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REVIEWS

The Great Complacency: Conservative Christians and Climate Change

Neall W. Pogue, *The Nature of the Religious Right: The Struggle Between Conservative Evangelicals and the Environmental Movement* (Cornell University Press, 2022).

Robin Globus Veldman, *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism: Why Evangelical Christians Oppose Action on Climate Change* (University of California Press, 2019).

James Morton Turner and Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Republican Reversal: Conservatives and the Environment from Nixon to Trump* (Harvard University Press, 2018).

In 1981, Ronald Reagan selected Wyoming attorney James G. Watt to serve as Secretary of the Interior, tasked with managing the nation's public lands, federal parks, and natural resources. Then president of the conservative Mountain States Legal Foundation, Watt's past relationship to the Department of the Interior had been primarily antagonistic, pressing the federal government to loosen regulations and to make public lands more accessible to timber, mining, and ranching interests. His nomination thus signaled that the Reagan administration intended to develop lands that had been protected in the past, drawing immediate scrutiny from environmental organizations and advocates. Though Watt's posture toward conservation and resource management may have been defensible within a secular conception of politics and policy, his approach quickly became entangled with the tenets of his evangelical Christian faith. It was around this time, according to an array of contemporary sources, that Watt drew the connection himself. The United States may not need to conserve its natural resources at all, he quipped, because "I do not know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns."[1] Thus with one careless remark, Watt established and substantiated a popular association between evangelical theology, conservative policymaking, and an exceedingly transitory, entirely disposable planet.

Though Watt's tenure was short—he was forced out in 1983 after some jarring comments on affirmative action and a public feud with the Beach Boys—his profile has proven durable. Over the four decades that followed, the claim that "end times" thinking has left evangelical Christians complacent on environmental conservation has been oft-repeated and published, with former Vice President Al Gore and journalist Bill Moyers among its more prominent proponents. In 2015, when a Pew Research poll revealed that only 28 percent of white evangelicals accepted the science behind anthropogenic climate

[1] Quoted in Robin Globus Veldman, *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism: Why Evangelical Christians Oppose Action on Climate Change* (University of California Press, 2019), 28.

change—far fewer than any other religious demographic—the theory seemed to be confirmed.[2] As far as most evangelicals are concerned, environmental problems either do not exist or do not matter. God is in control of the world and will end it on his own terms, however much oil and coal we burn.

Though this dismissive characterization may feel intuitive or cathartic to critics of the evangelical movement, the reality of the situation is somewhat more nuanced and complex. In recent years, scholars from a range of disciplines have investigated the matter and sought to clarify the relationships between evangelical belief, conservative politics, and environmental protection. Their careful labor has yielded a variety of fascinating reads, including the three books under consideration in this review. Each of them discusses James Watt, but all locate the problem in a discursive environment far larger than any one man or idea. Together, they explain how forty years of shifts in the American religious and political ecosystems have left evangelicals largely dubious of or indifferent to climate change, a problem that the United Nations has termed "the defining issue of our time."[3]

In *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism: Why Evangelical Christians Oppose Action on Climate Change*, Robin Globus Veldman confronts the "end times" question directly, even coining a term to pin it down. In her view, the "end-time apathy hypothesis" originated with Watt and almost immediately garnered sweeping acceptance, a quick and easy achievement that both verifies its persuasive force and casts its reliability into question. Clearly there is a certain logic to the idea that a doomed world need not be preserved, with implications likely to comfort believers and alarm the rest, especially when it is the believers who wield policymaking power. But as a practical matter, is it true that most evangelical Christians reject climate science because of their belief that the world will end soon? Veldman is open to the idea, but not convinced. "My point," she writes, "is that we do not know to what extent it is true because its apparent plausibility has for too long made further investigation seem unnecessary."[4]

