis for the emphasis on interdependence.[135]

The environmental ethics of American Baptists and Southern Baptists during this era did share some similarities. Not surprisingly, both Baptist groups highlighted the cornerstone Baptist belief known as the doctrine of creation—that man is made in the image of God. Faithfulness to the doctrine of creation meant that Southern Baptists and American Baptists affirmed that "dominion" should not be interpreted as a license to act irresponsibly to nature. Hence, Southern Baptist ethicist Henlee Barnette and American Baptist leader Owen Owens both preached the necessity of a reverence for nature. However, American Baptists warned against an unhealthy individualism and rejected the idea that saved Christians would save society. With their heavy emphasis on "soul-winning" evangelism, some Southern Baptists clearly still clung to the old belief that society could ultimately be bettered through the conversion of individuals.[136]

---

[134] Board of National Ministries, "Ecological Wholeness and Justice: The Imperative of God," 134-136.

[135] Owens, "Stewardship in a Transitional Era," 4-8.

[136] In his study titled *The Quality of Mercy: Southern Baptists and Social Christianity, 1890-1920*, Keith Harper argued that Southern Baptists displayed a strong commitment to social Christianity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He contended that this social Christianity represented a synthesis of evangelical outreach with social concern in which Southern Baptists sought to improve society by

Additionally, American Baptists including Jitsuo Morikawa and Owen Owens linked their environmental ethic of eco-justice to salvation. Morikawa argued that salvation involves man's relation to God and nature.[137] Southern Baptists did not share this theological perspective. Instead, Southern Baptists held, as Morris Ashcraft explained, that "a personal experience of salvation" served as a prerequisite to the practice of responsible Christian stewardship.[138] Thus, whereas salvation was concerned with eco-justice according to American Baptists, Southern Baptists considered stewardship as an obligation of already saved individuals.

American Baptists also shared with Southern Baptists a commitment to stewardship. Both Baptist groups sought to take this long-standing Christian concept and apply it beyond the financial realm. Both agreed that Christians were obligated to practice stewardship of the earth's resources, although American Baptists advocated a more radical stewardship. For American Baptists, Christian stewardship meant working for fundamental structural changes in American society. While Southern Baptists did champion governmental reforms and environmental legislation, there were few calls for a restructuring of society.

Certainly, Southern Baptists such as Edgar Chasteen and Walker Knight viewed the need for radical structural change to solve America's environmental woes. Nonetheless, this was a minority perspective among Southern Baptist leaders. Southern Baptists desired change but not radical change. American Baptists as a denomination

---

providing it with better (converted) people. See Keith Harper, *The Quality of Mercy: Southern Baptists and Social Christianity, 1890-1920* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1996).

[137] Morikawa, "Theological Meaning of Ecojustice Through Institutional Change," 100-101. See also Owens, "Salvation and Ecology," 113-114.

[138] Ashcraft, 19.

contended that the United States and the western world needed a radical reorientation of social priorities. Thus, American Baptists were loud critics of consumerism, advocated for a more simple lifestyle and called for strict limits on economic growth. While Southern Baptists critiqued materialism, there were no calls for economic growth to be limited.

Stewardship, of course, did not solely define the environmental ethic of American Baptists. Owen Owens put forth three values that he contended defined eco-justice. These were reverence, interdependence and stewardship. Southern Baptists shared these values with American Baptists. Reverence for nature was viewed as the logical extension of a commitment to the doctrine of creation. Similarly, the use of Paul Ehrlich's "Spaceship Earth" metaphor proves that Southern Baptists understood and accepted this important concept of interdependence. However, Southern Baptists lacked the language of justice in their environmental analysis. American Baptists viewed ecology and justice as inseparable. American Baptists believed that the eco-justice values of reverence, interdependence, and stewardship demanded a commitment to "distributive justice." This "distributive justice" involved a reduction of the distinction (and promise of elimination) between the "haves" and "have-nots" in American society and in the larger "global village." Southern Baptists simply lacked this commitment. Their analysis of environmental issues did not enjoy the level of detail and sophistication of American Baptists. The stewardship ethic that Southern Baptists affirmed heavily emphasized individual responsibility rather than structural change. While giving lip service to the interrelated nature of man to his environment, this individualistic stewardship ethic did

not recognize the relationship of environmental issues to other issues concerning human need.

*Conclusion*

The previously discussed four factors have served to shape and define the environmentalisms of American Baptists and Southern Baptists during the critical second wave of American environmental history. Both Baptist groups took the counter-cultural position of rejecting idea of a "technological fix" to the nation's environmental woes. However, both viewed science and technology as having an important role to play in the search for solutions to the nation's environmental problems. American Baptists and Southern Baptists parted ways, however, over the notion of a "government fix." Southern Baptists readily embraced this idea and put much faith in the ability of governments, especially the federal government, to find solutions to the "population explosion" and "pollution crisis." American Baptists recognized the need for greater government regulation and control but also expressed concerned for individual freedom. Consequently, American Baptists appealed to the Baptist principle of freedom of conscience as a guide when addressing these questions.

This chapter also found that American Baptists and Southern Baptists adopted different political engagement approaches during this period. Due primarily to different theological understandings of the mission of the church (evangelism), Southern Baptists adopted the more individualistic Public Christian approach and American Baptists embraced the more global and ecumenical Public Church approach to political engagement. Finally, Southern Baptists and American Baptists adopted environmental ethics that revealed their theological differences as evangelical and mainline Protestants

respectively. While the stewardship ethic of Southern Baptists shared much in common with the eco-justice ethic of American Baptists, the differences were profound.

In addition to these four defining factors, there are other shared similarities worthy of discussion. First, Southern Baptists and American Baptists alike had the tendency to pass resolutions that offered little in the way of specifics. Both groups tended to sound a clarion call for action without giving any guidance on what type of action was needed. Specific goals or policy objectives were rarely offered.[139]

Moreover, it must also be noted that the narrative put forward by scholars of Christian environmentalism, which stated that Lynn White played a pivotal role in spurring Protestants, especially evangelical Protestants, to address environmental questions, is not applicable here.[140] Lynn White deserves zero credit for the environmental engagement of Southern Baptists and American Baptists. As the past two chapters demonstrated, the environmental concern of these Baptist groups preceded Lynn White's popular short treatise. If any individual is owed praise for inspiring and encouraging American Baptists and Southern Baptists to take environmental action, it is population activist and author Paul Ehrlich. Ehrlich's "Spaceship Earth" metaphor was popular with both groups. American Baptists and Southern Baptists alike at times utilized Ehrlich's doomsday rhetoric without embracing many of his radical proposals. However, both groups addressed the population problem prior to the publication of Ehrlich's best-selling *The Population Bomb*.

---

[139] It must be noted that some Southern Baptists such as Edgar Chasteen, James Dunn, Walker Knight and others outlined specific environmental goals. Similarly, American Baptists gave detailed analysis of environmental problems and proposed solutions in the reports of task forces and elsewhere. However, this level of detail was absent in the resolutions of both groups. These resolutions were widely-read and distributed and considered extremely important denominational documents. American Baptists would in later years begin to offer more detailed analysis in its adopted statements.

[140] The role of Lynn White was discussed in the second chapter.

Nonetheless, Southern Baptists and American Baptists alike feared global overpopulation and the related disastrous consequences. It was the population issue that captured their environmental interest. Both groups in their own time then made the connection between the "population explosion" and the "pollution crisis." Focused on these two pressing environmental problems, American Baptists and Southern Baptists during this second wave of American environmental history developed their own unique environmentalisms consistent with the theological heritage of their respective mainline and evangelical Protestant traditions.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## The 1970s Energy Crises (1973-1979)

### *Introduction*

The previous two chapters analyzed and described the environmentalisms of Southern Baptists and American Baptists covering the mid-1960s through the early 1970s. During these formative years of the modern environmental movement, mainstream environmentalism was characterized by its bipartisan and unifying nature. Following this period, as chapter two noted, the environmental movement was institutionalized. A surge of environmental legislation made its way through Congress and received the signature of United States presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. In 1973, the Endangered Species Act became law. The Safe Drinking Water Act (1974) regulated the levels of toxins in drinking water. The National Forest Management Act (1976) required the U.S. Forest Service to protect wildlife habitats and wilderness. The Toxic Substances Control Act (1976) regulated the testing and use of toxic chemicals. The National Parks and Recreation Act (1978) granted 1.8 billion dollars for park projects while the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (1978) established thirteen new national parks.[1]

Southern Baptists and American Baptists, however, did not address a single one of these important environmental measures. Throughout the remainder of the 1970s, Southern Baptists and to a slightly lesser extent American Baptists were almost

[1] "Chronology: Environmental Policy and Politics and Time Line," in *Encyclopedia of the United States Government and the Environment*, ed. Matthew Lindstrom, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 855-857.

exclusively concerned with energy issues. During these final years of the second wave of American environmental history, the different energy crises of the era and related pressing energy questions captured their attention. While protecting endangered species did not rank on these Baptists environmental priority list, the conservation of oil and natural gas did.

Consequently, this fifth chapter analyzes and assesses the environmental attitudes, actions and approaches of both Southern Baptists and American Baptists from 1973-1979. Chapter five begins with an overview of the Arab-Israeli conflict inspired energy crisis of 1973-1974 followed with an in-depth examination of Southern Baptist and American Baptist responses to this market-disrupting oil crisis. The chapter continues with a thorough introduction of the natural gas crisis of 1976-1977. Southern Baptist and American Baptist responses are chronicled and considered as well. Finally, this fifth chapter looks at the Iranian Revolution fueled energy crisis of 1979 and the resulting Baptist responses. Consistent with the format of chapters three and four, a final section wraps-up chapter five with a comparative analysis of Southern Baptists and American Baptists along the four factors previously detailed. This section critically discusses how these factors—science and technology, role of government, political engagement and ethics—served to shape and define the environmentalisms of Southern Baptists and American Baptists at the conclusion of the second wave of American environmental history.

### *The Energy Crisis of 1973-1974: An Overview*

On October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria led a coalition of Arab states to launch a surprise attack against Israel as Jewish citizens were celebrating Yom Kippur (also

known as the Day of Atonement). Initially, the Soviet Union-backed Arab coalition had the tactical advantage. Israel responded, however, with an effective counterattack. The United States assisted Israel in the counterattack and provided the Israeli military with weapons, tanks and planes.[2] Prior to providing aid to Israel, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and other Arab leaders warned government officials that there would be serious consequences if the United States sided with Israel. President Nixon clearly did not heed that warning.[3] As payback, Saudi Arabia cut off all oil exports to the United States. Other Arab states soon followed suit.[4] This embargo created an international shock that sent wholesale oil buyers into a panic. Over the course of just three months, the price of oil from the Arab-controlled Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) witnessed a nearly 400 percent increase. OPEC oil was priced at $3.00 per barrel before the Yom Kippur War. On January 1, 1974, the price of OPEC oil was $11.65 per barrel.[5]

Six months after Saudi Arabia cut off oil exports to the United States, the embargo was ended. In that time, the perceptions of Americans concerning energy as a national problem were dramatically altered. Only 4 percent of Americans believed diminishing energy resources to be a serious problem before the embargo. A Gallup poll

---

[2] Martin V. Melosi, *Coping with Abundance: Energy and Environment in Industrial America* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1985), 279. See also John Barrow, "An Era of Limits: Jimmy Carter and the Quest for a National Energy Policy," (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1996): 10.

[3] Melosi, *Coping with Abundance*, 279.

[4] Walter Rosenbaum, *Energy, Politics & Public Policy*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1987), 3-4. Martin Melosi has noted that the embargo, while disturbing, was far from "airtight." Iraq's boycott was short-lived and Libya did not halt the supply of oil to the West. Melosi explained, "Economic interests were often more powerful than was politics." See Melosi, *Coping with Abundance*, 280.

[5] Barrow, 11.

in January 1974 revealed that 46 percent of Americans considered the energy crisis to be "the most important problem facing the country."[6]

The energy crisis of 1973-1974 did much more than simply change perceptions. Automobile sales in the United States dropped by 11 percent, forcing manufacturers General Motors and Chrysler to close over twenty-five plants and lay off almost 150,000 workers. The airline industry experienced cutbacks too. Thousands of construction workers found themselves unemployed as the industry faced a 20 percent decline. National economic indicators such as the DOW Jones also suffered.[7] Schools were forced to close in order to conserve energy. Power outages were common especially in major cities. Americans faced extremely long lines at gas stations where many motorists were restricted to purchasing far less than a full tank of gas. Rationing and price gouging were not uncommon.[8]

The embargo and resulting energy crisis sparked a national conversation about energy policy and related environmental consequences. Before the energy crisis, Americans had enjoyed cheap energy for several decades, mostly free of government regulation. Historian Jack Holl observed in his chapter titled "The Nixon Administration and the 1973 Energy Crisis," that "historically, the federal government [had] been a reluctant manager and guardian of America's energy resources."[9] Holl pointed out that the federal government had left the task of long-range energy planning to the private

---

[6] Ibid., 25.

[7] Ibid., 12-13.

[8] David Howard Davis, *Energy Politics*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 5.

[9] Jack M. Holl, "The Nixon Administration and the 1973 Energy Crisis," in *Energy and Transport: Historical Perspectives on Policy Issues*, eds. George H. Daniels and Mark H. Rose (London, UK: Sage Publications, 1982), 150.

sector or state and local authorities. Holl concluded, "In an era when energy resources seemed boundless, the American people did not call upon the federal government to make difficult decisions about the nation's energy future."[10]

The energy crisis changed this pattern. President Nixon issued an appeal to the American public on November 7, 1973 in a televised address. He called on Americans to find ways to conserve energy, specifically to drive slower and lower the thermostat in their homes. Citing the Manhattan Project that produced the atomic bomb and the Apollo Program that put astronauts on the moon, Nixon stressed that American science, technology and private industry could liberate the United States from dependence on OPEC oil.[11] Political scientist Walter Rosenbaum noted in *Energy Politics & Public Policy* that President Nixon viewed the federal government as having an important role in this arena. Nixon put this view into action when he created the Federal Energy Office in late 1973 and the Federal Energy Administration in 1974. The latter was an administrative agency vested with the power to initiate federal policy on energy issues. Nixon also took a number of additional steps to involve the federal government in the search for solutions to the national energy crisis. For example, under Nixon, the federal government began allocating and pricing petroleum products. Year-round daylight savings time was mandated along with a national fifty-five mile-per-hour speed limit. Moreover, Nixon saw that solar energy research programs were funded and promote nuclear power development. Rosenbaum explained that "Even as Congress and the

[10] Ibid., 151.

[11] Ibid., 153-154.

president argued over the proper role of government and private institutions in the energy marketplace, the federal role was enormously expanding."[12]

Meanwhile, the energy crisis sparked a debate among scholars about the appropriate balance between energy needs and environmental goals. Historian Martin Melosi has argued that the "convergence" of the energy crisis and the environmental movement in the early 1970s produced two different viewpoints. The first viewpoint stated, according to Melosi, that "energy and environmental goals [are] inherently contradictory." This perspective saw sustained economic growth, not environmental protection, as the first priority. The second viewpoint held that "energy and environment [are] symbiotic or complementary issues." This perspective deemphasized the need for such sustained growth and sought a balance with environmental protection. These viewpoints spurred on by the energy crisis helped launch a conversation that remains relevant forty years later and at the center of all current environmental debates.[13]

## *Baptists and Oil: Part 1*

### *Southern Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1973-1974*

The 1973 energy crisis began just as Southern Baptists were holding their annual state convention meetings in late October and November. Due to the timing, Southern Baptists addressed the crisis with a mostly resolutionary approach. One week after President Nixon's televised address to the nation, Southern Baptists in Virginia adopted a resolution echoing Nixon's message. The resolution advocated the conservation of

[12] Rosenbaum, 4-5.

[13] Martin v. Melosi, "Energy and Environment in the United States: The Era of Fossil Fuels," *Environmental Review* 11, no. 3 (Autumn 1987): 173-175.

energy resources and challenged politicians and scientists to find new alternative forms of energy to meet the needs of the present and future generations.[14] Similarly, Southern Baptists in Arkansas issued a call for conservation. The Arkansas Baptist State Convention passed a resolution requesting pastors and denominational leaders to consult with government officials to find ways to reduce fuel consumption.[15] Both groups of Southern Baptists agreed that the federal government had a vital role to play.

Southern Baptists in both Louisiana and Kentucky cited the biblical obligations of stewardship in their resolutions on the energy crisis. The Kentucky Baptist Convention explicitly urged others to heed President Nixon's appeal to conserve energy while being "ever mindful of their stewardship and citizenship responsibilities."[16] The Louisiana Baptist Convention stressed the "immediacy of the crisis" and warned that the energy shortage "will cause human suffering throughout the world." This resolution resolved that Louisiana Baptists would "assume our individual and corporate responsibilities as faithful stewards by establishing personal, family, business, civic and church priorities in the use of energy."[17] While not theologically sophisticated, these resolutions and their simple stewardship emphasis resonated with Southern Baptists.

The energy crisis was a popular topic among Southern Baptist newspaper columnists. *Baptist Press*—the news service of the Southern Baptist Convention—

---

[14] "Resolution #3," in *Virginia Baptist Annual* (Richmond, VA: Baptist General Association of Virginia, 1973), 114. This resolution was presented and passed on November 15, 1973.

[15] "Resolution #6: Fuel Allocations," in *Annual of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention* (Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Baptist State Convention, 1973), 48.

[16] "Resolution on Fuel Conservation," in *Annual of the Kentucky Baptist Convention* (Middletown, KY: Executive Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, 1973), 160.

[17] "Resolution Six: Energy Crisis," in *Annual of the Louisiana Baptist Convention* (Alexandria, LA: Executive Board of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, 1973), 201.

reported that numerous Southern Baptist agencies had responded to President Nixon's call to conservation and had turned down the thermostats during the winter months and adopted other practices to save energy.[18] For example, employees of the Baptist General Convention of Texas were instructed to drive fifty-miles per-hour while traveling on official business. All office lights were required to be turned off when not in use and every second light in the BGCT's "Baptist Building" was disconnected.[19] This is what "biblical stewardship" applied looked like to many Southern Baptists. Practical but not radical measures defined their Christian ethic of stewardship.

Some Southern Baptist leaders saw the energy crisis as an opportunity for inactive members to rediscover church. In light of the closing of all service stations on Sundays, these leaders assumed that there would be less weekend travel. A Southern Baptist columnist in North Carolina asked, "Will these same folks become acquainted with their own churches once again?"[20] T. A. Patterson, the Executive-Secretary of the BGCT, explained in his weekly column that gasoline rationing "could turn out to be a blessing." Patterson reasoned that rationing meant that families would decide to attend church since they would be unable to drive to their second home on the weekends.[21] This reasoning was similar to how some Southern Baptists viewed the population explosion of the mid-to-late 1960s as a great evangelistic opportunity.[22]

---

[18] James Lee Young, "Energy Shortage Not Crisis For Most—Yet," *Baptist Press*, November 29, 1973, 15.

[19] "Energy Crisis Evokes Concern," *Baptist Standard*, December 12, 1973, 4.

[20] "No Gas Sales on Sunday Shouldn't Hurt Church," *Biblical Recorder*, December 1, 1973, 3.

[21] T. A. Patterson, "The Energy Crisis," *Baptist Standard*, December 12, 1973, 4.

[22] Earl Hohman, "One Way Out," *Western Recorder*, January 7, 1965, 8.

Three months after Saudi Arabia ended its devastating oil embargo, the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, passed a resolution titled "On Stewardship of God's Creation." This resolution was extremely similar to the resolution passed earlier by Southern Baptists in Louisiana. Unlike the Virginia resolution which encouraged the involvement of scientists in the quest for energy solutions, this resolution instead urged the United States Congress and other governmental agencies to "take aggressive action to conserve our diminishing resources." In typical Southern Baptist fashion, specifics were missing. The resolution did, however, ask forgiveness from God for the "selfish use of God's creation."[23]

Southern Baptist messengers also adopted a recommendation from the Christian Life Commission relating to the energy crisis. That recommendation acknowledged the responsibility of Southern Baptists "as stewards of the energy resources which God has provided" and called upon Southern Baptists everywhere to "turn from our wasteful ways and embrace an alternative lifestyle." This new lifestyle was defined as "more moderate in its specific energy demands" and "more Christian in its concern for the welfare of others now living and of generations yet to be born." The recommendation also offered encouragement to national leaders to "devise a more equitable plan of distribution of all types of energy."[24]

Following the SBC's 1974 summer meeting, Southern Baptists in Virginia and North Carolina adopted environmental resolutions at their fall meetings. The Baptist

---

[23] "Resolution on Stewardship of God's Creation," in *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1974), 70-71.

[24] "Report of the Christian Life Commission," in *Book of Reports* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1975), 131.

State Convention of North Carolina issued a call for Southern Baptists to become "actively involved" in grassroots efforts to "protect and improve all facets of the environment as good stewards."[25] This type of short and straight-forward resolution sounding a call to action characterized most Southern Baptist resolutions and recommendations on energy and other environmental issues. The North Carolina resolution also implied support for the view, as articulated by historian Martin Melosi, that energy goals could complement environmental goals.

Southern Baptists in Virginia, however, offered an unusually specific and substantive recommendation in late 1974. Titled "The Stewardship of Energy Resources," this recommendation outlined what these Southern Baptists believed to be contributing factors to the energy crisis: 1) growing labor force, 2) growing population with increased energy demands, 3) adoption of and quest for higher standards of living, 4) efforts to eliminate environmental pollution, 5) wasteful consumption, and 6) continued industrial expansion. The recommendation contended that these six factors had put an "intolerable strain on our energy capacity." Government with its "inadequate policies" and the energy industry itself with its many "abuses" were also judged part of the problem.[26]

Despite these "inadequate policies," the recommendation stated that government regulation was the key to solving the "energy problem." The resolution cited a statistic which claimed that "Ten major oil companies own 90% of the nation's energy resources."

---

[25] "Report of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina," in *North Carolina Baptist Annual* (Raleigh, NC: Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, 1974), 99.

[26] "Report of the Christian Life Committee," in *Virginia Baptist Annual* (Richmond, VA: Baptist General Association of Virginia, 1974), 108-109.

Then, the recommendation quoted U.S. Congressman Benjamin Rosenthal, a New York Democrat, who asserted that the oil companies were controlled by five major banks. The recommendation concluded, "Too often the mission of these people is profit and self-interest rather than human interest." With much blame placed on big banks and big oil companies, the recommendation urged Southern Baptists in Virginia to "support proposals which will require industry and commerce to safeguard energy resources."[27] Consistent with earlier environmental engagement concern over the population explosion and pollution crisis, Southern Baptists were eager to see the federal government intervene to solve the energy crisis of 1973-1974. Big banks, oil companies and industry were not trusted to solve the nation's energy problems.

*American Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1973-1974*

American Baptists addressed the energy crisis with a resolution at their summer meeting in 1974. Titled "Ecology," the resolution stated its purpose as bringing pressing environmental concerns to the attention of "our legislators, American Baptist churches, and other Christian communities." The resolution called for "prudent and concerned use of energy" and advocated the development of alternative energy sources. In accordance with its focus on eco-justice, American Baptists did not promote a single-issue environmentalism. Instead, during this time of crisis, American Baptists chose to highlight a platform of environmental concerns. Emphasizing the earth's interconnected "web of life," the resolution called for "stiff laws for controlling [water] pollution," garbage composting, air pollution controls, protection and preservation of estuaries,

[27] Ibid.

restrictions on dam use, recycling, and a ban on the burning of plastics. The statement concluded:

> As American Baptists our personal commitment is to the preservation of our God-given world, and we should therefore strive responsibly to use and reuse products that contribute to a better environment and to manage conscientiously our natural resources.[28]

In addition to this resolution, the denomination's Board of National Ministries released a report on the energy crisis. It underscored the previously discussed concept of interdependency and pointed to the "over-consumptive lifestyles" of many Americans as a roadblock to achieving eco-justice.[29] This rejection of a single-issue environmentalism distinguished the American Baptist and Southern Baptist responses to the energy crisis of 1973-1974.

Other non-environmental aspects that spurred on the energy crisis were important as well. American Baptists sought a peaceful rather than violent relationship between Israel and Arab states in the region. A resolution the same year titled "The Middle East" issued an "appeal to our government to enter into negotiations for the purpose of reducing military supplies in the Middle East to achieve disengagement and disarmament." The resolution concluded with an appeal for Christians to be "agents of reconciliation" and encourage dialogue between Jews and Muslims.[30] This resolution demonstrated that the international focus of American Baptists was multi-dimensional. Although eco-justice

---

[28] "Resolution on Ecology," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1975), 76-77.

[29] "Report of the Board of National Ministries," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the USA* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1975), 201.

[30] "Resolution on the Middle East," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the USA* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1975), 68-69.

was not mentioned, this resolution revealed that American Baptists were interested in any and all issues at the intersection of ecology and justice including both peace and energy.

*The Energy Crisis of 1976-1977 and Federal Energy Policy*

Energy issues reemerged in the public spotlight during the administration of President Jimmy Carter. Walter Rosenbaum, a well-known expert on energy politics, observed in *Energy, Politics, and Public Policy* that the Carter Administration "began with a natural gas crisis and ended with the Iranian hostage crisis."[31] Carter was inaugurated as President on January 20, 1977 while the nation was experiencing record cold temperatures. Faced with a shortage of natural gas, thousands of schools and factories were forced to temporarily shut down. The day following his inauguration, Carter called on Americans to set their thermostats no higher than sixty-five degrees fahrenheit to conserve energy and help alleviate the shortage.[32]

Just two weeks after being inaugurated, Carter held a televised press conference to tell the nation that he planned to present a "comprehensive long-range energy policy" to Congress in the upcoming months. A few months later, Carter again addressed the nation on energy issues just days before Earth Day 1977. In that now historic speech, Carter declared:

> With the exception of preventing war, this is the greatest challenge our country will face during our lifetimes. The energy crisis has not yet overwhelmed us, but it will if we do not act quickly....Our decision about energy will test the character of the American people and the ability of the President and the Congress to

---

[31] Walter A. Rosenbaum, *Energy, Politics and Public Policy*, 2nd ed. (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1987), 6.

[32] John C. Barrow, "An Age of Limits: Jimmy Carter and the Quest for a National Energy Policy," in *The Carter Presidency: Policy Choices in the Post-New Deal Era,"* eds. Gary M. Fink and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 158.

> govern. This difficult effort will be the "moral equivalent of war"—except that we will be uniting our efforts to build and not destroy.[33]

Carter acknowledged that some of his proposals for "strict conservation" would be unpopular and require sacrifice. He laid out ten fundamental principles behind his proposed national energy policy. The first principle noted that a responsible government and individuals—willing to make sacrifices—were key elements to developing an effective solution to the nation's energy problems. The second and third principles dealt with economics and the environment respectively, deeming both economic growth and environmental protection to be essential elements of any national energy policy.[34] Therefore, Carter rejected the perspective in the energy-environment debate that claimed energy and environmental goals were not compatible.[35]

Despite this being considered an opportune occasion for broad-sweeping legislation, Congress had a mixed response to Carter's National Energy Program. Republicans viewed Carter's plan as a "big government" solution that overly relied on government regulation. The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate finally reached a compromise on Carter's energy program in late 1978. Many of Carter's uncontroversial conservative proposals were left in place including tax credits for energy conservation and appliance efficiency standards. However, Carter's proposed gasoline tax, tax on

---

[33] Jimmy Carter, "The President's Proposed Energy Policy," May 1, 1977, PBS, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/carter-energy/ (accessed May 1, 2012).

[34] Ibid.

[35] Barrow, "An Era of Limits," 160. Shortly after giving this televised speech, the Carter Administration released the National Energy Program which featured 113 different and conflicting initiatives. Scholars such as John Barrow have written that 1977 was a ripe time for national energy legislation. The interim period between this natural gas crisis and the 1973 oil crisis was marked by rising inflation and energy prices. Although there was much debate, federal energy policy changed very little during the presidential administrations of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

industrial users of both natural gas and oil and crude oil equalization tax were rejected and not included in the final version of the plan. Nonetheless, Carter still signed the National Energy Program into law on November 19, 1978.[36]

## *Baptists and Natural Gas*

### *Southern Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1976-1977*

As factories and schools were forced to temporarily close due to cold weather and the resulting natural gas crisis, Southern Baptist churches took immediate measures to conserve energy. Some churches moved their Sunday night services to Sunday afternoon. Committee meetings scheduled throughout the week were consolidated into one early evening meeting. Churches also chose to host their meetings in smaller classrooms rather than large sanctuaries and fellowship halls to save energy.[37]

Following Carter's speech comparing the energy crisis to the "moral equivalent of war," Southern Baptist leaders began to employ similar rhetoric. The President and Executive-Director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas labeled the nation's energy woes a "moral and spiritual matter."[38] The editor of the *Western Recorder*, the newspaper of Southern Baptists in Kentucky, asked in a May 1977 column regarding Carter's call to conserve energy: "Do we have the moral fiber to respond unselfishly?"[39] The editor of *The Alabama Baptist* argued in an editorial that Carter's message of

---

[36] Ibid., 167.

[37] "Churches Already Responding to Energy Crisis," *Biblical Recorder*, February 12, 1977, 4.

[38] "Energy Crisis/Cost Prompts Varied Response," *Baptist Standard*, May 25, 1977, 3.

[39] Daley, Chauncey. "Daley Observations: The Christian and Conservation Energy," *Western Recorder*, May 5, 1977, 2-3.

conservation was compatible with the "philosophy of Christian stewardship." The editor elaborated, "We are trustees of God's creation. As such, we are accountable for the way natural resources are used. Waste is sinful." The editorial described the need for stricter governmental regulations to be "sad" but necessary. These regulations were necessary, according to the editor, because Christians, Southern Baptists specifically, had failed to "practice a stewardship philosophy" as "taught in the Bible."[40] In other words, government regulation would not be necessary in a world free from sin. However, due to the sin of humans—Christians included—government regulation was required to protect the environment.

During the late summer of 1977, Southern Baptist leaders convened at a conference sponsored by the SBC's Christian Life Commission to discuss energy issues. The two-day conference featured presentations from elder Southern Baptist statesmen like Carlyle Marney as well as energy and environment experts including Frances Gulick of the Congressional Research Service.[41] All participants concurred that—contrary to some voices in the public square—the energy crisis was indeed real. Attendees differed on solutions to the problem.[42]

David Sapp, Director of Organization for the SBC's Christian Life Commission, spoke out strongly against consumerism and materialism. He preached: "The health of God's world and of God's people is presently endangered by our oil-based energy system." Echoing President Carter's call to sacrifice, Sapp explained that a "conservative

---

[40] "Editorial: Challenge to Conserve," *The Alabama Baptist*," April 28, 1977, 2.

[41] "Nuclear Protest Will Equal War Protest Speaker Says," *Baptist Press*, August 23, 1977, 1-2.

[42] "Editorial: The Enemy is Us," *The Baptist Record*, September 29, 1977, 8.

consumer life style" was needed in which Christians "avoid waste and materialism" and "practice sharing and frugality." He called on churches to develop and implement an energy stewardship plan, noting that some Southern Baptist churches had already invested much time and effort in developing an energy conservation plan. He reminded, "Christians must be led to realize that conservation is more than a nice idea, it is a Christian obligation." Sapp believed that the role of the church was to preach this truth as government "will never voice the claim that 'The Earth is the Lord's'." He insisted that it was the role of local churches, as part of their mission, to call denominations, Christian institutions and "the world to accountability for its use of God's energy resources." Sapp envisioned churches fulfilling this mission through preaching, teaching and the "vigorous exercise of Christian citizenship."[43] By "Christian citizenship," Sapp meant, of course, individual Christians participating in the political process.

Other speakers emphasized that local churches had an important role to play during the energy crisis. Cecil Ray, General Secretary of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, stressed that local churches had three specific duties. First, churches must articulate clearly an ethic of Christian stewardship and preach the stewardship message of responsible use of God's creation. Second, churches had a duty to facilitate Christians to adopt distinctly Christian lifestyles that eschewed consumerism and materialism. Third, churches were responsible for developing an energy conservation

[43] W. David Sapp, "A Church's Moral Responsibility in the Energy Crisis," 4-7, Southern Baptist History Library & Archives, Energy 1978-1979, CLC AR-138-2, Box 48.

plan.[44] With a clearly articulated Christian stewardship ethic, Ray believed that Christians could then apply this ethic in both their private lives and the public square.

Albert McClellan of the SBC's Executive Committee emphasized the implications of the energy crisis for individual Christians. He focused on individual responsibility and the obligation to be ethically responsible with regard to energy consumption. Referencing the doctrine of creation, McClellan lauded the need for a commitment to the Christian stewardship ethic. He explained, "If we are to replenish and subdue the earth, this does not mean to deplenish and ruin the earth. We have a theological obligation based on the doctrine of responsibility both retrospectively and prospectively." McClellan warned against alarm and encouraged his fellow Southern Baptists to accept that "moderate changes" in lifestyle and energy consumption are needed.[45] His call for "moderate changes" represented the typical Southern Baptist response to energy crises. Moderate rather than radical changes were a common suggested corrective to these crises.

While speakers at the energy conference stressed stewardship and sermonized on the role of local churches and individual Christians, one Baptist businessman took a very different approach. Gilbert Turner, a Houston executive in the oil industry, was harshly critical of the federal government. He argued that in order to decrease energy consumption and conserve energy, government "must be less restrictive and punitive in the application of laws, and rules and regulations." Turner continued:

---

[44] Cecil Ray, "What Baptist Churches Can Do," 1-2, Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives, Energy Conference 1977, CLC AR 138-2, Box 28.

[45] Albert McClellan, "The Energy Crisis and Organized Religion," 12-15, Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives, Energy Conference 1977, CLC AR 138-2, Box 28.

> We face a serious danger of runaway inflation from runaway regulation. We need a political economist messiah to rescue us from these twentieth century Levites. I have hopes that this messiah will come in the form of enlightened and freedom-loving voters, who recognize that the energy crisis is merely a symptom of a disease and is not incurable, but which requires immediate attention.

For Turner then, "an all-powerful central government" with its restrictive regulations were the cause of the nation's energy problems. Turner suggested that the "capitalistic free enterprise system" was under attack. Although Turner did not offer specifics to support his assertion, this anti-regulation message would be more common among Southern Baptists beginning in the 1980s.[46]

Numerous Southern Baptist state conventions addressed the natural gas crisis in their resolutions and reports beginning in late 1977. The Georgia Baptist Convention called on churches to reduce energy consumption and practice energy conservation at home and in the workplace. These Southern Baptists from Georgia described energy conservation as "a matter of Christian responsibility, based upon loving concern for our neighbor."[47] Southern Baptists in Virginia adopted a detailed report on energy which provided a lengthy list of suggestions to conserve energy. Utilizing the language of Christian stewardship, the report concluded that "Virginia Baptists will become responsible stewards of energy resources when we accept as our neighbor future generations as well as the people who inhabit our finite planet now (Luke 10:27, 37).

---

[46] Gilbert Turner, "Responses of a Baptist Businessman," 27-28, Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives, Energy Conference 1977, CLC AR 138-2, Box 28. The invitation of this executive from the oil industry signaled that Southern Baptist leaders understood that a competing viewpoint was present in certain corners of Southern Baptist life.

[47] "Report of the Committee on Resolution," in *Annual of the Georgia Baptist Convention* (Atlanta, GA: Georgia Baptist Convention, 1977), 29.

The limits of creation require an ethic of frugality."[48] This report targeted individuals and congregations.

Meanwhile, Southern Baptists in North Carolina adopted a resolution aimed at government leaders. It called on elected officials and North Carolina governor James Hunt to "seek industries that will be morally and environmentally as well as economically beneficial" and "seek industries that will not be detrimental to the health and welfare of our people."[49] In Texas, Southern Baptists encouraged the government to devote its resources to identifying alternative energy sources that were environmentally safe. The report of the Baptist General Convention of Texas raised questions about the "cost to the environment" of greater reliance on coal and nuclear power and suggested solar energy as a possible long-term solution.[50] At the 1977 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, Hunter Jones, a messenger from Texas, presented a resolution titled "On Energy and Natural Resources." This short four-sentence long resolution acknowledged the biblical command to be "good stewards" and offered support for government leaders to develop a national energy policy that is "equitable to all citizens."[51] These Southern Baptist state conventions clearly felt that government involvement was crucial to finding a way to stop the trend of energy crises and simultaneously preserve the earth.

---

[48] "Energy Use," in *Virginia Baptist Annual* (Richmond, VA: Baptist General Association of Virginia, 1978), 63.

[49] "Report of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina," in *North Carolina Baptist Annual* (Raleigh, NC: Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, 1978), 106.

[50] "Report of the Christian Life Commission," in *Texas Baptist Annual* (Dallas, TX: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1977), 73.

[51] "Resolution on Energy and Natural Resources," in *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1977), 50.

*American Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1976-1977*

Like their fellow Baptists to the south, American Baptists were extremely attentive to the natural gas crisis. In 1976, the denomination adopted a resolution advocating for a "balanced national energy program and renewed commitment to personal stewardship in the use of energy resources." The resolution further advocated that the federal government develop a program that relied heavily on renewable resources and shunned sources that could be potentially devastating to the environment. Nuclear power was cited as an environmentally questionable energy source.[52] With this resolution, American Baptists preceded Southern Baptists in Texas in raising questions about environmental costs associated with nuclear power.[53]

The resolution concluded with a section focusing on the "rights of the poor." The section began: "As Christian citizens, we urge energy policies which will seek economic and political equity in bearing the costs of the present imbalance of energy sources." This concern expressed was not simply for the poor in America but the poor around the world. The resolution declared that a national energy policy must also seek international equity. An international focus different from the generally U.S.-centric emphasis of Southern Baptists colored the American Baptist approach to the energy crises. Most notably, this resolution abandoned the language of eco-justice and only emphasized the Christian principle of stewardship.[54]

---

[52] "Energy," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the USA* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1977), 71-72.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

The following year, American Baptists adopted a detailed six-page policy statement on energy. While not using the explicit language of eco-justice, this statement did emphasize human justice. The statement also highlighted stewardship and interdependence. As discussed in the previous chapter, these were two of the three values that defined the American Baptist vision of eco-justice. The statement stressed the biblical and historical obligation of environmental stewardship "not only for ourselves, but also for future generations." Additionally, the statement argued that stewardship required cooperation which connotes interdependence and a "recognition by all of us that we share global responsibility for the stewardship of resources and justice for humanity."[55]

The statement also focused on the impact of rising fuel costs on the poor in the United States and especially those in Third World nations. The need for energy conservation and the development of alternative sources of renewable energy were also stressed. However, the statement emphasized that government and industry must take seriously ecological consideration in the search for alternatives to fossil fuels. Strip mining was judged to be a "violation of stewardship and a callous disregard of the rights and needs of present and future generations." Strip mining was equated with the "rape of the earth." The statement contended that technology did not provide all of the solutions to the energy crisis: "We cannot depend solely on technological breakthroughs...to solve

[55] American Baptist Churches USA, "Policy Statement on Energy," General Board Reference No. 7004, June 1977, 1-2, http://www.abc-usa.org/LinkClick.aspx? fileticket=odV2innUM z0%3D& tabid=199 (accessed May 1, 2012).

our energy problems."[56] Like Southern Baptists, American Baptists turned to government for solutions to the natural gas crisis.

After identifying and describing the energy challenges facing the world, the statement laid out a biblical and theological foundation to serve as the basis of an energy policy proposal. The doctrine of creation was invoked at several places: "To live in the image of God, human beings must show that same love and care for creation." Biblical justice and God's concern for the poor were themes present throughout this section. The statement described God as the "God of Justice who is allied with the poor and the oppressed of the nation and of the world." According to the statement, a Christian's primary concern must be with justice, defined as "love in action."[57] Stewardship then was understood as an environmental ethic defined by love and an alliance with the poor and active concern for future generations.

Based on this biblical and theological foundation, the statement listed six criteria for energy decisions. First, all persons have a right to energy necessary to survive and meet basic needs. Second, national energy policies must ensure justice and equity and display a concern for the poor. Third, energy policy discussions must be transparent. American Baptists were clearly wary of back-room deals that favored corporate interests. Fourth, a national energy program must be cost-efficient, require conservation and promote human justice. Fifth, an energy policy must be designed to alleviate international energy problems not just domestic issues. Sixth, an energy policy must not

[56] Ibid., 2-3.

[57] Ibid., 3-4.

oppress developing nations and must help narrow the divide between the rich and poor.[58] While no detailed description of "human justice" was given, the statement presented a picture of what justice entailed in the context of this energy crisis. The poor were to be favored and Third World nations were deserving of fair treatment.

Out of this biblical foundation and criteria, the statement outlined components for a national energy policy. The statement called for an emphasis on energy conservation, prioritized funding for the development of "renewable, non-polluting sources of energy," strict environmental standards, and the sharing of clean energy technology with developing nations. Although more detailed than previous American Baptist (and Southern Baptist) environmental statements, this statement failed to spell out what strict regulations were needed, what renewable resources should be developed and how this sharing of technology with poor nations could be accomplished. Not entirely focused on a government solution, the statement did call on individuals to adopt a more environmentally responsible lifestyle. Churches, in addition to individual Christians, were encouraged to be "influencing agents" and lobby for "just decisions on energy" in the political arena at the local, state and national levels.[59] Here again, no specific policy initiatives were suggested.

A resolution and policy statement were not the only ways that American Baptists confronted the natural gas crisis. The Office of Issue Development formed a task force in 1977 to study and determine a plan to address energy issues. Issue Development staff

---

[58] Ibid., 4-5.

