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RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS AND GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE
POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM: WHAT
MOTIVATES ACTIVISM?

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Religious Environmental Groups and Global Climate Change Politics in the United States
and the United Kingdom: What Motivates Activism?

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This study sought to explore the motivation of religious environmental groups (REG) to engage in climate change activism in the United Kingdom and the United States. The engagement of religious groups in climate change activism as civil society actors has potential for a significant impact on global environmental politics and remains largely under examined. Given the recent rise in religious environmentalism, a limited understanding is available of the values which motivate this engagement in global politics. This study examines the beliefs and values that motivate REGs to influence climate change politics in the United States and the United Kingdom. The REG framing of climate change and how their beliefs relate to support for environmental policies are examined in the context of advocacy coalitions. The relationship of REGs to the wider environmental movement and their role in global politics is assessed, as well as whether REGs constitute an emerging social movement.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	vi
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Literature Review	13
Chapter Three: Research Methodology	71
Chapter Four: Research Findings United Kingdom REGs	100
Chapter Five: Research Findings United States: Part One-IP&L	161
Chapter Six: Research Findings United States:	
Part Two- Interfaith grassroots, NRPE and Evangelical REGs	203
Chapter Seven: Research Analysis of REGs in the United Kingdom	274
Chapter Eight: Research Analysis of REGs in the United States	301
Chapter Nine: UK and US Comparative Analysis	339
Chapter Ten: Conclusions and Recommendations	373
Bibliography	388
Appendix A: Coding Scheme	404
Curriculum Vitae	406

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Summary of Advocacy Coalition Framework as applied to REGs engaged in climate activism in the United Kingdom and the United States	363- 364
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION: RELIGION AND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

Introduction

“Thirty years ago, I thought that with enough good science, we would be able to solve the environmental crisis. I was wrong. I used to think the greatest problems threatening the planet were pollution, bio-diversity loss and climate change. I was wrong there too. I now believe that the greatest problems are pride, apathy and greed. Because that’s what’s keeping us from solving the environmental problem. For that, I now see that we need a cultural and spiritual transformation. And we in the scientific community don’t know how to do that. But you evangelicals do. We need your help.”¹

The quote above is taken from a chapter written by Rev. Richard Cizik on the evangelical Christian response to climate change, what he referred to as “an evangelical awakening to the global environmental crisis.”² The statement was made by Gus Speth, Dean of Yale’s School of Forestry and the Environment, while addressing a meeting of thirty evangelical leaders since dubbed the “Thomasville Rebellion,” the role of which was to place climate change on the table of evangelical concerns. Cizik’s chapter was part of a larger volume by Rev. Sally Bingham, the leader of Interfaith Power and Light (IP&L) representing leading religious voices from multiple faiths on the ‘sacred duty’ to protect the environment. What is interesting is that their perspectives represent a growing religious presence in environmental debates both in the United States, the United Kingdom and worldwide. This growing religious environmental movement leads with a morally-based message on humanity’s obligation to care for and not destroy the Earth.

¹ Gus Speth Dean of the Yale School of Forestry and the Environment, speaking at the Evangelical meeting, the “Thomasville Rebellion” taken from ‘What If’ by Rev. Richard Cizik, in Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham (2009) *Love God: Heal Earth: 21 Leading Religious Voices Speak Out on Our Sacred Duty to Protect the Environment*, St. Lynn’s Press: Pittsburgh, PA, p. 9

² Ibid, p.10

Religion and personal values have played a major role in shaping human behavior and culture for millennia. Even in secular countries religious struggles and views had profound impacts on present worldviews. As Roger Gottlieb expressed:

“For as long as human beings have practiced them, the complex and multifaceted beliefs, rituals, and moral teachings known as religion have told us how to think about and relate to everything on earth that we did not make ourselves.”³

World religions have a profound impact on millions of followers and in recent years this impact has been recognized by scholars, economists and world leaders as a potential source of transforming humanity’s approach to minimizing environmental destruction. In reinterpreting the scripture and religious teachings of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Daoism, and Buddhism (to name a few major faiths,) in an ecological context, world religions can aid environmental causes by highlighting the ethical and moral considerations that may be used to stem environmental destruction. Religious views on stewardship, care for creation, and minimizing waste can foster environmentally beneficial actions and provide a locally or culturally significant meaning for changing existing practices. Global networks and organizations, including the UNDP, UNEP and World Bank are looking at religious environmentalism as a novel approach towards tackling pressing ecological challenges.⁴

Background:

³ Gottlieb, Roger S. *Religion and Ecology-What is the Connection and Why Does it Matter?* in Roger S. Gottlieb, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*. 2006. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.1

⁴ For more information see ‘Christian-Muslim Dialogue on Climate Change: With Delegations from the National Association of evangelicals and the Kingdom of Morocco’, June 19, 2008. The World Bank, WFDD; http://www.nyo.unep.org/harv_br.htm; <http://www.windsor2009.org/ARC-UNDPpressreleaseNov02.pdf>

Over forty years later it seems that Lynn White was correct in stating that the modern world, which inherited much of the Latin Western approach to nature, will need more than advanced science and technology and gloom-and-doom predictions to change humankind's collective approach to solving the ecological crisis. Increasingly since the 1980s, non-governmental organizations have formed that specialize in bringing together various faiths to address environmental problems, or networks of religious organizations uniting in common spiritual messages specific to certain faiths in addressing ecological challenges in their communities.

Martin Palmer describes the benefits of fostering plural and diverse approaches to addressing environmental conservation issues worldwide. Palmer argues that single-minded scientific approaches filled with gloom-and-doom foreshadowing statistics have for years failed to reach individuals and communities in a meaningful and approachable manner. The spiritual meaning of "nature" is for many people rooted in religious and cultural foundations, consequently environmental messages stemming from religious leaders or organizations can appeal to personal values that are not being motivated by government leaders and scientific experts. Religions, though their positive impact on the environment in some cases can be controversial, continue to have legitimacy and hold authority over every day practices.⁵

Even with positive examples of religion-ecology coalitions, many scientist, policymakers and scholars are likely to raise some concerns regarding the implications of growing religious political activism, especially in democratic countries. Rhys Williams points out that while religion can serve as an integrator within social groups:

⁵ Palmer, Martin with Victoria Finlay (2003)

“the political impact of religion in pluralistic societies can be divisive and contentious. The strong convictions and ultimacy associated with religious motivations are not the best for politics in a liberal democratic polity.”⁶

Much division in public debates persists among scientists and religious leaders regarding population control and stem-cell research to name a couple of controversial issues, however, a growing coalition of religions and environmental groups can perhaps provide common ground on numerous ecological issues and serve as a bridge builder towards dialogue on the more divisive topics. While religions were not the first champions of the present ecological crisis, many of the world religions according to Mary Evelyn Tucker are entering their “ecological phase” and re-interpreting scriptures to address their spiritual relationship with the natural world, as well humanity’s role in safeguarding the planet from further damage.⁷

Research into the connections between religion and the environment reveals a broad range of organizations, networks and growing academic interest in what is developing into a field of study called “religion and ecology.” Ten volumes compiling leading perspectives have been assembled by the Harvard Divinity School’s Center for the Study of World Religions, originally a series of 1996-1998 conferences, which helped to initiate contacts between religious and environmental groups, develop networks and launch new projects. In 1990, during the Global Forum meeting, scientists signed a statement called “Preserving the Earth: An Appeal for Joint Commitment of Science and Religion,” which noted the environmental crisis call for changes in personal behavior as well as changes in public

⁶ Williams, Rhys H. (Dec., 1996). pp. 883-900.

⁷ Tucker, Mary Evelyn (2003)

policy. The role of religion as shaping personal conduct was emphasized, as well as the recognition that “what is regarded as sacred is more likely to be treated with respect.”⁸

The potential REGs see for influencing public choices on climate change is summed up in this quote by the founder and president of IPL, Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:

“Up until recently the religious community had abdicated its responsibility to care for creation... I believe that clergy talking about environmental stewardship from the pulpit will have more influence than will scientists or a politician.”⁹

Problem Statement:

⁸ Tucker, Mary Evelyn, *Religion and Ecology: Survey of the Field* in Roger S. Gottlieb, ed. The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology. 2006. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 398-416.

⁹ <http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/2009/11/religious-leaders-from-around-the-world-meet-with-u-n-secretary-general-at-windsor-castle/>

As illustrated above, religious groups are playing a growing role in environmental protection and this involvement has increased substantially over the past couple of decades with the emergence of religious environmental groups (REG) and coalitions actively pursuing climate change mitigation. These REGs engaged in climate activism have received relatively little attention from scholars of global environmental politics. As Evelyn Bush points out, studies of global civil society often overlook the religious dimension of these actors, and fail to fully differentiate between strategies and motivations that drive them. It is also clear that while there is ample scientific knowledge regarding environmental degradation and the need to take action on climate change, the extent of these crises is not reflected in social-political transformation. Consequently, an improved understanding of how religious values can drive environmental activism and lead to larger cultural change is significant for addressing these problems. The problem of environmental degradation is not a lack of information, but rather a lack of enabling motivation to change existing governance structures and cultural practices, particularly in the West.

Purpose:

This study sought to evaluate the processes through which REGs are motivated to engage in climate change activism in the United Kingdom and the United States. In particular it aimed to elucidate how REG ideology influences their movement engagement, frame formation and the climate change policies they support. It also explored the role these religious actors play in the climate change discourse, how these actors perceive their moral authority when interacting with political elites and the public, and assessed the implications for global environmental politics as well as the wider environmental movement.

Research Questions:

The questions evaluated during the course of this research concerning the motivation of REGs to engage in climate activism can be summarized into four main points:

- Whether REGs utilize terms such as stewardship/creation care and sacrifice in their messaging?
- What is the role of religious beliefs in driving REG objectives or do other environmental beliefs serve as drives of activism?
- What is the role of religious beliefs and values in determining REG policy beliefs and advocacy coalitions?
- How do REGs perceive their moral authority and legitimacy when interacting with the public and political elites and what is their role in and relationship to the environmental movement?

Research Approach:

The research problem was addressed through qualitative methodology, focusing on in-depth, semi-structured interviews, participant observation and archival materials. Initially a data-base was constructed of REGs in the US and the UK, looking at previous research, existing resources--such as Yale's Forum and Religion and Ecology website¹⁰. Case studies were narrowed down based on the selection criteria that aimed to focus on Christian or interfaith REGs, given that those were the most representative of both US and UK demographics. Initial case studies included Interfaith Power and Light (IP&L) and the

¹⁰ <http://fore.research.yale.edu/religion/>

National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE) in the US, and Christian Ecology Link and Operation Noah in the UK. Additional case studies were identified through snow-ball sampling or through participation in REG events. The number of case studies was expanded beyond the initial target due to the structure of each advocacy coalition, and the goal of obtaining as complete a perspective as possible of REG motivation and participation in climate change activism in each country.

A total of sixty detailed interviews were conducted, along with field observations carried out between October 2011 and June 2012. The data was transcribed and coded into categories, which best reflected the main findings and research questions based on an inductive coding scheme, including key religious beliefs, organizational drivers, campaigns and perspectives on the environmental movement. Data was analyzed relying on the method of structured, focused comparison for case study analyses, with case studies divided into REG categories based on their organizational structure and approach. The analyses also included an evaluation of collective action frames utilized by REGs followed by application of the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) to illustrate policy belief formation in REG advocacy coalitions.

Anticipated Outcomes and Researcher Assumptions:

The study anticipated that terms such as stewardship and sacrifice may play a prominent role in REG belief systems. It also expected that religiosity would be a strong driver of environmental and climate change activism, however it did not anticipate that would be a primary driver. It also anticipated that REG activism would fit within the scope of the mainstream environmental movement more than being its own distinct movement. Given that the US is perceived as having a more religious population than the UK, it was

anticipated the REGs may play a more prominent role in US climate politics than in the UK.

One of the assumptions made regarded environmental stewardship as a fairly static concept that could be transposed between groups without much variation in definition. That assumption proved to be incorrect given the multiple meanings associated with ‘stewardship’ and other terms, including sacrifice, addressed in the present research. Another assumption initially regarded the case study REGs as fairly distinct units of analysis. That did not account for the many overlapping affiliations found between REG members, given that in some cases one individual can represent two to three different REGs that constitute part of the same advocacy coalition. Hence the scope of the interviews extended beyond the initial 2-4 targeted case studies.

Rationale & Significance:

This study intended to elucidate the relationship between religiosity and climate change activism, focusing on the role of religious beliefs and values in motivating this environmental engagement. In doing so it wanted to expand current research in the field of global environmental politics (GEP) on non-state actors to include religious actors and to better understand their role in GEP, as well as their implications for global civil society and the environmental movement. By taking a comparative approach it intended to highlight the role of local and domestic level activism in enabling support of transboundary problems, such as climate change. Furthermore this research aimed to provide insight into how religious beliefs can inspire and lead to environmental activism. One of the main challenges in the environmental crisis is to enable changes in behavior, both in the general public and political elites that can result in larger scale transformation. The underlying

question that motivated this research was whether groups which view care for the environment as a core part of their faith can facilitate a broader shift in cultural values that underpin ecologically destructive behavior. If religion can serve as a major motivator for people to act, then linking ecologically destructive behavior with the core tenants of one's faith should help to transform that behavior. That question is a complex and multifaceted one, however this research aimed at elucidating the potential role of faith in how the human-nature relationship is conceptualized. If faith can play this role, then a religiously grounded environmental movement may have substantial influence in actuating this socio-political change.

Definitions of Terminology:

The terminology used in this study centers around the concept of religious environmental groups (REG). For the purposes of this study, REGs are defined as organizations that have a self-identified religious orientation, participate in environmental activism, and are either non-for-profit groups or operate as part of a larger church hierarchy. This definition clarifies that the researcher did not seek to identify which groups were faith driven unless they explicitly identified as a faith-based organization. Additionally, while a definition that included only religious non-governmental organizations would be less complex, in practice REG members and organizations often span multiple affiliations, therefore drawing a clear-cut line is difficult without adversely affecting the results and scope of the study.

Chapter Organization:

Chapter two provides a literature review of fields relevant to the study of REGs including global environmental politics, religion in world politics, social movements and the sociology of religion. It identified connections between these fields as well as critical gaps where GEP and the role of religious actors were concerned. Chapter three details the qualitative methodology and analytical framework applied in this study. It discusses case study selection, the scope of the research sample in the US and the UK, as well as detailing the framing and ACF analysis applied later in the study. The processes used to code, organize and analyze the data are described, as well as how the analysis was structured. Chapter four presents research findings for the UK REGs, describing case studies selected based on three major categories of REGs in the study--namely green Christian REGs, church organizations and faith-based development agencies. Findings are addressed based on five main categories: stewardship, creation care and sacrifice; other religious beliefs; collective-action frames; policy beliefs and advocacy coalitions; perception of REG's moral authority and role in the environmental movement. Chapter five presents research findings for the US based Interfaith Power and Light (IP&L) and its state affiliates. IP&L, a grassroots organization with an extensive network of 40 state affiliates, was too broad an REG to discuss in conjunction with the other US case studies. The findings follow the same five categories applied to the UK REGs. Chapter six presents research findings for the remaining US REG case studies, which are divided into three main categories: grassroots interfaith REGs; denominational bodies or affiliated REGs as represented by the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE) and its constituent REGs; and Evangelical Christian REGs. Similarly to the previous research findings chapters, chapter six follows the five main finding categories. Chapter seven provides an analysis of the UK

research findings and analyzes their religious beliefs, collective action frames, and policy belief systems and advocacy coalitions with respect to the UK REGs. It also provides an analysis of how REGs in the UK relate to the wider environmental movement and global environmental politics. Chapter eight goes on to present an analysis of the US REGs, including IP&L and the remaining three groups. The US and UK analysis chapters aim to compare and contrast between case studies and organizational variation within each country. Chapter nine completes the analysis section by serving as a comparative assessment of UK and US REGs. It provides an overview of environmental governance in each country followed by analysis of the five major findings. This comparative chapter draws from both US and UK perspectives to offer an analysis of how religious actors interact with global civil society, social movements and the advocacy coalitions they represent. Finally, chapter ten outlines the conclusions and recommendations based on the research results presented, suggesting possible pathways for further research in the rich field of religious environmental activism.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE INTERPLAY OF GLOBALIZATION, GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND RELIGION

Purpose:

The purpose of the present study was to elucidate the causal relationship between religious environmental groups (REGs) and climate change activism by understanding the process through which these groups' beliefs and values motivate them to engage in activism. The academic aim is to fill in an existing gap in global environmental politics on the role religious ideology plays in driving environmentalism, as well as to articulate how this activism relates to the issues of framing and policy belief development. Specifically this study examines the extent which religiosity contributes to REG activism, the role of religious concepts and beliefs in REG operations, and their perception of moral authority and legitimacy in engaging with political elites, the public and secular organizations. Finally, this study looked at how REGs fit into the mainstream environmental movement and whether they form a distinct movement or a sub-set of the larger movement.

Rationale for Topics:

In order to develop a sound foundation of the existing literature and studies on this topic, and to illustrate the academic contribution of the present research, a thorough literature review was conducted that covered the major topics relevant to the study. The study is based primarily in the field of global environmental politics (GEP), but draws heavily from other fields, namely sociology (the sociology of religion, social movements) and political science (international relations, global governance, political theory and comparative politics). This literature review has identified and critiqued some of the key

work in these fields that is relevant to the present topic. The need to draw on several fields stems partly from the present lack of research within the field of GEP on religious actors and the linkages between state-society relations relevant to this topic. Research in sociology, mainly in the sociology of religion, deals with the nuanced understanding of how religion is conceptualized, its historical development as a distinct construct, and its relationship with the formation of nation-states. Social movement literature offers another significant perspective in evaluating the formation of collective action in national as well as transnational movements, including environmental movements. International relations (IR), though focused on nation-states as a unit of analysis, has recently begun to explore the role of religion in global politics. These studies, however, can often be limited through a narrow interpretation and definition of 'religion'. Political theory has helped to provide an overall structure to the study, focusing on the role of ideas and post-positivist approaches to understanding social reality. Comparative politics, especially within the sub-set of comparative environmental politics, offers valuable insight in comparing REGs in two countries and the role that domestic process, institutions and cultures play in influencing environmental movements.

Topic One: Global Politics, Globalization and Religion

The role of religious environmentalism on climate politics has implications for the understanding of world politics, global governance and globalization. The very notion that these actors may have a profound impact on global affairs is contradictory with most realist interpretations of international relations and depicts a different, more layered picture of global governance. It is also likely that transnational actors are at once being enabled by the forces of globalization while simultaneously driving globalization through numerous

networks, sharing of information, ideas and goals. Numerous scholars of environmental politics rely on Marxist and neo-Gramscian interpretations to examine causes of environmental degradation, capitalist growth and social inequality in developing countries. Post-international scholars such as Ferguson, Mansbach, Langhorne, Rosenau, Cerny and Strange, take a contrasting position to realists in their analysis of world politics.¹ For post-internationalists, as implied by the name, the 'nation-state' is not the sole driver of global politics. In this view, the state is composed of numerous actors who operate on the domestic, transnational, and global spheres in order to influence power relations. The notion of a 'black-box' dividing domestic and foreign relations among states and any such interpretations are illusory or incomplete.

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink point out that states have never in practice enjoyed absolute sovereignty. Certain practices, including international campaigns to abolish slavery, showed that states are not above scrutiny where treatment of its citizens is concerned.² International networks are key actors in principled international action in issue areas where shared values have a central role, such as the environment and human rights.³ They propose that realist theories, which differentiate between the realm of domestic and international politics, cannot account for the political influence of transnational activist networks. The motivations of these networks are not easily explained by rationalist theories alone since they are motivated by values and principled norms, which also reflect constructivist and social constructionist views on social relations--both are essential to a complete analysis.

¹ Ferguson and Mansbach (2004); Cerny (2010); Langhorne (2001); Rosenau (1990, 2003, 2008); Slaughter (2004)

² Keck and Sikkink (1998)

³ Sikkink (Summer, 1993) pp. 411-441.

While some post-international scholars argue that the ‘state’ is a weakened and fading actor on the world stage, others such as Cerny and Giddens see the state as continuing to be an important actor albeit in a different role than before.⁴ Much impetus in various perspectives on world politics comes from the studies of globalization-- whether it is a new process or not, how it impacts societies and its pros and cons. Globalization refers to the growing interconnections among political, social and economic spheres in world affairs.

According to sociologist, Anthony Giddens, globalization is marked by the shrinking of time and space in the post-modern era.⁵ The onset of globalization is often attributed to the rapid development of telecommunications technologies that worked to erode previous boundaries marked by geographic distance.⁶ Economic liberalization, in the face of a new technology revolution reduced state power by effectively fusing global markets and empowering financial flows and trade across borders. Transnational Corporations (TNCs) are seen in this light to have considerable influence in being able to move their facilities to the location that offers the best business advantage, as Cerny puts it we have moved from the ‘welfare state’ to the ‘competition state’ where national policies aim to deliver the best competitive advantage to their populations in the global market.⁷ Instant access to the media, inter-personal communication and networking also served to create ‘empowered individuals’ whose access to data and people outside their territorial state boundaries served to undermine traditional controls on the flow of and access to

⁴ Cerny (2010); Giddens (2009)

⁵ Giddens (1990)

⁶ Langhorne (2001)

⁷ Cerny (2010)

information.⁸ Increasing mobility among global elites worked to create a class of transnational professionals, de-territorialized from their national origins and cosmopolitan in their views. These integrative processes have at once driven to shrink distances and erode boundaries, but at the same time resulted in a ‘fragnegration’ of world politics, on the one hand fusing interactions, while fragmenting others (Rosenau).⁹ This can also be seen in what is often called ‘glocalization.’ While many issues are increasingly global in scale, many are seeing the emergence and strengthening of local forms of identity and authority in global governance.¹⁰ While some scholars point out that the nation-state was never likely to remain as the key actor in global affairs and a more natural system is more pluralistic (Ferguson and Mansbach 2004, Cerny 2010), others contended that globalization, perhaps made more apparent by new technology, is not a new process, and while the power of states may change over time, they are still and will continue to be for some time the main actors in global governance.

To the realist critics of globalization perspectives (Gilpin 2000), what we are seeing has in fact taken place for centuries.¹¹ Furthermore these scholars highlight that globalization as we know it and the technical revolution remains limited to a small and privileged percent of the human population.¹² While the wealthy in developing countries and many in the developed world have access to the internet, this does not hold true for the vast majority of the world. In this sense, can we really talk about ‘globalization’ when the process in question is still limited? Others remind us not to make too many generalizations

⁸ Friedman (2000), Rosenau (2003, 2008)

⁹ Rosenau (2003)

¹⁰ Ibid

¹² Cerny (2010)

about what we mean by ‘globalization.’¹³ Globalization can mean different things to different people (Berger and Huntington 2002). When critics point out the evils of globalization, they are generally referring to economic globalization and the abuses taken by some corporations to move the most dangerous and polluting industries to poor countries with fewer regulations or human rights standards for employee protection. This type of critique frequently emanates from northern Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) who seek to protect human rights and the environment. Ironically, the authority enjoyed by NGOs and other non-state actors has gained in visibility thanks in part to cultural and socio-political globalization resulting from access to technologies and improved networking.

The literature on international relations, global politics and globalization has in recent years included greater attention to the role of religion and religious actors. Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler speak of religion as an overlooked dimension in international relations that needs to be incorporated in order to gain a fuller understanding of IR. Fox and Sandler point out that uniform definitions of religion are problematic and that religious views influence worldviews, shape identities and provide a source of legitimacy, including, political legitimacy. Social scientists and philosophers developed their views in opposition to religion as a relevant ‘lens’ for understanding society, and while modernity was supposed to eliminate religion, it has conversely fueled its resurgence.¹⁴ Warner and Walker highlight existing gaps in understanding the role of religion in the foreign policy of states and propose a framework for analysis. Their review of how religion applies to international relations focuses mostly on positivist theories and approaches (realism,

¹³ Scholte (2005)

¹⁴ Fox and Sandler (2004), pp. 2-3; Fox (2001)

liberalism, constructivism, institutionalism).¹⁵ This perspective emphasizes the influence of religion on states as occurring either through driving the ideology of institutions or the worldviews of political elites. In reviewing different theoretical approaches, Warner and Walker identify a gap in the current literature where clear understanding of the causal mechanisms behind the role of religion in foreign policy is lacking, as is the breaking down of the analysis to focus on areas of specific issues. The model proposed utilizes complex adaptive systems and complexity theory to relate their view of how religion influences foreign policy.¹⁶ While Warner and Walker identify interesting positivist theoretical approaches, much of their argument maintains a clear distinction between domestic and foreign policies of states. The transnational dimension is not addressed where religious groups are concerned even though many religious organizations have functioned at the transnational level in various activist campaigns. Their point regarding the need to better understand causal mechanisms driving specific issues is well founded when looking at the engagement of religious actors in climate change. This is especially true for elucidating “deeper” mechanisms of causality related to the motivation for religious actors to engage in this emerging social movement.

Jeff Haynes discusses the evolving role of religion in global politics, including its recent resurgence in secular policy issues. Haynes differentiates between private spirituality and group religiosity whose claims, he states, are “always to some degree political.”¹⁷ Given that group religiosity reflects “group solidarity”, characterized by shared or contested value systems, which in turn can be seen as political. Haynes warns against

¹⁵ Warner and Walker (2011)

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Haynes 1998, p. 5

making general claims regarding religion and politics and finds that they are best understood in terms of “specific political contexts,” and while religious actors can influence these specific contexts, the contexts themselves also influence religious actors. At the level of civil society, Haynes differentiates between hegemonic civil religions and “religious pressure groups.” Religious groups use a wide variety of tactics to influence policy including lobbying of the state; alliances with similar (secular or religious) groups; use of mass media and mobilization of their followers or support base. Relative to defining “church-state” relations, Haynes points out that the concept of ‘church’ reflects “an Anglo-American standpoint, with most relevance to the Christian tradition.”¹⁸ This standpoint assumes the existence of clearly defined and largely singular institutions. Distinguishing between the USA and England, the USA is a religious state with the belief in God being one of the fundamental basis of the nation, whereas England has an officially recognized religion, but is highly secular.¹⁹ Hayne observes two phenomena developing in the West: first, there is “an increase in various forms of spirituality and religiosity and second, leading religious groups are increasingly taking stances on socio-political issues and articulating their views in relation to those issues.”²⁰

Casanova refers to this modern phenomenon as the ‘deprivitization’ of religion, meaning that religious traditions world-wide are no longer accepting relegation to the sphere of private life. This relegation had been long promoted by theories of modernity and secularization. Nevertheless, instead of disappearing from society and fading from relevance, religions are increasingly asserting their role, often through religious social

¹⁸ Ibid 8-9

¹⁹ Ibid, pp.10

²⁰ Ibid pp.12-13

movements, and challenging the legitimacy of secular sphere institutions, namely the state and market.²¹ Private religious and moral spheres are being repoliticized, while public economic and political spheres are, in Casanova's term, renormativized-- a process he defines as the deprivatization of religion.²² Deprivatization of religion can be traced to several events in the 1980s including struggles for liberation, justice and democracy such as "the Islamic revolution in Iran; the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland; Catholicism's role in the Sandinista revolution and other political conflicts in Latin America; and the reemergence of Protestant fundamentalism in American politics."²³ Casanova does not view these as being disparate or purely coincidental events, but rather as being linked with "prophetic biblical politics," where the "dream of a liberating exodus from enslavement" still carries much force.²⁴ This type of 'exodus' analogy has been utilized in the UK by Christian Ecology Link, referring to the shift from a fossil-fuel based economy to a climate-neutral one as a 'carbon exodus'.

Scott Thomas and K.R. Dark further describe the influence of religion in world politics and the study of IR by focusing on the role of values, ideas, beliefs and ideologies often inspired by religious views across many cultures. Dark notes the highly contested "secularization theory," which, he points out, means different things in different contexts. The original assumption of this theory, namely that as societies modernize they become more secular, has been disputed in relation to the non-Western world, but also regarding Western countries. As Thomas observes, religion continues to play a central role in 'modernizing' societies, including India, has grown drastically in China and remains a

²¹ Ibid, pp.5

²² Ibid, p.6

²³ Casanova (1994), pp. 3

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 3-4

viable presence in European Countries, as well as the US, which is generally viewed as a religious country.²⁵ Dark foresees 'religion' as having a growing significance in international relations, while observing that transnational religious ties and organizations may have a beneficial impact on numerous issues, including conflict mitigation. Scott views religion as being intertwined with the fragmenting processes of globalization, increasingly linking global and local religious identities. Dark also links the global rise in religiosity with increased communications capabilities and population movements, leading to the spread of beliefs and values. Dark and Thomas perceive that religious beliefs/values can impact political ideas creating linkages between religious and political globalization.

26

Hefner reflects on the resurgence of religions in world politics, echoing Haynes, Thomas and Berger, however he also notes the need to emphasize micro as well as macro processes that move beyond the realm of states and global capital, but also emphasize the role of "self, family and everyday life in driving this resurgence."²⁷ From the analysis of religious environmental actors, a clear pattern emerges which draws attention to the role of 'grassroots religiosity' mobilizing church hierarchies to take action on ecological issues. This perspective reflects the role of 'lived religion'-- the way religion is experienced by people. It also draws attention to the changing structure of global religiosity and religion's socio-political role, as described by Haynes, Thomas and Hefner.

²⁵ Thomas (2010)

²⁶ Dark, K.R. (2000), pp. 63-75.

²⁷ Hefner (2001, 2010)

Perspectives on international relations and religion often draw on studies in the sociology of religion, which has extensively explored the role of religion in society, including the development of states and modernity. Charles Taylor, in writing about the “malaise of modernity,” describes how the disenchantment of the world resulted in a crisis of meaning and a search for identity in contemporary society. As coined by Weber, the disenchantment of the world was connected with developments in the use of reason and science, and perceptions of having a greater understanding of the mechanical workings of the world. This sense of scientific reason contradicted established notions of transcendence and called into question religious ‘truths,’ which Taylor states were expressed in the eighteenth century Enlightenment ‘anthropocentric consciousness.’²⁸ Taylor points out that this culture and “buffered identity” of the disenchanted world lacks meaning and for many people often lacks a sense of purpose.²⁹ This sense of loss of the transcendent can confer a loss of something valuable, perceived as a division from nature brought on by reducing human life as “purely instrumental or rational,” thus achieving this type of “control over nature and our lives, destroyed something deep and valuable in them.” Taylor relates this type of “protest” as being instrumental to ecological movements, which he describes as:

“an important part of the whole ecological movement draws on the sense that there is something fundamentally wrong, blind, hubristic, even impious in taking this stance to the world, in which the environment is seen exclusively in terms of the human purposes to which it can be put” Needless to say this reaction too can take unbelieving as well as Christian forms.”³⁰

²⁸ Taylor (2007), pp.299-301.

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 302-303

³⁰ Ibid, pp. 317.

The “Christian forms of the ecological movement” that Taylor mentions are well reflected in religious environmental groups, whose major focus lies in challenging the conceptualization of the natural world in purely utilitarian terms that emphasize human instrumental value. In this sense REG activism protests this type of disenchanting modernity.

Peter Berger discusses the social context of religious belief in the context of modernity and increasingly pluralistic society. Berger perceives that modernity and the ‘disenchantment of the world,’ discussed by Taylor, resulted in greater polarization between “utter relativism and nihilism, either by denying any notion of truth in religion or our capacity to attain any measure of it. Berger sees modernity as “creating tensions and anxiety,” and observes that church groups that provide a sense of certainty relieve the anxiety and tension otherwise generated by modernity.³¹ In the social context living in the ‘modern’ world leads people to question their sense of self and identity-- establishing a connection with the world and a known ‘reality’ is one of the consequences. The religious aspect of taking a given position on a societal issue by an organization, such as the National Council of Churches, imbues that perspective with a sense of “religious righteousness and God’s will” and offers that sense of certainty alluded to by Berger.³²

Peter Beyer examines religion from the perspective of global society, evaluating the construction of religion as a recognized system in the context of global integration over the centuries. Beyer notes that religion, in the context of European expansion and cultural exposure, took on meaning over time in relation to other systems that formed in the economic and societal spheres--mainly capitalism, the state and relations between states

³¹ Berger (1992), pp.17-21

³² Ibid, pp. 58-61.

and science— that came to shape the notion of religion as a distinct system. Beyer argues that while some scholars of religion (Weber, Durkheim) tried to define ‘religion’ in binary terms reflecting the difference between the “sacred and mundane,” to him these definitions fail to capture the primary construction of religion as a societal system. Beyer’s own description relies on conceptualizing religion as a global system of communication dating back to when emphasis was placed on Christianity during the reformation, primarily on the binary code of “blessed vs. cursed.” Beyer concludes that while religion is an “invented” system, it is, none the less, socially real and relevant. Over time, what was once predominantly a Western framing that applied largely to Christianity has been adapted and integrated into a global system for conceptualizing religion.³³

In short the relationship between nation-states, global politics and religion has a long, intertwined history dating back to the development of the modern world system. While studies of international relations with their dominant realist paradigm have often overlooked the impact of religion on politics, developments over the past thirty years in democratization movements have reinvigorated the academic analysis of religion and global politics. The disenchantment to modernity alluded to by sociologists can also be observed in the way religious actors frame contentious environmental issues. It is clear that a deeper understanding of religious actor’s engagement in various issue areas could expand existing theoretical perspectives.

Topic Two: Global Environmental Politics

The environmental movement made many contributions towards moving ecological degradation to the forefront of policy debates. The proliferation of regulations,

³³ Ibid, pp. 111-115.

treaties, institutions and organizations formed to address national and transboundary environmental issues is indicative of the environmental movement's influence.³⁴ Scholars of international relations (IR), GEP and sociology addressed problems, such as the 'tragedy of the commons' and Common Pool Resources,³⁵ as well as what social institutions are and how they can shape regimes to facilitate management of complex global environmental problems.³⁶ As Oran Young elaborates, the body of research on social institutions should expand its present understanding of human-environment interactions that can incorporate advocates of both global/top-down institutions and small-scale local/bottom-up approaches to arrive at a unified theory of environmental governance³⁷. Increasingly, studies of GEP include a crucial examination of the interplay between the global political economy, environmental protection and whether these two can coexist in a neo-liberal economic order that remains bound to intensive resource use and consumption.³⁸ Numerous studies explored the role of transnational relations in addressing environmental problems, especially the role of civil society/ non-governmental organizations as well as corporate actors.³⁹ Other research focused on the influence of 'knowledge-brokers,' such as scientists, in guiding environmental policy. This research has frequently pointed out that no human system of knowledge construction can be obtained without some degree of personal bias and hidden outside influence. Given the growing complexity of ecological issues, the need for specialized technical knowledge has increased; however, society should not relinquish all decision making power to these elite actors without acknowledging other

³⁴ Wapner 2005; Conca and Dabelko 2004.

³⁵ Hardin 1968; Olson 1990

³⁶ Young 1982, 1997, 1998, 2005; Hass, Keohane and Levy 1993

³⁷ Young 2005

³⁸ Kütting 2010; Newell 2008 and 2010; Princen 2005; Dauvergne 2010

³⁹ Keck and Sikkink 1998; Betsill 2006; Alcock 2008; Dimitrov 2010

forms of expertise (i.e. indigenous knowledge, citizen-experts) and without consultation with those impacted by scientific decision-making.⁴⁰ The question for the future advancement of GEP is, ‘where do we go from here or which research themes require further exploration and how can these various disciplines build bridges to illuminate our understanding?’

Global environmental politics (GEP) continues to develop as an academic discipline, seeking to understand how ecological problems are governed, coordinated and conceptualized in local, global and transnational dimensions. As Peter Dauvergne elaborates, GEP is an evolving field

“partly grounded in political science, but increasingly interdisciplinary in nature, drawing from international relations, sociology, philosophy, history, economics, law and human ecology fields, and continuously blurring boundaries between them (p 8).”⁴¹

Scholars have contributed to understanding how and when regimes form around certain issues, when states cooperate and how actors other than states contribute to influencing these processes.⁴² Literature in global environmental governance and the role of global civil society helped to expand this discourse beyond realist concepts of relations between sovereign states.⁴³ The various stages of regime formation often lead to international treaties or extensive forms of cooperation, such as the Arctic Regime. In another example, epistemic communities help to build bridges to overcome political

⁴⁰ Jasanoff and Wynne (1998); Jasanoff (2005); Fischer (2000)

⁴¹ Dauvergne, Peter (2005), pp. 8-32.

⁴² Young (1982, 1998, 2005); Dimitrov (2006), Josephson (2004); Hass (1990), Wapner (2003), Paterson; Arts, Noortman and Reinalda (2001)

⁴³ Kütting and Lipschutz (2009); Lipschutz (1996, 2004); Young (1997); Winter (2006)

barriers, and examination of NGOs and their influence in transnational activist networks or social movements furthered understanding of GEP.⁴⁴

Other research focuses on the influence of ‘knowledge-brokers,’ such as scientists, in guiding environmental policy. This research has frequently pointed out that no system of knowledge can be constructed without some degree of personal bias and hidden outside influence. Given the growing complexity of ecological issues, the need for specialized technical knowledge has increased, however, society should not relinquish all decision making power to these elite actors without acknowledging other forms of expertise (i.e. indigenous knowledge, citizen-experts) and without consultation with those impacted by scientific decision-making. Research evaluating the position of ‘hard science’ as the ultimate non-biased source of policy guidance is continuously emerging to highlight that while science and scientific knowledge are valuable tools in decision-making, other types of knowledge and expertise should not be discounted in its favor, especially when its absolute objectivity can be questioned.⁴⁵

Kütting and Rose note that while the global system became more pluralistic, we have not seen a fundamental structural shift that displaces states as the sole sovereign/legally recognized agents.⁴⁶ Global governance policies do not account for the social significance and dependence on the environment, which leads to a devaluation of ecological considerations. Western consumption patterns and capitalist practices are linked to political, economic and cultural factors. Culture as a construct of societal norms can

⁴⁴ See Young (1997) on the Arctic Regime; (Hass (1990) on the Mediterranean Action Plan, Walsh (2004) on Atlantic Tuna Commission; and Keck and Sikkink (1998), Tarrow (1994 and 2005), Florini (2000), Moser (2007) on social movements

⁴⁵ Jasanoff and Wynne (1998), Jasanoff and Mortello (2004), Jasanoff (2005), Fischer (2000), Haas (2005)

⁴⁶ Kütting and Rose (2006), pp. 113-116

explain established practices, including how the environment is viewed and valued. The culture and environment relationship is not extensively studied in IR and globalization literature according to Kütting and Rose, and should be examined in further detail. Definitions of the environment, environmental degradation and change are culturally specific and determined by local factors including history and geography. Kütting and Rose define culture as “ social practices and beliefs that are rooted in particular forms of religious, social, economic and political practices predominant in a society” (p 126). Culture influences social practices and beliefs, but it also drives political and economic decisions that impact the environment.⁴⁷ From the perspective of religious environmental activism, the above points raise several questions that the present study aimed to address, including the role of religious values in the construction of societal responses to ecological degradation and its impact on global environmental politics.

Paul Wapner illustrates how transnational actors, especially transnational environmental activist groups or TEAGs are political actors in their own right, who often focus their efforts outside the state and have a broader societal impact that can lead to political impact.⁴⁸ Wapner notes that previous studies of NGOs or transnational groups missed a part of the picture by solely looking for how these groups influence the state.

Wapner’s point, similarly to that of Kütting and Rose, is that these arguments overlook the societal dimensions of politics – how culture, economics and public perception all influence state policies. This complex network of interactions is emerging at the global level that makes global civil society “that slice of associational life which

⁴⁷ Kütting, Gabriela, and Sandra Rose (2006), in Michele M. Betsill, Kathryn Hochstetler and Dimitris Stevis (eds), pp. 113-141.

⁴⁸ Wapner (1995)

exists above the individual and below the state, but also across national boundaries” (p113). Wapner recommends that borrowing the ‘fluid approach’ from sociology may prove a better method of evaluating TEAG influence on societal habits that consequently lead to fundamental changes.⁴⁹ Although Wapner’s point aptly illustrates that NGOs can influence state politics through changes in public perception, it should also call for a greater understanding of how local grassroots initiatives can help to shape national culture, its linkages to global organizations, and whether these activities still fall under the rubric of world civil society.

Some scholars of GEP and global environmental governance (GEG) highlight the existing power disparity implied by a focus on top-down approaches on which GEP approaches depend, and the power dimensions associated with the social construction of knowledge.⁵⁰ In looking at the relationship between knowledge and nature, place and space, Kütting and Lipschutz point out that discourses on global governance and GEP fail to take into account inequalities in social power relations in environmental politics, including the relationship to power between the global-local level. The GEG approach is seen as continuing to impose a hegemonic system by powerful actors on local communities.⁵¹ In looking at the spatiality of knowledge, Luke points out that key contradictions of everyday life are spatial, with market forces engaging the local, national, regional and global levels at the same time while dealing within the territorial construct of nation-states.⁵² He notes that environmental issues are too often reduced to contradictory concepts, such as the global-local divide. While ‘Nature’ is a “moral force animating many

⁴⁹ *ibid*, pp. 311-40.

⁵⁰ Kütting and Lipschutz (2009), pp. 1-10.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, pp. 3-5.

⁵² Timothy Luke (2009) in Kütting and Lipschutz (2009), pp. 13-14

visions of environmental politics,” it is nevertheless harmed by being framed in terms of ecological commons, infrastructure and assets, with citizens demoted to users.⁵³ These perspectives point to an existing power-structure that favors top-down governance mechanisms and disenfranchises local communities. ‘Nature’ is a crucial term for the environmental movement and as Wapner argues, this notion has been the cornerstone of American environmentalism, since its inception. The social constructivist ‘ecocritique’ illuminates how the term ‘nature’ can be taken for granted in environmental discourse without acknowledgment of its multiple interpretations and humanity’s frequent role over millennia in shaping ‘nature.’⁵⁴ Wapner argues that in the Western and in particular American context, nature has been portrayed by environmentalists as beautiful, wild and removed from human society. Nature, in this context personified by Muir, Thoreau and Leopold is ‘sacred’ and to be protected from the continuous onslaught of human intrusion. Wapner argues that the ‘end of nature,’ as he perceives it, represents a re-conceptualization of how ‘nature’ is defined, but also a transformation of the environmental movement itself. It is time to acknowledge that in order for the environmental movement to thrive it must accept humanity as a part of the natural world it seeks to protect rather than continuing to preserve an increasingly fictitious divide between human beings and the natural world.⁵⁵

The research presented here on REGs addresses the interplay of local-global issues, noting that local, bottom-up responses can strive to mobilize change within existing power structures, focusing on the local while acting with a global focus. It also examines how

⁵³ Ibid, pp. 20-22

⁵⁴ Luke (1997)

⁵⁵ Wapner, Paul Kevin (2010) pp. 1-33.