Having determined further investigation necessary, Veldman set out for Georgia, where she spent fourteen months conducting interviews and holding focus groups among members of various evangelical congregations. In the course of these discussions, she worked to refine her understanding of Christian eschatology, if only because her respondents did not fit cleanly into standard pre- or post-millennialist camps. Instead, Veldman distinguishes between what she terms "hot" and "cool" millennialists. Hot millennialists are those who take strong interest in biblical prophecy and map it onto current events, anticipating the end with hopefulness and enthusiasm, and perhaps even identifying climate change as a mechanism of God's judgment. Cool millennialists, by contrast, are those who foresee the end but do not closely regard the signs, and who are therefore more likely to ignore or discount climate change. Many also register simply as "practical environmentalists," seeing environmental stewardship as right and necessary but maintaining that personal salvation supersedes any such worldly concerns. Having identified this cast of characters, Veldman counts them up and assesses their influence.

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[2] "Religion and Views on Climate and Energy Issues," *Pew Research Center,* October 15, 2015, https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2015/10/22/religion-and-views-on-climate-and-energy-issues.
[3] "Climate Change," United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/climate-change.
[4] Veldman, *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism,* 29.

In short, there are far more cool millennialists than hot, and practical environmentalism prevails among them. For Veldman, this finding challenges the end-time apathy hypothesis, if only because a worldview animated by expectation of the end times would be prone to identify climate change as yet another sign, and so as cause for celebration. While hot millennialists do exist and some do embrace this perspective, the large majority of respondents represented the cooler view, inclining them to doubt climate change entirely—whether as apocalyptic mechanism or as lived reality. "In sum," Veldman writes, "while cool millennialists accepted earthquakes and natural disasters as indicators of the approaching end times, they found little biblical support for the idea that climate change could be interpreted similarly." Instead, "they tended to argue that those who suggested the climate was changing were doing so in order to *undermine* Christian understandings of the end times," largely by denying God's sovereignty. Cool millennialists thus tend to identify climate change as part of a rival worldview, or a "competing eschatology."[5] For the most the part, Veldman's respondents identified climate change as a concern for *them,* but not for *us.*

Indeed, Veldman's key finding may be that, on climate change and environmentalism more broadly, evangelicals are far less motivated by end times theorizing than by identity politics. Drawing on sociologist Christian Smith, she traces the problem back to the "embattled mentality" that evangelicals have been developing since the 1960s, conceiving themselves as locked in a spiritual struggle with worldly liberals, whether of the theological or political variety.[6] Almost invariably based in some form of Christian nationalism, this mentality suggests that the United States was founded by and for Christians, its customs, norms, and laws infused with Christian morality from the start, and its future dedicated to Christian witness in a fallen world. In the latter half of the twentieth century, that project was disrupted by a rising tide of secularism, driven by the activist Left and enshrined by a liberal Supreme Court. In these years prayer and Bible reading were removed from schools, abortion was legalized nationwide, homosexuality was normalized, feminism infiltrated the home, drug use and rebellion defined a generation, and certain Christian institutions were targeted by the Internal Revenue Service over their refusal to desegregate. These and other developments challenged the cultural hegemony evangelicals had enjoyed to that point in history, at once confronting and crafting the culture war ethos that would drive their political behavior for decades to come. Because environmentalism featured among the array of liberal-Left concerns, it became increasingly associated with the secular opposition. Whatever they may think about the end times, then, most evangelicals are predisposed to approach environmental threats from a position of skepticism rather than trust.

It is also true that, as they became increasingly suspicious of the Left, evangelicals became increasingly comfortable with the Right, embracing conservatism for its association with traditional values and adopting its laissez-faire economic preferences as well. As the historians Timothy Gloege and Kevin Kruse have shown, members of the American business elite had been courting evangelical leaders at least since the 1930s, soliciting their help in resistance to an array of New Deal provisions.[7]

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[5] Veldman, *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism,* 79. Emphasis hers.

