Faith and the Environment: Religious Beliefs and Attitudes on Environmental Policy*

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Theory: Conservative Christian theology contains a set of beliefs that run counter to the philosophy supporting environmentalism. Hypotheses: Conservative eschatology (Biblical literalism, End Times thinking), religious tradition, and religious commitment should be negatively related to support for environmental policy.

Data: Using data from four national surveys of clergy, religious activists, political-party contributors, and the mass public, we analyze the impact of religious variables on attitudes toward environmental protection. Results: We find that conservative eschatology, religious tradition, and religious commitment all have strong bivariate associations with environmentalism. In multivariate analyses, however, conservative eschatology proves by far the strongest religious predictor of environmental perspectives, although other measures exert occasional influence.

Political scientists have recently discovered the importance of religion in American political life (Leege and Kellstedt 1993). A growing body of literature has demonstrated the impact of religious beliefs, affiliations, and commitments on a variety of political attitudes, ranging from party identification and electoral choices to views on specific issues. Most of these efforts have focused on social or cultural questions, such as abortion, gay rights, and “family values,” with much less attention given to issues presumably less tied to religious world views, such as economic and foreign policy.

Nevertheless, religion may influence a wider range of attitudes than often thought: Religious socialization of some sort is pervasive in Ameri-

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can society; most Americans consider themselves religious; and more Americans participate in religious institutions than any other type of organization (Wald 1992). In addition, religious leaders often provide clear cues on a wide range of political topics, not just social issues (Guth et al. 1991). Perhaps the failure to uncover religion’s impact is due in part to the crude religious items used in most studies. Indeed, with even modest improvement in measurement, scholars may discover the tracks of religion where none appeared before. Here, religious variables, properly specified and measured, help us understand the way Americans perceive environmental policy.

Religion and Environmentalism

Despite the growing importance of environmentalism in American politics (Vig and Kraft 1990; Lanoue 1993), we still have much to learn about popular opinion concerning the movement. Indeed, scholars have struggled to uncover the origins of environmental sympathies and are often frustrated by the small amount of variance they can explain. Part of the difficulty stems from the general popularity of environmentalism, which in many surveys leaves little variance at all, but it may also result from the failure to include all relevant variables. Indeed, analysis has not progressed far beyond Van Liere and Dunlap’s (1980,192) comprehensive review of the early research, which concluded that only “age, education, and political ideology are consistently (albeit moderately) associated with environmental concern.” Some recent analysts find that occupation matters: professional and managerial classes, not blue-collar workers, form the core of environmental enthusiasts, although this may be partly an artifact of education. Others have argued that urbanites, people from more industrialized regions, those in close proximity to environmental hazards, and—since the late 1970s—Democrats have the strongest environmental sympathies (cf. Pollock, Vittes, and Lilie 1992; Peterson, Kowalewski, and Porter 1993).

Religion, however, has received little attention as a potential influence (Van Liere and Dunlap 1980, 182). This neglect is surprising given the fervent debate in religious circles over environmental questions (Shaiko 1987). Indeed, few recent issues have presented more complex choices to American churches. Theologians and church leaders have responded variously to the movement: some have embraced “environmental spirituality,” while others have virtually ignored or even rejected ecological concerns. Robert Booth Fowler (1992, 4) argues that theologically liberal churches have led the way in “a vigorous engagement between Protestantism and the ecology movement.” Most mainline Protestant denominations in the National Council of Churches, for ex-
ample, have official policies on the environment and some even have bureaucracies devoted to ecological concerns. Whether laity have been engaged is more questionable, although ecological activist Calvin De-Witt has found "many mainline churches where there is tremendous excitement" about environmental action (NIRR 1993, 8).

Roman Catholic interest has been less publicized, although some of the most progressive thinking on spirituality and the environment has been offered by (former) Catholic theologian Matthew Fox. More important, Catholic leaders from Pope John Paul II to the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops have been increasingly outspoken on the environmental responsibilities of both the faithful and their governments. The new international Catholic catechism incorporates significant discussion of environmental pollution (Steinfels 1992) and recently the Bishops Conference joined hands with mainline Protestants to address environmental concerns from an ecumenical perspective (Goldman 1993). Apparently this leadership effort has worked: survey evidence suggests that American Catholics are the most pro-environment of all major Christian groups (Greeley 1993).