REGs aim to re-frame the human-nature divide described by Wapner. Betsill notes that while initially the main point in GEP research was to highlight a political impact these various transnational actors had on environmental governance, the challenge is now to improve how they are defined, evaluated and scrutinized. She observes that all too frequently these groups are defined in terms of what they are not, rather than what they are--for instance non-state actors and non-governmental organizations--suggesting that additional research is needed concerning who participates in transnational environmental politics. While Agenda 21 introduced the concept of major groups, including religious organizations, the majority of work to date has focused on the impact of environmental NGOs.⁵⁶ From the perspective of conducting research on the political role of religious environmentalism, this research helps to minimize this gap by exploring the influence of religious groups on GEP framing and approaches.

Religion and Environmentalism

Religious organizations have by no means been excluded in global/international relations or social movements studies, however much of this focus was placed on human rights campaigns in Latin America or racial equity in the United States.⁵⁷ Social justice, democratization and equity were the issues areas where religious organizations were actively involved in leading pressure for change. The rise of environmental religious activism over the past several decades opens up new avenues for scholars of global politics where religion and politics are concerned. Theologians and sociologists examine the

⁵⁶ Betsill, Michele M. (2006), in Michele M. Betsill, Kathryn Hochstetler and Dimitris Stevis (eds) (2006), pp. 171-202.

⁵⁷ Keck and Sikkink (1998)

interplay of ‘faith and ecology’ in their religious teachings and the societal adaptation of these concepts.⁵⁸

The relationship between ecology, environmentalism and religion has long standing historical roots in shaping how people view and approach the natural world. Nature writers and naturalists, such as John Muir, Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson to name a few, addressed the sacredness and spirituality of connecting with nature in their 19th century writings.⁵⁹ For many spiritual traditions, viewing nature as sacred is not a new phenomenon; however, an organized coalition between major world religions and environmental activism emerged as a developing field of “religious environmentalism” over the past twenty years. This raises questions regarding the effectiveness of religion in fostering environmental stewardship and positive attitudes towards conservation. Lynn White’s now famous 1967 article on the roots of the environmental crisis sparked much heated debate on the impact of the Judeo-Christian worldview on environmental degradation in the West.⁶⁰ White focused much on the Western developments in science and technology and how the fusion of these two fields gave Western civilization the power to transform “nature” in potentially disastrous proportions. His conclusion, however, is frequently overlooked in many studies, since White did not advocate that the absence of religion or specifically Judeo-Christian teachings will help to change present day ecological destruction. To the contrary, he advocated reinterpreting Christian teachings in an ecologically sound manner or creating new religious beliefs. The one example he

⁵⁸ See Barnhill and Gottlieb (2001); Gottlieb(2006); Hessel (1996); Palmer and Finlay ((2003) Tucker and Swimme and Tucker and Grim (1994), (2011); Berry (2009); White (1967); Woodrum and Hoban (1994); Wolkomir et al (1997); Sherkat and Ellison (2007)

⁵⁹ See Begiebing, Robert J. and Owen Grumbling. *The Literature of Nature: The British and American Traditions*. 1990. Medford, NJ: Plexus Publishing, Inc.

⁶⁰ White, Lynn, Jr. (Mar. 10, 1967) pp. 1203-1207.

provided were the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi, who emphasized the equality of all creatures, rather than man's dominion over them.⁶¹ Numerous studies in the past examined Lynn White's hypothesis of the degrading impact the Judeo-Christian 'dominion' worldview has had on the approach towards the environment, but the results produced varied responses and a clear picture of a strictly negative impact did not emerge.⁶² Several studies in the US noted that while fundamentalist Christian beliefs seem to be positively correlated with a lack of support for environmentalism, groups who self-identified as being religious often showed a positive response towards environmental stewardship, with the possibility of dual and contrasting "dominion" and "stewardship" effects.⁶³ Sherkat and Ellison, in a study utilizing data from the 1993 General Social Survey, found "the negative impact of conservative Protestant affiliation and beliefs in biblical inerrancy on willingness to sacrifice for the environment."⁶⁴ Their general conclusion, however, notes the complexity of connections between environment, religion, and activism and calls for a more comprehensive view of religious influences as well as a more nuanced understanding of the links with political beliefs.⁶⁵ In research on worldviews it is often noted that in the U.S., divisive party politics can blur concern for environmental protection with party affiliation, where environmental activism is perceived as the cause of the liberal left.⁶⁶ Environmental beliefs are multidimensional and influenced by numerous factors that include, race, gender, education levels, income, and fundamentalist views.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Ibid. page 1206.

⁶² Woodrum and Hoban (1994); Wolkomir et al. (1997)

⁶³ Eckberg, Douglas Lee and T. Jean Blocker (1996) pp.343-355

⁶⁴ Sherkat and Ellison (2007), pp.77-78

⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 81-83

⁶⁶ Peterson and Liu (2008)

⁶⁷ Nooney, Jennifer G., Eric Woodrum, Thomas J. Hoban and William B. Clifford (November 2003), pp.763-783.

Other scholars remain more critical of Judeo-Christian teachings on ecology. Low and Tremayne examined whether ‘religious norms and beliefs lead to ethical behavior and respect for nature’ from an ecofeminist perspective.⁶⁸ Both western and non-western religions were evaluated, as was the notion that non-western religions are less dualistic and consequently less degrading of women and the environment. Amy Simes describes how western Neo-Pagan dualism seeks to balance rather than dominate nature imagery as is found in Judeo-Christian doctrine. Anne Primavesi links Christian theology, and in particular, hierarchies found in Christian teaching that related the order of the universe relative to one Supreme Being, with human beings (primarily man) found at the apex of this hierarchy. Primavesi finds that any hierarchy, including ones re-conceptualized by Christian eco-theologians, are inherently unequal and assume that all other beings--ecosystems, animals, plants--are inferior to humanity. She finds the notion of ‘stewardship’ to assume a human dominance over the world, which ignores ecosystemic interdependence and classifies organisms (scientific Kingdoms) into ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ forms of life. Primavesi claims that in Christianity the ordering of the universe in relation to God as the Supreme Being has dominated western perceptions of nature and human identity as well as dichotomized notions of gender. The notion of stewardship as portrayed by Primavesi is contested between REG activists as well, with some groups viewing it as domineering notion, while others expressed a greater comfort level with the implications of human ‘stewardship’ over the world. The concept of stewardship as it applies to REG issue framing and motivation is elucidated in greater detail in this study.

⁶⁸ Low, Elaine and Soraya Tremayne eds., (2001) Introduction, p 5,

One of the key questions addressed in this research examined the way religious environmental actors approach the notion of sacrifice for the environment in their activism and whether it was utilized in their framing. Michael Maniates and John Meyer elaborated on the politically charged notion of ‘sacrifice’ in the context of environmental politics. Sacrifice in the environmental political context is often shied away from as being too risky a statement to make to the public, with the expectation that people are only willing to look for easy solutions to environmental problems. Maniates and Meyer point out that sacrifice, often defined as “making sacred,” is not properly understood in policy discussions. One way to interpret sacrifice is as something negative or a loss of value. However, in certain contexts, sacrifice can be a personally rewarding experience, such as parental sacrifice, or a gaining more personal time for less profit. Maniates and Meyer also point out that while policymakers and activists are reluctant to ask the public to ‘sacrifice’ on behalf of the environment, they often overlook other sacrifices most people are making in return. For instance many people are already sacrificing clean air, potable water, open spaces and leisure time for corporate profits, growing consumerism and car ownership without questioning these sacrifices or having open acknowledgment of these actions as ‘sacrifices.’⁶⁹

In the same volume, Anna Peterson discusses the relationship between religion, sacrifice and the environment. Peterson notes that while ‘sacrifice’ can be a controversial topic, most religions and religious practices call for ‘sacrifice’ either in ritual form or in daily life. Sacrifice in a religious context is intended to show the value obtained from spiritual seeking, and highlight the significance of ‘sacrifice’ in society. Sacrifice when

⁶⁹ Meyer, John M. and Michael Maniates (2010), in Michael Maniates and John M. Meyer eds. pp. 1-11.

viewed from this perspective is readily accepted and expected by the public. In a secular example Peterson points out that parents make daily sacrifices in order to raise children, and this type of sacrifice is viewed as a societal good by most. Peterson concludes her discussion on sacrifice by stating that religions can play a significant role in shaping societal attitudes towards ‘sacrifice’ for the environment. “Religion can serve as a model and help to sustain and inspire such environmental sacrifices in contemporary America.”⁷⁰ Peterson’s conclusion highlights a key aspect of this research, namely to explore how religious environmental groups frame their message and the role of sacrifice in their discourse. Sacrifice was found to be a contentious topic, supported in practice but infrequently referenced. Some REGs also noted that they do not perceive the changes they propose as constituting ‘sacrifice’ given that they portray their effects in appositional light.

The notion of sacrifice and how religious actors apply it is more nuanced than that proposed by Peterson is shaping climate policies in the US and the UK. As observed with some REG activists, Karen Liftin points out that sacrifice does not have to be associated with the loss of something, but rather what can be gained or ‘made sacred’ in everyday life. This philosophy runs through many cultures, and builds on Ann Peterson’s notion of how religions can play a key role in bridging the acceptance of environmental sacrifice in politics, where ‘nature’ can commonly be viewed as ‘sacred.’ Sacrifice to Liftin has precedent in Pagan, Judeo-Christian and Vedic traditions, which in modern society she believes have not disappeared but rather gone “underground.” Sacrifice is simultaneously a social, political, and religious act, which can serve to promote social cohesion.⁷¹ Liftin’s

⁷⁰ Peterson, Anna (2010), in Michael Maniates and John M. Meyer eds. pp. 91-115.

⁷¹ Liftin, Karen (2010), ‘The Sacred and the Profane in the Ecological Politics of Sacrifice’ in Michael Maniates and John M. Meyer eds. *The Environmental Politics of Sacrifice*, Cambridge, MA: the MIT Press, pp. 117-143.

concept of sacrifice going ‘underground’ is reflected in the framing of some REGs regarding this message- they would contend that sacrifice does not have to be seen as a negative and is implicitly implied rather than explicitly demanded. She points out that sacrifice does not have to be associated with the loss of something, but rather what can be gained or ‘made sacred’ in everyday life. This philosophy runs through many cultures, and builds on Ann Peterson’s notion of how religions can play a key role in bridging the acceptance of environmental sacrifice in politics, where ‘nature’ can commonly be viewed as ‘sacred.’⁷²

Peterson, Liftin and Gunster (2010) all point to a similar message where environmental politics, sacrifice and policy are concerned, namely that the presence of personal value and fulfillment matters in religious practice as well as in policy choices. Gunster’s⁷³ analysis of the British-Columbia carbon tax campaign suggests that the voting public rejected this tax in part because the nature of the government’s campaign focused on minimal personal sacrifice. Climate change was not discussed in severe terms as a public threat, but the carbon tax was framed as a personal economic gain, which apparently did not motivate voters to support it.

Scholars of GEP would benefit from improved comprehension of how value-based groups, such as religious organizations with historically strong societal, institutional and transnational ties, have the capacity to influence environmental politics. At present there is an active and growing global movement involving many world religions in campaigns against anthropogenic climate change as well as other ecological issues. While climate

⁷² Liftin, Karen (2010), ‘The Sacred and the Profane in the Ecological Politics of Sacrifice’ in Michael Maniates and John M. Meyer eds. *The Environmental Politics of Sacrifice*, Cambridge, MA: the MIT Press, pp. 117-143.

⁷³ Gunster, Shane (2010), in Michael Maniates and John M. Meyer eds. pp. 187-215.

justice is a prominent point of these campaigns, especially where vulnerable populations are concerned, there is also a clearly expressed reconceptualization of religious teachings and a juxtaposition of those teachings with ecological holism and interconnectedness. Although the substantial contribution of the environmental movement towards creating multiple international treaties, institutions and policies must be acknowledged, it is hard to debate the extent of ecological damage that marks our world today.⁷⁴ As Wapner, Peterson and Liftin illustrate, nature is viewed as sacred by secular environmentalists and religious groups, but the link between these values and political action requires further exploration.

Climate Politics

Within the context of GEP, numerous issue areas and topics are researched concerning the environment. One of the most wide-ranging and contentious issues is that of anthropogenic climate change. A notion still debated and refuted by some political elites, primarily in the United States. Due to the global nature of climate change this issue is multifaceted and addressed from the perspective of multilateral negotiations, global governance as well as that of local, national and regional approaches for regulation, adaptation and life-style transformation. Climate change poses an unprecedented challenge in its sheer magnitude to the stability of ecological and societal systems. Religious environmental groups became engaged in climate change for this reason and it is why this study aimed to focus on their motivation to engage in this issue. As the literature described below shows, climate change is approached from a wide variety of perspectives and levels of analyses. Bas Arts describes the impact of NGOs on climate change negotiations, while

⁷⁴ Wapner (2005); Young (2005)

Anthony Giddens calls for the embrace of nation-states as mechanisms for implementation of climate change policies that will not succeed with this ‘enabling state.’ Newell and Peterson discuss the transition towards a ‘climate economy,’ including the way interfaith investors can call for greater accountability. Dimitrov, Fisher and others evaluate the perceived failures of the COP-15 UNFCCC summit in Copenhagen, touted as a make-or-break moment for controlling climate change, including the implication for the climate justice movement.⁷⁵ Wapner, Jinah, Nicholson and Chong discuss the current trend towards ‘climate bandwagoning’--the linkage by various campaigns and activists of numerous environmental issues to climate change--and evaluate the consequences of such issue-linkage. Nicholson and Chong discuss a reversal of this process in the field of human rights, where climate campaigners utilize the framework of human rights to strengthen their cause.⁷⁶

Bas Arts evaluated the political influence of Environmental NGOs on treaty negotiation in the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) during the 1990-1997 (pre-Kyoto) time-frame. Arts differentiates between political influence and political power, noting that political power refers to a ‘more or less permanent ability to influence outcomes’ rather than influence over specific instances. Arts found that NGOs influenced the political process in about half of the cases examined. This influence was usually indirect, with one instance of influencing a ‘high’ political issue⁷⁷. While the influence of REGs on climate politics is not the main aim of this study, it is a topic that should be pursued in future research, especially as the

⁷⁵ Fisher (2010); Dimitrov (2010)

⁷⁶ Nicholson and Chong (2011)

⁷⁷ Arts (2001)

engagement of religious actors continues to expand. Influence is also closely tied to questions about the motivation of religious actors and their perceived effectiveness in campaigns. Given the multitude of actors engaged in climate campaigns it may be challenging to gauge the influence of religious actors.

Anthony Giddens claims that at present there is no such thing as a politics of climate change and that new ideas will be needed to develop this ‘politics.’ One of these new ideas is that of the ‘ensuring state,’ which Giddens implies requires embracing the institutions of nation-states to implement and enforce new policies while acknowledging that ‘bottom-down’ politics of old will no longer apply in the post-modern world.⁷⁸ The ‘enabling state’ will have to be coupled with other changes, such as political and economic convergence. Focusing on negative images exclusively will not help to mobilize greater efforts for mobilizing climate mitigation and adaptation measures. Giddens is also very critical of the green movement and in particular, the focus on ‘nature preservation and risk aversion’ as the driving mechanisms. In Giddens’ view risk aversion, including policy mechanisms such as the precautionary principle, entail a measure of risk in inaction where climate change is concerned. Giddens believes that the primary focus must be placed on human survival and the best application of novel technologies along with lifestyle changes that will lead to successful adaptation to climate change. He notes that developed countries need to acknowledge that continuous development or ‘overdevelopment’ does not produce added benefits past a certain point.⁷⁹

In his critique of the precautionary principle and technocratic solutions, Giddens fails to observe that a lack of precaution is part of the cause behind anthropogenic climate

⁷⁸ Giddens (2009), p. 8

⁷⁹ Ibid

change. While alternative technologies and markets are necessary in moving away from a dependence on fossil fuels, they can offer the promise of easy solutions rather than favoring the profound lifestyle changes also promoted by Giddens.

Numerous studies of global environmental governance and climate change tended to focus on regimes, institutions and the negotiations process under the UN climate change framework. Over the years, while studying climate negotiations, many contributions have been made in understanding the role of civil society (especially NGOs) in influencing climate talks--how influence should be defined and the implications for global governance. It is argued here that GEP now needs to turn its analyses towards the ‘glocal’ dimensions of world politics, to paraphrase Phil Cerny’s take on transnational neopluralism.⁸⁰ One of the lessons learned from Copenhagen is that the multilateral climate process is one part of the climate governance puzzle.⁸¹ States can set their own national reduction targets, sub-national regions can adapt climate-neutral policies, and local communities can take action. The point here is not to say that the UN multilateral process is insignificant, but rather to emphasize that it is part of the myriad network of interactions that constitute a complex, layered and evolving system of climate governance.

Climate governance is increasingly seen as a multi-level process with a legally binding agreement being one piece of the governance scheme rather than its sole determinant. Shannon Orr refers to the UN’s climate change negotiations as “Brokenhagen” and “Can’tcun,” thereby summing up the wider disenchantment with this multilateral process. She further observes academic calls for a revision of this process to

⁸⁰ Cerny (2010)

⁸¹ Dimitrov (May 2010), pp. 18-24.

focus more on ‘micro’ rather than top-down approaches.⁸² As some scholars note, the transition to a climate economy must be seen in the bigger picture of the enormity of the proposed task-- industrialization did not happen overnight and decoupling the capitalist economy from fossil fuels won’t either.⁸³ Significantly, a single defeat of multilateralism (as seen at COP-15) does not mean that other instruments or progress to mitigate climate change cease to take place. As Newell, Paterson and Cerny point out, neo-pluralism has worked to change power among political actors and strengthened non-state entities. The global economy in its transition to a climate economy will rely on the power of investors as well as multilateral treaties. Investors, including religious groups and interfaith coalitions, may have a considerable say in how a given company approaches climate change. Newell describes the role a couple of faith based and interfaith investor organizations had on influencing companies’ climate policies.⁸⁴ The Interfaith Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), a coalition of 275 faith-based institutional investors and faith based-investor networks, was involved in filing resolutions and demanding corporate accountability on climate change.⁸⁵ Moolna, on the other hand, advocates for the inclusion of carbon in the wider social and environmental context. He claims that carbon reduction needs to be ‘recontextualized within a broader environmental ethic,’ moving away from commodified terminology such as ‘carbon neutral,’ towards a ‘climate clean’ framework. Moolna makes the analogy between the Fair Trade use of labels on products as one way to move towards a “climate-friendly global economy.”⁸⁶

⁸² Orr, Shannon (2011)

⁸³ Newell (2010); Okereke (2009); Dimitrov (2010)

⁸⁴ Newell and Paterson (2010), Newell (2008)

⁸⁵ Newell (2010), pp. 69-73

⁸⁶ Moolna, Adam (2012), pp. 1-7

Observations from COP-15 of civil society engagement provide a mixed picture of influence. Dana Fisher proposed that too many merging NGO movements actually contributed towards leaving civil society shut out from the decision making process. Fisher points out three major obstacles in Copenhagen that did not benefit civil society groups. One was the poor organization, second the increased number of registrants, and third the merging of movements. These factors were combined with the emergence of the “climate justice movement’ in Copenhagen and the aim of these activists to engage in civil disobedience by remaining outside the negotiations process and in fact calling for a takeover of the conference for a day to create a people’s assembly.⁸⁷ Ian McGregor provides a different perspective of NGO access as an NGO delegate at COP-15. McGregor points out that while many NGO delegates appeared to be left out of the process, many of those delegates were actually added on to the lists of official state delegates by their country’s delegation, thereby in many cases providing more direct access to the negotiating process rather than less. McGregor also notes that the climate justice “outsider” perspective to staging protests in Copenhagen was not the primary reason for NGO restrictions as Fischer implied, but rather it was an issue of fire-code safety that concerned the Dutch organizers. None the less, McGregor finds that COP-15 was a disappointment for global society, including member states and civil society representatives.⁸⁸

Radoslav Dimitrov noted that out of the various possible outcomes considered for COP-15, the final result showed a failure of the UN process to produce an approved document, let alone a legally-binding treaty. Dimitrov points out that this apparent failure

⁸⁷ Fisher, (May 2010), pp.11-17. See Table 1 p. 13 for participant numbers.

⁸⁸ McGregor (February 2011), pp.1-7.

of climate governance via the multilateral UN process is likely to shift policy action to regional, national, subnational, local and non-state led initiatives. Furthermore, many countries are still pledging ambitious domestic emission reductions and billions of dollars for climate policy as a result of the one achievement of Copenhagen. The transition to a green economy is taking place, but it cannot be gauged by the outcome of one multilateral meeting.⁸⁹ Focusing on the multilateral process as the end game of policy outcomes is misleading or incomplete. It is misleading in part because nation-states have many other inter-state agendas to play out while talking about a legally binding global treaty that may or may not reflect the full scope of domestic mitigation measures. As Dimitrov points out, this failure at Copenhagen of the inter-state system does not translate into global climate policy inaction.⁹⁰

Climate change mitigation efforts are continuing and gaining momentum in many local, national, regional and transnational settings. Admittedly, the effectiveness of some of these measures in reducing emissions may be misleading, but it none the less points to a trend in changing individual behavior in lieu of the climate change threat. This pattern of local activism is true for religious actors in the US and the UK, especially in the US where federal legislation on climate change is lacking. REGs in particular are focused on lobbying their governments through a top-down approach, but are also strong in mobilizing bottom-up approaches towards climate change. Certainly from the point of view of looking at the influence of civil society in reaching a legally-binding agreement, Copenhagen looks disappointing. Climate governance and negotiations failed to produce a long-awaited outcome.

⁸⁹ Dimitrov (May 2010), pp. 18-24.

⁹⁰ Ibid

It is proposed in this study that such outcomes do not represent a failure of global governance as much as they indicate a continuous transformation in World politics-- one where nation-states remain as key actors in policy-making, but not representative of the whole range of interests and actions that affect the decision-making process. Multilateral fora, such as COP-15, which are designed by the rules of a state-centric system, are simply unable to cope with the amount of interest, demands and actors present in the process. The result in an ineffective and subdued diplomatic process that represents more the limits of sovereign power than the capabilities of states to reach global solutions. While negotiation means that initial positions are likely to be altered, they may not experience a complete shift from the initial position. In short, national delegations (including heads of state) in democratic societies will only compromise as far as is politically acceptable back home.⁹¹ In this sense it is imperative to research the role of NGOs, social movement organizations and civil society at the local and national level as well as at the global level. Clearly, if activists do not make the link with core state interests, their multilateral negotiating ability is also weakened.

Climate 'bandwagoning' is a topic addressed by a several authors in a special issue of *Global Environmental Politics* and refers to recent issue-linkage between climate change and other regimes. Climate change is a politically prominent issue, which some actors try to utilize as a mechanism for furthering or reinvigorating their own policy agenda. In some

⁹¹ Many countries know that even if the U.S. promised drastic emissions cuts and signed up to a legally-binding treaty at a summit that would have no legal standing until the U.S. Congress accepts and ratifies the treaty. If the treaty contains language that is not politically supported, it will be moribund from the onset and the future U.S. position in negotiations would be weakened by this realization. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is an excellent example of this issue for the US, which year after year and Congress after Congress fails to be ratified.

cases climate ‘bandwagoning’ furthers climate change activism and in others in it may muddle the waters with too many broad issues and interests, as Wapner points out. But overall it may serve to include climate change goals in the discourse of other regimes, facilitating the expansion of climate activism. Some of the regimes involved in ‘climate bandwagoning’ include desertification, regional fisheries management, environmental security and human rights. As Jinah points out the COP-16 (UNFCCC) summit saw a wide range of organizations, including the World Bank, engaging in climate change related activities.⁹²

As climate change became a mainstream issue in international relations, strategic linkages were formed with the result that few international organizations, NGOs, universities or religious organizations do not have a climate focus at this point. By addressing climate bandwagoning, a broader understanding of how climate change is shaping global environmental politics and in turn being shaped by the strategic linkages framed by a variety of actors.⁹³ Jinah *et al*, use Oran Young’s definition of regime linkage to mean “conscious efforts to make use of [regime] interplay to promote both cooperative and competitive ends constitute a domain of activities that can be thought of as the politics of institutional linkages.”⁹⁴ The authors further differentiate between governance linkages and actor linkages, with governance linkages defined as the “structural connections between components of regimes,” and actor linkages as “agent-based linkages facilitated by member organizations, non-member organizations and /or individuals.”⁹⁵ The special issue focused on actor linkages, given their ability to influence strategic linkages to reach

⁹² Jinah (2011)

⁹³ Ibid, p.2

⁹⁴ Young, Oran 2002 as quoted by Sikina Jinah (2011), p. 3.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 3, quote from Salin and VanDeveer.

strategic outcomes. Climate bandwagoning is explored as a form of strategic linkage where actors choose to expand regimes to include new climate-oriented goals.

In the human rights regime, Nicholson and Chong present a normative argument that climate change bandwagoning should be taking place in reverse, namely that climate change activists should link their regime strategically with human rights and leverage the established framework of that regime.⁹⁶ The authors argue in favor of ‘human rights bandwagoning’ and state that it may result in more effective climate policies. The climate justice movement provides one example of activists using the human rights discourse in order to further climate goals, which Nicholson and Chong view as a positive development for the climate regime in terms of applying moral principles for the evaluation of climate policies. Religious environmental actors fall into this category, as many religious groups are part of the climate justice movement or utilize the human rights moral discourse as a way of strategically linking and leveraging both issues. According to Nicholson and Chong, the linkage of these two social movements opens up possibilities for wide-reaching social change and provides the framework and language for a new type of climate politics, one that recognizes exploitative power relations and marginalized groups.⁹⁷ Moral authority in the climate justice movement is an argument utilized by religious organizations and as the authors point out, religious (and climate justice) actors view this dimension as providing a new, more humanitarian perspective on climate change, as opposed to detached scientific language that appears more distant and abstract. While religious actors participated in COP-15 and in the climate justice movement, these analyses do not contain a detailed evaluation of the role of religious actors in climate politics, highlighting the need

⁹⁶ Nicholson and Chong (2011)

⁹⁷ Ibid pp.122-123

to elucidate the relationship between religious ideology and the pursuit of activism that is addressed by this research.

Addressing the challenges of global climate change, as described by the authors above, poses challenges at the local, national, global and transnational level. It is clear that even within a globalizing and integrated world, state-institutions and their domestic politics matter a great deal for the successful implementation of a multilateral treaty. Understanding the ideologies or values and beliefs which drive societal norms and preferences is also critical in mobilizing bottom-up approaches, encouraging life-style changes, and gathering political support for the implementation of national and global policy mechanisms. In this way, elucidating the causal mechanisms that motivate the engagement of religious actors in climate change politics is especially vital in developed countries such as the United States and United Kingdom.

Topic Three: Social Movements

The literature on social movements offers valuable insight into the study of environmentalism. While many scholars of environmental politics do not rely on social movement theory in their analyses, these perspectives are applicable to the present study, given their emphasis on understanding which factors drive collective action. The study of ‘new social movements,’ such as environmental movements relates to the recognition by analysts that collective action is driven by other forces in addition to ‘traditional’ labor and nations focus, with their Marxist and structural-functionalist models of interpretation.⁹⁸ New social movements are also marked by identity concerns, with a focus on who they are, how they are constructed and what they want to achieve. They also tend to have fluid,

⁹⁸ Della Porta and Diani (2006), p.6

discursive, participatory and impermanent organizational styles.⁹⁹ Della Porta and Diani define social movements as “a distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors engage in collective action, namely involvement in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; linked by dense informal networks and; sharing a distinct collective identity.”¹⁰⁰ By conflictual relations Della Porta and Diani refer to engaging in political or cultural conflicts either in support of or in opposition to social change, where conflict denotes an oppositional relationship between actors seeking power over the same issue. In this case the expression of support for some moral values or principles does not translate automatically into social movement action. In relation to dense informal networks, Della Porta and Diani note that social movements consist of more than social movement organizations engaged in collective action, and also include individual actors and collectivities, who are never the less connected to the other actors by a shared collective identity.¹⁰¹

According to Della Porta and Diani social movements can also be seen as expressions of values, and for the new global movements, reflect values related to historical experience of the left and religious experience. However, values may not reflect engagement in activism, which is also tied to constraints and opportunities for action.¹⁰² For this research study, the focus was on environmental movement organizations, namely religious environmental organizations. However it is arguable that these REGs represent a social movement. Though conflictual relations can be described in terms of making clear statements and objectives regarding specific policy actions, protest activity constitutes one

⁹⁹ Dryzek, Downs, Hunold, and Schlosberg (2003), p.11

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, pp. 20-21

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 21-22

¹⁰² Ibid, pp. 66, 72.

part of these movements. Della Porta and Diani also distinguish between conflictual and consensual collective action, where some religious movements engage in collective action without blaming other social actors.¹⁰³ Based on the present research findings, REGs, as part of a social movement, engage in conflictual collective action in challenging existing industrial regulations and protesting projects, such as the Tar Sands oil pipeline. Moreover, conflictual action does not have to take on the form of protest or direct opposition in every instance by challenging larger societal norms. Kate O'Neill notes that various forms of environmentalism has always been deeply political, given that collective action was intended in opposition with conflicting interests.¹⁰⁴ The climate movement, which was originally highly technocratic and elitist in approach targeting policymakers, has shifted towards a more populist movement aiming to transform lifestyles in wealthy countries.¹⁰⁵ Some scholars distinguish between "issue-specific" and "universal" environmental organizations and movements, with issues such as climate-change being issue-specific and broader goals for ideological transformation seen as being "universal" in approach.¹⁰⁶ Smith and Pulvar made a similar claim regarding REGs, noting that based on their assessment REGs function as primarily ethics-based organizations rather than focusing on specific issue-areas.¹⁰⁷

Though organizations can place a stronger emphasis on universal versus issue-specific approaches, this can be a misleading categorization. In the case of REGs, morals, values and beliefs play a strong role in the organizations operating principles and

¹⁰³ Ibid, pp. 22-23

¹⁰⁴ O'Neill, Kate (2012), pp. 117

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, pp.118

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 121

¹⁰⁷ Smith and Pulvar (2009)

motivation, as they do for many secular organizations, albeit the specific expression of these ideologies may vary. REGs do focus on transforming life-styles and “greening” beliefs, however some REGs are also issue-specific. For example, Operation Noah in the UK and Interfaith Power & Light in the US both focus on a religious response to global warming. That is issue-specific, but it does not prevent them from working for broader societal and life-style transformation. Doherty and Doyle also raise a relevant point in stating that not all environmental movements are necessarily social movements.¹⁰⁸ In their definition, social movements must be engaged in protest or counter-cultural activities, share a common identity as well as network ties, and in short advocate for social and political change that moves beyond policy change.¹⁰⁹

From this standpoint, REGs can be seen as constituting a growing social movement. There is a growing sense of identity formation and shared culture along with the aim to challenge dominant social norms. For some REGs that will take the form of protest, while for others it will be implemented through challenges to consumerism. Doherty and Doyle, as well as Schlosberg and Bomberg,¹¹⁰ note that environmentalism and the environmental movement are not monolithic, but composed of varied approaches, actors and coalitions. Schlosberg and Bomberg in particular focus on US environmentalism in comparison to European environmentalism and reflect that US institutions tend to favor a more adversarial form of environmental engagements while also favoring local and state driven political reforms as opposed to the more centralized European example. It is also noted that the highly polarized US political environment has generated environmental activism from

¹⁰⁸ Doherty and Doyle (2006)

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 702-703

¹¹⁰ Schlosberg and Bomberg (2008a), (2008b)

a “less expected” source of conservative Evangelicals, who have sought to frame climate change in terms of ‘creation care.’¹¹¹ They further observe that support from evangelical groups may lead to interesting alliances with mainstream environmental groups, which is one of the points explored in the present study, including perspectives from the evangelical community.

Another significant emphasis in researching environmental movements rests on the application of frames. Schlosberg and Blomberg point to several authors, including Brick and Cawley who utilized framing in their analysis of the environmental movement.¹¹² The way that the environmental movement frames issues to the public to interpret events is seen as a major factor of movements where ideas and values play a central role in the creation a ‘discursive commons.’ Brick and Cawley’s argument states that the creation of common discourse can lead to the formation of ‘discursive bridges’ between different ideas, which lead to transformation at various level, including that of ‘ledger politics.’¹¹³ Chalupka points out that environmentalism embraces certain modernist concepts, such as science, while denigrating others, such as natural resource exploitation, giving environmentalists a sense of moral superiority that keeps them from understanding the resentment of the right.¹¹⁴ Chaloupka calls on the movement to acknowledge ‘multinaturalism’ or the diverse interpretations of the “nature, science and politics relationship.”¹¹⁵ What is most significant from these various perspectives is that environmentalism is not restricted to interest group or lobby politics in challenging the political system. The way that environmental groups

¹¹¹ Ibid, (2008a), pp.345-346.

¹¹² Brick and Cawley (2008), cited in Schlosberg and Bomberg (2008), pp. 191-192

¹¹³ Ibid

¹¹⁴ Chaloupka, Bill (2008), cited in Schlosberg and Bomberg (2008), pp.193-194.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

draw on ideology and frame their cause offers new insights into the diverse forms a social movement can take in order to challenge dominant paradigms.¹¹⁶

Framing is relevant is assessing religious environmental group approach towards activism, given that much of their emphasis rests on transforming the way in which the human-ecology relationship is portrayed. Snow *et al* analyze the support and participation in social movement organizations by applying frame alignment processes in their study of religious organizations, citing that the willingness to participate in SMOs is often taken for granted by scholars.¹¹⁷ Snow identifies four types of frame alignment processes: frame bridging; frame amplification; frame extension, and frame transformation, noting that SMOs can apply only some or all of these processes with varying levels of success. Frame bridging applies to the linkage of two issue area under one cause or “sentiment pool,” a tactic that is utilized by a variety of SMOs, including religious environmental groups, in establishing a connection between religiosity and environmentalism. Simultaneously, some REGs engage in frame amplification in building on the existing ideologies of potential supporters and amplifying either their religious or ecological components. Frame extension is also applied, for instance in how faith-based development NGOs have extended their human rights mission to include a component of ‘climate justice.’ Frame transformation, which Snow divides into domain-specific and global-interpretive frames,¹¹⁸ is visible in REGs especially in the sense of more sweeping, global frames, which relate to the relationship of faith, ecology and human connectivity. Ideology, or the value and belief

¹¹⁶ Snow et al (1986) borrow the term ‘frame’ from Goffman (1974), with frames defined as “schemata of interpretation” enabling individuals “to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences” in their lives and the world, pp. 464.

¹¹⁷ Snow, David A., Burke Rochford, Jr., Steven K. Worden and Robert D. Benford (1986)

¹¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 473-476.

systems that guide human behavior, play a central role in understanding movements and the types of frames they choose to construct. As noted by Keck and Sikkink, networks need to frame issues in a certain context that makes their cause meaningful, a process called “frame resonance,” or how an organization interprets its information in a way to impact public understanding. Issue framing is a significant process for religious groups as they try to message environmental messaging in a different context, which they perceive to have greater resonance with their audience and the general public.¹¹⁹

Zald, argues that the social movement agenda should be expanded and redefined in terms of Ideologically Structured Action (ISA), defining ideologically structured behavior as “behavior which is guided and shaped by ideological concerns--belief systems defending and attacking current social relations and the social system.”¹²⁰ In his interpretation, ISA offers a means to integrate culture and action into the same framework, and notes that ideology has been shown to be a better predictor of environmental group behavior than other dominant approaches, including resource mobilization and new social movements.¹²¹ Zald also points out that scholars of SMOs should keep in mind that the larger movement framework can operate not only in the realm of protest activities and marches, but also in political party and bureaucratic government structures.¹²² Supporters of a movement can include party members who are elected to office and seek to continue the movement’s agenda, for instance by furthering feminist and environmental causes. While that division has to be drawn at some point, Zald make a relevant point in not delineating political boundary lines too rigidly. What is perceived as political activity can be handled outside

¹¹⁹ Keck and Sikkink (1998), pp. 1-17.

¹²⁰ Zald, Mayer N. (2000), pp. 3-4

¹²¹ Ibid, pp 5-6.

¹²² Ibid, pp. 9-13

of direct lobby action and may not have to take the form of a protest or march in order to challenge existing societal structures.

Sidney Tarrow, who focused most of his research in the political process tradition, notes some existing gaps in social movement research and highlights recent research aimed at illustrating the role of mechanisms and processes in the formation and maintenance of social movements. Overall, Tarrow notes that theory bridging structural and process approaches in a dynamic framework has not been fully developed.¹²³ His recent research contends that definitions of social movements should not be conflated with Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), which Tarrow depicts as utilizing non-disruptive forms of social action, such as their use of advocacy techniques, making them inherently different from social movements.¹²⁴ Tarrow conceptualizes social movements as “strangers at the gates...who operate on the boundaries of the polity, in an uneasy position...They are part of a broader system of conflict and cooperation I call ‘contentious politics.’”¹²⁵ Tarrow notes that among nonsocial movement actors, some of the most important and prominent are transnational advocacy groups (TNGOs), especially in the areas of the environment and human rights. One of the processes Tarrow attributes to TNGOs is internationalization--the insertion of international norms to domestic politics.¹²⁶ While Tarrow raises a significant point in differentiating between disruptive and non-disruptive techniques, a form of contentious action can still take place in the form of a social movement while including actors and groups that utilize both disruptive and non-disruptive forms of protest. While not every group that focuses on global issues is necessarily transnational in how it

¹²³ Tarrow (2012), pp. 14-26

¹²⁴ Ibid, pp. 205-206

¹²⁵ Ibid, pp. 3

¹²⁶ Ibid, pp. 205-207

operates, groups, which constitute a social movement, may focus on domestic politics while applying a process of ‘glocalization,’ or the focus on domestic issues with a lens towards the global dimensions of the problem. They are not transnational in the sense of working closely with partners in several countries or attributing international norms towards domestic politics, but rather they will frame issues in the context of a global problem with local solutions.

Charles Tilly’s work traced the historical development of social movements beginning in the West after 1750, with Great Britain showing the earliest development of a full social movement as defined by Tilly.¹²⁷ Similarly to Tarrow, Tilly cautions analysts against defining every form of contentious politics or organization as a ‘social movement.’ According to Tilly, “social movements join three elements: campaigns, a repertoire, and WUCN displays (public enactments of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment). A campaign always links at least three parties: a group of self-designated claimants, some object(s) of claims, and a public of some kind. The claims may target government officials, but the ‘authorities’ in question can also include owners of property, religious functionaries and others whose actions significantly affect the welfare of many people.”¹²⁸ In relation to the environmental movement, Tilly and Wood note that analysts often identify the environmental movement with the people, interpersonal networks, and advocacy organizations that support environmental causes rather than focusing on the campaigns they engage in, with the result of having any popular initiative in the world being construed as a part of the worldwide environmental movement.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Tilly (2008); Tilly and Wood (2009); the exact period Tilly attributed to the development of social movements in Great Britain and North America were the 1760’s through the 1830s , (Tilly 2008: 118-119)

¹²⁸ Tilly (2008), pp. 12-121.

¹²⁹ Tilly and Wood (2009), pp. 6-7

Bevington and Dixon offer a critique of Political Process Theory (PPT) as the dominant approach in American social movement research.¹³⁰ They note that scholars such as Goodwin and Jasper, who extensively critiqued PPT, prompted notable scholars in the field, such as Doug McAdam, Charley Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, to revise their approaches and focus on more relational and dynamic analyses of social movements that place a strong emphasis on mechanisms and processes.¹³¹ Bevington and Jasper stress that this shift had the effect of moving away from theory development and note that social movement research should strive to provide research that is useful to activists and social movement organizations, while generating movement-relevant theory. In their view, movement-relevant theory must interact closely or participate with social movement organizations in order to provide researchers with a more nuanced and accurate understanding of these movements.¹³²

While Bevington and Dixon raise valid points in stating that researchers in social movements must engage dynamically with activists in order to have an accurate and in-depth understanding of their operations, it is imperative to draw boundaries. In the present study it was critical to engage directly with activists and be connected to the workings of their organizations. However, given that tension and collegial competitiveness can exist between social movement organizations, a researcher can run the risk of becoming biased towards one group and perceived by others to lose their objectivity or represent the other organizations interests.

¹³⁰ Bevington and Dixon (2005), pp. 185-208

¹³¹ Ibid, pp 186-189

¹³² Ibid, pp.197-203

One of the points addressed in the present study is whether REG activism constitutes part of the mainstream environmental movement or whether it is better described as a distinct social movement based on faith and ecology with close links to the wider environmental movement. In relation to states and social movements, comparative research by Dryzek *et al* on the environmental movement found that a state's structure relative to interest representation has a substantial influence on the development and success of the environmental movement's goals.¹³³ They formed four ideal type categories of states relative to the inclusion or exclusion of interest representation including passive inclusive; active inclusive; passive exclusive; and active exclusive. Their categorization focused on open societies or developed democracies. The US for instance was seen as the most pluralistic and consequently passive inclusive political system, with corporatist Norway seen as the most actively inclusive state. In relation to market liberalism, as seen from the public choice theory approach, social movements and all forms of organized opposition should be eliminated to prevent a distortion of the competitive market. In this light, the Anglo-American countries that most strongly pursued market liberalism, such as the United States during the Reagan years and the United Kingdom during the Thatcher years, applied periods of active exclusion relative to environmental interests.¹³⁴

In Dryzek *et al*'s work they note that only social movements that are capable of aligning with the core interest of the state are capable of penetrating its core and achieving entry and legitimation. They speculate that social movements capable of this type of

¹³³ Dryzek, Downs, Hunfold and Schlosberg (2003)

¹³⁴ Ibid, pp.6-11

alignment may succeed in producing a new kind of state, the green state, on par with the earlier formations of the liberal capitalist and welfare states.¹³⁵

The selection of the US and the UK is relevant for the present study in terms of providing a structural framework for possible differences between REG activism and social movement formation in the two countries. In particular, the ability of REGs to penetrate core state interests is one measure by which their potential success may be evaluated in pushing for the formation of green states. While Dryzek *et al*'s work is focused on structural factors, this project's findings help to illustrate the potential role ideology plays in tackling the core interests of the state, and whether the application of religious beliefs and values can effectively align with those interests. The role of religious organizations in social movements has been explored by several authors. Barbara Yarnold, Andrew McFarland, Mel Haley and others explored what factors lead to religious engagement in social movements and the implications of their engagement for social movements.¹³⁶ Yarnold notes that religious organizations can help to facilitate the spread of a social movement's core ideas to the general public and policymakers in part through their use of an 'established communications system,' in the form of their congregations. Yarnold's research differentiates between two types of US interest groups-- entrenched and fringe groups.¹³⁷ Entrenched groups are mostly dependent on and shaped by the political system, whereas fringe groups were less dependent on the political system and operate on the basis of moral or natural law. 'Positive,' or conventional law is law that is constructed by a given societies' values and norms, and 'natural' law is seen as law that originates from a "higher"

¹³⁵ Ibid, pp. 1-2

¹³⁶ Yarnold (1991)

¹³⁷ Ibid, pp.1-3

moral law.¹³⁸ Social movements, Yarnold observes, seek to change positive law when it fails to coincide with their natural law beliefs, even if a possible violation of the positive law is involved.¹³⁹

In that sense, social movements are supported by and linked with fringe organizations. Religious organizations are historically linked to promoting natural law and are inclined to engage in social movements unless their core ideas are contradicted by the movement's objectives. Once a religious organization engages with a social movement it becomes a "fringe organization." Examples of this type of engagement are the civil rights movement and black Protestant churches in the United States, where positive law conflicted with natural law in the rights of African-Americans.¹⁴⁰ Yarrow's findings regarding the role of religious organizations in communicating the core concepts of a social movement to the public and policymakers are applicable to this project. As the present research will illustrate, in addition to communicating the core ideas, religious groups also serve in framing a movement's messaging in a way that is aligned with and resonates within a given social group's or political system's deeper beliefs.