[6] Veldman, *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism,* 88; Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[7] Timothy Gloege, *Guaranteed Pure: The Moody Bible Institute, Business, and the Making of Modern Evangelicalism* (University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America*

Through mid-century, these partnerships were formalized by shared commitments to small government, low taxes, anticommunism, and traditionalism, coalescing a front that would hold through the culture warfare of years to come. By the first decade of the 21st century, the union of evangelicals and pro-business Republicans had been sealed and sanctified, with the oil-friendly George W. Bush administration in the White House and the nation's most prominent conservative preachers campaigning *against* action on climate change.[8] Though some evangelical leaders tried to press for a greener, more conscientious faith during these years, the prevailing currents were by then too strong to resist. Veldman is excellent on all of these points, providing a thorough, detailed rebuttal to a series of commonplace claims that had long been allowed to travel uncontested or clarified. Readers of her work will be primed for more context, of which there is much.

The larger backstory on evangelicals and the environment is thoughtfully told by Neall W. Pogue in his *The Nature of the Religious Right: The Struggle Between Conservative Evangelicals and the Environmental Movement.* Like Veldman, Pogue sets out to challenge some conventional wisdom, identifying two claims in particular that fail under scrutiny. The first of these, of course, is the popular suggestion that evangelical apathy is traceable to theology, especially to beliefs about the coming end times and humanity's fundamental "dominion" or "mastery" over the natural world. The second traces it to politics, citing the symbiotic relationship between evangelicals and the Republican Party as reason enough for the one to endorse positions the other holds dear, like privileging "a strong economy over the health of nature."[9] Also like Veldman, Pogue stops short of dismissing these ideas entirely, conceding that they do exist and may well have their backers. But he argues that their influence is overstated, in part because it is recent. Up until a point in the early 1990s, evangelicals were pretty green.

Indeed, as of 1970, when the first Earth Day was celebrated and the Environmental Protection Agency established, Americans had reached a broad consensus around the importance of conservation. These first steps were taken under the Nixon Administration, after all, and both the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act were passed with bipartisan support during those years. Following a number of prominent ecological crises—including a 1969 incident in which Ohio's Cuyahoga River erupted in flames—environmental protection quickly became a source of agreement rather than division. Because the urgency was obvious, the issue was not vulnerable to abstraction or culture war appropriation. In 1970, fundamentalist stalwart Francis Schaeffer called Christians to environmental stewardship in his *Pollution and the Death of Man,* and *Christianity Today* editor Harold Lindsell wrote that Americans were committing "ecological suicide." In an essay that also encouraged readers to consider Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring,* Lindsell wrote, "We have exploited and raped nature… We have subdued and corrupted it and, if we continue at the rate we are going, the planet will shortly be uninhabitable."[10] These admonitions, issued by these figures and read against

Invented Christian America (Basic Books, 2015). For more on the historic relationship between evangelicalism and the American oil industry specifically, see Darren Dochuk, *Anointed with Oil: How Christianity and Crude Made Modern America* (Basic Books, 2019).

[8] Veldman, *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism,* 164.

[9] Neall W. Pogue, *The Nature of the Religious Right: The Struggle Between Conservative Evangelicals and the Environmental Movement* (Cornell University Press, 2022), 4.

[10] Quoted in Pogue, *The Nature of the Religious Right,* 28.

the politics of the early 70s, suggest that bipartisan, interfaith cooperation and collaboration were squarely on the table at the launch of the environmental movement.