Theologically conservative Protestants have been less receptive to environmentalism. Moderate evangelical churches have lagged behind mainline Protestants, but some are now rushing to develop an environmental ethic. Leading evangelical liberals and prominent mainstream figures such as Billy Graham have pushed for greater environmental awareness (Campolo 1992; Sider 1993). Still, preoccupation with social issues such as abortion and gay rights and environmentalism’s frequent association with forbidden New Age religious ideas have restrained the movement’s growth. Those further right on the theological spectrum are even more suspicious of environmentalism: fundamentalist and Pentecostal churches rarely address such issues and sometimes equate environmental enthusiasm with idolatry (Coffman and Alexander 1992).

Although efforts by theologians and church officials to confront environmental challenges have piqued the curiosity of scholars and journalists, there has been no comparable boom in survey research on how religious beliefs, attitudes, and commitment influence public opinion. To be sure, studies show that environmental activists have dramatically lower church attendance and religious affiliation than the general public (Shaiko 1987, 250) and some surveys on mass-public attitudes include a religious item or two (Weigel 1977; Kanagy and Willits 1993). But those items are often used to measure concepts such as moralism or social integration, rather than religion itself (Pollock, Vittes and Lilie 1992; Rohrschneider 1990).
Few surveys have actually focused on religion, and even fewer have a consistent theory on which religious variables should influence the environment and why. In the most extended treatments, Hand and Van Liere (1984) and Eckberg and Blocker (1989) addressed Lynn White’s (1967) classic assertion that a Judeo-Christian mastery perspective on nature (derived from God’s command in Genesis for humans to have “dominion” over the earth) retarded environmental sensitivities and encouraged exploitation. In a study of 806 Washington-state residents, Hand and Van Liere (1984, 555) found “Judeo-Christians are generally more committed to the mastery-over-nature orientation than non-Judeo-Christians,” but that commitment varied considerably by religious tradition. Church attendance and high subjective religiosity usually reduced environmental concern, but in some mainline Protestant denominations the faithful were actually more sensitive.

Hand and Van Liere (1984, 557) speculated that the mastery notion derived from a “fundamentalist Biblical orientation.” This would explain variation by religious tradition, as evangelical Protestants hold more literal views of Scripture than mainline Protestants. Eckberg and Blocker (1989) went one step further, arguing explicitly that the tie between religion and environmentalism derived primarily from Biblical literalism. Their survey of 300 Tulsa, Oklahoma residents used a direct measure of literalism, as well as denomination and religious-salience items (Eckberg and Blocker 1989, 510). While they found few dramatic results, Biblical literalism consistently predicted less support for environmentalism. The authors noted, however, that other doctrinal beliefs might also matter.

Most of the empirical literature fails to specify exactly which aspects of religious faith and practice influence environmental attitudes and why. Indeed, for secondary analysts the choice is often limited by necessity, as “religiosity” is measured infrequently and haphazardly by views of the Bible, religious tradition or denominational affiliation, or religious commitment (usually in the form of church attendance or subjective salience). White’s original thesis about the Judeo-Christian world view has also misled scholars into ignoring critical distinctions within religious communities; some otherwise sound studies simply lump Judeo-Christians into a single category (see Kanagy and Willits 1993). The few studies with multiple measures usually find that Biblical interpretation is critical: Literalists, the argument goes, take seriously the anthropocentric view of Creation in the Genesis account—that the world was created for humans to use, or even exploit. If religious tradition and religious commitment have impact, it is only as crude proxies for identi-
fying those most attuned to literalistic Biblical religion, sometimes loosely labeled fundamentalism.

We must add, however, that conservative Protestants’ proclivity for Biblical literalism is a part of theological strains far more powerful and central than the dominion ideas stressed by White and his empirical disciples. The most potent of these is dispensationalism, a century-old theological revision of Christian premillennialism, characterized by high supernaturalism, belief in the imminence of the “End Times” and Second Coming of Jesus, and consequent pessimism about thisworldly reform (Marsden 1980). Former Secretary of the Interior James Watt, a member of a Pentecostal denomination (the Assemblies of God) expressed this when he warned Congress not to gaze too far ahead on natural-resource policy because he did not know “how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns” (Martin 1982). Evangelical social activist and sociologist Anthony Campolo has lamented that dispensationalism “promotes a kind of passive quietism . . . that disengages Christians . . . from participating in those social programs designed to save the environment” (Campolo 1992, 92). Not only do such ideas divert believers’ attention to otherworldly concerns and inhibit political action, but for some dispensationalists the problems themselves become harbingers of the Second Coming, evidencing the inevitable deterioration of society and the imminence of the End. In a sensitive review of conservative eschatology, Janel M. Curry-Roper (1990, 162) concludes that dispensationalism’s tendencies are so powerful that the system “has to be purposely set aside in order to justify ecologically responsible action.”