Other research which examined the role of moral actors in political activism includes the work of Joshua Busby, which is concerned with how moral movements influence foreign policy. Busby analyzed how climate change activists failed to produce a successfully ratified climate treaty in the United States where it succeeded in other countries including the United Kingdom. Busby's argument, though focused on the role of moral actors, continues to link this failure in the US to structural reasons tied to the number

¹³⁸ Ibid, pp.17-18

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 20

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, pp.25-30

of steps required for ratifying a treaty, and does not explore the role of religious actors in climate change activism.¹⁴¹

In a special volume on religion and politics in the United States, Griffith and McAlister examine the “multiple and conflicting ways” in which religion matters in US politics. They utilize a variety of scholarly disciplines and perspectives to show how religious faith, either conservative or liberal, has mobilized political action. Their volume seeks to bridge the disciplines of religious studies and American studies in order to understand the role of religion in the US while maintaining an acknowledgment of ‘lived religion,’ or religion in how it is experienced in everyday life.¹⁴² One chapter in this volume by Brain McCammack evaluates the engagement of evangelicals in the climate change policy debate. McCammack looks at both conservative and liberal evangelical groups, noting that strong divisions still exists among evangelicals on how to approach climate change and whether it is a moral issue worthy of activism on a similar scale to abortion or gay rights. He cites a number of survey studies showing the divided and sometime misunderstood position of evangelicals on climate change, noting variation from different sources, as well as a lack of data on very recent events in the engagement of evangelical in climate change. His future predictions leave an open question whether evangelical will become more unified or split on the issue of climate, noting that recent extreme weather events may tip that scale more so than the other debates.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Busby (2010)

¹⁴² Griffith and McAlister eds. (2008), pp.1-31

¹⁴³ McCammack (2008), pp. 119-142, in Griffith and McAlister (2008)

As Greenberg further points out, political conservatism in the US is not monolithic. In fact, conservative values used to promote frugality, as well as conservation and stewardship, do not correspond with present pro-consumption oriented attitudes. At present there is an “emerging green conservatism” in the US that is described as being ‘elastic.’ Greenberg points to “green outliers” including prominent evangelical leaders also mentioned by McCammack, such as Richard Cizik, and Reverends Ted Haggard and Jim Ball of the Evangelical Environmental Network, who are advocating green thought and “creation care” as central to the conservative ideology.¹⁴⁴ While McCammack provides an excellent outline of the major cleavages and figures in evangelical environmental debates, his analysis would be strengthened by a deeper and in-depth analysis of the evangelical groups in question.

The current research is focused on religious groups which are in favor of climate change policy reform. It hoped to shed light on the belief systems of REGs, including evangelical ones, which translate into activism. The use of ‘lived religion’ is particularly significant given how the level of political mobilization stems from groups not strictly aligned with a given religious hierarchy. Much of REG activism is an example of lived religion-- people mobilizing from a faith-based foundation to transform their religious and political organizations.

Another significant academic contribution to scope of the current project comes from scholarship that draws on the role of religious actors in social movements, their relationship to the state, and global dynamics. In a historical analysis of transnational advocacy networks, Keck and Sikkink point out that one of the main goals of social

¹⁴⁴ Greenberg (May 2006), pp. 85-111

movements “is to make possible the previously unimaginable, by framing problems in such a way that their solution comes to appear inevitable.”¹⁴⁵ The changes produced are not obvious without appropriate meaning, historical context and resources. In the case of slavery abolition, Keck and Sikkink focused specifically on the Anglo-American movement in the 1833-1865 period. It is noteworthy that many of these movements, including the abolitionist one, originated with and were driven by religious groups and their sense of ‘morality.’ Unitarians, Methodists and Quakers, joined via transnational links and shared values, were able to build collations to influence domestic policy changes in the US. Scholars looking at reasons for the end of slavery in the US point out that those economic factors alone cannot explain the outcome. From an economic perspective, abolition was equivalent to “econocide,” or the political end of a profitable immoral industry for religious and humanitarian reasons.¹⁴⁶

The historical social movements studies by Keck and Sikkink all had roots in religious organizations, but with varying degrees of success. Strong linkages between domestic and foreign actors are not enough to guarantee success. The issues must be accepted by other groups to create allies in the campaign. In the case of abolition, while every activist was not religiously motivated, religious organizations helped to facilitate transnational communications and shape networks. One lesson learned from these campaigns is the significance of establishing domestic support for a given cause and identifying domestic groups that can champion the issue in question.¹⁴⁷ The abolitionist case is a significant example of the potential role of religious organizations in driving

¹⁴⁵ Keck and Sikkink (1998), pp. 40-41

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 42

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 72-76

political and policy changes. It is frequently utilized by REGs to show how a unified religious voice can change entrenched attitudes, even when an economic cost is involved.

Evelyn Bush highlights the need for additional research and new approaches towards the study of religion in global civil society.¹⁴⁸ Notably, her work elucidates how current secularist approaches can misinterpret the role of religious groups by focusing instead on organizational structure and elite groups who may not accurately reflect the full scope of global civil society. While Bush's research focused on human rights NGOs centered on the United Nations, her findings and questions are applicable to research on religious environmental activism toward climate change. Studies of global civil society lack a clear differentiation between rational and non-rational modes of organizing, as well as a "clear distinction between motivations and strategies."¹⁴⁹ This study examined the role of religious activism in climate change in the context of the broader environmental movement with a focus on the values and beliefs which motivate their activism and the role of religiosity in framing their messaging. A key conclusion of Bush's work is that religious groups operate with a different motivation base than most secular groups and see themselves as being distinct from secular NGOs because of their religious status. While this is true for some organizations and part of the movement, it is not the case for all REGs, especially when looking at a comparative of the US and the UK.

This study also examined how REGs perceive their moral authority and legitimacy relative to secular organizations. Bush noted that NGOs (or other civil society organizations) can gain additional leverage or legitimacy when they can claim religious

¹⁴⁸ Bush (2005 and 2007)

¹⁴⁹ Bush (2007); p. 1652

authority in their mission.¹⁵⁰ For many people, the lenses through which they view various issues stem from their values and worldviews. Even in secular countries, those worldviews can have religious origins and in many parts of the World religious views are take priority in decision making. While some realist scholars may assert that rational choice and relative power will remain the primary drivers of World Politics, it is one of the observations of this project that when compared with similar secular organizations, religious environmental groups can receive a different standing and perception of authority in decision making.

Some scholars contend that there are inherent differences between social movements and interest groups in the fundamental nature of their operations given they work more closely within the political framework (Tarrow). There are, however, overlaps between the two, with interest groups sometimes recognized as belonging to a wider social movement.¹⁵¹ This study recognizes that interest groups can also constitute part of a social movement, as is the case with REGs. The literature on interest group strategy is extensive and focuses on issues such as tactics and strategy, used by various groups to influence legislation and policy implementation, as well as the drivers behind cooperation or non-cooperation relative to given policies.¹⁵² Numerous studies often focus on use of direct vs. indirect lobbying strategies as well as conventional vs. conventional methods. Other factors examined in relation to tactic selection include age, financial resources, issue salience and political context.¹⁵³ Researchers have analyzed strategies of interest groups, including measurement of the intensity of political change sought (whether the group tries to

¹⁵⁰ Bush (2005), p.8

¹⁵¹ Snow and Zald

¹⁵² Robbins (2010)

¹⁵³ Shanahan (2010)

influence public opinion, the media agenda, the political agenda, bills and other policy decisions), the level of privileged access to decision makers, and politicization of the group (level of political and media attention, other group involvement).¹⁵⁴

Studies have examined environmental issues in the context of both US and European policymaking, particularly focusing on interest group strategy relative to the European Union. The extent to which lobby groups focus on ‘friends’ or ‘foes’ with whom they choose to lobby, and how institutional structures impact their approach, is another area researched in the EU context.¹⁵⁵ Studies of interest group strategy in the EU showed through case study analysis that local authorities’, ‘bypassing’ of national policymakers in favor of lobbying the EU to reach desired outcomes occurred most often in instances where the domestic groups dealt with an “unsympathetic national government”, as in the case of England in the 1980’s¹⁵⁶. In situations where local authorities had close contact with national representatives, as well as steady channels of communication, less of the ‘bypass’ strategy was utilized.¹⁵⁷ This approach in many ways resembles the “boomerang model” developed by Keck and Sikkink, where NGOs work with foreign NGOs, other nation-state governments, and IGOs to place pressure on their national government.

While this literature evaluates the types of strategies employed by groups (i.e. lobbying, engaging with the media, public protest) to influence policy decisions, it does not differentiate the normative value base driving the groups, except for referring to their ideologies as leaning to the “left” or “right.” This is an area that warrants additional analysis, and the present study will aim to shed light on the extent to which religious

¹⁵⁴ Binderkrantz (2005)

¹⁵⁵ Marshall (2010)

¹⁵⁶ Callanan (2011), p. 29

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

values/motivations differentiate the groups' tactics, operating strategy, and level of access. Perceived legitimacy of the groups will also be considered, in particular where interaction with and access to policy elites is concerned.

The study of social movements offers numerous insights relevant to the interpretation of environmental activism, contentious politics, and the way in which issues are framed to reach a target audience. The field is multidisciplinary and draws on a wide range of academic perspectives, therefore the definition of "social movements" is debated and presented from various perspectives. For the purposes of this study it will be argued that REGs constitute a part of a growing social movement, which engages in contentious politics as well as lobbying and other activities that constitute "challenges," direct and indirect, to the dominant socio-political system. It will also evaluate how faith and ecology movements differ between the US and the UK, noting that UK movement is better described as a sub-set of the wider environmental movement in how it operates, whereas the US movement is more distinct from mainstream environmentalism.

Summary

The aim of the present study is to evaluate the motivation of religious environmental groups to engage in climate change activism in the US and the UK. The key questions of this research asked: to what extent do religious values drive this activism, and how are they reflected in the REGs operations and framed to their target audience? Key questions also addressed the role of moral authority and legitimacy in REGs approach, and how their campaigns relate to the mainstream environmental movement. This literature review presented three topics that are relevant to the current research, including: 1- global

politics, globalization and religion; 2- global environmental politics, and 3-social movements. In researching this topic from a global environmental perspective, using search engines such as Ebscohost, JSTOR, library archives, internet searches and references in relevant literature, it was found that within the field of GEP the focus on religious actors has been minimal. For this reason the literature draws on perspectives from various disciplines that are relevant in framing the present study and understanding the existing gaps on this topic. The link between faith and ecology touches on a wide variety of disciplines and has enjoyed more extensive focus from theologians and sociologists such as Mary Evelyn Tucker, Thomas Barry and Roger Gottlieb.

While political science, international relations, and global governance scholars more recently looked at the link between religion and global politics, there was less emphasis on detailed examination of issue areas such as the environment. Sociologists of religion--including Jose Casanova, Peter Berger, Peter Bayer and others--conducted comprehensive research on the role of religion in society, its influence on the formation of nation-states, modernity and global dynamics. However, these studies still did not connect environmental politics with the role of religion. Research on social movements--including the work of Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, Donna Della Porta and Zald--provided a comprehensive framework for the conceptualization of social movements, the role of political processes, as well ideology in the framing of activist campaigns. This research still remains limited regarding religious actors and environmental activism, though recent studies by Smith and Pulver, and Billings and Samson are helping in addressing this gap. Overall, studies dealing with environmental NGOs and religious groups tend to focus on the influence of such actors, but fail to address the motivation of these value-based actors

to engage in this activism. The study presented here aimed to address this gap and provide a greater analytical understanding of how ideology acts as a facilitator of political belief systems and as a driver mobilizing activist campaigns and social movement formation.

Conceptual Framework

This study examines the role of values and beliefs in driving environmental activism and aims to elucidate the causal mechanisms between REG religiosity and engagement in climate politics. In the following chapter on research methodology and data analysis, the topics presented here will be applied to structure a concrete conceptual framework for this study. The conceptual framework began by first identifying this gap in the GEP literature, conducting further research into related disciplines, and a pilot study which sought to identify religious environmental groups engaged in environmental activism, especially climate change activism in the US and the UK. Based on that pilot study, relevant case study groups that engaged in political climate activism and were representative of the religious composition of their respective countries were identified. A qualitative methodology focusing on semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and contextual information, was applied in order to answer the key questions specified above. This data was coded and analyzed to provide an analysis, major findings and conclusions.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Overview:

The purpose of this study was to examine the causal processes by which values motivate Religious Environmental Groups (REGs) to engage in climate change activism in the United States and the United Kingdom. In other words, the main objective was to understand what motivated climate change activism among REGs. Three key questions were proposed for this research. First, does REG religiosity (religious values and beliefs) motivate engagement in climate change activism or does REG environmentalism drive their religious values? Second, how are religious values, such as stewardship, creation care and sacrifice reflected in their organization's climate activism? And third, are REGs perceived to have a different sense of moral authority or legitimacy among political elites and the public than secular ENGOS? The questions were intended to ascertain the role of religion and its associated beliefs and values as both a driver for changing behavior and a catalyst for engagement in climate change as a social, political and policy-relevant issue. This chapter will begin by providing an overview of the topic and its selection followed by a description of how appropriate methodology was identified. It will then review the data collection process, including sample size, material selection, and definitions of concepts applicable to this study. A section on data analysis will detail how collected data was managed and analyzed, leading to a formulation of conclusions that will be elucidated in the following chapter. Ethical and trustworthiness considerations will constitute the last part of the research methodology chapter.

The methodology chosen for this study utilizes a qualitative approach. In conducting an exploratory search on faith, ecology, and politics, various studies were consulted which, focused on a quantitative approach towards understanding the relationship between religious orientation, worldviews and support for environmental action.¹ These large sample studies, while informative about general trends, did not provide the level of detail and contextual analysis that a qualitative study would be able to provide, especially in elucidating the ‘deep casual’ mechanisms associated with people’s values, beliefs and behavior. Understanding the processes that motivate religious actors to engage in environmental issues required a more qualitative methodology capable of ‘unpacking’ and tracing the teleology of REG climate activism. The specific methodological approach taken focuses on case study analysis, applying a small sample number to explore larger political patterns associated with REG activism, and a degree of process tracing within constant case study comparison. One of the analytical chapters will provide an overview of the belief-system structure through applying a version of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). Overall, this study frames the topic in a post-positivist approach, moving away from a more reductionist, “A through B causes C” variable based analysis. Positivist approaches, in attempting to apply scientific methodology intended for the “hard sciences,” tend to overlook the more nuanced and discursive nature of social dynamics. Focusing on selected case studies allows the research to explore in more depth the processes that motivate the subjects’ engagement with issues such as climate change. It was determined that a case study based analysis was especially well suited to exploring the role of religious values and beliefs in driving environmental activism. Understanding

¹ Nooney et al (2003); Peterson et al (2007)

the role of beliefs and values as they relate to civil action requires the researcher to deconstruct the subjects' idea construction and application of 'collective action frames.' Case study analysis enables the researcher to elucidate causal process inferred from conducting this in-depth analysis. Case study data was derived from several material sources including semi-structured interviews and participant observation, as well as primary and secondary textual sources. The study selected several Religious Environmental Groups (REGs), from the United States and the United Kingdom, engaged in climate change activism at the national and multilateral level to evaluate the role of religion in driving engagement on climate change domestically. An emphasis was placed (during the initial selection) on REGs that were either Christian or Interfaith in religious orientation, and engaged in activities seeking to influence policy issues.. A comparative of the two countries constitutes the final part of the analysis.

Research Sample

The focus of this study are Religious Environmental Groups (REGs) engaged in climate change activism in the United States and the United Kingdom. Smith and Pulver define REGs as "organizations who engage in environmental work from a spiritual or religious perspective."² REGs, for the purposes of this research, are defined as faith-based organizations, places of worship,³ and religious groups engaged in ecological programs, specifically with an inclusion of climate change in the scope of their activities. It is important to point out that organizations which seek to promote environmentalism were

² Smith and Pulver (2009) Worldviews 13, pp.145-179 (p.146)

³ Houses of worship is meant to reflect churches, temples and congregations of various denominations

selected for this study. While there are a number of faith-based NGOs in the US focused on denial of anthropogenic climate change and an opposition to environmentalism, these organizations were not a part of this study. The reasons for this limitation are two-fold-- first, the key questions sought to understand the role of religion in motivating environmentalism, and second, after developing a database of REGs it was evident that the majority of these groups organize in order to challenge ecological degradation and push religions towards further action. Given that this study is based in the field of global environmental politics (GEP), the scope of organizations sampled was focused on REGs that engage, to some degree, in driving climate politics in the US and the UK by working to influence policies and legislation in their respective countries. There are numerous REGs whose main mission is targeted towards lifestyle changes such as eating local food, tips on how to become more 'green,' and exploring eco-spirituality. While these activities are socially transformative, and most REGs engage in them to some extent, the organizations researched here included a mix of 'top-down' and grassroots activism.

This represents one of the limitations of the present study, as there is much to learn from the approaches of groups aiming to transform Western lifestyles. However, given the number of REGs to research and the overall emphasis on linking religious activism with larger global political dynamics, it was necessary to limit the scope. During the course of the study it became evident that defining degrees of 'political engagement' can be a task with blurred boundaries given that most religious environmental groups participate in a range of activities including public outreach, education and political campaigning. In short, for many REGs extending political influence is embodied in more than traditional

influence group approaches, such as lobbying policymakers, and aims for wider societal transformation often starting with greening local congregations.

Groups involved in faith and ecology projects span across many religions in both the US and the UK, reflecting the pluralistic character of these countries. With the wide-range of diverse perspectives it became necessary to limit the size and scope of REGs included in the study by focusing on Christian and Interfaith organizations. The purpose was to choose REGs that are most reflective of the demographic composition of the counties in question. In the US and the UK, the majority of the population (over 70%) is Christian. In the US there is a larger Jewish population than in the UK and in the UK there is a larger Muslim population than in the US, with both displaying many other active religious affiliations.⁴ In order to reflect this pluralistic character, interfaith organizations were included in the scope of this study, though interfaith organizations focused on environmental issues are seen mainly in the US as observed in this study. Based on the construction of an initial database intended to catalog all REGs in the US and the UK, selections were made for the most suitable case study candidates to answer the proposed research questions.

In the United Kingdom the initial case study groups selected were Christian Ecology Link (CEL) and Operation Noah. CEL is one of UK's oldest "Green Christian" groups, dating back 27 years, and Operation Noah originally began as a CEL project before becoming an independent non-profit organization. Operation Noah is also the first UK

⁴ Pew Trust survey on religion in the US (2007) <http://religions.pewforum.org/affiliations>; <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=religion&newoffset=0&pageSize=50&sortBy=&sortDirection=DESCENDING&applyFilters=true> (Office of National Statistics, UK 2001) and BBC (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/3725801.stm)

religious group to focus exclusively on climate change. The research sample expanded into other organizations in part as a result of snowball sampling and an initial conversation with the Chair of CEL who helped to identify the key UK REG members. The faith-based religious community in the UK, primarily in organizations focused on England and Wales, is largely Christian and composed of small faith-based NGOs, leading church representatives, and Christian development agencies. The individuals who constitute the belief-based coalition are in close contact and frequently move between organizations, or participate in several organizations and activities at the same time. Given this pattern it was essential to interview the main members of this advocacy coalition, extending the study beyond the original two case studies. The UK research sample included semi-structured interviews conducted with members of CEL, Operation Noah, Eco-Congregation/ A Rocha, the Columbans/Peace and Social Justice Network, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, the Church of England, the Methodist Church/ Joint Public Issues Team, CAFOD, Progressio, Christian Aid and Tearfund.

The sample includes interviews and observations from annual meetings, lectures and workshops conducted between October 2011 and April 2012, as well as textual materials such as archival documents (publications, presentation materials, newsletters, articles, videos and websites). A total of 18 subjects were interviewed using the semi-structured format, along with personal communication with fourteen additional members of CEL and other organizations. Secondary source materials include books written by theologians and sociologists that were referenced by the research subjects as influential sources of material for their organization as motivation to engage in ecological issues.

In the United States initial case studies were selected based on the same process as applied to the UK. An initial database was constructed to catalog all REGs in the US active in climate change, with the selection of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE) and Interfaith Power and Light (IP&L) as the main case studies. IP&L was originally founded by Rev. Sally Bingham as California based, Episcopal Power & Light in. After interest emerged from other religious groups, Episcopal Power & Light became Interfaith Power & Light, with its headquarters and first state office located in California. IP&L expanded from the 1990's to the present in 2012 to cover most states in the US. IP&L's primary mission is a religious response to global warming, which makes it one of the main REGs focused exclusively on climate change and energy issues. With its state-affiliate model it also has a strong local presence across the United States.

The NRPE is an umbrella faith-based NGO composed of four mainline US religious organizations. Its constituent members include the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches, The Coalition on Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), and the Evangelical Environmental Network. Together these organizations represent the majority of religious denominations in the US. NRPE was founded in the 1990's and focuses on environmental stewardship on many ecological issues including climate change. After conducting initial research into these organizations and by utilizing snowball sampling, the number of organizations expended in order to include key member of this US belief-based coalition. Similarly to the UK, REGs in the US worked closely and often had the same people involved in several different organizations.

In the US, the overall sample size is larger given that there are more REGs, reflecting the size of the country and varied number of denominations, even within

Christian groups. The focus was placed on REGs that work, to some extent, on national-level issues, however many REGs work at the local, state, regional and national level. In the case of IP&L, which has a national headquarters in California, there are now 40 state affiliates, each with a unique model suited towards that particular state. In this case, a representative sample of the state affiliates was interviewed along with the national office. In addition to IP&L and NRPE the other REGs interviews include: the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN), Young Evangelicals for Climate Action,⁵ Catholic Coalition on Climate Change (CCC), National Council of Churches, Coalition on Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), Reformed Action Center (RAC), Hazon, National Coalition on Creation Care (NCC), Evangelicals for Social Action, Restoring Eden, Blessed Earth, A Rocha, Religious Witness for the Earth, the Green Seminary Initiative, Chesapeake Covenant Community, Franciscan Action Network (FAN), GreenFaith, Eco-Justice Ministries, Episcopal Church, Solana Beach Presbyterian Church, Friends Coalition on National Legislation (FCNL), National Committee of Baha' in the US and the Interfaith Moral Action on Climate (IMAC). For IP&L, two interviews were conducted with national office representatives and the state IP&L affiliates interviews included Georgia, Texas, North Carolina, Florida, Greater Washington,⁶ Virginia, Ohio, Connecticut, Wisconsin and Utah. The choice of these states attempted to show a representative cross-section of the various US chapters, as well as their level and history of engagement with IP&L. Georgia IP&L is the second state affiliate founded after the

⁵ Young Evangelicals for Social Action is currently housed in EEN

⁶ Greater Washington IP&L includes the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and Maryland, though as of time of writing there are plans to begin a new IP&L chapter in MD.

California/National office, and one of the largest, while Florida IP&L was launched a couple of years ago.

Other national REGs that include an interfaith perspective are GreenFaith based in Newark, NJ and the National Coalition on Creation Care (NCCC). GreenFaith is one of the oldest US REGs originally operating only in NJ. It was now expanded to a national presence and works in collaboration with other REGs such as IP&L, the Green Seminary Initiative, and others on their green certification program for clergy. The California based NCCC is run by an all-volunteer staff and reflects Christian and Jewish perspectives. Their main focus is advocacy on climate change, ocean, and forest issues.

In the US, a total of forty-two subjects were interviewed in addition to discussions with twenty-three additional REG members, mainly from IP&L. In addition to the interviews conducted from October 2011 to July 2012, the research sample includes observations from annual meetings, conferences and lectures attended between February and July 2012. Textual materials such as archival documents (publications, presentation materials, newsletters, articles, videos and websites) are also included in the sample along with secondary materials, such as the works of prominent theologians, environmentalists and others that were influential in motivating the research subjects towards climate activism. The REGs interviewed and researched represent the advocacy coalition in the US on faith and ecological issues. While a greater emphasis will be placed on IP&L, NRPE, and its constituent organizations, data derived from the other REGs is critical to portray a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of the role of religion in US climate politics.

Overview of Information Needed

The information needed to answer the main questions of this study falls under three main categories: contextual, perceptual and theoretical. Contextual information collected included historical origins of the organization-- how it was founded, when, and with what purpose. One of the reasons for collecting this type of information is to understand the motivating factors for religious organizations to choose to engage in environmental issues. This type of historical data can elucidate the process through which ecological activism develops, and the values which motivate it. Other types of contextual information collected relate to the mission of the organization, its operating principles, as well as the values and beliefs which guide its operations. This information is relevant in order to answer whether religious values drive REG environmental activism or if their environmentalism drives their religiosity. Additional contextual information collected includes the REGs operational focus. For this study it is essential to understand the types of activities each organization is engaged in, such as advocacy, education, public outreach, green certification, and lifestyle guidance, in order to comprehend the socio-political level on which their activism is oriented. It also helps to understand the differences between various REGs engaged in climate activism. For instance, an REG which officially represents or is part of a larger religious or church hierarchy often operates differently from a grassroots-based organization. The contextual data described was collected during interviews and also obtained from REG publications, reports, newsletters, videos, websites and correspondence with participants.

Perceptual information is critical to this study as this is a qualitative, case-study based project. Perceptual information was mainly gathered from semi-structured

interviews and participant observation. Much of the focus of this study on REGs focused on what values drive REG activism and how REGs perceive their role relative to the mainstream, secular environmental movement. Another key question explores whether religious groups are perceived to have a different sense of moral authority and legitimacy from secular ENGOs working on similar issues when addressing political elites or the public. Due to the limitations of the study, interviews and data collection focused primarily on REG perceptions rather than on comparing data collected from secular organizations.

The answers to these questions then largely depend on the REGs self-perception of their role in climate change activism, how they identify and perceive to be received by political elites and their target audience. The responses received and justification provided varied among REGs in the US and the UK, and within different denominations and geographic locations, especially in the US. The aim here was to comprehend how REGs interact with political elites and the public rather than to assess their level of influence in advocacy. Arguably in the US right now, assuming that any interest group could persuade the current Congress to enact climate legislation in this highly polarized setting, it would not paint the full picture of the groups' long-term role and motivation for engaging in advocacy. It is also outside of the scope of the present study to conduct separate interviews with political elites who interact with REGs, so this research is intended to illustrate how REGs' experiences relate to perception of moral authority or legitimacy. Other perceptual questions relate to whether REGs see themselves as being a part of the mainstream environmental movement or as a separate movement, distinct from the secular one. The responses to these questions are based on member's perceptions of their and their organizations role as well as the activities they engage in and coalitions they form.

While this research focused mainly on the organizational level, a note on the demographic composition of the subjects is needed in order to provide a context for who is engaged in these organizations. In terms of gender, both the UK and the US see mixed representation of both men and women, without a clear dominance of one gender over the other. Most participants are white, middle class, with varying degrees of education, though frequently with advanced degrees. Subjects in the UK and the US have included chemists, ministers, theologians, mathematicians, biologists, economists and journalists. Most people are either mid-career or past retirement, with a frequent observation noted that there is a strong Youth engagement and people in or close to retirement. The reasons for this may be varied, though most subjects who comment on this composition believe it is mainly related to the time constraints of young professionals raising families.

It is also significant to point out that several participants in the US have observed the lack of minority engagement and try to engage closer partnerships with diverse faith traditions, especially Muslims. Some of the US REGs are also interested in engaging more with African-American churches and having more representation from these communities. Based on observations of meetings, workshops, conferences and other events in REGs, this study noted a predominantly White member base. The most diverse event attended in the US was a multi-faith service held in Washington DC that focused strongly on eco-justice. This does not mean that African- American churches are not engaged in environmental issues, however based on the REGs sampled in this study, the majority of participants are White, which is also historically true for environmental NGOs in the US.

Theoretical information sampled for this study includes a review of existing literature on religion and environmentalism. Much of the literature presently available is

based in sociology, with global environmental politics showing a gap in research on religious actors. Literature reviewed traces one of the initial linkages between religion and treatment of the environment to Lynn White's⁷ controversial 1967 article on the roots of the ecological crisis. White claimed that Judeo-Christian 'dominion' theology was responsible towards Western justification for exploitation of the Earth. This article is significant for this topic because it helped to stimulate the debate, for many faiths, on what their teachings say about the relationship and treatment of 'nature.' Several participants interviewed mentioned this article and confirmed that theologians questioned White's interpretation and began to offer an eco-theology relevant to Judeo-Christian beliefs. Other relevant literature includes the work of Roger Gottlieb,⁸ Mary Evelyn Tucker,⁹ John Grimm and Martin Palmer,¹⁰ which provided an historical overview of the faith and ecology fields, and served as a source on ecology-related beliefs of various religions. In particular Roger Gottlieb's chapter in his comprehensive *Handbook of Religions and Ecology* offered an extensive historical description of events, organizations and individuals who began to make the connection between religions and environmental activism. Mary Evelyn Tucker and her husband John Grimm are co-directors of Yale's Forum on Religion and Ecology (FORE), which also publishes the *Worldviews* journal, a publication focused on religion and ecology. Both are also leading scholars in this growing field of eco-theology and widely regarded by REG members as leaders in this field. For instance, Tucker and Brian Thomas Swimme completed a three-part series titled "The Journey of the Universe," which is being presented in the US and in many countries around the world

⁷ White 1967

⁸ Gottlieb (2006)

⁹ Tucker and Grimm (1994), Tucker, (2003)

¹⁰ Palmer and Finnley (2003)

on the historical relationship between humans, the environment, and the need to move towards an ‘Earth Community.’¹¹ This work is significant since it is being used in schools in the US and also has influenced REGs member s in the UK.

Lastly, FORE’s website served as a resource in identifying and cataloging various REGs in the US and the UK, since they maintain links to and descriptions of religious organizations active on the environment from various world religions.¹² Martin Palmer is the executive director of the UK based Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), which is a globally-focused umbrella NGO helping world religions to develop statements and projects on ecology. His 2003 book¹³ provided a detailed account of ARC’s foundation and examples of how a faith-perspective can be applied to tackle environmental challenges. ARC is an organization that has helped to establish connections between REGs in different countries, especially through high-level events, such as their 2009 Windsor conference on climate change held shortly before the COP-15 Summit in Copenhagen. Other previous research on religion and the environment focused on studies in sociology, looking at worldviews and the relationship between religious affiliation, political leanings, and support for environmental issues such as Nooney¹⁴ and Peterson and Liu’s¹⁵ studies on environmental worldviews in North Carolina and in Utah, which focused more on large-scale, quantitative analyses. These studies were part of the reason for deciding to focus on more in-depth, qualitative and case-study based approaches for the present study, given

¹¹Swimme and Tucker (2011)

¹² See website at: <http://fore.research.yale.edu/religion/>

¹³ Palmer and Finnely (2003)

¹⁴ Nooney et al (2003)

¹⁵ Peterson and Liu (2008)

that they can yield more nuanced understanding of the process through which religious values motivate environmental behavior.

The work of Keck and Sikkink on transnational advocacy networks provided an historical understanding of the role of religion in the movement to abolish slavery in the US, and of particular relevance to this study, the role of US-UK transnational ties and religious, value-based justification to end slavery, which Keck and Sikkink found were instrumental in this campaign.¹⁶ Other theoretical information relevant to designing this study came from the work of Evelyn Bush on human rights, global civil society and the role of religious actors.¹⁷ In particular, Bush's work highlighted the need to have a clearer distinction between the motivations of religious organizations and their strategies, as well as how these contrast with secular organizations.¹⁸

Work of Maniates and Peterson provided insight into the concept of sacrifice and its contentious role in environmental politics.¹⁹ Peterson, in particular, highlighted the potential role religions can play in utilizing the original meaning of sacrifice as 'to make sacred,' and asked who can ask for society to sacrifice, if not religious groups.²⁰ Additional theoretical perspectives derived from the recent research of Smith and Pulver, and Billings and Samson on REG activism in the US. Smith and Pulver focused their study on the belief-based versus issue-based focus of REGs, where they claimed that REGs are

¹⁶ Keck and Sikkink (1995)

¹⁷ Bush (2005, 2007)

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Maniates and Meyer (2010)

²⁰ Peterson, Ann (2010)

primarily oriented around belief driven frames, rather than specific issues, such as climate change, which are the main focus of secular environmental groups.²¹

While the point about the influence of beliefs in REG issue framing is acknowledged, the present research findings contradict the notion that REGs do not focus on discrete environmental issues. The existence of organizations such as IP&L, Operation Noah and the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, whose chief focus is religious response to global warming, marked the need for further evaluation of this argument. Lastly, the recent work of Billings and Watson on the ‘Creation Care’ movement, and specifically the Christians for the Mountains campaign against mountain top removal in Appalachia, provided valuable insights into this growing evangelical movement. In particular, their findings dispel some widely held arguments on the anti-environmental beliefs of US Evangelical Christians and explain through the use of collective action frames how their faith inspires their environmental activism.²²

Research Design Overview

This qualitative, case-study based research was developed through several steps, which will be detailed in the section below. The first step after identifying the general topic of religion and ecology was to conduct a literature review of relevant research in the field and narrow down the specific focus to the motivation of religious groups to engage in climate change activism. This was followed by a construction of a data-base that sought to catalog all of the REGs in the US and the UK. In total, this data-base contained about 200

²¹ Smith and Pulver (2011)

²² Billings and Watson (2012)

groups. Database material came from web-searches, Congressional records, articles, and existing resources such as Yale's Forum on Ecology website. Case-study candidates were selected from the data-base, which focused on organizations engaged in political activism on climate change either from a Christian or interfaith perspective. Contacts were established with representatives from selected REGs, followed by observation, semi-structured interviews, and discussions with research participants. Additional case-studies and participants were identified using snowball sampling. Data collected includes interviews transcripts, observations from annual meetings and lectures, archival material, and secondary sources such as newspaper articles and books. Data was reviewed and coded to reflect key questions of the study, followed by a detailed analysis and comparison of REGs in the US and the UK.

Data Collection Methods

The design of this study relies on qualitative, social-scientific methodology with a primary emphasis on case-study analysis. Qualitative methodology was selected in order to provide a nuanced understanding of religious actors' motivation to engage in climate change activism and to elucidate the role religious values play in global environmental politics. The theoretical foundations of this research design are based in post-positivist epistemology, and critical tradition relying heavily on the role of discourse in the structuring social interaction. In terms of evaluating processes that drive environmental politics and policies, this study acknowledges Fischer's²³ critique of positivist

²³ Fischer (1998)

epistemology as well as Habermas'²⁴ earlier work on collective action frames in deliberative democracy. Fischer's work, in particular, discusses the reductionist nature of applying positivist methodology, which was designed for the natural sciences, to the social world.²⁵ As Prasad put it, in qualitative positivism "reality is assumed to be concrete, separate from the researcher, and understandable through the accurate use of 'objective' methods of data collection."²⁶ Prasad notes that some qualitative researchers continue to perceive the natural sciences model as the only legitimate way for carrying out social scientific research. Prasad refers to Max Weber's conclusion that positivism was guided by the study of inanimate objects and as a result does not have the means to allow for adequate understanding of cultural construction and human interpretation.²⁷ While influential volumes such as Kirk, Keohane and Verba's text on qualitative methods, *Designing Social Inquiry*, stressed the application of variable-based analysis to political science, their work has been critiqued for providing an overtly narrow interpretation of methodological approaches.²⁸ Brady and Collier addressed this in their response text, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, which sought to refocus the discussion on methodology and provide a more diverse range of qualitative approaches to social scientific research.²⁹ Brady, Collier, and Seawright note, in reference to the use of causal-process observations while conducting causal inference that the strength of these observations is based on the "depth of coverage" provided, where even one such observation may be significant in

²⁴ Habermas (1984)

²⁵ Ibid from 21

²⁶ Prasad (2005), p.4

²⁷ Ibid, pp.4-5

²⁸ King, Keohane and Verba (1994)

²⁹ Brady and Collier (2010)

making inference. These types of causal-process observations are frequently applied for within-case analysis.³⁰

For this research, a degree of process tracing was utilized as a heuristic tool intended to uncover new hypotheses based on inductive observation.³¹ Regarding definitions of ‘causality,’ Milja Kurki calls on IR theorists to re-conceptualize the notion of cause, and form a ‘deeper’ understanding of causality that bridges the constitutive and empiricist (post-positivist and positivist) divide.³² Mainstream causal ‘scientific’ analysis is based on the assumption that causal relations occur between observable patterns and variables that can be empirically tested. Kurki argues that this type of analysis often has trouble explaining ‘why’ regularities occur. Kurki points out that “ideas, rules, norms and discourses, often seen as constitutive forces can be understood in terms of formal cause, as defining and structuring social relations.”³³ Kurki stresses that “the essence of causal explanation is not the gathering of regularities, but the conceptual explanation of the variety of forces that bring about regularities of observables.”³⁴ With this notion in mind, Kurki emphasizes moving beyond the ‘causal-constitutive divide in IR’ in favor of employing more holistic notions of causality. The notion of causation employed by Kurki is applied in the methodology of this dissertation, since it utilized this “deeper” notion of cause, where causality is defined not solely as the observable pattern between two discrete variables, but also of the constitutive factors that enable those phenomena and draw on their multiplicity of interactions.

³⁰ Brady, Collier, Seawright (2010), pp. 24

³¹ George and Bennett (2005), pp. 7

³² Kurki (2006), p.190

³³ Ibid, p.208

³⁴ Ibid, pp. 210

Another significant component of this study was utilizing the framework of comparative environmental politics between nation-states to show patterns across different national settings. In this case the United States and the United Kingdom were selected in order to elucidate the role of domestic politics in driving global issues, such as climate change. The US and the UK share many similarities: cultural legacy, democratic norms and a capitalist economic system, to name a few. Political systems vary, between a parliamentary and federalist form of government, as well as the role of the central government in driving policy development. One major difference, which was significant for this study, is the religiosity of the two countries. The US is widely regarded as one of the most religious countries in the West, while the UK, as with much of Europe, is highly secular. Noting the differences in the relationship between church and state helps in understanding the differences between the role of religious environmentalism in the US and the UK. Linking how domestic factors drive the engagement of civil society actors helps to shed light on activism for climate change and other global issues, especially where support for new policies is concerned. As Steinberg and VanDeveer point out, scholars of GEP tended to focus their level of analyses on international negotiations and transnational interaction, to the exclusion of domestic factors that impact these global dynamics.³⁵ While these other processes are exciting research topics, GEP scholars should not forget the enduring role of nation-states, national institutions, democratic norms and political processes in steering environmental initiatives and enabling non-profit organizations to form.³⁶ Steinberg and VandDeveer argue that GEP scholarship will be enriched by “bridging the archipelago” between GEP and comparative politics research, applying the

³⁵ Steinberg and VanDeveer (2012)

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 14-15

methodology and insights of this method to further understanding of environmental politics worldwide.

Kate O’Neil notes that a greater understanding of comparative environmental politics can be especially helpful in researching environmental movement organizations and their development, with the study of comparative environmental movements drawing on a number of fields including social movement theory, theories of political institutions, political theory and philosophy.³⁷

One way the comparative method was applied in this study was through the use of Paul Sabatier’s Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF).³⁸ The ACF was designed to examine the role of beliefs in forming coalitions for policy subsystems, especially where multiple actors from various levels of government, research institutions, and interest groups are involved.³⁹ Sabatier’s model has been used extensively to study environmental policy issues.⁴⁰ His main concept related to the formation of policy coalitions around similarity of beliefs, noting that “deep beliefs” are unlikely to change; policy-core beliefs are focused on the issue at hand; and near-term beliefs are the most flexible in coalition formation. The ACF framework was well-suited to the scope of the present study concerning REG motivation, given the focus on beliefs as a driving factor behind policy coalition formation. The ACF framework was applied to analyze the REG coalition in the US and the UK, and compare the belief systems of each coalition. The ACF constitutes one of the analysis

³⁷ O’Neil (2011) p.118

³⁸ Sabatier (1988), Wieble and Sabtier (2004)

³⁹ Wieble and Sabatier (2004)

⁴⁰ Liftin (2000); Kim and Roh (2008)

chapters of the present study and provides an overview of the REGs in both countries, which is followed by more in depth, case-study analysis.

For case study analysis, George and Bennett's method of structured, focused comparison was applied.⁴¹ George and Bennett describe this as a "simple and straightforward approach," which is "structured" in having the researcher write general questions that reflect the research objectives and asking these questions of each case study to "guide and standardize data collection" allowing for "systematic comparison of cases." The method is "focused" in dealing with only certain aspects of the historical cases examined."⁴² Each of these requirements for structure and focus applies to every individual case study, given that additional cases may be added. The current study was structured through reliance on a standard set of general questions, relative to each key question under study, and focuses by concentrating on certain aspects of the REGs activism. The structured and focused comparison was intended to provide each case with a systematic approach that was applicable and comparable across cases, especially when additional cases were added to the study, while maintaining its overall theoretical approach. General questions asked related to three main questions: how religion influenced the REGs formation, development and mission; which types of values are relevant to the REG; and how the REG perceived its moral authority and role relative so secular ENGOs and the mainstream environmental movement.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Ibid, pp. 67-72

⁴³ The interview question template used is attached in the Appendix.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

The qualitative data utilized for this study, including semi-structured interview transcripts, REG documents, archival information and observations, were coded into distinct categories that were inductively derived from the main research findings as well as based on key questions of the study. The code constructed was meant to serve as a flexible device with categories and sub-categories designed narrowly enough to prevent overlapping while allowing for the possible compression of these categories in the final analysis. The code included a total of 10 categories that enabled organization of data. The ten categories were: 1-Types of religious beliefs that motivate environmental activism-stewardship, creation care, sacrifice, scriptures/specific religious teachings, creation theology, Earth spirituality; 2-Scientific perspectives on the environment and climate change-reliance on scientific data, technical aspects, scientific vs. religious drivers; 3-Historical reasons for activism, organization and mission-organizational drivers, mission, key leaders and funding sources; 5-Issue framing- humanitarian impacts of climate change, climate justice, responsibility of western countries, holistic approaches, linkage with other issues, religious frames applied to climate change, hope/gloom and doom scenarios, target audience, secular vs. religious perspectives; 6-Transforming Lifestyles- simple living, more fulfilling lifestyles, resisting neo-liberal capitalism, greening congregations, glocality; 7- Re-enchantment of the world- bringing elements of the sacred back to the modern world, challenging/diverging from church hierarchy, green sheep, lived religion; 8-Perception of moral authority/legitimacy- differences from secular NGOs, public perception and political elite perception; 9-Level of engagement- local, national, transnational, global; 10-Policy sub-systems/advocacy coalitions- secular groups, religious

groups/organizations, government agencies; environmental or separate faith based movement, change in movement over ten years.