Rifts cracked quickly, however, and Pogue suggests that the environmentalists—or some of them, anyway—are deserving of blame. In 1967, medieval historian Lynn White, Jr. had published an article titled "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," in which he traced centuries of environmental carelessness and destruction back to the Christian doctrine that humanity has been separated from nature and granted dominion over it. Originally printed in *Science* magazine, this essay was reprinted in a variety of other outlets over the years, including *The Environmental Handbook,* a high-profile anthology released in advance of the first Earth Day.[11] Other chapters in that text called for aggressive policy responses to overpopulation—such as placing limits on how many children each family can have and making major investments in contraception and sex education—and one recommended a list of environmentally friendly faith traditions that conspicuously excluded Christianity. Though most of the observations and ideas in the *Handbook* were commonsensical and uncontroversial, Pogue argues that certain of the entries were provocative enough to alienate evangelicals. The book "baldly accused Christianity of ruining the Earth while encouraging readers to find another faith," an "insulting approach" that "proved a defining moment when the secular environmental movement officially rejected the cautious but willing conservative evangelical community."[12] Though Lindsell had so recently worried about the "exploitation" and "rape" of nature, his *Christianity Today* began to oppose the environmental movement from the *Handbook* on, and he never wrote about conservation again.

Throughout the 1970s and 80s, evangelicals worked to calibrate the correct Christian posture on environmental concerns, pledging to honor God's creation and to improve it sensibly without succumbing to the radical demands of the Leftist earth worshippers. That negotiation drew input from a wide range of stakeholders, including business and political interests, media figures and pastors, as well as schoolteachers and textbooks. Though the authors of this rhetoric emphasized responsibility and stewardship, the long arc of the discourse bent steadily toward less of each rather than more, in part because world events seemed to conspire against environmental concern. In the midst of an oil embargo, high energy prices, and a stagnating economy, Americans of all beliefs and creeds deprioritized the environment and focused instead on pocketbook issues. When the foundering Carter Administration gave way to Ronald Reagan and James G. Watt, a new day had dawned in America. And yet, while this constellation of forces continued to coalesce around a refreshed tolerance for extraction, consumption, and waste, American evangelicals maintained their ostensible commitment to "creation care." When Pat Robertson addressed the Republican National Convention in 1988, he asserted that Reagan's "city on a hill" must be sustained responsibly, a "city where the water is pure to drink, the air clean to breathe, where the citizens respect and care for the soil, the forests, and God's other creatures who share with us the earth, the sky, and the water."[13] Despite everything, evangelicals were still game for an environmentalism of a particular sort.

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[11] Pogue, *The Nature of the Religious Right,* 18, 27.
[12] Pogue, *The Nature of the Religious Right,* 28.
[13] Quoted in Pogue, *The Nature of the Religious Right,* 106.

This changed, finally, in the 1990s and 20-aughts, as the culture war forces identified by Smith and emphasized by Veldman molded and calcified evangelicalism into a decidedly anti-environmentalist bloc. As theological and political conservatives blended seamlessly into one constituency, as evangelical and Republican priorities achieved near perfect alignment, and as the environmental movement was relentlessly marginalized and mocked into contemptible extremity by evangelical opinion shapers in both the pulpit and the press, the practical influence of "stewardship" arguments atrophied and died. Despite the focused advocacy of certain important figures—including Robert Dugan and Richard Land, for a while—evangelicals were by the turn of the millennium far more invested in fighting culture wars than in caring for creation. By 2006, when Richard Cizik joined other evangelical leaders in signing the Evangelical Climate Initiative, such a public declaration had become anathema in the movement, and it was all over but the firing. Pogue provides a thorough investigation of the texts and contexts informing this evolution, demonstrating persuasively that evangelicals and the environment have not been simply and always at odds. The dire state of their relationship in 2022 has been fifty years in the making, the product of internal debates and external influences, advances and retreats, culminating for now in an awful alienation.

As Pogue contextualizes Veldman, so too do James Morton Turner and Andrew C. Isenberg contextualize Pogue. In their book, *The Republican Reversal: Conservatives and the Environment from Nixon to Trump*, Turner and Isenberg situate the evangelical developments within the still larger trajectory of political conservatism and the Republican Party across the same decades. Indeed, the evangelicals' hard rightward shift since 1980 is more intelligible when understood within the rip currents of the full Republican tide. Short though his tenure proved to be, James G. Watt survived as a type, born again and persistently again in the long line of rightwing, evangelical, business-friendly and environmentally careless Republican appointees who certified the unequivocal victory of movement conservatism over a political party and a religious faith, neither of which had been previously oriented around its particular goals. Among the many great tragedies of the climate change era stands the solemn and brutal reminder that none of this was inevitable—everything could have been otherwise. Morton and Isenberg go a long way toward explaining why it is not.