Many scholars have pointed out that dispensationalism is a core element in American fundamentalism, Pentecostalism, and even in the broader evangelical movement, infiltrating and absorbing more traditional forms of premillennialism, which has always exhibited similar political implications. As historian Paul Boyer (1992) has shown in convincing detail, “prophecy belief” has permeated American popular religious culture far beyond its original conservative Protestant base. And, in a recent analysis of religious activists, the present authors found strong evidence supporting both Boyer’s observations on the wide diffusion of dispensationalist ideas and Campolo and Curry-Roper’s contentions about their impact on environmental attitudes (cf. Guth et al. 1993b).

In this article, we begin sorting out the relative influence on environmental attitudes of three overlapping religious factors—beliefs, traditions, and commitments—with a special focus on conservative Protestants.
The Impact of Conservative Eschatology

We will concentrate on Biblical literalism and End Times thinking, hypothesizing that those holding a conservative eschatology will offer less support for environmental policies. In the same vein, those identifying personally with a conservative Protestant theological movement (fundamentalism) shaped by dispensationalist and premillennialist thinking should also exhibit less backing for environmentalism (cf. Wilcox, Jelen and Leege 1993).

The Impact of Religious Tradition

Religious traditions are combinations of churches and denominations which share elements of theology, tradition, and organization (Leege and Kellstedt 1993). In this study, we will consider four large religious traditions identified by recent scholarship: evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, Roman Catholics, and seculars, groups which comprise about four-fifths of all Americans. We expect evangelicals to be least supportive of environmentalism, followed by mainline Protestants and then Catholics, with secular citizens most favorably disposed. Differences among religious traditions may be artifacts of the extent to which conservative eschatology has influenced each, or may result from elite cue-giving and mobilization. If conservative eschatology shapes responses, differences among religious traditions should diminish or disappear when religious beliefs are controlled; if elite perspectives dominate responses, variations by tradition should persist, even when belief variables are accounted for.

The Impact of Religious Commitment

Scholars often use items tapping religious commitment, either as involvement (usually church attendance) or as subjective religious salience. Indeed, in many studies these are the only religious items. Our expectations about the effects of commitment are mixed. As evangelicals exceed other believers both in frequency of religious observance and in religious salience, bivariate analysis may well show both variables conducive to lower environmentalism. And observant mainline Protestants and Catholics may also be more conservative than less-faithful coparishioners, as they are on some other issues (Kellstedt et al. 1994). On the other hand, the deeply committed in each tradition should reflect most faithfully the environmental cues presented by that tradition, its theology, or spokespersons (cf. Guth and Green 1993). In that case, serious evangelicals should still be most conservative, but their mainline and Catholic counterparts should be liberal, reflecting pro-environment policies emanating from their ecclesiastical elites. Sec-
ular citizens, finally, should be the strongest environmentalists on several grounds: they do not partake of the mastery-over-nature theological elements of the Judeo-Christian tradition, their world view excludes otherworldly eschatology, and their ideology emphasizes postmaterial values, such as quality of life (Inglehart 1990).

Thus, we intend to determine, first, whether conservative eschatology, religious tradition, and religious commitment influence environmental attitudes, and second, which is most powerful. We will also test our expectation that religious factors have the most influence among religious elites, less among political activists, and least of all in the mass public. Of course, as we noted earlier, several political and demographic variables are related to environmental attitudes and, often, to religious measures as well: ideology, party identification, education, gender, urban or rural origins, age, and income are usually the most important. Although we argue elsewhere that religion has substantial indirect effects on many policy attitudes through its impact on partisanship and ideology (see Kellstedt et al. 1994), here we adopt a conservative strategy, using the political and demographic measures as simultaneous controls. If religious variables survive the multivariate analysis, we can be confident that their effects are real.