The ten categories and sub-categories reflected the findings relative to all cases examined, though some cases did not have findings for every category. Once the coding was completed for all US and UK case studies, the data was organized for presentation in the research findings chapters. In order to facilitate the presentation of findings, the UK and the US findings were organized into categories that best suited their organizational structure and mission. In the UK these categories were: Green Christian groups; Church organizations; Faith-based development agencies. In the US the categories include: Grassroots interfaith groups; REGs that represent or are denominational bodies; Evangelical Christian REGs. In the grassroots interfaith category the findings were divided between two chapters, with a separate chapter dedicated to Interfaith Power and Light (IP&L) and its state affiliates. In that sense IP&L, though a grassroots interfaith REG was treated as its own category due to the scope and size of the organization. IP&L has a national headquarters office with approximately 40 state affiliates that often function as their own independent non-profits or are linked with other organizations. For these reasons and sheer scope of data from IP&L its findings were presented in a separate chapter. The findings and the analysis condensed the ten coding categories described above into five main research findings that best reflected results and questions presented at the onset of the study. These five categories are 1- The application of stewardship, creation care and sacrifice; 2-Other religious beliefs linked with motivating climate/environmental activism; 3- Issue frames applied by REGs including frame bridging, extension, amplification and transformation; 4- Policy Beliefs and Advocacy Coalitions; 5- REGs role in the

environmental movement and global civil society, perception of moral authority/legitimacy, and whether these actors constitute a distinct social movement.

These categories were general enough to accommodate all the major findings, as well as to collapse some of the smaller coding sub-categories. The research findings were then analyzed in relation to these five main categories for each group of REGs in the UK and the US. The research findings for the US and UK REGs are detailed in separate chapters. The analysis then moves on to interpret these findings in relation to each of the five categories for the UK REGs, and then for US REGs in the next two chapters. It is followed by a comparative analysis of REG case studies in the US and the UK. The methods used include Snow's framing analyses of social movements as well as Sabatier's ACF model. The overall framework of the research analysis employed George and Bennett's (2005) method of structured, focused comparison. The structure of the method was provided by a set of general questions applied to each case study and focused through limiting aspects that were examined for the case studies. That enabled a systematic comparison between and across cases, both within each country selected, but also comparatively across countries.

Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

The data collected in this study was derived in large part from semi-structured interviews with subject matter experts and observations of REG activities, such as conferences, marches, workshops and annual meetings. Supplemental data was obtained from archival sources, sometimes obtained directly from REG activists. Prior to conducting

this study the proposed human subject research had received IRB approval. Each participant was presented with an approved form that detailed the purpose of the research, its main objectives, and the use of the data. All participants received a written copy of this form, sent electronically ahead of the interview. They either signed or verbally acknowledged their approval. Names are not attributed directly when subjects specified they did not wish to be quoted. In general, the research refers to organizations and not individuals, with the exception of statements made by leading figures who have expressed the referenced views publically. Information that might be sensitive to the organization or individuals in question was not presented in the research findings. The research aimed to obtain an objective portrayal of REGs in each country and their motivations for engaging in climate change activism. As most of what these organizations do is presented publically and is widely disseminated, most of the content is not seen as potentially damaging to the participants.

Limitations of the Study

This study was constrained by several limitations that could not be eliminated. One of the aims during initial study design was to focus on groups that in some way sought to influence state policies on climate change and the environment. Over the course of this research it became apparent that ‘political’ influence is exercised through many channels in addition to interest group advocacy, including approaches that foster grassroots, social-value transformation. Consequently several REGs that focus on alternative approaches were included in the study. The study proposed to select REGs that were either Christian or interfaith in orientation for case studies in the US and the UK. However, over the course

of conducting field work it was found that while many REGs in the US operate as interfaith organizations, whereas in the UK the REGs were more faith-specific. While Muslim REGs are also active in the UK, the Muslim and Christian groups engage in loose collaboration through shared events, but not within the same interfaith organization or network. Hence, the REGs examined in the UK were Christian groups.

Similarly, in the US there are numerous Jewish REGs or Jewish partners who are part of the interfaith groups or coalitions. In the UK there is no comparable example given that the Jewish community is much smaller. While Jewish environmentalism is becoming more active in the UK, at the time this study was conducted there were no close Jewish partners in the UK REG network examined. Some UK activists also expressed that it was more effective to focus on faith-specific approaches rather than operate through an interfaith organization. Questions posed during the research process explored how REGs view their perception of moral authority and approach relative to secular ENGOs. This question explored the perspective of religious groups on this issue rather than having a direct comparison with secular organizations. While one secular ENGO was interviewed, a full examination of similarities or differences between secular and religious groups would entail a different study design and was outside the scope of the current research. Similarly, the study aimed to understand what motivates REGs engaged in campaigns in favor of action on climate change and environmental issues. In that context it eliminated groups that possess an anti-environmental approach. While those types of organizations exist in the US, similar organizations were not identified in the UK and were found to be in the minority in the US relative to REGs in favor of environmental protection. A study that included that perspective would have been outside of the scope of the current research,

though it would be a worthwhile future endeavor to compare the belief systems of both pro and anti-environmental REGs.

Lastly, while every effort was made to provide a complete picture of REG's motivation for climate activism in the US and the UK, due to the sheer scope of this movement it is impossible to interview every coalition partner and organization. The focus was placed on a representative sample of REGs from both countries, and results and conclusions were based on those findings. However, this study does not claim to represent the belief systems of all REGs and denominations in the US or the UK.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented qualitative methodology employed over the course of the research process to elucidate what beliefs and values motivate religious environmental groups to engage in climate activism in the United Kingdom and the United States. It sought to introduce the topic, key questions, describe the research sample, as well as the research design and data collection processes. It outlined concepts that were used during the analysis, such as Snow's (1988) framing approach to social movements and Sabtier's (1988) advocacy collation framework. It then went on to describe how collected data was coded, presented and analyzed. The analysis sought to identify the belief systems and values that motivate REGs on climate activism then to examine how those beliefs/values are framed to their target audience. The frames and beliefs were linked with policies supported through advocacy coalitions using the ACF model. Lastly, this chapter describes ethical considerations of this research along with certain limitations to the study. The

chapters that follow will present findings for UK and US case studies, followed by an analyses and comparison of the countries.

CHAPTER FOUR: UK RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction to Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore what motivates climate change activism among religious environmental groups in the United States and the United Kingdom. Case studies were identified based on Christian and interfaith organizations with the intent of a comparative design across cases and countries. Three main questions were explored in this study. The questions addressed the influence of religiosity, religious values and beliefs in driving environmental activism relative to environmental (science driven) beliefs, and the role of religious beliefs in driving policy choices. They further explored REG coalition formation and religious framing on climate change and the environment, and how it differed from secular groups in the mainstream environmental movement, as well as their interactions and association with the environmental movement.

The research findings are organized in the following chapters. First, an overview of the setting will be provided for both US and UK field work and case studies along with general background information on the REGs and participants in question. This section will also outline the major categories of research findings which will be addressed relative to each country. Chapter four will focus on research findings in the UK, followed by chapters five and six that describe US research findings. An analysis of the UK research findings will be provided in chapter seven and an analysis of US finding in chapter eight. Chapter nine will provide an overview and analysis of the comparative differences in key findings from the US and the UK cases, followed by a conclusion and recommendations for future research in chapter ten.

The main findings fall into five key categories based on the research questions, which will be described relative to the case studies. The first category includes how terms such as stewardship, creation care, and sacrifice are applied and interpreted by religious groups. Also included is how other religious beliefs relate to climate change and ecological issues, including the difference between religious based and other drivers such as the role of scientific and environmental beliefs in motivating REG activism. The second category discusses collective action frames applied by REGs to their activism on climate change and environmental issues. The third category shows REG activism in the context of advocacy coalition formation as well as policy beliefs that drive the formation of such coalitions and how they are translated into policy choices. The fourth category addresses the perception REGs have of their moral authority and legitimacy when interacting with their target audience. The fifth category results elaborate further on religious environmental activism as an emerging social movement and how REG coalitions highlight alignment or differentiation between the movements. This category will address how REGs focus on transforming lifestyles, greening congregations, changing behavior and challenging the prevailing notions of the “good life” as promised by neoliberal capitalism. It also extends these results to findings that show how REGs aim to “re-enchant modernity”--to bring back elements of the sacred and to challenge both modernity and utilitarian conceptualizations of the environment, as propagated by not only the secular world, but also established church hierarchies. Each of these categories of findings will be described for case study organizations in the US and the UK, with results compiled into categories of REGs in each country.

Introduction to UK REGs

In the United Kingdom research was focused on REGs that are primarily active in England and Wales although several organizations do have separate chapters working in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The REGs can be subdivided based on their organization's focus, affiliations, and closest partnerships. In the UK context, the REGs in question, and especially driven individuals who constitute the frame of these organizations, work closely in a well-defined network of Christian environmental groups. In some instances the same people are involved in two or more organizations or have a long history of working together and at the same organizations. Christian Ecology Link (CEL), for instance, is one of the UK's older Green Christian organizations and was founded in the 1980s by a group of like-minded Christian Green Party Members of Parliament. CEL is primarily a grass-roots organization that gets involved with various ecological issues while placing a strong emphasis on life-style changes. Operation Noah was founded in the early 2000s as the first UK religious environmental organization to focus exclusively on global climate change, however prior to becoming an independent organization it began as project of CEL. The ties between the two groups remain close, in part due to having members who are actively engaged in both. In other cases, there is a 'revolving door' between organizations where staff members moving between organizations and retain their close collaborations, as is the case with several of the Catholic groups. Due to these close-knit and overlapping affiliations, results found from case-study research will be described in those categories with linkages described between groups. The other major distinction between the UK REGs lies in the type of organization, which falls under three main categories: Green Christian non-profit organizations (CEL, Operation Noah, Eco-Congregation/A Rocha);

religious organizations (Church of England, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Methodist Church, Columban/National Peace and Justice Network); and Christian development/aid organizations (Christian Aid, CAFOD, Progressio, Tearfund). While close-partnerships and affiliations exist between these various groups, their organizational structure does result in differences in focus, often in a complimentary capacity. The smaller NGOs tend to focus more on UK domestic issues or targets, and tend not to engage in international conferences as much or as directly as the development agencies. This is in part due to funding and staff limitations as well as a focus on personal air travel reduction through programs such as Ecocell that will be discussed in greater detail. The development organizations, while active in international meetings including the COP summits and Rio+20, focus on climate change through a human development lens with much of their framing centered on climate justice themes. The last group of ENGOs includes Churches or denominational organizations, specifically, the Church of England, the Methodist Church/ the Joint Public Issues Team, the Quakers, and to a limited extent, the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church perspective is derived from Catholic organizations such as the Columbans and CAFOD and their views on that church's standing relative to ecological and climate related issues.

The population sampled included members of these various REGs focusing on semi-structured interviews, participant observation through conferences and annual meetings, informal conversations, as well as primary source documents related to each organization's mission, vision and focus. In total, about twenty formal interviews were carried out in the UK, primarily in person, but with two phone interviews. Overall, the groups studied in the UK were all Christian organizations, though Muslim Eco-groups and

a Jewish presence are also present in the UK. Interfaith organizations, such as those found in the US, were not identified in this study.¹ While these organizations interact with other religious groups, an integrated interfaith perspective was not found as it was in the United States with groups such as Interfaith Power and Light.

Organizational history, mission and campaigns

The Green Christian NGOs, as mentioned above, include Christian Ecology Link, Operation Noah, Columbans/NJPN and Eco-Congregation/A Rocha. Christian Ecology Link (CEL) and Operation Noah continue to share close ties since Operation Noah begun as a CEL project. Eco-Congregation is currently based in a larger faith-based NGO, A Rocha, which has a UK branch but is headquartered in Portugal with a focus on conservation projects. CEL traces its origins back to a 1981 meeting of Green Party Members of Parliament who decided to form a Christian based environmental group. The group has since lost its direct connections to the Green Party, transitioning from a political campaigning organization to a grassroots based movement. This movement has focused on a bottom up approach from about 2000 looking to green their members, congregations, churches leading to more profound societal and political change. CEL observed that there are far more Christian responses to the environment since the 1980s, and have tried to encourage their members to engage with secular campaigns and activities with a unique Christian perspective. Operation Noah was formed in the early 2000s and developed, through the leadership of CEL's director, a project exclusively focused on climate change.

¹ The exception is the Alliance of Religions and Conservation, which is a UK-based umbrella NGO helping world religions to connect their faith with ecology and serving to facilitate religious environmentalism world-wide. ARC's is more global in nature, though it also plays a role in the UK as describes by other REGs. ARC considers itself a secular NGO that works with religious groups. Numerous attempts were made to contact ARC, however, it was not possible to gain an interview.

Operation Noah went on to become its own independent organization. The aim of Operation Noah was to focus on driving change in the Churches on the topic of climate change, inspiring and persuading them to take a strong stance that prioritizes the issue. There is a greater emphasis on ‘high-level’ political engagement in lobbying church leaders, MPs and other political elites. For instance, in February 2012 they launched their ‘Ash Wednesday’ declaration written by David Atkinson, a retired Bishop, and aimed at mobilizing church action on climate change. The Ash Wednesday Declaration is framed as a call to church noting that climate change is a fundamental moral concern for the Christian faith that cannot be overlooked. It further calls to churches and individuals to repent, take responsibility for their actions, seek justice and move forward with hope in God to motivate this transformation, without despair in dealing with the implications of climate change.² Numerous REGs discussed here were signatories, notably the Archbishop of Canterbury.³ With the support of grants, Operation Noah was able to bring in well-respected staff who were able to launch an effective communications campaign and access higher-level governmental meetings focused on their climate change message. Eco-congregation represents another green Christian organization and is part of the network of groups that are closely engaged, including CEL and Operation Noah.

Eco-Congregation is different in its focus on certifying parishes, and as of recently has become a program under A Rocha.⁴ A Rocha is an international Christian conservation organization, with a UK affiliate. A Rocha’s roots are also closely linked with Evangelical

² ‘Climate Change and the Purpose of God: a call to Church’, Operation Noah 2012; www.operationnoah.org

³ Interview with Operation Noah and CEL, November 14, 2011

⁴ ‘The Eco-Congregation Story’, accessed on the Eco-Congregation website on November 10, 2011: <http://ew.ecocongregation.org/story>

Christian groups and founders. Eco-Congregation was founded about ten years ago with funding from a government body, and set up as a charity through the Keep Britain Tidy campaign of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. The campaign was chaired by a Bishop who was a scientist and felt that it would further the Church's mission. The previous director of Eco-Congregation decided to make it part of larger organization, A Rocha, with the integration currently in progress. The move gave Eco-Congregation more institutional stability, with A Rocha being a Christian international conservation organization active in many countries in addition to the UK.

The Columban order of the Catholic Church is also very active on environmental issues at the national and global level--economic justice, (and especially where extractive industries are concerned) issues of peace and justice. The National Justice and Peace Network, coupled with major Columban engagement, is a strong advocate on climate issues in collaboration with coalitions such as Stop Climate Chaos and a national level Catholic Environmental Justice Group, which includes other members such as Cafod. The NJPN is a "grassroots body, with Catholic roots and values...with beginnings going back to the Church's response to the call of *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) and *Populorum Progressio* (1967), which called on Catholics to 'work for a better world for all people.'⁵ Columban activists are engaged in campaigns lobbying the UK government and their MPs on energy, climate and development policies.⁶

⁵ Peace, Anne (2011), 'The National Justice and Peace Network', in *Vocation for Justice: Celebrating 25 Years of Solidarity with the Poor and the Exploited Earth*, p. 19

⁶ Interview with Columban Peace and Justice Network activist, November 7, 2011

For religious denominational organizations including the Church of England, the Methodist Church and Quakers, engagement in environmental issues such as climate change has a slightly different perspective than the Green Christian NGOs, though with certain similarities. For hierarchical church organizations, such as the Church of England, engagement in environmental issues has been slower to develop than Green Christian groups. In organizations such as church bodies, the scope is broader, but so is the range of competing issues and perspectives. There are a greater number of skeptics or those who do not see ‘care for the Earth’ as being a core mission for the churches. The churches also deal with many conflicting priorities. Ministers do not always see homelessness, poverty, and other immediate issues as taking precedence over other, long-standing missions.

The Church, however, has slowly moved towards embracing environmental messages actions. One of the first campaigns dealt with the planting of Yew trees and protection of ancient Yew trees, 84% of which are found in church yards. The campaign began around 1999 and applied the notion around the Jubilee that some of these trees are over 2000 years old. The Church and other faiths, including Jewish and Muslim perspectives, have become more engaged in environmental issues over the years, according to one representative who also noted that faiths have had messages related to the environment in their teachings and sermons long before climate change came along.⁷ In other words the care for creation message was not new to many religions, but the activism is a more recent development:

“I think it was something of an epiphany. I think like many others that we received a wakeup call, and I think this being common to a lot of faith groups, not only Christian ones, but other faith as well. But there has been

⁷ Interview with Church of England advisor, November 15, 2011

a realization that we've had the responsibility all along to care for God's creation, and that we haven't been paying anything like much attention as we should've done."⁸

The Synod of the Church of England has moved forward with campaigns such as 'Shrinking the footprint' and greening church yards. In 2005, a report was produced called 'Sharing the God's Planet.'⁹ It was adapted by the General Synod of the Church of England (its governing body). Shrinking the Footprint was a campaign that emerged as a result as the national response of the Church on energy and climate change, and was adapted by most of the 43 Diocese.¹⁰ The campaign and the Church's stance on the environment include the "Five Marks of Mission," established by the worldwide Anglican Communion. Care for the environment falls under the fifth mark of mission, 'striving to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth,' and under all five of the marks including, "the redemption of all things and the unjust structures that promote consumerism and dominance of economic growth at any price."¹¹ Each diocese is supposed to have an environmental officer, and for the London Diocese a full time position was created for the purposes of leading the Shrinking the footprint campaign in London. The London Diocese also began a Climate Action Program, including a Route 2050 campaign for meeting the national climate target.¹²

The environmental involvement of the Methodist Church in the UK dates back to 1999 when a report and request for work was brought to the Methodist Conference followed by a report on an environmental policy for the Methodist Church. An

⁸ Church of England Interview, March 26, 2012

⁹ <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1258771/gs1558.pdf>, accessed April 16, 2013

¹⁰ <http://www.london.anglican.org/mission/shrinking-the-footprint>, accessed April 13, 2013

¹¹ Ibid, (<http://www.london.anglican.org/mission/shrinking-the-footprint>)

¹² <http://www.london.anglican.org/kb/route-2050>, accessed April 13, 2013

environmental policy called ‘Caring for the Earth’ was adapted by the Church in 2000, which stressed more efficient and reduced use of resources, sustainable sources for products, and an awareness of human actions on the natural world including air travel.¹³

The response to climate change was drafted jointly by the Baptist Union, Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church, and was expressed in a report and guide called ‘Hope in God’s Future.’ Section 1-4 of the report were adapted by the Methodist Conference in 2009, and voted on as an official statement in 2011¹⁴ due to growing awareness of climate change in the churches in the UK over those years. As the climate officer pointed out, the challenge comes in executing this work and these projects within a diverse organizational structure. Each Methodist church is set up as its own individual trust (there are about 6000 in total) and utilize a large volunteer force in their operations.. Consequently, “trying to achieve change across that sort of structure is quite a challenge” with the present focus being on encouraging lifestyle changes and coming together as a church community, with the view that it is on the basis of this kind of change that Parliamentary action or engagement takes pace.¹⁵ This change also presents organizational challenges such as implementing these environmental policies across churches in a given region. The structure of the Methodist Church, for instance, does not have a dedicated environmental affairs officer as the Church of England does to facilitate some of this work.

The Quakers in the UK have a strong presence in environmental issues and work on campaigns that focus on climate change, minimizing their carbon footprint, and

¹³ <http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/public-issues/environment-and-the-created-world-%28archived%29/caring-for-the-earth>, accessed April 21, 2013

¹⁴ <http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/climate-change>, accessed April 21, 2013

¹⁵ *ibid*

environmental justice. Quakers do not associate their faith with any specific scriptures, but rather experience and express their beliefs by serving witness to what is going on in the world around them and acting to implement changes through their meetings. The Quaker governance structure is very democratic and driven by a bottom-up process where an individual friend can raise a concern in their local meeting house, which is then discussed and, following discussions, taken on as an action only if the meeting as a whole agrees that it should be. Many issues remain at this level if the local meeting can implement the action on their own. In the case of something broader, such as climate change, that concern can move from the local meeting to the area meeting. These concerns can eventually be raised, with enough group support, to the yearly Quaker (national) meeting. For an issue to reach the yearly meeting it must show strong community support among Quakers before it even reaches that level. Once an issue is decided upon at the yearly meeting, it is documented in the minutes from that meeting and taken on as an action for the national Quaker community.

Quaker Peace and Social Witness is a body within the Quakers in Britain that is part of the Quaker central structure, with the role of taking action on behalf of Quakers in Britain. One of their more recent programs is on the issue of sustainability and peace, with the role of supporting, inspiring, and providing resources to Quakers in Britain to act on sustainability and environmental issues. The program has three main areas, including playing a role in transforming sustainability in the national context into a nation committed to sustainability both at home and abroad. The recent focus has been on making the voices of the Quaker community in Britain heard in policy discussions, in governmental and non-

governmental organization decision making, as well as in campaigns concerning sustainability.¹⁶

When first exploring development and environment issues, development agencies had concerns that they not be seen as being anti-development. Through series of meetings, Cafod explored the different types of development including environmentally destructive development that was not sustainable and could not be seen as valid development. Other meetings looked at the nexus of poverty, environment and development, extractive industries, and campaigns such as the Chipco movement. The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (Cafod) dates back over 50 years to 1962 when it was organized by the Catholic Bishops, with the environmental and climate change campaigns starting in about 1989.¹⁷ The 1989-1991 Campaign theme was called 'Renewing the Earth' and was built around six themes of Christians and Creation; a sick world; beginning locally; acting globally; powerful and powerless; and healing the world. It talked about the greenhouse effect as one of several pressing environmental issues as well as calling for an end to over-development in rich countries and a return to a simpler way of life.¹⁸ Other prominent Cafod campaigns include the Jubilee 2000 campaign on debt forgiveness, Trade Justice Campaign in 2001, Make Poverty History in 2005, and the launch of the Climate Justice Campaign in 2009.¹⁹ Cafod is the official Catholic aid agency of the United Kingdom.

¹⁶ Interview with a Quaker organization, January 2012

¹⁷ <http://www.cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Get-clued-up/Climate-and-environment>

¹⁸ 'Renewing the Earth': How to get people thinking about Development and the Environment, CAFOD Campaign 1989-1991, Parish Folder

¹⁹ Archival material from Cafod

Cafod works in about 45 countries around the World-- in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. It is a part of the Caritas and CDSE (Catholic) federations and is actively engaged in both coalitions, including the Catholic Environmental Justice Group. There was a surge in activities in 2006 following UK's declaration to enact climate change legislation, encouraging campaigners and activists to lobby their MPs. Justice was always a prominent component. Cafod is also a member of the ecumenical Churches Together in Britain and Ireland committee, and worked closely with Eco-Congregation on launching a 'Live Simply' award targeted towards Catholic churches and congregations and engaging people at the grassroots level.²⁰

Progressio is a UK-based Catholic aid agency that was originally founded as 'The Sword of the Spirit' in 1940 by a group of Catholics in an effort to counter Hitler's totalitarianism and respond to the war. It initially focused on oppression of Eastern Europe and was renamed the Catholic Institute for International Relations until changing its name to Progressio in 2006 as its mission expanded to development work and other regions. The name is derived from a key Catholic social teaching document called 'Populorum Progressio,' which came out of the Second Vatican Council.²¹ Progressio relies heavily on Catholic social teaching in its mission, though it is not officially part of the Catholic Church hierarchy of organizations, as is the case with Cafod. It works closely with Cafod, other Catholic peace, justice and environmental activists, as well as other development aid organizations (faith-based as well as secular). Progressio focuses on long-term development in working with their partners. The environmental component of their work became formally articulated in a 2005 plan, with environmental work embedded within the

²⁰ Interview with Cafod, March 12, 2012

²¹ <http://www.progressio.org.uk/content/our-history>, accessed on May 8, 2013

broader livelihood, human rights focus prior to that, since the mid-1990s. The explicit definition of the environment in the strategic planning process recognized the growing link between environment and development, especially given the impact of weather and climate variability, such as droughts and flooding, on local natural resource management. In terms of Catholic teaching, ‘Sollicitudo rei socialis’ first mentioned ecological issues with a growth of church teaching on ecological issues after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.²²

Christian Aid, a Christian development organization, dates back to the 1940s coming out of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and is supported currently by 41 denominations in Britain in Ireland. It continues to see itself as the official Churches’ development agency. Christian Aid works in 48 countries with the aim of eradicating poverty and has served as a critical driver in promoting the climate justice debate, which has had high visibility during recent climate summits.²³ Christian Aid believes that “all people are made equal in the image of God, and that gives them infinite dignity and inherent worth.” Their theology is based “on the idea of relationship...a special relationship between God and humans.”²⁴ One of Christian Aid’s key campaigns related to climate change is the ‘Time for Climate Justice’ Campaign, which leads with linking the science of climate change with food security, freshwater access, health, forests and other problems that exacerbate human injustice. Christian Aid’s involvement in climate change was launched with their first campaign in 2007 called ‘Cut the Carbon,’ with a major push in

²² http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html, accessed May 8, 2013

²³ Christian Aid Annual Report and Accounts 2010/2011, christianaid.org.uk/resources/annual-reports

²⁴ ‘From Hope to Action: Living Out Our Faith’, Christian Aid, October 2010

2008 lobbying the UK government and MPs on the Climate Change bill, calling for an 80% reduction of by 2050 over 1990 CO₂ levels. In 2009 Christian Aid campaigned for action in Copenhagen, successfully working with the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition to halt the building of a new coal-fired power station in Kingsnorth.²⁵ Christian Aid, though, has their agenda regarding climate change focused on its humanitarian dimensions and does not view itself as engaging in environmental campaigns. That delineation is upheld in order to maintain its core functions as a development organization, which is also tied to its funding support and mission directives. Its primary concern in the development field is the eradication of poverty.

Tearfund is an Evangelical Christian faith-based development organization in the UK with their engagement in climate change dating back to the first Earth Summit in 1992. That effort involved partnership with other Christian organizations in the UK pushing for the Church and UK government to recognize climate change as a major issue. For the next ten years, Tearfund was not very active on climate change until 2002 when it started an advocacy program on climate change and environmental stewardship. Tearfund's 'biblical baseline' related to the notion of 'The Earth is the Lord's and everything that is in it,' meaning that humanity is entrusted with the commission of caring for the Earth and its inhabitants. They also stress the scientific evidence for climate change, especially the disproportionate amount of carbon dioxide emissions contributed by people in Western countries, including the US and the UK.²⁶ Similarly to Cafod, Progressio, and Christian Aid, Tearfund's engagement in climate change was mobilized by their partners on three

²⁵ 'Time for Climate Justice: Campaign Guide', Christian Aid, August 2010

²⁶ 'The Part You Play: Living Faithfully in a Changing Climate', Tearfund, www.tearfund.org/climate

continents who were experiencing the impacts of a changing climate, including an increased frequency of natural disasters and a lack of rainfall. Long-term development work and disaster response in this context became a major part of ongoing programs. Doing this work initially also meant educating supporters and the public on how climate change was both an environmental and a development issue that impacted people as well as “polar bears.” A more recent backlash has resulted from the economic downturn where people in the UK are more focused on their immediate economic issues.²⁷

Stewardship/creation care, sacrifice and other religious beliefs linked with motivating REGs

Green Christian REGs have a distinct position concerning the use of terms such as ‘stewardship.’ Stewardship and creation care are both subjective concepts influenced by the users’ interpretations. In studying responses from various groups, the term “stewardship” was found to have multiple meanings, and to some even controversial meanings. In religious terms, stewardship is often attributed to (monetary) resources and has been widely expanded in religious and secular contexts. For Christian Ecology Link members as well as Operation Noah, stewardship is not the most applicable term to apply. CEL’s view is centered on a holistic interpretation of the human- ecosystem relationship. Stewardship is seen as a limiting term, one that emphasizes an anthropocentric worldview. The term is not seen by CEL members as representative of the human role in the ecosystem- - one that is not of domination or even superiority to other species. CEL views stewardship as being dominion centered and not in tune with ecology. It is further viewed as tolerating

²⁷ Interview with Tearfund April 2012

a misreading of Genesis that supports an oppression of creation, where CEL's perspective is focused on 'participation in creation.' To quote the director of CEL:

“Jesus didn't become incarnate in order to become a steward of creation, he became incarnate in order to participate in it.”²⁸

While 'care for creation' is a term applied by CEL members over stewardship, 'creation care' is associated with and applied more often in evangelical circles. A concept that is preferred by some in CEL is that of 'servantship, not stewardship,' noting that a “human being is a servant of nature, a plain member of the community of life.”²⁹ The distinction, for one CEL member, between stewardship and creation care lay in applying and taking responsibility for humanity's extensive impact-- he did not mind the term stewardship provided responsible care was a part of that definition. And he was cautious about creation care, as to him it may be seen by some as 'being nice towards creation,' an approach that can abdicate responsibility unless explicitly noted.³⁰ Operation Noah shares a similar view of stewardship, preferring to speak of care for creation as a biblical term. Eco-congregation did not express as many concerns over the use of 'stewardship' and contrasted it with 'dominion,' noting that the term should be used as a metaphor for borrowing, not owning resources, which belong to God and human beings.

Sacrifice, stemming from the origin “to make sacred,” is a contentious topic in environmental discussions and this was reflected in responses received to whether the term is being used. The primary response to the use of sacrifice relative to climate change was

²⁸Interview with CEL, November 14, 2011

²⁹ Walton, Chris (Summer 2011) *Green Christian*, 'Servantship not Stewardship', Issue 71; www.christian-ecology.org.uk

³⁰ Interview with CEL, November 18, 2011

favorable, in that participants agreed that a need for sacrifice exists, they did, however, point out that sacrifice is not a palatable concept in modern Western society and needs to be used cautiously. Sacrifice can also be perceived as a negative whereas the lifestyle changes and reduction of consumerism are seen as personal benefits. The need for sacrifice or changes is perceived as move for the greater universal good and while difficult, not dour. The concept of sacrifice is also portrayed as a spiritual journey-- Jesus dying on the Cross to be reborn. While the process is painful, it is ultimately rewarding and enriching. It was noted that Operation Noah and CEL as members of larger (mainstream) environmental movement alliances such as Climate Alliance were directed to avoid using the term sacrifice.³¹ The Christian perspective on the other hand should emphasize the need to sacrifice and “love onto death,” posing a different religious frame not recognized in secular environmental circles.³² The meaning of ‘conversion’ is another religious concept that relates to:

“transcending the boundaries of the individual...surrender to the ultimate meaning, ultimate value...rather than personal value...and that’s sort of orthodox Christianity to say that personal sacrifice is actually for the greater good...It’s not for personal reward...it’s been put in terms of eternal award and the afterlife.”³³

For others in Operation Noah such as Rev. Chris Brice, sacrifice is not the term to strive for with the general public, but rather a focus on radical change and justice. One analogy applied by Rev. Brice was that of public sacrifice during World War II in the effort to defeat Hitler, and how religious groups need to act as the prophetic voice in pushing for

³¹ Interview with CEL, November 18, 2011

³² Interview with Operation Noah/CEL November 14, 2011

³³ Interview with CEL, November 14, 2011

a reordering of society away from a carbon based economy.³⁴ The other major emphasis is on simple living, a major feature of Eco-Congregation's programs, including a partnership with CAFOD, to launch a "Live Simply" program. Sacrifice is not a term applied by Eco-Congregation, noting that other colleagues may shy away from that word as well. The reason behind avoiding the use of 'sacrifice' was to frame the message in a different light:

"We hope to create a much more positive language and actually a much more positive way of thinking about it. We're much more inclined to speak in terms of hope."³⁵

Religious beliefs applied by these Green Christian organizations center around notions of eco-justice, human dignity, care for your neighbor, living without harming others, and especially the notion of love in a Christian context.³⁶ The organizations challenge members and society to think what it means to love your neighbor and to love creation or what God created. As the motto of Operation Noah states, they are 'faith-motivated, science-informed, hope-driven.' For some green Christians it is also means finding hope for action, but understanding that the journey towards a sustainable future means exploring the "depths of darkness"³⁷ and confronting the truth of how challenging the transition may be from a fossil-fuel economy, acknowledging that it will take more than 'changing a light bulb.' The process is compared to Jesus' own struggle and "accompanying Jesus on the way of the cross." As articulated by Rev. Chris Brice of Operation Noah, there is a focus on the purpose of Christian life in being more and more

³⁴ Interview with Rev. Chris Brice, Director Operation Noah, November 17, 2011)

³⁵ Interview with Eco-Congregation, November 16, 2011

³⁶ Between the Flood and the Rainbow: Climate Change and the Church's Social Teaching- A Study Guide (2008), Produced by Operation Noah with support from CAFOD, Columban Faith and Justice and the National Justice and Peace Network

³⁷ Interview with CEL, November 14, 2011

like Jesus in any given situation, where practicing a Christian life means making the world safe from climate change. It is also reflected as a struggle similar to Christ's life, death, and resurrection. A profound sense of justice is also expressed in relation to other human beings, species, and 'creation.' This is partly expanded by the analogy of being made in God's image, with equal dignity for every human being, while also striving to protect God's entrusted creation. As one Operation Noah activist said:

“the whole concept of ecological justice- that the West is just damaging the planet at the expense of the very poorest, whose lifestyles rarely have any impact at all on climate change and yet who are those who are those who are already suffering hugely.”³⁸

For Eco-Congregation, the message of caring for creation and being God's Stewards is also emphasized, though they point out that each church even within the same denomination can have differing views on theology and the relationship with the Earth. Eco-Congregation, in approaching different churches, would emphasize that the attitude of 'all of this will burn in 100 years anyway' is incorrect theology, because Jesus said not to look for the end times and because God entrusted humanity with caring for the Earth, it doesn't matter if it is going to burn or not, humanity is still charged with taking care of it in the meantime. At the root of the message is:

“doing the right thing because it's the right thing,” emphasizing more of a “very spiritual message, it's not a materialistic one. It has profound materialistic consequences, but it would mean nothing to someone who wasn't a committed Christian.”³⁹

Green Christian REG beliefs related to environmental degradation and the climate crisis are centered around caring for God's creation, justice for all of creation, love for your

³⁸ Interview with Operation Noah, November 21, 2011

³⁹ Interview with Eco-Congregation November 16, 2011

neighbor (human and non-human species), as well as resisting false idols in the form of excessive consumption. Living in a way that destroys God's creation is seen as a sin and a sign of disrespect. Green Christians also stress their interpretation of their faith in terms of ethics as well as Christian experience. There is also theological emphasis on varying interpretations of the "end times." Another emphasis lies in the notion of environmental degradation-- pollution, climate change, and habitat destruction as Christian sin. As one activist said:

"Our understanding of sin--for example to many Catholics, murdering someone is a sin, murdering an unborn child is a sin, but you know if a rain forest is destroyed and all the creatures in it...they might say it's a pity, but they wouldn't see it as a sin...or if a mining company poisons a river in the Philippines, is that a pity or is it a sin?"⁴⁰

Columban religious beliefs are greatly inspired by the notion of 'the Cosmic Christ,' a holistic conception of human kind's relationship and role within the rest of creation, including that "communion with God, must include communion with Earth." Columbans are inspired by the "cosmological dimension of Christ with cosmic and earthly symbols of light and dark, new fire, flowers and greens, water and oil, bread and wine."⁴¹ They stress the Church's responsibility for creation, calling for restoration of the human relationship with creation and viewing environmental degradation as a type of sin.⁴² A leading eco-theologian and Columban priest is Father Sean McDonagh, whose work has served as an inspiration to many activists.

⁴⁰ Interview with Columbans, Peace and Justice Network, November 17, 2011

⁴¹ Johnson, Elizabeth, 'For God so Loved the Cosmos' US Catholic (April 2010) , vol. 74, no. 4, pp.18-21
<http://www.uscatholic.org/culture/environment/2010/07/god-so-loved-world-jesus-and-environment>

⁴² Compilation of Columban archival meeting materials

For Green Christian REGs, often beliefs are linked to the notion of a ‘Cosmic Christ,’ with all species seen as being interrelated rather than existing in hierarchical relationships. Humans are part of a web.

The church organizations would disagree with the interpretation of ‘dominion’ as intending to mean conquest of the natural world and would emphasize the Christian responsibility in caring for the Earth as the proper intention of that phrase.⁴³ There is, however, acknowledgment that the biblical notion of ‘dominion’ was distorted in the mechanistic, enlightenment era interpretations of the human-nature relationship. The rise of 20th century secularism is also perceived as having perpetuated the idea of limitless growth and equated it with happiness.⁴⁴ The Church of England emphasized the notion of the ‘Sabbath’ as a day of God’s rest, but also a time for Christians to take a break from being wrapped up in consumption and the need for possessions stressing that the most salient, valuable things in life are not material.⁴⁵ Beliefs related to caring for the Earth relate to the writings of Paul and the association in Colossians I of creation:

“being created by and through and for, Jesus Christ, so creation is in some way a sort of...it’s a manifestation of God to us....but there is a special identification of the son of God, Jesus Christ. He became a part of creation, and a part of the world, Himself became a part of it...and the ultimate purpose of creation. And so obviously as Christians, we have a duty to Christ to uphold the creation, which is uniquely associated with Him.”⁴⁶

Another view looks at the redemptive purpose of God, which is extended to redemption for all of creation. Stewardship is seen as a central component of the human-

⁴³ Sharing God’s Planet: a Christian vision for a sustainable future’ Mission and Public Affairs Council, Church House Publishing, p.25

⁴⁴ ‘Sharing God’s Planet: a Christian vision for a sustainable future’ Mission and Public Affairs Council, Church House Publishing, pp. 1-2

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.27

⁴⁶ Church of England, London Dioceses interview, March 26, 2012

nature relationship and the term is used more readily than by Green Christian organizations. Creation is viewed as belonging to God, with the human role defined as ‘steward of creation, exercising dominion under God, whose rule is sovereign,’ with this stewardship role being practiced under four theological principles, which include: “the covenant with creation; the sacrament of creation; the role of humanity and the Sabbath.” The covenant with creation emphasizes the three-way covenant made between God, Noah and all living creatures, seen as stressing the interrelatedness of all life.⁴⁷

Climate change to Quakers is seen as a broader issue and not in isolation from other key topics such as economic justice. In terms of use of terminology, such as stewardship and creation care, that biblical language is not something that some Quakers in Britain are comfortable with, though older quotes by John Roman referred to the gracious creator. John Roman, in 1772, was one of the earliest Quakers who referred to the prodigies of the Earth as being a gift from the gracious creator to the inhabitants. Quaker motivations for engaging in environmental issues can come from multiple sources, given that there is no central creed of beliefs, though the overall focus is on simplicity, equality and living in a ‘right relationship’ with people and planet.⁴⁸ Quakers focus on testifying in the world and recording their testimonies as actions that should be lived out in the world. The beliefs, though without a core set of rules, relate to the presence of spirit in everyone, peace, integrity, and truth, which increasingly means the integrity of the Earth as well.

⁴⁷ ⁴⁷ Sharing God’s Planet: a Christian vision for a sustainable future’ Mission and Public Affairs Council, Church House Publishing, p.16-17

⁴⁸ Interview with ECCR, March 16, 2012

Sacrifice is perceived as being implied in some of these messages, though also a difficult message to pass on to people accustomed to a particular way of living who do not want to see their personal lifestyles disturbed. Sacrifice is also seen as giving something up for the greater good, and a point that needs to be made, but not before being able to show “that we’re able to make sacrifices before we suggest that to other people.”⁴⁹ Environmental justice is another large component seen as critical to the Christian view on creation as acting justly, living justly within our means, and not taking more than our fair share. This is particularly true in relation to people and other creatures around the world and abusing resources to the detriment of others. Perspectives from the Methodist Church and the Joint Public Issues Team focus on the need to sacrifice or change lifestyles from the perspective of confession and repentance, and “looking at the drivers of climate change including the whole aspect of consumerism.” The destruction of God’s creation is viewed as a sin, emphasizing that ‘God made creation and called it good.’ The impact the industrialized world has had on the rest of creation, and especially the poor and marginalized, requires it to seek repentance. Seeking repentance requires that “this change of heart and practice is confessing our complicity in the sinful structures that have caused the problem.”⁵⁰

While stewardship is also mentioned as a central practice, it is discussed in the context of attending to non-human neighbors and with an emphasis on creation being viewed by God as good, along with the three-way covenant made with Noah.⁵¹ Sacrifice is not a term commonly used by Quaker groups. Their messages are framed in more positive

⁴⁹ Interview with Church of England, March 26, 2012

⁵⁰ <http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/higf-studyguide-100909.pdf>, accessed April 20, 2013

⁵¹ <http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/higf-studyguide-100909.pdf>, pp. 18-20

terms that try to make people feel less despair and more hope while helping people connect with finding greater meaning in life, what it means to flourish, consume less, and build relationships. These steps are seen not as sacrifices, but rather ways to make life fuller.⁵²

Faith-based development agencies in the UK, including Cafod, Progressio, Christian Aid and Tearfund are also engaged in climate change activism, though from a distinctly human justice perspective. Their motivation stems from seeing and hearing about the impacts of climate change on people living in the developing countries in which they work. These agencies are focused on and funded for human development projects and do not consider themselves to be environmental groups or organizations. They are supportive of environmental campaigns and causes, but stress the need to focus on their core mission. They are also usually better funded than the smaller green Christian groups and engaged with the international UNFCCC climate negotiations promoting campaigns such as climate justice and making them visible actors where climate advocacy is concerned.