The contemporary Republican approach to environmental problems large and small constitutes a "reversal" because Republicans past were environmentally conscious. Abraham Lincoln created Yosemite National Park, Ulysses S. Grant created Yellowstone, Benjamin Harrison created the first national forests, and Theodore Roosevelt designated 230 million acres of American land for a variety of protected forests, preserves, and parks. That legacy held, for the most part, through Richard Nixon's achievements in 1970-72. In 1964, the Wilderness Act sailed through Congress, receiving nearly unanimous support in the House (373-1) and overwhelming support in the Senate (73-12). Environmental matters were not yet subject to a partisan split, and the federal government was still able to achieve great things when summoned by need. And yet, ominously, among the twelve senators to oppose the Wilderness Act was Arizona conservative Barry Goldwater, the party's new standard bearer. Goldwater's rise corresponded with a broader ideological mobilization then on-going, with politically conservative neoliberal economists like Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman making converts among Republican elites, and their devotees developing think tanks to grow

and propagate their ideas.[14] At the same time, the New Christian Right formed and mobilized through organizations like the Moral Majority, activating congregants as voters and ushering them into a uniformly conservative bloc. Though moderates had dominated the Republican Party through mid-century, they were increasingly vulnerable to attacks from the right, until by the 1990s the Republican moderate had become yet another endangered species that party leadership would not deign to protect. Morton and Isenberg note that, prior to 1980, the GOP "(1) viewed environmental issues with a sense of urgency that demanded action, (2) put faith in scientific research and professional expertise, and (3) embraced an essential role for government in regulating business and industry to safeguard the environment and public health." In the decades since 1980, Republicans have increasingly "(1) viewed environmental concerns as alarmist and exaggerated, (2) cast doubt on scientific research and dismissed professional expertise, and (3) viewed many environmental regulations as unnecessary burdens on the economy and as threats to individual freedom and the free enterprise system."[15] A core Republican constituency, evangelical Christians have walked this path as well.

The United States is a large nation, home to many interests, and the broad success of the conservative cause lies in the ability of its leaders to unite a variety of factions along a few resonant themes. While the regulatory state grated on conservative-minded citizens nationwide in the 1970s, it did so for different—often *regional*—reasons. During the Carter administration, as many white parents in the south and east continued to fume over mandated desegregation and bussing, many westerners were chafing against federal land restrictions, most of which dated back to Teddy Roosevelt. Even today, the federal government owns approximately one-third of the nation's public lands, the vast majority (93 percent) of which are located in twelve western states and continental shelves. In many of these states, the deeds for enormous tracts of public land are held somewhere in Washington, DC, and so are controlled by decisionmakers thousands of miles from the soil itself. In Colorado, the federal government owns 36 percent of the land; in Utah, 64 percent; in Nevada, 86 percent; and in Alaska, 90 percent.[16] After 1973, as the nation struggled through an energy crisis, many westerners called for the development of these lands and the extraction of their coal, oil, and gas, with previously bipartisan environmental protection rules now standing in the way. Thus James Watt's appointment to the Department of the Interior in 1981 signified the formation of a broad, ideological alliance of concerned citizens against a burdensome, meddling government.[17]

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[14] At the time, a popular complaint about American political parties observed that they were not polarized *enough*. Bipartisan bills and nearly unanimous votes suggested to critics that Republicans and Democrats were too similar to each other, leaving voters with little of substance to choose. When the conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly published her endorsement of Goldwater in 1964, she presented him as something different from the normal, backroom, good ol' boy politics. See Schlafly, *A Choice Not an Echo: The Inside Story of How American Presidents are Chosen* (Pere Marquette Pr, 1964).