[59] Ibid., 5-6.

members were also involved in national ecumenical efforts related to the energy crisis.[60] Similarly, the Office of Governmental Relations participated in the Task Force on Energy and Ecology of the Washington Interreligious Staff Council (WISC).[61] Through their participation and leadership in the ecumenical WISC, the Office of Governmental Relations successfully lobbied for federal funding for energy research and development.[62] Activism was indeed a vital component of American Baptist denominational engagement with environmental issues. This was demonstrated by the fact that the staffs of two of the denomination's offices devoted, as evidenced in the annual reports, a significant amount of their time to dealing with the natural gas crisis during 1976 and 1977.

*The Energy Crisis of 1979: Iranian Revolution and Three-Mile Island*

After the natural gas crisis of 1977, which led to the enactment in late 1978 of the National Energy Program, the United States faced a third energy crisis in 1979. Massive riots in Iran increased instability in the Middle East during the fall of 1978. The regime of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi—the "Shah of Iran"—was eventually overthrown in an Islamic fundamentalist revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini. The revolution greatly

---

[60] "Report of the Office of Issue Development," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the USA* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1978), 142-143.

[61] "Report of the Office of Governmental Relations," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the USA* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 222.

[62] "Report of the Office of Governmental Relations," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the USA* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1978), 145-146. In the aftermath of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., mainline Protestant denominations formed the Washington Interreligious Staff Council and its IMPACT network for the purposes of education advocacy and political mobilization and activism. Initially the IMPACT network targeted 100 congressional districts but eventually expanded to include all 435 districts. Through this network, American Baptists lobbied members of Congress to take certain positions and back specific legislation. See Steven M. Tipson, *Methodists and mainline churches in the moral argument of public life* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 285-286.

affected Iran's oil sector. Oil exports were completely halted on December 27, 1978.[63] This severe turmoil in the Middle East generated a strong sense of panic in the United States. Increased oil consumption in the United States and other industrialized nations made matters worse. Saudi Arabia and other OPEC nations had increased oil production during the first quarter of 1979. Yet, their production level was still two million barrels below the previous quarter's levels. Panic induced demand resulting in an additional shortfall of three million barrels per day. As a result, oil prices skyrocketed from fourteen to thirty-four dollars per barrel. In the United States, Americans paid nearly one dollar for a gallon of gasoline, more than three-times the previous price.[64]

With lengthy lines at the gasoline pump and soaring prices, President Carter called on Americans to recommit to conservation. During his April 5, 1979 address to the nation, Carter signaled his intent to deregulate oil prices as he had begun doing with natural gas prices in October 1978.[65] However, Carter's voluntary conservation programs to reduce energy consumption were not a success. Nor did his deregulation efforts curb the demand for oil. Instead, inflation increased.[66] Daniel Horowitz wrote in *Jimmy Carter and the Energy Crisis of the 1970s* that "for the first time since the end of the World War II in 1945, the nation no longer appeared to control its economic destiny."[67]

---

[63] Barrow, "An Age of Limits," 176. See also Daniel Horowitz, *Jimmy Carter and the Energy Crisis of the 1970s* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins, 2005), 12-13.

[64] Christopher Caplinger, "The Politics of Trusteeship Governance: Jimmy Carter's Fight for a Standby Gasoline Rationing Plan," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (Summer 1996): 780.

[65] Horowitz, 12-13.

[66] Benjamin Kline, *First Along the River: A Brief History of the Environmental Movement,* 3rd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 96-97.

[67] Horowitz, 12-13.

Meanwhile, as the nation was searching for alternative energy, disaster struck at Three-Mile Island near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on March 28, 1979. There, the Metropolitan Edison Company's nuclear reactor experienced a partial meltdown. Radioactive steam had to be released into the atmosphere to cool the reactor's core. After the reactor was shut down, radiation leaks continued, causing widespread panic in the region. Pennsylvania governor Richard Thornburgh ordered that all pregnant women and children be evacuated. Over 200,000 residents fled the nearby area. The disaster at Three-Mile Island received much national newspaper and television coverage. While the accident cost the nuclear power industry more than one billion dollars, it "destroyed what remained of American public confidence in nuclear power," according to environmental historian Hal K. Rotham. Consequently, nuclear power would no longer be seriously considered as a possible long-term alternative energy source.[68]

On June 30, 1979, President Carter canceled his vacation plans and instead hosted meetings with members of Congress, governors, academics and religious leaders to determine how to deal with this latest energy crisis. Lines at the gasoline pump were longer and there was much anger across the nation. Carter's approval rating had dropped to an all-time low of 25 percent, making Carter even less popular than President Richard Nixon during the Watergate scandal.[69]

After more than a week of meetings at Camp David, Carter delivered a nationally televised speech on the energy crisis. Titled "Crisis of Confidence" but known as the

---

[68] Hal K. Rotham, *The Greening of a Nation? Environmentalism in the United States Since 1945* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998), 146-147.

[69] Horowitz, 13-14, 24-25. See also Dan F. Hahn, "Flailing the Profligate: Carter's Energy Sermon of 1979," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (Fall 1980): 583-587.

"malaise" speech, Carter declared "The erosion of our confidence in the future is threatening to destroy the social and the political fabric of America." Carter also asserted that "the generation-long growth in our dependence on foreign oil will be stopped dead in its tracks right now and then reversed as we move through the 1980s." In his speech, which scholars have described as a "sermon," Carter requested authority from Congress for mandatory conservation and standby gasoline rationing. He called on Americans to avoid taking unnecessary trips, use carpools, and obey the speed limit. Carter referred to these and other conservation measures as "act[s] of patriotism."[70] Although Carter's proposals boosted his approval ratings, they gained little traction as political controversies proved to be a distraction.[71]

## *Baptists and Oil: Part 2*

### *Southern Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1979*

During the height of this energy crisis, President Carter received advice from Jimmy Allen, the then immediate past president of Southern Baptist Convention. Allen was one of ten religious leaders that Carter sought counsel from on how to deal with the crisis at the ten-day Camp David summit.[72] Two days after Carter's "Crisis of

---

[70] Jimmy Carter, "Crisis of Confidence," July 15, 1979, PBS.org, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/ features/primary-resources/carter-crisis/ (accessed May 1, 2012).

[71] Austin Ranney, "The Carter Administration," in *The American Elections of 1980*, ed. Austin Ranney (Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research), 28-32. Carter shook up and re-organized his Cabinet with firings and forced resignations just days after his "Crisis of Confidence" speech. Then, on November 4, 1979, American hostages were sized at the United States embassy in Iran. Three days later, Senator Edward Kennedy entered the race for the presidency to challenge the incumbent Carter in the Democratic primary.

[72] Robert O'Brien, "President Challenges Religious Leaders," *Baptist Press*, July 12, 1979, 3. See also Larry L. McSwain, *Loving beyond Your Theology: The Life and Ministry of Jimmy Raymond Allen* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010), 151.

Confidence" speech, Allen joined a group of forty religious leaders in releasing a statement calling on all Americans "in charity and in justice to join hands in meeting this crisis squarely."[73]

The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention was also responsive to Carter's call to strengthen conservation efforts. During the first-week of 1980, the Sunday School Board co-sponsored a one-day religion and energy conference. Other sponsors included the National Council of Churches, United States Catholic Conference, Synagogue Council of America and the Interfaith Coalition on Energy. President Carter spoke to the group of religious leaders and stated that "the conservation of oil has a religious connotation." Carter continued, "We are stewards under God's guidance who are called upon 'to husband' natural resources for the good of all persons especially the less fortunate." Harold Bennett, the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the SBC's Executive Committee also addressed the group. Bennett emphasized that Christian stewardship should shape a proper response to the energy crisis.[74]

Later in the year, the Sunday School Board led Southern Baptist churches nationwide to participate in and observe "Responsible Energy Sabbath," designated for October 18-19, 1980. This observance was the product of a year-long effort by Jewish and Christian groups. The SBC became involved in this project as a result of the previously mentioned conference on religion and energy held at the White House. Southern Baptist churches that participated in the initiative were asked to take up an

---

[73] "Clerical Group Urges Americans to Support Carter 'Call to Action'," *New York Times*, July 17, 1979, A13.

[74] "Stan Hastey, "Nation's Religious Leaders Asked to Join Energy Fight," *Baptist Press*, January 11, 1980, 2.

energy-related project of their choosing that promoted conservation. The SBC also published an energy resource book titled *A Church Energy Handbook* to assist churches involved in planning conservation efforts.[75]

The energy crisis fueled by the Iranian revolution was also addressed through resolutions and reports. During the summer of 1979, while meeting in Houston, Texas, the SBC adopted a short resolution titled "On Energy" calling on Southern Baptists to "practice stringent conservation efforts as an important part of Christian stewardship and witness." With this resolution, the SBC pledged to cooperate with government and corporations to "devise major new initiatives in the development of safe, clean, and renewable energy forms." The resolution also referenced the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island. While not calling for a halt to plans to construct new nuclear power plants, the SBC did urge federal and state governments to "proceed...only when the safety of their operation and waste disposal processes can be assured."[76]

This was the first time that Southern Baptists as a denomination had addressed the subject of nuclear power. However, just a few weeks following the Three Mile Island accident, David Sapp of the SBC's Christian Life Commission penned a guest editorial published in state convention newspapers that backed an "immediate moratorium on the construction of nuclear power plants." Sapp argued that "a Christlike concern for the well-being of humanity, the born and the unborn, demands that emergency priority be given to solving the nuclear waste disposal problem." Invoking Jesus' command in

---

[75] "SBC Sunday School Board Promotes Energy Sabbath," *The Alabama Baptist*, August 28, 1980, 3. See also "Responsible Energy Sabbath Weekend, October 17-19, 1980," Southern Baptist History Library & Archives, Energy 1980, CLC AR-138-2, Box 47.

[76] "Resolution on Energy," in *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1979), 49-50.

Matthew 19:19 to "Love your neighbor as yourself," Sapp declared that Southern Baptists could not stay silent because "God has given us a clear moral principle for dealing with the problems of nuclear power."[77]

Several Southern Baptist state conventions adopted resolutions and reports concerning the energy crisis in 1979 and 1980. In Florida, Southern Baptists resolved that "we encourage restraint and frugal use of nonrenewable sources of energy that God has entrusted to our care" and practice "stewardship of his creation."[78] Southern Baptists in North Carolina affirmed a report declaring that "God's people are to be wise stewards." This report offered steps that churches could take to conserve energy and reduce waste. Practical energy-saving measures were suggested such as turning off unnecessary lights and refraining from using large rooms for meetings and gatherings of small groups.[79] A report adopted in 1980 by Southern Baptists in Oklahoma declared that "God's people must be examples to the lifestyles, and prophets to the ears, of a wasteful nation in a world of limited natural resources."[80] These reports all urged Southern Baptists to practice a stewardship ethic that resembled a basic conservation plan of using less energy and reducing waste.

---

[77] W. David Sapp, "The Gospel and Three Mile Island," *Western Recorder*, April 25, 1979, 2. The South Carolina Baptist Convention adopted a resolution in late 1979 that expressed appreciation to the state's governor, Richard W. Riley, "for protecting our state from possible nuclear waste exposure." See "Resolution on Nuclear Waste and Alcohol," in *South Carolina Baptist Convention Annual* (Greenville, SC: South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1979), 47.

[78] "Resolution No. 4: Energy," in *Annual of the Florida Baptist State Convention* (Jacksonville, FL: Florida Baptist State Convention, 1979), 59.

[79] "Report of the Christian Life & Public Affairs Committee," in *North Carolina Baptist Annual* (Raleigh, NC: Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, 1979), 170-171.

[80] "Report of the Christian Life Committee," in *Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Oklahoma Baptist State Convention* (Oklahoma City, OK, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1980), 108.

*American Baptists and the Energy Crisis of 1979*

American Baptists responded to the energy crisis in 1979 with a resolution titled "On Food and Fuel Crisis Assistance." The resolution's framework was a commitment to caring for the poor, destitute and disadvantaged as a "necessary expression of God's love and justice." The Apostle Paul's "rule of equality" was offered as a biblical rationale for the resolution.[81] In 2 Corinthians 8:13-15, the Apostle Paul wrote:

> Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.'[82]

Building off of the Apostle Paul's "rule of equality," the resolution declared that all Christians are required to be "faithful stewards" of the environment regardless if rich or poor. Referring to the Old Testament story of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:7-16), the resolution reminded American Baptists of their biblical obligation to share with others: "In giving of our scarcity we experience that our security is not in material plentitude, but in participation in God's love and life."[83]

After laying a theological foundation drawn explicitly and exclusively from the Bible, the resolution focused on the suffering that the elderly and poor would experience as a result of the energy crisis. It explained that Christians must act whenever access to basic necessities such as fuel for heat is denied to others. Taking aim at capitalism, the resolution announced that "the law of the love of God is a higher law than the law of

---

[81] General Board of the American Baptist Churches USA, "Resolution on Food and Fuel Crisis Assistance, 8046: 12/79" in *Adopted Resolutions of the* American Baptist *Convention, 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA, 1996), np.

[82] 2 Corinthians 8:13-15 (New International Version).

[83] "Resolution on Food and Fuel Crisis Assistance."

supply and demand." Christians and churches were called on to seek out an "equitable resolution" to the nation's energy problems.[84]

Government-related solutions headlined the list of suggested actions. American Baptists were urged to support legislation for fuel assistance, resist efforts to cut benefits for low-income individuals and families, and back state legislation and local ordinances that prevented cutting off of utilities or fuel supplies "without proper safeguards" for the poor. Individual Christians were asked to educate the public about existing fuel assistance programs and local churches were called upon to develop programs to serve families without heat and light.[85] American Baptists also joined the Interfaith Coalition on Energy in 1979. This newly formed coalition was comprised of Catholics, Protestants and Jews and launched with a nationwide energy-saving campaign. Central to this campaign was the "Covenant for Conservation." Members were asked to sign a covenant and pledge to take a number of conservation measures. These included: car pooling and taking public transportation, avoiding energy-consuming leisure activities and packaged goods that could not be recycled.[86]

American Baptists addressed the energy crisis through their participation in the National Council of Churches. The NCC had endorsed the "peaceful" uses of nuclear or atomic energy in 1960.[87] However, two weeks prior to OPEC lifting its embargo of oil to the United States in 1974, the NCC Division of Church and Society commissioned a

---

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Marjorie Hyer, "Church Coalition Seeks Energy Savings," *Washington Post*, February 27, 1979, C5.

[87] Andy J. Smith III, "Religious Attitudes Toward Nuclear Energy: An Analysis of Statements by Religious Groups," (PhD diss., Drew University, 1983), 36.

group of scholars to study the environmental implications of nuclear energy.[88] Noted environmentalists Margaret Mead, a well-known cultural anthropologist, and Rene Dubos, a microbiologist, were selected to chair the committee.[89] This ecumenical effort resulted in a 1976 resolution describing the "widespread and potentially dangerous results" of developing nuclear energy. The NCC also recommended a moratorium on the commercial use of plutonium.[90] Presbyterian theologian and environmentalist Dieter Hessel has noted that this study and resolution coincided with the environmental movement's effort to delegitimize nuclear power.[91]

Following the nuclear accident at Three-Mile Island, American Baptists passed a resolution calling on the government to "consider a moratorium on nuclear power plant construction." Throughout the resolution were repeated references to the biblical obligation to be "good stewards of creation" and "exercise stewardship of the earth." The Nuclear Regulatory Commission was urged to fully disclose all nuclear accidents and inform the public of problems related to radioactive waste disposal. It stressed that this nuclear waste disposal problem posed a grave "danger to future generations."[92] In addition to requesting government involvement and transparency, the resolution encouraged local churches to study the denomination's energy policy statement and

---

[88] Bruce Birch, "Energy Ethics Reaches the Church's Agenda," *Christian Century*, November 1, 1978, 1034.

[89] Smith, "Religious Attitudes Toward Nuclear Energy," 36.

[90] K.L. Billingsley, *From Mainline to Sideline: The Social Witness of the National Council of Churches* (Lanham, MD: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1990), 149.

[91] Dieter T. Hessel, "Becoming a church for Ecology & Justice," in *The Prophetic Call: Celebrating Community, Earth, Justice, and Peace*, ed. Hugh Sanborn (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004), 88.

[92] "Resolution on the Environment and Nuclear Power," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the USA* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 54-55.

reduce individual and institutional demands for energy through stewardship practices. Similar to the fuel assistance resolution, this statement emphasized the theme of sharing. American Baptists were called upon to conserve energy so that the world's resources could be shared with "all peoples of the world."[93]

American Baptists were responsive to the Love Canal toxic waste disaster in 1979. From 1930 to 1952, an old hydroelectric canal near Niagara Falls, New York was used by Hooker Chemical Company as a dumping ground for toxic industrial waste. The chemical company sold the site to the city of Niagara Falls and disclosed that the area was contaminated with toxic waste. Despite this disclosure, the city constructed a school on the site in 1953. Families began to move into the neighborhood surrounding the school. Then, in 1971, toxic liquids began to leak through the once-sealed dump. The contamination of the neighborhood resulted in a high birth defect and miscarriage rate. A disproportionate number of women suffered from different types of cancer and an unusual number of children were born deaf. According to historian Hal Rotham, "Even the pets reflected the toxicity of the area." Lesions and tumors were common among the neighborhood dogs and cats.[94]

In his detailed account of the Love Canal scandal, Rotham observed that the response of the local government was "deceitful." Niagara Falls officials denied that anything was awry in Love Canal into 1978. Yet, these officials had privately informed New York's Department of Environmental Conservation of the dangerous toxicity at Love Canal. Finally, the Environmental Protection Agency made public a report in May

---

[93] Ibid.

[94] Kline, 181. See Rotham, 148-149.

1978 detailing the dangerous cancer-causing agent benzene that infected the air in the Love Canal neighborhood. While Hooker Chemical Company insisted that there was no toxic problem, the Health Commission of New York announced that Love Canal posed a "great and imminent peril to the health of the general public." This announcement came on August 2, 1978.[95]

With no federal or state plan for evacuation, Love Canal residents started to panic. President Carter soon stepped in and declared a national emergency. The state of New York promised to purchase all homes in the area at a fair market value. Six months later, 237 families had been permanently evacuated and a chain-link fence was erected around the six-block neighborhood. This is when American Baptists and other mainline Protestants became involved, forming the Ecumenical Task Force (ETF) to address the Love Canal disaster in March 1979.[96] A few short months later, support for the ETF had grown to include over thirty religious organizations including Catholic and Jewish groups.[97] The task force offered emergency and disaster relief to the displaced families of the Love Canal neighborhood. Additionally, the task force aided families that resided just outside of the evacuated area.[98] During the clean-up effort, toxic contamination was discovered beyond the six-block neighborhood that had been sealed off. Toxic runoff had polluted a much greater area.[99]

---

[95] Rotham, 151.

[96] Ibid., 153-155.

[97] Rich Newman, "Making Environmental Politics: Women and Love Canal Activism," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 1/2 (Spring-Summer 2001): 69.

[98] Donald L. Lawrence, "Love Canal: Does Anybody Care?" *The American Baptist*, July-August 1980, 14-16.

[99] Rotham, 154-155.

American Baptists of the Niagara Frontier region of the denomination were extremely active in the task force, comprising the second largest financial contributor of the thirty groups involved. These American Baptists worked through the task force to raise awareness about the Love Canal disaster and similar problems in other parts of the country. Advocacy and activism were also encouraged. However, the primary goal was to provide and secure for the relief of the "physical, psychological, social, and economic distress" of individuals and families in the Love Canal neighborhood and surrounding area. There was not a single mention of Love Canal in any denominational report or resolution nor in any popular periodical or newspaper.[100]

American Baptist Churches USA also partnered with mainline denominations in the corporate responsibility movement. This was another avenue through which American Baptists addressed environmental issues including the different energy crises of the 1970s. In 1967, Saul Alinsky's organization FIGHT purchased ten shares of Kodak stock and encouraged civil rights advocates and others owning Kodak stock to attend the annual shareholders meeting to protest the company's hiring practices.[101] Alinsky was a well-known liberal activist and pioneer community organizer. This proxy tactic caught the attention of mainline Protestant leaders who led their denominations to study how churches could utilize Alinsky's strategy. Seeking to challenge corporate power, mainline denominations formed the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility in 1974. The purpose of this ecumenical agency was to advise and assist churches and denominations regarding the ethical implication of their investments. During the 1960s,

---

[100] Lawrence, 14-16.

[101] Thomas C. Oden, *Conscience and Dividends: Churches and Multinationals* (Washington DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1985), 23.

mainline denominations including American Baptists had been criticized for not leveraging their significant stock holdings for ethical purposes. The ICCR sought to determine the social impact of corporations based on the application of social criteria. One factor considered was the impact of a corporation and its practices on the environment.[102]

The ICCR put much of its initial focus on environmental issues such as nuclear power, strip mining and the petrochemical industry. This effort gained national attention. The nation's newspaper of record, *The New York Times*, featured an article in January 1974 titled "Church Groups Hit Corporations." The article detailed that mainline denominations had passed stockholder resolutions dealing with strip mining and the energy crisis. Specifically, American Baptists Churches USA and the United Church of Christ challenged Exxon Corporation and Gulf Oil Corporation in 1974.[103]

Prior to the formation of the ICCR, American Baptists had helped in 1971—via shareholder participation—to delay and scale down a strip mining venture of American Metal Climax in Puerto Rico. Additionally, the denomination participated in an ecumenical Eco-Justice Task Force that specifically confronted similar issues of corporate environmental responsibility or the lack thereof.[104] American Baptists felt that the oil industry was a perpetrator in the energy crisis and urged their fellow stockholders to pass a resolution demanding more transparency with regard to actual oil production and distribution. The oil companies argued that much of the information requested had

---

[102] David Ermann and William H. Clements, "The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility and its Campaign Against Marketing Infant Formula in the Third World," *Social Problems* 32, no. 2 (December 1984): 185-187.

[103] Eleanor Blau, "Church Groups Hits Corporations," *New York Times*, January 26, 1974, 45.

[104] Ermann and Clements, 186-187.

already been made public. Further, the corporations contended that providing additional information beyond what the law requires would not be in the best interest of the corporation and its stockholders.[105]

In the late 1970s, the Board of National Ministries launched a program called Social and Ethical Responsibility in Investments. This program monitored the behavior of corporations held in the denomination's Common Investment Fund. It did so on the basis of social criteria including environmental impact. Other criteria or areas of concern included sex and racial discrimination, militarism, fraudulent marketing practices and human rights violations. A biblical justification for the program was offered: "The Old and New Testaments call on us to speak on behalf of the poor and oppressed, to speak against deceit, and to be wise stewards of the Lord's resources." The program expressed concerns to corporations through letters to management, visits and shareholder resolutions. This emphasis on ensuring corporate environmental responsibility continued and heightened during the 1980s.[106]

## *Comparative Analysis and Conclusion*

### *Science and Technology*

The previous two chapters found that American Baptists and most Southern Baptists rejected the popular notion of a "technological fix." In *The Restructuring of American Religion*, sociologist Robert Wuthnow argued that American had placed much

---

[105] Roy W. Morano, *The Protestant Challenge to Corporate America: Issues of Social Responsibility* (Ann Arbor, MI: UM Research Press, 1984), 149.

[106] "Report of Board of National Ministries: Social and Ethical Responsibility in Investments," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the USA* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1980), 172.

faith in science and technology in the aftermath of World War II. This newfound faith inspired a majority of Americans to affirm that scientific and technological advances were the key to solving many of society's ills including environmental problems.[107]

Science and technology were an important focus during the formative years of the environmental movement. The historical record reveals, as detailed in chapters three and four, that American Baptists and Southern Baptists considered the role of science and technology in the search for environmental solutions during this pivotal period. Yet, at the close of the second wave of American environmental history, neither group of Baptists devoted much attention to science and technology. In fact, the historical record is almost completely devoid of any mention of science and technology in denominational periodicals, resolutions, reports and meeting minutes from 1973-1979.

When Southern Baptists did address the subject, they did so to encourage scientific advancements to help alleviate the energy crises. Southern Baptists in Virginia adopted a resolution during the 1973 OPEC oil embargo that challenged scientists to discover and develop viable alternative forms of energy.[108] Similar to the earlier period, the attitude of Southern Baptists to science and technology was positive as seen in this resolution. Although Southern Baptists held an appreciation for science and technology, their ultimate faith in a "fix" rested elsewhere.

Meanwhile, American Baptists adopted a similar attitude. In the midst of the natural gas crisis of 1977, American Baptists declared, "We cannot depend solely on

---

[107] Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 287.

[108] "Resolution #3," in *Virginia Baptist Annual*, 114.

technological breakthroughs to solve our energy problems."[109] Clearly, American Baptists recognized that science and technology had a role to play in the quest to end the energy troubles that faced the United States. This attitude was significantly more positive when compared with the attitudes of some American Baptists toward science and technology during the pollution and population crises. American Baptists such as David Rainey viewed technology to be the problem rather than a solution and influential American Baptist leader Owen Owens voiced his belief that technology had "gotten out of control."[110] Nonetheless, despite this shift to a more welcoming attitude, American Baptists—like Southern Baptists—continued to reject the widespread belief in a "technological fix."

*Government*

While rejecting a "technological fix," Southern Baptists again welcomed and affirmed the idea of a "government fix" from 1973-1979. Chapter three demonstrated that Southern Baptists did not raise questions or speak against the ever expanding regulatory role of the federal government. More not less government regulation to protect the environment was encouraged. This pattern continued throughout the 1970s. Southern Baptist state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention itself advocated for Congress and other government entities to "take aggressive action" to combat the 1973 energy crisis.[111] A national energy plan was even urged. All Southern Baptist

---

[109] American Baptist Churches USA, "Policy Statement on Energy," 2-3.

[110] David Rainey, "The Gospel and the Good Earth," *The American Baptist*, May 1970, 11. See also Owen Owens, "Salvation and Ecology: Missionary Imperatives in Light of a New Cosmology," *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974): 112.

[111] "Resolution on Stewardship of God's Creation," 70-71.

groups looked to the federal government to solve this energy crisis. In fact, Southern Baptists in Virginia explicitly stated that government regulation was the key to solving the crisis. Corporations including big banks and big oil companies were not trusted.[112]

During the natural gas crisis of 1977, Southern Baptists sought government to devote its resources to identifying alternate energy sources that were environmentally safe and seek industries that were both environmentally and economically beneficial to society.[113] As the nation was facing the 1979 oil crisis, Southern Baptists again pressured the federal government to ensure the development of "safe, clean, and renewable energy forms."[114] The federal government was also asked to protect its residents from industries such as nuclear power plants with toxic waste disposal issues.[115] Undoubtedly, Southern Baptists believed that government—via greater regulation—could provide the "fix" to these energy crises. Even as government distrust was building, Southern Baptists continued to place an enormous amount of faith in the federal government under both Republican and Democratic presidents.[116]

---

[112] "Report of the Christian Life Commission (1975), 131. See also "Report of the Christian Life Committee (1974)," in *Virginia Baptist Annual*, 108-109.

[113] "Report of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (1978)," in *North Carolina Baptist Annual*, 106. See also "Report of the Christian Life Commission (1977)," in *Texas Baptist Annual*, 73.

[114] "Resolution on Energy (1979)," in *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention,* 49-50.

[115] Ibid.

[116] The Southern Baptist embrace of a "government fix" stood in stark contrast to the position of their fellow evangelical Protestants. Kenneth Larsen detailed in "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals confront environmentalism, 1967-2000," that non-Southern Baptist evangelicals decried government regulation and viewed self-regulation as the answer to the energy crises. Larsen cited the editors of prominent evangelical publications such as *Christianity Today* who championed voluntary reductions in energy use over government mandated conservation. Kenneth David Larsen, "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals confront environmentalism, 1967-2000," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 104-105.

American Baptists had, during the earlier formative period, supported a more expansive role for the federal government in the environmental arena. Resolutions were adopted asking the federal government to regulate or control both pollution and population. Although recognizing the need for government regulation, American Baptists did so reluctantly, warning that a bigger, more powerful centralized government "should not make us feel easy." The tension between individual freedom and government restraint was emphasized.[117]

When facing the energy crises of the 1970s, American Baptists abandoned their former reluctant attitude toward a greater role for government, ceasing to give attention to the tense relationship between freedom and regulation. During these years, the attitude and position of American Baptists toward government regulation was no different than Southern Baptists. A 1974 resolution called for "stiff laws" to control pollution and preserve the environment and a 1976 resolution urged the federal government to develop a national energy program.[118] In 1979, the denomination urged American Baptists to support various legislative proposals that would provide greater regulations or "safeguards."[119] Like Southern Baptists, American Baptists turned to government to provide federal, environmentally-conscious solutions to the nation's energy problems. Both viewed government involvement in the form of strict regulations as the ultimate solution to environmental problems.

---

[117] American Baptist Churches USA, Board of National Ministries, "Ecological Wholeness and Justice: The Imperative of God," *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974): 139-140.

[118] "Resolution on Ecology," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A*, 76-77. See also "Energy," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the USA*, 71-72.

[119] "Resolution on Food and Fuel Crisis Assistance."

*Political Engagement*

Faced with an oil crisis followed by a natural gas crisis and then another oil crisis, Southern Baptists continued to practice a political engagement approach consistent with the Public Christian position. Historian Mark Toulouse identified this approach as one that requires Christians and individuals to become personally involved in the political arena.[120] As detailed in chapter three, Southern Baptists—with limited exceptions—followed this approach from the mid-1960s through the early 1970s. Polling bore out that the Public Christian position was then the preferred political engagement approach of Southern Baptists.[121]

Clearly, the Public Christian approach remained the preferred way to engage environmental issues from 1973-1979. A 1973 resolution of Southern Baptists in Kentucky invoked the "citizenship responsibilities" of Southern Baptists.[122] The next year, Southern Baptists in North Carolina passed a resolution calling on Southern Baptists as individuals to become "actively involved" in the environmental efforts.[123] David Sapp of the SBC's Christian Life Commission best articulated the Public Christian approach during these years. He explained in his presentation at the CLC-sponsored Energy Conference in 1977 that the church's role was not politics but preaching and teaching individual Christians to participate in the political process as "Christian

---

[120] Mark G. Toulouse, *God in Public: Four Ways American Christianity and Public Life Relate* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 108-116, 121-122.

[121] Kenneth Hayes, "Baptist Leaders Speak Out on Pollution Problems," *Baptist Press*, December 8, 1970, 10.

[122] "Resolution on Fuel Conservation (1973)," in *Annual of the Kentucky Baptist Convention,* 160.

[123] "Report of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (1974)," in *North Carolina Baptist Annual*, 99.

citizens."[124] At the same conference, Cecil Ray of North Carolina emphasized that the role of churches was to articulate an ethic of Christian stewardship. Southern Baptists could then apply this ethic to both their personal lifestyle and in the political arena.[125]

Chapter three noted that a small but influential group of Southern Baptist denominational leaders had embraced the Public Church approach to political engagement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. From 1973-1979, there were no Southern Baptist leaders to voice this perspective with regard to environmental issues. Unlike during the population and pollution crises, political advocacy and activism on the part of local churches was not encouraged. Churches were encouraged to confront the energy crises by preaching individual responsibility and encouraging individuals to be active political participants.[126]

American Baptists did not, however, abandon their commitment to the Public Church approach to political engagement. The Public Church approach, according to Toulouse, expects local churches and denominations to be politically active and work to accomplish social change.[127] American Baptists did just that during this period. Like Southern Baptists, American Baptists called on individuals to conserve energy and adopt more environmentally responsible lifestyles. But American Baptists also encouraged local churches to also be "influencing agents" and lobby for "just decisions on energy" in the public square. Local churches were called to involve themselves at the local, state and national levels. During the natural gas crisis, churches were urged to lobby for a

---

[124] Sapp, "A Church's Moral Responsibility in the Energy Crisis," 4-7.

[125] Ray, "What Baptist Churches Can Do," 1-2.

[126] McClellan, "The Energy Crisis and Organized Religion," 12-15.

[127] Toulouse, 136.

national energy policy.[128] Two years later during the 1979 oil crisis, churches were asked to seek an "equitable resolution" to the nation's energy problems. American Baptists continued to preach that local churches and individual Christians had important roles to play in American public life.[129]

Ecumenism remained central to the political engagement approach of American Baptists. This commitment distinguished the political engagement approach of American Baptists from Southern Baptists who were reluctant to participate in ecumenical efforts. In addition to numerous denominational programs focused on energy-related environmental issues, American Baptists addressed energy crises through their involvement in the Ecumenical Task Force (Love Canal) and the National Council of Churches.[130]

Beginning in 1974, American Baptists added a new component to their political engagement approach. Moving beyond ecumenical efforts with Christian groups, American Baptists decided to participate in interfaith efforts to confront environmental issues. Interfaith engagement became more popular during this period as religious organizations recognized the necessity and importance of building diverse coalitions to effectively lobby elected officials on a particular political issue. This interfaith commitment of American Baptists was expressed through participation in the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility.[131] Five years later in 1979, American Baptists joined the Interfaith Coalition on Energy and helped spearhead a national energy-saving

---

[128] American Baptist Churches USA, "Policy Statement on Energy," 5-6.

[129] "Resolution on Food and Fuel Crisis Assistance."

[130] Lawrence, 14-16. See Billingsley, 149.

[131] Blau, 45.

campaign.[132] While primarily focused on domestic issues, the denominational political engagement of American Baptists was able to keep an international focus. The previously discussed resolutions and policy statements reveal this sustained international focus with special attention given to the plight of the poor in Third World countries.

*Ethics*

Earlier chapters described how Southern Baptists like their fellow Evangelical Protestants had adopted an environmental theology and ethic firmly rooted in the concept of Christian stewardship. Sociologist Laurel Kearns explained that the Bible served as the foundation of Christian stewardship. Therefore this concept naturally appealed to evangelicals including Southern Baptists who stressed biblical authority and emphasized individual sin.[133] Chapter three demonstrated that Southern Baptists beginning in the mid-1960s through the early 1970s embraced a form of Christian stewardship that was rooted in a theological commitment to the belief (and implications of) that humans are "imago dei" and in a covenant relationship with God. These theological commitments served as the basis for an individual-focused stewardship ethic that preached both conservation and preservation of the environment.

This early Southern Baptist environmental stewardship ethic entered a new phase during the energy crises of the 1970s. Theologian Eric Rust and ethicist Henlee Barnette did more than any individual to articulate and develop an environmental theology and ethic for Southern Baptists in the previous period. However, academic writings on

---

[132] Hyer, C5.

[133] Kearns, "Saving the creation: Religious environmentalism," 211-212. See also Laurel Kearns, "Saving the Creation: Christian Environmentalism in the United States," *Sociology of Religion* 57, no. 1 (1996): 58-60.

environmental issues were few from 1973-1979. No Southern Baptist scholar sought to follow in the footsteps of Barnette and Rust. Instead, as this chapter revealed, Southern Baptist environmentalism was characterized by denominational resolutions, reports and recommendations. No new or revised environmental theology or ethic was offered.

Like Rust, Barnette and others of the earlier era, Southern Baptists continued to utilize the language of stewardship. Rare was a resolution that failed to cite the biblical obligation to practice stewardship. Resolutions regularly called on Christians to be "wise stewards" or "responsible stewards" of the earth's resources.[134] Sin continued to be stressed. Waste was declared to be "sinful" and forgiveness was requested for the "selfish use of God's creation."[135] Consistent with the stewardship ethic of evangelicals depicted by Laurel Kearns, Southern Baptists still viewed—contrary to the earlier claims of Lynn White—sinful Christians not Christianity to bear responsibility for environmental crises. Government regulation was needed, according to Southern Baptists, because Christians had failed "to practice a stewardship philosophy as taught in the Bible."[136]

While the early stewardship ethic emphasized both conservation and preservation, Southern Baptists were primarily concerned with conservation from 1973-1979. In fact, conservation essentially became a synonym for stewardship. Southern Baptists interpreted calls to conservation from President Nixon and President Carter as calls to meet their biblical obligation of stewardship. Much emphasis was placed on adopting

---

[134] "Report of the Christian Life & Public Affairs Committee (1979)," in *North Carolina Baptist Annual*, 170-171. "Energy Use (1978)," in *Virginia Baptist Annual*, 63.

[135] "Resolution on Stewardship of God's Creation (1974)," in *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention*, 70-71.

[136] "Editorial: Challenge to Conserve," 2.

and developing an applied stewardship ethic that sought to conserve energy through a variety of ways, many mentioned in this chapter.

New emphases were added to the stewardship ethic in the midst of the energy crises. Resolutions and recommendations reasoned that conservation was necessary due to a concern for the needs of present and future generations. Displaying a commitment to the Christo-centrism championed by Rust and Barnette, David Sapp of the SBC's CLC urged a "Christlike concern for the well-being of humanity, the born and the unborn."[137] Not a novel idea, Eric Rust had earlier argued that Christians had a duty to "preserve the earth and to pass it on to future generations inusable condition."[138] This idea became a common emphasis throughout the energy crises as Southern Baptists considered the finite nature of nonrenewable energy sources.

Another popular reason for stewardship that emerged was based on Jesus' instruction in Matthew 19:19 to "love your neighbor as yourself."[139] Southern Baptists in Georgia in 1977 called on churches to practice conservation as a "matter of Christian responsibility based upon loving concern for our neighbor."[140] Several state conventions and the SBC itself emphasized "human suffering throughout the world" and the "welfare of others" as reasons to practice stewardship.[141]

---

[137] Sapp, "The Gospel and Three Mile Island," 2.

[138] Eric C. Rust, "Christians and the Voyage of Spaceship Earth," *Home Missions*, February 1971, 25.

[139] Sapp, "The gospel and Three Mile Island," 2.

[140] "Report of the Committee on Resolution (1977)," in *Annual of the Georgia Baptist Convention*, 29.

[141] "Resolution Six: Energy Crisis (1973)," in *Annual of the Louisiana Baptist Convention*, 201. See also "Report of the Christian Life Commission (1975)," in *Book of Reports*, 131.

With these new emphases, Southern Baptists built on the stewardship ethic of Rust and Barnette. This stewardship ethic remained very individualistic. Individual responsibility was prioritized. Moderate not inconvenient, radical changes in lifestyle were demanded.[142] Frugality and sacrifice were encouraged and consumerism was denounced.[143] But little more than moderate conservation efforts were demanded. Southern Baptists did not see the need for a radical reorientation of lifestyle priorities unlike American Baptists in previous years. Cutting back on unnecessary trips, driving slower on the interstate and turning down the thermostat during the winter were adequate prescriptions.

Meanwhile, American Baptists continued to embrace and preach the eco-justice ethic. American Baptists did so, however, without explicitly using the term that they themselves had coined. The previous chapter discussed Owen Owens' argument that three values defined the eco-justice ethic. These were reverence, interdependence and stewardship. Owens contended that these three values demanded a commitment to social justice.[144] Although the denomination ceased using the term "eco-justice" in the aforementioned resolutions and reports, American Baptists did not abandon the substance of the eco-justice ethic. Justice, stewardship and interdependence were frequently emphasized.

As the nation was focused primarily on conservation, neither Southern Baptists nor American Baptists devoted much space to stressing reverence for nature. However,

---

[142] McClellan, "The Energy Crisis and Organized Religion," 12-15.

[143] "Energy Use (1978)," in *Virginia Baptist Annual*, 63.

[144] Owens, "Salvation and Ecology: Missionary Imperatives in Light of a New Cosmology," 113-114.

Jitsuo Morikawa did highlight in 1976 the importance of interdependence and "reverence for the creation of God's" in an essay in the denomination's theological journal *Foundations* In his essay, Morikawa reflected on both concepts:

> Reverence for the creation of God's, moreover, includes all of the divine works, and not merely human ones. The conscious and unconscious destructive effects of industrial civilization upon the whole ecosystems of living creatures have taught us much about human interdependence with the rest of creation.[145]

Chapter three demonstrated that reverence for nature was central to Southern Baptist Henlee Barnette's environmental ethic. Concentrated on the overuse of natural resources and how best to conserve those resources, Southern Baptists failed to maintain Barnette's emphasis on revering nature. With the exception of Morikawa, the same is true of American Baptists.

Like Southern Baptists, American Baptists argued that stewardship was necessary for the sake of "present and future generations."[146] While Southern Baptists called on Christians to practice stewardship due to Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 19:19), American Baptists urged stewardship and justice on the basis of concern for the poor. The denomination's detailed energy policy was founded on the belief that justice is "love in action" and God is "allied with the poor and oppressed." Justice ("love in action) and stewardship were examples of "[living] in the image of God."[147] Thus at the heart of the eco-justice ethic, remained the all-important doctrine of creation.

---

[145] Jitsuo Morikawa, "Interdependence," *Foundations* 19 (1976): 201-202.

[146] American Baptist Churches USA, "Policy Statement on Energy," 2-3.

[147] Ibid., 3-4.

Different from Southern Baptists, American Baptists articulated their concern for the poor in the language of "rights." The denomination's energy policy statement emphasized the "rights of the poor." The poor were said to have a "right to energy necessary to survive and meet basic needs." This belief in the "rights of the poor" was reflected in American Baptists' 1976 policy statement on human rights.[148] A 1976 resolution emphasized the "rights of the poor." Citing the doctrine of creation and referencing Baptist champions of freedom including Roger Williams and Martin Luther King Jr., the statement declared that "basic human rights are given by God." Among these basic God-given human rights listed were the "right to a secure and healthy environment, clean air, pure water and an earth that can nurture and support present and future generations."[149] Therefore, American Baptists insisted these "rights of the poor" were central to their eco-justice ethic and had to be considered first and foremost when addressing issues such as energy crises, toxic waste disposal and nuclear power.