For Progressio, their faith perspective is not always the driver of much as their development agenda, however faith underpins and supports the positions they take. Progressio works with a wide range of partners in eleven countries with diverging faith perspectives, and tailors its message to be open and inclusive of people of all faiths or no faith.⁵³ As the director of Progressio put it:

“Those organizational values are underpinned by Catholic social teaching and the gospel message...that are about helping to sustain the dignity of all people to work for the common good, to work...in solidarity for a more just world. And within that the concept of sustainability is kind of integral that we can't just work for the dignity of all human people now, we work for the dignity of all human people in the future. It's a very clear sense of our

⁵² Interview with ECCR, March 16, 2012

⁵³ ‘People Powered Development: Progressio’s Strategic Framework 2010-2015’, Progressio

stewardship role...and therefore what comes next is that concept of inter-generational justice, and making sure that one is able to leave an appropriate legacy for future generations...so there's a sort of circularity that says...our theology underpins our values and our values, which at the moment are respect, solidarity, passion and boldness...and that's respect for both people and the planet."⁵⁴

Progressio would use the term 'sustainability' rather than stewardship in describing their work, which focuses on sustainability as a form of capacity building for communities. Both stewardship and care of creation may be used, with care of creation being a more common expression in Catholic social teaching. Sacrifice is not a term that is utilized; rather the message is framed in terms of inter-generational justice, with the goal of using language that enables people to move forward. Standing in solidarity with others and the importance of lifestyle changes are also emphasized, with sacrifice being too strong a term that will not resonate well with people.⁵⁵ Solidarity is also a term that was applied during liberation theology struggles in Latin America and Africa and fused in the UK with faith-based organizations.⁵⁶ Similarly to Progressio, Christian Aid does not consider stewardship or creation care to be their primary focus as much as sustainability. Their carbon footprint is monitored internally through an annual audit of flights, miles, and resources used during the course of business. Christian Aid's engagement with climate change was driven by a survey conducted of their partners' key issues identified as hampering development. One of two main identified issues was a changing and unpredictable climate, and the other was economic justice. For countries such as India, climate change was making the planning of livelihoods difficult and hard to predict,

⁵⁴ Interview with Progressio, March 12, 2012

⁵⁵ Progressio interview March 28, 2012

⁵⁶ Progressio interviews March 2012

making these changes an issue for their humanitarian mission. Christian Aid's involvement in climate change stemmed from the concerns of their partners and the need to respond to them as an organization.⁵⁷

Tearfund includes the term stewardship in their messaging, however it is not one of their primary messages given that the focus of their audience is international development and global poverty. They prefer to lead with the development message followed by the concept that God has an environmental stewardship message that is also important. Having climate change seen as a long-term environmental issue can also be problematic, because people are less motivated to act on it rather than something they can act on today.⁵⁸

Sacrifice is not directly, but more implicitly expressed by Cafod, with a focus on making positive impacts on one's own life and on the world. It is the approach emphasized in the 'Live Simply' program-- stressing solidarity and working towards a more equal world for people in more affluent countries and the rest of the world. In the words of Cafod's patron Father Romero, "aspire not to have more, but to be more, including the sense of hope and joy that comes from working with Cafod's partners who are living through much more difficult circumstances."⁵⁹ The Live Simply Award encourages participating parishes and individuals to use only what they need, live sustainably with creation, strengthen communities, reduce waste and car use, as well as save energy and water.⁶⁰ Religious teachings and scriptures that influence Cafod's mission, the organization

⁵⁷ Interview with Christian Aid March 13, 2012

⁵⁸ Interview with Tearfund, April 2012

⁵⁹ Interview with Cafod March 12, 2012.

⁶⁰ 'The Livesimply Award: Your information and resources pack', CAFOD and Eco-Congregation, livesimplyaward.org.uk

(and other Catholic groups) relate to Catholic social teaching- the letters, quotes as well as documents produced by Popes, Bishop's Conferences and religious leaders. Campaigns such as the 'Thirst for Change Campaign' link water scarcity with the impact of water poverty in Africa as well as how that problem ties in with their climate work.⁶¹

Progressio also views solidarity as reflecting a greater sense of wider community and broader family, whereas sacrifice or even self-denial can seem like very personal, individual actions. The term sacrifice, or self-denial, might also be linked with more conservative aspects of Catholicism, while most of Progressio's supporters are mainly progressive.⁶² Sacrifice, while in principle supported by Tearfund, is not seen as the most effective framing to reach their audiences "hearts." They prefer to focus on making positive changes such as being healthier or saving money, much as the other development and green Christian organizations do by focusing on the vision they seek to achieve rather than that being a sacrificial act.⁶³ Tearfund asks its supporters to take up campaigning actions from time to time and join lifestyle changing campaigns such as the Carbon Fast. The Carbon Fast encourages churches and individuals to take actions during the Lenten season that diminish their contribution to climate change, including taking local holidays and not flying, loaning items as opposed to buying them when possible, buying local produce, and having a 'meat-free Monday.' These actions are linked with the religious foundations of walking humble, acting justly, loving neighbors, caring, and enjoying creation.⁶⁴ Tearfund also reaches out to individuals in local churches and works through denominations and their networks, including individuals in leadership roles and the Christian media. Tearfund

⁶¹ 'New Campaign: Thirst for Change', Campaigns Update, November 2011, CAFOD

⁶² Progression interviews March 2012

⁶³ Interview with Tearfund, April 27, 2012

⁶⁴ 'The Carbon Fast: Lent 2012', Tearfund, www.tearfund.org/carbonfast

has found that it is difficult to raise funds for climate change, more so than other development issues such as HIV or water sanitation, because the perception of donors is that they can have greater influence on those issues with their donations.

Issue Framing: collective action frames applied to climate change

REGs utilize a variety of frames to link their messages on ecological degradation with religious beliefs and values involving frame extension and amplification. Frames utilized include the humanitarian consequences of climate change, climate justice, linkage with other issues, as well as holistic approaches towards the human-environment relationship.

For green Christian groups, the emphasis is very much placed on seeing creation in inclusive terms, humans, other species, and ecosystems. Climate justice, though not opposed by Green Christians is seeing as missing some elements that address the root issues of the problems beyond the justice implications. They also feel that climate justice is adequately addressed by the Christian development agencies and they seek to expand upon that frame to include the rest of creation. The notion of ‘love thy neighbor’ is expanded to include non-human species as well as people in poor counties. This type of holistic frame is also meant to mean more than giving donations to the poor or sending students from the West work on projects in the global south. It means fundamentally addressing the roots of the problems with further reaching actions that are meant to mitigate issues causing poverty, such as climate change. In the words of one CEL activist: “loving your neighbor has to be considered other than doing something that you feel good about.”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Interview with CEL activist, November 8, 2011

CEL seeks to provide its target audience with hope in overcoming the obstacles of climate change. Without making that transformation seem overly simplistic, that means looking for frames to tell people the truth without losing them to instinctive denial and fear of the full implications of climate change. One of the Christian metaphors is Christ own struggle--death, bearing the cross--that later lead to resurrection. In that sense they seek to convey the message that the Christian faith holds for dealing with repentance for the 'sins' of climate change,' adapting to new lifestyles, and handling environmental changes with the goal of creation being re-born. Green Christians view this as taking Christian eco-theology a step further than the churches would normally by encouraging the notion of transcendence not just for the individual, but for the wider creation. It also stresses the challenges that lie ahead without providing "too cheap a hope by saying that one can change a few lights bulbs and everything will be ok."⁶⁶ Green Christians in CEL and Operation Noah encourage confronting this despair, achieving "a sincere and sustainable hope" that will lead people out of the darkness to confront the truth of climate change.⁶⁷ According to Rev. Chris Brice, it is the Church's role to help transform, preserve, renew and keep creation afresh:

"It's the amalgam of the church being true to itself and transforming and redeeming all the functions of creation in order they operate in such a way that brings about the better to creation for the good of all and accordance with God's teachings and God's being."⁶⁸

Green Christian groups point out the challenges of finding the 'right' religious frames to apply to climate change. That work may be done by Theologians, but it's hard to

⁶⁶ Interview with CEL, November 2011

⁶⁷ CEL Interview November 2011

⁶⁸ Interview with Rev. Chris Brice, Operation Noah, November 17, 2011

say what the best message is other than focusing on God's love for the world and humanity. They further note that Christ's message to his followers was that if they wanted to inherit the kingdom of heaven they had to give everything up so that they may "buy the best pearl." In the context of climate change, the challenge for campaigning is different than in other campaigns in that "climate change is different than every other campaign where you're campaigning against something-or wanting something to change, but with climate change, we're campaigning against ourselves, you know, we are the ones that have to change, and it's just an incredible difficult message to sell."⁶⁹ REGs see the promise of having a more spiritual, Christian message that enables this kind of larger transformation and reaches the "heart of the process."⁷⁰

Values are drivers of behavior. REGs see tremendous potential for churches to give society a way forward by using the language of grief, repentance, transformation and responsibility, by guiding people in how a moral human being thinks and what should be considered unacceptable behavior in terms of ecological degradation, and by connecting their values with how they behave.⁷¹ Organizations, such as CEL serve as a home for the "green sheep," or the greens in their congregations who feel isolated because they can be the only ones pushing their church for enhanced environmental efforts. CEL provides materials for these individuals that they can take back to their congregations to bolster their message and have a place in CEL to gain support, guidance, and encouragement for their work.⁷² Eco-Congregation also provides this type of support, encouraging churches to

⁶⁹ Interview with Operation Noah member, November 2011

⁷⁰ Interview with Operation Noah, November 21, 2011

⁷¹ Interview with Operation Noah and CEL, November 14, 2011

⁷² CEL resources include publications such as: 'Resources from Christian Ecology Link: Ordinary Christians extraordinary times; 'Use Your LOAF (Locally produced, organically grown, Animal friendly and Fairly traded); Christian Ecology Link: a Prayer Guide for the Care of Creation (November 2011);

obtain their green awards and encourages churches to engage more with secular campaigns. They emphasize the theological message, practical steps such as the engagement by congregations with the local and global community need to be taken. They also find new ways of framing environmental campaigns that can motivate greater support. For instance, Eco-Congregation has partnered with secular conservation groups on a bat conservation plan. Bats, a protected species, often dwell in the UKs over 40,000 200-year-old and older churches that serve as habitat. Bats, though are not always seen in a positive light by church goers, and Eco-Congregation aims to appeal to their sense of caring for God's creation as opposed to relying on a legal, 'negative stick approach' that has failed in the past. Eco-Congregation also noted that biodiversity is easier to discuss in biblical terms than is climate change, given the historical context for when it was written. The present focus should be concerned with the wider environment, of which one aspect is climate change.

Mainline church organizations frame environmental degradation and climate issues in terms of justice, which includes humans and non-human creation: "it is wrong actually to use or abuse the world's resources for our own ends to the deception of others, which includes other people and includes other creatures as well. So we have to act justly, we have to live justly, we can't live beyond our means, we can't take more than our fair share."⁷³ They also focus on the redemptive and hope filling aspect of the Christian faith in helping congregations and communities address these challenges. The Methodist Church frames its message in terms of justice and creation care. They also call on confession and

'Going Green the Christian Way'; and 'Climate Change: What can Christian do?'; www.greenchristian.org.uk

⁷³ Interview with Church of England, March 26, 2012

repentance as the means by which to acknowledge the scope of the challenges ahead. The Quakers express particular interest in climate change because “not only of the impact it has on the planet, but because of the fact that it stems from and causes inequality, lack of peace in the world, lack of justice-is a manifestation of a lack of integrity as to who we are.”⁷⁴ Churches also note that it is difficult to make radical lifestyle changes and especially to communicate that message to people. QPSW stresses that while they talk about moving beyond comfortable changes, they don’t think those changes should be driven by fear. Instead they prefer to frame that message “in terms of working from a basis of love for the planet, for each other,” making that a positive experience centered on building communities, rather than “gloom and doom.”⁷⁵

One important transformation that is needed in the church is the inclusion of the environment as part of the core mission, prayers and services, as opposed to having a dedicated service once per year, with some churches including prayers every Sunday for the environment. It is also a challenge for an organization with many buildings and assets to calculate its footprint and look at the best ways to make them efficient given usage and other concerns. While lifestyle changes and sacrifices may be necessary, having a hopeful message and a two-fold approach that recognizes the practical challenges is also significant to success. As a Methodist Church representative noted:

“I think to a certain extent the church needs to adopt a similarly diverse and sort of two track approach that is quite clear about the need for lifestyle change, the need for confession/repentance, the need to change hearts and minds, but in terms of the pragmatic change also use other incentives as well.”⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Interview with Quaker Peace and Social Witness, January 18, 2012

⁷⁵ Interview with QPSW.ECCR, , March 16, 2012

⁷⁶ Interview with Methodist Church/Joint Public Issues Team, March 15, 2012

The faith-based development agencies have a much clearer focus on human development and frame issues of climate change relative to climate justice, the elevation of poverty, inequity, which includes support for domestic efforts in the UK to transform lifestyles and behavior that impacts developing countries. Cafod and Progressio both emphasize the significance of Catholic Social teaching on their missions, especially where responsibility to the poor is concerned, in developing a sense of solidarity with the poor. They work with secular coalitions such as Stop Climate Chaos, and where development work and joint campaigns are concerned, they find the work they perform as organizations is very similar. Both would also stress the need for a message of hope, and note that secular organizations recognize that hope is needed when addressing climate change. Tearfund also views hope as a critical element in motivating people, especially Christians, if

“they believe in a God that can do anything and is commanding them to do things if they are not sure that it will work out or not, is still motivates them to do them, just because they’re the right thing to do.”⁷⁷

Faith-based development agencies and their unique perspectives are respected by government agencies and thereby receive funding support for some of their programs. MPs and members of government also acknowledge the large, Catholic voting constituency, and recognize their potential influence as organized and civically engaged citizens. They also point out the surprise that MPs receive from the novelty of being addressed by a group of ‘habit wearing women,’ where the notion of serving as a religious witness can be powerful. Christian Aid sees the Lords Spiritual as being able to bring a moral voice to Parliamentary debates, even if there are a few climate skeptics in the House of Lords or among Bishops,

⁷⁷ Interview with Tearfund, April 27, 2012

they would agree with the need to help people affected by climate even if they disagreed on its causes.⁷⁸ Tearfund similarly finds that the House of Lords is one avenue for political engagement, though the House of Commons is more powerful in the UK system.⁷⁹ Progressio highlights to its audience that on issues including poverty, globalization and climate change, Catholics are often very progressive. Cafod and Progressio are also partners on the Live Simply Award, which involved a partnership with Eco-Congregation to tailor the award towards Catholic teaching, masses, and congregations. One of the aims of the program is to build a sense of solidarity with people in poor global south countries being adversely affected by climate change, and also to see that small steps can lead to larger impacts.

They note that people can often feel overwhelmed by climate change, therefore framing issues in an approachable light can make a difference. Progressio frames its campaigns on climate change by acknowledging its scope and complexity and linking it with other issues, including water and illegal logging. These issues, also drivers of climate change, are something their targets and audiences can relate to. For instance, in framing climate change, Progressio talks about water in the context of a changing climate, including the impacts already seen and felt by farmers in Zimbabwe: more regular occurrences of droughts, changing weather patterns, and their increasing inability to grow and harvest their crops.⁸⁰ Some of these more specific campaigns can serve as entry point for approaching various audiences and linking the impact of water shortages to small farmers and how they make a difference to help alleviate those problems. They point out that it can be hard to

⁷⁸ Interviews with Christian Aid March 13, 2012

⁷⁹ Interview with Tearfund, April 27, 2012

⁸⁰ Interviews with Progressio, March-April 2012

maintain interest in a campaign if it seems like the same issue, so it's important to use different frames. Christian Aid highlighted a similar concern regarding weariness in the climate movement, with a public often fatigued by the message and more focused on immediate impacts. Following a lack of success in Copenhagen, mobilizing on climate change has been more challenging. Avoiding a fatalistic approach and attitude is another important element of social teaching, so maintaining a message of hope in the face of adversity is also stressed by Progressio and Cafod.⁸¹ At the level of the Catholic Church as an institution, the message on climate change often depends on Bishops who have a great amount of authority in the church and not all of them see that as a key concern for the church. There is also concern among some Catholic leaders that creation theology undermines the traditional hierarchical authority, as well as other economic and political power structures. Creation theology is holistic and rejects anthropocentrism, where the notion of human superiority dominated church thinking for a long time.

Christian Aid's primary focus where climate change is concerned is poverty and poverty alleviation. , For those reasons, its work and message framing is rooted in its church audience, as well as lobbying government and political activism. Much as Cafod and Progressio, Christian Aid sees itself primarily as a development organization and its message framing is aligned well with secular development agencies. Christian Aid notes that it is very careful about the language it uses and making sure that a consistent message goes out to its target audience, but that it does not see a tension when producing joint statements with secular groups. Christian Aid is selective regarding the campaigns they

⁸¹ Interviews with Cafod and Progressio, March 2012

choose to engage in and the message that is presented, especially being careful not to lose their identity as a development organization. For that reason their engagement in climate change is always framed in terms of climate justice and the impact of climate change on poverty worldwide.

Tearfund, whose target audience is the Evangelical part of the Protestant Church, similarly focuses on their development message of aiding the poor first and helping them adapt to the impacts of climate change. It finds that the church mission is more closely aligned with the aim of helping people rather than with the environmental message, where the connection to human impacts may not be made. They see the motivators for a Christian audience as stemming from a justice perspective and the notion of a just God. Tearfund also notes the message of environmental stewardship as caring for God's creation, but does not see that frame as being as powerful a motivator for people as the human justice one. They work with their audience to show the message that climate change is real and happening now with great consequences for people living in poverty, with the aim of encouraging them to change their lifestyles, reduce emissions, and campaign for change at the governmental level. Also, for people who are part of church communities, it is easier to encourage that motivation by linking them to communities of the same faith who are dealing with climate change impacts.

Tearfund has seen more success when campaigning on simpler issues such as water sanitation than on an all-encompassing one like climate change, but it finds that breaking up the movement into smaller campaigns can weaken its overall focus. One of Tearfund's focal areas on climate change is climate finance. Tearfund notes that climate change is a challenging issue to campaign on given the multifaceted range of issues. Technical and

scientific complexity can also make it hard to focus on a single frame for mobilizing support. This was most successfully done in 2009 prior to the COP-15 summit, but given the lack of desired outcomes at Copenhagen, mobilizing that level of support has been a challenge. Given the all-encompassing nature of climate change, it is difficult to pick one issue that can be seen as most important by a wide range of partners.

Policy Beliefs and Advocacy Coalitions

REGs in the UK link their religious beliefs with policies and actions they support through active engagement in various coalitions.

CEL and Operation Noah work with individuals to green their congregations as well as lobby Church leadership to take a stronger stance on climate change and other pressing environmental issues. CEL and Operation Noah encourage engagement in campaigns that inspire people based on their Christian values, and look for ways to engage with the main-stream green groups when possible. The participation includes organizing or participating in joint marches against climate change and meeting with other stakeholders including trade unions and secular NGOs such as Friends of the Earth and 350.org in order to pursue goals of common interest. CEL also focuses more on local, bottom-up activities, where Operation Noah is more engaged in lobbying government officials and Church hierarchies.

Both CEL and Operation Noah support policy goals set by Zero Carbon Britain and the Center for Alternative Technology, whose recommendations were used to develop Operation Noah's 7-year plan.⁸² CEL also engaged in a Carbon Exodus campaign,

⁸² www.operationnoah.org

equating the journey of Moses to the modern-day journey of escaping fossil-fuel dependency. The UK's 2008 goal was to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, with groups such as CEL and Operation Noah supporting that reduction by 2030 on the basis that it is both scientifically and religiously moral to do so. They support these reforms while acknowledging the extent of lifestyle choices that will have to be made in the west in order to reach that zero emission goal (assuming that relying on nuclear power is the wrong question to ask). A major program of CEL is called 'Eco-cell,' which works with its members on living a sustainable life and reducing carbon emissions to a sustainable level within five years by living on a limited carbon-budget of about 2.5 tons of CO₂ per year. The program works with participating Christians to monitor their personal carbon budgets, with actions such as insulating windows, using less energy, and reducing personal travel, as well as group study, prayer and reflection. The Eco-cell mission is based on the premise that:

“The society in which we live is based on excessive consumerism and wastefulness, and success is usually measured by financial gain. It relies on burning huge quantities of fossil fuels, and keeping people dissatisfied, so they will continue to spend. Its priorities are therefore very far removed from God's priorities, as set out clearly here by Jesus.”⁸³

The program coordinator notes that there is considerable variation between people with some having a very low carbon footprint, whereas others who joined not realizing that a flight to Thailand would make their annual emissions reach 35 tons. Eco-cell builds on the concept of carbon-free discipleship, disciples on a journey, negotiating their way through the carbon exodus.⁸⁴ It builds on biblical examples relating the journey in carbon-

⁸³ Personal communication, November 2011

⁸⁴ Interview with CEL, Eco-Cell program coordinator, November 8, 2011

free discipleship to that of Moses' leading the escape from slavery in Egypt. Eco-cell calls on participants to confront their notions of faithfulness or survival, their willingness to trust in God on their way to carbon freedom. It further calls for rediscovery of a simple life based on needs, in conjunction with CEL's LOAF concept of local sustainability and the Transition Towns movement. CEL and Operation Noah highlight that the Eco-cell journey is not easy, it is "a hard journey to make, a journey of courage, repentance and humility....a journey to a zero-carbon society is part of Jesus' call to discipleship."⁸⁵ As the Eco-cell program coordinator noted regarding the program:

"It's particularly a message for our political, business and church leaders. They may be nervous about taking effective environmental action at their levels. A growing number of their constituents, customers or members will not be put off by the significant changes required- we are showing that the changes we demand are both realistic and desirable."⁸⁶

Church organizations in turn focus mostly on their member parishes, synods and corresponding hierarchies for implementing environmental policies, as well as working ecumenically with other denominations both nationally as well as abroad. The Church of England's Route 2050 adapted UK's 2008 national climate targets and looks at mitigation measures for climate change including energy reduction for all the properties, schools, parsonages and clergy houses under its jurisdiction.⁸⁷ The Creation Challenge campaign also committed the Methodist Church to meeting the UK's national target of reducing emissions by 80% by 2050. While the JPIT encourages people to engage politically with their MPs, they find that it difficult to do and focus on a range of topics with most of the work on climate change centered on "providing resources, educating people and

⁸⁵ 'Storm of Hope: Going Carbon Free with Christian Ecology Link' (2011), Christian Ecology Link

⁸⁶ *ibid*

⁸⁷ Church of England interview, March 26, 2012

encouraging through things like Eco-Congregation, for the issue of climate change to be brought into church services, into bible study groups.”⁸⁸

In 2011, Quakers in Britain made a great stride towards sustainability by deciding at their yearly meeting to become a low-carbon sustainable community. An exciting challenge meaning living low-carbon sustainable lifestyles as provided in that minute (the Canterbury commitment)⁸⁹. This goal becomes a part of the Quaker discipline at the local and national level, setting baselines for current and future actions that are part of the Quaker witness. As one Quaker organization put it:

“To explore the connection between that with peace, with truth, with simplicity, and with equality-- to speak out, to speak truth to power, as we often say at the local level and national level.”⁹⁰

Tools developed in order to support individual friends and meetings include two carbon footprint calculators-- one for individuals the other for groups--and sustainability toolkits on how to become a low-carbon community, take political action, and understand the nature of investments that were produced by Quaker Peace and Social Witness as Living Witness. Other efforts include the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Center, which provides day and weekend long courses on various topics such as the Good Life Project. The project looks at what it means to live a good life in terms of money, sustainability, and how to change lifestyles. The church/denominational organizations also work with Green Christian groups on supporting similar policy issues or statements such as the Ash

⁸⁸ Interview with Methodist Church/Joint Public Issues Team, March 15, 2012

⁸⁹ Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain at the Yearly Meeting Held in Canterbury at the University of Kent, 30 July-6 August 2011; Minute 23; Economic Justice and Minute 36: As Lead (Gathering up the issues)

⁹⁰ Interview with Quaker organization January 18, 2012

Wednesday Declaration. Ecumenical working groups on ecology and justice also help to bring these faith-based coalitions' members into closer partnerships and mutual support.

Development, faith-based organizations will primarily focus on the development/humanitarian aspects of climate change in their engagement, with their primarily partners being their clients in the Global South countries, as well as other development agencies/organizations. The international fora are where development and larger organizations, including Cafod, Progressio, Tearfund and Christian Aid, tend to lead the way on the Christian message due to their institutional reach and higher funding levels. For faith-based development agencies, their primary focus in terms of policies supported, networks and partners is their international work in the global south countries. Cafod, for example, engages on UK energy and climate policy issues, but given their focus on global development, they have a stronger emphasis on the international/global level rather than on the domestic UK situation, looking towards European wide initiatives on climate finance and support for alternative technologies. In the UK, Christian Aid is engaged in advocacy work, urging MPs to take action on climate legislation in 2008 and strengthening emission reduction targets, stressing UK's responsibility for emission reduction. They also actively support funding for climate adaptation and mitigation, asserting that poor countries have a right to develop, but stressing 'leap-frogging' towards low-carbon technologies that will not exacerbate climate change.⁹¹

The UK-based Christian REGs, with their different missions and levels of engagement do work closely together, with a close network of officers, activists and

⁹¹ Doig, Alison and Mohamed Adow (November 2011), 'Low-Carbon Africa: Leapfrogging to a Green Future', Christian Aid

religious leaders supporting each other's campaigns with similar positions on UK policies. Policies supported by this advocacy coalition include notable campaigns such as the push for a national climate change bill in the UK, which was successfully passed in 2008.

Perception of Moral Authority

UK REGs perceive that their voices and positions coming from a religious perspective are well received and respected by the general public as well as policymakers. They do not feel that coming from a religious perspective gives them a greater moral authority than secular environmental groups. Green REGs have members who are passionate about faith and ecology, often noting that this movement presents a great opportunity for the churches to reclaim more people in the pulpit, if the churches emphasizes that message. Green Christian groups also point out that secular ENGOs are driven by their own sense of morals and values with religious people among their leadership, including groups such as Friends of the Earth.

The Church of England notes the potential for moral authority of religious groups in society, but cautions that western countries, especially the UK, are highly secular with lower church attendance and a public tired of church scandals, debates about gay marriage, and women bishops. The Church of England and the Methodist Church do work with the Lords Spiritual, who have direct access to parliament and are seen as a source of potential influence on certain policy issues. However, that does not mean that religion plays a greater role than other interests in UK politics. MPs and Lords will engage with Church representatives if they receive quality briefings and a new perspective that can be applied to existing issues. The QPSW sees Quaker and religious engagement in political activities as coming from a position of integrity. In particular, the work of Quakers at UN Geneva

Office is valued and respected for their calm approach, offering a place for quiet reflection and conversations that can go on to influence other negotiations. In the UK as well, politicians have considered the religious voice to be important for generating societal support.⁹² One observed difference, noted by a Methodist Church representative, between secular NGOs and churches, was that secular NGOs' were primarily campaign organizations. Those groups can take a more adversarial approach with the government than the churches.⁹³ One observation regarding the role of churches in environmental activities is that some people find it to be a refreshing change and express that it is the type of issue the churches should be engaged in.

All three UK REG groups note that the UK is a highly secular country where a religious voice can be received with a mixed response since for some, religion does not play a prominent role. Some activists do point out that the moral authority role of the churches is deeply engrained in society, and when the Archbishop of Canterbury makes a statement on a given issue, it continues to draw people's attention. They also observe that a religious voice can have a way of reaching people's "hearts" in a way that a secular perspective might not. In terms of the response of MPs and government officials, UK REGs observe that they are respected and viewed as a legitimate voice on their issue, especially where the faith-based development agencies are concerned. The Churches also work through the Lords Spiritual, providing them with briefing materials on which to address Parliament. They do note that while the Lords Spiritual may be seen as a voice of moral authority, their power in terms of affecting parliament is limited in the UK system. Most REGs feel that the role of religion in political life is greater in the US and has a further

⁹² Interview with Quaker Peace and Social Witness, January 18, 2012

⁹³ Interview with Methodist Church/Joint Public Issues Team, March 15, 2012

reach than in the UK. The UK REGs highlight that MPs pay attention to the religious voice because they are also seen as a well-organized, civically engaged and voting constituency, hence their impact as drivers of collective action is recognized.⁹⁴

Role in the Environmental Movement

Coalitions and Level of Engagement:

REGs in the United Kingdom are engaged in various networks and policy coalitions at the local, national, and global level. Their degree of engagement in global or intergovernmental issues depends on the size, scope, and mission of the organization as well as focal area. Overall, REGs in the UK tend to work primarily ecumenically with other Christian organizations, such as the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility, rather than directly in interfaith organizations. Members of Christian REGs will engaged in panels and meetings with other faiths, but they find that it difficult to craft a unifying message. Furthermore, in the UK, Muslim and Jewish faiths are still in the process of organizing their efforts, with notable exceptions such as IFFES. Partnerships with US REGs exist, though they are mainly based on loose networks such as attendance of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) Windsor Climate summit and electronic correspondence. The REGs are aware of each other's activities, such as the US Carbon Covenant.⁹⁵ Some of the highest levels of engagement from Green Christian groups, churches and development agencies took place before the COP-15 Summit in Copenhagen. One noteworthy march, called the Wave, had its largest attendance that year with 50,000

⁹⁴ Interviews with UK REG members November 2011- April 2012

⁹⁵ Interviews, with Green Christian REGs March 2012

people and the heads of all the Christian churches in the UK. The heads of Christian churches included the Anglican Church, Catholic Church and the Methodist church.

The Green Christian groups tend to work at the local/national level with a focus on global impacts, but without direct engagement with transnational partners and intergovernmental meetings. The key partners for Green Christian REGs are similar faith-based organizations as well as their churches, faith-development agencies, and individual members. Groups such as CEL and Operation Noah also partner with secular coalitions including Stop Climate Chaos, Campaign Against Climate Change, and the Climate Alliance. Up in Smoke is another secular coalition in which the Columbans have been engaged. Secular organizations are collaborators, but not as closely linked as the other faith-organizations. CEL encourages its members to be active in secular as well as Christian campaigns, given that there are more of those campaigns organized with more institutional resources to bear. Eco-Congregation and A Rocha, which are fundamentally conservation organizations, have close working relationships with other (secular) conservation groups including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and English Nature. Projects, such as the Bat Conservation Trust also involved partnerships with secular conservation groups. Eco-Congregation has also been working with CEL to involve churches in the secular Transition Towns movement. Eco-Congregation has key members involved with other Christian REGs, such as Cafod, Tearfund, Church denominational bodies, CEL and Operation Noah. The Eco-Congregation program focuses on using a green award program to inspire churches and individuals to take action in their parishes on the environment, giving them hope and empowerment that these steps can make a difference in the context of far-reaching ecological problems. The concept is that

of motivational change, asking people to start out small on a journey that can lead to greater transformation. Eco-Congregation has also worked with Cafod on developing their Live Simply Award, and begun to branch out to encouraging green awards at the Diocese level, where the entire Diocese would be certified.

Denominational bodies including the Church of England also made a tremendous push before Copenhagen with the feeling among activists that it was ‘Copenhagen or bust’ in terms of climate change. The religions delivered a response in terms of statements and intentions for action. Actions taken included the Church of England’s ‘Shrinking the Footprint Campaign’ and in the UK the Climate Change Act was passed in 2008 with strong support from religious groups including Christian Aid, The Joint Public Issues Team and the Lords Spiritual. Shrinking the Footprint matched the UK’s 2050 CO₂ reduction target and also includes an internal target of 42% reduction by 2020.⁹⁶ Other churches, such as the Methodist Church, feel that MPs have an interest in work that links theology with public policy, especially if they have a strong Christian faith. The Methodist Church, which is part of the Joint Public Issues Team, also participates in a group called Radar. Radar is made up of UK denominations--including the Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed Church, and the Church of England--that track upcoming legislative priorities and actions, and serve as a toll for information sharing. The Methodist, Baptist and United Reformed Church have the strongest collaboration among the UK denominations with the other denominations working more independently.⁹⁷ The Methodist Church, along with a strong Quaker presence, was also a participant in the Wave march before Copenhagen.. Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) participates in a wide range of secular and

⁹⁶ Interview with Church of England, March 26, 2012

⁹⁷ Interview with Methodist Church, March 15, 2012

ecumenical coalitions, including Stop Climate Chaos, and has an officer serving on the board of Operation Noah. Stop Climate Chaos is a coalition of NGOs, trade unions and other community/religious groups that coordinates climate change actions around international negotiations in particular. Another secular coalition that includes QPSW is the British NGOs for Overseas Development (BOND) that serves as a coordination mechanism for NGOs on a variety of issues including development and environment. QPSW is also engaged in the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. QPSW works at the local level to encourage Quakers to contact their MPs regarding climate change to express public support and mobilize domestic political support on climate change and other environmental issues. Quakers work through community groups at the local, national, regional and global level, collaborating and coordinating positions through various committees. There is an office in Brussels, which works at the European Union level, as well as UN offices in Geneva and New York, which have addressed climate change issues.

Cafod is also engaged in a number of secular coalitions, including Stop Climate Chaos, and was a key supporter of the Wave climate March. In the US, Cafod's closest partner is their sister agency, Catholic Relief Services, but they also work with the Center of Concern and have links through the Bishops Conferences. Cafod usually sends a delegation to the Climate Summits and has a larger presence in Copenhagen due to the close proximity. They also attend events sponsored by the World Council of Churches and Caritas Internationalis. Copenhagen did not achieve Cafod's goals, but they did report a strong feeling of solidarity at the conference and made as much progress as possible. Cafod also tries to work with other green Christian partners in the UK and support their activities,

such as CEL. They were heavily involved in lobbying the UK government in support of passing the 2008 Climate Act. Cafod has a program called MP Correspondence, which asks key campaigners to write to their MPs on issues, such as the climate bill.⁹⁸ Cafod had a major presence during the Copenhagen COP-15 Climate Summit and in following years in Cancun and Durban. Though they did not receive the much anticipated legally binding agreement during COP-15, Cafod noted the strong voice of civil society and continued to push for further reforms at the following summits focusing on climate adaptation and mitigation including a green climate fund and long term finance. Their lobbying efforts included MPs as well as the UK Treasury and the DFID (Department for International Development).⁹⁹

As an organization in the development field, Progressio tries to balance its need to meet and interact with partners on the ground along with their commitment to monitor their carbon footprint by evaluating travel needs as well as auditing energy use. Progressio works with three interrelated areas of development with the climate change work being part of their sustainable environment efforts, including supporting farmers in sustainable farming methods and increasing food security. As part of Progressio's advocacy work, a campaign on water, 'Waterproof: water for life,' is framed in terms of climate change issues, including food, farming and livelihoods, in the adaptation debates during COP summits in Copenhagen and Nairobi.¹⁰⁰ They also bring small-scale farmers from countries such as India to international meetings in Cancun and Copenhagen in order to provide direct accounts of how climate change impacts their communities and enhances

⁹⁸ Interview with Cafod, March 12, 2012

⁹⁹ 'CAFOD's Climate Justice Campaign, and 'Post-Copenhagen-where are we now' presentations, archival documents obtained from CAFOD, March 2012

¹⁰⁰ 'Water for Life: add you voice to our new 'Waterproof' campaign, 2012 issue one, Progressio.

vulnerabilities. In the UK, Progressio participates in coalitions such as the Stop Climate Chaos coalition working with larger and smaller, local organizations on small-scale efforts including transition towns and lobbying MPs. Progressio also engages in advocacy, lobbying the government and parliament on issues such as EU illegal logging legislation, green carbon budgets, and funding for overseas development. Progressio's key partners are the people they support and work with through their development work, but they work closely with other faith-based and secular aid agencies, participate in BOND and the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition, and support green Christian efforts including CEL and Operation Noah's Ark Wednesday declaration. A major campaign, which also relates to climate change impacts, is focused on water in particular in preparation for Rio+20. The campaign was commissioned by Cafod to work on water policy along with a joint initiative on campaigning and fundraising. The water campaign relates directly to the impacts around daily water resource issues experienced by development partners. In secular contexts, Progressio is also linked in with water stakeholder forums, UK food groups, and NGO partners such as WWF. Progressio, which is independent of the Catholic Church but prefers to be seen as working within the wider Catholic family. Progressio also maintains close relationships with the Catholic Churches in their partner countries. Progressio endeavors to maintain good working relationships with their stakeholder, including governmental departments and decision makers in Westminster and Brussels, as well as funding supports, which are often secular institutions.¹⁰¹

In the UK, Christian Aid participates in the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition as one of the founding members and on the steering group. They look at grassroots mobilization and

¹⁰¹ Interviews with Progressio, March 2012

annual lobbying campaigns around the country asking people to contact their MPs on certain issues. It was also a key partner in the 'Wave' London march prior to Copenhagen. Christian Aid works through networks on these campaigns, with a broad range of partners, including secular and religious groups, though always ensuring that the messages produced have a humanitarian focus as well as an environmental one. Outside of the UK, a main US partner is Church World Service, being Christian Aid's closest US equivalent. They are also very active in European networks and the World Council of Churches, working closely with Northern European and Scandinavian partners. They were instrumental in setting up the Act Alliance, which helped churches to work together based on shared values. On climate change, Christian Aid often partners with other churches and organizations in a joint international campaign, called Time for Climate Justice, where the organizations attend meetings under that banner. Christian Aid's engagement in Copenhagen was conducted under the 'Time for Climate Justice' campaign. Christian Aid also works closely with the other faith-based development agencies in the UK, including Cafod, Progressio and Tearfund and is a member of the Environmental Issues Network (EIN). In their work with EIN, Christian Aid also engages with CEL and Operation Noah and has become a signatory to the Ash Wednesday Declaration. They work with churches, including the United Reformed Church and the Church of England, to campaign for assistance to countries impacted by water logging, such as Bangladesh, bringing partners in from impacted countries to push for UK support. The Lords Spiritual in the House of Lords, who are independent of party affiliation, also receive briefings and materials related to development and climate change from Christian Aid, then decide to take up certain issues such as the climate act.

Tearfund, an Evangelical development agency, is actively involved in advocacy with the UK government and the EU, participates in international climate meetings, and works with a broad range of secular and religious partners. Tearfund engaged in lobbying the UK government in support of the UK climate act, which they consider their largest UK lobbying success, and were also calling on the British government to improve policies that impact climate change, such as forestry prior to the Rio+20 summit in Brazil. In the US, Tearfund has worked with evangelical churches for years, seeing the US as a key partner in influencing action on climate change. Christian Aid and Tearfund also partnered with the US Evangelical Environmental Network on a prayer breakfast centered around climate justice, as well as a day of activism that involved lobbying White House officials to push the Obama administration to take a stronger stance on climate change legislation. Tearfund was one of the first development groups to join the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition when it formed in 2005, noting that at that time engaging in climate change was a controversial issue for development work. The link between the two areas still had to be established. Tearfund will usually send a delegation to attend and lobby during the climate summits, and also work closely with their partners in developing countries, often helping their national delegations during the negotiations process. Tearfund is engaged in several networks that work on climate change including the European Climate Action Network and the Global Campaign for Climate Action. Other secular partners include NGOs, such as the RSPB and Friends of the Earth. Other religious partners include Christian Aid, Cafod and the other faith-based development agencies, such as A Rocha, which is an evangelical conservation organization and CEL. As part of the Stop Climate Chaos

Coalition, a number of partners from different faiths including Islam and Judaism had been engaged, such as Islamic Relief.

Challenging the Constant Growth Paradigm:

The religious environmental NGOs take a distinctive stance on neoliberal capitalism, lifestyle transformation, and the moral imperative behind supporting these counter-cultural practices. , Embedded within the framework of most REGs researched in this study is a critique of maintaining current lifestyles and capitalism as we know it, which is reflected by the policies and individual actions they propose. While there is range in how ‘radical’ and implicit these reforms are, mainly divided between the two countries and certain denominations within them, the prescriptions proposed to battling the ecological crises challenge modernity and its assumptions.

Green Christian REGs in the UK, including Operation Noah, CEL and Eco-Congregation, have a strong focus on opposing consumerism and what constitutes the ‘good life’ in the western cultural context. Certain Church groups also share this view of transforming lifestyles through changing individual consumption patterns, but also show their support for greening the economy through emphasizing sustainable and just investment. This is true for the Methodist church as well the Ecumenical Council for Social Responsibility, which emphasizes socially and environmentally conscious investment in corporations as well by churches. For Green Christian groups, transforming the nature and structure of capitalism is pivotal towards transforming society and ensuring long-term stability though stabilizing climate change. Consumerism is viewed as having ‘become the new God’ of modern secular society, which needs to be challenged by a radical and

alternative message grounded in Christian teachings.¹⁰² The Green Christian organizations, such as CEL and Operation Noah, are seen as being able to take a more radical stance than main-line church organizations, such as the Catholic Church. Notwithstanding, for a large organization such as the Catholic Church, many groups including Columbans and Franciscans are very active on environmental issues and work with prominent eco-theologians such as Father Sean McDonagh. One CEL member, who is also a Catholic activist and works on Columban campaigns, stressed her belief that the current economic system is destroying the planet, and that she is “with the people up at Tent City,” referring to the Occupy London Movement. In referring to Thomas Berry’s work on patriarchal institutions that govern human history, including nation-states and corporations, she sees the Church as being deeply embedded in that system, where taking a radical ecological stance calling for the transformation of capitalism is still a hard sell among many Catholic leaders.¹⁰³ It will be interesting to see how Pope Francis, who supported the care for creation message in his first address, will act to stress this message of living simply in relation to the economic paradigm of constant growth.¹⁰⁴ CEL and Operation Noah lectures, annual meetings are writing support the transition to a new form of capitalism, with the current capitalist system seen as unsustainable in the future without transformation. Jonathan Porritt, a prominent UK environmental activist with strong roots in the Christian Green movement, delivered a key note speech during the CEL annual meeting focusing on the alternative version of capitalism. Jonathan Porritt talked about five types of capitalism that we are used to hearing about-- financial, manufactured, social,

¹⁰² Interview with Operation Noah and CEL November 14, 2011

¹⁰³ Interview with Green Christian activist, November 11, 2011

¹⁰⁴ Note Washington Post article on Pope Francis’ call for care for creation

human and natural--and that the notion of 'spiritual capital' is highly contested and seen as being "a bridge too far."¹⁰⁵ What is spiritual capital? Porritt argued that not all definitions can fit. For instance, boundaries need to be drawn on how it is defined. Porritt alluded to the technological solutions available to stem climate change, such as giving everyone access to low-cost clean energy, but pointed out an observed paradox-- as societies become more efficient they consume more in other areas, so technology is not enough. "Technology doesn't challenge this growth paradigm head on...it allows you to maintain this commitment to belief in economic growth. Major political parties and society is trapped by the 'endless growth paradigm' and afraid to challenge the status quo of economic growth, which is where spiritual capital comes on."¹⁰⁶ The only way to change this growth paradigm is to redefine growth in spiritual, values based terms, growth as human beings, growth in learning, and quality of life as opposed to continuous consumption.

For the church organizations such as the Methodist Church, the message often involves approaching transformation from the "perspective of confession and repentance, involving self-critical evaluation about the drivers of climate change including consumerism."¹⁰⁷ The Quaker perspective, while not tied directly to specific teachings or scripture, emphasizes having 'the right relationship' with the Earth and with each other, stressing the element of justice. Quakers:

"Testify in the world and record testimonies in how they should live out in the world...to live and stand out for equality for everyone...peace, integrity...and increasingly the integrity of the Earth as well." While there

¹⁰⁵ See Porritt, Jonathan (2007) *Capitalism as if the World Matters*, Earthscan: London, Sterling, VA, for the five types of capitalism. Porritt references spiritual capitalism during his March 2012 Annual CEL Meeting Address (Personal observation)

¹⁰⁶ Jonathan Porritt talk on spiritual capitalism during his March 2012 Annual CEL Meeting Address (Personal observation)

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Methodist Church/JPIT, March 15, 2012

is not set creed Quakers must adhere to, Quaker ideals relate to this notion of the ‘right relationship’ including the human relationship with creation, people and the planet reflecting principles of “equality and simplicity.”