Data and Analysis

For this study, we employ four data sets which contain adequate measures of both environmental orientation and religious variables. First, we use a survey of Protestant ministers in five major denominations (Assemblies of God, Southern Baptist Convention, United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church in the USA, and Disciples of Christ), coordinated by one of the authors in 1988 (for details, see Guth et al. 1991). For a second look at religious professionals, we draw on the 1990 Wheaton Religious Activist Study, which surveyed 5000 clergy and lay members of eight religious interest groups (Guth et al. 1993a). Although the pastors in this survey are not a representative sample, they include Catholic priests and many evangelical and mainline Protestants from denominations not present in the 1988 clergy surveys. The Wheaton Study clergy, moreover, are activists, inclined to use their ministerial role for social and political purposes.

We then look at two other sets of political activists: the laity from the Wheaton Study and respondents from two matched surveys of Republican and Democratic donors in 1986–1987 (see Green, Guth, and Fraser 1991). Finally, we turn to the 1992 American National Election Study, with its improved religious items derived from the 1989 Pilot
Study, to examine the mass public. Rather than studying the mass public as a whole, however, we divide the sample into activist, attentive, and voting publics as a way of identifying citizens with the most potential influence on policy. In all the samples, we have excluded African Americans, as black Protestant religious beliefs and traditions have quite different impacts on political attitudes.

For each sample, we produced an environmental-factor score which represents a combination of two items. In the 1988 clergy study, we used questions on environmental protection and the priority of environmental issues. In the two Wheaton study subsamples, we used the environmental-protection item from the 1988 clergy survey and a slightly different priorities item. In the party surveys, we utilized questions on environmental spending and proximity to the Sierra Club, while for the 1992 ANES sample we used environmental spending and a thermometer rating for environmentalists.

Our religious measures also vary slightly from sample to sample, but are all well designed to capture conservative eschatology. In all the elite surveys, conservative eschatology includes an item on Biblical authority and, among the religious elites and activists, questions on End Times thinking. In the mass public samples, we used a Bible item, along with reports on frequency of Bible reading and a modified "born-again" item as proxies for prophecy belief. As an alternative strategy to identify core conservative eschatologists, we also included religious self-identification, counting all respondents who accepted one or more evangelical label: fundamentalist, Pentecostal, charismatic, or evangelical. Denominational affiliations are collapsed into religious traditions, following Kellstedt and Green's (1993) reworking of the ANES denomination codes. Finally, religious commitment is measured by frequency of church attendance and by subjective assessment of religious salience. (For details on variable measurement in each sample, see the Appendix.)

**Results**

Are religious perspectives and environmentalism related? Table 1 reports zero-order correlations between environmentalism and the religious measures across the samples. Despite some variation in the measures employed, there is impressive strength and consistency in the association between religious variables and environmentalism. Note that conservative eschatology is negatively associated with environmentalism across the board, while relationships for evangelical identification are just as consistent, though somewhat weaker. Religious tradition, on
|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|

**Theological Beliefs:**
- Eschatology: - .48***
- Evangelical ID: - .30***

**Religious Tradition:**
- Evangelical: - .45***
- Mainline: .45***
- Catholic: NA
- Secular: NA

**Religious Commitment:**
- Attendance: NA
- Salience: NA

**Political Identity:**
- Liberal: .50***
- Democrat: .39***

**Demography:**
- Income: NA
- Age: - .05*
- Urban: .04*
- Female: .08***
- Education: .35**

NA = Not available in data set.
* p < .05 one-tailed; ** p < .001 one-tailed.
the other hand, has the strongest correlations among religious professionals such as clergy and lay religious activists, but declines among political activists and the mass public.

Still, relationships follow expectations. Among clergy, evangelicals are least environmental; mainline Protestants and Catholics are much "greener." A gap appears between Mainline Protestants in the clergy and religious activist samples, on the one hand, and mainline laity among party activists and in the mass public: Mainline laity match evangelicals in coolness toward the environment, at least as compared to Catholics and secular citizens. Catholics in the mass public, like their clergy, are more sympathetic to the environment, but the correlations are not very strong. The correlations with religious commitment are more modest, but quite consistent: in all samples, regular churchgoers are less environmental. Similarly, religious salience is negatively correlated with environmentalism, except among clergy activists, who understandably vary little on this item.

Not surprisingly, environmentalism is strongly associated with political-identity variables. In every sample, political liberalism and Democratic identification (as measured by standard ANES items) are strongly correlated with pro-environment attitudes. Indeed, among both elites and the mass public, environmentalism has been assimilated into ideological and partisan preferences (cf. Jacoby 1994). Note that the correlations' magnitudes are similar to those for conservative eschatology and tradition among religious elites, but become relatively larger for the party activists and mass public. Among religious professionals and committed lay activists, then, theological perspectives count as much as political views, but among broader and less religiously committed publics the political variables have a stronger association with environmentalism.