Prioritizing the "rights of the poor" complemented their international focus. This chapter showed that American Baptists were not concerned simply with the poor in the United States. The denomination sought international equity.[150] American Baptists believed that they had a "global responsibility" to seek justice and practice stewardship. Whereas the responses of Southern Baptists to the energy crises reflected—to a great extent—their self-interest, American Baptists urged solutions that would alleviate energy problems in both developed and developing nations, the United States and Third World

---

[148] General Board of the American Baptist Churches USA, "Policy Statement on Human Rights," in *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA, 1996), np.

[149] Ibid.

[150] "Energy," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the USA*, 71-72.

nations. To achieve international equity, the poor had to be favored in public policy over corporations. American Baptists believed this preference for the poor to be a biblical position based on sound theology.[151] These emphases defined the American Baptist eco-justice ethic in this period.

*Conclusion*

From 1973-1979, Southern Baptists had come to preach and practice a thoroughly moderate environmentalism. Absent during this period were dissenting voices urging radical structural change to solve environmental problems. Similarly, American Baptists had grown less radical. In the previous era, American Baptists claimed that the western world needed a radical reorientation of social priorities. As the nation and world faced an onslaught of energy problems, American Baptists preached a more mainstream message of stewardship, justice and equity. No more calls for strict limits to economic growth were made. While environmentally harmful practices such as strip mining were still denounced in the strongest possible terms, alarmist rhetoric warning of the collapse of civilization ceased. Southern Baptists too dropped the Paul Ehrlich-inspired apocalyptic rhetoric as concern over the "population explosion" dissipated.[152]

---

[151] American Baptist Churches USA, "Policy Statement on Energy," 4-5.

[152] The Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution in 1974 titled "On the Population Explosion." While noting that the "population explosion" continues worldwide, the resolution did not urge action of any kind on the part of individuals, churches or the government. References to the "population explosion" disappeared in future years. Population was only mentioned in the context of hunger issues. For example, American Baptists in their 1975 hunger policy statement noted that population growth was one factor causing hunger in food scarce developing nations. No calls were made for population control. With the "population explosion" no longer front-and-center, the alarmist rhetoric warning of apocalyptic disaster on the horizon quickly disappeared from both Southern Baptist and American Baptist periodicals and denominational reports and resolutions. "Resolution on the Population Explosion," in *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1974), 77. See also General Board of the American Baptist Churches USA, "Policy Statement on Hunger," in *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA, 1996), np.

The respective environmentalisms of Southern Baptists and American Baptists alike were reactionary during this period. Although their proposed solutions to environmental matters varied, with Southern Baptists offering a more moderate approach, both groups tended to give sustained attention to environmental issues only in response to a related crisis or in the aftermath of a tragedy. For example, Southern Baptists were extremely responsive to calls to environmental action from both President Nixon and President Carter. Whether Democrat or Republican, Southern Baptists took seriously the directives and suggestions coming from the White House. Similarly, American Baptists were reactive in their environmental responses. However, American Baptists responded to more environmental issues than did Southern Baptists. The toxic waste scandal was an extremely important event in American environmental history. Not a single Southern Baptist state convention or denominational entity publicly addressed the scandal. Meanwhile, American Baptists were ministering to and raising funds for the Love Canal victims. This example highlights the narrow nature of Southern Baptists' moderate environmentalism at the close of this second wave of environmental history.

Although some exceptions existed, Southern Baptists adopted a rather resolutionary environmentalism. Resolutions were the chief means by which Southern Baptists confronted environmental problems. American Baptists continued to maintain a more diverse environmental toolkit. Passing resolutions was indeed a favorite pastime. But American Baptists also devoted numerous denominational programs to actively addressing these issues in the political arena. Increased ecumenical and new interfaith coalition efforts were an integral component of the denomination's activism. These vital components were mostly missing from Southern Baptist environmentalism. The next

chapter examines these evolving environmentalisms during the tumultuous 1980s, a decade that marked the beginning of the third wave of American environmental history.

# CHAPTER SIX

## The 1980s: A New Era and Environmental Backlash

### *Introduction*

The 1980s marked the beginning of a new era of environmental history. This "third wave" coincided with the election of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States. An environmental backlash accompanied this "conservative resurgence" that was ushered in by the Reagan Revolution. During the 1980s, mainline Protestants including American Baptists linked arms to counter Reagan's environmental proposals and anti-regulation ideology. Some evangelical Protestants even entered the environmental arena. Historian Robert Booth Fowler concluded in *The Greening of Protestant Thought* that a "pronounced and remarkable expansion of evangelical engagement with the environment began in the 1980s."[1] However, Southern Baptists were not among the evangelicals emphasizing environmental stewardship. This chapter tells the story of their near silence on environmental subjects.

Chapter six explores the environmental engagement (and lack thereof) of Southern Baptists and American Baptists throughout the 1980s. It begins with an overview of the rise of Ronald Reagan and his views concerning environmental policy and regulation as well as the mainstream environmental movement. The chapter continues with an assessment of the rise of the Religious Right and its origins. The Religious Right is analyzed with regard to their view about the appropriate role of government and its regulatory function. The following section surveys the related rise of

[1]Robert Booth Fowler, *The Greening of Protestant Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 39.

Southern Baptist Republicanism and the Southern Baptist Convention's "Conservative Resurgence" of the 1980s. Here, the SBC's lone environmental resolution is closely scrutinized.

Turning from Southern Baptists to American Baptists, the next section looks at the contentious and combative relationship between mainline Protestants and the Reagan Administration. The environmental engagement of mainline Protestants is also detailed in the subsequent section. A final lengthy section chronicles the specific American Baptist environmental engagement during these tumultuous years. It is divided into sub-sections that focus on corporate responsibility, hazardous waste and environmental justice respectively. Consistent with the format of the previous three chapters, chapter six will wrap-up with a conclusion that critically discusses how the following four factors—science and technology, government, political engagement and ethics—served to shape the different environmentalisms of Southern Baptists and American Baptists throughout these early years of the third wave of American environmental history. As the immediate section below shows, an anti-environmental "conservative backlash" considerably defined this period.

### *Rise of Ronald Reagan and Environmental Regulation*

The 1980s marked the beginning of the third wave of American environmental history. This was a decade characterized by a period of open hostility toward popular environmentalism and the modern environmental movement. Newly elected President Ronald Reagan was the driving force behind this anti-environmentalism movement. One of his first acts as president was to have the solar panels that President Jimmy Carter had

installed removed from the roof of the White House.[2] As chapter two detailed, Reagan vilified environmentalists as extremists and refused to meet with environmentalists during his 1980 presidential campaign.[3] He has been credited as the first United States president to introduce anti-environmental rhetoric into the Executive Branch.[4] Upon taking office, Reagan immediately challenged the environmental movement through executive orders, speeches, press releases and cabinet appointments.[5] Historian Mark Dowie described Reagan as a "counterrevolutionary" who was "determined from the outset to turn Americans away from environmentalism."[6] Indeed, Reagan's environmental politics, policies and philosophies stood in stark contrast to the prevailing popular environmentalism of the 1970s, a decade which scholars have often referred to as the "Environmental Decade."[7]

Pursuing a domestic agenda based on tax reform, budget cuts and economic growth, Reagan launched a "conservative assault on government regulations."[8] This

---

[2] Benjamin Kline, *First Along the River: A Brief History of the U.S. Environmental Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 101.

[3] Mark Dowie, *Losing Ground: American environmentalism at the close of the twentieth century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 66-67.

[4] Katrina Lacher, "Extinguishing the Green Fire: The Rise of Opposition to Environmentalism, 1948-2010," (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 2011), 133. At a 1983 press conference, Reagan offered the following response to a question about environmental laws yet to be implemented: "Well there is environmental extremism. I don't think they'll [environmentalists] be happy until the White House looks like a bird's nest." Lacher, 145.

[5] Lacher, 133.

[6] Dowie, 66-67.

[7] Katrina Darleen Taylor, "Contemporary Issues," in *Encyclopedia of the U.S. Government and the Environment: History, Policy and Politics*, ed. Matthew Lindstrom, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO), 25.

[8] Raymond Tatalovich and Mark J. Wattier, "Opinion Leadership: Elections, Campaigns, Agenda Setting, and Environmentalism," in *The Environmental Presidency*, ed. Dennis L. Soden (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 152-153. Kevin Hillstrom points out that Reagan was able to

assault especially targeted environmental regulations. While running for president, Reagan campaigned on a promise to reverse the growth of the federal government's programs and regulations. Central to his political philosophy was the view of government as the problem rather than as a solution to the nation's challenges. He attributed much of the nation's economic struggles to excessive government regulations.[9]

During the first month of his presidency, Reagan issued Executive Order 12291 which greatly expanded the power and influence of the Office of Management and Budget. Executive Order 12291 applied a cost-benefit analysis to all new regulations and required the OMB to first approve all proposed regulations. With this order, Reagan intended to drain power from government agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency.[10] Executive Order 12291 is but one example showing that Reagan and his administration embraced the increasingly popular perspective that prioritized economic growth over environmental protection. Whereas Carter sought a balance between economic and environmental goals, Reagan held that the two goals were not compatible.[11]

An important component of Reagan's anti-regulation campaign was the selection of industry leaders hostile to popular environmentalism to high positions in his administration. Most notably, Reagan selected James Watt as Secretary of the Interior

---

pursue an aggressive and ambitious agenda thanks to his electoral landslide victory over President Carter. See Kevin Hillstrom, "Reagan and the Environmental Protection Agency," *U.S. Environmental Policy & Politics: A Documentary History*, ed. Kevin Hillstrom (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly, 2010), 476.

[9] *Energy and Environment: The Unfinished Business* (Washington DC, Congressional Quarterly, Energy and Environment: The Unfinished Business, Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1985), 85.

[10] Ibid. See also Taylor, "Contemporary Issues," 33-34.

[11] Martin V. Melosi, "Energy and Environment in the United States: The Era of Fossil Fuels," *Environmental Review* 11, no. 3 (Autumn 1987): 173-175.

and Anne Gorsuch Burford as head of the Environmental Protection Agency. Burford had been a visible and vocal opponent of federal environmental regulations as an attorney for resource-extraction industries.[12] These appointments assisted the emergence of an anti-environmentalism and anti-environmental movement. Katrina Lacher observed in "Extinguishing the Green Fire: The Rise of Opposition to Environmentalism" that this movement took form and enjoyed "remarkable cohesion" throughout Reagan's two presidential terms. Lacher continued, "The conjoined rise of Ronald Reagan and the anti-environmental movement are attributable to the resurgence of conservatism in the United States in the late 20th century."[13] Lacher emphasized the revival of "political conservatism" as promoted by the "New Right" along with a revival of "social and religious conservatism" as seen in the rise of the Moral Majority or "New Religious Right."[14]

*Rise of the New Religious Right & Government Regulation*

Historian Barry Hankins detailed this revival of social and religious conservatism in *American Evangelicals: A Contemporary History of a Mainstream Religious Movement*. During World War II and through the 1950s, fundamentalist Protestants utilized radio to preach patriotism and rail against communism. These fundamentalists formed a loose coalition—now known as the Old Religious Right—that fought the teaching of sex education in public schools. Sex education was viewed as an attempt by the government to promote and teach an anti-Christian morality. The Old Religious

[12] Taylor, "Contemporary Issues," 33. James Watt will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

[13] Lacher, 131-132.

[14] Ibid., 136

Right, according to Hankins, regularly promoted conspiracy theories that claimed the government was part of a communist plot to deny individual freedom and control its citizens.[15]

Two decisions of the United States Supreme Court deeply disturbed many Christian conservatives in the 1960s. In *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), the Supreme Court forbid government mandated prayer in public schools and *Abington v. Schempp* (1963) held that to require children in public schools to read the Bible or recite the Lord's Prayer was unconstitutional. Many Christian conservatives charged that God had been kicked out of public schools with these two rulings. Consequently, Christian conservatives began to mobilize around these issues. In 1979, the Moral Majority was founded to promote conservative morality and defend the political interests of Christian conservatives. Led by Rev. Jerry Falwell, a fiery fundamentalist independent Baptist pastor, this political organization was comprised primarily of conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists.[16]

With the help of the Moral Majority and other "New Religious Right" organizations, Ronald Reagan easily defeated President Carter in a lopsided electoral victory (489 to 49). According to Hankins, "The election of 1980 marked the beginning of a political shift that would see evangelicals become a solid Republican voting bloc, while the New Religious Right would amass tremendous influence within the party." Hankins argued that Reagan's victory indicated that Christian conservatives including

---

[15] Barry Hankins, *American Evangelicals: A Contemporary History of a Mainstream Religious Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2008), 139-141.

[16] Ibid., 141-143.

once-separatist fundamentalists were willing to become more politically engaged than during any previous era.[17]

What most motivated the leaders of the New Religious Right to mobilize and form political operations such as the Moral Majority? The dominant viewpoint among scholars is that *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 Supreme Court ruling that declared pregnant women had a constitutional right to an abortion, was primarily responsible for motivating the formation of the New Religious Right.[18] Noted evangelical historian Randall Balmer recently put forward a different thesis that has found support among other scholars. This thesis, which Balmer dubbed the "abortion myth," maintains that the Religious Right was not, in fact, founded as a response to the *Roe* decision. Instead, what most motivated Falwell and other Religious Right leaders were efforts of the federal government to regulate private Christian schools in the mid-1970s.[19]

In 1971, a federal district court held in *Green v. Connally* that private schools with racially discriminatory policies did not have a right to a tax exemption. The Supreme Court affirmed that decision the same year. Following these rulings, the Internal Revenue Service began to identify racially discriminatory private schools and revoke their tax exempt status.[20] The tax exemption of Bob Jones University was

---

[17] Ibid., 147-148.

[18] Barry Hankins, *Uneasy in Babylon: Southern Baptist conservatives and American culture* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 45. The shortened "Religious Right" is used to refer to the social movement originally known as the "New Religious Right."

[19] Randall Balmer, *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2006), 12-15. Jonathan Dudley adopted Balmer's "abortion myth" thesis in his recent book. See Jonathan Dudley, *Broken Words: The Abuse of Science and Faith in American Politics* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 2011). Barry Hankins has also cited Balmer's thesis. See Hankins, *American Evangelicals*, 144-146.

[20] Bruce Beezer, "The Bob Jones University Decision: Financial and Policy Implications," *Journal of Education Finance* 9, no. 4 (Spring 1983): 510.

revoked in 1975. Located in South Carolina, Bob Jones University was a well-known and influential independent fundamentalist Baptist institution. Prior to 1971, the university refused to admit African-Americans and later in 1971 it began to admit only married black applicants with black spouses. Forced to open admission to all applicants regardless of marital status, the university adopted a new disciplinary policy banning all students from interracial dating or interracial marriage. Violators faced expulsion.[21] After having its tax exempt status revoked, the university challenged the IRS rule in federal court on First Amendment grounds.[22] Meanwhile, the IRS under the Carter Administration continued to pursue private schools, dubbed "segregation academies," with racially discriminatory policies.[23]

Paul Weyrich, regarded as one of the founders of the New Religious Right and the person credited for luring influential pastors such as Jerry Falwell into the political arena, has stated:

> What galvanized the Christian community was not abortion, school prayer or the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment). I am living witness to that because I was trying to get those people interested in those issues and I utterly failed. What changed their minds was Jimmy Carter's intervention against the Christian schools, trying to deny them tax-exempt status on the basis of so-called de facto segregation.[24]

Moral Majority co-founder Ed Dobson has confirmed Weyrich's claim. Dobson explained, "The Religious New Right did not start because of a concern about abortion."

---

[21] Mayer G. Freed and Daniel D. Polsby, "Race, Religion, and Public Policy: Bob Jones University v. United States," *The Supreme Court Review* (1983): 4.

[22] Beezer, 513. See also Paul B. Stephan, "Bob Jones University v. United States: Public Policy in Search of Tax Policy," *The Supreme Court Review* (1983): 33-82.

[23] Hankins, *American Evangelicals*, 143.

[24] Ibid., 144.

"Government interference in Christian schools," Dobson related, was responsible for mobilizing the leaders of the Religious Right.[25]

The origins of the Religious Right then are appropriately traced back to serious concern over the expanding role of government. Hankins found that many evangelicals and fundamentalists viewed the government's attempt to regulate church-related schools as "an attack on their ability to live their lives in accordance with their own private religious views."[26] Intrusive government regulation was deemed the problem. It should come as no surprise that conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists who supported the Religious Right were also supportive in 1980 of the anti-regulation campaign of Ronald Reagan.

*Rise of Southern Baptist Republicanism and a "Conservative Resurgence"*

Southern Baptist conservatives and fundamentalists were key leaders in this political movement known as the Religious Right. Charles Stanley, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, was one of the founders of the Moral Majority alongside Jerry Falwell. Other important Southern Baptist conservative leaders such as Bailey Smith, James Draper, Adrian Rogers, Paige Patterson and Paul Pressler served on the board of directors of other Religious Right organizations.[27] Conservative pastor and historian Jerry Sutton explained in his book *A Matter of Conviction: A History of Southern Baptist*

---

[25] Dudley, 46. Dobson continued, "I sat in the non-smoke-filled back room with the Moral Majority, and I frankly do not remember abortion ever being mentioned as a reason why we ought to do something."

[26] Hankins, *American Evangelicals*, 144.

[27] Nancy Ammerman, "Southern Baptists and the New Christian Right," *Review of Religious Research* 50 (October 2008): 83. Southern Baptists served on the boards of the Religious Roundtable, American Coalition for Traditional Values and the Coalition for Teen Health. The American Coalition for Traditional Values was founded by Tim LaHaye, a Southern Baptist.

*Engagement with the Culture* that issues such as race, abortion, and the "outlawing of prayer and Bible reading in public schools" caused Christian conservatives including Southern Baptist conservatives to search for a solution to this "era of national crisis." According to Sutton, conservatives began to find answers from the leaders of the Religious Right.[28] By 1979, Sutton pointed out, Southern Baptist conservatives—especially pastors—were "emerging from their separatist shells" and "beginning to ally with Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and other leaders of the Religious Right."[29]

While Southern Baptist conservatives were becoming politically active as part of the Religious Right and Reagan Revolution, Southern Baptist conservatives launched a movement to seize control of the institutions and agencies of their denomination. However, this movement did not emerge overnight. Numerous cultural changes, including the ones that Sutton mentioned, severely impacted southern culture throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Historian Bill Leonard has contended that these cultural changes were extremely threatening to many Southern Baptists. This fracturing of cultural stability made denominational coalitions that had held the Southern Baptist Convention together very vulnerable.[30]

For most of the twentieth-century, Leonard contended, a "Grand Compromise" held together the denomination's diverse constituencies. An understood agreement between these constituencies, the "Grand Compromise" prevented ideologues on the right or the left to control the Southern Baptist Convention. Instead, a sizeable group of

---

[28] Jerry Sutton, *A Matter of Conviction: A History of Southern Baptist Engagement with the Culture* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 2008), 230.

[29] Ibid., 231.

[30] Bill Leonard, *God's Last & Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 29-38.

centrists held together the denomination, finding unity amid diversity. Due to a lack of cultural stability, the Grand Compromise began to falter in the 1970s. Thus, these politically-driven cultural changes contributed greatly to the fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention as well as the rise of a movement to take control of the denomination.[31]

As the SBC was mobilizing for an evangelism effort called "Bold Mission Thrust" in the late 1970s, a group of conservatives were formulating a politically strategy to end the "Grand Compromise." Their goal was to gain complete control (or restore order, in their view) of the denomination and its agencies, seminaries and missions institutions. The architects of this takeover were Paige Patterson of Criswell Bible Institute in Dallas and layman Paul Pressler, a Texas appeals court judge from Houston.[32] Pressler was a well-known conservative with ties to the national Republican Party. Concerned with what he viewed as "liberal" practices at his own church, Second Baptist in Houston, Pressler became involved in national denominational affairs at the urging of conservative activist Bill Powell. Powell was the leader of a conservative network that opposed and sought to eradicate perceived liberalism in the Southern Baptist Convention. This network was organized as the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship in 1973.[33]

Pressler and Patterson developed a takeover strategy that focused on the role of the president of the SBC. Presidents had generally been considered figureheads since no one person spoke for Southern Baptists. However, presidential duties included the right

---

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 139.

[33] Andrew Hogue, "With the Salt of the Law and the Light of the Gospel: The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention under Richard Land," (master's thesis, Baylor University, 2005), 13-15.

to appoint leaders who would then select trustees to denominational agencies, seminaries and other institutions. As part of their plan, men eligible for election as president had to be committed to the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. With a series of presidential victories, Pressler, Patterson and their coalition of conservative pastors believed that the trustee boards of SBC institutions and eventually the institutions themselves would be remolded with an orthodox, conservative evangelical identity. The belief in the Bible as the inerrant, literal word of God would serve as the cornerstone of this new identity.[34]

The election of Memphis pastor Adrian Rogers in 1979 marked the conservatives' first victory. Although some of the presidential elections in the 1980s were close, the political strategy of Patterson and Pressler worked. The candidate endorsed by their conservative network won and by 1990, the battle for the Southern Baptist Convention was over. The conservative coalition led by Patterson and Pressler had seized control of the denomination. These conservative winners saw their takeover as signaling a new reformation in religious history. The nation's largest Protestant denomination had, according to the victors, defeated liberalism and restored historic Baptist conservatism.[35]

Oran Smith put this denominational takeover, dubbed the "conservative resurgence," in its appropriate historical context in *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism* (1997). There, Smith argued that the Republican Party of Ronald Reagan and the Southern Baptist Convention "are not only in firm alliance" but are "sometimes

---

[34] Leonard, 139.

[35] C. Douglas Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 190-191. Note the title of Jerry Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation: The Conservative Resurgence of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 2000). See also Hankins, *Uneasy in Babylon*, 7-10.

indistinguishable from each other."[36] Smith observed, "In the latter half of the 20th century the SBC has become a barometer of southern culture and politics by rejecting a reluctant moderate conservatism, and adopting in its place a military 'go for the jugular' two-party Republican conservatism."[37] Smith showed how the SBC transitioned from political and theological moderation to political and theological conservatism, also in tight alliance with and contributing to the leadership of the Religious Right.[38]

Similar to how scholars have traced the origins of the Religious Right to efforts of the federal government to regulate private Christian schools with racially discriminatory policies, Smith dated the rise of Baptist Republicanism to the civil rights era. Just weeks after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Southern Baptists adopted "A Statement Concerning the Crisis in Our Nation." This statement, which passed after much debate, confessed to being guilty of racism and sounded a clarion call for improved race relations and a commitment to social action. In Smith's view, this statement represented a "moderate political awakening" that had the result of "touch[ing] a match to conservative dynamite." Smith contended that until moderates sounded this clarion call, conservatives "seemed to be lulled to sleep, content to coexist with a moderate element."[39] This lit dynamite resulted in the previously mentioned formation of the

---

[36] Oran Smith, *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism* (New York, N: New York University Press, 1997), 2.

[37] Ibid., 22.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., 47-48.

Baptist Faith & Message Fellowship in 1973 and the Patterson-Pressler strategy launched in 1979.[40]

*Southern Baptists and Environmental Regulation*

Controversy consumed the Southern Baptist Convention throughout the 1980s. During this decade, the "moderate political awakening" was brought to a complete halt. While Southern Baptists confronted numerous environmental issues from population to pollution to energy from 1967-1979, little attention was given to any environmental issue during the 1980s. As a denomination, the SBC collectively mentioned the environment just once during this decade of in-fighting. Coming in the form of a resolution, this singular example of environmental engagement revealed the political dividing lines between moderates and conservatives within the denomination. It also served as an example of the growing partisan divide on environmental issues during the third wave of environmental history.

At the 1983 annual meeting of the SBC in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, messenger William Wallace Finlator introduced a resolution titled "On the Care of Our Environment." Finlator was a prominent Southern Baptist pastor and progressive social activist from North Carolina. From the 1940s through the 1980s, Finlator was known for his activism, taking part in civil rights marches and walking the picket lines with labor unions on strike. As pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, the Southern

[40] This rise of Baptist Republicanism also coincided with the rise of Southern Republicanism. In *The Rise of Southern Republicanism*, Earl Black and Merle Black argued that Ronald Reagan's defeat of Jimmy Carter in 1980 was "the turning point in the evolution of a competitive, two-party electorate in the South. Until Reagan's election, the Republican Party had failed to lure white southerners in mass away from the Democratic Party. Earl Black and Merle Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 25.

Baptist bastion of theological and political progressivism, Finlator made a name for himself and his church's activism.[41]

Finlator's 1983 resolution began with an affirmation that "God is Creator...and has placed us here as responsible stewards to keep the earth that it might give sustenance to all living things." The resolution continued with a statement expressing that the abuse of the earth "through reckless greed is a sin against our Creator and our brothers and sisters, both present and future." Southern Baptists were called on to "commit our lives to a deeper reverence for the earth and to a more sparing use of its limiting resources" and industry and commerce leaders were urged to "impose upon themselves rigorous and verifiable standards of protection and preservation of land, air, and water." Government officials were asked to "faithfully and fearfully enforce all legislation enacted, or to be enacted, for the protection of the natural environment." The proposed resolution concluded with a request that the United States join "the family of nations in solemn compact to protect, preserve and share the resources of the oceans and seas."[42]

Finlator's seemingly harmless resolution proved to be controversial. J. Thurmond George, a conservative pastor from California, moved that the word "reverence" be deleted and replaced with "regard."[43] George's successful move signaled that conservatives felt that "reverence" for the earth suggested or implied nature worship. This would become more apparent in the late 1980s when Southern Baptist conservatives

---

[41] Glenn Jonas, "William Wallace Finlator: Activist Prophet," *Baptist History and Heritage* 43, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 96-109.

[42] "Text of Some Resolutions," *Religious Herald*, June 30, 1983, 10. "Resolution on the Care of our Environment," in *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1983), 64-65. "Proceedings," in *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1983), 64-65.

[43] Ibid.

began to express fears about the influence of the "New Age Movement" and warn against worshipping nature. The position of conservatives stood in stark contrast to the environmental theology and ethic that had been promoted in the late 1960s and 1970s by early Southern Baptist environmentalists Eric Rust and Henlee Barnette. As previous chapters demonstrated, reverence for nature was central to the ethic and theology of both Rust and Barnette. This is one example of the shift from theological moderation to theological conservatism in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Albert Lee Smith, a prominent leader in the denomination's fundamentalist movement, also moved to make changes to Finlator's resolution. Smith requested that the messengers delete the resolution's final two paragraphs:

> Be it further RESOLVED, That we urge our officials faithfully and fearfully to enforce all legislation enacted, or to be enacted, for the protection of the natural environment; and
>
> Be it finally RESOLVED, That we as a nation join the family of nations in solemn compact to protect, preserve and share the resources of the oceans and seas.[44]

Messengers then voted to extend additional time for discussion. After debate on the convention floor, Smith's motion to amend passed and the final two paragraphs along with the word "reverence" were removed from Finlator's resolution.[45]

The final adopted resolution still affirmed that Christians were to be "responsible stewards" for the sake of present and future generations. It still affirmed that the abuse of the earth is a "sin against our Creator." The amended resolution, however, now concluded with a charge to businesses and corporations to "impose upon themselves"

---

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

standards to protect the environment. The removal of the final two paragraphs clearly indicated the opposition of conservative leaders to government regulations, especially with regard to the environment. The resolution no longer asked the government to enforce existing and future environmental regulations and laws. Additionally, the resolution no longer asked the United States to join other nations on protecting the global environment. A strong role for government was replaced with no role for the government in Finlator's severely amended resolution titled "On the Care of Our Environment."[46]

The anti-regulation ideology on display in this resolution should come as no surprise. Southern Baptist conservative leader Albert Lee Smith was closely identified with the anti-regulation Moral Majority. An early victory of the Moral Majority came in the 1980 Republican primary when Smith beat incumbent John Buchanan Jr. The Moral Majority and Jerry Falwell personally had targeted Buchanan who had been a persistent advocate for racial justice and had voted to extent the deadline for ratifying the controversial Equal Rights Amendment. Buchanan, a friend to many moderate denominational leaders, was also an ordained minister and his father was an influential Southern Baptist pastor. While in Congress, Buchanan served as interim pastor of Birmingham's historic Riverside Baptist Church, an inner-city, biracial congregation. Political pundits credited the then newly-found Moral Majority with Smith's upset win over Buchanan.[47] Opposition to government regulation and support for smaller role for the federal government were important tenets to this new "Republicanism" popular among the conservative leaders of the SBC like Smith.

---

[46] "Resolution on the Care of our Environment."

[47] Wayne Flynt, *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 552-553, 590-591.

*Mainline Protestants and the Reagan Administration*

With the rise of the Religious Right and the election of Ronald Reagan, mainline Protestants began to see their public influence wane. Lacking a friendship with the Reagan Administration, mainline denominations banded together to form closer alliances. Together, these coalitions worked to organize and mobilize their own churches against Reagan's policies and proposals.[48] Less than five months into Reagan's first-term as president, the ecumenical National Council of Churches released a manifesto alleging that his administration's policies represented a "reversal of direction for this country as a whole, and threatened the vision of America as the model and embodiment of a just and humane society."[49] This strong statement reflected the attitude of mainline Protestant denominations—including American Baptists—to Ronald Reagan, the Religious Right and the Republican Party during the 1980s.

Robert Campbell, General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA, joined a group of fifty predominantly mainline denominational leaders and theologians in a campaign to persuade Congress to reject President Reagan's budget proposals. American Baptists and other mainline denominations opposed Reagan's proposed cuts to social welfare programs for low-income families such as food stamps, housing subsidies and Medicaid.[50] The following year, American Baptists again joined mainline Protestant and Jewish groups in opposing Reagan's proposed budget for 1984. The interfaith group of leaders accused Reagan of charting a "selfish and dangerous course." Their statement

---

[48] Warren L. Vinz, *Pulpit Politics: Faces of American Protestant Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 238-239.

[49] A. James Reichley, *Faith in Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002), 259.

[50] "Religious Leaders Open Drive to Aid the Poor," *New York Times* April 28, 1982, A25.

urged Congress to preserve funding levels to social programs and cut military spending instead. Reagan's budget, according to the group, "reject[ed] the rights" of the poor and "all human beings to live their lives in peace and security."[51] The National Council of Churches in 1981 declared that Reagan's proposed tax reforms and social spending cuts would result in "a substantial redistribution of wealth to those already wealthy." The NCC characterized Reagan's vision for America as a vision of "private opportunity and empire." The ecumenical group urged that elected officials instead adopt a vision of "public responsibility and compassionate neighbor."[52]

In addition to Reagan's domestic policy, American Baptists and mainline Protestants strongly criticized the president's foreign policy. The NCC claimed that Reagan sought to make the United States "number one in military dominance, in the ability to impose our will on others or to kill multitudes in the attempt." American Baptists, along with other mainline denominations, issued a public letter in late 1982 asking the House Appropriations Committee to reject the president's request for nuclear weapon funding. Reagan had recommended nearly one billion in federal spending for 100 MX missiles designed to each carry ten nuclear warheads. The letter stated, "We reject...the idea that the way to achieve significant arms reductions is to first rearm. Indeed, we reject the assumption that weapons of mass destruction have any moral justification whatsoever."[53]

---

[51] Paula Herbut, "Religious leaders call Reagan budget 'selfish, dangerous'," *Washington Post*, March 21, 1983, G12.

[52] Reichley, 259.

[53] George C. Wilson, "Religious Groups Lobby Against the MX Missile," *The Washington Post*, December 1, 1982, A12.

American Baptist Churches USA took part in the antinuclear movement as a member of the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE). American Baptist leaders participated in the committee's weekly meetings on how to coordinate efforts against Reagan's nuclear missile proposals. While American Baptists had previously participated in ecumenical and interfaith coalitions, SANE included both secular and religious organizations. Among the groups that American Baptists met with weekly to strategize against the Reagan Administration was Americans for Democratic Action, Common Cause, the Federation of American Scientists and Greenpeace. This alliance with secular organizations added a new dimension to the political engagement of American Baptists.[54]

*Mainline Protestants and Environmental Engagement in the Reagan Era*

During Reagan's presidency, mainline Protestant denominations expanded their environmental programs. Their environmental advocacy gained a great deal of attention as soon as Reagan took office. Mainline denominations joined up in 1981 with secular environmental groups to oppose President Reagan's nomination of anti-environmentalist James Watt as Secretary of the Interior. Like Reagan, Watt believed that government regulation was an impediment to economic growth.[55] An attorney and advocate of free market capitalism, Watt had a long history of fighting environmental legislation in federal courtrooms. In his previous position as head of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, Watt represented corporate clients in lawsuits against the Environmental Protection Agency, Sierra Club and the Environmental Defense Fund. Despite

---

[54] "A New Image for AntiNuclear Lobby," *New York Times*, April 17, 1984, A18.

[55] Erik D. Carlson, "James G. Watt," in *Encyclopedia of the U.S. Government and the Environment: History, Policy and Politics*, ed. Matthew Lindstrom, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO), 807-808.

opposition from the nation's major environmental groups, the U.S. Senate easily approved Watt's appointment just two days after Reagan's inauguration.[56]

Watt's environmental philosophy was put on national display shortly after his confirmation. At a briefing before a congressional subcommittee, Watt was asked whether he believed in preserving natural resources for future generations. He created a controversy with the following reply:

> Absolutely. That is the delicate balance the Secretary of the Interior must have, to be steward for natural resources for this generation as well as future generations. I do not know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns, whatever it is we have to manage with a skill to leave the resources needed for future generations."[57]

Most media outlets excised Watt's reference to stewardship and only emphasized the "Lord returns" comment in their news coverage. Many attributed Watt's comment to his Pentecostal background as a member of an Assemblies of God congregation. This controversy peaked when Congressman James Weaver asked Watt at a July hearing whether he approached "the environmental issue of surface mining [with] 'Why worry, the Lord's return is imminent?'" Watt dodged the question citing his right to religious freedom. This answer certainly did not satisfy the growing number of critics.[58]

---

[56] Kenneth David Larsen, "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals confront environmentalism, 1967-2000," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 161.

[57] Ron Arnold, *At the Eye of the Storm: James Watt and Environmentalists* (Chicago, IL: Regnery Gateway, 1982), 75.

[58] Lellani Watt, *Caught in the Conflict: My Life with James Watt* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1984), 101-102. Kenneth Larsen has argued against the suggestion that James Watt was an "otherworldly apocalypticist" as many of his critics alleged. Larsen has demonstrated that Watt held to a "typically evangelical" and "pro-development understanding of stewardship." Watt's narrow understanding of stewardship would be embraced by other evangelicals in the 1990s. This understanding and these evangelicals will be discussed in the next chapter. See Larsen, 164-166. For more on Watt's stewardship views, see Susan Bratton, "The eco-theology of James Watt," *Environmental Ethics* 5, no. 3 (1984): 225-236.

Meanwhile, Watt pursued President Reagan's agenda of deregulation during his first year as Secretary of the Interior. Watt sought to rollback regulations on coal companies and even allow strip mining in national parks. Environmental groups fought Watt's proposals and policies, capitalizing on the Reagan Administration's anti-environmentalism. Historian Hal Rotham has pointed out that environmental groups gained many new members thanks to Watt.[59] The National Council of Churches even proposed a resolution urging the ouster of Watt in 1981. Citing Watt's cuts to the offices of the Department of the Interior, the federal agency responsible for enforcing many environmental regulations, the resolution accused Watt of "irresponsible rhetoric." This rhetoric, according to the resolution, "damaged the national consensus on resource conservation issues which sought to balance the long-term well-being of our commonly-held land and resources with our short-term needs."[60]

Following their movement to oust Watt, mainline Protestants through the National Council of Churches launched the Eco-Justice Working Group in 1984. American Baptists and most notably Owen Owens played a central role in the founding this new organization. The working group was an outgrowth of the Joint Strategy and Action Committee. JSAC was a coalition of mainline denominations which included American Baptists. From 1978 thru 1983, JSAC produced resources on responsible energy use in churches and eco-justice. Out of a partnership between JSAC and NCC, the Eco-Justice

---

[59] Hal Rotham, *The Greening of a Nation? Environmentalism in the United States Since 1945* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace, 1998), 180-181.

[60] David E. Anderson, "Church group goes after Watt," *United Press International*, November 4, 1981. This resolution was latter pulled. Sponsors of the resolution agreed that it was not specific enough in naming and identifying the troublesome policies of Watt/Reagan. See David E. Anderson, "Council of Churches Seeks Ways to Meet 'Human Needs Crisis'," November 5, 1981.

Working Group was formed to focus exclusively on environmental issues with social justice implications.[61]

The working group spent much of its time assisting denominations with their environmental statements and publishing educational resources and liturgical resources for churches. In addition to education advocacy, the working group started a public policy subcommittee in Washington D.C. Through this operation in the nation's capital, the working group coordinated policy advocacy, sending out letters and action alerts, and helped mainline Protestants to present a "united public face" on particular environmental issues.[62]

## *American Baptists and Environmental Engagement*

### *Corporate Responsibility*

Throughout the 1980s, ecumenical efforts were central to the environmental program of American Baptists. In addition to playing a key leadership role in the EJWG, the denomination remained very involved in the corporate responsibility movement. American Baptists began the decade with a resolution adopted by the Board of National Ministries in 1980 promising to "monitor corporations disposing of toxic wastes in ways which may be harmful to the environment or the people." The Social and Ethical Responsibility in Investments program was charged with fulfilling this mission. Led by

---

[61] Michael Moody, "Caring for Creation: Environmental Advocacy by Mainline Protestant Organizations," in *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*, eds. Robert Wuthnow and John H. Evans (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 241. Owen Owens, "Memorandum to Dick Jones, RE: Eco-Justice Working Group," October 24, 1984, Owen Owens Collection, American Baptist Historical Society. The EJWG remains the primary ecumenical group comprised mostly of mainline Protestants working on environmental issues.

[62] Moody, 246. The EJWG provided support until dissolution of Interfaith IMPACT in 1995.

Andrew Smith, this denominational program aimed to present its concerns to the officers of the corporations but only file a stockholder or shareholder resolution as a last resort.[63]

American Baptists felt a moment of last resort had arrived in 1980. Then, National Ministries asked the Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO) to halt expansion at the nearby Limerick nuclear power plant. This resolution failed. However, National Ministries introduced a shareholder resolution each subsequent year. In 1985, National Ministries submitted a resolution urging PECO to instead develop a comprehensive conservation and alternative energy program. Speaking on behalf of the resolution, Andrew Smith pointed out that the corporation spent ten times as much on the expansion of the nuclear site as it spent on energy conservation, despite promises to pursue conservation aggressively. Like those before it, this resolution also failed.[64] Three years later, National Ministries submitted a resolution against PECO's nuclear power plant for the ninth consecutive year. This too failed and received only 12 percent of shareholder support.[65]

As part of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, a coalition of seventeen Protestant denominations and Catholic orders and dioceses, National Ministries participated in a campaign in the mid-1980s to pressure utility companies to stop financing the advertising efforts of the nuclear power industry. The group felt that the

---

[63] "Report of the Social and Ethical Responsibility in Investments," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1981), 172-173. The disposal of toxic and hazardous waste was the primary focus of this Board of National Ministries program from 1980-1984. See also "Report of the Board of National Ministries," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1984), 170.

[64] Wendy Ryan, "AT&T, Philadelphia Electric Asked to Cancel Nuclear Operations," *The American Baptist*, July-August 1983, 16. Stephen J. Morgan, "PE Shareholders reject anti-Limerick proposal," *United Press International*, April 10, 1985.

[65] Lee Linder, "PECO Stockholders Hammer Dissidents' Bid to Stop Limerick, *Associated Press*, April 13, 1988.

advertisements misled Americans about the safety of nuclear power. Andrew Smith of National Ministries characterized, in an interview with the *New York Times*, the advertisement campaign as a "deceptive public relations effort of an industry in deep financial trouble." A key leader in the corporate responsibility movement, Smith represented American Baptists as the chairman of the ICCR's energy and environment program.[66]

Participation in the corporate responsibility movement also came through involvement in the Agricultural Chemicals Dialogue Group. Andrew Smith again represented American Baptists in this secular organization comprised of denominations, environmental groups and corporations. The dialogue group developed a code for advertising pesticides in the Third World and another code for labeling pesticide containers. Ten of the largest United States pesticide exporters were successfully lobbied to adopt these codes. The dialogue group devoted much of its time to education efforts on the correct use of pesticides.[67]

Andrew Smith's view of technology guided how American Baptists, through the Social and Ethical Responsibility in Investments program, addressed corporate responsibility issues. In his book titled *God's Gift, Our Responsibility: Biblical Reflections on Creation, Christian Stewardship and Corporate Accountability* (1993), Smith discussed three views or attitudes toward technology. Here, Smith rejected the popular American idea of a "technological fix." He described this view as

---

[66] "Church Coalition Assails Utility Ads Favoring Nuclear Power," *New York Times*, January 5, 1984, A18.

[67] "Report of the Social and Ethical Responsibility in Investments," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1987), 169-170.