The Anglican Church of England approach is trying to implement programs that shrink the church’s carbon footprint and lead by example in how lifestyle transformation can be accomplished. This change on an individual and organizational level is challenging, and the emphasis for the church is acknowledging that it may involve “giving things up for the greater good.”¹⁰⁸ While not all Church of England clergy will have the same position supporting action on climate change, campaigns such as ‘Shrinking the Footprint’ are working to mobilize churches and their congregation members as a community to reduce church energy use, encourage recycling, and expand church yard biodiversity. In particular, the campaign encourages churches to lead communities in energy schemes. The church’s focus is on positive action, with the hope that a regular audience will take the message from their congregation to their homes and offices.¹⁰⁹ While the Church of England looks to make changes at the political level, the work of its environmental officers and programs tries to make sure that those actions are matched by their own activities, including lifestyle changes.¹¹⁰

The Catholic Church, mainly through its UK development agency Cafod, has launched in partnership with Eco-Congregation a ‘Live Simply’ award intended for Catholic churches, and as an extension of the ‘Live Simply’ movement’s counter-cultural, anti-consumerist message. The ‘Live Simply’ Green Award is given to parishes that build on Cafod’s three principles of fair trade, support for overseas development and Cafod’s

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Church of England, March 26, 2012

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Church of England, November 15, 2011

¹¹⁰ Interview with Church of England, March 26, 2012

mission.¹¹¹ Lenten programs, which emphasize ecological practices as a form of justice, provide another anti-consumerist message. Progressio, a Catholic faith-based development organization, also partners with Cafod on the Live Simply project, which they emphasize stresses a message of simple living in solidarity with the poor to UK audiences. Progressio, which approaches climate change as an issue of justice for people in the global south who did not contribute to the problems, also framed its message in terms of its water campaign by appealing to members as consumers adapting better practices. The waterproof campaign looked toward aiming the message at “a consumer...oriented bit of work around people measuring their water footprint, virtual water costs, those sorts of things that can be valuable to consumers and also to producers in terms of supply-chain and management.”¹¹²

The director of Progressio points out that:

“language of sustainability and solidarity are really important...if we want to take poverty seriously then we have to acknowledge that we have to live in a more sustainable way. And what does that mean? It doesn’t mean everybody living in absolute poverty, but it does mean about being careful about one’s choices and taking those choices seriously.”¹¹³

Tearfund, the Evangelical development agency in the UK, developed a “Carbon Lent” program that has since been adapted by other REGs, including IP&L, in the US. Tearfund also approaches climate change from a development-based justice perspective for people in the poorest parts of the world suffering the consequences right now. They encourage people to change their lifestyles, reduce emissions, campaign the government for change, and give support on issues such as climate finance. With its Carbon Fast program, Tearfund found that once people realize that climate change is moving faster than

¹¹¹ Interview with Cafod, March 12, 2012

¹¹² Interview with Progressio, March 28, 2012

¹¹³ Interview with Progressio, March 12, 2012

they thought, then “they want to change their lifestyle...so I guess more of us think of ourselves as consumers and good citizens.”¹¹⁴ Their campaign links the need for individual actions with the necessity of far-reaching governmental action at the domestic and international level to reach meaningful transformation. Christian Aid, a faith-based development agency, similarly to the other Christian development agencies, supports climate justice as a means towards the eradication of poverty, where a changing climate causes greater inequalities and hardship in poor communities. Christian Aid sees this as part of their ‘relational theology,’ “taking responsibility for actions causing climate change and helping those living in poverty cope with those conditions as being part of Christian responsibility.”¹¹⁵

Wider Environmental Movement:

Green Christian REGs see themselves as being closely linked with the wider environmental movement. Many note that the churches continue to lag behind the mainstream environmental movement in terms of implementing proposed changes. Churches and ministers can see the environment as another issue to deal with within a range of competing priorities, so while support is growing it still has a way to go. Eco-theology, including works of prominent eco-theologians, are not always taught in seminaries. They also note that every type of activism will be needed in order to make the lifestyle change and economic transition to a carbon-neutral society, including lobbying governments, churches, grassroots campaigning, and people’s willingness to be vocal and challenge the status quo even if it means placing their liberty on the line.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Tearfund Interview, April 27, 2012

¹¹⁵ Interview with Christian Aid March 3, 2012

¹¹⁶ Interview with Operation Noah and CEL, November 14, 2011

In relation to the secular movement, green Christian organizations seek to complement secular activism on climate change, often serving the role of inspiring Christians to engage further in the wider environmental movement. Secular groups seek to work with Christian organizations to expand their support base and draw from a variety of civil society stakeholders. REGs do not see secular organizations as operating from a less value or moral driven perspective; they express admiration for the work conducted including the devout Christians who are involved with secular NGOs. Green Christians also see the faith perspective as playing a unique role as part of the environmental movement. They observe that coming from a Christian value-driven perspective helps to appeal to people's hearts, more so than speaking about the scientific implications. Examples often cited by REG activists include the role religious groups played in the abolition of slavery, anti-apartheid and US civil rights movements, though REGs also recognize that those issues, though transformational, were singular causes that could see changes implemented in a couple of years, whereas climate change is a highly complex, long-term issue. The secular environmental groups are seen as inspiring with a small 'i', where Christianity can motivate with a capital 'I':

“If you realize you're doing God's work in a fundamental sense, you've got that confidence, that backing that's inspiring with a capital 'I'...that's just the basis of rational decision making and scientific evidence we agree the model was based on, the Friends of the Earth, etc, etc...”¹¹⁷

Secular groups are seen by UK REGs as being fundamentally different in their strategies, rather than focusing first on the science, whereas REGs want to look at a combination of science and faith, motivating a cohort of people, which secular groups don't often understand.

¹¹⁷ Interview with CEL November 8, 2011

The Church of England does not see itself as being part of a distinct movement but sees greater value in inclusion of both secular and religious perspectives rather than their separation. QPSW notes that secular groups are driven by human values. For Quakers and other religious groups, “it’s about what truly is at the heart of life...about their being...the integrity of creation.” They point out that concept of looking beyond the impact on people and planet is not always around in secular groups, though some people engaged in secular groups are also motivated by faith. Sometimes the difference lies in how concepts are phrased.

Both Cafod and Progressio noted that, coming from a development standpoint, they do not see themselves as part of the environmental movement. They see their work as being part of the social justice movement, of which the environment is a major component.¹¹⁸ Christian Aid would see itself as part of the climate justice movement, though not the environmental movement, in terms the impact it has on people living in poverty.¹¹⁹ Tearfund sees strength in having a diverse range of partners and engaging in the development movement and the environmental movement, with both faith groups and other civil society actors, rather than having one uniform movement. Over the past ten years, the addressing of climate change by faith and development organizations has become accepted and it is no longer a surprise to include it as part of church mission planning. While the concept is accepted it isn’t always prioritized by church leaders as highly as REGs feel it should be.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Interviews with Progressio and Cafod March 2012

¹¹⁹ Interview with Christian Aid, March 13, 2012

¹²⁰ Interview with Tearfund, April 27, 2012

Many UK REGs observe that many oppressive issues, including apartheid, have been both backed by and opposed by theology in the past, so theology that is applied is often dependent on one's mindset. They also acknowledge the rise in religious environmental groups and see that their growing number is a manifestation and recognition that these issues matter to a growing number of people, especially where they seek to galvanize church support--in a sense "people voting with their feet."¹²¹

This chapter outlined the major findings regarding religious environmental groups' motivation, beliefs, and activism on climate change in the United Kingdom. The next chapter will build on this similar findings framework to describe the various types of REGs in the US, as well as major findings relative to the same questions that were addressed with the UK case studies.

¹²¹ Interview with Progressio, March 2012

CHAPTER FIVE:

US RESEARCH FINDINGS: PART ONE, INTERFAITH POWER AND LIGHT (IP&L)

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to continue with the presentation of research findings focused on the United States religious environmental group (REG) case studies. The REGs in the United States constitute a larger sample than those in the UK due to the greater number of organizations and size of the advocacy coalition. The US REGs consisted primarily of interfaith and Christian organizations. Interfaith organizations can have a diverse religious membership, though in most cases the majority of participants are Christian and Jewish. One Baha'i organization was interviewed, which has acted as a key leader in organizing a new interfaith coalition. Many of the interfaith organizations try to actively recruit minority faiths, with membership often reflecting the regional demographic. Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Wiccan members constitute a part of several REGs interviewed. This represents one fundamental difference between the US and the UK research samples, where in the UK interfaith collaboration is more loosely organized with key partners being other Christian groups. In the US the interfaith presence is much stronger among REGs, which is reflected in the case studies.

US REGs are divided, similarly to the UK case studies, based on their organization type. These categories include interfaith organizations: Interfaith Power and Light (IP&L), both the National headquarters and state affiliates; GreenFaith; the National Coalition on Creation Care (NCCC), Religious Witness for the Earth (RWE), The Interfaith Moral Action on Climate (IMAC), and the Chesapeake Covenant Community. IP&L will be discussed in a separate chapter given its broad organizational structure. Another analogous

category of REGs includes coalitions of Church/Denominational bodies and religious organizations. This category overlaps to a certain extent with the Interfaith REGs, though the important distinction is that while groups such as IP&L are organized through grassroots activism of religious people, they are not representative of Church hierarchies. NRPE, while still a faith-based NGO is essentially an interreligious coalition of several main US denominations and their representative organizations.

This category includes: The National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE) as well as their main constituent organizations and partners-- the National Council of Churches (NCC), the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, the Coalition on Environment and Jewish life (COEJL), Religious Action Center of Reformed Judaism (RAC) and the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN). The Franciscan Action Network (FAN) will be discussed in this category. Even though it is not an official part of the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy, it does represent the perspective of the Franciscan order. Other groups included in this category will be the Episcopal Church, a Presbyterian congregation, the Quakers, and the Baha'i.

The next category focuses on Evangelical REGs and will also include EEN's Evangelical perspective. EEN will also be discussed as part of the NRPE. Other Evangelical REGs discussed are The Young Evangelicals for Climate Action (YECA); Blessed Earth; Restoring Eden; Evangelicals for Social Action (ESA); and A Rocha. Additional perspectives will be drawn from two Christian (Ecumenical) REGs: Eco-justice Ministries and the Green Seminaries Initiative. Similarly to the UK case studies, REGs in the US often have activists engaged or affiliated with two or more organizations. When possible, information provided was attributed to the different organizations. However,

given that these individuals are the drivers behind most organizations, setting their vision, mission and sense of purpose and working closely with partner REGs, consequently some degree of overlap can be expected. Five major findings are presented, as they were for the UK, for each category of REGs. The key findings all relate to the motivation of US REGs to engage in climate activism, namely their history, mission and vision; perspectives on stewardship, creation care and sacrifice and other religious beliefs associated with climate change; issue frames applied by REGs to climate change/environmental degradation; the policy beliefs and advocacy coalition structure; perception of moral authority of religious groups; role in the environmental movement including: REGs perception of the wider environmental movement and their role as a movement; the challenge to neoliberal capitalism and re-enchantment of modernity.

Organizational history, mission and campaigns

The first category of REGs discussed includes grassroots interfaith organizations, which operate both at the state and national level. Interfaith Power and Light (IP&L) was founded initially in California as the Regeneration Project, followed by Episcopal Power and Light with the aim of providing a religious response to global warming. Over the years the organization has grown substantially to form a national headquarters office in California as well as 40 state affiliates. The state affiliates focus on local, state-level and regional issues related to climate change, energy, food and other issues. State affiliates vary in size, scope and focus, reflecting each state's unique needs as well as socio-political differences. Some of the state affiliate IP&Ls originated as earlier faith-based groups, which adapted the IP&L brand, others reflect new initiatives or joint partnerships. IP&L maintains a common focus with its affiliates though similar focus areas and a three-fold

organizational focus on outreach, education and advocacy. Advocacy activities of IP&L, or any other 501(c)(3) non-profits are limited under the US IRS code, in partisan activities and political support. As a result, faith-based REGs with this status can support existing legislative proposals, lobby members of Congress and the Executive branch regarding those proposals, but they cannot make statements of support based on partisan affiliation. IP&L also partners with other faith-based organizations and maintains strong links within that network. In order to obtain a comprehensive IP&L perspective, members of both the headquarters and several state affiliates were interviewed, including greater Washington (DC), Virginia, Connecticut, North Carolina, Georgia, Texas, Florida, Ohio, Wisconsin and Utah. Observations were also conducted during IP&L's annual conference, which is attended by all state affiliates. The findings presented here will include both the national as well as state perspectives of IP&L. The concept for IP&L was developed by Episcopal priest, Rev. Sally Bingham. Rev. Bingham, who participated on an NGO board, heard about the dire state of the environment and wondered why there was a disconnect between care for the environment and expressing that practice as a faith issue. According to Rev. Bingham:

“When I asked clergy why they never talked about saving creation from the pulpit, no one ever had a satisfactory answer. So I went...I had never been to college, so I went to college and then I went to seminary to try to find out where the disconnect is between what we say we believe in and how we were behaving as Christians who were called to be stewards of creation and to love our neighbors and to love God.”¹

In order to explore this link, Bingham decided to pursue a college education and attended seminary, seeing this as a call to ministry. She founded the Regeneration project

¹ Interview with Rev. Sally Bingham, President IP&L, May 29, 2012

shortly afterwards, which became Episcopal Power and Light in 1998 beginning with an effort to purchase renewable energy through a coalition of Episcopal churches.² The decision to focus on a religious response to global warming came from a review of the most pressing issues and a decision was made that climate change should be the focus point for the new organization. Bingham said that she felt that “climate change affects every single aspect of our lives” making it the “most moral issue of our time.”³ The project received interest from other Christian denominations--Presbyterian, Lutheran as well as Jewish groups--and this level of interest transformed Episcopal Power and Light into an interfaith organization known since as IP&L, starting out as California IP&L in 2000. In discussions with religious groups and colleagues around the country, IP&L began to develop state affiliates in Georgia and Massachusetts in 2001. As the network, outreach, and interest level expanded in IP&L’s mission, the number of state affiliates began to grow exponentially over a ten year period. IP&L believes that their organization:

“reasonably well reflect America...so it’s primarily Christian and Jewish and that’s what we represent and then we certainly have many other faith traditions represented in smaller numbers throughout the country and each state tries to make sure that they are reaching out beyond only reaching Christians and Jews within their state...they have varying levels of success...some states have quite diverse boards that include Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims and Baha’is and other states are struggling more with that interfaith diversity.”⁴

Overall the IP&L model is representative of the US demographic landscape, which is reflected in its state affiliate structures. While IP&L requires that organizations that wish to become state affiliates fill out an application, the headquarters office does provide a

² <http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/about/mission-history/>, accessed May 29, 2012

³ PBS special ‘Religion and Environment’ Sally Bingham Interview, April 19, 2013

⁴ Interview with IP&L national Headquarters, May 22, 2012

useful framework, materials, and concepts for their state affiliates to apply, but does not micro-manage the affiliates programming, resulting in an adaptive and flexible model.

The state IP&L's have diverse origins, some starting out as an affiliate after meeting with Rev. Bingham or learning of the organization, while others are hosted in larger 'parent' non-profits or became an affiliate after starting out as an independent organization. For instance, the oldest state affiliate (After California) is in Georgia, the Georgia Interfaith Power and Light (GIPL). It was co-founded in 2003 by Episcopal priest Woody Bartlett, and his wife, Carol Bartlett, who were aware of Sally Bingham's work through their mutual Episcopalian roots.

The Rev. Bartlett became engaged in environmental issues through a transformative and eye-opening experience while visiting the San Francisco zoo. While enjoying the zoo and its display of diversity, he noted that half of the species there were listed as endangered as a result of human activities. Rev. Bartlett was appalled as he began to research this issue further and realized that his faith had been focused on personal salvation. However, he could not believe that if Christ came to save humanity, this is what salvation should be about, as the destruction of some many species would also lead to the destruction of human kind.⁵ Rev. Bartlett then began to connect this problem with his own faith, including his life-long engagement in civil rights and social justice issues dating back to the US civil rights movement. Forming GIPL made sense from a faith perspective and the organization grew since then. In Utah and Ohio, small groups of religious people gathered to talk about environmental issues and see Sally Bingham talk about her work,

⁵ The Rev. Woody Bartlett (2009), 'The Road to Green', in The Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham (2009), *Love God, Heal Earth: 21 Leading Religious Voices Speak Out on Our Sacred Duty to Protect the Environment*, St. Lynn's Press: Pittsburg, pp. 61-70

which inspired them to form their own organizations. In Utah, an interfaith committee formed before the Olympics that looked at various issues and this group evolved into an independent organization. The committee was called the Salt lake Interfaith Round Table and it was established to ensure that interfaith services were provided during the 2002 Olympics. They continued to meet afterwards seeing the benefit of the interfaith organization for their community. Two people, Elaine Emmy and Carolyn Peterson, explored an interest in climate issues. They contacted Sally Bingham through an Episcopal priest in Utah, Rev. Johnson and were able to gather funding support and started the Utah IP&L.⁶

In Ohio, the Catholic Sister of Charity, Paula Gonzales--who is a biologist, educator and long-term environmental activist--felt the need to pursue this path in Ohio, especially where renewable energy was concerned, and co-founded the state's IP&L in 2007 with Keith Mills. A small group of interested individuals and congregations attended a workshop, during which Sally Bingham gave a presentation on the IP&L concept and vision, and the group mobilized in forming the affiliate. Sister Paula was first inspired to focus on activism after seeing the 'Limits to Growth' report as well as the famous Apollo photo depicting the Planet Earth as one small world. Through her efforts over the years she became known as the 'solar nun,' and lives in a re-built chicken coop that relies exclusively on solar powered energy. The Ohio affiliate formed at a time of a high level of climate related news, including Al Gore's *The Inconvenient Truth*, preparations for COP-15 in Copenhagen, and renewable energy legislation discussions.⁷

⁶ Interviews with Utah IP&L, May-June 2012; <http://www.utahipl.org/>

⁷ Ohio IP&L interviews, May-June 2012; <http://www.ohipl.org/about-us/history/>

In Wisconsin, the IP&L is part of the state's Council of Churches, and in North Carolina the IP&L's parent organization is the states' Council of Churches, though their board and funding are independent. The Wisconsin IP&L was originally a project of Wisconsin Interfaith Impact, which in turn was sponsored by the Wisconsin Council of Churches. When the Wisconsin Council of Churches let go of the interfaith projects, Interfaith Impact became its own independent 501 C3, the Wisconsin Climate Change Campaign, which later became the Wisconsin Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign. The Campaign officially affiliated with IP&L in 2010 becoming the Wisconsin state affiliate.⁸

The North Carolina IP&L was initiated in 2001 by Sr. Evelyn, initially as the Climate Connection: Interfaith Eco-Justice Network, following funding support from the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Working Group. Following the passing of Sr. Evelyn in 2003 and a series of meetings, Climate Connection decided to become the 16th IP&L affiliate in 2005. It is currently managed by two co-directors and housed in the North Carolina Council of Churches (not affiliate with the NCC).⁹

In Virginia and Texas, both IP&Ls are part of larger 'parent' faith-based NGOs, which pre-date IP&L. In Texas, IP&L is part of Texas Impact, a forty year old interfaith social justice organization, and Virginia's IP&L is part of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, the oldest faith-based advocacy group in the state.¹⁰ The Greater Washington IP&L (GWIPL) serves the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and Maryland, with plans to launch the newest state affiliate in Maryland.

⁸ Wisconsin IP&L interview, May 2012; <http://wisconsinipl.org/whoweare.htm>

⁹ North Carolina IP&L May 2011 interview and archival material courtesy of NCIP&L

¹⁰ <http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org/About.aspx>; <http://www.vipl.org/Home/tabid/491/Default.aspx>, last accessed September 2013

The director of GWIPL was inspired though both her environmental interests (she previously worked for a secular environmental NGO) as well as her Jewish faith, where she sought to explore the nexus between the two prior to joining IP&L¹¹. GWIPL is a project of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, an organization of eleven faith communities including Baha'i and Zoroastrian founded in 1978 to deepen understanding and build a just community in the area.¹²

Connecticut's IP&L was formed initially as an interfaith organization, which advocated and campaigned at the state level for the clean-up of six dirty coal-fired power plants--grandfathered under the Clean Air Act and enhanced regulations--prior to becoming an IP&L affiliate. The power plants became known as the dirty six, and the campaign lasted several years resulting in more stringent regulations. The coalition of groups engaged included a major faith presence in addition to health and environmental organizations. As a result of that collaboration the Interreligious Network of Connecticut was formed in 2001 dealing with climate change and renewable energy, becoming an IP&L affiliate about 2006¹³.

The Florida Sunshine State IP&L was formed in 2010, with a predecessor organization called Faiths United for Sustainable Energy (FUSE), which had an analogous mission focus, but was in the process of shutting down when exploratory meetings for the forming the Sunshine State IP&L were taking place. FUSE's remaining funds were used to start up the Florida affiliate.¹⁴ The IP&L program's rapid growth is a testament to the success of the model growing from one California IP&L in 2001 to a national movement

¹¹ GWIP&L interview, April 2012

¹² <http://gwipl.org/about-us/>, accessed May 24, 2013

¹³ Interview with Connecticut IP&L member, May 2012

¹⁴ Interview with Sunshine State IP&L, May 2012

with IP&L affiliates in 40 states (including the Washington DC area). Rev. Bingham expressed how she feels this dedicated core of climate advocates is “being led by the Spirit,” often relying on volunteers and small staffs to carry out its mission.¹⁵

Stewardship/creation care, sacrifice and other religious beliefs linked with motivating REGs

Stewardship and creation care are terms that IP&L applies at the national level in its messaging, though the affiliates tailor this message depending on what type of congregation they are speaking to. The terms ‘being good stewards of the Earth,’ ‘taking care of the Earth,’ and ‘stewardship of creation’ are also used by IP&L national, and at times are applied interchangeably.¹⁶ They also point out that stewardship and creation care are best suited towards Christian audiences, whereas terms including Tikkun Olan and Bal Tashkit resonate better with Jewish audiences. In Unitarian Churches for instance, the term ‘Earth Care’ was seen as preferable over ‘creation care,’ especially given that Unitarian churches have a diverse membership base that can include atheist and non-Christian members who would not relate well to the biblical terminology. In most IP&L contexts, stewardship and creation care are both used. Some members show strong support for stewardship, such as Georgia where it resonates well with the Christian base, as well as in Utah and Virginia, noting that their congregations and audience relates well to the term and understands stewardship in its financial context as well.

¹⁵ The Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham (2009), *Love God, Heal Earth: 21 Leading Religious Voices Speak Out on Our Sacred Duty to Protect the Environment*, St. Lynn’s Press: Pittsburg, PA, p. vi-vii

¹⁶ Interview with IP&L HQ, May 22, 2012

Others apply the term, but have more reservations about its implications, notably that it can be associated with an anthropocentric view. In Wisconsin for instance, the term care of creation is emphasized over stewardship because it sounds less “like an anthropocentric utilitarian perspective.” Others stress the need to move beyond stewardship to a kinship model, where the sense of being part of a larger community is expressed, or that of care takers. These views also reflect influence of the work of Thomas Berry, Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker, who discussed the notion of an Earth Community. Aside from the desire to move beyond the notion of stewardship, the term remains widely used at IP&L especially given that the majority of the audience related to its Judeo-Christian roots and biblical origins in Genesis. IP&L members stress that the concept of stewardship is meant to express that everything in this world belongs to God, so the human role is to act as a steward or as a tenant, who has to abide by certain terms of the lease. Those terms include “tilling the earth,” as well as keeping the garden and not abusing or destroying creation, because human kind doesn’t ‘own the property.’

Creation care is a term often associated with Evangelical origins and is preferred by some IP&L members for its religious tone and holistic implications. One IP&L member did express that he uses creation care, with caution at times, to avoid any confusion with ‘creationism,’ not wanting to engage in the debate over when the world was created and evolution, but did not note this to be a major issue. Creation care is also seen by some as the larger framework, of which stewardship is a specific practice.

The concept of sacrifice, with its religious undertones, is seen by many IP&L members as worthy of exploration and sound in its principles, though it is rarely used explicitly with their audience. Some view sacrifice as having significance in many religious

traditions, though more so in Christian context where the notion of redemptive suffering has a larger presence than in Judaism, where repentance may be more suitable. Most, though, do not use the term in part because it is seen in a negative light by the general public, where people shy away from the notion of sacrifice, having to give up any comforts, or change their lifestyles. IP&L leaders in the national office, DC area, and Virginia also noted that while some of the actions they address do involve sacrifice in terms of giving something up, they do not see the trade off as being negative or difficult. As the director of GWIPL said:

“If you leave your car at home and you ride your bike to work, and it takes a little longer, but you’re getting exercise, you’re out in fresh air, you’re not causing pollution...you know is that really a sacrifice or is it that you found a truer better way of life?...people like the idea of simplicity of returning to a kind of more integrated life...I don’t emphasize the idea of sacrifice per se, and I don’t really think that’s what’s called for.”¹⁷

In one sense the changes proposed are seen as an improvement on the quality of life rather than giving something up, gaining the benefits of health, well-being and simplicity, or simply switching to cleaner alternatives. In another sense, IP&L tries to avoid the negative imaging people can associate with changing lifestyles, such as sitting in the dark without any source of light as opposed to having solar power. Many IP&L leaders prefer to frame their message in a positive light, noting that it is challenging to change people’s behavior, even when applying the concept of sacrifice in a church setting. In Ohio, one way to frame sacrifice in a positive light was by linking healthy eating habits with cutting down on over-consumption, lowering one’s carbon footprint, and creating room to give back the saved ‘surplus’ to those in need. Members from Ohio and Florida also point

¹⁷ Interview with GWIP&L, April 6, 2012

out that during the recession and economic downturn, many people in the US already feel like they have been sacrificing economically and cannot afford to do more, regardless of how their wealth compares relative to many other people around the world. The perception of economic hardship and making due with less made it even more difficult for people to be receptive to the notion of sacrifice where climate change is concerned.

For some more conservative states such as Utah, a further challenge is the high level of climate denial in existence. If people refuse to accept something, then it is hard to convince them to sacrifice for it. A couple of IP&L representatives from Texas and North Carolina observed that although they had not applied the concept of sacrifice, they did see the need for it and believed that it is something that may be taken up by their IP&Ls in the near future as part of the climate change discourse. In North Carolina, they began to evaluate how to take concepts such as sacrifice, redemption, and sin and put them into practice, building on the idea of a carbon fast around the Lenten season. The concepts are being explored through an interfaith group, with different faiths coming up with their own statements that can be applied to different congregations. Others pointed out that they prefer to frame sacrifice in different terms, for instance, extending the notion of responsibility to being responsible for damage done to the Earth and other people, asking them to start off with simple actions such as reducing meat consumption and encouraging further activism with other environmental efforts that can lead to greater political and economic change.

The notion of sin in an environmental context is also more controversial, but applicable to the faith context. This is especially true when examining materialism, waste and overconsumption as forms of idolatry, or worshipping false Gods, where living an

abundant life should not be tied exclusively to resources. It was also pointed out that during World War II, citizens were asked to make daily sacrifices in terms of resources to support the war effort. They considered how that type of sacrifice can be applied to modern society to prevent the climate crisis. Core religious teachings applied by IP&L, especially in relation to the Abrahamic faiths, include the concept that people are stewards/trustees of the Earth, that the Earth is the Lord's and everything that is in it. Consequently everything created in the world was created by God and has its own inherent purpose, and in order to have the right relationship with God, one must also have the right relationship with the Earth. For most faiths, core meanings include the notion that all living things and the Earth were created by a supreme being, which makes them all sacred. The notion of interconnectedness, even if not expressed in terms of 'creation care,' is embedded in many religious traditions including Hinduism and Judaism. This edict to care for the Earth is seen in Genesis as well as in Muslim scriptures and is also extended to the notion of justice towards other people, especially the poor and disadvantaged. Jewish teachings, for instance, prohibited the destruction of an enemy's trees in wartime, which was extended by rabbinical scholars to not wasting needlessly at any time and taking a day of break from material concerns during the Sabbath.

Some IP&L members caution that although these teachings exist within the Judeo-Christian tradition, they were embedded within a mindset that for many centuries viewed nature as separate from God, where the divine was transcendent and not earthly, hence, what is needed is a shift in the worldview as well as a rediscovery of these teachings that highlight care for the environment. For instance, the covenant between Noah and God described in Genesis was intended as a three-way covenant between people, God and all

living creatures, which IP&L members emphasize as a call to include other species in this special relationship. As a religious leader observes:

“The basis of our work is caring for God’s creation and all inhabitants...that’s our kind of bottom line theological premise...the Earth is the Lords and everything in it. And that’s it. And we’re called to be caretakers of all life...Genesis through 2:15 says God took the Adam, the man/human in the garden to fill up and take care of it-human and other than human...God makes a covenant with Noah and his sons with him and al the creatures that come out of the Ark... it’s a three-way covenant and that’s God, human beings, and all the rest of life.”¹⁸

In IP&L at the national and state level, the notion of responsibility is emphasized as a deeply religious and fundamental calling for all human beings, in particular those who are more affluent, to take care of what was entrusted to them without spoiling it for the present and future generations. In many respects what IP&L works on is a transformation of how many people have viewed their faith and the earth. To quote one IP&L leader:

“It’s the worldview of people, the perspective on reality that needs to be changed...a change of the way we understand where we fit into this planet...we are one of the members of the sacred Earth community...If people who deal with the sacred religions become more heavily involved...many, many more to begin to influence behavior and policy, we’re on the road to the right trip.”¹⁹

Issue Framing: collective action frames applied to climate change

Religious environmental groups in the US use various frames to extended, amplify, transform, and align their messaging on climate change/environment with their faith perspective. One prominent frame utilized by REGs related to justice, with social justice having a strong foundation in most religious belief systems. Extending social justice issues

¹⁸ Interview with CT IP&L and Baptist Church, May 3, 2012

¹⁹ Interview with Ohio IP&L, June 21, 2012

to include the impact of climate change and other forms of environmental degradation to environmental and climate justice is applied by IP&L as well as other REGs. IP&L members note that many people are not moved by environmental damage unless it has a human link and impacts their own community. This is especially true with climate change, where in the Western countries people have not seen the direct impact of climate change as much as those in developing countries, or have not linked increasing natural disasters with climate change. IP&L affiliates find that for certain religious audiences having a human impact message is critical, for instance relying on Catholic Social teaching for Catholic audiences, where the impact on the poor resonates with those teachings. Using local examples and extending the global consequences of climate change to reflect local realities and amplify the scope of the problem through localizing climate justice, is also seen as critical. As the director of the Georgia IP&L observed:

“One thing we have learned that has been interesting you know, we can show shrinking glaciers and pictures of polar bears stuck on ice and we can show rising sea levels in Bangladesh all we want, but people need to be able to specifically reach out and touch I think climate change and climate justice. And so we have done the work to find ways to symbolize climate change here in Georgia to make it real to the people that live here...there’s a recent study that looks at 10 different types of air pollution in the 12 counties here in Metro-Atlanta and found that obviously low income and communities of color are disproportionately affected by pollution. So that’s a kind of way we can touch kind of what’s happening here. When we talk about the drought or the fact that it’s been the hottest year ever or the driest year ever...we try to localize climate justice here in Georgia...We do talk about the science of climate change and the science of climate justice, but without making it real to them...people don’t care...so unless we humanize it for them, unless we find ways for them to look out their window and see it happening, it tends to not make as big a difference.”²⁰

²⁰ GWIPL, interview, May 21, 2012

IP&L sees the value of focusing on the science of climate change and its broader implications, but without framing the message in a personally meaningful way it is harder to sway their target audience. Another significant issue where justice and policy proposals are concerned, in Texas and other states, is not to “pit poor people versus the environment,” with faith-groups working to find solutions that do not overtly burden low income communities. They show that environmental degradation, much of the time, impacts poor people most severely. It is also significant to show that environmental justice is not just about “polar bears and tree frogs,” but to show that “humans are a part of the environment and that when bad things happen to the environment, bad things also happen to people.”²¹ Other state IP&L, such as Virginia, press for bans on Uranium mining as well as a fuel tax to help support vulnerable communities. Coming from the faith perspective, IP&L notes the extent of personal responsibility that comes from knowing how energy consumption can negatively impact people in Africa. As a minister noted, “there’s nothing in my personal faith tradition that says I’m allowed to live a lifestyle that continues to harm other people,” but that for many people without experiencing direct negative impacts it is hard to gain support for larger changes. People may support the concept of justice provided they don’t have to change the way they live, unless they see the consequences for themselves.

Having that human-centered message is important for IP&L, though its members also express that the notion of climate justice needs to include non-human neighbors and the broader environment as well, further observing that as long as people think of the environment as something distinct, they will not realize that they are an integral part of it.

²¹ Interview with Texas IP&L, May 13, 2012

IP&L works to frame its messages relative to their target audience, with faith relevant messages that resonate in a given community.

In some cases they will talk about the implications of climate change--the impact it has on poor communities and future generations--and ask the audience what their faith tells them about responding to this situation. This is especially true when approaching an interfaith audience or an audience of a different faith than the speaker. IP&L leaders find that most of the time, once a message is presented in that light, people know what the core teachings of their faith tell about causing harm to others. They will also link the broader picture with specific issues in their states, for instance advocating for the Open Beach Act in Texas and linking that issue with climate induced beach erosion that will have a profound impact on Texas beaches.

Many IP&L affiliates find that it is best to focus on specific aspects of climate change that are relevant to the community/audience in question, because the term climate change can come with “a lot of baggage” for some people, especially in conservative states. They will be firm in their core message about the magnitude of climate change and the causes of it, but will address the problem through examples such as air pollution in Utah and Texas--both issues related with climate change, but with an immediate and local impact. In some cases, specific issues are found to be easier for people to comprehend or relate to than something like climate change at the global level, which can be overwhelming for some audiences. It helps for organizations like IP&L to break it down and frame it in the right context. Even for issues such as fracking, many people do not always take note unless they see the impacts of pollution, health, and water quality in their own experiences. As one activist noted:

“When it happens to where you live, or where your loved ones live there will be changes”, but without that direct impact it’s easier for people to look at the short-term economic benefits of fracking and allow the ‘industrial assault on the planet’ to continue.”

One effective way of connecting people’s health, lifestyle choices, and climate change has been through IP&L’s Cool Harvest project. A project that started at the national office has been adapted by certain states including Ohio and North Carolina, and builds its program on a documentary called “Nourish,” encouraging congregations to focus on buying local foods, growing their own or congregation gardens, and reducing their carbon footprint by embracing a healthier lifestyle. IP&L members note that often people are lacking a basic education on what to do with raw food, having been accustomed to processed and microwave-ready meals, but the interest in these programs is very high. In Ohio, they emphasized educating people about the benefits of local-food, including less transport fuel. They combine that with teaching people how to cook with some local foods they may not be familiar with. In North Carolina, the Cool Harvest program was tailored to that state and renamed as the ‘sacred food scapes’ program, also building on work done at the North Carolina National Council of Churches. NCIPL participated in a presentation on food, faiths, farms, and the climate connection and found that many people were surprised that those issues are related. Talking about food supply, distribution, and carbon production was a better core topic than talking about energy policy, because as the NCIP co-director noted:

“Energy policy and energy issues are absolutely paramount to help educate people on, but...people don’t run to that topic. Only one type of person runs to that, whereas everyone eats. Everyone uses energy too, but they just don’t understand it in a way...it’s easier to talk about your grocery store than it is to talk about your utility company with people.”²²

²² Interview with North Carolina IP&L, , May 29, 2012

Framing messages in a way that people can relate to is paramount when tackling a topic like climate change, especially in states where climate skepticism remains high. In Utah for instance, where the legislature passed a statement denying that climate change is real and where the majority of people favor resource extraction and development, framing the climate change message specific to that faith community is critical. At times that means not leading with climate change as the first message, but instead talking about local air pollution, saving on energy efficiency, and ‘meeting people where they’re at’ rather than confronting climate denial outright. IP&Ls also note that coming from the faith-perspective allows them to address these issues outside of the partisan political landscape, “bypassing the political swampland...going around it to the back door of that moral obligation to care for what God has created,” which is something that the secular environmental organizations cannot do. IP&L also notes that people tend to “listen and hear differently in a house of worship or a faith setting, going around their ideological dogma, which is one of the biggest values of an interfaith environmental group.”²³ IP&L members also emphasize that having a purely ‘doom and gloom’ message does not work. People need to feel hopeful, optimistic, and rejuvenated by what they hear as well, and they will find a way to love what God has given them. Guilt and hopelessness can make people angry and less motivated to change.²⁴ Utilizing people’s belief systems, values, and teachings can be more inspiring. For instance, NCIPL has relied on the Green Bible to find passages and scriptures suitable to

²³ Interview with Utah IP&L, May 25, 2012

²⁴ Interview with Georgia IP&L, , May 21, 2012

their Christian audiences. They found that those were well received by ministers, who then look for additional resources to share with their congregations.²⁵

Policy Beliefs and Advocacy Coalitions

IP&L at the national and state levels endorses scientific findings related to climate change, including conclusions of the IPCC reports and the scientific consensus on the anthropogenic causes of climate change. Some affiliates are more direct about leading with science during their discussions, while others prefer to lead with a faith voice, citing that is the core strength of their organization. The challenge for IP&L is to balance between the amount of science and religion included in their approach and messaging, which is highly dependent upon their target audience. In DC for instance, with a largely progressive audience, climate denial is not a major concerns, and materials such as the work of noted evangelical and climate scientist, Katherine Hayhoe, are used to describe the effects of climate change and link them with people's daily experiences. For instance, talking about increasingly hot summers, earlier springs and early cherry blossoms, all of which are linked to climatic changes. Certain IP&L members note the long standing historical tension between the world of science and religion dating back to Galileo. The differences in worldviews can be substantial, and recent conferences and meetings have helped to bridge this gap and mistrust between these communities. Science has also been critiqued for being overtly reductionist and linear, an enlightenment mentality that is reflected in the working of industrial society, which supports waste and inefficiency.²⁶ Some IP&L members note that this worldview must also change to embrace a more holistic, integrated and ecological

²⁵ Interview with NCIPL, May 29, 2012

²⁶ Interview with Ohio IP&L, June 21, 2012

perspective that merges various fields including religion, science and politics. Religions also struggle with this problem, though now the controversy is not about the Earth being the center of the universe, but about human beings being seen as the center of the universe. In conservative states such as Utah, an additional challenge for IP&L is the mistrust of science and scientific studies where issues such as evolution are very contentious. In these cases it is more effective to talk about the concepts of passing down and preserving land for future generations or working to sway people's hearts rather than lead with more facts that may be resisted. As one IP&L member observed:

“People are not going to be moved by better facts...the overwhelming scientific...analysis is that climate change is real, it's happening now, and it's primarily human caused...the people who deny...the only thing that's going to change...why I think religious communities are so critical is that when the heart is changed, that's when there can be true change...but if you really want a transformation, you know more facts about how awful the droughts are becoming or the floods, and the melting glaciers in the Arctic Sea and that...emaciation doesn't do it. When people are in love with something, and they fall in love, whatever that love is, is being threatened...that's when people react.”²⁷

For many IP&L members, it is making this connection between religious values and moral responsibility to observed and scientifically documented climatic changes that lies at the core of their mission. For those people who have made this link, they see the need to mobilize them and have their voices heard through outreach, education and advocacy at the state and national level. IP&L views that faith voice as a critical sub-set of society, whose position should be known by legislators and the public. Their efforts focus on encouraging their congregations and members to support federal climate legislation, renewable energy, and clean air standards as well as to implement those changes in their

²⁷ Interview with CT IP&L, May 3, 2012

lives by reducing their carbon footprint. The national office will lead in several campaigns annually, with states either choosing to work on the same issues or focusing on their state's own legislative efforts. In Georgia for instance, GIPL launched a campaign to educate the public and support a transportation referendum in 2012, while in Ohio, Maryland and nationally IP&L is calling for regulation of fracking. In North Carolina, a 2010 campaign addressed resource extraction by hosting 'Climate Justice Tours on Mountain Top Removal,' as well as lobbying and testifying in state hearings concerning off-shore wind development and off-shore oil drilling.

IP&L state affiliates such as Ohio and North Carolina also participated in coalitions with other aligned organizations including secular ENGOs, and health organizations to campaign and raise awareness on policy issues. In Ohio, support for EPA's mercury rules involved collaboration between the Audubon Society, the American Lung Association and other partners. In North Carolina, the NCIP&L joined a coalition on 'Consumers Against Rate Hikes' aimed at opposing a policy supported by utility companies that would involve rate payers covering the cost of new power plants before they were submitted for utility commission review.

A major national campaign as well as a state-level campaign for IP&L involved providing support for the 2012 new EPA industrial carbon pollution standards and energy efficiency legislation, specifically Senate bill S.1000 and House bill H.R. 4017. IP&L members lobbied their legislators to support these new EPA safeguards and to bring the energy efficiency legislation to the floor.²⁸ The IP&L annual 'advocacy day on the Hill,' lobbying members of Congress, was focused on this legislation, and called for support of

²⁸ IP&L annual conference 2012 materials and personal observation May 2012

the EPA policy and energy efficiency measures due to the moral implications as well as the health implications of polluting plants.²⁹ Another major issue for IP&L as well as numerous REGs in the US is the Keystone XL pipeline, with IP&L actively calling on the President and the State department to stop it from moving forward. A letter with hundreds of signatures, including IP&L leaders and a 150 other religious leaders in the US, called on the President to stop Keystone and not be tempted by the ‘false promise’ of tar sands oil.³⁰ IP&L sees the faith-voice on the environment as enabling people to think and provide support for existential questions and struggles, and they see care for the environment as a cause beyond politics.

IP&L has a threefold mission which includes education, outreach, and advocacy, with each state affiliate engaged in these areas, some with greater emphasis one area versus another. Every state reaches out to their congregations and keeps a database to keep them informed and engaged on issues. The national IP&L works on several major advocacy issues per year, with state affiliates engaging in advocacy both at the state and federal levels. The main audiences are congregations, religious people, and policy/decision-makers who influence climate/energy related issues.³¹ As IP&L has grown over the past ten years, their name is more recognized by congregations, though the work is still focused on personal contacts and building trust with congregations, “one person and one congregation at a time.”³² For certain states, advocacy plays a larger role than others. The Greater Washington IP&L has recently been engaged in promoting off-shore wind energy legislation in MD (which succeeded). Georgia IP&L engage with the state and federal

²⁹ Personal observation May 2012

³⁰ Ad in Politico, ‘Don’t be tempted by the promise of tar Sands Oil’, April 2012

³¹ Interview with Rev. Sally Bingham, IP&L, May 29, 2012

³² Interview with IP&L, May 22, 2012

officials, often having direct conversations with them. IP&L's model works on the basis of signing up partner congregations and in some cases individuals to become "cool congregations" in relation to their energy use and carbon footprint.

Generally, IP&L finds that its message is well received, though that also varies by state and audience. In states such as Connecticut and Maryland, the audience is more open towards the climate message than in a more conservative state, such as Utah, Virginia or Texas. In Utah, for instance, the IP&L highlights the politicized nature of climate change and how a strong party affiliation with the Republican Party leads some people to be more skeptical of climate change as part of support for the party's platform. While testifying at one state hearing, the IP&L member and clergy person recalls being booed by the audience for mentioning the linkage between climate change and pollution. They also noted that in those states, having an IP&L is especially significant. For some IP&L congregations the message may be well received, but IP&L needs to work with participants who are unaware of the potential energy saving measures, or simply do not think they can do much as individuals to make a difference in dealing with climate change.