[15] James Morton Turner and Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Republican Reversal: Conservatives and the Environment from Nixon to Trump* (Harvard University Press, 2018), 6-7.

[16] Turner and Isenberg, *The Republican Reversal,* 56-57.

[17] With Watt in place at the Department of the Interior, Reagan nominated Anne Gorsuch—the mother of a current Supreme Court Justice—to head the Environmental Protection Agency. Another highly controversial figure who resigned early, Gorsuch worked to dismantle the EPA from the inside. The agency's budget shrank by 21 percent during her first year, and 26 percent during her second. See Morton and Isenberg, *The Republican Reversal,* 104.

By the turn of the century, the battle lines had been entirely redrawn along these lines. Though the campaigns of the early 70s had aligned both major parties against pollution and waste, those of the early aughts cast pro-economy, small government conservatives against pro-environment, big government liberals, pushing voters to take sides in a vicious false dilemma with major implications for climate change. The George W. Bush administration placed itself squarely in the first column, working with ideological allies at the Competitive Enterprise Institute and Exxon to build political support for a variety of shared ambitions, including the deregulation of carbon dioxide emissions under the Clean Air Act. The Administration also worked with the American Petroleum Institute to question the science on climate change and to delegitimate the Kyoto Protocol, a process that was especially smooth given that Phil Cooney, head of Bush's Council on Environmental Quality, had served previously as chief climate lobbyist for API.[18] Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Bush's approval rating soared even as the nation's attention was dramatically turned, giving the Administration free rein to pursue these goals with little public scrutiny. Though the 2008 election of Barack Obama lifted hopes for climate action—especially the Waxman-Markey "cap-and-trade" bill—the economic argument continued to prevail in Congress, and no substantive legislation was passed. Following Donald Trump's election in 2016, the unified Republican government was largely free to roll back environmental regulation, which it did in aggressive fashion.

The Republican Reversal presents a fifty-year narrative of the struggle between this organized and highly ideological movement and the environmental advocates who worked to resist its advance—sometimes at the polls, sometimes in the chambers, and often in the courts. Morton and Isenberg tell this story in strikingly even-handed fashion, granting industry lobbyists and their Republican allies as much good faith as the evidence will allow, and acknowledging their moments of caution and concern whenever these periodically arise. But overall, this is some very somber history, a record of ambition and greed that has left the world dirtier, more dangerous, less equal, and far less just than it might have been otherwise.

If human beings had taken climate change more seriously and from an earlier date, their civilization would be far less imperiled than it is today. The climate crisis is not breaking news in the 2020s—it was recognized and warned against long before. Even discounting those perceptive scientists who foresaw the effects of carbon emission as early as the nineteenth century, Nathaniel Rich has shown that high-ranking officials in the United States government were calling for action in the 1970s.[19] (If the unalloyed tragedy of American climate policy were to be captured in a single telling anecdote, it may be that Jimmy Carter installed solar panels on the White House roof, and Ronald Reagan had them promptly removed.) James Hansen testified before Congress in 1988, and Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature* came out the following year.[20] Michael E. Mann, Raymond S. Bradley, and Malcolm K. Hughes published their "hockey stick" paper in 1999, and Al Gore starred in *An Inconvenient Truth* in 2006, doing global climate advocacy

[18] Morton and Isenberg, *The Republican Reversal,* 170-173. The tactics employed by fossil fuel interests to cast doubt on climate science are documented in depth in Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Climate Change* (Bloomsbury, 2011).
[19] Nathaniel Rich, *Losing Earth: A Recent History* (MCD, 2019).
[20] Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (Random House, 1989, 1999, 2006).