"empower[ing] technology to the extent of worshipping it." Smith emphasized that those who put great faith in technology "often lose sight of why technology exists and of the uses to which it is put." Smith clearly believed that many American corporations had embraced this attitude toward technology.[68]

Smith also rejected an attitude of hostility toward technology. Although Smith repudiated consumerism and materialism, he did not advocate for a form of cultural separatism through simple living in the countryside. Instead, Smith advocated a third view that "puts technology in the perspective of its use." Smith elaborated on this view: "Technology itself is not evil but the uses to which it is put may be. This attitude stresses the purpose of any use. A variation of this attitude emphasizes the suitability of the technology to the problem." Smith urged that technology must be used in ways that "extend the natural relationships of creation rather than conquer them." In the context of the corporate responsibility movement, Smith lobbied and pressured U.S. corporations to consider the morality of certain uses of technology. Smith and American Baptists were especially concerned with the use of pesticides and other chemicals in developing nations.[69]

On December 3, 1984, a Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal, India released methyl isocyanate gas (MIC) into the air. The lethal gas immediately killed over 1,600 people and 4,000 animals. Thousands of other victims suffered permanent life-altering injuries including lung and eye damage, impaired immune systems and reproductive problems. Six years after the industrial disaster, Smith was invited to visit Bhopal where

---

[68] J. Andrew Smith III, *God's Gift, our Responsibility: Biblical Reflections on Creation, Christian Stewardship and Corporate Accountability* (Valley Forge, PA: National Ministries, 1993), 13-14.

[69] Ibid.

he met with victims and Union Carbide officials. Upon returning to the United States, Smith attended the annual shareholders meeting of Union Carbide. There, National Ministries sponsored, along with a convent of Catholic nuns, a resolution asking the corporation to provide more aid to the Bhopal victims. Presenting the resolution, Smith described the sickness and other affects of the disaster that he had witnessed in Bhopal. However, he was jeered by his fellow shareholders and the resolution received only 4 percent of the vote.[70]

*Hazardous Waste*

This concern over dangerous chemicals was reflected in a 1982 resolution on the disposal of hazardous and radioactive wastes. American Baptists first adopted this resolution in 1980 and revised it in 1982 to deal with more current public policy issues. This resolution was rooted in previous American Baptist policy statements that declared the "right to a secure and healthy environment" to be a human right and stressed the biblical command to "express love to our neighbors." It committed American Baptists to take nearly a dozen actions. First, American Baptists acknowledged their social responsibility as individuals who use products and services that produce toxic waste. Second, American Baptists pledged to encourage legislation providing incentives to industries to clean up waste sites and determine a plan for safe waste disposal in the future.[71] The recycling of hazardous waste and the development and use of nonhazardous substitute for materials that generate toxic waste were also encouraged. Additionally,

---

[70] Abid Aslam, "Union Carbide Set for Investor Fight Over Bhopal," *Inter Press Service*, March 28, 1990. See Smith, *God's Gift*, 48-54.

[71] "Resolution on the Disposal of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes, 8053: 9/82" *Adopted Resolutions of the* American Baptist *Convention, 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA, 1996), np.

American Baptists recommitted to monitoring corporate behavior to ensure that corporations are socially responsible. International political efforts were urged including a prohibition on the exportation of toxic waste to other nations. Seven of the eleven pledged actions dealt with urging further government regulations and the implementation of existing regulations. Clearly, American Baptists trusted the federal government to play the most important role in solving environmental problems associated with hazardous and radioactive waste.[72]

Two of the pledged actions were particularly political and concerned with public policy. American Baptists pledged to support the "strict enforcement of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act" and called for the "provision of resources to the Environmental Protection Agency and state agencies" to enforce RCRA and other hazardous waste laws and regulations. President Gerald Ford signed RCRA into law on October 21, 1976. The stated goals of RCRA were to ensure wastes are managed to best protect humans and the environment, reduce waste including hazardous waste, and conserve energy and resources through recycling.[73] The purpose of RCRA was to start a new federal approach to the disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous solid waste. The Environmental Protection Agency was charged with the duty of administration rulemaking and also given the power to enforce its rules. Non-complaint businesses and corporations could be sued and willful violators could be criminally prosecuted.[74]

---

[72] Ibid.

[73] Teri J. Bengston, "The Environmental Protection Agency's Enforcement of Resource Conservation and Recovery Act: Legal, Political Culture and Economic Models Compared (PhD diss., Northern Illinois University, 2005), 8-9.

[74] John Michael Keefe, "Pollution, Politics, and Policy: Implementation of Hazardous Waste Policy Through the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act," (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1993), 133.

During his first two years in office, President Reagan was accused of undermining numerous existing environmental laws like RCRA that had been enacted in the previous decade.[75] In March 1982, Reagan's EPA announced that it had lifted a federal ban on burying barrels of hazardous liquids at landfills and planned to keep the ban lifted for a 90-day period.[76] Three weeks later, after much criticism from environmental groups, the EPA reversed its decision.[77] Nevertheless, the EPA continued its "regulatory retreat" with proposals to rescind annual reporting requirements for producers and disposers of hazardous waste. Perhaps most notably, the EPA proposed the implementation of flexible case-by-case guidelines to replace uniform national standards regulating the clean-up of abandoned toxic waste sites. The self-described "non-partisan" *National Journal* stated in March of 1982 that these actions "represent a significant agency retrenchment in attempting to carry out the nation's three major laws dealing with hazardous substances."[78] This is the political context in which American Baptists urged RCRA to be strictly enforced just a few months later in September 1982.[79]

The resolution also included a pledge to "support the full implementation" of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, popularly known as Superfund. This act was adopted during the lame duck session following President Jimmy Carter's loss to Ronald Reagan. It created a 1.6 billion fund for the

---

[75] Martin Crutsinger, "Environmentalists Say Reagan's Cuts Would Reverse 10-year gains," *Associated Press*, March 11, 1981.

[76] "Reversal on Hazardous Waste Disposal Asked," *Associated Press*, March 1, 1982.

[77] Philip Shabecoff, "U.S. Reversing Stand on Burial of Toxic Liquid," *New York Times*, March 18, 1982, A1.

[78] Lawrence Mosher, "EPA retreats on control of hazardous wastes," *National Journal*, March 27, 1982, 562.

[79] "Resolution on the Disposal of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes, 8053: 9/82"

clean-up of toxic waste sites. The fund was to be financed by taxes on oil and chemicals in addition to federal appropriations. Dubbed "the crowning legal victory in the battle to assure cleanup of toxic sites" by environmental historian Hal Rotham, Congress passed Superfund on December 11, 1980. President Carter subsequently signed Superfund into law days before concluding his one-term in office. Rotham called the timing "ironic." He explained, "[Superfund] opened the way for a range of legal sanctions at the exact moment when the transition to the Reagan administration which was far less likely than its predecessors to exercise such power, began in earnest."[80]

During the first years of the Reagan Administration, enforcement of Superfund drastically slowed down. From January 20, 1981 to April 21, 1982, Reagan's Environmental Protection Agency filed zero enforcement cases against hazardous waste sites.[81] U.S. Representative James Florio, a Democrat from New Jersey and original sponsor of the Superfund bill, accused the Reagan Administration of "foot dragging" in implementing the new law. [82] States also expressed concern that they would not receive adequate federal funding for priority hazardous waste cleanups.[83] The Environmental Defense Fund testified in November 1981 that the EPA was failing to implement the law.[84] It was against this backdrop that American Baptists championed the "full implementation" of Superfund. American Baptists recognized that the anti-regulation

---

[80] Rotham, 158.

[81] Ibid., 159.

[82] William Kronholm, "Congressman Accuses Administration of Dragging Feet on Cleanup," *Associated Press*, July 7, 1981.

[83] "Superfund: Holding Back the Money," *Chemical Week*, July 8, 1981, 25.

[84] William Kronholm, "Environmentalists Charge EPA Moving Backward on Superfund Cleanup," *Associated Press*, November 17, 1981.

political philosophy of the Reagan Administration threatened to undue the accomplishments of the environmental movement from the previous decade.

*Environmental Justice*

American Baptists continued to address issues pertaining to hazardous waste in the 1980s through involvement in the Environmental Justice Movement. This movement was birthed in 1982 when hundreds of mostly African-American protestors applied the techniques of nonviolent civil disobedience and attempted to prevent the dumping of more than 6,000 truckloads of soil contaminated with the toxic chemical PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) at a landfill in Warren County, North Carolina.[85] African-Americans comprised more than 84 percent of the neighborhood in Warren County where the landfill was located.[86] A group of concerned citizens recruited the help of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Rev. Luther Brown, an influential local Black Baptist pastor, to organize protests against the toxic dump.[87] These residents were deeply concerned with the public health repercussions associated with the dump. Their fears of groundwater contamination were fueled by the Love Canal disaster just a few years prior where hazardous waste caused

[85] Rachel D. Godsil, "Remedying Environmental Racism," *Michigan Law Review* 90, no. 2 (November 1991): 394.

[86] Robert Bullard, "20th Anniversary of the Warren County PCB Landfill Protests," Dissident Voice, May 29, 2007, http://www.dissidentvoice.org/2007/05/25th-anniversary-of-the-warren-county-pcb-landfill-protests (accessed June 18, 2012).

[87] Eileen Maura McGurta, "From NIMBY to Civil Rights: The Origins of the Environmental Justice Movement," *Environmental History* 2, no. 3 (1997): 301-302.

severe health problems including disease and widespread birth defects in a community near Niagara Falls, New York.[88]

Every day for six consecutive weeks these protestors met at Coley Springs Baptist Church and marched to the dump in order to block the delivery trucks. Local residents were joined by national civil rights leaders, African-American elected officials, Black Baptist pastors and other Black Church ministers. Two weeks after the marches began, 414 protestors had been arrested including Rev. Walter Fauntroy, the pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church in Washington D.C. and leader in the Progressive National Baptist Convention.[89] Ultimately, more than 500 protesters were arrested and Warren County was thrust into the national spotlight. Serious media attention was finally given to the relationship between pollution and minority communities.[90]

In response to these protests, the Congressional Black Caucus requested that the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) examine the racial demographics of hazardous waste sites. The GAO found in its 1983 report that commercial hazardous waste facilities located in the southeast United States were more likely to be found in predominantly African-American communities.[91] Massive protests in Warren County

---

[88] Ibid., 307-308.

[89] Mark Stoll, "Religion and African American Environmentalism," in *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History*, eds. Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 160-161. Coley Springs Baptist Church was the largest African-American congregation in Warren County and located just one-mile from the landfill. See Dollie Burwell and Luke W. Cole, "Environmental Justice Comes Full Circle: Warren County Before and After," *Golden Gate University Environmental Law Journal* 1, no. 1 (2007): 17-18.

[90] Matthew Ross, "Black and Green," *The New Republic*, March 2, 1992, 15-16. See also Robert Bullard, "Assuring Environmental Justice For All," in *The Covenant with Black America*, ed. Tavis Smiley (Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 2006), 189-191.

[91] United States General Accounting Office, *Siting of Hazardous Waste Landfill and their Correlation with Racial and Economic Status of Surrounding Communities*, RCED-83-168, Washington D.C., June 1, 1983, 1-13. The GAO report found that three out of four of the off-site commercial hazardous

also led the United Church of Christ (UCC), a mainline Protestant denomination, to investigate the connection between race and pollution. After five years of research, the UCC's Commission for Racial Justice published the nation's first exhaustive study to analyze the relationship between race and the location of hazardous waste facilities.[92] The UCC's 1987 study found that while socio-economic status appeared to serve as a central factor in the location of these toxic waste facilities, race was determined to be a more important variable.[93] This landmark study helped encourage an emphasis among mainline Protestants on environmental issues that directly impact minority communities.[94]

The following year, the ecumenical Eco-Justice Working Group sponsored the Great Louisiana Toxics March. American Baptist leader Owen Owens represented the working group at the 1988 march. Owens helped lead the marchers along the Mississippi River from Baton Rouge to New Orleans. The march was held through a corridor lined with chemical plants, industrial sites, landfills and incinerators nicknamed "Cancer Alley." The Great Louisiana Toxics March was important because it involved a diverse coalition of African-American organizations and predominantly white environmental

---

waste landfills located in the Southeast United States (Region 5) were located in communities with a majority African-American population despite the fact that African-Americans comprised only 20 percent of the region's population.

[92] Robert D. Bullard, "Environmental Justice in the 21st Century: Race Still Matters," *Phylon* 49, no. 3 (Autumn-Winter 2001), 151-152.

[93] UCC Commission for Racial Justice, *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States* (New York, N: United Church of Christ, 1987), 14-16.

[94] The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has defined "environmental justice" as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all peoples regardless of race, color, national origins, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." This definition has been widely adopted. See "Environmental Justice," U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice (accessed June 18, 2012).

groups.[95] Prior to this march, there had been little interaction between these groups on environment-related issues.

Owens also represented American Baptists as the EJWG sponsored a toxic tour in 1989 of minority communities in Albuquerque, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas. There, the working group held interfaith hearings on toxic waste. Owens and the EJWG did much to emphasize the connection between pollution and the environment and the disproportionate impact of toxic waste on racial minorities. In addition to sponsoring hearings and tours which attracted the attention of the media, the EJWG produced a video on chemical poisoning in minority communities.[96] Prior to participating in these marches and hearings, Owen Owens and other American Baptist denominational leaders organized an ecumenical consultation on eco-justice issues. Beginning in 1983, the American Baptist Office of Congregational Renewal started to plan a conference to focus on ecological wholeness and social justice.[97] This national ecumenical conference was eventually held on December 1-3, 1986 in Stony Point, New York. Mainline Protestant denominations and other faith organizations were represented at the conference.[98]

---

[95] Owen D. Owens, "The Eco-Justice Working Group," *The Egg*, January, 1989, 3, 16.

[96] Ibid., 3, 16-17. See also William Somplatsky-Jarman, "The Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches," in *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the well-being of earth and humans*, eds. Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Reuther (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 573-575.

[97] Owen Owens, "Report of Office of Congregational Renewal," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1984), 154.

[98] Owen Owens, "Report of Office of Church Renewal," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1987), 157-158. See also Report of the BNM, 87, Annual, covering 86, 157-58, Church Renewal, Owen Owens. See also Chris Cowap, "Not Just Ecology, Not Just Economics, Eco Justice," in *Eco-justice: The Unfinished Journey*, ed. William Gibson (Albany, NY: State University Press, 2004), 16-20.

## *Comparative Analysis and Conclusion*

### *Science and Technology*

Science and technology received scant attention from Southern Baptists and American Baptists in the 1980s. In earlier periods, science and technology had been an important focus of the two groups. This was true especially during the formative years of the environmental movement. As the previous chapter concluded, the subject of science and technology received very little notice from either denomination in the final years of the second wave of environmental history. Yet, the subject was not entirely neglected. American Baptists and Southern Baptists adopted similar attitudes in the 1970s. Each encouraged—albeit irregularly—scientific and technological advancements to help alleviate the nation's energy problems. However, neither group was dependent on the possibility of breakthrough advancements and rejected the widespread belief in a "technological fix."

American Baptists continued down this path. Rejecting belief in a "technological fix" and eschewing an attitude of hostility toward scientific advancements, the denomination's corporate responsibility leader Andrew Smith articulated a third way or view. He insisted that technology be used in a manner that "extends the natural relationships of creation rather than conquer them."[99] Beyond Smith's commentary, American Baptists did not address the subject of science and technology. Although, while not explicitly addressing the subject, the denomination did implicitly acknowledge the dangers of some technologies and scientific developments. This can be seen in the

[99] Smith, *God's Gift*, 13-14.

aforementioned American Baptist opposition to Reagan's nuclear power policies and in-depth concerns and efforts related to hazardous and radioactive wastes.

Meanwhile, Southern Baptists made no mention of science and technology as it related the environment. In the midst of a "Battle for the Bible" which divided the nation's largest Protestant denomination into warring parties, Southern Baptists simply were not concerned with environmental issues. Science specifically would only once again become an important focus of Southern Baptists in the twenty-first century with the emergence of global warming as a popular international environmental concern.

*Government*

Previous chapters demonstrated that Southern Baptists affirmed the idea of a "government fix" to environmental problems beginning in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Additional government regulation to protect the environment for present and future generations was repeatedly encouraged. With new, distinctly conservative denominational leaders, Southern Baptists began to reverse course in the 1980s.

This course reversal coincided with a "conservative resurgence" in American politics. The election of Ronald Reagan as President in 1980 was the most visible proof of this resurgence. Reagan blamed government regulations—including environmental regulations—for many of the nation's economic problems. In his view, government was the problem not a solution.

Many Christian conservatives—especially Evangelical Protestants—shared Reagan's concerns about the expanding size and role of government. In fact, as this chapter revealed, the origins of the Religious Right are necessarily traced back to serious concern over the expanding or, in their view, intrusive role of government. Not

surprisingly then, conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists were overwhelmingly supportive of Reagan's anti-regulation campaign and candidacy. The new conservative leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention was especially involved in this new political movement, then popularly known as the New Religious Right.

Southern Baptists gave scant attention environmental issues during the 1980s. But, when the SBC did address the environment, the political dividing lines between the old moderate leaders and the new conservative leaders were revealed. Whereas Southern Baptists had—in their first fifteen years of environmental engagement—urged the federal government to take environmental action, the new conservative leaders took a drastically different approach. Instead of following the trend of calling for greater government regulation on environmental matters, conservative leaders helped pass a resolution that eliminated any role for the government.

Meanwhile, American Baptists continued to support a more expansive role for the federal government on environmental issues. During this decade, American Baptists backed and urged the implementation of the Resource Conservative and Recovery Act and Superfund. Unlike Southern Baptist conservatives, American Baptists as a denomination certainly did not trust businesses and corporations to impose regulations upon themselves. This is especially true with regard to hazardous waste disposal issues. American Baptists were adamant that the federal government alone was responsible for protecting the people and the environment from toxic pollution and waste.

*Political Engagement*

With no environmental actions or attitudes to speak of—aside from the brief 1983 resolution—it is impossible to assess the political engagement approach of Southern

Baptists in the 1980s. Quite the opposite is true of American Baptists. Throughout the 1980s, American Baptists confronted environmental issues in a variety of ways. Continuing their commitment to the Public Church approach to political engagement, American Baptist leaders sought to mobilize churches and the denomination through ecumenical initiatives. More specifically, American Baptist leaders aimed to organize and mobilize their own churches against many of the policies and proposals of the Reagan administration on a host of social justice issues including the environment.

Working closely with other mainline Protestants through the National Council of Churches, American Baptists targeted environmental causes specifically with the formation of the Eco-Justice Working Group in 1984. The working group was active in the political arena on issues pertaining to hazardous and toxic waste. As in previous periods, ecumenism was central to the political engagement approach of American Baptists. Chapter five noted that in the mid-1970s American Baptists added a new component to their political engagement toolkit via participation in interfaith environmental efforts. The denomination's approach evolved even further in the early 1980s as American Baptists began to join coalitions that included both secular and religious organizations.

American Baptists also continued to engage environmental issues at the international level. Denominational representatives served during the decade on a committee of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Local churches were encouraged to take part in the observance of an Environmental Sabbath on the first weekend of June.[100] Although American Baptists continued to be involved at the

[100] "United Nations ," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge: PA American Baptist Publication Society, 1988), 180-181.

international level through the United Nations, the denomination's focus in the political arena was primarily at the domestic level. Similar to other mainline Protestants, American Baptists devoted most of its time and energy to challenging the Reagan Administration and calling on American companies to exercise corporate responsibility.

*Ethics*

Previous chapters have described in much detail the stewardship ethic of Southern Baptists and the eco-justice ethic of American Baptists. With one mere resolution over the course of an entire decade, it is difficult to assess the environmental ethic of Southern Baptists. That single resolution does indicate that the new conservative leadership affirmed the language of stewardship. However, due to its brevity, the resolution does not define stewardship in any detail. The debate over the resolution reveals that conservatives viewed the concept of "reverence for nature" with suspicion. In the resolution's final version, "reverence for nature" was replaced with "regard for nature." Clearly, conservatives felt that "reverence" implied some form of nature worship. This small wording change suggested that the environmental ethic of the new conservative leaders was indeed quite different from that of popular Southern Baptist environmental thinkers Henlee Barnette and Eric Rust.

American Baptists invested much time throughout the previous decade—especially in the early 1970s—laying a theological and ethical foundation for the denomination's particular justice-oriented environmentalism. With this fleshed-out ethical framework, American Baptists focused primarily on advocacy and activism during the 1980s. Of course, adopted resolutions continued to include detailed sections offering a theological and ethical rationale. However, environment-themed books and

journal articles written from a theological perspective were almost nonexistent. Apparently, the denomination was not interested in putting out new resources explaining the justification for action. Rather, denominational leaders were focused on calling American Baptists—both individuals and local congregations—to follow their lead and engage environmental issues in the political arena.

*Conclusion*

Both Southern Baptists and American Baptists would soon experience a renewed interest in environmental theology and ethics. This renewed interest naturally coincided with the much-hyped worldwide celebration of Earth Day 1990 marking its twentieth anniversary. The following seventh chapter explores the environmental engagement of Southern Baptists and American Baptists beginning with this historic occasion. As both groups of Baptists entered further into the third wave of American environmental history, only Southern Baptists would reverse course and quickly adopt a new environmentalism. This new environmentalism would stand in stark contrast to the denomination's moderate environmentalism of 1973-1979 detailed in chapter five and stand in much starker contrast when compared with the environmentalism of American Baptists. While American Baptists worked to strengthen alliances with other mainline Protestants, Southern Baptists found themselves at odds with a growing number of Evangelical Protestants on environmental issues.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Earth Day, Kyoto and Climate Change (1990-2008)

### *Introduction*

Chapter seven begins where the previous chapter left off with the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day. This chapter details the new environmentalism adopted by Southern Baptist conservatives and demonstrates its differences with the denomination's previous environmentalism and with the eco-justice focused environmentalism of American Baptists. Therefore, this chapter compares and analyzes the environmentalisms of Southern Baptists and American Baptists during the 1990s and 2000s. Chapter seven offers an introductory overview of Earth Day 1990, an event that helped launch a renewed popular and political interest in environmental issues. The chapter continues with a section exploring the environmental engagement of the new conservative leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1990s. The environmental advocacy of American Baptists during this same time period is also examined.

From this discussion of Southern Baptist and American Baptist engagement with various environmental issues in the 1990s, chapter seven proceeds to address the controversial subject of climate change. First, an historical introduction to climate change is provided, detailing how climate change emerged as a significant issue of both national and international importance. Next, Southern Baptist and American Baptist responses to climate change are compared. Following these lengthy sections, chapter seven concludes with a comparative analysis that critically reflects at length on the

different factors that shaped the disparate environmentalisms of Southern Baptists and American Baptists throughout these two recent decades.

*Earth Day 1990: An Overview*

The twentieth anniversary celebration of Earth Day on April 22, 1990 once again put environmentalism front-and-center in American society as it had done two decades prior. While twenty million Americans participated in the first Earth Day in 1970, an estimated 200 million worldwide in 140 countries took part in 1990.[1] The *New York Times* claimed that this twentieth anniversary celebration was "the largest grassroots demonstration in history."[2] In the United States, millions gathered in public spaces, at stadiums and schools and on college campuses to raise awareness about environmental issues. Participants also led tree planting, recycling and neighborhood clean-up projects throughout the nation.[3]

Unlike the inaugural Earth Day, the 1990 celebration was more inclusive. Most participants in 1970 were white middle-class Americans. The planners of the 1990 celebration sought to include minorities and focus on environmental issues important to minority communities such as toxic waste and air and water pollution. Civil rights leader Jesse Jackson was a key leader in Earth Day 1990, touring the United States with organizer Denis Hayes to encourage the participation of African-Americans and Latino-Americans.

---

[1] Robert Cahn and Patricia Cahn, "Did Earth Day Change the World?" *Environment*, September 1990, 17.

[2] Robert D. McFadden, "Millions Join Battle for a Beloved Planet," *New York Times*, April 23, 1990, A1.

[3] Cahn, 18-19.

Additionally, organizers attracted corporate participation. Big businesses had ignored Earth Day 1970. Yet, corporations played a key role in Earth Day 1990. Media corporations gave much attention in the pages of their newspapers and television programming to Earth Day and environmental subjects. The widespread embrace of Earth Day 1990 even among the business community signaled the extent to which environmentalism had once-again become mainstream. Over the twenty years since the inaugural Earth Day, the environmental movement had institutionalized and consequently become less radical and no longer countercultural.[4]

Environmentalism was also becoming more mainstream among evangelical Protestants in 1990. Historian Kenneth Larsen observed that, "As environmentalism took a more central place on the public agenda, it also assumed a higher place on the agenda of evangelicals, who shared the general public's renewed concern about ecological degradation."[5] As an earlier chapter noted, this flowering of environmentalism among evangelicals resulted in a significant increase in articles and columns on environmental subjects in evangelical publications. Advocacy groups were formed such as the Evangelical Environmental Network to promote Christian environmentalism.

Not all evangelicals were supportive of this particular renewed interest in environmental issues. In his study of evangelical environmentalism, Larsen wrote that "Wariness about environmentalism was especially pronounced among fundamentalists and other conservative evangelicals but was also apparent among moderate

---

[4] Ibid., 36-37.

[5] Kenneth David Larsen, "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals confront environmentalism, 1967-2000," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 225.

evangelicals."[6] Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals—who fifteen years later would become one of the nation's leading evangelical environmentalists—expressed "concern and caution" over evangelical involvement in environmental issues. These moderate and conservative evangelicals were suspicious of environmental organizations which promoted birth control and other family planning policies that evangelicals considered "pro-abortion." There were also worries that mainstream environmentalism was infected with neo-pagan New Age philosophies. *Christianity Today*, the flagship evangelical magazine, concluded in its reporting on Earth Day 1990 that many Christians had "shunned the secular environmental movement because it is permeated with philosophies they find inconsistent with biblical Christianity."[7]

*Southern Baptist Conservatives Enter Environmental Arena*

The SBC's Christian Life Commission initially welcomed the renewed focus on environmental concerns. In 1988, denominational takeover architect Paul Pressler helped install Richard Land as the Executive-Director of the Christian Life Commission. Land had impeccable academic credentials as a graduate of Princeton University and Oxford University where he earned his doctorate in history and theology. Land was both theologically and politically conservative. For nearly a decade, he served as a professor and administrator at Criswell Bible Institute in Dallas. In 1987, he took a leave of absence from his Criswell post to work as an aide to Governor Bill Clements, the first Republican governor of Texas since Reconstruction. The selection of Land to head the

[6] Ibid., 227.

[7] Randall L. Frame, "Christianity and Ecology: A Better Mix Than Before," *Christianity Today*, April 1990, 38-39.

SBC's ethics agency signaled that the denomination was headed in a distinctly different, politically conservative direction.[8]

Early in his tenure, Land led the denomination's ethics agency to focus on the environment. At a gathering of ministers in January 1990 to discuss plans for Earth Day 1990, Land stated that Christians must adopt a broader understanding of salvation—"salvation of humankind and salvation and redemption of creation." Land continued, "Our salvation history causes too narrow a focus for salvation. We must redeem not only humankind but the cosmos." He emphasized that man had a biblical directive to practice stewardship of the earth.[9]

The following month, Land spoke at a denominational conference on the doctrine of creation and called on Southern Baptists to develop a theology of ecology. Land told the crowd of pastors and laity:

> It will take 40 years or two generations to restore the world from the catastrophe man has wrought upon nature. We live in a world of finite rather than infinite resources. The earth is here for our use. God has given us dominion. We must not idolize creation, but we must not be irresponsible to creation.[10]

Just a few weeks later, Land again spoke on environmental issues at a meeting of several hundred Tennessee religious leaders. Land argued that environmental action must be a priority for the 1990s:

> For Baptists and other evangelicals, the only question is whether we will engage the issue and aggressively join the debate, or whether we will continue to leave the field to a largely secular environmentalist movement which sometimes sounds

---

[8] Andrew Hogue, "With the Salt of the Law and the Light of the Gospel: The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention under Richard Land," (master's thesis, Baylor University, 2005), 37-39.

[9] Connie Davis, "'Save Creation' ministers urged," *Baptist Press*, January 19, 1990, 3-4.

[10] Terry Lackey, "Christian doctrine of creation requires God as creator, speakers say," *Baptist Press*, February 27, 1990, 5-6.

> as though the creation of man was an act of aggression against the animal and mineral kingdoms.

Land continued, "Christians must remember that our Heavenly Father tells us a great deal in the Bible about our responsibilities concerning his creation." Like other panelists, Land encouraged the audience to meet their stewardship obligations. Following Land's panel, U.S. Senator Al Gore of Tennessee gave the keynote address and delivered a presentation on the ecological dangers of global warming due to the rising level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.[11]

During the summer of 1990, Southern Baptists addressed the environment for the first time since their brief environmental resolution in 1983. In a resolution titled "On Environmental Stewardship," Southern Baptists stressed that the "sinfulness of the human race has led to the destruction of the created order." Before calling on Southern Baptists to be "faithful stewards" and "better stewards," the resolution warned that Christians are "forbidden to worship creation." This resolution came two months after the twentieth anniversary celebration of Earth Day. The denomination's new conservative leadership, which had much influence over the resolution-making process, felt it necessary to make explicitly clear that their environmental concern was not influenced by neo-pagan New Age philosophies.[12]

Like the 1983 resolution, this resolution did not urge any type of government action or regulation. In fact, it did not specifically suggest any form of political engagement on environmental issues. Instead, the resolution concluded, "That

---

[11] Louis Moore, "Land: Christians must confront worsening environmental crisis," *Baptist Press*, March 21, 1990, 5-6.

[12] Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution On Environmental Stewardship," June 1990, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=456 (accessed August 12, 2012).

individuals, churches, and other Baptist groups be encouraged to make an environmentally responsible ethic a part of our lifestyle and evangelistic witness."[13] This conclusion was reflective of the SBC's new conservative approach to environmental issues that focused on individuals, churches and businesses voluntarily adopting more environmentally responsible behaviors. Government regulation was not considered an answer.

Less than a year after adopting this resolution, Land led the Christian Life Commission to host a conference on environmental issues. Titled "Christians and the Environment: Finding a Biblical Balance Between Idolatry and Irresponsibility," Land hoped the conference would prompt environmental discussions among Southern Baptists and other evangelicals.[14] The presentations from this conference were published as a book the following year titled *The Earth is the Lord's*. Almost all of the presentations were given by Southern Baptist pastors, theologians and denominational leaders rather than scientists and government officials.[15]

During his presentation, Land articulated a simple environmental theology based on the concept of biblical stewardship: "As stewards of His property, we are responsible for protecting His creation. We come first. We must remember, however, that while human life demands reverence, all life deserves respect." Land stressed that Southern Baptists and other evangelicals have a responsibility to teach biblical stewardship to their

---

[13] Ibid.

[14] Richard Land and Louis Moore, "Introduction," in *The Earth is the Lord's: Christians and the Environment*, eds. Richard Land and Louis Moore (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 15.

[15] Chip Alford, "Broadman book designed as environmental 'primer'," *Baptist Press*, March 30, 1992, 3-4.

children in order to "inoculate our young people against the false, anti-biblical teaching which so heavily suffuses so much of the modern, secular environmentalist movement."[16]

Other presenters joined Land in warning about New Age influences in the environmental movement. Russ Bush, dean of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, presented on New Age influences in popular culture. Bush described Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets and environmental advocate, as a strong advocate of pantheism with his cast of "self-conscious talking animals."[17] Another presenter sought to discredit previous Earth Day celebrations, claiming that since 1970 the environmental awareness effort has been observed "mostly by persons holding a New Age world view."[18]

Land's purpose then was to chart a middle path between ignoring environmental issues altogether and embracing New Age philosophy. Yet, in his advocacy of this middle path, Land did not recognize that his denomination had long been on this road. Not once during the conference did Land recognize the past environmental engagement of his denomination. He neglected to mention the contributions of denominational officials beginning in the late 1960s and the writings of Southern Baptist environmental thinkers Henlee Barnette and Eric Rust. Instead, Land traced the history of Christian environmental concern to Francis Schaeffer. This example of revisionism allowed

---

[16] Richard Land, "Overview: Beliefs and Behaviors," in *The Earth is the Lord's: Christians and the Environment*, eds. Richard Land and Louis Moore (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 24-25.

[17] L. Russ Bush, "Humanistic and New Age Ideas and Ecological Issues," in *The Earth is the Lord's: Christians and the Environment*, eds. Richard Land and Louis Moore (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 57-58.

[18] Gary H. Leazer, "The New Age Movement and the Environment," in *The Earth is the Lord's: Christians and the Environment*, eds. Richard Land and Louis Moore (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 107.

Southern Baptist conservatives to have a new identity that was unconnected to moderate Southern Baptists of the 1960s and 1970s.

As with the 1983 and 1990 resolutions, there were no calls for government action at the CLC's 1991 conference. Environmental legislation as a solution to what Land called an "ecological crisis" was not a subject of discussion. Instead, conference participants focused on what churches and individuals could do such as recycling. Despite this focus, the practical applications of their stewardship ethic received considerably less attention than New Age influences in the environmental movement.[19]

This focus on New Age influences was not new to the SBC. In the late 1980s, the *Southern Baptist Journal* devoted numerous articles and columns warning its readers of perceived New Age influences. The *Southern Baptist Journal* was the official publication of the conservative activist network known as the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship whose mission was to expose and eradicate liberalism from the SBC. A cover-story report in the January-March 1987 issue claimed that denomination, specifically the embattled moderate leaders, had embraced New Age ideas.[20] The report began: "Throughout this study one should take note that there are numerous Globalist New Age code words that are found in both the blatant occult-styled New Age writings as well as Southern Baptist writings." This paranoid report attempted to link Southern Baptist moderates to New Age thinkers due to the fact that both groups used words and phrases such as "cooperation," "interdependent," "unity in diversity" and "holistic."[21]

---

[19] Lamar E. Cooper Sr., "How a local church can being a recycling program," in *The Earth is the Lord's: Christians and the Environment*, eds. Richard Land and Louis Moore (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 198-207.

[20] Editor, "Globalized!" *Southern Baptist Journal*, January-March 1987, 1-17.

[21] Ibid., 1-2.

The report concluded that "there are many other strong evidences that the SBC has been infiltrated by the New Age Globalists."[22]

When the SBC convened its annual meeting in 1988, messengers adopted a resolution on the New Age movement. Key characteristics of what was meant by "New Age" were identified. They included: reincarnation, astrology, universalism and secular humanism defined as "no deity will save us, we must save ourselves." The resolution declared that the New Age movement had crept into "every facet of American life" especially the media and entertainment industry. With this resolution, Southern Baptists hoped to warn and educate "our Baptist constituency of the deception and critical dangers of this movement."[23] Southern Baptist environmental engagement twenty-years after the first Earth Day was motivated by a desire to actively confront and counter this perceived widespread and influential New Age movement.

In the lead up to the Earth Day 1990 celebration, American astronomer Carl Sagan called on prominent scientists to issue a statement encouraging religious groups to take a leadership role in addressing environmental issues. Sagan's colleagues including Stephen Jay Gould and Edward O. Wilson responded with a statement that appealed to

---

[22] Ibid., 17. The July-September 1987 issue of the *Southern Baptist Journal* asked: "Is there any evidence that the WMU (Woman's Missionary Union) of the SBC is involved with the Globalist New Age Movement? Yes, there is, in the opinion of this writer." See Editor, "The Global Woman," *Southern Baptist Journal*, July-September 1987, 13.

[23] Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution on the New Age Movement," June 1988, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=785 (accessed August 12, 2012). In 2000, Southern Baptists adopted another resolution on the New Age movement. Titled "On the Threat of New Age Globalism," this resolution again warned of secular humanism, "a foundational component of which is the belief that no religion can or does possess objective truth and that all religions are of equal worth." The resolution stated that New Age globalism movement promotes a one-world government, one-world religion and one-world economy. It concluded with a call to Congress and the President to "guard our national sovereignty, to prevent the placement of American troops under foreign military command or direction, to scrutinize and reverse the trend toward globalism, and to resist its encroachments by certain elements within our own government, the United Nations, and other organizations." See Southern Baptist Convention, "On the Threat of New Age Globalism," June 2000, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions /amResolution.asp?ID=786 (accessed August 12, 2012).

religious groups worldwide to "commit in word and deed, and as boldly as is required, to preserve the environment of the Earth."[24] Sagan's challenge resulted in an effort called the "Joint Appeal by Religion and Science for the Environment."[25]

Richard Land represented the Southern Baptist Convention at the second meeting of the Joint Appeal by Religion and Science in May 1992. The product of this historic summit was a statement titled "Declaration of the 'Mission to Washington.'" Signed by diverse group of American scientists and religious leaders, the declaration advocated that science and religion could together make a positive contribution toward finding a resolution to the world's environmental problems:

> We commit ourselves to work together for a United States that will lead the world in the efficient use of fossil fuels, in devising and utilizing renewable sources of energy, in phasing out all significant ozone-depleting chemicals, in halting deforestation and slowing the decline in species diversity, in planting forests and restoring other habitats and in realizing worldwide social justice. We believe there is a need for concerted efforts to stabilize world population by humane, responsible and voluntary means consistent with our differing values. For these, and other reasons, we believe that special attention must be paid to education and to enhancing the roles and the status of women.[26]

The statement concluded, "we dedicate ourselves to undertake bold action to cherish and protect the environment of our planetary home."[27]

Land was credited with shaping the final version of the declaration. *Christianity Today* reported that Land and Ron Sider of Evangelicals for Social Action convinced the

---

[24] "Preserving and Cherishing the Earth: An Appeal for Joint Commitment in Science and Religion," Forum on Religion and Ecology, January 1990, http://fore.research.yale.edu /publications/statements/preserve.html (accessed August 10, 2012).

[25] Ibid.

[26] "Joint Appeal by Religion and Science for the Environment," in *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (New York: Routledge Press, 1996), 640-642.

[27] Ibid.

declaration's drafters to make certain changes. Land and Sider told the group that they would not be able to sign the declaration unless the phrase "on which all life depends" was deleted. Land explained that life depends on God not the earth. The phrase was removed in the declaration's final form.[28] Still, Land was not completely satisfied with the declaration but viewed the participation of conservative evangelicals like himself as a positive.

Out of this gathering of scientists and faith leaders, a new evangelical environmental organization was born in late 1993. Ron Sider's Evangelicals for Social Action and World Vision served as co-sponsors of the Evangelical Environmental Network.[29] Representatives from these two evangelical organizations along with evangelical environmental theologians Loren Wilkinson and Calvin DeWitt drafted the EEN's founding document titled "An Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation." The drafters aimed to articulate an evangelical theology of the environment that affirmed "the full authority of the Scriptures" and stressed sin along with the themes of reconciliation and repentance. The declaration began:

> Because we worship and honor the Creator, we seek to cherish and care for the creation. Because we have sinned, we have failed in our stewardship of creation. Therefore we repent of the way we have polluted, distorted, or destroyed so much of the Creator's work.[30]

---

[28] Tom Strode, "Land: Evangelicals helpful at environmental meeting," *Baptist Press*, May 18, 1992, 3-4. "Are Evangelicals Warming to Earth Issues?" *Christianity Today*, June 1992, 63-65. Land told the SBC's news agency "This is not everything we would want and not everything is said the way we would want it but this is a better statement than it would have been had not evangelicals participated in the process." In his extended comments to *Baptist Press*, Land was careful to point out that the declaration called for population "stabilization" and not a reduction in the world's population. He also argued that the support for stabilization by "humane, responsible and voluntary means" precludes abortion or, in Land's view, "the killing of the unborn." See Strode, "Land: Evangelicals helpful at environmental meeting."

[29] "Evangelical environmental effort initiated at White House Meeting," *Baptist Press*, October 12, 1993, 5-6.

[30] "Evangelical Declaration on the care of creation," *Creation Care* (Spring 2000): 10-11.

The declaration called on individual Christians and churches to be "centers of creation's care and renewal" and "work for godly, just, and sustainable economies which reflect God's sovereign economy, and enable men, women and children to flourish along with all the diversity of creation."[31]

Over 200 evangelical pastors, denominational leaders and scholars endorsed the EEN's declaration. However, Richard Land refused to add his name to the list. He expressed concern that one particular passage of the declaration implied the need for population control. Land explained that the SBC's Christian Life Commission had been instructed by its trustees not to advocate on behalf of population control or birth control.[32] Land was also bothered by a passage in the declaration that called on Christians to listen to, learn from and work with others—Christian and non-Christian alike—who are concerned about the "healing of creation." He bluntly stated that "learning from New Agers is not something I'm willing to endorse."[33]

Prior to Land's decision, the declaration had been sharply criticized in *World* magazine. Evangelical economist Calvin Beisner penned a lengthy takedown of the declaration, addressing and offering refutations to many of its claims. Beisner argued that the declaration was not scientifically credible and also theologically problematic.[34]

---

[31] Ibid.

[32] Darrell Turner, "For now, Land isn't signing environmental declaration," *Baptist Press*, June 3, 1994, 4-5. Land's concern involved a declaration paragraph that warned that "many of these degradations [of creation] are signs that we are pressing against the finite limits God ahs set for creation. With continued population growth, these degradations will become more severe." See "Evangelical Declaration on the care of creation," 10-11.

[33] Ibid. Cliff Benzel, the founding director of the EEN, expressed his disappointment that Land was unwilling to sign the declaration because "Southern Baptists represent a very large part of our evangelical constituency."