The demographic variables, often the focus of studies on environmental attitudes, are generally less helpful. Higher income depresses environmentalism modestly, as does age in most cases. Urbanites and women have slightly stronger environmental sympathies. Education, often the most powerful predictor of environmentalism, shows considerable power among elites, but surprisingly shows no significant correlations in the mass public. Environmentalism is clearly more connected to ideas, identifications, and beliefs than to demographic traits.

To this point we have demonstrated that religious measures are linked to environmental attitudes as expected. Many variables in the analysis are, of course, interrelated: conservative eschatology, evangelical self-identification, evangelical tradition, church attendance, and subjective religious commitment are all positively correlated with each
other. Similarly, as we have noted elsewhere, the religious and political identity measures are related: religious beliefs, affiliations, and identifications are important shapers of party identification and ideology (Leege and Kellstedt 1993). To sort out the predictive power of each variable, then, we ran a series of OLS regressions, with all variables entered simultaneously. If one or more religious variables survive this test, we can assert that religion matters. Table 2 reports standardized regression coefficients, as well as the multiple correlations and adjusted $R$-squares. We also report the proportion of variance explained by religious variables alone, if entered as the first bloc in the regressions. (Mainline Protestants are the suppressed reference category for the regression in the 1988 clergy study; Catholics, for the 1990 clergy and lay-activist columns; and seculars and members of minor religious traditions, for the party and mass public samples.)

Overall, conservative eschatology remains a powerful influence in virtually all samples. (The partial exception of party activists reflects our dependence on a single, crude three-point Bible item.) Most other religious measures drop markedly in importance or are eliminated once conservative eschatology and the political and demographic variables are accounted for. Nevertheless, the betas for religious tradition and evangelical self-identification usually move in the proper direction, and sometimes barely miss significance at the .05 level. Still, when religious belief and behavior are controlled, neither tradition nor self-identification adds much explanatory power. Thus, evangelical affiliates are conservative on environmental issues because of what they believe, not where they belong.

Religious commitment also tends to wash out. Although negatively related to environmentalism at the bivariate level, attendance usually drops out of the multivariate results, retaining some negative influence among party activists (where conservative eschatology is less well measured) and among the "attentive" public. Religious salience holds only a modest remnant of its negative bivariate influence among clergy activists. Salience actually reverses signs in the party-activist regressions and mass-public regressions: those who say religion is important are more environmentalist once all other variables are taken into account. This presents an interesting theoretical result, but the practical implications are limited. High subjective religiosity (and high involvement, for that matter) is most common among evangelicals or doctrinally orthodox and observant mainline Protestants or Catholics, who as a result, are more conservative on environmental issues. That subjective religiosity is related to pro-environment attitudes only after tradition, beliefs, and
Table 2. Standardized Regression Coefficients for Environmentalism by Religious, Political and Demographic Influences (Whites Only)

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<td>( R^2 = 0.51 )</td>
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<td>* p &lt; .05 one-tailed; ** p &lt; .001 one-tailed.</td>
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involvement are accounted for represents, perhaps, only a New Age, environmental spirituality disconnected from traditional religious institutions.

We also tested several possibilities on the interactions of religious tradition and commitment: that highly committed evangelicals, mainline Protestants and Catholics are the most conservative on environmental scores, given their commitment to conservative eschatology or other (unmeasured) elements of Christian orthodoxy—or, alternatively, that committed mainliners and Catholics are influenced by the official positions and informal pro-environment cues provided by denominational elites. Experimentation with interaction terms reveals a small but significant tendency for highly committed evangelicals to be even more conservative than their less committed coparishioners. However, none of the interaction terms for mainliners or Catholics was significant, although the signs were usually in the conservative, not environmentalist, direction (data not shown). Thus, committed mainline and Catholic parishioners have not necessarily adopted the official position of their institutions.

Not surprisingly, political-identity variables emerge as strong predictors of environmental sympathies, with liberalism usually more important than Democratic identification. Note, however, that in almost every sample conservative eschatology exceeds or matches the impact of partisanship, and in the 1990 clergy, religious activist, and activist public samples outperform even ideology. Finally, a few demographic variables survive the regression, with income, age, and gender holding on in several cases. Urban origin generally drops out and education has modest effects only in a couple of the elite samples. Thus, once again, ideational variables demonstrate much greater explanatory power than the demographic factors which are often the target of analysis.