for which he received a Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.[21] World leaders deliberated in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, in Kyoto in 1997, in Copenhagen in 2009, and in Paris in 2016, all without a substantive commitment from the United States, the world's leading emitter of greenhouse gases. This is just a small sampling of the many potential turning points at which we failed to turn, our nation barreling heedlessly into preventable disaster. That mindless track record extends to the present, as the Biden Administration's increasingly modest climate plan has pursued narrow passage around the uniform opposition of fifty Republican Senators and the exacting demands of one Joe Manchin.[22]

None of this would have been possible, of course, had evangelical Christians refused to comply. A central piece in the Republican coalitional puzzle, evangelicals have the power to shift the political winds. Had they not been so completely consumed by culture war obsessions, they may not have allowed climate change into the culture war frame, and so this intensely divided nation may have been able to come together over at least one matter of grave importance to all. From this vantage it is difficult not to resent Harold Lindsell, who, if Pogue has it right, went from fierce environmental advocacy to complete indifference the very moment that some jerks insulted his beliefs. It is difficult to understand how a conclusive answer to a question of fact—he wrote, remember, that nature was being "raped"—can be so quickly discarded over a matter of hurt feelings. (If we agree that homelessness is a problem and you implicate my religious beliefs among the causes, I may be irritated with you but homelessness will still be a concern.) If Lindsell's U-turn on environmentalism is in any way representative of the larger evangelical swing, then the whole enterprise is simply indefensible.

Still, the climate continues to change and we remain in desperate need of concerted action. The road to consensus has never been paved with recrimination, and climate advocates have grappled for two decades with the difficult question of how to bring evangelicals on board. Maybe it cannot be done, and if so, the end may be foregone—a bitterly ironic outcome now that the end times question has been dismissed. And even if hope remains, it likely requires concessions that climate advocates may not be prepared to make. Having developed a full and coherent theory of "environmental justice" that links climate action to an array of related causes long prioritized on the Left, they may be unwilling to abandon vulnerable communities as a condition of partnership with longtime rivals.[23] At some point, however, these intractable disputes must boil

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[21] Michael E. Mann, Raymond S. Bradley, Malcolm K. Hughes, "Northern Hemisphere Temperatures During the Past Millennium: Inferences, Uncertainties, and Limitations," *Geophysical Research Letters* 26.6 (1999): 759-762; *An Inconvenient Truth,* directed by Guggenheim Davis. (Lawrence Bender Productions/Participant, 2006), 1 hr, 58 min, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZUoYGAI5i0.

[22] Manchin's ties to the coal industry are matters of public record, and his conflicts of interest have been documented by Christopher Flavelle and Julie Tate, "How Manchin Aided Coal, and Earned Millions," *The New York Times,* March 27, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/27/climate/manchin-coal-climate-conflicts.html.

[23] There are lots of book-length treatments of environmental justice, including Jason Hickel, *Less is More: How Degrowth Will Save the World* (Windmill, 2021); Ayana E. Johnson and Katharine K. Wilkinson, ed., *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis* (One World, 2020); Catherine Coleman Flowers, *Waste: One Woman's Fight Against America's Dirty Secret* (The New Press, 2020); Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long As the Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock* (Beacon, 2020); Julie Sze, *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger* (University of California Press, 2020); Dorcetta Taylor, *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility* (New York University Press, 2014); and Luke W. Cole and Sheila R. Foster, *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement* (New York University Press, 2001).

down to certain fundamentals. Can a big tent coalition of climate advocates be assembled? Do points of agreement and common cause exist? Would such a coalition move elected officials to act aggressively to reduce carbon emissions? And, if so in each case, what other values must be compromised in order to create the necessary mobilization? These are difficult, discouraging questions, attendant to an enormous, overwhelming problem. I cannot claim to have the answers. Instead, I will recommend a book by someone who may—Katharine Hayhoe's *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World.*[24] Concerned evangelicals should read it and pass it around at church.

Eric C. Miller[25]

[24] Katharine Hayhoe, *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World* (One Signal, 2021).

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