[34] Calvin Beisner, "Are God's Resources Finite? A group of Christian leaders claim they are, but does the claim square with the evidence?" *WORLD Magazine, November 27, 1993, 10-13.*

Historian Kenneth Larsen has argued that in their attack on the EEN declaration, *World* magazine and Beisner "tapped into an undercurrent of anti-environmentalism that had come to characterize the increasingly influential New Christian Right."[35]

*American Baptist Environmental Advocacy in 1990s*

Unlike their Baptist counterparts to the south, American Baptists did not wait until after Earth Day 1990 to respond to the environmental issues of the day. In 1987, the denomination's Board of National Ministries put together a special multi-racial task force to prepare a policy statement on environmental issues. From 1987-1989, members of the task force met with American Baptists and visited local churches to dialogue on this subject. The task force's proposed ecology policy was unanimously adopted in June 1989 by the General Board of American Baptist Churches USA.[36]

The policy statement began with a detailed section highlighting diverse environmental concerns including deforestation, air and water pollution, toxic and hazardous wastes, soil erosion, pesticide contamination and the thinning of the ozone layer. This was the first Baptist statement to address global warming which was caused, according to the statement, "primarily by the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation." The statement emphasized that these were problems not unique to the North American continent: "On every continent issues of ecological sustainability demand attention."[37]

---

[35] Larsen, 263-264.

[36] American Baptist Churches USA, "An Ecological Situational Analysis," in Keith Ignatius, *Our Only Home: Planet Earth: A Prayer and Bible Study About God, Planet Earth and Ecological Stewardship* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist National Ministries, 1992), 32-39.

[37] Ibid., 32-33.

After detailing environmental threats, the statement articulated a succinct theology of the environment consistent with past denominational resolutions. It affirmed the goodness of creation, the responsibility for the rest of creation and that the earth is the Lord's (Psalms 24:1). With a continued emphasis on the doctrine of creation, the statement declared: "Our proper perspective on all activity on the earth flows directly from our affirmation of God as Creator."[38] The New Testament concept of stewardship, the statement stressed, provides the "best understanding of the Biblical attitude of humanity's relationship with the Creation." The statement continued:

> Our responsibility as stewards is one of the most basic relationships we have with God. It implies a great degree of caring for God's creation and all God's creatures. The right relationship is embodied in the everlasting covenant to which Isaiah refers. There can be no justice without right relationships of creatures with one another and with all of creation. Eco-justice is the vision of the garden in Genesis—the realm and the reality of right relationship.[39]

Eco-justice and its emphasis on stewardship and interdependence remained the preferred environmental ethic of American Baptists.

Science and technology were also addressed. Praising advances in science, the statement noted that scientific technology has "provided thousands of ways of applying scientific knowledge to improve our lives." Technology was described as a powerful tool and as a gift from God. Christians have "responsibility as stewards" to use technology for good and work to mitigate or eliminate the harmful effects of certain technologies, according to the statement.[40]

---

[38] Ibid., 34-35.

[39] Ibid., 35.

[40] Ibid.

Following the brief discussion of science and technology, the statement focused on sin. Two forms of sin were described: individual and corporate. The statement urged that both types of sin be recognized and taken seriously in order to build an "eco-just community and world." Churches and individuals alike were called upon to confront these sins and—citing Ephesians 2:10— "take responsibility to God and neighbor seriously and respond." The policy laid out the ultimate task for American Baptists as "nothing less than to join God in preserving, renewing and fulfilling the creation....to relate to nature in ways that sustain life on the planet, provide for the essential material and physical needs of all humankind, and increase justice and well-being for all life in a peaceful world."[41] The eco-justice ethic remained central to the denomination's environmental engagement two decades later.

The statement concluded with the familiar reminder that "ecology and justice are inseparable." Citing Christian stewardship responsibilities, the statement asserted that American Baptists "bear the responsibility to affirm and support programs, legislation, research and organizations that protect and restore the vulnerable and the oppressed, the earth as well as the poor." This statement was followed with another reminder that American Baptists were to be concerned not just with the environment of human life but all of life.[42]

American Baptist Churches USA joined the Southern Baptist Convention in adopting an environmental resolution in June 1990. This resolution titled "On Individual Lifestyle for Ecological Responsibility" came just two months after Earth Day 1990. The

---

[41] Ibid., 37.

[42] Ibid., 37-38.

two-page resolution quoted extensively from the newly adopted environmental policy statement. It asked American Baptists to focus on making changes in lifestyle through conservation practices and recycling. Churches and pew-sitters were encouraged to educate others about environmental issues and join conservation and other environmental groups.[43]

American Baptists adopted another resolution in 1990 urging Congress to reauthorize the Clean Air Act. Since its adoption in 1970, the Clean Air Act has served as the cornerstone of air pollution control policy in the United States, regulating the amount and location of pollution that automobiles and business released into the air. With this resolution, American Baptists declared their support for strict air pollution control including mandated reductions in automobile emissions and requirements that polluters pay cleanup costs. The resolution also asked that the reauthorized Clean Air Act cut sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions and phase out ozone-destroying chemicals. The federal government was viewed as having the primary responsibility for ensuring that public health was protected and the nation's airs were "clean."[44]

In addition to the resolution, the Office of Governmental Relations lobbied with other mainline Protestant denominations for the reauthorization of the Clean Air Act in

---

[43] American Baptist Churches USA, "Resolution on Individual Lifestyle for Ecological Responsibility, 8181 6/90," in *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA, 1996), np.

[44] American Baptist Churches USA, "Resolution on Clean Air, 8183, 6/90," in *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA, 1996), np. Tom Schierholz, "Pollution sanctions loom as clean air deadlines comes due," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 29, 1988, 3.

1990.[45] President George Bush signed into law an amended version of the Clean Air Act on November 15, 1990. Two new amendments were added that aimed to curb acid rain and protect the ozone. Existing regulations such as automobile emission standards were made more strict. Environmentalists viewed the addition of enforcement mechanisms as significantly strengthening the Clean Air Act.[46]

The following year, the Board of National Ministries published an environmental themed prayer and bible study titled *Our Only Home: Planet Earth* and distributed it to American Baptist churches and pastors. Like the 1990 resolution, this bible study was seen as a means of implementing the 1989 policy statement. The Office of Church Renewal—led by Owen Owens—worked with the Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches to develop an additional environmental resource in 1992. This resource titled *101 Ways to Help Save the Earth* included suggestions for 52-weeks of environmental activity for congregations. It also featured 101 practical environmental activities for individuals such as planting a tree, refraining from using chemical fertilizers, watering lawn only when necessary and recycling. Churches were encouraged to carpool to services, celebrate the environmental Sabbath, conduct an energy audit of the congregation's facilities and speak out on environmental issues in the political arena. This resource was distributed to American Baptist and other mainline Protestant churches.[47]

---

[45] American Baptist Churches USA, "Report of the Office of Governmental Relations," in *Yearbook of American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1991), 138-139.

[46] Walter A. Rosenbaum, *Environmental Politics and Policy*, 8th ed. (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly, 2010), 208.

[47] American Baptist Churches USA, "Report of the Office of Church Renewal," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1991), 143.

Throughout the mid-1990s American Baptists spoke out against conservative attempts to reform the Endangered Species Act. Following the 1994 mid-term elections which saw the Republican Party take control of both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, there were numerous efforts to eliminate or weaken many national environmental regulations. Republicans especially targeted the Endangered Species Act, a federal program that mandates the protection of endangered plants and animals and their habitats. Federal agencies such as the United States Fish & Wildlife Service are responsible for implementing this program.[48]

Mainline Protestant denominations were credited with helping to defeat the proposals to weaken the Endangered Species Act in 1995-1996. These denominations used Earth Day 1995 to emphasize protection of endangered species in their literature and mailings. Denominations played an important role in letter-writing campaigns to legislators. Evangelical groups even joined the debate. The Evangelical Environmental Network launched a million-dollar "Noah's Ark" campaign to defeat the proposed revisions. While evangelicals received much media attention, secular environmental groups credited mainline Protestant denominations for their quiet but extremely influential involvement.[49] Again in 1997 and 1998, mainline Protestant denominations including American Baptist Churches USA fought efforts to amend the Endangered

---

Eco-Justice Working Group, *101 Ways to Save the Earth* (New York, NY: Eco-Justice Working Group and The Greenhouse Gas Foundation, 1992).

[48] Environmental Protection Agency, "Summary of the ESA," http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/laws/esa.html (accessed September 10, 2012).

[49] Michael Moody, "Caring for Creation: Environmental Advocacy by Mainline Protestant Organizations," in *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*, eds. Robert Wuthnow and John H. Evans (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 248-249.

Species Act and delete key provisions from the act. During those years, American Baptists worked with the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Environmental Network and various secular environmental groups.[50]

Southern Baptists were silent on the subject of endangered species. The only comments on the subject came in response to the Evangelical Environmental Network's "Noah's Ark" media campaign in 1996. Christian Life Commission president Richard Land voiced his opposition to the nearly quarter-century old environmental legislation. He stated that the Endangered Species Act had been "an unmitigated disaster...a classic example of how federal policies and federal bureaucracies often have an effect exactly the oppose of that which was intended." Land contended that the act had done "little to protected 'endangered' species and in the process has done much to ruin individual human lives and to trample upon basic property rights."[51] This attitude toward the ESA is another example of the anti-regulation ideology that has significantly shaped the SBC's environmental engagement in recent decades.

Corporate responsibility remained an environmental emphasis of American Baptists throughout the 1990s. An oil tanker collided with a reef near the Alaska coast on March 24, 1989. This collision resulted in a massive oil spill. Eleven million gallons poured out of the Exxon Valdez and spread over one-thousand miles along the coast,

---

[50] Allen Johnson, "Keeping the Ark Afloat: Kempthorne Bill will Destroy God's creation," *Charleston Gazette*, March 30, 1988, 5a. See also "Religious Groups Defend Endangered Species Act," *Christian Century*, November 12, 1997, 1029-1030.

[51] "Environmental effort gets mixed review," *Western Recorder*, April 9, 1996, 17.

devastating animal and plant life.[52] In response, a diverse organization formed called the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES) to hold corporations accountable for their practices that impacted the environment. Soon after forming, CERES released a code of conduct known as the "Valdez Principles" for corporations to adopt to demonstrate their commitment to environmental protection. This code of conduct was intended to serve as a pledge to embrace environmental protection measures beyond the regulations already legally required.[53]

American Baptists were involved in the CERES effort through their involvement and leadership in the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, a coalition member. At their summer meeting in 1991, American Baptist delegates adopted a resolution introducing and affirming the Valdez Principles. The resolution urged the passage of federal legislation consistent with the principles and asked American Baptists to present the principles to corporations for their adoption.[54]

More than 200 corporations received proposals to sign the principles in the first three years. Very few, however, were willing to commit to the principles. In 1992, the principles were renamed the "CERES Principles" as many corporations did not want to be associated with the Exxon Valdez environmental disaster.[55] The following year the coalition gained its first large corporate signatory when the SUN Company adopted the

---

[52] Michael R. MacLeod, "Forging Private Governance of Climate Change: The Power and Politics of Socially Responsible Investment," (PhD diss., George Washington University, 2008), 80.

[53] J. Andy Smith III, "Corporations and Community Accountability," in *Eco-Justice—The Unfinished Journey*, ed. William E. Gibson (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), 99-104.

[54] American Baptist Churches USA, "Resolution on the Valdez Principles 8190, 6/91," in *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA, 1996), np.

[55] MacLeod, 87.

CERES Principles. Over the course of the next seven years, more than fifty corporations followed the SUN Company's lead including American Airlines, Coca-Cola, General Motors and Ford Motor Company. Denominational resources were devoted to this CERES effort throughout the 1990s and denominational leaders continued to play key leadership roles in the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. News reports specifically attributed the decision of Ford Motor Company to endorse the CERES Principles to a three-year dialogue with the Sierra Club and American Baptist Churches USA.[56]

In addition to their involvement on behalf of corporate responsibility, American Baptists remained involved in the Environmental Justice Movement. In 1991, the denomination launched a new program called "Ecology and Racial Justice" to bring more attention to eco-justice issues of special importance to racial minorities such as the siting and disposal of hazardous and toxic wastes.[57] The next year, American Baptists adopted a resolution encouraging federal legislation to deal with hazardous, toxic and radioactive waste disposal problems.[58] Denominational publications also focused on these issues in the mid-1990s. For example, the magazine *All My Relations* offered ways that individuals and churches could take environmental action. These articles were

---

[56] "CERES Conference is Backdrop for Ford Motor's Adoption of Environmental Code," *PR Newswire*, April 14, 2000.

[57]"Report of Ecology and Racial Justice Program," in *Yearbook of American Baptist Churches USA* (Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1992), 140.

[58] American Baptist Churches USA, "Resolution on Hazardous, Toxic and Radioactive Waste, 8196, 12/92," in *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA, 1996), np.

informative and intended to raise awareness to pressing environmental problems in minority communities such as the need for clean water.[59]

Forest conservation emerged as a new environmental concern of the denomination in the late 1990s. American Baptist leader Owen Owens co-founded an interfaith coalition in 1999 called the Religious Campaign for Forest Conservation. This coalition included Protestant, Catholic and Jewish leaders with Owens serving as the coalition's national chair. Citing Psalm 24:1 ("The Earth is the Lord's"), Owens explained in an introductory press release that the purpose of the group was "to use our minds and faith together to preserve whole forests—not mere tree plantations—for future generations. We believe forest stewardship must be addressed from a faith perspective."[60] For several years, Owens and his staff worked to raise public awareness about forest conservation or, more accurately, forest preservation.

Two months after its inception, the coalition announced that it was backing legislation to end commercial logging on national forestlands. In a letter to President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the coalition stated: "The Scriptures make clear that protecting God's forests, and the many aspects of creation they embody and protect, is not merely sound policy but holy obligation." The coalition pressured the Clinton Administration to pursue a federal policy that prohibited the construction of roads, logging and mining within the national forests.[61]

---

[59] *All My Relations* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 1-10. See also *All My Relations* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 1-12). Both issues were devoted entirely to environmental justice topics.

[60] Fran Homer, "Religious Leaders Meet With US Legislators to Promote Forest Conservation," National Ministries Press Release, February 18, 1999, http://archive.wfn.org/1999/02/msg00181.html (accessed August 12, 2012).

[61] "Religious Leaders Call for End to Forest Destruction," EarthCare News Press Release, April 13, 1999, http://www.earthcareonline.org/ecnews/ectimes699.html (accessed August 12, 2012). "Religious

*Climate Change: An Historical Introduction*

During the 1990s climate change, or more specifically global warming, emerged as the dominant international environmental concern of that decade and the next. In 1988, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC was given the mission of assessing "the scientific, technical and socioeconomic information relevant for the understanding of the risk of human-induced climate change." This new international organization brought together thousands of scientists to collect and analyze existing peer-reviewed scientific research relating to climate change.[62] Since 1988, the IPCC has been looked to as the most respected and controversial authority on the subject of global warming.

Climate change was emphasized at United Nations meetings throughout the 1990s. At the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992—also known as the "Earth Summit"—the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted. This international treaty sought to stabilize greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere to prevent human-induced changes in the climate. Although a toothless treaty with no mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions, the treaty did provide for future updates to the treaty called "protocols."[63]

---

Leaders Urge Protection of National Forests' Roadless Arenas," *Earth Justice*, June 29, 1999, http://earthjustice.org/news/press/1999/religious-leaders-urge-protection-of-national-forests-roadless-areas (accessed August 12, 2012).

[62] Walter A. Rosenbaum, *Environmental Politics and Policy* 8 (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly, 2010, 365.

[63] Dianne Rahm, *Climate Change Policy in the United States: The Science, the Politics and the Prospects for Change* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2009), 42-43.

These subsequent updates represent the final product of international environmental engagement.

The zenith of international environmental engagement on climate change during the 1990s came in 1997 with the development of the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement to set limits on the emission of greenhouse gases. Under the Kyoto Protocol, limits were legally binding and only applied to the industrialized or developed nations. Nations that were considered "developing" such as China, India, Mexico, and Brazil were exempted from the emissions limits. Meanwhile, the protocol stipulated that the industrialized nations would be required as a group to reduce their emissions levels by five percent between 2008 and 2012. Despite extended negotiations, the United States never ratified the Kyoto Protocol and President George W. Bush withdrew the United States from further negotiations in 2002.[64]

Throughout the 1990s, third party organizations persistently attempted to discredit the findings of the IPCC with regard to the science of climate change. Exxon Mobil and the American Petroleum Institute formed the Global Climate Coalition in 1989 to debunk the scientific findings of the IPCC, specifically their conclusions that changes in the earth's climate were human induced. Some Republicans in the U.S. Congress advocating deregulation also questioned the credibility of these findings and declared the IPCC to be a political rather than scientific organization.[65]

---

[64] Ibid., 42. See also Martin A. Nie, "'It's the Environment, Stupid!' Clinton and the Environment," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 39-51.

[65] Rahm, 99-101.

*Southern Baptists*

Conservative evangelicals were another group that began to express skepticism about human-induced climate change. While the 1990s marked the flowering of evangelical environmentalism, it also marked the emergence of a new distinct and coherent environmentalism, popularly described as Christian anti-environmentalism. Proponents of Christian anti-environmentalism were fundamentally opposed to the goals and aims of the modern environmental movement. The single defining characteristic of these Christian anti-environmentalists was their loud and consistent opposition to almost all government regulations of the environment in the post-World War II era.

In a 1995 article in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, evangelical scholar Richard T. Wright briefly chronicled the growing popularity of anti-environmentalism among evangelicals. Wright argued that this Christian anti-environmentalism had coalesced into a movement with a distinct political agenda to "restrict the regulatory powers of government."[66] He noted that two strategies were used to pursue this agenda. Similar to the groups discussed above, Christian anti-environmentalists attacked the credibility of the claims of prominent climate scientists and groups such as the IPCC. Another tactic frequently employed was to characterize popular environmentalism and environmentalists as New Age earth-worshippers. Wright

[66] Richard T. Wright, "Tearing Down the Green: Environmental Backlash in the Evangelical Sub-Culture," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 47, no. 2 (June 1995): 80-81. According to Kenneth Larsen, "During the last half of the 1990s, what has been relatively infrequent and unorganized criticisms of environmentalism within conservative evangelicalism coalesced into a concerted, organized effort to counter the evangelical environmental movement." See Larsen, 302.

claimed that these were "red herrings" which masqued the purely political anti-regulation motivations of these Christian anti-environmentalists.[67]

During the mid-to-late 1990s, economist Calvin Beisner established himself as the most prominent and influential Christian anti-environmentalist.[68] As a previous section detailed, Beisner authored a harsh and lengthy critique of the Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation in 1993. He went on to publish a book in 1997 articulating his anti-environmentalism titled *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry in the Environmental Debate.*[69]

Beisner's environmental theology has been examined closely in a recent dissertation titled "Becoming Good Shepherds: A New Model of Creation Care for Evangelical Christians" by Donald McDaniel of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. McDaniel demonstrated that three characteristics define Beisner's theology: an intense focus on the "Dominion Mandate" of Genesis 1:26-28, an anthropocentric view of the cosmos and an instrumental view of nature.[70] According to McDaniel, this third characteristic, the belief that nature (rest of creation) "exists only to serve the needs

---

[67] Ibid., 80-81, 89.

[68] Paul Maltby, "Fundamentalist Dominion, Postmodern Ecology," *Ethics and the Environment* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 121-122.

[69] Calvin Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997). According to Larsen, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness* was published jointly with the Acton Institute, an organization formed in 1990 to "promote a society that embraces civil liberties and free market economics" by helping "religious leaders and entrepreneurs" to "forge an alliance that will serve to foster and secure an open, free and virtuous society." See Larsen, 303. Beisner has had a close relationship the Acton Institute and served as an adjunct scholar. See Maltby, 122.

[70] Donald R. McDaniel, "Becoming Good Shepherds: A New Model of Creation Care for Evangelical Christians," (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 68-73.

of mankind" and only "has value as it can be used to further some other goal," serves as the core element of Beisner's theology.[71]

Due to this strong emphasis on the instrumentality of nature, Beisner has encouraged increased consumption and population growth. In *Where the Garden Meets the Wilderness*, Beisner asserted that the "dominant dynamic driving the trend toward environmental improvement is precisely growing population and its growing economies."[72] Arguing against environmental regulations, Beisner stated, "Humility applied to environmental stewardship should lead us, in light of the vast complexity of human society and the earth's ecosystems, to hesitate considerably at the notion that we know enough about them to manage them."[73] These basic theologically-based principles serve as the foundation of Beisner's environmental thinking which he has shared with many conservative individuals and institutions especially Southern Baptists over the last two decades.

During the fall of 1999, Richard Land called on conservative religious leaders to put forward a statement on environmental issues to coincide with the 2000 presidential election and the 30th anniversary of Earth Day. Land's ERLC took the lead in this project, drafting a statement titled "A Faith Community Commitment to the Environment and Our Children's Future." A public policy-focused statement, it advocated the passage

---

[71] Ibid., 72-73.

[72] Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*, 111.

[73] Ibid., 28.

of specific proposals in Congress that championed the free-market environmental philosophy of environment deregulation.[74] The ERLC statement concluded:

> We pledge to the American people to always remember that environmental policies must expand economic opportunity for all Americans....We pledge to implement policies that protect the future job opportunities for our children and grandchildren and to protect their right to enjoy the natural resources and beauty of America that is their heritage. Real environmental solutions must keep in mind that all Americans of this generation and all generations to come must share in the environmental improvements Congress is charged with passing.[75]

The ERLC's statement featured a very short-list of signatories. However, this list included several executives of the most prominent and influential organizations of the Religious Right such as Roberta Combs of the Christian Coalition, Jerry Falwell of the Liberty Alliance and Louis Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition.[76]

Meanwhile, a separate group of well-known conservatives that included Calvin Beisner and Religious Right leaders such as D. James Kennedy were drafting a similar environmental statement also from a free market economic philosophy. Beisner was the principal author of this statement dubbed the "Cornwall Declaration." Beisner's group was planning the formation of an organization called the Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship (ICES). The purpose of the Cornwall Declaration and the ICES was to counter the environmental message and advocacy of Christian environmental groups such as the Evangelical Environmental Network and the Eco-

---

[74] Larry Witham, "Alliance shuns nature worship; Religious groups urge more science in ecology policies," *The Washington Times*, April 18, 2000, A8.

[75] "Religious Groups Link Stewardship to Economic Growth," *Earthkeeping News*, May/June 2000, http://nacce.org/2000/env-eth-econ.html (accessed August 28, 2012).

[76] Ibid.

Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches.[77] All of these groups encouraged more strict environmental regulations.

The Cornwall Declaration identified three specific concerns. First, the statement contended that "Many people mistakenly view humans as principally consumers and polluters rather than producers and stewards." A "clean environment" is depicted as a commodity ("costly good") and affluence, "technological innovation" and "human and material capital" are viewed as "integral to environmental improvement." The second concern takes aim at preservationists and argues that romanticism leads preservationists "to defy nature or oppose human dominion over creation." The declaration defined biblical stewardship as opposed to environmental preservation: "Our position, informed by revelation and confirmed by reason and experience, views human stewardship that unlocks the potential in creation for all the earth's inhabitants as good." Development was the cornerstone of the declaration's particular stewardship ethic.[78]

The Cornwall Declaration emphasized in its third concern that some environmental problems are "without foundation or greatly exaggerated." These "unfounded or undue problems" include, according to the statement, global warming, overpopulation and the loss of species. The statement claimed that public policies designed to combat these unfounded problems can "dangerously delay or reverse the economic development necessary to improve not only human life but also human

---

[77] Witham, A8. The ICES and Cornwall Declaration were specifically a response to the National Religious Partnership for the Environment's announcement that it was launching a ten-year sixteen-million dollar campaign. The NRPE was established in 1993 as a coalition comprised of the Evangelical Environmental Network, National Council of Churches, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Coalition on Environment and Jewish Life.

[78] Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship, "Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship," *VERITAS—A Quarterly Journal of Public Policy in Texas* (Summer 2000): 10-11.

stewardship of the environment."[79] Economic development was viewed then as necessary to ensuring environmental stewardship.

Defining its ethical approach to environmental issues, the declaration emphasized that environmental stewardship must meet the "demands of human well being" and "exercise caring dominion over the earth." "Sound theology" and "careful use of scientific methods" were stressed as guides to environmental stewardship. "Economic freedom" was described as a requirement for "sound ecological stewardship" and almost all government regulations were eschewed: "We aspire to a world in which the relationships between stewardship and private property are fully appreciated, allowing people's natural incentive to care for their own property to reduce the need for collective ownership and control of resources and enterprises, and in which collective action, when deemed necessary, takes place at the most local level possible."[80]

The Cornwall Declaration secured the signatures of many conservative religious leaders including Charles Colson of Prison Fellowship Ministries, Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ International, Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association and Jewish theologian Dennis Prager. The declaration was introduced and the formation of the ICES was announced at a April 17, 2000 news conference just days before the 30th anniversary celebration of Earth Day.[81]

Richard Land also signed the Cornwall Declaration and participated in the Washington D.C. news conference. At this media event, Land emphasized the pro-

---

[79] Ibid., 11.

[80] Ibid., 12-13.

[81] "Religious Leaders Announce New Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship; Take the Environmental Movement to Task for Misguided View of God, Man, Nature, *PR Newswire*, April 17, 2000.

development emphasis of the Cornwall Declaration. He explained that humans were given a "divine mandate" per Genesis 2:15 to "till" or develop the earth and "keep" or protect and preserve the earth.[82] Land lamented to Religion News Service that "Unfortunately there are many today who want to stress the preservation mandate and ignore the development mandate."[83] This event and the Cornwall Declaration marked the beginning of the Southern Baptist Convention's relationship with Calvin Beisner.

*American Baptists*

During the summer of 1991, American Baptists became one of the first major denominations to devote an entire resolution to global warming. This resolution warned that global warming could have devastating environmental consequences including, most notably, the inundation of densely populated land. The statement warned that melting polar ice caps and rising sea levels could eventually submerge islands in the South Pacific. Other impacts were mentioned such as increased storm intensity, changes in water conditions and agriculture as well as food production variations. Citing the findings of the Second World Climate Conference, the resolution emphasized that the poor in developing nations would bear the brunt of the impact of human-induced climatic changes.[84]

American Baptists contended that a response to the international environmental concern of global warming was necessary due to Jesus' commandment to "love your

---

[82] Tom Strode, "Religious leaders issue calls for biblical view of ecology," *Baptist Press*, April 18, 2000.

[83] "Evangelicals counter environmental movement," *Western Recorder*, April 25, 2000, 9.

[84] American Baptist Churches USA, "Resolution on Global Warming, 8189, 6/91," in *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995* (Valley Forge, PA, 1996), 1-4.

neighbor as yourself." The resolution urged an expanded understanding of what it means to love one's neighbor: "We must see the whole creation as our neighbor." With this statement, American Baptists offered a less human-centered understanding of that oft-repeated biblical command. "Neighbor" was defined non-literally to include all persons across cultures and from different racial, ethnic and religious groups. But it was also defined now to include the rest of creation including land, water, air as well as plant and animal life.[85]

The resolution concluded with a section calling on American Baptist institutions, churches and individuals to focus on "deepening our biblical understanding of creation" through denominational programs, church-wide activities and personal study. There was plenty of encouragement for American Baptists to study the international issue of global warming and join efforts to combat the problem. Lifestyle changes were advocated. Public transportation and energy efficient practices were offered as ways that American Baptists could "safeguard the world's atmospheric integrity and quality."[86]

The resolution suggested numerous ways that American Baptists could become politically involved. American Baptists were asked to advocate for the passage of legislation to regulate carbon dioxide emissions and mandate higher fuel efficiency. Other suggested legislative responses included anti-deforestation programs and the adoption of an international treaty setting specific goals for greenhouse gas reductions.

---

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

Strict environmental regulations in the United States and international political measures were the primary means that American Baptists sought to respond to global warming.[87]

Several months prior to the adoption of this resolution, a diverse group of religious leaders met in New York City to discuss ecological concerns. This interfaith group included the executives of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish denominations and institutions. Beverly Davidson, president of American Baptist Churches USA, represented the denomination at this historic meeting. The final product of this gathering was the "Statement By Religious Leaders At The Summit On Environment." Twenty-four religious executives signed this document.[88]

The summit statement described the "crisis of the Earth's environment," focusing on predictions that global warming—"generated mainly by the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation"—would change the earth's climate, increase drought in many parts of the world, threaten agriculture, wildlife and the "integrity of natural ecosystems." In addition to global warming, the statement emphasized that population growth posed a problem in already crowded developing nations. These leaders offered their public commitment to work toward the phase-out of ozone-depleting chemicals, preservation of tropical forests, greater energy efficiency, a non-fossil fuel economy and the slow-down of world population growth through economic development and family education programs. The

---

[87] Ibid.

[88] "Statement by Religious Leaders at the Summit on Environment," in *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (New York: Routledge, 2004), 636-639. Richard Land nor any SBC official attended this meeting. Although, Land's predecessor at the Christian Life Commission, Foy Valentine, was a signatory to the statement. As this chapter previously noted, Land did attended the gathering of scientists and religious leaders in 1992 and signed and helped shape the "Mission to Washington" statement. The 1992 meeting that Land attended was a follow-up to this 1991 gathering.

statement stressed that such family education programs were to be on a "strictly voluntary basis."[89]

This group rooted their statement in an environmental ethic of eco-justice, affirming "the indivisibility of social justice and ecological integrity." These leaders declared: "An equitable international economic order is essential for preserving the global environment. Economic equity, racial justice, gender equality and environmental well-being are interconnected and all are essential to peace." To accomplish these lofty goals, the group pledged to mobilize public opinion and work with political and business leaders. These faith leaders also promised to raise awareness about environmental issues within their own religious communities and institutions such as seminaries and denominational entities.[90] This statement signaled the growing awareness of religious groups to the increasingly popular environmental issue of global warming.

In 1997, as global warming was receiving more public attention, American Baptists through their involvement in the Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches helped produce a study resource guide titled *It's God's World: Christians, the Environment, and Climate Change*. This short guide was widely distributed to mainline Protestant congregations across the United States. It featured five study sessions on climate change intended to be used in a bible study group or church school class. This resource guide provided beginner-level information about the climate

[89] Ibid., 637.

[90] Ibid., 637-638.

and global warming. Citing Bible passages, the guide asked many unanswered questions aimed at generating group discussion.[91]

The following year, the Eco-Justice Working Group launched a campaign to lobby for the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. The working group submitted a letter urging ratification to President Clinton and all United States Senators. The letter called the Kyoto Protocol "an important move toward protecting God's children and God's creation." It continued, "We continue to be astonished by the widespread failure to understand that climate change affects not only justice for future generations but justice in the present...the United States has a special responsibility to address the problem of climate change without delay."[92]

Working with other groups such as the Coalition on Environment and Jewish Life, the Eco-Justice Working Group targeted specific Senators in states such as West Virginia and Michigan where coal and auto industries were outspoken in their opposition to the Kyoto Protocol. American Baptist Churches USA was invested in this effort as a high-profile American Baptist layman, Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, was regarded as a "swing vote." Ultimately, this interfaith effort was unsuccessful as the Kyoto Protocol was never ratified. Nonetheless, the campaign did serve to bring greater attention to the relationship between climate change and energy issues.[93]

---

[91] Vera K. White, *It's God's World: Christians, the Environment and Climate Change* (New York: Eco-Justice Working Group, 1997).

[92] Art Toalston, "Global warming campaign launched by National Council of Churches," *Baptist Press*, August 17, 1998, http://www.bpnews.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID=2502 (accessed September 11, 2012).

[93] John Cushman Jr., "Religious Groups Mount a Campaign to Support Pact on Global Warming," *New York Times*, August 15, 1998, A10. See also Laurel Kearns, "Cooking the Truth: Faith, Science, the Market and Global Warming," in *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*, eds. Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller (New York: Fordham University Press, 207), 101.

The campaign also served to highlight on the national stage the refusal of the Southern Baptist Convention to join with mainline Protestant, Catholic and Jewish groups on environmental issues. When the campaign was announced, a spokesperson for the Southern Baptist Convention stated:

> There is considerable debate in the scientific community on the whole issue of global warming, enough to learn that working scientists are not monolithic on the question. The convention itself has not taken a position, and in view of the unsettled science, it seems unlikely that we will take such a position.[94]

The refusal to take part in the campaign signaled the growing divide between conservative evangelicals and other Protestants on this increasingly popular international environmental concern. It also indicated how far apart Southern Baptists had traveled from American Baptists on environmental issues.

Following the 2000 presidential election, the National Council of Churches penned a letter urging outgoing President Bill Clinton to complete negotiations for the Kyoto Protocol during the last days of his presidency. An international conference was held at The Hague, Netherlands on November 13-25 to discuss climate change and the Kyoto Protocol. The NCC's letter was released on November 20 as President Clinton was negotiating the Kyoto Protocol with international leaders. Endorsed by the heads of the twenty-eight member denominations, the letter included the signature of Robert Roberts, the interim General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA. Similar to the 1998 letter to the President and United States Senators, this letter described the Kyoto Protocol as an "important witness to God's redemption of creation and to the importance of protecting God's children and God's creation, now and for future generations." Overall, the letter struck an extremely positive tone of encouragement rather than

[94] Toalston, "Global warming campaign launched."

admonition toward the Clinton Administration. It concluded by pointing out that adoption of the Kyoto Protocol would be a "significant legacy" of Clinton's presidency.[95]

During the first year of George W. Bush's presidency, American Baptists continued to take part in ecumenical and interfaith efforts to secure ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Less than five months after Bush's inauguration, an interfaith coalition of mainline Protestant and Jewish leaders that again included interim General Secretary Robert Roberts issued a public statement urging ratification. The letter declared, "Preventing climate change is a preeminent expression of faithfulness to our Creator God." Global warming was portrayed as a "scientific fact." Noting that the United States generated 22 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions while accounting for only 5 percent of the world's population, the letter characterized the nation's energy policy as a "cause of global climate change." The United States, according to these faith leaders, has a "moral responsibility to lead a transition to a new sustainable global energy system." While emphasizing the themes of conservation and stewardship, justice, and responsibility to future generations, the letter failed to propose or offer support for any specific public policies beyond ratification.[96]

As a follow-up to this letter, the Eco-Justice Working Group and the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life teamed up to lobby against President Bush's energy plan to remove and weaken environmental regulations and construct 1,300 new coal-fired power plants. President Bush's plan—which he unveiled in May 2001—called for

---

[95] National Council of Churches, "Heads of Communion Letter to President Clinton on Global Warming," National Council of Churches, November 20, 2000, http://www.ncccusa.org/news/00news 104a.html (accessed September 12, 2012).

[96] "'Let There Be Light' (Gen 1:3): An Interfaith Call for Energy Conservation and Climate Justice," Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, May 18, 2001, http://coejl.org/resources /openletter/ (accessed September 12, 2012). See also "Faith-Based Groups Call for Energy Conservation and Climate Justice," *Environmental News Network*, May 24, 2001.

increased oil and gas drilling on federal lands including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Naturally, these deregulation proposals were not well-received by American Baptists and other faith groups that desired even greater environmental regulations.[97]

The two groups spearheaded another letter. This letter was sent to President Bush and every member of the United States Senate. Unlike the statement from the previous year, this letter focused on specific public policies. It called for increased fuel efficiency and support for hybrid-electric and other clean technology research and development as well as increased funding for rail and metropolitan mass transit. Meanwhile, the groups voiced opposition to opposition oil and gas drilling on public lands "important to the traditional cultures of indigenous peoples." President Bush's proposal to allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was strongly rejected. Not only were specific proposals rejected, the group also opposed the argument behind Bush's energy plan that increased drilling could alleviate the nation's energy challenges to any significant extent. The group argued that conservation provides "much greater benefits that are more permanent, rather than a modest and short-lived increase in oil supply."[98] This was a rebuttal to members of the Bush Administration such as Vice President Richard Cheney who stated that "Conservation may be a sign of personal virtue, but it is not a sufficient basis for a sound, comprehensive energy policy."[99]

---

[97] Rich Heffern, "The energy wake-up call," *National Catholic Reporter*, June 15, 2001, 10.

[98] "Jewish and Christian Leaders Join in Support of Bold Energy Conservation Program," Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, February 26, 2002, http://coejl.org/resources/moral reflection/ (accessed September 12, 2012).

[99] Heffern, 10.

Towards the end of President Bush's first term, American Baptists endorsed bipartisan legislation authored by Senators John McCain and Joe Lieberman to curb greenhouse gas emissions. In 2003, McCain and Lieberman introduced the "Climate Stewardship Act" to require corporations to cut carbon dioxide emissions to 2000 levels within a decade and create a market for companies to buy and sell pollution allowance credits. This plan was modeled after an acid rain trading program that was part of the Clean Air Act of 1990. In a 43-55 vote in October 2003, the "Climate Stewardship Act" failed to pass in the U.S. Senate. However, McCain and Lieberman reintroduced the bipartisan legislation in the spring of 2004, seeking to secure it passage as an amendment to another bill.[100]

Weeks later, a group of scientists and religious leaders including Roy Medley, General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA, released a statement pressuring Congress to pass the Climate Stewardship Act. The statement noted that "Highly regarded institutions in the international scientific community have reached a broad consensus on causes and potential consequences of climate change." Among the consequences cited were more frequent heat waves, drought, torrential rains, floods, global sea level rise and a significant reduction in biodiversity. Citing the shared value of the "protection of future generations," the statement offered its explicit support for the Climate Stewardship Act calling it "a way forward and an opportunity for renewed resolve." The statement concluded with a plea to the senators to "step back from

[100] Brian DeBose, "Senators revisit global warming; McCain-Lieberman legislation is introduced," *The Washington Times*, March 31, 2004, A06. See also Andrew Freedman, "Abrupt Climate Change Bill Heads to Senate Floor," *Environment and Energy Daily*, March 10, 2004.

partisanship and consider what is needed here for the common goods of humankind and our planet home."[101]

American Baptists also confronted climate change in the corporate arena through their continued participation in the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. In late 2002, the ICCR targeted General Motors and Ford Motor Company, filing shareholder resolutions requesting that the automakers reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their vehicles and factories. The ICCR took aim at these two corporations because they had lobbied against legislative proposals at the state and national levels to cut vehicle emissions.[102]

Two months later, ICCR members submitted shareholder resolutions to five investor-owned utility corporations including American Electric Power, Southern Company, Cinergy, Xcel Energy and TXU. These corporations were dubbed the "Filthy Five" due to their role as the five largest carbon dioxide utility emitters in the United States.[103] The TXU resolution requested that the corporation report to its shareholders on the economic risks associated with its carbon dioxide and other emissions and the benefits of reducing these emissions. This particular resolution received 24 percent of the shareholder vote and an identical resolution submitted to American Electric Power

---

[101] "Earth's Climate Embraces Us All: A Plea from Religion and Science for Action on Global Climate Change," The National Religious Partnership For The Environment, May 2004, http://www.nrpe .org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=11&Itemid=1181 (accessed September 12, 2012).

[102] "Green, religious shareholders ask GM, Ford to cut emissions," *Agence France Presse*, December 12, 20012.

[103] "Investors File Proxy Resolutions With 5 Utilities on CO2 Exposure," *Electric Utility Week*, January 20, 2003, 2.

received 26.9 percent. These totals were considered a success as similar global warming resolutions during the previous year averaged just 18 percent.[104]

The ICCR proceeded to target smaller oil and gas corporations. In 2004, American Baptist Churches USA filed a global warming shareholder resolution. The United Methodist Church and an order of Catholic nuns, the Sisters of St. Dominic, also submitted resolutions in 2004. While not successful, these publicized resolutions served to increase the pressure on energy corporations to set goals for limiting emissions. The following year, the ICCR achieved a victory when six energy corporation executives pledged to track emissions and set reduction goals and take other measures to combat climate change.[105] Again in 2006, several additional corporations including Lowes and Liberty Property Trust reached a similar agreement with the ICCR to focus on reducing emissions and increasing energy efficiency[106]

*Southern Baptists Revisited*

The relationship between Southern Baptists and Calvin Beisner became much closer as climate change became a central issue of American politics following the 2004 presidential election. Evangelicals were also beginning to take notice, giving climate change the same level of attention that mainline Protestants had fifteen years prior. In 2005, Beisner founded a new organization called the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance to

---

[104] "Strong Showing on Global Warming Resolution at TXU is 'Major Victory' For Religious Shareholder Activities," *PR Newswire*, May 16, 2003.

[105] "Climate Change: Shareholders pull resolutions after companies promise change," *Greenwire*, March 18, 2005. These six companies included Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, Apache Corporation and Chevron Texaco Corporation. In return, the ICCR members agreed to withdraw pending shareholder resolutions.

[106] "One in Five ICCR Sponsored Proxy Resolutions Withdrawn Because of Corporate Cooperation Resolutions At Lowes, Liberty Property Trust, Simon Property Groups," *Financial Wire*, June 26, 2006.

implement the principles of the Cornwall Declaration. A first order of business for the ISA was to pen a letter urging the National Association of Evangelicals not to take an official position on global warming. The letter read, "Global warming is not a consensus issue, and our love for the Creator and respect for His creation does not require us to take a position." The ISA letter clearly reflected an emerging sentiment that global warming could serve as a wedge issue to divide conservative evangelicals. Representing the Southern Baptist Convention, Richard Land signed the ISA letter. He did so despite the fact that the SBC is not a member body of the National Association of Evangelicals.[107]

The same year, Land's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission began to devote more attention to environmental issues after a five-year period of relative silence on the subject. In August 2005, the ERLC released a policy statement on global warming. Following in the footsteps of the Cornwall Declaration which dismissed global warming as a legitimate environmental concern, the ERLC statement devoted extensive space to do the same. Acknowledging that the earth is indeed warming, the statement asserted "Many do, however, dispute its causes." The ERLC statement argued that then current climate data suggested that global warming is part of a cyclical pattern and is not human-induced. The statement insisted that the "scientific data is simply not conclusive enough concerning the human effect on climate change to take rash action on limiting carbon emissions." Like the Cornwall Declaration, the ERLC statement advocated that a proper "Christian view" of global warming must be firmly rooted in "theology and reason."