IP&Ls also observe that the majority of their congregations come from the Judeo-Christian tradition and that faith perspective also drives the type of message framing utilized by them. In North Carolina, for instance they learned that pushing diverse groups towards having a uniform, universal message does not equal having a greater impact derived from that message, so it is best to have each faith look at their theology, and help them relate that theology to climate/ecological issues so the message has a stronger hold. In their state they started by focusing on Christian groups and theology, because that reflects the majority of their audience. They formed a working group to explore theology

that can inform action on the environment in the hope that will help to mobilize their target audience, as well as serve as a model to use for other faith in defining their own views. As one leader observed:

“What we need to do is lead people through their own paths to a place that they find themselves in a circle of shared value and that they’re able to collaborate and communicate that shared value as a common thread through humanity.”³³

IP&L national and state affiliates find that many of their congregations respond well to energy efficiency and greening projects, and are actively doing the work of reducing their environmental impact. Many IP&Ls realize that changing and simplifying lifestyles may be a large part of future adaptation in face of climate change, either through voluntary measures now or by necessity in the future. They point to growing interest in community and backyard gardens, urban agriculture, and a heightened awareness of where one’s food comes from, which is visible in a small, building ‘back to land’ movement. One leading activist noted that what is needed is a return to the sustainable model of the family farm that was a staple of American life in the early part of the 20th century, as well as the ‘victory garden’ or backyard gardens people had during WWII to increase self-reliance. It is that reverence for the land, and seeing the environment-human connection that makes people more inclined to change or simplify lifestyles, though there are critical energy choices that need to be made right now and in the near future to move away from the ‘industrial model’ to renewable energy and energy efficiency. IP&Ls express that they are hopeful that these changes can be done before major and widespread climatic disasters impact the US. While many environmental groups have tried to shy away from talking about climate change,

³³ Interview with NIPL May 25, 2012

IP&L feels that religions have a long-standing tradition of guiding people through changes and encouraging them to be brave enough to do so. In GWIPL and other IP&Ls they talk about health and job impacts, but always maintain the connection to climate change. Greening congregations projects are implemented across the IP&L's with national Cool Congregations programs, where congregations sign up to participate as covenant congregations. To become a covenant congregation they have to review their energy use, submit a carbon footprint form, and commit to taking at least one of the steps in the program aimed at reducing their environmental impact.

Many IP&Ls offer resources for their congregations to conduct church/temple energy audits, providing guidance as well as access to funds or reduced costs for the audit. In Georgia, GIPL provides a "Power Wise" program, helping congregations conduct a professional energy audit as well as a matching grant of up to \$10,000 for energy efficiency upgrades.³⁴ 'Power Wise,' in operation since 2003, is now part of a larger program called 'Creation Wise' that provides tools for congregations in other areas including water conservation, sustainable gardening, and sustainable purchasing.³⁵ GIPL also holds annual green awards, called the 'gippies,' to congregations who have made exemplary progress in improving energy efficiency, leading environmental programs/celebrations, or individual initiatives. For instance, in 2011 it granted awards to the Catholic Earth Day Coalition for hosting Earth Day around the St. Francis Pledge and the Catholic Climate Change Covenant.³⁶ In Ohio, an energy audit program for congregations is in place, and Sr. Paula also leads by example by refurbishing buildings to rely entirely on solar and geothermal

³⁴ http://www.gipl.org/content/Power_Wise.asp, accessed May 30, 2013

³⁵ http://www.gipl.org/Content/take_Action.asp, accessed May 30, 2013

³⁶ Interview with GIPL, May 21, 2012

power, which she makes available for tours, and she teaches workshops on the topic of looking at a holistic, integrated relationship to God and the Earth community. For some audiences, for example in parts of the South, that can pose a challenge. Especially when people are confronted with the concept of science and evolution and need to open their minds to seeing their faith in a new light.³⁷ For many congregations, the energy audit helps to motivate community as well as individual action that can be implanted in their homes, and provides incentives through lowering utility bills.

In North Carolina, congregations are asked to sign a Certificate of Participation, so IP&L can keep them informed and engaged. NCIPL offers another innovative program called the “Earth Sabbath Celebrations”, which is an interfaith worship service intended to rejuvenate participants and help them deal with challenges in environmental activism, including seeing the negative impacts of environmental degradation. The celebrations are meant to be motivating and help to instill NCIPL’s view that Earth day activities should be a routine part of everyday worship, not one day out of the year.³⁸ For most of IP&L, the focus remains on their local communities, but with action at the federal level that is mindful of its global impacts.

Perception of REG’s moral authority

The perception of religious group’s moral authority and legitimacy with the public and policymakers is positive overall, though not without caution as to the extent of influence a faith voice can exercise. That variation in influence can depend on the state an IP&L represents and which policymakers they address. For many audiences IP&L

³⁷ Interview with Ohio IP&L, June 21, 2012

³⁸ Interview with NIPL, May 29, 2012

observed that people tend to listen ‘with different ears’ when in a religious setting or context, meaning they can be more open to the moral message presented even if the topic is controversial in a different context, such as climate science. Most IP&L representatives noted that the moral authority perception is stronger in a political setting than among people of faith, mostly because they are expecting to hear a faith message in that context, whereas policymakers are often surprised to see a clergy person lobbying their office or speaking about the moral obligation of God’s calling to care for creation. IP&L members do not see themselves as having a higher moral standing than secular organizations, but they note that the message they present is framed in a different light and often received as stemming from an apolitical source, not advocating for any particular interest group.

The motivation of REGs to engage their legislators or other government officials is viewed as coming from a human interest, a moral orientation, so often in cases where secular ENGOs cannot get access to a given legislators, religious groups have a better chance of ‘getting in the door.’ That access does not automatically translate to action taken by legislators, who can choose to focus on economic issues alone, but they receive an audience. In the case of certain conservative states, including Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina and Texas, the faith perspective is seen as being of particular importance due to the religiosity of their populations as well as their legislators.³⁹ IP&L members point out that sometimes the deciding voice in persuading a legislator to vote in favor of a policy can come from their family members or clergy and not necessarily from the electorate. Rev Sally Bingham observed that:

“Every one of the politicians or at least most of them, have some kind of a faith connection. So if you can send a Rabbi to talk to Jewish legislator or a

³⁹ Interviews with IP&L state affiliates: VA, OH, UT, NC, TX, GA and the DC area, May-June 2012

Catholic Priest in to talk to a Catholic legislator about moral responsibility, I believe it does have a more personal and much deeper meaning for a legislator than if someone from the Sierra Club comes in and says we don't need new coal plants., but if somebody comes in and talks about moral decisions that this person is making when they vote, I think it makes a big difference.”⁴⁰

They also highlight the need to stay focused on the religious message rather than trying to take a technocratic approach similar to secular ENGOs, and make sure that policymakers don't try to avoid the moral dimensions of poverty and environmental degradation.⁴¹ During IP&L's annual day on the hill, many state leaders went to lobby their respective offices, and were surprised to find that Democratic staffers told them that they need to hear the faith voice more often on the environment, and in particular encouraged them to speak with their Republican counterparts seeing the faith/moral perspective as critical in mobilizing bi-partisan support.⁴² Some observed that the impasse with environmental policy has to do with Washington power plays more so than the substance of the actual legislation. In that context, a theological argument as opposed to a scientific argument may be more persuasive. The religious message can be seen as more novel and compelling than that coming from secular ENGOs, as one religious leader expressed:

“Its access and perhaps greater effectiveness, especially when we do it in an interfaith context...when a Priest, an Imam and a Rabbi walk into a Congressman's office is not just a good joke, it's a good tactic.”⁴³

Role in the Environmental Movement

Coalitions and Level of Engagement

⁴⁰ Interview with National IP&L, Rev. Sally Bingham, May 29, 2012

⁴¹ Interview with CT IP&L, May 3, 2012

⁴² Personal Observation May 2012 IP&L annual conference

⁴³ Interview with GWIPL and COEJL member May 10, 2012

IP&L national and state affiliates focus their advocacy and outreach efforts primarily on the local, state and national level. This is largely due to the focus of the organization on grassroots activism in the US. But also, for small non-profits, engagement on the global level in climate summits is expensive and with limited resources they focus on their key missions to work locally. It is also seen as the area of greatest potential impact where the US climate change debate is concerned. IP&L leaders point out that relative to many other western countries, the US remains a religious country where the faith voice matters. They see that faith groups have the potential to mobilize the US for change more so than other groups due to the overall religiosity of the population. This is seen as essential for the climate change discourse due to the US' resistance to greenhouse gas regulation at the federal and intergovernmental level.

One national IP&L program, called the Carbon Covenant, links US congregations and individuals with those dealing with and mitigating climate change in the Global South, thus expanding awareness of the immediate consequence of climate change.⁴⁴ Most international and global activities are handled at the national level, with Rev. Bingham attending certain conferences, such as the Alliance for Religions and Conservation (ARC) Windsor summit held prior to COP-15. National IP&L tries to keep their state affiliates engaged on events surrounding the climate summits and funded a couple of participants to attend COP-15, though their resources restrict this from being a routine occurrence. State IP&Ls will in turn keep their congregations and members informed regarding events at the international level, speak in public about the need for a global treaty, and provide support for climate adaptation funding, primarily looking to mobilize US support. In Washington

⁴⁴ IP&L programs brochure, obtained during the May 2012 annual conference

DC prior to COP-15 GWIPL organized a climate vigil, with one activist building a symbolic Noah's Ark on the national Mall, with the message that "we don't have a plan B if we flood the city." There are also several countries, including Sweden and Australia, who were interested in implementing the IP&L model in their countries, though those efforts would not be an extension of IP&L, but rather a creation of similar groups in those countries. In the UK in addition to the affiliation with UK, IP&Ls on occasion share information and resources with collaborators in an informal manner. For instance GWIPL has used Tearfund's carbon lent concept in its program.

IP&Ls across the country engage in a wide range of collaborative campaigns and partnerships in order to spread their message and maximize their voice. These coalitions also include work with secular environmental and health organizations. In the DC metro area, notable partners include the Chesapeake Climate Action Network--which focuses on climate change, Environment Maryland, DC SUN, and the local Sierra Club. GWIPL has engaged in local marches involving numerous organizations, such as the first anti-fracking rally held in the summer of 2012. It also engages in numerous joint campaigns with secular groups such as the Stop Keystone XL Pipeline Tar Sands Action, Choose Clean Water Campaign, and the DC Environmental Network among others.⁴⁵ Partnerships are still evolving and sometimes determined on a case by case basis. In Georgia frequent partners include the Sierra Club, the Georgia Water Coalition, the Georgia Solar Energy Association and the Georgia Conservation Voters. In Texas, IP&L has been part of the Alliance for Clean Texas (ACT), which was focused on review of new EPA rules at the state level. In Connecticut, the City 6 campaign partners included Clean Water Action, the

⁴⁵ <http://gwipl.org/speak-out/>, accessed, May 30, 2013

Toxic Action Center, and the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut. Partner groups often include the Sierra Club, the Nature Conservancy and local organizations focused on renewable energy, offshore wind production, clean air, and water.

In Utah IP&L partnered with the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance on a program called 'Faith and the Land,' where IP&L worked with members of their congregations to speak about their experiences with wild lands and how they relate to their spirituality. The findings were prepared in a report that was presented to legislators in an effort to show how people of faith value wilderness areas.⁴⁶ IP&L wants to maintain their distinctive faith voice and face, rather than being seen as an extension of secular ENGOs. The messaging applied by both groups is not always analogous, and at times IP&L can reach other groups more effectively by remaining separate. GIPL, for instance, highlights that while secular groups such as Sierra Club see the need for prayer during their events in Georgia and GIPL is a recognized name, GIPL cannot afford to have 'blanket' partnerships without additional consideration of their unique faith perspective.⁴⁷

Often what an IP&L wishes to avoid is being perceived as politically polarized--they do not wish to cater to one part of the electorate alone, and feel that maintaining an apolitical stance when possible helps with certain audiences. For example, in North Carolina, NCIP&L decided not to engage with Green Peace and the Sierra Club in an Occupy Charlotte protest of Bank of America, a large coal investor with headquarters in Charlotte NC. They agreed with the goals, but did not wish to co-sponsor the event in order not to alienate the more conservative faith groups in their state, and to keep their

⁴⁶ Utah IP&L Interview, June 12, 2012

⁴⁷ Interviews with TX, GA, Greater DC IP&Ls, May-June 2012

message “open across politics.”⁴⁸ Also, the IP&L structure does not have resources for helping members with civil disobedience, such as legal help, so IP&Ls do not engage their name directly in civil disobedience, though individual members and leaders have participated in civil disobedience and been arrested, for instance during the Keystone XL protest in DC.⁴⁹

At the national level, IP&L partners with several large NGOs and points out that IP&L does not have the resources to hire scientists and economists. Instead, they share information with those larger organizations with greater resources. Secular partners include the Environmental Defense Fund, the National Wildlife Federation, and health organizations such as the Physicians for Social Responsibility and American Lung Association.⁵⁰ A major partner and advocate for religious groups, including IP&L, is Bill Mckibben’s organization, 350.org. Mckibben, through his work and writings, has stressed the need for a faith response, and IP&Ls frequently link with his organization as well as other REGs.

IP&L national and state affiliates are engaged in partnerships with other REGs, denominational bodies and religious partners in a close network. At the national level, IP&L engages with NRPE’s partner organizations, the National Council of Churches, GreenFaith, the Evangelical Environmental Network, and Evangelicals for the Common Good. Rev. Sally Bingham observed that climate change can serve as a unifying issue for the faith community: “I find religious organizations talking about climate change as a

⁴⁸ Interview with NCIPL, May 29, 2012

⁴⁹ Interview with NCIPL and personal communication, May 2012

⁵⁰ National IP&L interviews with SB and BB, May 2012

unifying issue...because we're dealing with different religions, we're not dealing with the environmental community...You'll have Jews, Muslims, Christians, Baha'is, Buddhists, Mormons, Catholics all sitting around the table together agreeing on something-which is that we are the stewards of creation." Bingham notes that finding a common interfaith message is not always easy because of the variety of scriptures and teachings in questions, but she highlights that while the language is different, the underlying message is the same.⁵¹

At the state level, IP&L affiliates are closely linked within their faith communities, including other local, regional, and national REGs. In the Greater Washington DC area, IP&L will work most closely with congregations rather than denominational bodies, whereas in Georgia and Texas they work closely with the denominational bodies (Methodist, Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Jewish, Muslim) to reach their congregations. Many IP&L state representatives have worked with GreenFaith by participating in their 18 month long fellowship program. In DC they also partner with COEJL, EEN, National Council of Churches Eco-Justice office, and some of the NRPE organizations--mainly the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, both of which have offices in the area. Other IP&Ls, including Wisconsin and Ohio, work with other IP&Ls and coalitions, such as RE-AMP, focused on mid-western issues. RE-AMP is an umbrella organization focused on reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide levels.⁵² Restoring Eden, an evangelical organization, has participated in that collation. Wisconsin is also a co-sponsor of GreenFaith's Ground for Hope conference in conjunction with the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee. Ohio has developed links with EEN as well as Blessed Earth. Often state IP&Ls will work with state-level faith organizations and groups to establish smaller interfaith networks. In

⁵¹ Interviews with National IP&L, May 2012

⁵² <http://www.reamp.org/>, accessed August 1, 2013

DC, there is a monthly meeting of the Faith and Ecology working group--aimed at connecting professionals across various faiths working in this area. In Texas, IP&L works with various cities to form local Interfaith Environmental Networks, with the first such network having been established in Austin. The networks reflect a diverse community and include Abrahamic religions as well as strong engagement from Buddhist, Hindu, as well as Wiccan members.

IP&L leaders note that while the majority of their members are Christian and Jewish, they actively work to engage other faiths in their partnerships and activities. This is especially true for reaching out to the Muslim community, with the observation that interest in green issues for Islam has risen in recent years, with organizations such as the Green Muslims.

Wider Environmental Movement

IP&L, as well as other grassroots based REGs, fill a unique niche in the religious landscape. They focus primarily on mobilizing interested individuals, green teams, and congregations rather than starting with denominational bodies. More hierarchical churches and organizations are often seen as having responded slowly to ecological issues, and some IP&L members note that, in their experience, the problem often lies with clergy who were not taught at seminaries about eco-theology, and with many pressing issues in congregations, tend not to prioritize it in their ministry. IP&Ls focus lies in providing support, guidance and encouragement for the “green sheep” of these congregations--people who feel that caring for the environment/dealing with climate change is part of their faith, but feel isolated in their congregations due to a lack of broader interest or availability of resources. That message does not come from the pulpit much of the time, but from lay

leaders and people who experienced this faith and ecology connection at the local level and look for ways, such as joining IP&L, to strengthen their efforts. IP&L members highlight that very often this type of engagement begins at the individual or small group level before moving on to their congregation or community--a truly bottom-up effort. As one IP&L activist observed:

“We almost, sort of interact exclusively with congregations as congregations rather than denominational bodies. And we almost always work with....I call them the green sheep of their congregations...somebody who cares about this within the congregation. And help them sort of lead the way to the changes they want to make....it seems there's a lot of focus on ...clergy and on religious denominations at the highest level...what we found what's most powerful is to work one by one with the individual green teams within these congregations, but it's less effective to start with...to go top down. And it's much more effective to go bottom up--to support green team leaders in these congregations in doing the work they want to do.”⁵³

IP&L sees their organization as serving the critical role of connecting people's understanding of their faith with the concept of caring for the natural world. Though IP&L members note that churches and seminaries are slowly making progress on this issue, there is much work to be done through this bottom-up, education, outreach, and advocacy process. They are also hopeful that other projects, such as the Green Seminary Initiative, will help in integrating eco-theology into the seminary curriculum, thus strengthening students' knowledge of the faith-ecology link for their future ministry work. Many Churches are perceived as having for a long time been focused on “eternal salvation” rather than “how we live here and now in the world and what are our responsibilities here.”⁵⁴ One activist noted that this disconnect may be why church attendance is in decline--people see the extent of profound social issues, including environmental degradation, and need to

⁵³ GWIPL interview, April 6, 2012

⁵⁴ Interview with Utah IP&L, June 12, 2012

search outside the church to find that guidance.⁵⁵ As national IP&L expressed, clergy feel they are about the business of saving souls, and needed someone to frame the care of the environment issue as a part of that greater religious role. They also saw the 'environment' as departmentalized and separate from human behavior-and perceived the-environment should be handled by other organizations, such as Sierra Club., In that sense, IP&L served as a reminder of their religious responsibility to care for the Earth or Creation.⁵⁶

IP&L views its mission and perspective as being firmly embedded in the faith perspective--it is not an environmental organization, but a faith-based organization with the mission of caring for creation. National and state IP&L members note that while many of the aims they have are similar to those of secular environmental organizations, such as reduced use of fossil fuels, the messaging and framing can be different from the faith perspective. Secular ENGOs, even though their members may come from various faith perspectives, tend to lead with scientific reasons for taking action--the ecological implications, technicalities--while IP&L focuses on leading with a religious moral voice for taking action. Often, they emphasize that the faith focus will tend to look at both sides of the story and make sure that the broader perspective, not just a single issue, is taken into consideration. For instance, a faith perspective would always make sure that low income people do not suffer from a new policy. It would ensure that that policy includes provisions to ameliorate negative consequences such as increased fuel prices or sufficient funding for climate adaptation measures in developing countries. The timelines that secular NGOs use are also perceived differently by IP&L, which notes that ENGOS can be more aggressive

⁵⁵ Interviews with IP&L, NC, Greater DC, UT, CT, OH, May-June 2012

⁵⁶ Interviews with National IP&L, May 2012

in pursuing certain policies within an electoral cycle, whereas a faith perspective tends to focus on the longer term goals. In the case of fracking, IP&L is pushing for regulations of fracking, where certain ENGOs are opposed to any fracking taking place in the US. IP&L members observe that a tension sometimes remains between religious and environmental perspectives. In conservative settings in the US, environmentalists are seen in a negative light. Environmentalists in turn sometimes view religions as having contributed to the ecological crises and slow in their support over the years. When dealing with conservative states and audiences, IP&L finds that it is best to approach climate change from a faith perspective, always maintaining that this is an important moral and faith issue. For that reason, IP&L tries to make sure that its identity as a faith-based organization is maintained, especially when engaging in partnerships. Though they understand that there are times when value-tradeoffs may need to be made, they do not want that message to be diluted or perceived as not stemming from a place of faith. As the GIPL director describes:

“We have to come from it from our scriptural, our theological, and our historical traditions in a very significant way. The Sierra Club can’t do that and we can’t do what the Sierra Club does...I will lead with faith 100% of the time. There’s no moment or presentation or whatever in which I will lead with anything else, because we aren’t an environmental organization...even remotely. We are a faith organization that engages communities of faith and in stewardship ...we aren’t environmentalists.”⁵⁷

For many people in IP&L’s audience, environmentalists are seen as having a biased or politicized agenda that can be dismissed by some as an interest group. IP&L does not share that sentiment, but they are mindful of it and the differences in their approach from secular ENGOs when doing outreach, education and advocacy work.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ GIPL, Interview May 21, 2012)

⁵⁸ Perspectives based on interviews with IP&L national, GA, CT, WI, NC, VA, OH, TX, UT, Greater Washington DC area, May-June 2012

In terms of identifying as a distinct faith and ecology movement or as a part of the wider environmental movement, IP&L shows a mixed response with the majority of participants seeing their engagement as a unique niche within the wider environmental movement. Many participants feel that they are part of both movements and view them as essential in making an impact. For leaders in certain states, including Utah and Georgia, IP&L's role was seen as being a distinct movement in religious environmentalism. Both of those states have conservative populations with a negative perception of the mainstream environmental movement or a perception of it being associated with the liberal left. In the case of the National IP&L, the Greater DC area (Maryland, Northern Virginia), Texas, Florida, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Connecticut and Ohio viewed the faith-based component as a unique contribution to the larger environmental efforts, though without seeing a clear-cut distinction between the two. They did emphasize the need to maintain their unique voice and identity when working with secular organizations and coalitions, further noting that their motivation for this work stems from the faith perspective. The religious contribution to climate change activism is their 'prophetic voice,' focused on long-term implications, rather than short-term policies or benefits. In the words of an IP&L leader:

"We're about living our faith traditions as it relates to livability and sustainability on the planet...I think what we bring to the table that most environmental groups don't is the history and the prophetic voice to ask more questions. Yes, science is telling us we can do all of these things...we have to ask the bigger questions of just because we can, should we? We can continue to build you know coal fired power plant/methane powered electric plants, but should we? What are the externalized costs that we never talk about? Who suffers the most? What species are going extinct? They're not powers to kill...they don't belong to us. So that's something that we bring

to the table, we can ask those questions...you know we need to be doing it a whole lot louder than we have been.”

A couple of participants noted that the secular environmental groups, after the failing of the 2009 American Clean Energy and Security Act, decided to shift away from addressing climate change directly and focused exclusively on health impacts of pollution. IP&L members expressed that one of the aspects of their organization is not to lose track of the main problem, which is continuing to mention the significance of climate change regardless of the political situation. All IP&L members also expressed that this faith-based movement is at its early stages of development relative even to the wider environmental movement. The religions were slow coming on board, but more congregations and denominations are becoming aware of this work and making the connection between climate change, justice and stewardship. While some of these efforts began in the 1980s and 1990s, the momentum took off about ten years ago, seeing a growth in the number of organizations.

Most religions now have statements on ecology and it is more common to have a church green team. Ten years ago people were surprised to learn of religious groups engaged in environmental work, and the perspective has gained wider acceptance. Even with this rise of religious environmentalism, IP&L members caution that this movement is in its early stages and it will be years before a full impact can be perceived, with a great many people still unaware of this connection to their faith. IP&&L members point out that it is hard to change people’s deeply held beliefs, and especially to ask them to change their lifestyles, where many look for a techno-fix solution. It is especially challenging with the great recession and people looking at short-term job solutions, such as those provided by

fracking, without concern for the consequences unless they see those first-hand. As a long-time leading activist observed:

“As far as getting to the religious communities- to the people in the pew...that’s a very early start. Thank God it’s happening and it has been happening on minute scales for 30 years probably, but really minute. And then a little bit more, 20 years...and 10 years. The last 10 years has seen as significant growth in that kind of orientation. But it’s a very difficult thing to do to help people change their mindset. That’s what you’re trying to do. You’re trying to have them see the world they live in from a completely different perspective...that you have to do ecologically. But if you are also wanting to include their faith life in whatever they understand to be God, it really is tough.”⁵⁹

In spite of these challenges, they are hopeful that their activism and movement will spread, enabling a change in the popular value-system from a deeper perspective, and have a similar effect as the engagement of religious groups in the anti-slavery and civil rights movements. IP&L activists note that religions can move slowly to embrace change, but once they do they can serve as a powerful force for change:

“It’s the most conservative organization in the world in terms of change...But once it gets going there’s nothing that can stop it...It’s like the Civil Rights Movement you know? Black churches were there...and some to start the white churches, it took them a long time, and some never got on boards. But once they got on board that was the tipping point.”⁶⁰

The perspective of IP&L can be best described as a movement within a movement. IP&L acknowledges its links to the wider environmental movement, but sees itself as a distinct voice. Its activism integrates elements of social justice and transformation embedded within the context of climate change.

⁵⁹ Interview with Ohio IP&L

⁶⁰ Interview with CT IP&L and Baptist minister, May 3, 2012

CHAPTER SIX:

US RESEARCH FINDINGS PART TWO: INTERFAITH GRASSROOTS REGS, NRPE AND PARTNERS AND EVANGELICAL REGS

Introduction

This chapter constitutes part two of the US research findings section. It covers three groups of REGs-interfaith grassroots organizations; the National Religious Partnership for the Environment and their partners; and Evangelical Christian REGs. Each group of REGs will be discussed in sections that cover the major findings of the study.

Organizational history, mission and campaigns

Interfaith grassroots REGs:

In addition to IP&L, other grassroots interfaith REGs researched in this study include GreenFaith, the National Religious Coalition on Creation Care (NRCCC), Religious Witness for the Earth (RWE), Interfaith Moral Action on Climate (IMAC) and the Chesapeake Covenant Community (CCC). These organizations share many similarities with IP&L, though they are not as large and have a broader mission focus than IP&L's focus on a religious response to global warming, though each one has been engaged in climate change.

GreenFaith, which is based in New Jersey, was founded in 1992 by Jewish and Christian religious leaders who saw the need for a faith response to the environmental crises. Its mission is to “inspire, educate and mobilize people of diverse religious backgrounds for environmental leadership.” The three core values that motivate GreenFaith are: spirit, stewardship and justice.¹ GreenFaith, which originated as ‘Partners

¹ www.greenfaith.org/about/mission-and-areas-of-focus.org, accessed March 27, 2012

for Environmental Quality,’ was initially focused locally on New Jersey congregations and has since expanded into a national organization, working with congregations in 12 states across the US and with individual leaders from 28 states trained through their fellowship program. It continues to maintain a strong presence in New Jersey.

GreenFaith considers itself to be one of the oldest REGs in the US, first working with religious communities to further the link between religion and the Earth, and then focusing on promoting green energy and energy conservation in the state from 2003-2006. Its initial pilot program called ‘Lighting the Way’ involved installing 25 solar arrays on religious institutions around the state through a partnership with the Sun Farm Network. Other programs focused on working with houses of worship to help them ‘green’ their services and facilities, including the Sustainable sanctuaries project. After 2004, GreenFaith began to expand nationally with the start of their GreenFaith Fellowship and GreenFaith Certification programs. The fellowship provides an 18-month training course focused on faith and the environment for clergy and lay leaders. The certification program works with congregations to help them transition towards sustainable and eco-friendly practices and operations.²

Its membership base is composed of individuals as well as congregations, temples, and mosques, with a membership base that is about 65% Christian and Jewish, about 15% Muslim, and a combination of Hindu, Buddhist and New Age spiritual seekers or non-affiliated people. GreenFaith notes that the Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu membership has grown in recent years, and the organization works to increase their participation. GreenFaith’s core values of spirit, stewardship, and justice are key motivating factors and

² www.greenfaith.org/about/history, accessed May 30, 2012

it finds that these values are common to all the faith traditions they work with. Spirit refers to the natural world serving as a source of human inspiration and divine revelation, as well as an embodiment of the divine for some traditions. Their stewardship principle is meant to reflect the extent of power humans possess over the natural world, and highlight the sense of responsibility that power entails to respect it and treat it with compassion. The principle of justice is related to environmental justice and the right of every human being, regardless of race or income, to live in a clean environment, with religious groups highlighting the need for equity and fairness. Climate change was one of the first issues addressed by GreenFaith, given its widespread impacts, and has been a focus for about twenty years. In addition to their fellowship and certification programs, GreenFaith engages in national advocacy efforts focusing on campaigns such as control of toxins in the environment.³

Religious Witness for the Earth (RWE) is an interfaith activist network based in Massachusetts, which originated in 2001 in response to the Bush administrations' denial of climate change and plans for the extension of oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Most of its campaigns have focused around climate change. RWE's focus is termed as "a national, independent, interfaith network dedicated to creating a society in which human beings live in loving, just relationships with one another and with all Creation."⁴ REW is the brain-child of Unitarian Minister, Fred Small, as well as United Church of Christ Minister, Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvazian and Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb. It is a volunteer run organization focused on organizing activist campaigns and marches,

³ GreenFaith interview, April 6, 2012

⁴ <http://rweearth.org/>, accessed June 2, 2013

and targeting regional policymakers in New England as well as the federal government in Washington DC. It's first major event--with fifty faith leaders lobbying Congress and the administration, which concluded with a protest of ANWR in front of the Department of Energ--was an act of civil disobedience, with a 150 participants. 22 clergy members, including Rev. Small and Rev. Bullit-Jonas of REW, as well as clergy from various faiths were arrested during the event with the message that this is an act of public witness against the sin of climate change.⁵ The message to the Bush administration was that creation is sacred and destroying ANWAR is sacrilege.⁶ Other major events include climate vigils held across New England capitals in support of the regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and protesting the Tar Sands/ Keystone XL pipeline. RWE board members are also active in their faith traditions and other organizations, furthering the connection between religion and ecology through their ministry participation in interfaith conferences and speaking out about the restoring the right relationship with the Earth, thus providing a religious witness to the present state of ecological degradation. For instance, RWE Co-Chair, Rev. Margaret Bullit-Jonas, was a speaker at the NCCC conference on climate change, as well as the Episcopal Church's event with the Church of Sweden focusing on national and international religious responses to climate change.⁷

The National Religious Coalition on Creation Care (NRCCC) is a volunteer-run advocacy organization with focus primarily on the Judeo-Christian faiths. It was founded in 1999 with the aim of developing a religious ethic of the forest in response to the

⁵ Rev. Fred Small, 'The Greater Sacrifice' (2009) in the Rev. Sally G. Bingham, 'Love God, Heal Earth, St. Lynn's Press: Pittsburgh PA, pp. 11-13

⁶ Gottlieb, Roger (2006), *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, p. 468

⁷ Personal Observation 2012-2013

campaign against logging Redwoods in the West coast. Religious leaders gather on an annual basis in Washington DC to present their environmental positions to Congress, the White House, and other governmental agencies. While the initial focus was on conservation of national forests, it has since expanded to include climate change, endangered species, wilderness protection, ending mountain top-removal, and the protection of national parks from commercial development. Its emphasis on several major issues areas has been marked by the development of religious ethic documents concerning forests, climate change, and most recently, the oceans. NRCCC's ethic is based on biblical teachings as they relate to the human relationship with God, neighbors and nature. This ethic, seen as culminating the essence of Christian and Jewish teaching regarding the natural world, expresses NRCCC's purpose by stating "The Earth is God's and all that is in it; Thou shall not destroy the earth nor despoil the life thereon."⁸

The NRCCC's annual advocacy week in Washington DC is marked with a creation care breakfast during which a leader is awarded the 'steward of creation award,' based on the Congressional Medal of Honor, for exemplary work in environmental care. The award has been awarded to religious and secular leaders including Dr. Jim Hansen of NASA, Rev. Tom English of the Presbyterian Creation Care program, Bill Mckibben, the founder of 350.org, as well as Dr. Luisa Van Sustern, who led the creation of the Interfaith Moral Action on Climate (IMAC). Over the years Jewish, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Evangelical and Pentecostal groups have been engaged with the NRCCC, noting there is a commonality between these faiths on the necessity of creation care.⁹ One program of NRCCC, called Opening the Book of nature, had a slogan 'three not two' that stressed

⁸ http://www.nrccc.org/Resources/Principles/NCCC_Ethic_of_Creation.pdf, accessed June 2, 2013

⁹ http://nrccc.org/site/Topics/About/washingtonWeek_part1.html, accessed June 2, 2013

how Christianity, in addition to emphasizing the scriptures and Jesus Christ, also needed to look at the third manifestation of the word, which is creation. The analogy is that of a having a two versus three-legged stool--it just does not work.¹⁰

The Interfaith Moral Action on Climate (IMAC) is a recently formed coalition of religious group, which was founded in November of 2011. It has a diverse membership base with Baha'i, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Native American, as well as Christian (Catholic, Evangelical, Protestant) members. IMAC was formed in response to what they call the climate crisis and the greatest imperative of our time. IMAC views inaction on climate change as immoral, and formed to call on elected officials, civic and business leaders, and households to take immediate action on the climate emergency. Part of the motivation has been the inaction of the US Congress on climate legislation. IMAC worked to develop a 'report card' for each member of congress, giving them a grade on their climate action, with an overall 'F' for the US Congress as a whole. IMAC's first major action took place around April, Earth day 2012, with a weeklong series of events, including a march in Washington DC, an interfaith service, and a day of action on Capitol Hill. During the day on the Hill IMAC members visited each congressional office with their message.¹¹

The Chesapeake Covenant Community (CCC) is an interfaith, mainly Jewish and Christian, organization focused on dealing with environmental issues concerning the Chesapeake Bay region. In that respect, it is a regional REG. CCC evolved as a result of a conference held in 2004 by the NCC-Eco Justice office called Sacred Orders, and it was first a Christian organization prior to becoming interfaith about three years ago. Due to this

¹⁰ NRCCC interview, May 3, 2012

¹¹ IMAC Media advisor and Congress Report Card, April 2012

transition, CCC was in the process of reorganizing. Its overall focus is on the Chesapeake Bay watershed region, with an emphasis on the importance of water that has to be thought of in terms of natural boundaries. Water is a central issue for CCC, serving as the cornerstone of their activities, and is seen as the ‘canary in the goldmine’ that indicates the overall health of the environment. CCC’s work is focused on working with congregations, helping to form green teams and build their stewardship ethic. CCC sees its role as that of a broker for the religious community, helping their members connect with religious and secular organizations, including IP&L, interested in the same issues, such as energy. They also serve as consultants and ‘translators’ between secular organizations including the League of Conservation Voters, the Sierra Club, the Save the Bay Foundation and faith communities. CCC notes that often secular groups want to reach out to congregations, but do not know how to speak to them or what language to use, CCC is a resource in building that dialogue.¹²

NRPE Partners:

The National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE) is an interreligious organization, founded in 1993 and composed of four major US denominational bodies including the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC), the Coalition on Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) and the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN). Within the denominations represented by these organizations are additional partner organizations including the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change and the Reform Action Center, which represent or are a part of these larger organizations. The US Conference of Catholic

¹² Chesapeake Covenant Community Interview June 15, 2012

Bishops conducts its work in NRPE through the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change and its Environmental Justice Program. The National Council of Churches of Christ is a federation of 34 Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, and African American denominations, which engage with NRPE through its Eco-Justice Program. COEJL is an alliance of agencies and organizations that includes all four Jewish movements (reformed, conservative). EEN is a coalition of 23 Evangelical Christian programs and educational institutions.¹³ NRPE's composition and the congregations they represent account for about 85% of the US religious population representing the Judeo-Christian tradition with a mission centered on stewardship. NRPE's founding dates back to the late 1980s and early 1990s, with key events such as the writing of a letter by 34 leading scientists and Noble prize laureates asking for greater engagement from the world's religious leaders in the environmental crises in 1990. Religious leaders responded with their own letter and joint conference of religious and spiritual leaders that helped to build momentum for the faith-based environmental movement and the action of denominational bodies.

Other notable events include the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio and Time Magazine's naming Earth as the planet of the year. In short, religious leaders began to recognize that environmental degradation was having a substantial impact in all areas of life, including the Church's traditional missions, such as health, hunger and poverty alleviation. The USCCB founded their Environmental Justice Program at the time NRPE was established, and in 2006 formed the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change (CCCC) as a separate program outside of the Conference. The CCCC's aim was to work with other national

¹³ Schneek, John (April 2011) 'Funding International Climate Adaptation: Supporting Developing-Country Needs in the Absence of a Federal Climate Bill, policy brief, Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions, Duke University

Catholic organizations in support of the Church's climate change work. CCCC's approach is that of a bottom-up organization, targeting US Catholic parishes, schools and individuals, and working through other organizations such as Catholic Relief Services and the Catholic World Life Conference in order to reach them and disseminate their message. CCCC notes that with about 70 million Catholics in the US and about 18,000 parishes that can be a daunting task for a small organization, but they developed programs and 'networks within networks' to disseminate information and reach their target audience. Two such programs include the St. Francis Pledge and the 'Whose Under Your Footprint' campaign. CCCC's mission is driven by the US Bishop's 2001 statement on climate change, the Pope's messages on the environment and social justice, as well as Catholic Social Teaching.¹⁴ Other key concepts in CCCC's messaging revolve around the concepts of prudence, poverty, and the common good. Prudence, in particular, is similar to the precautionary principle in acknowledging the scientific consensus and the need to take action before it is too late. The emphasis on poverty and the common good places an emphasis on the human and moral dimensions of the issue.¹⁵

A close partner of CCCC, though not under the official NRPE umbrella, is the Franciscan Action Network (FAN). FAN, which draws its inspiration from St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi and the Franciscan movement, is focused on advocacy in the "matters of Justice, Peace and Care for Creation" through advocacy of the US Government and other Washington DC based institutions including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the Organization of American States on domestic as well as international

¹⁴ Interview with CCCC director, October 21, 2011

¹⁵ CCCC publication, distribute handout, May 2012

issues.¹⁶ FAN “hopes to bring a spirit of healing and reconciliation” through their advocacy work. FAN is composed of “US based ministries, institutions and persons following the spiritual and social movement begun...more than 800 years ago.”¹⁷ FAN’s emphasis lies in building a society based on “justice, peace and care for all of creation.”¹⁸

COEJL was also formed in 1993 in conjunction with NRPE and aimed as serving the focal point for Jewish denominational movements including Reform, Orthodox and Conservative movements. It was initially established under the Jewish Council of Public Affairs, an umbrella organization for the Jewish community with 125 local community relations councils which are located around the country at 14 national member agencies. COEJL’s aim was to “enact a Jewish programmatic policy response to the environmental crisis”, which was motivated by increasing Jewish community’s awareness about the need to protect the environment, mobilize it to become more energy efficient, and to advocate for the environment¹⁹. Specific programs were established to work with congregations, Jewish organizations, and other institutions to reduce their environmental impact with campaigns such as the Jewish Climate Covenant, which aimed to reduce greenhouse gas emission by 14% by 2014 for participating individuals and organizations.²⁰ Presently, the number of Jewish environmental organizations has expanded, with the Green Hevra, Jews Against Hydrofracking, and others. COEJL also frequently serves as an umbrella and coordinating organization for these other organizations²¹.

¹⁶ Franciscan Action Network, ‘Transforming the World in the Spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare’ Handout, obtained June 2012

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Interview with COEJL, May 2012

²⁰ Ibid; <http://coejl.org/jecc/>, last accessed September 22, 2013

²¹ Interviews with members of Jewish Environmental groups, May 2012

The National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) engages with NRPE through their Eco-Justice Program, which is designed as an education and advocacy model providing education, worship resources, as well as resources for individuals and congregations on how to engage with their policymakers. NCCC-Eco Justice has been involved in climate change issues for about 25 years and takes guidance from their communion members, whose concern stemmed from their desire to care for God's creation and God's people.²² NCCC has been strongly engaged with environmental justice issues over the years including climate justice and the income and racial inequalities that it stems from.

The NCCC Eco-Justice office works with numerous mainline protestant and orthodox denominations, and has served a key role in fostering green programs and dialogue in the US. It also serves as the US member of the World Council of Churches, which has been a strong advocate of climate justice at the global level. One of the churches which has been engaged with NCC-Eco Justice group is the Episcopal Church, which first established an environmental commission in 1991 during the General Convention. Their emphasis had been on the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) including a Genesis Covenant, which is an internal challenge aimed at reducing the church's greenhouse gas emissions. The Episcopal Church participates in a working group that provides guidance to the NCC Eco-Justice office, and also participates in advocacy work and congressional testimonies. Their engagement with NRPE is coordinated through the NCC offices, which shows an example of how different churches engage with the council.²³

²² Interview with NCCC Eco-Justice Program Director, June 7, 2012

²³ Interview with Episcopal Church environmental officer, May 22, 2012

The NCC Eco-Justice office has also served as a source of guidance for ministers interested in eco-theology. For instance, the founder of Eco-Justice Ministries, a minister in the United Church of Christ, found his work with the NCC as helpful in forming his own church's response. The Eco-Justice Ministries focuses on working with Christian churches in educational programs that help to foster awareness and values that rethink how human beings view their place and role in creation.²⁴

The Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) traces its roots back to the formation of NRPE, when it became the evangelical representative of the partnership in 1993. It works with its evangelical partner organizations to promote the ethic of creation care as well as to advocate for policies that reflect that mission. EEN was heavily engaged in efforts to lobby the administration on climate change prior to the 2012 Presidential election, galvanizing support for climate change legislation among secular environmental groups as well as partnering with Catholic organizations to support the 'creation care is a matter of life' message calling for support of EPA's more stringent regulations on mercury in coal fired power plant emissions. Going back to campaigns in the 1990s, EEN worked to build evangelical support for re-authorization of the Endangered Species Act when the act was targeted by Republican lawmakers for elimination, and was able to successfully defend the legislation. Another prominent EEN campaign was 'What Would Jesus Drive' (WWJD), which linked choices in transportation with moral obligations not to hurt your neighbors and creation. EEN is also involved with partners in countries already greatly impacted by climate change, such as Malawi, building support for climate adaptation and

²⁴ Interview, Eco-Justice Ministries, May 4, 2012

working with organizations to provide technologies to help poor communities deal with the negative consequences to their food and water production.