Nonvoters were omitted from Table 1 and Table 2. Among those who reported not voting in 1992, none of the religious, political or demographic variables even approached the .10 level of statistical significance. For nonvoters, then, environmental attitudes appear essentially random, confirming the importance of focusing analysis on participants in the political process (cf. Zaller 1992).

The models explain significant proportions of the variance. In the elite samples, about one-half is accounted for, while among mass publics the variables explain one-third of the variance among activists and about one-fifth among voters. As the second line of adjusted R-squares shows, the religious variables, if entered alone, account for a substantial part of the variance, doing almost as well as all variables combined among
the clergy and religious activists, and explaining more than one-third of the variance accounted for in the other samples.

Summary and Conclusions

What can we conclude from this survey of the relationship between religious variables and environmental attitudes? First, conservative eschatology, religious tradition, and religious commitment all have significant bivariate influence on the way Americans view the environment. These relationships are strongest, naturally, among those for whom religion represents a professional calling—the clergy—but appear also among religious activists. Even among party activists religion has a clear impact on attitudes, both at the bivariate level and after accounting for traits often considered more relevant to political beliefs. Finally, religion matters in the mass public, but especially among active and attentive citizens.

The question of which religious variable is most important in swaying environmental attitudes is more problematic, given the limited measures available for testing. Most studies incorporating multiple measures have usually found that "religion as social group" (religious tradition) demonstrates greater power over attitudes than does religious belief, although the latter is seldom well measured. In the present instance, religious tradition is consistently important at the bivariate level, where strong evidence suggests that evangelicalism is the least tractable of the Christian traditions for environmental theologies. Catholicism appears more environment-friendly; those outside the Judeo-Christian religious tradition—secular Americans—are the most pro-environment.

The crucial beliefs producing these patterns among religious traditions—and modifying them within traditions—are more difficult to delineate. Certainly there are enormous variations among Judeo-Christian traditions, so that White’s mastery thesis is far too simplistic to explain the religion-environmental nexus. The results among clergy and religious activists strongly suggest that the complex of ideas in dispensational theology—and not just Biblical literalism—may well condition fundamentalists, Pentecostals, and other evangelicals against active concern with environmental policies. Indeed, the better the measure we have of this theology, the stronger the correlations with environmental attitudes. This conclusion is also supported by the bivariate (and occasional multivariate) finding that evangelical self-identification is associated with less support for the environment.

Religious salience and church involvement are sometimes significant predictors, especially among the mass public where religiosity varies. Although the relationship with environmentalism is complex,
church attendance usually has a conservative impact, even in liberal traditions. The most observant in all traditions lean toward conservative policies; at times the subjectively religious are more liberal, but only when all other religious variables are taken into account.

This analysis leaves many questions unanswered. How much of the difference among religious traditions reflects theological orientations inculcated in believers by long-term religious socialization, and how much comes from the contemporary activity and cue-giving of organizational elites, who explain the meaning of theology for contemporary issues? Does dispensationalism’s conservatizing effect simply reflect the central tendency of any highly otherworldly religious system, compared to more secularized and thisworldly ones (cf. Wuthnow 1976)? Or, might some facets of conservative theology actually be conducive to fostering an "Evangelical Environmental Ethic"? On the other hand, what theological emphases in liberal churches contribute to pro-environmental attitudes? Here we have been most concerned with the absence of conservative eschatology in these churches. We have no items tapping liberal theological beliefs, which might further differentiate among mainliners and Catholics, but experimentation with "Social Gospel," "liberation theology," and "communitarian" items in the elite surveys suggests that such measures might allow us to explain more variance in environmental attitudes, even within the mass public. Perhaps future studies will provide help on these and other questions, but only if political scientists take religious perspectives seriously in exploring public attitudes.

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APPENDIX
Variable Construction

1988 Clergy Survey
Ministers from the Assemblies of God and Southern Baptist Convention were classified as evangelical Protestants, while United Methodists, Presbyterian Church in the USA and Disciples of Christ pastors were put in the mainline Protestant category. For conservative eschatology, we used the following three five-point Likert items (ranging from 1 "strongly agree," to 5 "strongly disagree"): "The Bible clearly teaches a 'premillennial view' of history and the future"; "I believe in a dispensationalist interpretation of Scripture"; and, "Scriptures are the inerrant word of God not only in matters of faith,
but in all other matters as well." The conservative eschatology score is a principal components factor score, with a theta reliability of .83.