[107] Interfaith Stewardship Alliance, "A Letter to the National Association of Evangelicals on the Issue of Global Warming," http://www.interfaithstewardship.org (accessed August 28, 2012). Signatories include influential leaders of Religious Right organizations including James Dobson of Focus on the Family, D. James Kennedy, John Hagee, Louis Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition, Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association, David Barton of Wallbuilders, and Joel Belz of World Magazine.

However, aside from a single reference to Genesis 2:15, the statement failed to articulate the theological foundation for this anti-regulation perspective.[108]

In February 2006, an alliance of evangelical leaders calling themselves the Evangelical Climate Initiative released a declaration titled "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action." Among the declaration's eighty-six signatories were prominent academics, megachurch pastors, and thirty-nine presidents of evangelical colleges. Notable Southern Baptist signatories included popular pastor and author Rick Warren and Timothy George, founding Dean of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School. While several presidents of Southern Baptist colleges signed the declaration, no denominational official endorsed the evangelical document.[109]

This controversial declaration acknowledged that evangelical leaders had not yet given much attention to climate change. It even revealed that many of the signatories "required considerable convincing before becoming persuaded that climate change is a real problem." Now convinced, these leaders offered four "simple but urgent claims" to their fellow evangelicals to consider. These claims affirmed the reality of human-induced climate change and stressed that the consequences of climate change will be severe and disproportionately impact the poor. Consequently, evangelicals—including churches and individuals—have a moral obligation to respond and take action.[110]

---

[108] Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, "Policy Statement on Global Warming," August 1, 2005, http://faithandfamily.com/article/policy-statement-on-global-warming/ (accessed August 28, 2012).

[109] Evangelical Climate Initiative, "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action," http://christiansandclimate.org/learn/call-to-action (accessed August 28, 2012). See also Bob Allen, "Evangelicals Divide Over Global Warming, *EthicsDaily.com*, February 9, 2006, http://www.ethicsdaily.com/evangelicals-divide-over-global-warming-cms-6949 (accessed August 29, 2012).

[110] Evangelical Climate Initiative, "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action."

This "Call to Action" statement also urged federal legislation that would require reductions in carbon dioxide emissions through "cost-effective, market-based mechanisms"—a phrase lifted from a 2005 bipartisan United States Senate resolution authored by New Mexico Senators Pete V. Domenici, a Republican, and Jeff Bingaman, a Democrat. This U.S. Senate resolution called for regulatory environmental measures such as a cap and trade program, a system in which industries would buy or trade permits to emit greenhouse gases. The ECI's statement commended the Domenici-Bingaman resolution and encouraged other senators to fulfill their pledge to enact legislation requiring carbon dioxide emissions to be reduced. In conjunction with the release of this declaration, the Evangelical Climate Initiative launched a multi-state television and radio advertisement campaign in states with influential legislators. Additionally, these leaders announced their intention to launch informational campaigns in evangelical churches and host educational events at evangelical colleges.[111]

The SBC's news agency *Baptist Press* was quick to point out that the ECI declaration lacked the signatures of prominent conservative evangelical leaders like James Dobson and Charles Colson as well as Southern Baptist officials. *Baptist Press* noted that the then current SBC president nor any former SBC president signed the declaration. Further, none of the six SBC seminary presidents endorsed the ECI. Richard Land explained that he did not sign the declaration because of his belief that doing so would be "unethical and irresponsible for me to sign such a statement giving the impression that there is a consensus among Southern Baptists on this issue when there is

[111] Ibid. See also Laurie Goodstein, "Evangelical Leaders Join Global Warming Initiative," *The New York Times*, February 8, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/08/national/08warm.htm?_r =3&oref=slogin&pagewanted=all (accessed October 24, 2008).

clearly not one." Clearly, Land did not apply this same standard when choosing to endorse the Cornwall Declaration in 2000 which rejected global warming as a legitimate environmental problem.[112]

Responding to the ECI declaration, Southern Baptists adopted a resolution titled "On Environmentalism and Evangelicals" just a few short months later. This was the denomination's first environmental resolution in sixteen years. The resolution warned that environmentalism was "threatening to become a wedge issue to divide the evangelical community and further distract its members from the priority of the Great Commission." In addition to making the accusation that "some in our culture" have "made environmentalism into a neo-pagan religion," this strongly-worded resolution made the news-grabbing assertion that "the scientific community is divided on the effects of mankind's impact on the environment." Public policies were encouraged that "seek to improve the environment based on sound scientific and technological research." The resolution also affirmed conservation and preservation of natural resources "while respecting ownership and property rights."[113]

Just one month later, the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance released a lengthy 12,000-word point-by-point rebuttal to the claims made in the Evangelical Climate Initiative declaration. This document titled "A Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Response to Global Warming," was initially endorsed by a coalition of more than 100 evangelical leaders including numerous Southern Baptist

---

[112] Tom Strode, "Group of evangelicals issues global warming stance; several notable names are absent," *Baptist Press*, February 9, 2006, http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=22617 (accessed August 28, 2012).

[113] Southern Baptist Convention, "On Environmentalism and Evangelicals," June 2006, http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID-1159 (accessed August 29, 2012).

academics as well as ERLC Vice-President Barrett Duke. Prominent Religious Right leaders such as James Dobson and Richard Land were not asked to sign the document. Beisner explained that he sought to include a mix of evangelical leaders rather than the "huge names in the Christian constellation."[114]

Written primarily by Calvin Beisner, the "Call to Truth" statement offered conclusions completely at odds with the ECI declaration. First, the statement asserted that global warming will not have catastrophic consequences for humanity, even the poor. Instead, according to the statement, global warming will have "moderate and mixed (not only harmful but also helpful)" consequences in the foreseeable future. Second, the statement argued that natural causes likely account for a large part of the earth's warming while human emissions of greenhouse gases are only "a minor and insignificant contributor to its causes." Third, the reduction of these emissions, according to the statement, would result in an "insignificant impact on the quantity and duration of global warming and would not significantly reduce alleged harmful effects." Fourth, the statement stressed that government regulation of emissions would "cause greater harm than good to humanity." In contrast to the ECI declaration, the ISA's "Call to Truth" concluded that legislation regulating emissions would actually hurt the poor in developed and especially developing nations.[115]

From this "Call to Truth," statement the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance (renamed in 2007 the "Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation") formed a task force

---

[114] Tom Strode, "Coalition of more than 100 evangelicals presents alternative on global warming," *Baptist Press*, July 31, 2006, http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=23708 (accessed August 28, 2012).

[115] Interfaith Stewardship Alliance, "A Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Response to Global Warming," http://www.cornwallalliance.org/docs/a-call-to-truth-prudence-and-protection-of-the-poor.pdf (accessed August 28, 2012).

comprised of conservative public policy specialists. With the ERLC's Barrett Duke as co-chair, the task force worked to propose policy recommendations based on the principles outlined in Beisner's Cornwall Declaration and "Call to Truth" statement.[116] At the press conference announcing the task force, Duke emphasized, "Nature is here to serve our needs. We're not here to serve nature's."[117] Barrett's comment implicitly affirmed the continued opposition of Southern Baptists to any theology or ethic that remotely resembled New Age beliefs.

Just a month after the SBC's ethics agency helped launch the Cornwall Alliance's environment policy task force, Southern Baptist messengers meeting in San Antonio, Texas, adopted a resolution on global warming. A rather lengthy resolution that echoed many of the points made in Beisner's "Call to Truth" declaration, "On Global Warming" described the rise in global temperatures as cyclical. The resolution asserted that the "scientific community is divided regarding the extent to which humans are responsible or recent global warming" and stressed that "many scientists reject the idea of catastrophic human-induced global warming." The credibility of the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was challenged and characterized as a political rather than scientific organization. Natural causes such as El Nino were claimed to be "more significant in climate change than CO2 emissions."[118]

The resolution rejected government regulations mandating limits on carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, depicting them as "very dangerous" because

---

[116] "Coalition to Advocate Environmental Balance," *SBC Life*, June 2007, 1-2.

[117] Katherine Boyle, "Climate: Evangelical coalition says emission curbs could hurt poor," *E&E News*, May 2, 2007.

[118] Southern Baptist Convention, “On Global Warming,” http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1171 (accessed August 30, 2012).

they could lead to "major economic hardships worldwide." The resolution urged Southern Baptists to "proceed cautiously in the human-induced global warming debate in light of conflicting scientific research" and to only support public policies that ensure "an appropriate balance between care for the environment, effects on economies and impact on the poor."[119] During the floor debate over the resolution, messengers voted to remove a phrase that encouraged government funding to find answers to the cause of global warming. Messengers also voted to remove a second phrase pledging Southern Baptist support for "economically responsible government initiatives and funding to locate and implement viable energy alternatives to oil, reducing our dependence on foreign oil and decreasing the amount of CO2 (carbon dioxide) and other greenhouse gas emissions."[120] As with the 1983 resolution, Southern Baptists were again on record denying that the government should play an active role in solving environmental problems or perceived problems.

After the resolution passed, Wiley Drake, the SBC's Second Vice-President, summarized the statement's message to the media as "We don't believe in global warming."[121] Barrett Duke, who co-authored the statement, explained that Southern Baptists "do not deny that there has been a recent warming trend in average global temperatures....But we think if the data is being misinterpreted, and policies are being

---

[119] Ibid.

[120] Carla Hinton, "Baptist environment stance set; some global-warming language removed from final document," *The Oklahoman*, March 15, 2008, E3.

[121] Bob Allen, "Southern Baptists Reject Scientific Consensus About Global Warming," *EthicsDaily.com*, June 14, 2007, http://www.ethicsdaily.com/southern-baptists-reject-scientific-consensus-about-global-warming-cms-9058 (accessed September 1, 2012).

implemented to reduce the human contributions, those policies are bound to drive up the cost of goods and services for poor and underdeveloped parts of the world."[122]

Less than a week before Southern Baptists adopted this resolution, Russell Moore, dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, testified before the United States Senate on the subject of global warming. Moore testified:

> Southern Baptists and other evangelicals do not deny that there is climate change, or even that some of this climate change may be human-caused. Many of us though, are not yet convinced that the extent of human responsibility is as it is portrayed by some global warming activists, or that the expensive and dramatic solutions called for will be able to ultimately transform the situation.[123]

Moore raised questions about the impact of government regulation on the working class in America and the poor in developing nations. He emphasized that Southern Baptists, while affirming environmental stewardship, "understand that divine revelation does not give us a blueprint for environmental policy."[124]

Moore submitted for the congressional record several documents in addition to his prepared testimony. These appendixes included the remarks of Calvin Beisner at an April 2007 conference on climate change in Vatican City. Moore also included Beisner's lengthy "Call to Truth" declaration along with a 2006 open letter from the Interfaith

---

[122] Eric Gorski, "Baptists question human role in global warming," *Associated Press*, June 14, 2007, http://www.usatoday.com/weather/climate/globalwarming/2007-06-13-baptists-warming-vote_N.htm (accessed August 30, 2012).

[123] United States Congress, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, "Statement of Russell D. Moore, Dean, School of Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," 110-1092 - An Examination of the View of Religious Organizations Regarding Global Warming, June 7, 2007, 123.

[124] Ibid., 124. In addition to Moore's testimony, Republican Senator James Inhofe of Oklahoma read a portion of a letter from Barrett Duke during the hearing which expressed similar concerns about climate change policy proposals and their impact on the poor. Tom Strode, "Baptist adds caution over global warming," *Baptist Press*, June 11, 2007, http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=25825 (accessed August 30, 2012).

Stewardship Alliance to the signatories of the Evangelical Climate Initiative.[125] These appendixes further reveal the influence of Calvin Beisner on the environmental positions of the Southern Baptist Convention. Donald McDaniel confirmed this influence in his dissertation. Citing ERLC fellow and seminary professor Daniel Heimbach, McDaniel described Beisner as the "main expert that America's largest Protestant denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, depends upon for its major publications and presentations" on environmental subjects. McDaniel noted that "When the SBC makes an informed opinion on environmental matters...[Richard] Land and [Barrett] Duke ensure that its content will mainly be informed by Cal Beisner and his Dominionist ecology."[126]

Nine months after the SBC adopted its global warming resolution and Moore testified before the United States Senate, a group of prominent Southern Baptists released "A Southern Baptist Declaration on the Environment and Climate Change." This declaration was spearheaded by Jonathan Merritt, a twenty-five year-old seminary student and son of a former SBC president. Included among the forty-six original signatories were past and present presidents of the denomination, presidents of Southern Baptist colleges, universities and state conventions, megachurch pastors and a president of a SBC seminary.[127]

Emphasizing the "deep and lasting commitment" of Southern Baptists to opposing abortion rights and same-sex marriage, the declaration stressed that the SBC is "not a

---

[125] "Statement of Russell D. Moore," 143-184.

[126] McDaniel, 81-82.

[127] "Southern Baptist group shifts position on climate," *Christian Century*, April 8, 2009, http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2008-04/southern-baptist-group-shifts-position-climate (accessed September 1, 2012). For a complete list of signatories, see Southern Baptist Environment and Climate Initiative, http://baptistcreationcare.org/ (accessed August 1, 2012).

single-issue body." The declaration lamented that the denomination's previous environmental engagement had been "too timid, failing to produce a unified moral voice." It continued, "Our cautious response to these issues in the face of mounting evidence may be seen by the world as uncaring, reckless and ill-informed. We can do better." While government action was commended, unlike the Evangelical Climate Initiative, this Southern Baptist declaration made no specific public policy recommendations.[128]

Similar to the format of the Evangelical Climate Initiative, the declaration offered four main points. First, humans have a responsibility to be stewards of the environment and acknowledge their "contributions to environmental degradation." Describing such degradation as "sinful," the signatories vowed to "take an unwavering stand to preserve and protect" God's creation. Second, the declaration reasoned that it is "prudent to address global climate change." On the question of whether climate change is primarily human-induced, the signatories cautiously concluded that "If consensus means unanimity, there is not a consensus regarding the anthropogenic nature of climate change or the severity of the problem." However, the group noted that there existed a "general agreement among those engaged with this issue in the scientific community." In light of this "general agreement," the group determined that while the "claims of science are neither infallible nor unanimous, they are substantial and cannot be dismissed out of hand on either scientific or theological grounds." Consequently, the declaration asserted that

[128] Southern Baptist Environment & Climate Initiative, "A Southern Baptist Declaration on the Environment and Climate Change," http://baptistcreationcare.org/node/1 (accessed September 1, 2012).

proactive step needed to be taken and responsibility assumed by humans for their contributions to climate change—"however great or small."[129]

On the third point, the statement stressed that the theological commitments of Southern Baptists demand environmental stewardship. The fourth and final point called upon individuals, churches, communities and governments to take action:

> We realize that the primary impetus for prudent action must come from the will of the people, families and those in the private sector. Held to this standard of common good, action by government is often needed to assure the health and well-being of all people. We pledge, therefore, to give serious consideration to responsible policies that acceptably address the conditions set forth in this declaration.[130]

This government regulation-friendly stance stood in stark contrast to the official position of the Southern Baptist Convention as reflected in the 1983 and 2006 environmental resolutions.

The declaration's widespread media coverage infuriated denominational leaders especially the SBC's ethics agency. The *New York Times*' headline read: "Southern Baptists Back a Shift on Climate Change." *CNN*'s headline reported: "Southern Baptist leaders shift position on Climate Change." *The Tennessean*'s front-page story claimed: "Baptists convert on global warming."[131] Almost immediately Baptist Press, the denomination's news service, published an article intended to correct these reports titled "Seminary student's climate change project is not SBC's." The environmental initiative

---

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Robert Parham, "Headlines Mislead Public About SBC Shift on Global Warming," *EthicsDaily.com*, March 11, 2008, http://www.ethicsdaily.com/article_detail.cfm?AID-10198 (September 1, 2012).

was described as merely a "student project" of a "25-year old student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary."[132]

ERLC president Richard Land released a statement expressing his rationale for not signing the statement. He explained that it would be "misleading and unethical of the ERLC to promote a position at variance with the convention's expressly stated position." Land took issue with the characterization of past environmental engagement as being "too timid."[133] Calvin Beisner also responded with a statement. He stated, "This declaration, though sincere, is being used to give the false impression of a major split among Southern Baptists over global warming." Beisner blasted the declaration as being "more concerned with newsworthiness than substance."[134] David Hankins, Executive Director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, lamented in his public critique that the declaration "did not appear to take into account any of the analyses produced by the Cornwall Alliance."[135]

Over the following week, Baptist Press published an additional thirteen stories that criticized the declaration.[136] One former president of the SBC described the

---

[132] "Seminary student's climate change project is not SBC's," *Baptist Press*, March 10, 2008, http://baptistpress.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID-27582 (accessed September 1, 2012). Several Southern Baptist leaders signed the statement and then had their names removed before the statement was made public. A few others such as theologian Malcolm Yarnell had their names removed after the declaration was publicized. See Brian Kaylor, "Organizers Defend Environmental Statement," *EthicsDaily.com*, March 12, 2008, http://ethicsdaily.com/organizers-defend-environmental-statement-cms-12373 (accessed September 2, 2012).

[133] "Seminary student's climate change project is not SBC's."

[134] Calvin Beisner, "Perceived Southern Baptist Split on Global Warming Evaporating," Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, http://www.cornwallalliance.org/press/read/perceived-southern-baptist-split-on-global-warming-evaporating/ (accessed September 2, 2012).

[135] David Hankins, "Why I will not sign," *Baptist Press*, March 14, 2008, http://bpnews.net/BPFirstPerson.asp?ID=27636 (accessed September 1, 2012).

[136] Joe Westbury, "Younger conservative leaders need a voice in SBC," *The Christian Index*, April 10, 2008, http://www.christianindex.org/4329.article (accessed September 2, 2012).

denomination's response to Merritt's declaration as "a little heavy handed" and warned that if there is not room for a healthy debate in the SBC, younger Southern Baptists will ultimately leave.[137] Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, also expressed concern at the over-reaction" of the declaration's critics. He explained, "Some Christians have a problem separating conservative theology from conservative politics. The two are not always the same."[138]

Shortly after the declaration made headlines, the ERLC along with the Cornwall Alliance and several Religious Right groups including the Family Research Council unveiled an environmental campaign. This campaign sought the signatures of one-million Christians who endorsed a "biblical" view of the environment that dismissed concerns about global warming. The "We Get It!" campaign's press-release stated that "knee-jerk reactions with good intentions can harm more than help."[139] The "We Get It!" campaign declaration read:

> Our stewardship of creation must be based on Biblical principles and factual evidence. We face important environmental challenges, but must be cautious of claims that our planet is in peril from speculative dangers like man-made global warming.[140]

In a statement, Richard Land cited a poll which showed that less than one-third of evangelicals believed that global warming is a major problem. He added: "You wouldn't

---

[137] Ibid.

[138] Joe Westbury, "Seminary president lauds student's courage," *The Christian Index*, April 10, 2008, http://www.christianindex.org/4327.article (accessed September 1, 2012).

[139] "'We Get It' Campaign Kicks Off Campaign for a Million Signatures," Institute on Religion and Democracy, May 15, 2008, http://www.we-get-it.org/press/Press_Release_-_IRD.pdf (accessed September 1, 2012).

[140] We Get It! Coalition, "The WeGetIt.org Declaration," http://we-get-it.org/declaration/ (accessed September 1, 2012).

know that from the news headlines. It's time to set the record straight, and the 'We Get It' campaign is just what's needed."[141]

The ERLC also joined up with Beisner's Cornwall Alliance to release a twenty-page document called "The Cornwall Stewardship Agenda." Co-authored by Barrett Duke, the agenda outlined a detailed set of public policy recommendations.[142] Based on free market principles and a deregulation philosophy, the agenda declared: "Therefore, environmental policies should harness human creative potential by expanding political and economic freedom, instead of imposing draconian restrictions or seeking to reduce the 'human burden' on the natural world." The agenda continued. "Suppressing human liberty and productivity in the name of environmental protection is antithetical to the principles of stewardship and counterproductive to the environment." With regard to climate change policy proposals, the agenda contended that "Prudent stewardship will avoid siren calls to action on speculative problems that are based on politicized science or media-driven hype, focusing instead on well-understood and well-argued evidence."[143] The agenda also endorsed the "prudent use of the pesticide DDT as a means to control malaria." This position best reflects the wholesale opposition of Beisner and the Cornwall Alliance to popular environmentalism. It is fitting that this environmental ideology—appropriately described as anti-environmentalism—encourages the use of

---

[141] Bob Allen, "Christian Right Leaders Push Back Against Concern for Global Warming," *EthicsDaily.com*, May 16, 2008, http://www.ethicsdaily.com/christian-right-leaders-push-back-against-concern-for-global-warming-cms-12657 (accessed September 1, 2012).

[142] Mark Kelly, "Cornwall Alliance issues climate change agenda," *Baptist Press*, April 17, 2008, http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=27849 (accessed September 2, 2012).

[143] Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, "The Cornwall Stewardship Agenda," April 17, 2008, http://www.cornwallalliance.org/docs/cornwall-stewardship-agenda.pdf (accessed September 1, 2012).

DDT, a pesticide whose effects on human health and the environment, as exposed by Rachel Carson, helped launch the modern environmental movement.

The SBC acted on this agenda just weeks later when the ERLC sent out an "action alert" to Southern Baptists urging them to contact their senators to oppose the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act of 2007.[144] Similar to the failed Climate Stewardship Act (2003), the Climate Security Act sought to combat global warming by regulating the greenhouse gas emissions of corporations through a "cap-and-trade" system. This system would require corporations to "cap" their carbon dioxide emissions in 2012 by four percent below 2005 emissions levels. Long-term, corporations would have to reduce emissions levels more drastically. Companies unable to meet this "cap" would be allowed to purchase the right to pollute called "carbon credits." This "trade" element allowed companies to buy and sell credits within a government regulated market.[145]

In the ERLC's action alert, Richard Land warned that the Climate Security Act would have "devastating consequences." He painted a frightful image for his fellow Southern Baptists. Land claimed that the bill would cause electricity prices to increase 40 percent within a decade and result in the loss of 1.8 million jobs in that time. Stressing that the poor in both the United States and around the world would suffer the most, Land concluded, "This is a price too high for a policy based on science disputed more and more each day by thousands of scientists and climatologists."[146] Less than a

---

[144] Richard Land, "Action Alert: Tell Senate to Reject Climate Change Bill that Would Hurt Poor, Economy," The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, June 2, 2008, http://erlc.com/article/tell-senate-to-reject-climate-change-bill-that-would-hurt-poor-economy/ (accessed September 12, 2012).

[145] Bob Keefe, "Heated debate likely over bill to cut carbon," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 1, 2008, 5F.

[146] Land, "Action Alert."

week later, the Climate Security Act was defeated. The legislation fell twelve votes short of the 60 votes needed to cut off a Republican filibuster.[147]

American Baptists, however, backed the Climate Security Act, voicing their support for the "strongest possible climate legislation" in April 2008. In a letter spearheaded by the Baptist Center for Ethics, a diverse group of Baptist leaders called on the United States Senate to pass legislation that would reduce carbon emissions by 15-20 percent by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050. Like the SBC's "action alert," these Baptists grounded its rationale in concern for the poor. That is where the similarities stop, however. These Baptists contended that the poor "stand to suffer the most" from the consequences of climate change. The letter urged the passage of strong legislation that "recognizes the needs and burdens of low-income and working families in the United States and around the world." Numerous American Baptist pastors signed the letter along with several key denominational leaders such as the executive directors of National Ministries, International Ministries and the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board. The General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA, Roy Medley, also signed the letter.[148] The public positions of these two denominations on the Climate Security Act revealed that little actual common ground existed between Southern Baptists and American Baptists on environmental public policy in 2008.

---

[147] "The heat goes on; Congress' shelving of legislation to combat climate change fuels a prime time campaign issue," *Houston Chronicle*, June 10, 2008, 8.

[148] Baptist Center for Ethics, "Baptist Letter to United States Senate on Climate Change Legislation," *EthicsDaily.com*, April 28, 2008, http://ethicsdaily.com/photos/pdf_senate.pdf (accessed September 12, 2012).

## *Comparative Analysis and Conclusion*

### *Introduction*

The pace of change within the Southern Baptist Convention throughout the 1990s and 2000s was incredibly rapid. What began in the 1970s as a theological controversy over the nature of the Bible and how it should be interpreted quickly transformed into a full-fledged culture war. Southern Baptist fundamentalists demanded that the nation's largest Protestant denomination affirm a particular conservative political and theological orthodoxy. Within a mere decade, the SBC had flip-flopped on almost every major social issue of the day. Once supportive of abortion rights, at least in certain circumstances, the SBC, under its new conservative leadership, become a thoroughly "pro-life" denomination that rejected the right to an abortion and supported a constitutional ban on abortion. The SBC went from being an ardent proponent of the Supreme Court's controversial prayer and bible rulings to endorsing state-sponsored classroom prayer in the form of a constitutional amendment. The denomination's view of gender shifted significantly too, moving from an egalitarian perspective that championed political proposals such as the Equal Rights Amendment to a complementarian viewpoint that outlined specific roles for each gender and prohibited women from serving as pastor and teaching the Bible to men. These fast and immense changes certainly help provide context to the SBC's changes on environmental issues and adoption of an entirely new environmentalism in the third wave period.[149]

[149] Historian Barry Hankins has carefully described these rapid changes with a separate chapter devoted to each issue mentioned above. See Barry Hankins, *Uneasy in Babylon: Southern Baptist conservatives and American culture* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2002).

*Ethics*

During the 1980s, as the previous chapter detailed, Southern Baptists were in the process of adopting a new environmental ethic. When conservatives replaced moderates in denominational leadership positions, the SBC's environmental engagement began to look different. In 1983, debate sparked by conservatives over an environmental resolution authored by progressive activist William Finlator led to "reverence for nature" being replaced with "regard for nature" on the basis that reverence implied nature worship. This small-wording change suggested that Southern Baptist conservatives were planning to distance the denomination from the environmental engagement of the 1960s and 1970s that promoted "reverence for nature."

Southern Baptist conservatives continued down this path in subsequent decades. Calling upon pastors and laity to develop an environmental theology in the lead up to Earth Day 1990, Richard Land warned that Christians must be careful not to "idolize creation."[150] Land and other conservative leaders were undoubtedly concerned that environmental engagement could morph into New Age nature worship. Fears of New Age influence were real and widespread among the new conservative leadership. While one might dismiss the conspiratorial issues of the *Southern Baptist Journal* as merely the misguided opinions of one person, it is difficult to dismiss two denominational resolutions devoted to New Age philosophy. Adopted in 1988 and 2000, these resolutions confirm that much of the environmental engagement of Southern Baptist conservatives was motivated by a desire to confront and counter perceived New Age influences in popular environmentalism.

---

[150] Lackey, 5-6.

This emphasis on the New Age movement is consistent with the effort of conservatives to eradicate the denomination of perceived liberalism. Countering New Age philosophy became a central component of the SBC's environmental ethic in the 1990s. It remained central to the denomination's ethic throughout the following decade as well. At a 2007 press conference Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission Vice-President Barrett Duke reminded his audience that "Nature is here to serve our needs. We're not here to serve nature's."[151]

Southern Baptist conservatives continued to use the language of stewardship. Quite clearly, their stewardship ethic was distinct from the stewardship ethic promoted by Southern Baptist leaders and in denominational publications throughout the previous decades. At the CLC's conference on the environment in 1991, Richard Land explained, "As stewards of His property, we are responsible for protecting His creation."[152] When Richard Land signed Calvin Beisner's Cornwall Declaration in 2000, he articulated a simple environmental theology. Citing Genesis 2:15, Land stated that humans were given a "preservation mandate" and "development mandate."[153] Land contended that the environmental movement had ignored this divine mandate to develop the earth. Southern Baptist conservatives then—as evidenced throughout their strong alliance with Calvin Beisner and the Cornwall Alliance—defined biblical stewardship to prioritize development over preservation. This was a complete reversal from the denomination's previous emphasis on preservation and conservation.

---

[151] Boyle, "Climate: Evangelical coalition says emission curbs could hurt poor."

[152] Land, "Overview: Beliefs and Behaviors," 24-25.

[153] "Evangelicals counter environmental movement," 9.

While Southern Baptist conservatives failed to put forth a well-developed environmental theology, their alliance with Calvin Beisner and support of the Cornwall Alliance reveals a denomination at home with Beisner's particular stewardship ethic. For Beisner, the sole purpose of nature is to serve humans. Consequently, Beisner defined stewardship in terms of economic development, insisting that "Humility applied to environmental stewardship should lead us, in light of the vast complexity of human society and the earth's ecosystems, to hesitate considerably at the notion that we know enough about them to manage them."[154] This type of stewardship had little in common with the stewardship of the previous era which held that humans had a divine responsibility to manage the earth's resources in a careful and unselfish manner. The development-focused stewardship of Beisner and Land was indeed at odds with this earlier unselfish stewardship that preached both conservation and preservation and made little mention of the need for further development.

With an already developed environmental theology and ethic, American Baptists continued throughout the 1990s and 2000s to focus on environmental issues in the public square. However, American Baptists still emphasized their eco-justice ethic during these decades. For example, the denomination's environmental policy statement highlighted the importance of a proper understanding of the doctrine of creation as well as the centrality of stewardship, interdependence and covenant to the eco-justice ethic.

Eco-justice maintained an international vision of a "peaceful world" where the "essential material and physical needs" of humans are met. Previous chapters noted that the "rights of the poor" were central to their eco-justice ethic. American Baptists pressed

[154] Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness*, 28.

this theme further during this era, promising to "protect and restore...the earth as well as the poor."[155] Invoking Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself," American Baptists offered a more expansive understanding of "neighbor" to include all persons plus the rest of God's creation including land, water, air as well as plant and animal life. This reinterpretation of that oft-repeated biblical instruction was consistent with American Baptists' commitment to interdependence. This commitment can be seen in their affirmation of "the indivisibility of social justice and ecological integrity."[156] The vision of an eco-just world is only possible with the recognition that all of God's creation is interconnected and dependent upon one another.

The redefinition of "neighbor" reveals the stark contrast between the environmental ethics of Southern Baptists and American Baptists nearing the close of the first-decade of the twenty-first century. Southern Baptists championed a pro-development, increasingly anthropocentric ethic that viewed nature solely as an instrument of man. Meanwhile, American Baptists put a greater emphasis on reverence for nature and the interconnectedness of humans with their environment. While American Baptists were forming interfaith coalitions to preserve the nation's forests, Southern Baptists were advocating environmental policies to develop those same forests. And when American Baptists were opposing efforts to drill for oil in the ANWR region, Southern Baptists were encouraging such drilling or development through their participation in Calvin Beisner's Cornwall Alliance.

---

[155] American Baptist Churches USA, "An Ecological Situational Analysis," 37-38.

[156] "Statement by Religious Leaders at the Summit on Environment," 637-638.

*Political Engagement*

Chapter six noted that it is impossible to assess the political engagement approach of Southern Baptists in the 1980s. This is due to the fact that there was virtually no environmental-focus during this decade beyond a single, short resolution. However, earlier chapters documented the Southern Baptist embrace of the Public Christian position throughout the 1960s and 1970s. This dominant political engagement approach demands that individuals should be active citizens participating in the political process. Politics is not the role of the church, according to the Public Christian position.

Nonetheless, during the 1960s and early 1970s, a small but influential group of mostly denominational leaders embraced on environmental issues a different political engagement approach. Dubbed the Public Church position, this approach expected both churches and individual Christians to be politically active. Although this approach was practiced and promoted for a period of time, it disappeared during the mid-to-late 1970s. From 1973-1979, there were no Southern Baptist leaders to voice this Public Church perspective on pressing environmental questions. The Public Christian approach prevailed as Southern Baptist leaders asked churches to preach individual responsibility and encouraged individuals to be active citizens.

With the denomination headed in a decidedly conservative direction and under new leadership, the SBC's political engagement approach changed during the 1990s and 2000s. Richard Land led the denomination to encourage a more politically active role for its churches. This shift in political engagement approach from Public Christian to Public Church was first seen on other issues such as abortion and homosexuality. Once in

power, conservative leaders called on Southern Baptist churches to be more involved in the political arena, actively opposing abortion rights and gay rights.

In 2007, the SBC began to encourage churches to become involved in the debate over climate change. Partnering with the Cornwall Alliance and several Religious Right groups, the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission launched an environmental campaign to get one million Christians to endorse a "biblical" view of the environment that rejected concerns about global warming. The following year, the ERLC launched another initiative to assist churches in registering its members to vote. Churches were entrusted with the responsibility of telling members to "vote according to their, beliefs, convictions and values" while also entrusted to "teach and preach" those values or "biblical truths" to its members.[157]

This shift in political engagement approaches is not meaningful from a theological perspective. Previous chapters noted that the primary theological disagreement between American Baptists and Southern Baptists in this area was over the public mission of the church. Drawing from Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel Movement, American Baptists understood "evangelism" to require social change and activism. Southern Baptists, on the other hand, generally understood the primary objective of the church to be traditional evangelism or "soul-winning." The church was to be concerned with salvation while individual Christians had a responsibility to be active citizens. This was the Public Christian perspective of Southern Baptists.

There is little evidence in the historical record to suggest that Southern Baptist theology changed with regard to the church's mission. Despite a seemingly unchanged

[157] Southern Baptist Convention, "Resolution On Political Engagement," June 2008, http://sbc.net/resolutions /amResolution.asp?ID=1188 (accessed October 30, 2012).

theology on the role of the church in society, Southern Baptist conservatives did lead their denomination to encourage churches to take on a more active role in the political arena. This is likely due to the fact that the SBC's ethics agency began to play an important role in the conservative faith-based movement known as the Religious Right. Like other faith-based political movements, conservative and liberal alike, the Religious Right has sought both individual Christians and churches to become active participants in the public square. The SBC's new political engagement approach reflects this reorientation and partnership with and participation in the Religious Right.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, American Baptists remained committed to the Public Church approach to political engagement. During this period, American Baptist political engagement was characterized by ecumenical partnerships, interfaith efforts, and secular-religious coalitions. This muti-faceted approach had both national and international emphases as well. The ecumenical aspect of their political engagement was seen through the denomination's participation and leadership in the Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches. There, American Baptists worked to secure ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and partner with other mainline Protestant denominations to attain reauthorization of the Clean Air Act and combat efforts to weaken the Endangered Species Act.

Interfaith environmental engagement included partnerships with Jewish groups to collectively urge government action on climate change and other pressing environmental issues. Additionally, American Baptists maintained its important leadership role in the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. With their participation in the Environmental Justice Movement, American Baptists continued to forge religious-secular

partnerships for the sake of a more powerful and effective voice in the political arena. The denomination first expanded their political engagement approach to include these types of partnerships in the 1980s. Moreover, American Baptists continued to address environmental issues of national importance such as the siting of toxic waste dumps in minority communities as well as environmental issues with a larger international scope such as climate change.

In addition to these diverse types of engagement, American Baptists as a denomination kept encouraging both their churches and laypersons to tackle environmental issues. Individuals were called upon to make more environmentally-friendly lifestyle changes such as the use of public transportation and churches were urged to develop different environmental programs and maintain a presence in the public square. Consequently, over forty years after Jitsuo Morikawa redefined "evangelism" for the denomination, American Baptists still maintained this expanded understanding of the church's mission, insisting on active roles for congregations, denominational institutions and individuals.

*Government*

American Baptists continued to pursue greater government regulations during the 1990s and 2000s. Strict environmental regulations had long been a central part of the denomination's environmentalism. In previous decades, however, American Baptists had expressed some trepidation about big government and the tension between individual freedom and government restraint, noting in the 1970s that a bigger, more powerful

federal government "should not make us feel easy."[158] If this remained a concern of American Baptists, it was not expressed during this period.

American Baptist actions and advocacy from Earth Day 1990 onward indicates a denomination in agreement with what has been previously described as a "government fix." The denomination did continue to urge American Baptists to adopt a more environmentally-friendly lifestyle that eschewed materialism and championed conservation. However, long gone were the days when American Baptists insisted on the need for a radical reorientation of individual lifestyle and far-reaching structural changes in American society. Like other mainline Protestant denominations, American Baptists turned almost completely to the federal government for solutions to pressing environmental problems.

Government regulation was deemed to be the environment's friend and deregulation to be its foe. American Baptists urged passage of federal legislation consistent with the Valdez/CERES principles and federal legislation to deal with the nation's hazardous and toxic waste challenges. President Clinton was pressured to adopt a preservation policy prohibiting construction, logging and mining within national forests. The denomination also worked to secure the reauthorization of the Clean Air Act, the ratification of the Kyoto Treaty and the passage of both the Climate Stewardship Act (2003) and the Climate Security Act (2008).

When Republicans in either the White House or Congress pursued environmental deregulation, American Baptists formed coalitions with Jews, Catholics, evangelicals, secular organizations and especially other mainline Protestants to fight those efforts.

---

[158] American Baptist Churches USA, Board of National Ministries, "Ecological Wholeness and Justice: The Imperative of God," *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974), 139-140.

Through the Eco-Justice Working Group, American Baptists lobbied against President Bush's energy plan to remove environmental regulations in part to prevent the construction of new coal-fired power plants. The denomination involved itself in coalition efforts to thwart the removal of regulations that prohibited oil and gas drilling on federal lands such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. All of these examples reveal a denomination that was thoroughly committed to an environmentalism that viewed strict government regulations as an absolute necessity to social justice and ecological wholeness (eco-justice).

Unlike American Baptists, Southern Baptists did not turn to the federal government for environmental solutions. Instead, Southern Baptists embraced the polar opposite viewpoint of their fellow Baptists to the North. Government regulation was deemed to be an enemy of both the environment and the poor. Deregulation was encouraged not eschewed. This anti-regulation attitude was first seen in the previously discussed 1983 resolution that was the first environmental resolution to urge any type of government involvement. Environmental legislation was not even a subject of discussion at the Christian Life Commission's environment conference in 1991. Once again, Southern Baptist conservatives sought to focus the denomination's attention on what churches and individuals could do to be a better friend to the environment.

Finally, the SBC's chief ethics spokesperson Richard Land came out explicitly in favor of environmental deregulation just prior to the 2000 election. Land released in 1999 a public policy-focused statement advocating a free market environmental philosophy. He also aligned the SBC with Calvin Beisner and the Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship, endorsing a declaration that described "economic freedom"

as a prerequisite to "sound ecological stewardship." By "economic freedom," the declaration meant an economy largely free of government regulation. When government action or regulation is necessary, according to the declaration, it must "take place at the most local level possible." In other words, environmental regulations should be the domain of local and state authorities not the federal government.

The SBC's resolution in 2007 titled "On Global Warming" took the position that government regulations on greenhouse gas emissions were "very dangerous" and could lead to "major economic hardships worldwide."[159] Through resolutions, testimony and other statements, the SBC explained that its opposition to government regulation was out of concern for the poor. Russell Moore suggested in his congressional testimony that these regulations would have a harmful impact on both the working class in the United States and the poor in developing nations. During the debate over the Climate Security Act of 2008, the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission warned that regulations through a cap and trade system would have "devastating consequences" on the economy and poor.[160] Yet, this concern for the poor was relatively new. The SBC's initial opposition to government regulation as seen in the 1983 resolution did not mention the poor.

Between the 1970s and the 1990s, the SBC completely changed its attitude about the appropriate role of government in the environmental arena. As chapter six detailed, this course reversal coincided with a conservative takeover of the denomination. This course reversal also paralleled transformations in American politics and society, specifically the rise of the Religious Right, a movement birthed out of opposition to

---

[159] "Resolution On Global Warming (June 2007)."

[160] Land, "Action Alert."

government regulation. In 1970, Southern Baptists in Kentucky proclaimed, "Only through government can much be done to regulate and control the principal polluters of our air and water."[161] This sentiment was echoed throughout the denomination. Several decades later, government proposals to regulate these polluters were routinely rejected and depicted as dangerous.

*Science and Technology*

From the 1960s onward, American Baptists enjoyed a positive and affirming relationship with science and technology. During the second wave of American environmental history, American Baptists—while rejecting the popular idea of a "technological fix"—emphasized the need for technological and scientific advancement. American Baptists believed that science and technology had a valuable role to play in the quest for solutions to environmental problems. As Jitsuo Morikawa stressed, "Both science and faith need each other."[162] This positive attitude reveals, to an extent, the influence of liberal theology and its friendly accommodation to modern science on American Baptists.

During the 1980s, American Baptists had only a limited focus on science and technology. Similar to the period of energy crises from 1973-1979, American Baptists continued to recognize the importance of advances in science and technology. American Baptist leader Andrew Smith urged technology to be used in a manner that "extends the

---

[161] Kentucky Baptist Convention, "1970 Christian Life Committee Report," in *Annual of the Kentucky Baptist Convention* (Louisville, KY: Executive Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, 1970), 223.