The environmental score is a principal components factor score derived from analysis of the following questions: "More environmental protection is needed, even if it raises prices and costs jobs" (1 "strongly agree," 5 "strongly disagree"); and "How often have you addressed these issues: environmental problems" (four-point scale: 1 "very often," 4 "never"). The score has a theta reliability of .61.

1990 Wheaton Religious Activist Study

Respondents were classified into religious traditions following the denominational classification found in Kellstedt and Green (1993). For conservative eschatology, we used two five-point Likert items (ranging from 1 "strongly agree" to 5 "strongly disagree"): "I believe in the ‘Rapture’ of the church" and "The Bible teaches a premillennial view of history." We also used the following Bible item: "Which of the following comes closest to your views regarding the Bible? 1. The Bible is God’s Word, meant to be taken literally, word for word. 2. The Bible is God’s Word, and all it says is true, but it is not meant to be taken literally, word for word. 3. The Bible is God’s Word, and is authoritative for Christian faith and practice, but it is not intended as a book of science and history. 4. The Bible was written by men inspired by God but it does contain some spiritual errors, often reflecting the limitations of its authors and their eras. 5. The Bible is a good book because it was written by wise men, but God had nothing to do with it. 6. The Bible was written by men who lived so long ago that it is worth very little today." The conservative-eschatology-factor score is derived from a principal-components analysis of these three items with a theta reliability of .74 for the clergy subsample and .70 for the laity subsample.

The environmental variable is a factor-score based on a principal-components analysis of the following questions: "More environmental protection is needed, even if it raises prices and costs jobs" (1 "strongly agree," 5 "strongly disagree"); and "There is a lot of talk these days about what the aims of this country should be for the next ten years. Listed below are six goals which different people would give top priority. Rank these goals from 1 most important to 6 least important." The options were: maintaining order in the nation, giving people more say in governmental decisions, maintaining a high rate of economic growth, raising moral standards, protecting freedom of speech, protecting the environment. (Score equals respondent’s rank for "protecting the environment.") Theta reliability is .74 for both clergy and laity subsamples.

1986–1987 Party Contributor Studies

Conservative eschatology is measured by the following Bible item: "Which of the following comes closest to your view of the Bible? 1 The actual Word of God, to be taken literally, word for word; 2 The inspired Word of God, but not all to be taken literally; or, 3 An ancient book of fables, legends, history and moral precepts."

The environmental score is a principal-components-factor score, derived from
two items, both on seven-point scales: "What budget levels would you suggest for the following programs?: environmental programs" (1 "spend more," 7 "cut a lot") and, "How close do you feel to these prominent groups and organizations?: Sierra Club" (1 "very close," 7 "very far"). The score has a theta reliability of .78.

1992 National Election Study

Conservative eschatology is a factor score derived from a principal-components analysis of the ANES Bible item (V3824), Bible-reading (V3823), and a modified "born-again" item (V3847). Given the lack of eschatology items in the ANES, we used the Bible-reading and "born-again" measure as a way of identifying respondents who are in the "prophecy-belief tradition" (cf. Marsden 1980). In surveys where we have both types of questions, such as the Wheaton Religious Activist Survey or the Akron Study of Religion and Politics (Kellstedt et al. 1993), the Bible-reading and born-again items and questions on eschatology typically reveal Pearson rs of between .48 and .60. The theta reliability is .71. The environmental score results from a principal-components analysis of preferences for environmental spending (V3815) and the thermometer rating for environmentalists (V5329). The theta reliability for the full sample is .60.

The activist public is the 15% of the public which is politically involved beyond regular voting and an occasional political act. Any respondent who reported voting and also reported at least two activities from among V5807, V5809, V5810, V5812, V5815, and V5819 is included. Political knowledge is a simple additive index of V5916, V5917, V5918, V5919, V5920, V5921, V5951, and V5952, with correct answers scored 1, incorrect or no answer 0. The attentive public is the half of the 1992 ANES sample with highest scores. The alpha reliability coefficient is .90. The voting public includes all those who reported voting in 1992 (V5601).

REFERENCE