[162] Jitsuo Morikawa, "A Theological Perspective on the World," *American Baptist Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (June 1993): 159-160.

natural relationships of creation rather than conquer them."[163] The denomination expressed concern about the dangers of certain technologies and scientific developments such as nuclear power and the disposal of hazardous and radioactive wastes.

In 1989, American Baptists adopted an in-depth policy statement on the environment intended to guide the denomination's environmental engagement in the 1990s. It praised advances and science and described technology as a powerful tool and gift from God. In addition to praising advancements, American Baptists readily affirmed the findings of major scientific entities such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. For example, American Baptists became one of the first major denominations to recognize global warming as a serious environmental concern with potential devastating international consequences. Their resolution alerting others to this problem cited as authoritative the findings of scientists at the Second World Climate Conference.

Unlike their Baptist counterparts in the South, American Baptists did not question the credibility of these institutions and conferences. Like other mainline Protestants, American Baptists were not involved in the popular debate, especially among evangelicals, over whether humans were causing the earth's climate to change. Rather, American Baptists depicted human-induced climate change as "scientific fact."[164] This perspective stands at odds with the perspective of Southern Baptists that is discussed below.

Earlier chapters have revealed that Southern Baptists welcomed the findings of science and technological advancements during the second wave of American

---

[163] J. Andrew Smith III, *God's Gift, our Responsibility: Biblical Reflections on Creation, Christian Stewardship and Corporate Accountability* (Valley Forge, PA: National Ministries, 1993), 13-14.

[164] "'Let There Be Light' (Gen 1:3): An Interfaith Call for Energy Conservation and Climate Justice."

environmental history. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Southern Baptists voiced much faith in the ability of science and technology to help alleviate environmental problems. Southern Baptists took seriously the doomsday pronouncements of popular scientists such as Paul Ehrlich who warned of a worldwide "population explosion." As fears of overpopulation began to fade in the mid-1970s, Southern Baptists focused their attention on a series of energy crises. While Southern Baptist writers rarely addressed science and technology from 1973-1979, they did continue to welcome and affirm the conclusions of scientists especially as they pertained to the energy crises. With the "Battle for the Bible" raging in the 1980s, science and technology—as well as environmental issues in general—received little attention from Southern Baptists. This pattern persisted until the emergence of global warming as an international environmental concern.

The SBC's cozy relationship with science and uncritical embrace of the pronouncements of scientists took a skeptical turn once conservatives controlled the denomination. In 1998 during the debate over the Kyoto Protocol, the denomination's spokesperson emphasized that "scientists are not monolithic" on the question of global warming. The science behind global warming was described as "unsettled."[165] The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission's policy statement on global warming in 2005 accepted that "the planet is currently experiencing a warming trend." This trend was described in this policy statement and a later resolution as cyclical. Noting that global warming is a "very complicated subject," the policy statement repeatedly stressed that

[165] Art Toalston, "Global warming campaign launched by National Council of Churches," *Baptist Press*, August 17, 1998, http://www.bpnews.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID=2502 (accessed September 11, 2012).

"the scientific data is simply not conclusive enough" and that "the most rational action to take would be to not blindly accept inconclusive evidence as pure fact."[166]

Skepticism heightened over the next three years. In the 2007 resolution titled "On Global Warming," Southern Baptists asserted that the "scientific community is divided" over the causes of global warming. The scientific credibility of the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was challenged and characterized as a political organization. Resolution co-author Barrett Duke later added that Southern Baptists believe that scientists had misinterpreted climate change data. The following year during the debate over the Climate Security Act, Richard Land asserted that the science behind climate change was "disputed more and more each day by thousands of scientists and climatologists."

These numerous examples indicate that Southern Baptists considered the presence of dissent among some scientists to justify their global warming skepticism. Even without the presence of meaningful dissent, it seems unlikely that Southern Baptist skepticism toward global warming would disappear. Ben Phillips, Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has argued that this skepticism is historically "well-grounded." In an article published by the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Phillips wrote, "Yet, the appeal to scientific consensus by evangelical environmentalists is particularly surprising in light of the traditional skepticism with which evangelicals have greeted grandiose scientific claims." Phillips noted that evangelicals have "typically rejected the scientific consensus concerning naturalistic evolution." He continued, "Evangelicals ought to be wary of consensus science in the area of climate change, just as they have been wary of consensus with

[166] Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, "Policy Statement on Global Warming,"

regard to the origin of species. Consensus is neither a standard for proof nor a mark of probability in scientific inquiry." Phillips pointed out that Southern Baptists and other evangelicals would never accept the consensus standard in another field of study such as theology.[167]

Historian Mark Noll wrote in *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* that the "intellectual disaster of fundamentalism" caused evangelical Protestants in the twentieth-century to prefer a warfare model between science and religion.[168] George Marsden added in *Fundamentalism and American Culture* that fundamentalists, while often viewed as anti-scientific actually "stood in an intellectual tradition that had the highest regard for one understanding of true scientific method and proper rationality."[169] The fundamentalists of the 1920s were, according to Marsden, committed to the principles of seventeenth-century philosopher Francis Bacon. Unlike Darwinism, Baconian science was not theoretical but instead relied on the "careful observation and classification of facts."[170] Noll noted that evangelicals who reject evolution affirm the principles of Baconian science: "no speculation without direct empirical proof, no deductions from speculative principles, no science without extensive empirical evidence."[171]

Noll and Marsden offer a helpful explanation for the basis of Southern Baptist skepticism toward prevailing scientific viewpoints. Evangelicals including Southern

---

[167] Benjamin Phillips, "Getting Into Hot Water: Evangelicals and Global Warming," Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, February 3, 2009, http://erlc.com/article/getting-into-hot-water-evangelicals-and-global-warming/ (accessed October 21, 2012).

[168] Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 109-145.

[169] George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 7.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Noll, 197.

Baptist conservatives who have been influenced by fundamentalism (or are themselves fundamentalists) are naturally skeptical toward what Phillips called "grandiose scientific claims." The warfare model pitting science versus religion that emerged as result of the debate over evolution has created an evangelical culture and, more specifically, a Southern Baptist culture, deeply distrustful of the major scientific pronouncements. However, this historical skepticism only partially explains the Southern Baptist attitudes toward the international environmental concern of climate change. It is impossible to fully understand this skepticism without considering the Southern Baptist commitment to the political philosophy of deregulation. Without a doubt, the Southern Baptist rejection of big government solutions to environmental solutions has influenced the denomination's position on climate change. This deregulation philosophy has significantly shaped the SBC's position on climate change and defined their environmentalism in the 1990s and 2000s.

*Conclusion*

Nearly forty years after the first-ever Earth Day on April 22, 1970, Southern Baptists and American Baptists had come to embrace radically different environmentalisms. American Baptists preached and practiced an environmentalism defined by an eco-justice ethic emphasizing the interconnectedness of humans with their environment and reinterpreting Jesus' command to love one's neighbor to also include the rest of God's creation. This environmentalism was expressed through a multi-faceted Public Church approach to political engagement that featured ecumenical partnerships, interfaith efforts and secular-religious coalitions. Political engagement was a requirement for congregations, denominational institutions and individuals alike. Strict

environmental regulations were foundational to this environmentalism. Government, American Baptists trusted, was capable of providing a "fix" to the nation's environmental woes. Regulation was the environment's friend and deregulation its foe. Advancements in science and technology were encouraged and the findings of scientific entities were affirmed. The credibility and reliability of these institutions was not questioned but instead vied as the deliverers of truth or "scientific fact."

Meanwhile, Southern Baptists were preaching and practicing a distinctly different environmentalism. Southern Baptists abandoned the ethic of previous decades committed to an unselfish stewardship that sought to promote both conservation and preservation. This ethic was replaced with a new decidedly more conservative ethic that continued to utilize the language of stewardship but was increasingly anthropocentric and strikingly development-focused. Also, Southern Baptist leaders encouraged a more politically active role for their churches without a coinciding change to the denomination's theology of mission. Echoing former President Ronald Reagan, the denomination's new conservative leaders made this anti-regulation philosophy an essential component of their environmentalism. Government regulation was the problem. Deregulation was encouraged not eschewed and "economic freedom" was a prerequisite to stewardship. Beginning in the 1990s, this anti-regulation attitude was justified in terms of concern for the poor. Additionally, Southern Baptist environmentalism developed a penchant for skepticism toward prevailing scientific viewpoints. This skepticism of "grandiose scientific claims" was a product of fundamentalist influence on the denomination, an influence that promoted the popular warfare model that pitted science and religion against one another in a never-ending epic battle.

In 2008, American Baptists and Southern Baptists found themselves on opposing sides of the public debate over the Climate Security Act. Without a doubt, the differences between these two historic Baptist groups on environmental issues were indeed "deep and wide" to quote from the once-popular children's song sung in Baptist churches throughout the United States. These differences highlight the partisan fault-lines separating American Baptists and Southern Baptists. American Baptists regularly found themselves supporting the environmental proposals of Democrats in Congress and the White House while Southern Baptists backed the policies of Republicans. Of course, these Baptists did not arrive at this place simply out of loyalty to the Democratic Party or Republican Party respectively. In recent decades, it has been Democrats who have championed government regulation and Republicans who have pleaded for government deregulation on environmental matters. Similarly, it has been Democrats following the lead of their then Vice-President, Al Gore, who have welcomed and affirming scientific pronouncements on international environmental concerns such as climate change and Republicans who have expressed varying levels of skepticism toward consensus science. These partisan fault lines reflect transformations in both politics and religion in the United States. The following chapter wraps up this project with brief concluding thoughts. There, these Baptist environmentalisms will receive a final succinct comparative analysis.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## Conclusion

### *Introduction*

This dissertation set out to explain the "how" and "why" of American Baptist and Southern Baptist environmental engagement during the critical second and third waves of American environmental history. The introductory chapter announced that this project would reveal that Southern Baptists and American Baptists, while enjoying some similarities along the way and a shared Baptist heritage, have adopted and promoted very different environmentalisms. Chapter one contended that these different attitudes, actions and approaches are due to four factors: science and technology, the role of government, political engagement and ethics. Following the first chapter, the remaining six chapters have demonstrated through a comparative analysis exactly how and why these Baptists embrace environmental views that are increasingly at odds with one another.

### *Science and Technology*

Those six chapters revealed that Southern Baptist and American Baptist views toward science and technology distinctly shaped their respective environmentalisms. Chapters three and four showed that American Baptists and Southern Baptists both rejected the notion of a "technological fix," an idea popular with many Americans during the second wave of American environmental history. While rejecting a "technological fix," both groups acknowledged the need for advancements in science and technology to help alleviate environmental problems. Southern Baptists saw these advancements as

able to offer short-term solutions. Overcoming sin, specifically the sins of greed and selfishness, was the necessary long-term solution to environmental issues, according to many Southern Baptists. Little attention was paid to Lynn White's claim that traditional Christian theology was the root of environmental crises. Sin, not a particular theology, was considered most responsible for problems such as pollution. Unlike Southern Baptists, American Baptists did not often utilize the language of sin but instead called for technology to be "Christianized" and urged the need for a new "technological man" that is not controlled by science and technology.[1] American Baptists believed that "Christianized" technology, while not being able to "fix" environmental problems, would be able to make great strides toward alleviation of those problems in conjunction with greater government regulation.

At the close of the second wave of American environmental history (1973-1979), neither Southern Baptists nor American Baptists devoted much space to a discussion of science and technology. This pattern continued throughout the 1980s. When science and technology was referenced, the reference remained positive. Both continued to reject the idea of a "technological fix" while also affirming the importance of scientific advancements and breakthroughs.

Beginning in the 1990s, science once again received sustained attention from American Baptists who affirmed the findings of major scientific entities such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Southern Baptists again focused on science. Unlike American Baptists, Southern Baptists did not affirm the findings of organizations such as the IPCC. Instead, Southern Baptists—led by the new conservative

---

[1] Owen Owens, "Salvation and Ecology: Missionary Imperatives in Light of a New Cosmology," *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974): 121.

leadership—challenged the IPCC's findings and characterized it as a political organization. Their global warming skepticism has been justified on historical grounds with one Southern Baptist scholar emphasizing the "traditional skepticism with which evangelicals have greeted grandiose scientific claims."[2] Quite clearly, as chapter seven stressed, this hostility toward prevailing scientific viewpoints, is better understood in light of the influence of fundamentalism on many Southern Baptists. The views toward science and technology of American Baptists have theological influences too. Previous chapters emphasized that the positive attitude of American Baptists toward science revealed, to an extent, the influence of liberal theology and its friendly accommodation to modern science on American Baptists.

### *Government*

This project also focused on how the views of Southern Baptists and American Baptists concerning the proper role of the state and the extent of permissible government regulation influenced their attitudes, actions and approaches toward environmental issues. Southern Baptists viewed greater government regulation as a solution to environmental problems during the second wave. "Only through government can much be done to regulate and control the principal polluters of our air and water," according to one state convention of Southern Baptists.[3]

---

[2] Benjamin Phillips, "Getting Into Hot Water: Evangelicals and Global Warming," Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, February 3, 2009, http://erlc.com/article/getting-into-hot-water-evangelicals-and-global-warming/ (accessed October 21, 2012).

[3] Kentucky Baptist Convention, "1970 Christian Life Committee Report," in *Annual of the Kentucky Baptist Convention* (Louisville, KY: Executive Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, 1970), 223. Kentucky Baptists adopted this quote from the 1969 report of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Meanwhile, American Baptists took a slightly different approach. American Baptists agreed with the need for more (not less) government regulation. In fact, American Baptists advocated for a more expansive role for government in environmental matters. However, American Baptists did so with an amount of trepidation, noting that a more powerful centralized government "should not make us feel easy."[4] The preservation of individual freedom was a stated concern of American Baptists. However, this stated concern did not cause American Baptists to act differently than Southern Baptists who did not raise questions about the impact government regulations would have on the freedom of individuals.

Throughout the remaining years of the second wave of American environmental history, Southern Baptists and American Baptists continued to call for strict environmental regulations. A bigger government with a strong regulatory role was desired. This desire went unchanged for American Baptists throughout the third wave of American environmental history. Southern Baptists did change, however, and this change coincided with a "conservative resurgence" within both the denomination and American politics. An anti-government regulation philosophy began to influence the environmental engagement of Southern Baptists. This could be first seen in a 1983 resolution urging voluntary rather than government-mandated regulations on polluters.

Deregulation was the guiding philosophy of Southern Baptists on environmental issues consistently throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Some regulations were cast as being

[4] American Baptist Churches USA, Board of National Ministries, "Ecological Wholeness and Justice: The Imperative of God," *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974), 139-140.

"very dangerous" and said to possibly lead to "major economic hardships worldwide."[5] Later expressions of this anti-regulation attitude emphasized concern for the poor, characterizing environmental regulations as a threat to the survival of the poor in Third World nations. As much as any other factor (and perhaps more) discussed in this project, changing attitudes toward the appropriate role of government have defined the environmentalism of Southern Baptists. Within the course of a mere decade, Southern Baptists went from embracing government regulation as the solution to environmental issue to viewing government regulation as the enemy of God's creation.

### *Political Engagement*

The political engagement approaches of Southern Baptists and American Baptists have also served to define and distinguish their environmentalisms. As stated in the first chapter, Southern Baptists have, with limited exceptions and until in recent years, adopted and advocated on behalf of the Public Christian approach to political engagement. They have done so, in part, out of their emphasis on individualism and specifically the centrality of individual salvation. Southern Baptists called on individuals to be active citizens and participate in the political process. Churches, however were not called to action. Political engagement was a responsibility reserved for individuals.

American Baptists have taken a different approach to political engagement. Their approach, dubbed Public Church by historian Mark Toulouse, urges American Baptists to be the "church in the world" and collectively confront social injustices in the political arena. Rooted in the "new evangelism" advocated by Jitsuo Morikawa and proposed decades prior by American Baptist leader Walter Rauschenbusch, regarded as the father

[5] Southern Baptist Convention, "On Global Warming," http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1171 (accessed August 30, 2012).

of the Social Gospel Movement, this form of political engagement was founded on different theological commitments from those of Southern Baptists. American Baptists promoted a social salvation and social understanding of the role or mission of the church in society. Local churches and the denomination as a whole were urged to be "influencing agents" and involve themselves in environmental politics at the local, state and national levels.[6] Ecumenical and international-focused from the outset, American Baptists began to pursue environmental engagement with non-Christian groups, religious and secular, at the end of the second wave period. These interfaith and secular partnerships further distinguished their political engagement from Southern Baptists whose engagement lacked an applied international focus and who were generally reluctant to partner with non-Baptist groups. American Baptists remained committed to this Public Church approach throughout the second and third waves of American environmental history.

As chapter seven chronicled, the SBC's political engagement approach shifted from Public Christian to Public Church during the 1990s and 2000s. Churches were encouraged to become involved, first in the debates over abortion rights and gay rights, and later in the debate over climate change. In 2008, a denomination-wide initiative was launched to assist churches in registering people to vote in the presidential election and endorse a "biblical" view of the environment at the ballot box. The theological significance of this shift is not meaningful as little, if any, evidence exists in the historical record to suggest that Southern Baptist theology changed with regard to the church's mission. While the theology may not have shifted, this shift in engagement approaches is

[6] "Report of the Office of Governmental Relations," in *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches in the USA* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 222.

meaningful as it sheds light on denominational priorities as they actually exist in practice rather than on paper in the form of a resolution or confessional statement.

*Ethics*

Previous chapters detailed at length the stewardship ethic that Southern Baptists embraced during the second wave of American environmental history. This ethic was rooted in a reverence for nature and Christo-centrism. Early environmentalists Henlee Barnette and Eric Rust insisted that Jesus Christ must remain central to any Christian environmental ethic due to the central role of the incarnation of Christ to Christianity. This particular stewardship ethic preached both conservation (responsible use of resources) and preservation (protection of the earth). Meanwhile, American Baptists developed an environmental ethic known as eco-justice, a term American Baptist leaders are credited with coining and a concept rooted in the idea that issues of ecology and issues of human justice are both interrelated and inseparable. This new ethic declared that social injustices rather than individual sin to be the primary cause of environmental problems.

Both ethics shared some similarities with one another during this critical second wave period. For example, American Baptists and Southern Baptists highlighted the doctrine of creation—that man is made in the image of God. Faithfulness to this cornerstone doctrine meant that Southern Baptists and American Baptists bore a responsibility to act responsibly toward nature. As discussed in chapter four, American Baptists shared with Southern Baptists a commitment to the practice of stewardship. However, American Baptists preached a more radical stewardship that called for fundamental structural changes in American society. Southern Baptists made few calls

for a restructuring of society. While American Baptists demanded "distributive justice," Southern Baptists stuck consistently to the language of stewardship. Their environmental analysis lacked the language of justice and encouraged only moderate rather than inconvenient and radical changes in lifestyle.

American Baptists continued to preach eco-justice during the third wave period. With the theological foundations of this ethic already fully developed during the second wave, American Baptists did not devote much attention to the theological and biblical aspects of their eco-justice ethic. Instead, their focus was on how to apply the ethic and do so particularly in the political arena through legislative reforms. But Southern Baptists charted a different course in the 1990s and 2000s and adopted an entirely different ethic that utilized the language of stewardship. Emphases on reverence for nature and Christo-centrism were replaced with warnings of New Age influences within both popular environmentalism and the denomination itself. The focus on conservation and preservation was replaced with an emphasis on new development of natural resources. Although Southern Baptists failed to articulate a comprehensive environmental theology during the third wave period, the denomination's relationship with Calvin Beisner and partnership with his Cornwall Alliance indicates a theological closeness. This new stewardship ethic defined stewardship in terms of economic development and viewed nature solely as an instrument of man.

### *Concluding Thoughts*

Without a doubt, the environmentalisms of Southern Baptists and American Baptists experienced significant and sometimes rapid change during the second and third waves of American environmental history. A Southern Baptist environmentalism first

emerged in the mid-to-late 1960s primarily in response to the "population explosion." During these years, Southern Baptist environmental concern was attentive to the apocalyptic rhetoric of Paul Ehrlich and other alarmists. Southern Baptist scholars and denominational leaders invested much energy in addressing the popular twin environmental issues of population and pollution. American Baptists too were responsive to these environmental concerns and, as stated above, urged a fundamental reorientation of national priorities and structural changes to society including government-mandated limits on economic growth, a radical proposal even in the late 1960s.

Less than a decade later, these early Baptist environmentalisms had moderated. Southern Baptists preached a mainstream and safe stewardship ethic that sought government reforms and individual lifestyle changes but lacked the alarmist tone and urgency expressed in earlier years. American Baptists were less radical and ceased their controversial calls for strict limits to economic growth and a fundamental transformation of society. Toward the closing years of the second wave period, both environmentalisms had become extremely reactionary. Environmental engagement came almost always in response to a national crisis or disaster. For Southern Baptists, their environmentalism began to look rather resolutionary with denominational resolutions and reports being the chief means by which Southern Baptists confronted environmental issues. This resolutionary approach is subject to critique as the words of resolutions are not always acted upon by denominations. Certainly the stated environmental concern of Southern Baptists did not always translate into environmental action. Unlike Southern Baptists, American Baptists devoted numerous denominational programs to actively addressing environmental issues in society.

As chapters six and seven described in much detail, the third wave of American environmental history marked a turning point resulting in American Baptists and Southern Baptists heading in completely different directions on environmental issues. At the center of this divergence was the question of the proper role of government. Southern Baptists welcomed and affirmed the anti-regulation philosophy of Ronald Reagan while American Baptists fought to keep this philosophy from taking form in new legislation. American Baptists believed government to be the solution to environmental concerns and Southern Baptists felt strongly that government was the problem.

Moving forward the environmentalisms of both Baptist groups will surely continue to diverge. These diverging environmentalisms are reflections of larger divergences in American society, specifically between mainline Protestants and evangelical Protestants and also the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. The fault line between these groups on many issues, including environmental questions, remains, to a great extent, the proper role of government. This is an area that warrants further consideration from other scholars. How have particular views regarding the appropriate role of government shaped specific denominational conflicts and conflicts between denominations and their respective social perspectives and priorities? Without a doubt, differences over the proper role of government was central to this project's aim of explaining the "how" and "why" of American Baptist and Southern Baptist environmental engagement.

Additionally, the history of Christian environmental engagement as well as the environmental engagement of other faith groups is deserving of more scholarly attention. Thus far, very little attention has been given to the study of faith-based environmental

concern and engagement from a historical perspective. This project has attempted to start the process of filling this huge void. With the title "Baptist environmentalisms," this project has aimed to make a meaningful and unique interdisciplinary contribution to several different fields of study and neglected corners of those fields.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Primary Sources

### *Books, Book Chapters and Journal Articles*

American Baptist Churches USA, Board of National Ministries. "Ecological Wholeness and Justice: The Imperative of God." *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974): 133-157.

Ashcraft, J. Morris. "A Theological Rationale for Christian Stewardship." In *Resource Unlimited*, edited by William L. Hendricks, 9-20. Nashville, TN: Stewardship Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1972.

Barnette, Henlee H. *Introducing Christian Ethics*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1961.

———. *The Church and the Ecological Crisis*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972.

———. "Ecocide! Are We Committing Ecological Suicide?" *World Mission Journal* 45 (January 1971): 1-7.

———. *A Pilgrimage of Faith: My Story*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004.

———. *Crucial Problems in Christian Perspective*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1970.

Bennett, G. Willis. "The City's Challenge to the Church." *Review and Expositor* 63, no. 3 (Summer 1966): 249-261.

Cauthen, Kenneth. *Christian Biopolitics: A Credo & Strategy for the Future*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1971.

Cavanaugh, James H. "Population and Public Health." In *Toward Authentic Morality for Modern Man: Proceedings of the 1970 Christian Life Commission Seminary*, 43-45. Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1970.

Chasteen, Edgar. "The Case for Compulsory Birth Control." In *Readings in Human Population Ecology*, edited by Wayne Davis, 218-221. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1971.

———. "The Case for Compulsory Birth Control." In *The American Population Debate*, edited by Daniel Callahan, 274-278. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1971.

———. *The Case for Compulsory Birth Control*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Inc., 1971.

Christian Life Commission. *Issues & Answers: Pollution*. Nashville, TN: Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1970.

———. *Issues & Answers: Population Explosion*. Nashville, TN: Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1970.

———. *Why Christians Should Be Involved in Politics*. Nashville, TN: Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1976.

Davis, Wayne. "The Ecological Crisis." *Review & Expositor* 69, no. 1 (Winter 1972): 5-10.

"Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment." In *The Plot to Save the World*, edited by Wade Rowland, 140-145. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1973.

Dunn, James M. "How to Get the Church into Politics." In *Politics: A Guidebook for Christians*, edited by James M. Dunn, 47-59. Dallas, TX: Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1970.

Eco-Justice Working Group. *101 Ways to Save the Earth*. New York, NY: Eco-Justice Working Group and The Greenhouse Gas Foundation, 1992.

Editorial. "Ecojustice." *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974): 99-100.

Ehrlich, Paul. *The Population Bomb*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1971.

"Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation." *Creation Care* (Spring 2000): 10-13.

Fuller, Ellis. "The Challenge of Biology of Traditional Theology." *Review and Expositor* 67, no. 1 (Winter 1970): 31-43.

Garrett Jr., James Leo. "Southern Baptists as Evangelicals." *Baptist History and Heritage* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 10-20.

Hahn, Dan F. "Flailing the Profligate: Carter's Energy Sermon of 1979." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (Fall 1980): 583-587.

Henry, Carl F. H. *Aspects of Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964.

Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship. "Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship." *VERITAS—A Quarterly Journal of Public Policy in Texas* (Summer 2000): 10-13.

Jenkins, Willis. *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

"Joint Appeal by Religion and Science for the Environment." In *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb, 640-642. New York: Routledge Press, 1996.

Land, Richard, and Louis Moore, eds. *The Earth is the Lord's: Christians and the Environment*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992.

Maltby, Paul. "Fundamentalist Dominion, Postmodern Ecology." *Ethics and the Environment* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 119-141.

McCall, Duke. "Editorial Introduction." *Review & Expositor* 69, no. 1 (Winter 1972): 3-4.

Morikawa, Hazel Takii. *Footprints: One Man's Pilgrimage: A Biography of Jitsuo Morikawa*. Oakland, CA: The Jitsuo Morikawa Memorial, 1990.

Morikawa, Jitsuo. "A Theological Perspective on the World." *American Baptist Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (June 1993): 156-162.

———. "Evangelistic Lifestyle in an Ecojust Universe." *Foundations* 18, no. 3 (July-September 1975): 272-281.

———. "Theological Meaning of Ecojustice Through Institutional Change." *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974): 100-105.

———. *My Spiritual Pilgrimage*. New York: The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of the American Baptist Churches, 1973.

———. Quoted in *Footprints: One Man's Pilgrimage, A Biography of Jitsuo Morikawa*. Oakland, CA: The Jitsuo Morikawa Memorial, 1990.

———. *The Anguish of our Witness*. New York: Division of Evangelism, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, 1964.

———. *The Nature and Purpose of Mission*. St. Louis, MO: UCCF Publications Office, 1963.

Nelson, Gaylord. *Beyond Earth Day: Fulfilling the Promise*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002.

Owens, Owen. "Salvation and Ecology: Missionary Imperatives in Light of a New Cosmology." *Foundations* 17, no. 2 (April-June 1974): 106-123.

Pinson Jr., William M. "Issues and Priorities." In *Toward Creative Urban Strategy*, edited by George A. Torney, 43-55. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970.

———. "Why Are Christians Called Into Politics?" in *Politics: A Guidebook for Christians*, edited by James M. Dunn, 9-28. Dallas, TX: Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1970.

———. *Resource Guide to Current Social Issues*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1968.

———. "Stewardship of Total Resources and the Local Congregation." *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1971): 59-72.

Rauschenbusch, Walter. "The New Evangelism." In *American Protestant Thought in the Liberal Era*, edited by William R. Hutchison, 108-116. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984.

Rust, Eric Charles. *Nature—Garden or Desert? An Essay in Environmental Theology*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1971.

———. *Nature and Man in Biblical Thought*. London: Lutterworth Press, 1952.

Schaeffer, Francis. *Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian View of Ecology*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale Home Publishers, 1970.

Sittler, Joseph A. "A Theology for Earth." *The Christian Scholar* 37 (1954): 367-374.

———. "Ecological Commitment as Theological Responsibility." *Zygon* 5 (June 1970): 172-181.

Smith III, J. Andrew. *God's Gift, Our Responsibility: Biblical Reflections on Creation, Christian Stewardship and Corporate Accountability*. Valley Forge, PA: National Ministries, 1993.

———. "Corporations and Community Accountability." In *Eco-Justice—The Unfinished Journey*, ed. William E. Gibson (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), 99-104.

Stassen, Glen H., and David P. Gushee. *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

"Statement by Religious Leaders at the Summit on Environment." In *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb, 636-639. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Summers, Ray. "Christian Stewardship in the Light of Redemption." In *Resource Unlimited*, edited by William L. Hendricks, 21-36. Nashville, TN: Stewardship Commission, 1972.

Toulouse, Mark G. *God in Public: Four Ways American Christianity and Public Life Relate*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

Trible, Phyllis. "Ancient Priests and Modern Polluters." *Andover Newton Quarterly* 12 (1971): 74-79.

Tuck, William P. "The Church and Ecological Action." *Review & Expositor* 69, no. 1 (Winter 1972): 67-76.

United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States*. New York: United Church of Christ, 1987.

United States Congress, Senate Subcommittee on Health, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. Statement of Dr. James Dunn, Executive Secretary, Christian Life Commission, Baptist General Convention of Texas, S. 2108. Session 91-1, 1969, 227-230.

United States General Accounting Office. *Siting of Hazardous Waste Landfill and their Correlation with Racial and Economic Status of Surrounding Communities*. RCED-83-168, June 1, 1983. Washington DC.

Watt, Lellani. *Caught in the Conflict: My Life with James Watt*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1984.

White, Vera K. *It's God's World: Christians, the Environment and Climate Change*. New York: Eco-Justice Working Group, 1997.

Wright, Richard. "Responsibility for the Ecological Crisis." *BioScience* 20, no. 15 (August 1970): 851-853.

———. "Tearing Down the Green: Environmental Backlash in the Evangelical Sub-Culture." *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 47, no. 2 (June 1995): 80-91.

*Newspapers and Magazines*

Beisner, Calvin. "Are God's Resources Finite? A group of Christian leaders claim they are, but does the claim square with the evidence?" *WORLD Magazine,* November 27, 1993, 10-13.

Birch, Bruce. "Energy Ethics Reaches the Church's Agenda." *Christian Century*, November 1, 1978, 1034.

Brooks, Sue. "Operation ESCAPE." *Home Missions*, July 1968, 23.

———. "To Extinguish the Fuse: Planned Parenthood Clinic." *Home Missions*, August 1967, A13-A15.

Brown, Cole. "As Christian As Hitler." *Home Missions*, September 1968, 3.

Cauthen, Kenneth. "The Case for Christian Biopolitics." *Christian Century*, November 19, 1969, 1481-1483.

Chasteen, Edgar. "Big Brother and Birth Control." *Home Missions*, December 1968, 2.

———. "Should the government limit births." *Home Missions*, July 1968, 21-23.

———. "The Case for Compulsory Birth Control." *Mademoiselle*, January 1970, 27.

Christian Life Commission. "Pollution: A Christian Life Commission Resource Paper." *Home Missions*, February 1971, 1-8.

———. "Urban Crisis: A Christian Life Commission Resource Paper." *Home Missions*, April 1971, 1-8.

Daley, Chauncey. "Daley Observations: The Christian and Conservation Energy." *Western Recorder*, May 5, 1977, 2-3.

———. "Two Kinds of Pollution." *Western Recorder*, May 2, 1970, 4.

Dean, Robert J. "Does the Bible Teach Pollution." *People*, February 1971, 34-36.

Editor. "Challenge to Conserve." *The Alabama Baptist*, April 28, 1977, 2.

Editor. "Globalized!" *Southern Baptist Journal*, January-March 1987, 1-17.

———. "The Global Woman." *Southern Baptist Journal*, July-September 1987, 13.

Editor. "Procreation and the Explosion." *Home Life*, July 1967, 4.

Editor. "The Enemy is Us." *The Baptist Record*, September 29, 1977, 8.

Editor. "What Are Baptists Doing About This Critical Problem?" *Biblical Recorder*, April 6, 1968, 3.

Gale, Horace E. "Eco-Justice: A National Ministries Report." *The American Baptist*, June 1974, 21-29.

Hankins, David. "Why I will not sign." *Baptist Press*, March 14, 2008. http://bpnews.net /BPFirstPerson.asp?ID=27636 (accessed September 1, 2012).

Hohman, Earl. "One Way Out." *Western Recorder*, January 7, 1965, 8.

———. "One Way Out." *Western Recorder*, November 8, 1965, 5, 9.

Holser, Harold C. "Letters." *Home Missions*, October 1968, 3.

Homer, Fran. "Religious Leaders Meet With US Legislators to Promote Forest Conservation." National Ministries Press Release, February 18, 1999. http://archive.wfn.org/1999/02/msg00181.html (accessed August 12, 2012).

Knight, Walker. "Churches and Crisis." *Home Missions*, October 1968, 6.

———. "Rampant Reproduction." *Home Missions*, August 1967, A4.

Lawrence, Donald L. "Love Canal: Does Anybody Care?" *The American Baptist*, July-August 1980, 14-16.

Moncrief, Adiel J. "It's not all Trash." *Home Missions*, March 1971, 47.

Mosher, Lawrence. "EPA retreats on control of hazardous wastes." *National Journal*, March 27, 1982, 562.

Osborne, Harold W. "The Fuse is Short: A Commentary on the Population Problem and What It Portends." *Home Missions*, August 1967, A6-A9.

Owens, Owen, and Elizabeth Miller. "1, 2, 3, 4, 5." *The American Baptist*, February 1973, 10-13.

Owens, Owen. "The Eco-Justice Working Group." *The Egg*, January 1989, 3, 16.

Patterson, T. A. "The Energy Crisis." *Baptist Standard*, December 12, 1973, 4.

Peters, George A. "Letters." *Home Missions*, September 1968, 3.

"Preserving and Cherishing the Earth: An Appeal for Joint Commitment in Science and Religion." Forum on Religion and Ecology, January 1990. http://fore.research.yale.edu/publications/statements/preserve.html (accessed August 10, 2012).

Rainey, David. "The Gospel and the Good Earth." *The American Baptist*, May 1970, 11.

"Religious Groups Link Stewardship to Economic Growth." *Earthkeeping News*, May/June 2000, http://nacce.org/2000/env-eth-econ.html (accessed August 28, 2012).

"Religious Leaders Call for End to Forest Destruction." EarthCare News Press Release, April 13, 1999. http://www.earthcareonline.org/ecnews/ectimes699.html (accessed August 12, 2012).

"Religious Leaders Urge Protection of National Forests' Roadless Arenas." *Earth Justice*, June 29, 1999. http://earthjustice.org/news/press/1999/religious-leaders-urge-protection-of-national-forests-roadless-areas (accessed August 12, 2012).

Rice, John. "Do Southern Baptists Endorse Abortion & Government Limiting Families." *The Sword of the Lord*, May 31, 1974, 1, 13.

Rust, Eric Charles. "Christians and the Voyage of Spaceship Earth." *Home Missions*, February 1971, 17-28.

———. "From the Garden to the Desert: The Quest for a Theology of Ecology." *The Student*, January 1971, 10-14.

Sanders, Harold G. "Yours and His." *Western Recorder*, January 7, 1965, 8.

Sapp, W. David. "The Gospel and Three Mile Island." *Western Recorder*, April 25, 1979, 2.

White Jr., Lynn. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." *Science*, March 1967, 1203-1207.

"World Population Year—1974." *The American Baptist*, April 1974, 24.

*Archival Collections*

American Baptist Home Mission Societies Collection. American Baptist Historical Society. Atlanta, GA.

Baptist Jubilee Advance Collection. AR 132. Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives. Nashville, TN.

Christian Life Commission Resource Files Collection. AR 138-2. Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives. Nashville, TN.

Department of Christian Education Collection. American Baptist Historical Society. Atlanta, GA.

Henlee Barnette Collection. Special Collections Department, Z. Smith Reynolds Library, Wake Forest University. Winston-Salem, NC.

Owen Owens Collection. American Baptist Historical Society. Atlanta, GA.

*Denominational Reports and Resolutions*

American Baptist Churches USA. "An Ecological Situational Analysis." In Keith Ignatius, *Our Only Home: Planet Earth: A Prayer and Bible Study About God, Planet Earth and Ecological Stewardship*, 32-39. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist National Ministries, 1992.

———. "Energy." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 71-72. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1977.

———. "Policy Statement on Energy." General Board Reference No. 7004, June 1977, 1-2. http://www.abcusa.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=odV2innUMz0%3D&tabid=199 (accessed May 1, 2012).

———. "Policy Statement on Human Rights." In *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995*. Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

———. "Policy Statement on Hunger." In *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995*. Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

———. "Policy Statements and Resolutions." American Baptist Churches USA. http://www.abcusa.org/Resources/ABCResources/PolicyStatementsResolutions/tabid/199/Default.aspx (accessed July 6, 2011).

———. "Report of Ecology and Racial Justice Program." In *Yearbook of American Baptist Churches USA*, 140. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1992.

———. "Report of the American Baptist Extension Corporation." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 255. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1972.

———. "Report of the American Baptist Extension Corporation." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 220-221. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1973.

———. "Report of the American Baptist Management Corporation." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 223-224. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1973.

———. "Report of the Board of National Ministries." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 201-202. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1975.

———. "Report of the Board of National Ministries: Social and Ethical Responsibility in Investments." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 172. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1980.

———. "Report of the Board of National Ministries." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 170-172. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1984.

———. "Report of the Department of International Affairs." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 101-102. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1967-1968.

———. "Report of the Office of Church Renewal." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 157-158. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1987.

———. "Report of the Office of Church Renewal." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 143. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1991.

———. "Report of the Office of Congregational Renewal." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 154. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1984.

———. "Report of the Office of Governmental Relations." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 201. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1975.

———. "Report of the Office of Governmental Relations." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 145-146. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1978.

———. "Report of the Office of Governmental Relations." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 222. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1979.

———. "Report of the Office of Governmental Relations." In *Yearbook of American Baptist Churches USA*, 138-139. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1991.

———. "Report of the Office of Issue Development." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 142-143. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1978.

———. "Report of the Office of Planning and Organizational Development." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 206. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1973.

———. "Report of the Social and Ethical Responsibility in Investments." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 172-173. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1981.

———. "Report of the Social and Ethical Responsibility in Investments." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 169-170. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1987.

———. "Resolution on Clean Air, 8183, 6/90." In *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995.* Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

———. "Resolution on Ecology." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 76-77. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1975.

———. "Resolution on Environmental Concerns—1970." In *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995*. Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

———. "Resolution on Global Warming, 8189, 6/91." In *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995.* Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

———. "Resolution on Global Warming." American Baptist Churches USA. http://www.abc-usa.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=0JpsQst6Agw%3d&tabid=199 (accessed August 9, 2011).

———. "Resolution on Hazardous, Toxic and Radioactive Waste, 8196, 12/92." In *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995.* Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

———. "Resolution on Individual Lifestyle for Ecological Responsibility, 8181 6/90." In *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995.* Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

———. "Resolution on the Disposal of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes, 8053: 9/82." In *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995*. Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

———. "Resolution on the Environment and Nuclear Power." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Churches USA*, 54-55. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1979.

———. "Resolution on the United Nations (1951)." In *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995*. Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

———. "Resolution on the Valdez Principles 8190, 6/91." In *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995.* Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

———. *Adopted resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995*. Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

American Baptist Convention. "Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention*, 313. Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1957.

———. "Report of the Department of International Affairs." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention*, 101-102. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1967-1968.

———. "Report of the Division of Evangelism." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention*, 275-276. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1966-1967.

———. "Report of the Division of Missions." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention*, 252-253. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1972.

———. "Report of the Division of Social Concern." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention*, 37-38. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1971.

———. "Report of the Office of Planning and Organizational Development." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention*, 244-245. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1972.

———. "Resolution on Conservation." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention*, 75. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1966-1967.

———. "Resolution on Economic Justice (International)." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention*, 135. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1969-1970.

———. "Resolution on Economic Justice (National)." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention*, 130-131. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1969-1970.

———. "Resolution on Food and Fuel Crisis Assistance, 8046: 12/79." In *Adopted Resolutions of the American Baptist Convention, 1975-1995*. Valley Forge, PA, 1996.

———. "Resolution on the Middle East." In *Yearbook of the American Baptist Convention*, 206. Valley Forge, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1973.

Arkansas Baptist State Convention. "Resolution #6: Fuel Allocations." In *Annual of the Arkansas Baptist Convention*, 48. Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Baptist State Convention, 1973.

Baptist Center for Ethics. "Baptist Letter to United States Senate on Climate Change Legislation." *EthicsDaily.com*, April 28, 2008. http://ethicsdaily.com/photos /pdf_senate.pdf (accessed September 12, 2012).

Baptist General Association of Virginia. "1970 Report of the Committee on Town and Country Churches." In *Virginia Baptist Annual*, 133-134. Richmond, VA: Williams Printing Co., 1971.

———. "1972 Report of the Committee on Town and Country Churches." In *Virginia Baptist Annual*, 97-98. Richmond, VA: Williams Printing Co., 1972.

———. "Energy Use." In *Virginia Baptist Annual*, 63. Richmond VA: Baptist General Association of Virginia, 1978.

———. "Report of the Christian Life Committee." In *Virginia Baptist Annual*, 108-109. Richmond, VA: Baptist General Association of Virginia, 1977.

———. "Resolution #3." In *Virginia Baptist Annual*, 114. Richmond, VA: Baptist General Association of Virginia, 1973.

Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. "Report of the Christian Life Committee." In *Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Oklahoma Baptist State Convention*, 108-109. Oklahoma City, OK: Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1980.

Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. "Report of the Christian Life & Public Affairs Committee." In *North Carolina Baptist Annual*, 170-171. Raleigh, NC: Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, 1979.

———. "Report of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina." In *North Carolina Baptist Annual*, 106-107. Raleigh, NC: Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

———. "Report of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina." In *North Carolina Baptist Annual*, 99. Raleigh, NC: Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, 1974.

Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation. "The Cornwall Stewardship Agenda." April 17, 2008. http://www.cornwallalliance.org/docs/cornwall-stewardship-agenda.pdf (accessed September 1, 2012).

Christian Life Commission. "1967 Report of the Christian Life Commission." In *Annual of the Baptist General Convention of Texas*, 16-19. Dallas, TX: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1967.

———. "1968 Report of the Christian Life Commission." In *Texas Baptist Annual*, 105-106. Dallas, TX: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1968.

———. "1969 Report of the Christian Life Commission." In *Texas Baptist Annual*, 88-89. Dallas, TX: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1969.

———. "1970 Report of the Christian Life Commission." In *Texas Baptist Annual*, 93-95. Dallas, TX: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1970.

Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "Policy Statement on Global Warming." August 1, 2005. http://faithandfamily.com/article/policy-statement-on-global-warming/ (accessed August 28, 2012).

Evangelical Climate Initiative. "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action." http://christiansandclimate.org/learn/call-to-action (accessed August 28, 2012).

Florida Baptist State Convention. "Resolution No. 4: Energy." In *Annual of the Florida Baptist State Convention*, 59. Jacksonville, FL: Florida Baptist State Convention, 1979.

Georgia Baptist Convention. "Report of the Committee on Resolutions." In *Annual of the Georgia Baptist Convention*, 29. Atlanta, GA: Georgia Baptist Convention, 1977.

Interfaith Stewardship Alliance. "A Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Response to Global Warming." http://www.cornwallalliance.org /docs/a-call-to-truth-prudence-and-protection-of-the-poor.pdf (accessed August 28, 2012).

———. "A Letter to the National Association of Evangelicals on the Issue of Global Warming." http://www.interfaithstewardship.org (accessed August 28, 2012).

Kentucky Baptist Convention. "1970 Christian Life Committee Report." In *Annual of the Kentucky Baptist Convention*, 223-224. Louisville, KY: Executive Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, 1970.

———. "Resolution on Fuel Conservation." In *Annual of the Kentucky Baptist Convention*, 160. Middletown, KY: Executive Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, 1973.

Land, Richard. "Action Alert: Tell Senate to Reject Climate Change Bill that Would Hurt Poor, Economy." The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, June 2, 2008. http://erlc.com/article/tell-senate-to-reject-climate-change-bill-that-would-hurt-poor-economy/ (accessed September 12, 2012).

Louisiana Baptist Convention. "Resolution Six: Energy Crisis." In *Annual of the Louisiana Baptist Convention*, 201. Alexandria, LA: Executive Board of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

Mississippi Baptist Convention. "1970 Christian Action Report." In *Annual of the Mississippi Baptist Convention*, 98-99. Jackson, MS: Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 1970.

National Council of Churches. "Heads of Communion Letter to President Clinton on Global Warming." National Council of Churches, November 20, 2000. http://www.ncccusa.org/news/00news 104a.html (accessed September 12, 2012).

South Carolina Baptist Convention. "Resolution on Nuclear Waste and Alcohol." In *South Carolina Baptist Convention Annual*, 47. Greenville, SC: South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1979.

Southern Baptist Convention. "1971 Report of the Christian Life Commission." In *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention*, 208-209. Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1971.

———. "Proceedings." In *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention*, 64-65. Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1983.

———. "1975 Report of the Christian Life Commission." In *Book of Reports*, 131-132. Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1975.

———. "Resolution on Energy and Natural Resources." In *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention*, 50. Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1977.

———. "Resolution On Care of our Environment." Southern Baptist Convention. http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=455 (accessed July 6, 2011).

———. "Resolution on Energy." In *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention*, 49-50. Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1979.

———. "Resolution On Environmental Stewardship." http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=456 (accessed August 12, 2012).

———. "Resolution On Environmentalism and Evangelicals." Southern Baptist Convention. http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1159 (accessed July 6, 2011).

———. "Resolution On Global Warming." Southern Baptist Convention. http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1171 (accessed July 6, 2011).

———. "Resolution On Population Explosion." Southern Baptist Convention. http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=799 (accessed July 6, 2011).

———. "Resolution on Stewardship of God's Creation." In *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention*, 70-71. Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1974.

———. "Resolution On the Environment." Southern Baptist Convention. http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=452 (accessed July 6, 2011).

———. "Resolution on the New Age Movement." http://www.sbc.net/resolutions /amResolution.asp?ID=785 (accessed August 12, 2012).

———."Resolution on the Threat of New Age Globalism." http://www.sbc.net /resolutions /amResolution.asp?ID=786 (accessed August 12, 2012).

———. "Resolution on the Population Explosion." In *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention*, 77. Nashville, TN: Southern Baptist Convention, 1974.

Southern Baptist Environment & Climate Initiative. "A Southern Baptist Declaration on the Environment and Climate Change." http://baptistcreationcare.org/node/1 (accessed September 1, 2012).

*Other Sources*

Carter, Jimmy. "Crisis of Confidence." PBS, July 15, 1979. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh /americanexperience/features/primary-resources/carter-crisis/ (accessed May 1, 2012).

Carter, Jimmy. "The President's Proposed Energy Policy." PBS, May 1, 1977. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/carter-energy/ (accessed May 1, 2012).

"Environmental Justice." U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice (accessed June 18, 2012).

"National Environmental Policy Act of 1969." National Environmental Policy Act. http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/nepa/nepaeqia.htm (accessed July 7, 2011).

We Get It! Coalition. "The WeGetIt.org Declaration." http://we-get-it.org/declaration/ (accessed September 1, 2012).

## Secondary Sources

### *Books, Book Chapters and Journal Articles*

"Air Pollution Control, 1967 Legislative Chronology." In *Congress and the Nation, 1965-1968*. Vol. 2, 695-696. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1969.

"Air Pollution, 1970 Legislative Chronology." In *Congress and the Nation, 1969-1972*. Vol. 3, 757-759. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1973.

Allen, Yeh. "A Multiethnic and Prophetic Heritage in the American Baptist Churches USA: Orlando E. Costas and Jitsuo Morikawa." *American Baptist Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 368-380.

Allitt, Patrick. "American Catholics and the Environment, 1960-1995." *The Catholic Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (April 1998): 263-280.

Ammerman, Nancy. "Southern Baptists and the New Christian Right. *Review of Religious Research* 50 (October 2008): 69-91.

Arnold, Ron. *At the Eye of the Storm: James Watt and Environmentalists*. Chicago, IL: Regnery Gateway, 1982.

Bakken, Peter, Joan Gibb Engel, and J. Ronald Engel. *Ecology, Justice, and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995.

Balmer, Randall. *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America*. New York: Basic Books, 2006.

Barrow, John C. "An Age of Limits: Jimmy Carter and the Quest for a National Energy Policy." In *The Carter Presidency: Policy Choices in the Post-New Deal Era*, edited by Gary M. Fink and Hugh Davis Graham, 158-178. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998.

Bebbington, David. *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989.

Beck, Roy and Leon Kolankiewicz. "The Environmental Movement's Retreat from Advocating U.S. Population Stabilization (1970-1998): A First Draft of History." *Journal of Policy History* 12, no. 1 (2000): 123-156.

Beezer, Bruce. "The Bob Jones University Decision: Financial and Policy Implications." *Journal of Education Finance* 9, no. 4 (Spring 1983): 508-523.

Beisner, E. Calvin. *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997.

Berg, Thomas. "'Proclaiming Together'? Convergence and Divergence in Mainline and Evangelical Evangelism, 1945-1967." *Religious and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 49-76.

Billingsley, K.L. *From Mainline to Sideline: The Social Witness of the National Council of Churches*. Lanham, MD: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1990.

Brackney, William. *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004.

———. *The Baptists*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1994.

Bratton, Susan. "The eco-theology of James Watt." *Environmental Ethics* 5, no. 3 (1984): 225-236.

Bullard, Robert D. "Assuring Environmental Justice For All." In *The Covenant with Black America*, edited by Tavis Smiley,189-211. Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 2006.

———. "Environmental Justice in the 21st Century: Race Still Matters." *Phylon* 49, no. 3 (Autumn-Winter 2001): 151-171.

Burwell, Dollie, and Luke W. Cole. "Environmental Justice Comes Full Circle: Warren County Before and After." *Golden Gate University Environmental Law Journal* 1, no. 1 (2007): 8-40.

Campolo, Anthony. *A Denomination Looks at Itself*. Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1971.

———. *Can Mainline Denominations Make a Comeback?* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995.

Caplinger, Christopher. "The Politics of Trusteeship Governance: Jimmy Carter's Fight for a Standby Gasoline Rationing Plan." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (Summer 1996): 778-794.

Carlson, Erik D. "James G. Watt." In *Encyclopedia of the U.S. Government and the Environment: History, Policy and Politics*, edited by Matthew Lindstrom. Vol. 2, 807-808. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

"Chronology; Environmental Policy and Politics and Time Line." In *Encyclopedia of the U.S. Government and the Environment*, edited by Matthew Lindstrom. Vol. 2, 835-870. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011.

Cowap, Chris. "Not Just Ecology, Not Just Economics, Eco Justice." In *Eco-justice: The Unfinished Journey*, edited by William E. Gibson, 16-20. Albany, NY: State University Press, 2004.

Critchlow, Donald T. *Intended Consequences: Birth Control, Abortion and the Federal Government in Modern America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

———. "Birth Control, Population Control, and Family Planning: An Overview." In *The Politics of Abortion and Birth Control in Historical Perspective*, edited by Donald T. Critchlow, 1-21. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.

Davis, David Howard. *Energy Politics*. 4th ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Dick, James. "American Baptist Polity and Practice: Our Historical Development and Some Inadequacies in our Present Legislative Structure." *American Baptist Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1982): 4-15.

Doherty, Brian and Timothy Doyle. "Beyond Borders: Transnational Politics, Social Movements and Modern Environmentalisms." *Environmental Politics* 15, no. 3 (2006): 697-712.

Dowie, Mark. *Losing Ground: American Environmentalism at the Close of the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996.

Dudley, Jonathan. *Broken Words: The Abuse of Science and Faith in American Politics*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2011.

Durso, Pamela R., and Keith E. Durso. *The Story of Baptists in the United States*. Brentwood, TN: Baptist History & Heritage Society, 2006.

Eighmy, John Lee. *Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1972.

Ermann, David, and William H. Clements. "The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility and its Campaign Against Marketing Infant Formula in the Third World." *Social Problems* 32, no. 2 (December 1984): 185-196.

Ernst, Eldon G. "The Baptist Jubilee Advance in Historical Context: An Analysis of American Baptist Evangelism in the Twentieth Century." *Foundations* 9 (January-March 1966): 5-36.

"Family Planning Services, 1970 Legislative Chronology." In *Congress and the Nation, 1969-1973*. Vol. 3, 557. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1973.

Finke, Roger, and Rodney Stark. *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in our Religious Economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Finkle, Jason L., and Barbara B. Crane. "The Politics of Bucharest: Population, Development and the New International Economic Order." *Population and Development Review* 1, no. 1 (1975): 87-114.

Flippen, J. Brooks. *Nixon and the Environment*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2000.

Flynt, Wayne. *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1998.

Fowler, Robert Booth. *The Greening of Protestant Thought*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Freed, Mayer G., and Daniel D. Polsby. "Race, Religion, and Public Policy: Bob Jones University v. United States." *The Supreme Court Review* (1983): 1-31.

Gibson, William E. "Eco-Justice: New Perspective for a Time of Turning." In *For Creation's Sake: Preaching, Ecology & Justice*, edited by Dieter T. Hessel, 15-31. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985.

———. "Introduction to the Journey." In *Eco-Justice—The Unfinished Journey*, edited by William E. Gibson, 1-11. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004.

Godsil, Rachel D. "Remedying Environmental Racism." *Michigan Law Review* 90, no. 2 (November 1991): 394-427.

Goodwin, Everett C. *Baptists in the Balance: The Tension Between Freedom and Responsibility*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1997.

Gottlieb, Robert. *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*. Washington DC: Island Press, 2005.

Gould, Lewis L. *America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1914*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1974.

Green, Marshall. "The Evolution of U.S. International Population Policy, 1965-1992: A Chronological Account." *Population and Development Review* 19, no. 2 (June 1993): 303-321.

Hankins, Barry. *American Evangelicals: A Contemporary History of a Mainstream Religious Movement*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2008.

———. *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008.

———. *Uneasy in Babylon: Southern Baptist Conservatives and American Culture*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2002.

Harper, Keith. *The Quality of Mercy: Southern Baptists and Social Christianity, 1890-1920*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1996.

Hays, Samuel P. *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Hessel, Dieter T. "Becoming a Church for Ecology and Justice." In *The Prophetic Call: Celebrating Community, Earth, Poverty, and Peace*, edited by Hugh Sanborn, 83-96. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004.

———. "Eco-Justice Ethics: A Brief Overview." Forum on Religion and Ecology. http://www.ecojusticenow.org/resources/Eco-Justice-Ethics/Eco-Justice-Ethics-(Brief-Overview).pdf (accessed December 10, 2011).

———. Foreword to *Ecology, Justice, and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature*, edited by Peter Bakken, Joan Gibb Engel, and J. Ronald Engel, xiii. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995.

Hill, Samuel S. *Baptists North and South*. Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1964.

Hillstrom, Kevin. "Public Health and Environmental Regulation." In *U.S. Environmental Policy & Politics: A Documentary History*, edited by Kevin Hillstrom, 475-493. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly, 2010.

Hoff, Derek S. "'Kick that Population Commission in the Ass': The Nixon Administration, the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future and the Defusing of the Population Bomb." *Journal of Policy History* 22, no. 1 (2010): 23-63.

Holl, Jack M. "The Nixon Administration and the 1973 Energy Crisis." In *Energy and Transport: Historical Perspectives on Policy Issues*, edited by George H. Daniels and Mark H. Rose, 149-156. London, UK: Sage Publications, 1982.

Horowitz, Daniel. *Jimmy Carter and the Energy Crisis of the 1970s*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins, 2005.

Hughes, J. Donald. "Environmental History." In *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, edited by J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman, 1:332-333. Farmington Hills, MI: MacMillan Reference USA, 2009.

Hutchison, William. *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Jonas, Glenn. "William Wallace Finlator: Activist Prophet." *Baptist History and Heritage* 43, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 96-109.

Joyner, Christopher C. "Stockholm Retrospect: Progress in the International Law of Environment." *World Affairs* 136, no. 4 (Spring 1974): 347-348.

Kearns, Laurel. "Cooking the Truth: Faith, Science, the Market and Global Warming." In *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*, eds. Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller, 97-124. New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.

———. "Noah's Ark Goes to Washington: A Profile of Evangelical Environmentalism." *Social Compass* 44, no. 3 (1997): 349-366.

———. "Saving the Creation: Christian Environmentalism in the United States." *Sociology of Religion* 57, no. 1 (1996): 55-70.

Kline, Benjamin. *First Along the River: A Brief History of the U.S. Environmental Movement*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

Leonard, Bill. *Baptist Ways: A History*. Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 2003.

———. *Baptists in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

———. *God's Last & Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1990.

Livingstone, David. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis: A Reassessment," *Fides et Historia* 26 (1994): 38-55.

Manis, Andrew M. *Southern Civil Religions in Conflict: Civil Rights and the Culture Wars*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002.

Maring, Norman H. *American Baptists Whence and Whither*. Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1968.

McBeth, H. Leon. *The Baptist Heritage*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987.

McGurta, Eileen Maura. "From NIMBY to Civil Rights: The Origins of the Environmental Justice Movement." *Environmental History* 2, no. 3 (1997): 301-323.

McSwain, Larry L. *Loving Beyond Your Theology: The Life and Ministry of Jimmy Raymond Allen*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010.

Melosi, Martin V. *Coping with Abundance: Energy and Environment in Industrial America*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1985.

———. "Energy and Environment in the United States: The Era of Fossil Fuels." *Environmental Review* 11, no. 3 (Autumn 1987): 167-188.

Miro, Carmen A. "The World Population Plan of Action: A Political Instrument Whose Potential Has Not Been Realized." *Population and Development Review* 3, no. 4 (December 1977): 421-442.

Moody, Michael. "Caring for Creation: Environmental Advocacy by Mainline Protestant Organizations." In *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*, edited by Robert Wuthnow and John Evans, 237-264. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.

Morano, Roy W. *The Protestant Challenge to Corporate America: Issues of Social Responsibility*. Ann Arbor, MI: UM Research Press, 1984.

"National Environmental Policy Act, 1969 Legislative Chronology." In *Congress and the Nation, 1969-1972*. Vol. 3, 748. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1973.

Newman, Mark. *Getting Right with God: Southern Baptists and Desegregation, 1945-1995*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2001.

Newman, Rich. "Making Environmental Politics: Women and Love Canal Activism." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 1/2 (Spring-Summer 2001): 65-84.

Newman, William M., and William V. D'Antonio. "'For Christ's Sake!': A Study of Key '73 in New England." *Review of Religious Research* 19, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 139-153.

Nie, Martin. "'It's the Environment, Stupid!' Clinton and the Environment." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 39-51.

Noll, Mark. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994.

Oden, Thomas C. *Conscience and Dividends: Churches and Multinationals*. Washington DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1985.

Odum, Eugene. "Ecology as Science." In *The Encyclopedia of the Environment*, edited by Ruth A. Eblen and William R. Eblen, 171-173. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1994.

Patterson, Bob, ed. *Science, Faith, and Revelation: An Approach to Christian Philosophy*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1979.

Pulliam, Walter B. "Tribute to Jitsuo Morikawa." *American Baptist Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (June 1993): 98-102.

Queen, Edward L. *In the South the Baptists are the Center of Gravity: Southern Baptists and Social Change, 1930-1980*. Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Press, 1991.

Rahm, Dianne. *Climate Change Policy in the United States: The Science, the Politics and the Prospects for Change*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2009.

Ranney, Austin. "The Carter Administration." In *The American Elections of 1980*, edited by Austin Ranney, 1-36. Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Reichley, A. James. *Faith in Politics*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002.

Rome, Adam. *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Rosenbaum, Walter. *Environmental Politics and Policy*. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly, 2010.

———. *Energy, Politics & Public Policy*. 2nd ed. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1987.

Rotham, Hal K. *The Greening of a Nation? Environmentalism in the U.S. Since 1945*. London: Harcourt Brace, 1998.

Scharlin, Patricia. "The United Nations and the Environment: After Three Decades of Concern, Progress is Still Slow." *Ambio* 11, no. 1 (1982): 26-29.

Schlosser, Ronald E. "Chronology of the Board of National Ministries, 1817-1994." *American Baptist Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (June 1995): 139-157.

Schramm, Rich. "Ecology and Justice: The Ongoing Ministry of Owen Owens." *The Christian Citizen* 1 (2009): 5.

Sheldon, Joseph. *Rediscovery of Creation: A Bibliographical Study of the Church's Response to the Environmental Crisis*. Metuchen, NJ: American Theological Library Association and Scarecrow Press, 1992.

Shibley, Mark and Jonathon L. Wiggins. "The Greening of Mainline American Religion: A Sociological Analysis of the Environmental Ethics of the National Partnership for the Environment." *Social Compass* 44, no. 3 (1997): 333-348.

Sisk, Ronald D. "Henlee Hulix Barnette: Principalist in the Southern Seminary Tradition." In *Twentieth Century Shapers of Baptist Social Ethics*, edited by Larry McSwain, 81-98. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008.

Smith, Oran. *The Rise of Baptist Republicanism*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

Somplatsky-Jarman, William. "The Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches." In *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, edited by Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Reuther, 573-578. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Spain, Rufus. *At Ease in Zion: A Social History of Southern Baptists, 1875-1900*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2003.

Specht, David L., and Richard R. Broholm. "Toward a Theology of Institutions." In *Practicing Servant-Leadership: Succeeding Through Trust, Bravery and Forgiveness*, edited by Larry C. Spears and Michael Lawrence. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

Stephan, Paul B. "Bob Jones University v. United States: Public Policy in Search of Tax Policy." *The Supreme Court Review* (1983): 33-82.

Stewart, Howard R. *American Baptists and the Church*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997.

Stoll, Mark. "Religion and African American Environmentalism." In *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History*, edited by Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll, 150-163. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.

Storey, John. *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity, 1900-1980*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986.

Stricklin, David. *A Genealogy of Dissent: Southern Baptist Protest in the Twentieth Century*. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999.

Sutton, Jerry. *A Matter of Conviction: A History of Southern Baptist Engagement with the Culture*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 2008.

———. *The Baptist Reformation: The Conservative Resurgence of the Southern Baptist Convention*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 2000.

Tatalovich, Raymond, and Mark J. Wattier. "Opinion Leadership: Elections, Campaigns, Agenda Setting, and Environmentalism." In *The Environmental Presidency*, edited by Dennis L. Soden, 147-188. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999.

Taylor, Katrina Darleen. "Contemporary Issues." In *Encyclopedia of the U.S. Government and the Environment: History, Policy and Politics*, edited by Matthew Lindstrom, 21-40. Vol. 1. Santa Barba, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011.

Theusen, Peter. "The Logic of Mainline Churchliness: Historical Background since the Reformation." In *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*, edited by Robert Wuthnow and John Evans, 27-53. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.

Thomas, Dwight. "An Environmental Legacy: Lynn White and Francis Schaeffer on Christian Responsibility to the Environment." *Faith and Practice* 2 (1996): 45-54.

Tipson, Steven M. *Methodists and Mainline Churches in the Moral Argument of Public Life*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Van Dyke, Fred. *Between Heaven and Earth: Christian Perspectives on Environmental Protection*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Publishing, 2010.

Vinz, Warren L. *Pulpit Politics: Faces of American Protestant Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997.

Wardin, Albert W. *The Twelve Baptist Tribes in the United States: A Historical and Statistical Analysis*. Atlanta, GA: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2007.

Weaver, Aaron. "Baptist Environmentalism." *Christian Ethics Today: A Journal of Christian Ethics* 16, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 19-21.

———. Review of *A Genealogy of Dissent: Southern Baptist Protest in the Twentieth Century*, by David Stricklin. *The Journal of Baptist Studies* 2 (2008).

Weaver, C. Douglas. *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008.

Wellock, Thomas R. *Preserving the Nation: The Conservation and Environmental Movements, 1870-2000*. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson Publishing, 2007.

Woodward, C. Vann. *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1951.

Wright, Richard. "Tearing down the green: environmental backlash in the evangelical subculture." *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 47 (1995): 80-91.

Wuthnow, Robert. "Introduction." In *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*, edited by Robert Wuthnow and John Evans, 1-24. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.

———. *The Restructuring of American Religion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988.

*Dissertations and Theses*

Ball, James. "Evangelical Protestants, the Ecological Crisis and Public Theology." PhD diss., Drew University, 1997.

Barrow, John. "An Era of Limits: Jimmy Carter and the Quest for a National Energy Policy." PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1996.

Barry, Shannon K. "'To Till It and Keep It': Engaging the American Christian Community in the Environmental Movement." Master's thesis, Tufts University, 2006.

Bengston, Teri J. "The Environmental Protection Agency's Enforcement of Resource Conservation and Recovery Act: Legal, Political Culture and Economic Models Compared." PhD diss., Northern Illinois University, 2005.

Campolo, Anthony. "A Study of the Controversy in the American Baptist Convention Over the Function and Structure of the Church." PhD diss., Temple University, 1967.

Gregg Sr., Larry. "The Method of Correlation in the Theology of Eric Charles Rust." PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991.

Hardee, William. "The Christian Philosophy of Eric Charles Rust: A Critical Evaluation." PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1985.

Hogue, Andrew. "With the Salt of he Law and the Light of the Gospel: The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention under Richard Land." Master's thesis, Baylor University, 2005.

Kearns, Laurel. "Saving the creation: Religious environmentalism." PhD diss., Emory University, 1994.

Keefe, John Michael. "Pollution, Politics, and Policy: Implementation of Hazardous Waste Policy Through the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act." PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1993.

Lacher, Katrina. "Extinguishing the Green Fire: The Rise of Opposition to Environmentalism, 1948-2010." PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 2011.

Larsen, Kenneth David. "God's Gardeners: American Protestant Evangelicals Confront Environmentalism, 1967-2000." PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001.

MacLeod, Michael R. "Forging Private Governance of Climate Change: The Power and Politics of Socially Responsible Investment." PhD diss., George Washington University, 2008).

McDaniel, Donald R. "Becoming Good Shepherds: A New Model of Creation Care for Evangelical Christians." PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011.

Robertson, Thomas. "The Population Bomb: Population Growth, Globalization, and American Environmentalism, 1945-1980." PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005.

Sisk, Ronald. "The Ethics of Henlee Barnette: A Study in Method." PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982.

Smith III, Andrew J. "Religious Attitudes Toward Nuclear Energy: An Analysis of States by Religious Groups." PhD diss., Drew University, 1983.

Stricklin, David. "An Interpretive History of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1950-1977." PhD diss., Baylor University, 1981.

Weaver, Aaron. "James M. Dunn and Soul Freedom: A Paradigm for Baptist Political Engagement." Master's thesis, Baylor University, 2008.

*Baptist Periodicals*

Allen, Bob. "Christian Right Leaders Push Back Against Concern for Global Warming." *EthicsDaily.com*, May 16, 2008. http://www.ethicsdaily.com/christian-right-leaders-push-back-against-concern-for-global-warming-cms-12657 (accessed September 1, 2012).

———. "Gore Urges New Covenant Baptists To Take Up Mantle of Creation Care." *Ethics Daily*, February 1, 2008. http://www.ethicsdaily.com/gore-urges-new-covenant-baptists-to-take-up-mantle-of-creation-care-cms-10040 (accessed August 9, 2011).

———. "Evangelicals Divide Over Global Warming." *Ethics Daily*, February 9, 2006. http://www.ethicsdaily.com/evangelicals-divide-over-global-warming-cms-6949 (accessed August 9, 2011).

———. "Southern Baptists Reject Scientific Consensus About Global Warming." *Ethics Daily*, June 14, 2007. http://www.ethicsdaily.com/southern-baptists-reject-scientific-consensus-about-global-warming-cms-9058 (accessed August 9, 2011).

———. "Christian Right Leaders Push Back Against Concern for Global Warming." *Ethics Daily*, May 16, 2008. http://www.ethicsdaily.com/christian-right-leaders-push-back-against-concern-for-global-warming-cms-12657 (accessed August 9, 2011).

Alford, Chip. "Broadman book designed as environmental 'primer'." Baptist Press, March 30, 1992, 3-4.

"American Baptists Discuss Evangelism." *Baptist Press*, November 3, 1967, 1.

"Churches Already Responding to Energy Crisis." *Biblical Recorder*, February 12, 1977, 4.

"Coalition to Advocate Environmental Balance." *SBC Life*, June 2007, 1-2.

"Criswell Praises Southern America Crusade Enthusiasm." *Baptist Press*, September 11, 1968, 3.

Davis, Connie. "'Save Creation' ministers urged." *Baptist Press*, January 19, 1990, 3-4.

"Differences and Agreements Shared." *Baptist Press*, May 25, 1964, 2-3.

"East Germans Broadcast Baptist-Produced Film." *Baptist Press*, December 28, 1973, 2-3.

"Energy Crisis Evokes Concern." *Baptist Standard*, December 12, 1973, 4.

"Energy Crisis/Cost Prompts Varied Response." *Baptist Standard*, May 25, 1977, 3.

"Environmental effort gets mixed review." *Western Recorder*, April 9, 1996, 17.

"Evangelical environmental effort initiated at White House Meeting." *Baptist Press*, October 12, 1993, 5-6.

"Evangelicals counter environmental movement." *Western Recorder*, April 25, 2000, 9.

Fields, W.C. "Peace Terms Key World Issue at Baptist Meeting." *Baptist Press*, March 31, 1966, 30.

Hastey, Stan. "Nation's Religious Leaders Asked to Join Energy Fight." *Baptist Press*, January 11, 1980, 2.

Hayes, Kenneth. "Baptist Leaders Speak Out on Pollution Problems." *Baptist Press*, December 8, 1970, 10.

"Home Earns American Film Festival Award." *Baptist Press*, May 30, 1972, 3.

"International Film Festival Honors Two Baptist TV Shows." *Baptist Press*, November 7, 1972, 1.

Jennings, Roy. "Roundup for Wednesday." *Baptist Press*, May 30, 1967, 30.

"Jubilee Advance Reaches Baptists Around World." *Baptist Press*, March 7, 1960, 30.

Kaylor, Brian. "Organizers Defend Environmental Statement." *EthicsDaily.com*, March 12, 2008. http://ethicsdaily.com/organizers-defend-environmental-statement-cms-12373 (accessed September 2, 2012).

Kelly, Mark. "Cornwall Alliance issues climate change agenda." *Baptist Press*, April 17, 2008. http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=27849 (accessed September 2, 2012).

Lackey, Terry. "Christian doctrine of creation requires God as creator, speakers say." *Baptist Press*, February 27, 1990, 5-6.

Lee, Dallas. "New Release." *Baptist Press*, May 27, 1967, 30.

Moore, Louis. "Land: Christians must confront worsening environmental crisis." *Baptist Press*, March 21, 1990, 5-6.

"Moyers say priorities are wrong, churches 'in bed with culture.'" *Baptist Press*, March 2, 1971, 2.

Newton, Jim. "Baptists Examine Authentic Morality in Debate Crucible." *Baptist Press*, March 19, 1970, 5-6.

"Nixon Urged to Study Population Control Report, Ignore Catholic Criticism." *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1972.

"No Gas Sales on Sunday Shouldn't Hurt Church." *Biblical Recorder*, December 1, 1973, 3.

"Nuclear Protest Will Equal War Protest Speaker Says." *Baptist Press*, August 23, 1977, 1-2.

O'Brien, Robert. "President Challenges Religious Leaders." *Baptist Press*, July 12, 1979, 3.

Parham, Robert. "Headlines Mislead Public About SBC Shift on Global Warming." *EthicsDaily.com*, March 11, 2008. http://www.ethicsdaily.com/article_ detail.cfm?AID-10198 (September 1, 2012).

"Pollution is topic of SBC TV program." *Western Recorder*, February 19, 1972, 6.

"Progressive Baptists Vote Fellowship Participation." *Baptist Press*, February 3, 1966, 4-5.

"Purpose of the Baptist Jubilee Advance." *Baptist Press*, May 5, 1956, 30.

"Resource on Social Issues Provided for SBC Leaders." *Baptist Press*, June 27, 1968, 30.

Ryan, Wendy. "AT&T, Philadelphia Electric Asked to Cancel Nuclear Operations." *The American Baptist*, July-August 1983, 16.

"SBC Sunday School Board Promotes Energy Sabbath." *The Alabama Baptist*, August 28, 1980, 3.

"Seminary student's climate change project is not SBC's." *Baptist Press*, March 10, 2008. http://baptistpress.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID-27582 (accessed September 1, 2012).

Strode, Tom. "Coalition of more than 100 evangelicals presents alternative on global warming." *Baptist Press*, July 31, 2006. http://www.bpnews.net/ bpnews.asp?id=23708 (accessed August 28, 2012).

———. "Group of evangelicals issues global warming stance; several notable names are absent." *Baptist Press*, February 9, 2006. http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=22617 (accessed August 28, 2012).

———. "Land: Evangelicals helpful at environmental meeting." *Baptist Press*, May 18, 1992, 3-4.

———. "Religious leaders issue calls for biblical view of ecology." *Baptist Press*, April 18, 2000.

———. "'We Get It!' environmental campaign launches with goal to be biblical, factual." *Baptist Press*, May 16, 2008. http://www.sbcbaptistpress.org/ bpnews.asp? id=28076 (accessed July 6, 2011).

"Take Population Study Seriously, Leaders Urge." *Baptist Press*, March 31, 1972, 1-2.

"Text of Some Resolutions." *Religious Herald*, June 30, 1983, 10.

"Theology of Ecology Urged at Seminary Lecture-Dialogue." *Baptist Press*, April 6, 1971, 1-2.

Toalston, Art. "Global warming campaign launched by National Council of Churches," *Baptist Press*, August 17, 1998. http://www.bpnews.net /printerfriendly.asp?ID=2502 (accessed September 11, 2012).

Turner, Darrell. "For now, Land isn't signing environmental declaration." *Baptist Press*, June 3, 1994, 4-5.

"Two Southern Baptist TV Shows Accepted By Armed Forces." *Baptist Press*, August 20, 1973, 1.

Weaver, Aaron. "Saving the Environment—A Resolution at a Time." *Ethics Daily*, July 21, 2009. http://www.ethicsdaily.com/saving-the-environment-a-resolution-at-a-time-cms-14571 (accessed June 8, 2011).

Westbury, Joe. "Younger conservative leaders need a voice in SBC." *The Christian Index*, April 10, 2008. http://www.christianindex.org/4329.article (accessed September 2, 2012).

———. “Seminary president lauds student’s courage.” *The Christian Index*, April 10, 2008. http://www.christianindex.org/4327.article (accessed September 1, 2012).

"World May Become 'Environmental Pigsty' Seminary Professor Says." *Baptist Press*, November 11, 1971, 30-31.

Young, James Lee. "Energy Shortage Not Crisis For Most—Yet." *Baptist Press*, November 29, 1973, 15.

*Newspapers and Magazines*

"A New Image for AntiNuclear Lobby." *New York Times*, April 17, 1984, A18.

Anderson, David E. "Church group goes after Watt." *United Press International*, November 4, 1981.

Anderson, David E. "Council of Churches Seeks Ways to Meet 'Human Needs Crisis.'" *United Press International*, November 5, 1981.

"Are Evangelicals Warming to Earth Issues?" *Christianity Today*, June 1992, 63-65.

Aslam, Abid. "Union Carbidge Set for Investor Fight Over Bhopal." *Inter Press Service*, March 28, 1990.

Beisner, Calvin. "Perceived Southern Baptist Split on Global Warming Evaporating." Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation. http://www.cornwallalliance .org/press/read/perceived-southern-baptist-split-on-global-warming-evaporating/ (accessed September 2, 2012).

Blau, Eleanor. "Church Groups Hits Corporations." *New York Times*, January 26, 1974, 45.

Boyle, Katherine. "Climate: Evangelical coalition says emission curbs could hurt poor." *E&E News*, May 2, 2007.

Bullard, Robert. "20th Anniversary of the Warren County PCB Landfill Protests." Dissident Voice, May 29, 2007, http://www.dissidentvoice.org/2007/05/25th-anniversary-of-the-warren-county-pcb-landfill-protests (accessed June 18, 2012).

Cahn, Robert and Patricia Cahn, "Did Earth Day Change the World?" *Environment*, September 1990, 17.

Campaign to Check the Population Explosion. "Display Ad 229." *New York Times*, April 13, 1969, E9.

"CERES Conference is Backdrop for Ford Motor's Adoption of Environmental Code." *PR Newswire*, April 14, 2000.

"Church Center for United Nations Dedicated." *Christian Century*. October 9, 1963, 1229.

"Church Coalition Assails Utility Ads Favoring Nuclear Power." *New York Times*, January 5, 1984, A18.

"Church Heads Welcome Study on Population." *The Tennessean*, March 30, 1972.

"Clerical Group Urges Americans to Support Carter 'Call to Action'." *New York Times*, July 17, 1979, A13.

"Climate Change: Shareholders pull resolutions after companies promise change." *Greenwire*, March 18, 2005.

Crutsinger, Martin, "Environmentalists Say Reagan's Cuts Would Reverse 10-year gains." *Associated Press*, March 11, 1981.

Cushman Jr., John. "Religious Groups Mount a Campaign to Support Pact on Global Warming." *New York Times*, August 15, 1998, A10.

DeBose, Brian. "Senators revisit global warming; McCain-Lieberman legislation is introduced." *The Washington Times*, March 31, 2004, A06.

"Faith-Based Groups Call for Energy Conservation and Climate Justice." *Environmental News Network*, May 24, 2001.

Frame, Randall L. "Christianity and Ecology: A Better Mix Than Before." *Christianity Today*, April 1990, 38-39.

Freedman, Andrew. "Abrupt Climate Change Bill Heads to Senate Floor." *Environment and Energy Daily*, March 10, 2004.

Goodstein, Laurie. "Evangelical Leaders Join Global Warming Initiative." *The New York Times*, February 8, 2006. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/08/national/08warm.htm?_r=3&oref=slogin&

Gorski, Eric. "Baptists question human role in global warming." *USA Today*, June 14, 2007. http://www.usatoday.com/weather/climate/globalwarming/2007-06-13-baptists-warming-vote_N.htm (accessed August 9, 2011).

"Green, religious shareholders ask GM, Ford to cut emissions." *Agence France Presse*, December 12, 20012.

Heffern, Rich. "The energy wake-up call." *National Catholic Reporter*, June 15, 2001, 10.

Herbut, Paula. "Religious leaders call Reagan budget 'selfish, dangerous'. *Washington Post*, March 21, 1983, G12.

Hinton, Carla. "Baptist environment stance set; some global-warming language removed from final document." *The Oklahoman*, March 15, 2008, E3.

Hugh Moore Fund. "Catholic Bishops Assail Birth Control As Millions Face Starvation." *New York Times*, December 18, 1966, E14.

Hugh Moore Fund. "Display Ad 189." *New York Times*, December 15, 1964, E5.

Hyer, Majorie. "Church Coalition Seeks Energy Savings." *Washington Post*, February 27, 1979, C5.

"Investors File Proxy Resolutions With 5 Utilities on CO2 Exposure." *Electric Utility Week*, January 20, 2003, 2.

Johnson, Allen. "Keeping the Ark Afloat: Kempthorne Bill will Destroy God's creation." *Charleston Gazette*, March 30, 1988, 5a.

Keefe, Bob. "Heated debate likely over bill to cut carbon." *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 1, 2008, 5F.

Kronholm, William. "Congressman Accuses Administration of Dragging Feet on Cleanup." *Associated Press*, July 7, 1981.

———. "Environmentalists Charge EPA Moving Backward on Superfund Cleanup." *Associated Press*, November 17, 1981.

Linder, Lee. "PECO Shareholders Hammer Dissidents' Bid to Stop Limerick." *Associated Press*, April 13, 1988.

McFadden, Robert D. "Millions Join Battle for a Beloved Planet." *New York Times*, April 23, 1990, A1.

Morgan, Stephen J. "PE Shareholders Reject anti-Limerick Proposal." *United Press International*, April 10, 1985.

"Nixon Urged to Study Population Control Report, Ignore Catholic Criticism." *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1972.

"One in Five ICCR Sponsored Proxy Resolutions Withdrawn Because of Corporate Cooperation Resolutions At Lowes, Liberty Property Trust, Simon Property Groups." *Financial Wire*, June 26, 2006.

Parmley, Helen. "Baptists Reaffirm Motherhood Support." *Dallas Morning News*, May 11, 1974, 14.

Reed, W.A. "SBC Tracts Called Un-Christian—Not So, Says Agency." *The Tennessean*. May 8, 1974, 7.

"Religious Groups Defend Endangered Species Act." *Christian Century*, November 12, 1997, 1029-1030.

"Religious Leaders Announce New Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship; Take the Environmental Movement to Task for Misguided View of God, Man, Nature." *PR Newswire*, April 17, 2000.

"Religious Leaders Open Drive to Aid the Poor." *New York Times*, April 28, 1982, A25.

Robinson, Douglas. "6 Church Groups Fighting Mine Project." *New York Times*. February 9, 1971, 78.

Ross, Matthew. "Black and Green." *The New Republic*, March 2, 1992, 15-16.

Schierholz, Tom. "Pollution sanctions loom as clean air deadlines comes due." *Christian Science Monitor*, August 29, 1988, 3.

Shabecoff, Philip. "U.S. Reversing Stand on Burial of Toxic Liquid." *New York Times*, March 18, 1982, A1.

"Southern Baptist group shifts position on climate." *Christian Century*, April 8, 2009. http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2008-04/southern-baptist-group-shifts-position-climate (accessed September 1, 2012).

"Strong Showing on Global Warming Resolution at TXU is 'Major Victory' For Religious Shareholder Activities." *PR Newswire*, May 16, 2003.

"Superfund: Holding Back the Money." *Chemical Week*, July 8, 1981, 25.

Taggart, Frank. "Large-family insult: Baptist group charges Mother's Day affront." *Dallas Times Herald*, May 7, 1974, 3, 15.

"The heat goes on; Congress' shelving of legislation to combat climate change fuels a prime time campaign issue." *Houston Chronicle*, June 10, 2008, 8.

"'We Get It' Campaign Kicks Off Campaign for a Million Signatures." Institute on Religion and Democracy, May 15, 2008. http://www.we-getit.org/press /Press_Release_-_IRD.pdf (accessed August 9, 2011).

Wilson, George C. "Religious Groups Lobby Against the MX Missile." *Washington Post*, December 1, 1982, A12.

Witham, Larry. "Alliance shuns nature worship; Religious groups urge more science in ecology policies." *The Washington Times*, April 18, 2000, A8.