NRPE is viewed more as a ‘grass-tops than a grass-roots organization,’ given that its major constituent partners represent their respective religious hierarchies. They work through NRPE and their designated organizations to reach the top levels of their organizations, policymakers, as well as through their organizations to reach a local and congregational level of engagement. NRPE is often viewed by many REGs as an umbrella, or coordinating, organization that provides major funding support for some of its partner organizations. NRPE defines itself as an interreligious and not interfaith organization, noting that the partnership is based on ‘walking together separately,’ or under common founding principles, but while maintaining each religion’s own unique perspective rather than looking for a universalized message. In the Judeo-Christian tradition these shared and unifying principles are based on the belief that this world and everything that is in it belongs to God. Creation is seen as a gift from God for all, including future generations. Human beings’ role is act as its wise stewards, which includes care and love of their neighbors, as well as justice and equity for the most vulnerable. NRPEs sees the work they do as more of a vocation or calling than a career. They note that religions have a certain amount of staying power because they are built into local communities and cross generational as well as international lines. That is true even with a decline in religious affiliations for many.²⁵

A key motivator for NRPE members is the realization that creation is a gift from God and that responding to destructive actions is also a response to the Creator. The partnership draws on their shared biblical foundation with the Old Testament as the starting

²⁵ NRPE interviews December 2011 and March 2012

point. Additional texts, such as Genesis 2:15 (to till and tend the earth), Noah's story and the Noahatic covenant add "depth and intensity." Each partner draws on their own traditions, including rabbinical law for Jewish partners, the New Testament for Christian partners, and Catholic Social teaching for their Catholic partners.²⁶

Evangelical REGs:

In addition to EEN, this study will also include perspectives from other evangelical Christian REGs, namely Restoring Eden, Blessed Earth, A Rocha US, Evangelicals for Social Action, and the Young Evangelicals for Climate Action (YECA). It will further draw supporting perspectives from other Evangelical sources and organizations, such as Christians for the Mountains and the National Association for Evangelicals, as well as writings of prominent US Evangelical environmental leaders. Evangelicals for Social Action (ESA) was founded by Dr. Ron Sider, a prominent evangelical scholar in the 1970s, focusing on social equity issues. One of the first main evangelical statements that spurred that engagement was the Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern in 1973.

ESA's main concern is to:

"help that part of the Christian community that identifies as evangelical to develop more...biblically balanced concern of word and deed in the one hand and against a political agenda, not just one issue politics- not just a right winged politics effect- we don't believe in right winged politics. But we'd like to say pro-life, pro-poor, pro-family, pro-racial justice, pro-sexual integrity, pro-creation-care."

In the 1990s ESA worked with other religious leaders (including Paul Gorman, the first NRPE director) on a series of meetings that led to the establishment of NRPE. At that time, COEJL was formed and US Bishops and NCCC joined, but there was not an

²⁶ Interview with NRPE Executive Director, March 2012

evangelical partner, which led Dr. Sider to propose to host EEN as a project of the ESA. For the first 15 years of its existence, EEN was staffed and supported in daily operations through ESA prior to becoming its own independent non-profit organization. Young Evangelicals for Climate Action (YECA) is in turn a program currently managed under the auspices of EEN. YECA, which works with young evangelicals ages 18-30, targets young people in colleges and churches to join them. YECA takes a three-fold action approach, which includes mobilizing members of their own generation to take action, holding church leaders accountable and mobilizing them on climate change, and third to mobilize and hold political leaders accountable on this issue. YECA, which launched around 2012, was involved in supporting a creation care video contest and is also involved in a Creation Care Discipleship Project targeting Christian colleges and campuses to integrate creation care, sustainability, and stewardship into their daily academic and operational activities.²⁷

Restoring Eden (officially Christians in Conservation) was founded in the 1990s by Evangelical minister, Peter Illyn, who after an extensive 1000 mile hike came out convinced of the need to care for creation based on his religious beliefs.²⁸ He was confronted with the controversy over logging in the Pacific Northwest and the spotted owl, which pitted logging communities against the endangered spotted owl. Restoring Eden worked with EEN to develop a message that framed saving endangered species as a matter of faith, stating that God did not create these species for them to be made extinct. At the time, many conservatives in Congress had mounted an attack against the Endangered Species Act, and Restoring Eden along with EEN launched this campaign to show why endangered species should be protected. Restoring Eden is focused on working with groups

²⁷ YECA interview May 17, 2012

²⁸ <http://restoringeden.org/about/history>, accessed August 1, 2013

and congregations to bring them back to the wilderness, restore their connection with the divinity in nature, and educate them about ongoing environmental degradation such as coal and mountain top removal.

Blessed Earth is an evangelical Christian educational organization founded by Dr. Matthew Sleeth and his wife, Nancy Sleeth. The Sleeth's began to question their own affluent lifestyle after pondering that one of the greatest challenges facing the world is the state of environmental degradation. In responding to how to deal with this, they decided to simplify their lives. They moved into a smaller home, reduced their energy use, and founded Blessed Earth. Blessed Earth defines itself as "an educational nonprofit that inspires and equips people of faith to become better stewards of the earth."²⁹ Blessed Earth runs two major programs: the Seminary Stewardship Alliance (SSA) and Creation Care Year. SSA aims to work with covenant seminaries in integrating a care of creation and stewardship ethic into their curriculum and practices. Creation Care Year aims to work with influential churches across the US in exploring the concept and practice of stewardship and applying it to churches. Blessed Earth was awarded funding in 2012 to work on executing these programs over a 5 year period, and since 2008 has spoken to over 1,000 church, educational, media and environmental groups on "the biblical call to care for God's creation."³⁰

A Rocha USA is a conservation Christian organization. Its parent organization, A Rocha, is an international organization based in Portugal that works in 19 countries. A Rocha has its origins in evangelical Christianity and they consider their mission in the US to act as "bridge builders" between the conservation and Christian communities. A Rocha

²⁹ <http://www.blessedearth.org/about/mission-and-beliefs/>, accessed September 22, 2013

³⁰ Blessed Earth brochure, obtained 2012

is working to mobilize Christians in supporting the environment through hands-on conservation projects at home.³¹ A Rocha does not engage in political advocacy or lifestyle changing projects, and is deeply-embedded in science-based conservation and encourages interested groups to start a project in their community for which A Rocha will offer guidance. They view human beings as a part of the world with emphasis on participation in a thriving eco-system.

Stewardship/creation care, sacrifice and other religious beliefs linked with motivating REGs

Interfaith Grassroots REGs:

Stewardship and creation care are both concepts used by GreenFaith, NRCCC, RWE, IMAC, and CCC. There is much commonality in how these REGs interpret these concepts within key religious beliefs. Primarily the REGs note that the relationship between human beings and the natural world needs to be reconceptualized, where humanity is a part of this greater community and not distinct from it. Many groups, such as GreenFaith, RWE, and NRCCC, stress the humans from many different faith traditions find solace and divine/spiritual inspiration from spending time in nature, and that living in disconnect with the natural world creates a sense of false isolation from it. God, in Christian and Jewish traditions, is seen as communication with people through the natural world. Degradation of the Earth, the extinction of species, and destruction of habitats are viewed as a violation of the Ten Commandments as well as the teachings of Jesus. For instance, to build one's house on solid foundation such as rock, which is God's Kingdom, and not on sand or it will wash out to sea and be destroyed. GreenFaith, for instance, notes that while

³¹ A Rocha article, handout obtained in April 2012

most people in the US can name hundreds of products brands, many of them cannot name native animal and plant species in their region. Creation care and stewardship are at times used interchangeably, though creation care is seen as a term favored by evangelical Christians. The underlying message of REGs is that human beings do not own the Earth and other species or resources. They are called by God to care for them, use them with respect to equity and justice, and not to destroy them for present and future generations, as well as other species.³²

Some of the discussed REGs acknowledge critiques of the term stewardship as not reflecting the right relationship, but also note that given the extent of human power over the natural world, humanity also needs to acknowledge its responsibility and moral duty towards ‘creation.’ Stewardship is sometimes seen as maintaining the division between people and the world around them rather than being fully integrative. One Rabbi referred to the Jewish concept of ‘Shomer’- a guardian or protector--as being closer to right relationship between humans and their world, where people have the right to use it, but they don’t possess it. It is owned by God³³.

As members from RWE, IMAC and CCC expressed, the model they have in mind is a partnership with the community of life, with humans as one of many partners. They emphasize the call to care for your neighbors as yourself, which includes equitable and just treatment for the suffering and poor. Climate Change is seen as having an immediate impact on those communities, which is a violation of that principle. The REGs refer to the concepts embedded with ‘sacrifice’, such as restraint, reduced consumption and changing lifestyles, though they do not usually use the term directly. This is due in part to the

³² Interviews conducted with interfaith REGs, May-June, 2012

³³ Interview with Jewish environmental activist, and Rabbi, June 2012

negative association of sacrifice in the general public, but also many of the REGs do not view the required lifestyle changes as being a sacrificial act. They view it as a positive change, one that will enrich western lifestyles and not diminish them. As one NRCCC member mentioned, life in the west has been about quantity, not quality. NRCCC does use the concept of sacrifice when speaking with policymakers, since they believe that the need to sacrifice will become a key issue for the United States. They note that in the US, we need to make sacrifices by consuming less and using alternative energy sources. NRCCC views this cost, however, as the cost that is “directly connected with maintain one’s own integrity and not selling one’s soul.”³⁴

NRPE and Partners:

For NRPE and its constituent members, the concepts of stewardship and creation care represent some of their key messages regarding how people should interact with the natural world. Stewardship is perceived to reflect a specific practice, the ‘how’ of creation care. Creation care is viewed as the wider perspective, the call and edict from God to serve and protect the world for current and future generations. Other terms used include sustainability and eco-justice, and will vary in application between different denominations. Creation care is more commonly used in Evangelical circles and eco-justice if widely applied by the National Council of Churches. Jewish groups, including COEJL will refer to creation care and stewardship, but have other concepts based on Jewish teachings that resonate better with their audience-- Bal Taschkit or ‘do not waste,’ or by referring to the ‘mitzvah’ or commandments that relate to the practice of creation care. Catholic perspectives will stress stewardship, sustainability, and the common good.

³⁴ Interviews with NRCCC, May 2012

Tikkun Olam is another concept, which means to restore the world, and it resonates well with Jewish audiences in relation environmental issues. The notion of justice also resonates strongly in the COEJL, CCCC and NCCC frames. Most NRPE members support the concept and principle behind the sacrifice, noting that it is a powerful work with strong religious resonance for certain faith groups. The executive director of NRPE pointed out that while the word sacrifice has not been directly used, there was an active dialogue amongst NRPE members regarding its application. The struggle with the term sacrifice is traced back to its present negative connotations in popular culture, with one NRPE member noting that during World War II, sacrifice was accepted as a virtue when it came to giving up resources to serve the war effort. There is religious symbolism associated with sacrifice, especially for certain Christians, though its popular meaning is seen in such a negative light that NRPE members try to “talk about sacrifice without using the word sacrifice, because it’s makes people uncomfortable.”³⁵ CCCC also highlights that one of their messages talks about ‘sacrifice as freeing’--freeing lives of clutter, stuff, and leaving more room for personal growth including getting back in touch with nature.

NRPE members also note that the way religions frame sacrifice is different than the way it has been framed by the environmental movement, mainly as taking something away. They note that people are willing to sacrifice if it is done as an act of love for what they care about or the people in their lives, so sacrifice for someone is not received in the same light: “That’s one of the objections that some people have with the environmental community. You want me to give up my SUV... Whereas the notion of sacrifice within the faith community is sacrifice for someone else...action of love as opposed to I don’t like

³⁵ Interview with CCCC, October 2011

the way you live, and you need to do something rather than a notion which comes as a result of our love for God and other people.”³⁶ NRPE members talk about changing and simplifying lifestyles. For instance, CCCC has the ‘Whose Under Your Footprint’ campaign, which asks people to look at who is being impacted by their high emissions-- people living in poverty at home and in the Global South. They are encouraged to sign the Catholic Climate Covenant and take the St. Francis Pledge asking them to “pray, learn, assess, act and advocate”³⁷ to reflect on caring for God’s creation, seeing how they can take individual actions, being less wasteful, and advocate for the:

“Catholic principles of solidarity and stewardship creation in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.”³⁸

The EEN position on the terms sacrifice is slightly different in explicitly critiquing its implied messaging. Sacrifice is viewed as the wrong approach, its implications on self-denial and punishment are not consistent with the religious message they emphasize, and they do not see it as being motivational for people. EEN approaches looking at this as a transition and spiritual challenge from God--Christ as the ‘Risen Lord’ who is going to guide people on this journey in overcoming global warming. That may involve some pain and change along the way, but it is seen as ultimately rewarding. In the Christian context, EEN notes that eliminating pollution, moving the country towards sustainable energy, and learning what is more important in life in terms of loving others and spiritual growth cannot be construed as a sacrifice. Rev. Ball conceptualizes the Christian role in this movement against the “tyranny of global warming” as becoming “Christian agents of transformation

³⁶ NRPE interview December 2011

³⁷ CCCC Catholic Climate Covenant campaign materials, May 2012

³⁸ CCCC campaign materials, obtained May 2012

with hearts of a servant, rather than ascetic “global-warming spiritual superstars.”³⁹ In relation to sacrifice he notes:

“Extremes can capture the imagination. Both secular environmentalists and Christians can have extreme elements or strains of asceticism, of self-denial tinged with punishment, which can come to the fore in our minds when we begin to talk about what needs to be done...It is quite true that as Christians we should be ready to sacrifice when following the Risen LORD calls for it. We should even be ready to lay down our lives. However, the current *stereotype* of what “personal sacrifice” means in responding to global warming- a sour, dour, denial framing of our future driven by a guilt-punishment dynamic- is a recipe for failure in overcoming global warming. It’s as if all my talk about becoming more glorious and more free and more ourselves was really just some positive spin put on the real situation: we’re going to have to endure a time of deprivation- and we deserve it, too. Such an emotional and mental crouch is the opposite of what we need: a forward-leaning stance combined with a transformational mindset. Again, let me be clear. If at times in our journey of following the Risen LORD we are called to certain types of sacrifice, including of the material blessings of this life, we must be ready to do so with the anticipation that such sacrifices would actually bring freedom and joy...Our mindset needs to be that we are going to start doing climate friendly things, not that we are going to stop doing certain “bad” things. We need to be creative and discover common-sense solutions that others can implement. We can show others how a joyous, love-filled life today includes helping the Risen LORD overcome global warming together in this great cause of freedom.”⁴⁰

In short, most NRPE members are talking about transforming our current socio-political system and helping to re-claim the original meaning of sacrifice as ‘to make sacred’ rather than framing it in the negative terms commonly seen in popular culture.

Evangelical REGs:

Evangelical REGs, EEN, YECA, ESA, Blessed Earth, Restoring Eden and A Rocha view stewardship and creation care as central to their perspective on the human-

³⁹ Rev. Jim Ball (2010) *Global Warming and the Risen LORD: Christian Discipleship and Climate Change*, Evangelical Environmental Network: Washington DC, pp. 318,321

⁴⁰ Rev. Jim Ball (2010) pp. 315-321

environment relationship. Creation Care is viewed as the broader encompassing term, whereas stewardship is the practice of creation care. Some Evangelical groups, such as A Rocha, do not make a strong differentiation between the two, given that their primary focus is hands-on conservation. In Evangelical contexts, creation care is major underlying theme in which the message of environmental protection is conceptualized. Creation care is seen as a biblical calling, a mandate from God to care for his creation. Not doing so is equivalent to disobeying God's law. Global warming, in particular with its large-scale human impacts, is viewed as a major challenge that can be overcome by faithfully following as Christ's disciples. EEN defines creation care as: "caring for God's creation by stopping and preventing activities that are harmful (e.g. air and water pollution, species extinction), and participating in activities that further Christ's reconciliation of all creation to God. Doing creation-care fills us with the joy that only comes from doing the will of God."⁴¹ As Restoring Eden notes, destroying what God created is seen as the opposite of "faithful and wise stewardship." Blessed Earth points out that they use the language of creation care, even if in practice it is the same as what environmentalists do, in order for their message to resonate with people who read the bible literally. They stress that the message of creation care is found throughout the bible, not only in Genesis, but exemplified by all of Jesus' miracles, which, all but one, were miracles of recreation. ESA and YECA further note that stewardship was not intended to mean 'dominion' in the sense of domination, but in the sense of watching over and caring, with humans as representatives of God, created in the image of God and meant to act in his reflection.

⁴¹ www.prayerforcreationacre.creationcare.org/blog.php?=15

In relation to sacrifice, as described above, EEN does not support the notion of sacrifice as it is applied in popular terminology, though ESA, YECA, and Restoring Eden do refer to the notion of sacrifice, especially as sacrificial love is concerned--sacrifice as an act of love rather than an act of self-punishment. EEN talks about the concept of the 'five loves' while living life faithfully as disciples, witnesses, and by "putting His Lordship into practice." The five great loves refer to Jesus' teachings: "to love one another as Christ loves us; to love our neighbors; to love our enemies; to love "the least of these", and to love God Back."⁴² ESA further points out that there are clear indications in scripture that non-human creation is not just for human consumption. Even in reference to the end times, when Christ returns, creation is describes as groaning, but even the trees, the flowers and the rivers will be free of their bondage and decay, in short seeing this as a restoration of creation upon the 'end times' rather than a destruction of the earth.

Restoring Eden mentions sacrifice in the context of justice, especially when doing mission trips to places impacted by coal mountain-top removal and seeing the direct impact on people nearby. Restoring Eden observes that because Evangelicals have a personal relationship with Jesus with a focus on fighting personal temptation, approaches towards global issues such as poverty are often individual. For example, sponsoring a child or taking other individual action is easier to pursue in the evangelical church than dealing with 'big systems.' Blessed Earth approaches creation care with a basic, but motivational message that says you should care for the earth because God told you to. This message is further echoed by the National Association of Evangelicals in stating that "Loving God means obeying." Obeying includes caring for creation--created by God and entrusted to

⁴² Creation Care, Fall 2010 'Life and Hope for the People of the Gulf', EEN, p. 16

humans. It also means ‘loving the least of these,’ or caring for the poor who are impacted by the changing climate and other ecological disasters such as the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.⁴³ EEN also points out that for evangelical Christians every issue is a moral and faith-based issue, grounded in being faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Issue Framing: collective action frames applied to climate change

Interfaith Grassroots REGs:

Grassroots based REGs, including GreenFaith, NRCCC, RWE, CCC and IMAC, utilize certain frames that resonate with their religious messaging when approaching their target audience. Frames utilized by these REGs include —climate, economic and intergenerational justice; love of God and creation; finding spiritual sustenance in nature; and confronting fear through religious journey. GreenFaith emphasizes the need to focus on justice issues at home and abroad, and points out that secular ENGOs and some religious groups often tend to overlook the domestic issues concerning environmental racism and inequity in the US. GreenFaith tries to balance this approach by looking at climate justice/environmental justice issues in the context of toxic pollution, plants, and the bias it perceives the environmental movement has historically had towards cities by not seeing them as a part of the ‘environment.’ NRCCC and RWE point out the massive consequences of climate change, such as drought, that have historically been known to destroy civilizations. They also point out the disproportionate impact that western countries have had in causing the climate crisis. They perceive that environmentalists are often labeled (not always fairly) as caring only about polar bears and trees, but not people. GreenFaith

⁴³ Boorse, Dorothy (2011) Loving the Least of These: Addressing a Changing Climate, a Conversation Piece from the National Association of Evangelicals, National Association of Evangelicals

finds that they have a greater emphasis on the impact on poor communities and people of color than some mainstream environmental groups. NRCCC stresses that for any person of the Bible, God's primary intent was for this world was for human beings to do justice with love, mercy, and compassion, and to walk humbly. None of those principles are expressed by destructive and unjust behavior as exemplified by extreme energy initiatives.⁴⁴ REGs frame their message in the context of moral and social justice, relying on their religious beliefs and values as the central message. In the Jewish context, NRCCC noted that social justice was already a major focus but linking social justice with environmental justice proved to be a challenge because some people saw the two as distinct issues.

All the REGs concerned observe that while they work in an interfaith and multi-denominational setting, it is best to frame messaging according to each group's distinct tradition. Most of their audiences are congregations, religious leaders, denominations, faith based groups and political elites, so having a message tailored to each specific faith rather than universal statements is more effective. Another element of these REGs is finding spirituality and nature and reconnecting with it. GreenFaith, NRCCC, and RWE all noted that for many faith traditions, their connection with God came from spending time in the wilderness and how powerful those experiences can be for encouraging people to change their lifestyles and consumption patterns. NRCCC gave the example that instead of the temple, Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days to have a more personal experience with the spiritual world and of God. GreenFaith refers to environmental discipleship and revitalizing people's faith and spiritual lives through a stronger connection with the environment.

⁴⁴ Interview with NRCCC, May 8 2012

All the REGs strongly emphasize that US culture became dominated by seeing material goods as measures of worthiness and happiness. They point out that money does not buy happiness, and in the US people could benefit from reducing consumption and focusing more on quality of life versus quantity. To quote NRCCC:

“We’ve got to get back to the basics. Nobody is anybody because of what you’ve got. As Jesus said, a person’s worth can’t be measured in terms of the abundance of your possessions and in America we’ve tried to do that and we need to forget it and it doesn’t work anyway because nobody ever is satisfied, it that’s what you’re trying to measure yourself by.”⁴⁵

Conspicuous consumption cannot buy happiness, so greater emphasis must be placed on improving the quality of life. REGs also express that they work within a broader accountability and longer timeframes than immediate needs and electoral cycles. They find that religious beliefs can resonate deeply with people and be a more powerful motivator than continuing to look solely at the financial and scientific bottom line, but instead “to hear from voices that address our imaginations, and our souls, and our conscience.”⁴⁶ CCC provides the examples of reclaiming water rituals in the Jewish and Christian traditions. For instance having a Seder focused on water for Jews, and for Christians talking about baptism with water--both in reference to the rejuvenating and life sustaining qualities of water.⁴⁷ REGs also rely on practical approaches when dealing with congregations, understanding that they need to balance the budget and maintain operations. So if a congregation is focused on energy efficiency that is a good starting point for further engagement.

NRPE and Partners:

⁴⁵ Interview with NRCCC, May 8 2012

⁴⁶ Interview with REC co-chair, May 16 2012

⁴⁷ CCC interview June 15, 2012

NRPE and its partner organizations utilize various frames to express their messaging on climate change. The frames utilized include justice for the poor, God's mandate to call for creation, and long-term time scales and hope. NRPE's messaging includes common themes, but is adapted by each partner organization based on their own teachings and audience. For instance, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change has the St. Francis Pledge, while COEJL is working on encouraging Jewish communities to reduce their carbon footprint by 14% by 2014 as part of the next Shmita year, meaning a year of rest, or "Sabbath" for the land.⁴⁸ For all the partners, a common theme is centered on the broader notion of social justice, with climate or environmental justice seen as a subset of the wider concept.⁴⁹ NRPE has partners who engage with climate negotiations and also communicate with faith leaders in countries most adversely impacted by climate change, such as Bangladesh, Malawi, Sudan and Nepal. They have education campaigns about the notion of economic justice at the global level, with local campaigns that also focus on justice issues in the US dealing with pollution impacts from toxic chemicals and energy production. The director of NRPE, for example, is part of the NAACP's advisory panel on their climate program.⁵⁰

NRPE members note that standing up for the most vulnerable is a part of their religious mandate, while noting that the wealthier countries, such as the US who contribute greatly to carbon emissions, need to take responsibility for their actions. The NCCC emphasizes that they do not separate human and non-human creation in their messaging about the vulnerable. While some environmental groups may focus more on the non-

⁴⁸ <http://coejl.org/resources/shmita-sabbath-for-the-land/>, accessed June 11, 2013

⁴⁹ Interview with RAC, May 15, 2012

⁵⁰ NRPE interview with March 23, 2012

human aspect, the niche that religious groups fill aims to bridge that void, with human beings seen as an interrelated part of the ‘environment.’⁵¹ For the faith community, a key issue is always working to ‘integrate issues within a wider frame,’ meaning that religions had multiple aspects of social justice including climate change as well as other concerns, such as health care and unemployment. So unlike groups focused exclusively on the environment, they have to take multiple aspects of an issue under consideration. They work to link climate change with poverty, human health, and concerns that relate more to traditional ministries that are familiar and understandable to their audience.

NRPE mentioned that one way in which they framed the message to Senator Warner was by discussing the link between climate change and security--the destabilizing effects of water or land resource conflicts and refugee crisis. This is relevant to faith groups who have faith based relief and development agencies that deal with issues related to displacement and conflict. CCCC also stresses that people can perceive the environment issue as being distinct from their core faith concerns and see it as an external, add on problem. CCCC is working with their Catholic audience to link Catholic teaching and ancient religious texts with modern day environmental problems, and show that these concerns are not a new ‘spin,’ but have always been the cornerstone of their faith. NRPE views human beings as having a unique place in the natural world and tries to maintain a balance between that and having a respect for nature. A unique place, in short, is not equivalent to being able to use other species and ecosystems as we please. The justice

⁵¹ Interview with NCCC, June 7, 2012

component is extended to the treatment of nature in general, seen in Judeo-Christian teachings as declared to be good by God.⁵²

NRPE members, with their multiple faith-based networks, can connect with hierarchical organizations at the top-down level, but then work with local organizations to have the message resonate with the general public. NRPE members emphasize that the local context is critical in raising awareness and making it seem real to everyday people. In that sense, COEJL points out that focusing on smaller aspects of climate change, such as energy conservation or toxic pollutants, can help people grasp the impact in a direct context. Climate change can otherwise become an overwhelming issue to frame and translate since many people do not see the connection between parts per-million of carbon dioxide and their lives. For instance COEJL, as an umbrella organization, helps to connect the issue nationally creating a feeling ‘movement and solidarity’. But as a COEJL board members observes: “there’s almost an invisible baton handoff from once COEJL or one of its sister groups have done their work and a local congregation is excited to get involved then they need to know about local utility rebates for an energy audit...or about the meeting in two weeks to support offshore wind as you know at the state level with people of faith well represented, and national offices don’t and can’t and shouldn’t do that.”⁵³

That broader, more holistic perspective, which focuses on the wider aspect of climate/environmental issues within an intergenerational time-scale and moral-bound perspective, is what NRPE members view as the unique contribution of the faith community to the environmental discourse. They work with secular ENGOS and value their contributions, but note that these groups have been (sometimes unfairly) characterized as “caring more about polar bears than people.”⁵⁴ In other words, the secular groups are perceived as not framing their message in a way that clearly includes human beings as part of the environmental equation. The Sierra Club and World Wildlife Fund among others

⁵² Interviews with NRPE members, October 2011-June 2012

⁵³ COEJL/ GWIPL interview May 10, 2012.

⁵⁴ NRPE member interview, October 2011

have ongoing partnerships with many faith groups⁵⁵ and welcome their engagement, so while that perception does not hold true for every secular ENGO, and many utilize different approaches, the perception of the environmental movement as distanced from people remains in the public context. As NCCC observes:

“I don’t know where they come from, what motivates them (secular ENGOs). I just know their particular job is to work on environmental issues; our particular job is to work to protect all of God’s creation. So, we just have a different way we frame it and...we do ministry in that regard...but the message is definitely different. Or framed differently, our language is different...so natural resources, a word that the secular environmental community uses, in my office we do not use that word because we are God centric not human centered, so there is no such thing as a resource for human consumption, it is a gift from God. So you see the difference in framing?...Other examples is that we rarely use the word environment, it’s creation, it’s God’s creation, it’s God’s world. So again, it’s a different language and a different way of perceiving the world.”⁵⁶

NRPE members also point out that the ideological divide in the country along ideological lines can prevent a segment of the population from accepting the message of climate science, which often extends to acceptance of environmental group messaging. Religious denominations often reflect the ‘broad spectrum of society,’ with members on both sides of the aisle. Consequently they will frame their message relative to their core teachings and emphasize how these actions are a part of their core faith values. A key message stressed by NRPE members is adaptation and mitigation measures for poor and vulnerable populations, impacts of pollution, and other forms of environmental degradation. The human focus then, is stronger for a segment of the population seen as the most threatened and disproportionately affected. One member noted that religious groups engaged in the Jubilee debt forgiveness campaign where the linkages between the issues

⁵⁵ <http://www.sierraclub.org/ej/downloads/faithinactionreport2008.pdf>, accessed June 11, 2013

⁵⁶ NCCC interview with CC, June 7, 2012

of environmental degradation and poverty became evident.⁵⁷ Faith groups also emphasize that they can reach their audience at a different level than secular groups, being able “to touch people at their core...their core values and beliefs...environmentalists like the Sierra Club or Green Peace would never be able to tap that.”⁵⁸

Evangelical REGs:

Evangelical groups use a number of varying frames in relation to environmental issues. EEN and YECA address climate change directly and often through political activism. They work to re-frame the climate change debate by focusing mainly on humanitarian consequences, especially for disadvantaged populations. Justice, as noted by some evangelical leaders, can be a contentious term due to its historical association with the US liberal movement. In principle, EEN agrees with the concept of climate justice, but frames it as a matter of fairness, loving your neighbors, and loving the least of these. They emphasize using terminology that is likely to ‘give you a hearing,’ so being perceived as telling people what the right thing to do is can be problematic. EEN also does not like to portray evening out the amount of emissions from each country as just, because it can be seen as raising the emissions threshold for everyone. As EEN phrased:

“Justice from a biblical point of view is that everybody has what they need to live their lives that God intends for them. Not that everybody has the same amount of whatever it is...Fairness but more the final...the real ultimate thing is love. That’s the real motivator, the real root of this is loving others.”⁵⁹

⁵⁷ RAC interview May 2012

⁵⁸ Interview with CCCC, October 21, 2011

⁵⁹ Interview with EEN November 4, 2011

Restoring Eden also does not utilize the climate justice frame, though agrees with the principle of it. Instead of talking about statistical data and abstract concepts of how much damage is done by practices such as mountain top removal, Restoring Eden prefers bringing in people impacted by these practices and letting them tell their stories to show the actual impact. They believe that seeing this direct negative impact will resonate better than speaking about coal-use reduction for its own sake, believing that once people see that connection they will more willing to be taught about changing their energy use. Restoring Eden also points out that it is difficult even to discuss justice or bring in speakers from impacted areas in part due to the sheer scope of environmental issues and the underlying questions they raise about the present workings of society that many people do not wish to face.

A Rocha stresses having a different message or a different frame depending on the audience. Some of the evangelical groups note that they sometimes work to ‘correct bad theology’ or theology related to the modern interpretation of the end times often linked with the wise use movement. This is a set of beliefs associated with some conservative evangelicals who believe that the earth was made disposable by God, and Jesus returned will only be sped up by its destruction. Evangelical REGs work to show how a literal interpretation calls for care of creation and stewardship, and has many edicts against its destruction. That being said, Restoring Eden and YECA explain that it is best being with people who are either sympathetic, have not made the faith-ecology connection, or are open to the message rather than trying to work on the small percentage who are completely opposed to the environmental message. In those instances, they note that changing that level of “cognitive dissonance” and entrenched beliefs takes multiple attempts and is less

likely to succeed. Even seeing the biblical evidence can lead some to strengthen their previous convictions if forced that to have the desired effect. A message of hope is also important since many people feel overwhelmed by the sheer scope of climate change or other ecological degradation, and a feeling of helplessness does not entice action. The evangelical REGs target both evangelical and other Christian groups and individuals for engagement, however they highlight how significant it is to gain support for climate/environment issues among the US evangelicals, in particular the conservative evangelical Christian audience given their extent of political influence. They also note that given all the scientific evidence of ongoing ecological crises, it is evident that urgent action is required, however those arguments do not resonate with many people. The advantage of appealing to values and beliefs, in particular religious beliefs, is that they can tap into people's 'hearts' which can bring a deeper level understanding than just seeing the 'facts.'

The approaches the evangelical groups utilize vary depending on the type of influence they seek to have. Climate change, in particular, is a highly contested issue among some American Evangelicals, with support growing in recent years on the need to take action, as indicated by the signing of an 'Evangelical Declaration on Global Warming' in 2006. Several organizations address climate change and "creation care" from different approaches--political advocacy and cultural change. The Evangelical Environmental Network was founded in 1994 and became one of the main NRPE organizations. It has been a leader in providing an Evangelical response to climate change, pushing for greater support in the Evangelical community, emphasizing the biblical role of creation care, and calling for comprehensive climate legislation. According to a prominent Evangelical theologian:

“There are clear indication in different scriptures that the non-human creation is not just for human use and consumption, it is that God intends for people to use it and I think we should...nothing wrong with shaping it and developing it and using it in those kinds of ways- always with the respect for sustainability...but there are other passages that talk about that it should be for the glory of God...so the created order is not just for human consumption.”⁶⁰

One innovative campaign launched by Rev. Jim Ball of EEN in 2002 was titled “What Would Jesus Drive.” EEN would not oppose ‘development,’ but emphasizes living life as Jesus would. Hence, the WWJD campaign was aimed at improving US fuel efficiency standards and encouraging the use of more fuel efficient cars. It was a highly successful media campaign with over 4000 stories.⁶¹ For EEN, creation care is framed as “a matter of life.” One example of how this frame was extended includes the Mercury and the Unborn campaign, in which EEN partnered with Catholic groups such as Catholic Coalition on Climate Change to advocate for more stringent coal power plant standards proposed by the EPA, which would limit the amount of mercury release into the air. EEN and the Catholic organizations successfully argued that caring for the unborn (both are anti-abortion) means more than opposing abortion, it also means making sure the fetus and mother are not exposed to harmful pollutants, thus justifying support for this regulatory measure.

Other evangelical organizations do not have such a politically open stance on climate change. They work with a section of the population that is resistant and skeptical about climate change, mistrusts the science, and prides itself on minimizing government intervention. Blessed Earth, for example, focuses on greening conservative evangelical

⁶⁰ Interview with Evangelicals for Social Action, May 16, 2012

⁶¹ Interview with EEN November 4, 2011

seminaries, churches, and Evangelical Christians. They support the science of climate change, but do not lead their efforts with climate change because it would serve as a deterrent for their audience. Blessed Earth tries to refrain from engagement in direct political action, such as lobbying or protests, with the belief that “the system will take back what the culture hasn’t granted.”⁶² Their approach is to tie creation care with other conservative values believing that those who believe in a literal interpretation of the bible should take note of the message about caring for the Earth, as well as living simply, fulfilling their needs without taking too much. As stated by Blessed Earth:

“To a church... a portion of the American church which has been very content to speak on certain sexually related issues – abortion and gay marriage for example, but we haven’t come out and said you know you should shop less...to me that’s the real power of getting the more conservative elements of American Christianity engaged in this issue is there are people to whom if you say you should do this because God told you to, they will.”⁶³

Another REG with an Evangelical foundation, Restoring Eden, works with Christians through projects that expose them to the natural world as well as to the environmental problems facing local communities such as mountain top removal for coal extraction. Restoring Eden takes college age students to week-long trips in Appalachia, addressing the climate change issue through exposure to the problem. They ask the participants to conduct health surveys, interviewing local residents about increasing health concerns and mortalities, thus galvanizing their support for improved oversight of extractive industries as well as the need for alternative sources of energy. They tie back those findings to the concepts of sustainability and justice with direct evidence of how

⁶² Blessed Earth interview, May 2012

⁶³ Blessed Earth interview, May 2012

those practices harm communities. The students, who reportedly are often not environmentally focused when entering the trips, respond to this message. Some of the survey data collected was used in testimonies, and many students go on engage in advocacy on the issue. This direct exposure to human and ecological impacts coupled with a Christian message of care for creation and neighbors helps to transform mindsets.⁶⁴

The US branch of A Rocha, a conservation based Evangelical Christian international NGO, does not engage in direct political activism but prefers to focus on conservation projects that are grounded in local community, often congregation driven initiatives, serving as a bridge between often polarized partisan viewpoints. As the director of A Rocha USA said:

“It’s not just the head, it’s the heart. You know, we appeal all day long to people with statistics about, you know, CO2 parts per million and species extinction and everything else but we, people don’t readily change based just on information, it takes a change of heart, and again that’s where you have to get at what they value and what they value is quite often driven by what they believe. And that’s true, and that’s true for people of faith and it’s true for people who are not of faith.”⁶⁵

In framing the debate about consumption, the A Rocha director also noted that defining the problem as over consumption in the US is “like putting lipstick on a pig, I just call it greed.”⁶⁶ These are very basic terms framing the consumption discussion as what should be an acknowledged Christian sin.

A common theme for these evangelical REGs is their emphasis on working with and influencing young people as well as seminarians in training. There is a wide-spread recognition that shifting entrenched viewpoints is more challenging. Some evangelicals

⁶⁴ Interview with Blessed Earth and Restoring Eden, 2012

⁶⁵ Interview with A Rocha, January 2012

⁶⁶ A Rocha Interview, 2012

also note that American evangelism has experienced a shift towards the center over the past 10 years and that is especially evident in young people. For YECA members' creation care is a core part of their faith. As observed by the ESA founder:

“What’s happened in the last ten years, the Evangelical center has slowly emerged. And that evangelical center has increasingly picked up a concern for a broader agenda. And in 2004, the National Association of Evangelicals, which is the largest Evangelical network in the country—it represents about 30 million Evangelicals essentially...And the NAE adopted the document that called for the health of nation. And that document says that faithful Evangelical civic engagement must have a biblically balanced agenda. And it goes on to spell it out in terms of yes it has a conservative position on abortion to save the wife, and yes you know the traditional understanding that marriage is between a man and a woman, but also a strong concern for the poor. That’s the longest section. A very fine statement on environmental concerns and that’s called creation care...So that broader agenda that ESA has been promoting for several decades is now the official position of the largest Evangelical network in the country. And more and more Evangelicals embrace in the center embrace that whole agenda.”⁶⁷

Blessed Earth also targets seminarians with their initiative to green conservative seminaries, embedding creation care throughout their education. As the development director of Blessed Earth notes, their focus is to go after the people who will be preaching to the people in the pews. Many REG members interviewed noted how this type of ‘ecological’ focus was missing from their own seminary experience or during ministry training. A Rocha finds that, similarly to IP&L, they often serve as a home for the ‘green sheep,’ those who feel alone in their congregations in their ecological views as well as those who feel isolated as Christians in secular settings. A Rocha provides a home for ‘bridging’ those two passions in a conservation context.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Interview with ESA, May 16, 2012

⁶⁸ Interview with A Rocha USA, January 17, 2012

While the reception of the creation care message has improved and looks likely to gain further support, some Evangelical REGs note that the challenges involved include a mistrust of science and politicization of the environment as a campaign of the liberal left. The linkage between issues such as abortion and environmentalism also tend to lead to distrust among more conservative audiences. The controversies around evolution also further the distrust of science, as it is difficult for certain creationists to believe science in one field and not the other without questioning their larger worldview. As the director of Restoring Eden observed when he asked a creationist friend why he tried to prove Genesis I was literal, his friend remarked that “if I can’t trust the first book of the bible is true then I can’t trust anything else in the bible is true.”⁶⁹ In other words, Restoring Eden learned how challenging it was to ask people to face that “cognitive chasm” and question even a part of their worldview without raising further insecurities.

Blessed Earth, which explicitly avoids using the term climate change, focuses on fostering lifestyle changes and living practices in support of creation care, but also in a transformation of high-paced material consumption oriented western lifestyles. For instance, Nancy Sleeth’s book, *Almost Amish*, presented a set of practices aimed towards simplifying lifestyles, using fewer resources, and spending more time with family and friends. In this way *Almost Amish* did not frame their message as one of deprivation, but rather of enrichment and spiritual growth through practices such as ‘keeping the Sabbath’ focused on taking a day of rest and a break.⁷⁰

Policy Beliefs and Advocacy Coalitions

⁶⁹ Restoring Eden Interview, May 2012

⁷⁰ Sleeth, Nancy (2012) *Almost Amish: One Woman’s Quest for a Slower, Simpler, More Sustainable Life*, Tyndale House Publishers: Carol Stream, Illinois

Interfaith Grassroots REGs:

Interfaith REGs, including GreenFaith, NCCC, RWE, CCC and IMAC, utilize science based understanding of climate change and other environmental issues to engage in a range of advocacy coalitions involving both secular and religious partners primarily at the national level, but with a looser network of affiliations globally. These REGs accept the finding of scientists regarding climate change and the damaging consequences of inaction. IPCC reports and interactions with scientists from NASA and NOAA help to guide their need for action as well as policy choices. Due to their small size, and unlike some of the secular ENGOS, these REGs do not have the budget and staff capacity to hire scientists, so they rely on information from some of these secular organizations to help guide their decision-making and calls for activism. There are a variety of approaches among the interfaith REGs, which include a mix of political advocacy, lobbying legislators, participating in protest marches, as well as working with administration officials on ethics statements, proposed legislation, and community watershed plans. It should be noted that one of the differences between secular ENGOS and faith-based groups is that while ENGOS tend to focus more on campaigns/advocacy work, the faith groups usually use a mix of advocacy work with lifestyle change support. This point was made by GreenFaith:

“The mainstream environmental movement is focused largely on political advocacy and I would say we are something that is connected to but different from that because we really do work not only on advocacy but on individual behavior and through those things on getting people to identify and clarify their values and then to build their lives consistently in relationship to those values”⁷¹

⁷¹ Interview with GreenFaith, April 2012

Interfaith REGs also emphasize that given a large degree of overlap in the issues covered, they are not the “Sierra Club with prayer.”⁷² That is not say anything negative about the Sierra Club, which is a frequent REG partner, but to elucidate the difference in approach and perspective, which REGs feel brings a unique voice to the discourse. Interfaith REGs use their values as a basis for defining advocacy and policy goals. In some cases, the focus is less on specific legislation than the overall moral framework, though some REGs are more specific about their targets, for instance in specifying that carbon taxes are a preferred method over a carbon trading scheme. GreenFaith, as well as most other REGs, supported the 2009 American Clean Energy and Security Act, which included provisions for federal regulation of greenhouse gases. The bill passed in the House, but failed to gain enough support in the Senate and many faith groups advocated on its behalf, even if they did not see it as the ideal legislation. A major emphasis of faith groups, such as GreenFaith and the NRPE affiliates, was having adequate provisions to support the poor, and addressing pollution reduction in poor communities. GreenFaith and other faith groups noted that without a change in Congress or full Democratic control of both chambers, federal climate legislation was unlikely to succeed in the next few years, and even if passed would be challenged through the legal system. They emphasized local and regional US initiatives in solar energy and carbon trading as viable local, bottom-up solutions to the current legislative impasse. Other legislative action supported by GreenFaith is federal toxics policy reform, in particular supporting the “Safe Chemicals Act of 2010,” which was introduced by Sen. Lautenberg to strengthen the 1976 federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TOSCA). GreenFaith introduced faith statements from Judaism, Christianity, Islam,

⁷² Interviews with REG activists, May-June 2012

Hinduism and Buddhism that spoke to the need to care for the poor, respect the natural world, and promote healthy living environments. They also stated how many hundreds of chemicals in use today in the US have not been tested and the disproportionate impact on communities of color.⁷³

Perception of Moral Authority

The perception of religious actor's moral authority is seen by REGs in realistic terms. Some groups perceive that faith voices add an important element that also speaks to a broader constituency than other single-issue organizations. Others note that when the faith based environmental movement was new it received a different response, but as it becomes more routine it begins to receive the same demands as other advocacy organizations and coalitions. GreenFaith observed that now legislators expect faith groups to have more detailed proposals and background knowledge on the issues than during the initial 'honeymoon' period. NCCC views their approach as unique in developing statements of ethics with multiple religious denominations, including collaboration with scientists and direct talks with administration officials. They also do not believe that if the Obama administration is to succeed in bringing the Republican House to pass climate legislation that it will be accomplished by the technocratic route. To that effect NCCC proposed the need for an advisory council on the moral and ethical dimensions of climate change to the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ):

“Our supposition is that if the President is going to bring the Republican House into passage of anything, it won't be with this pounding of the science at them, but rather it will be to look at the religious statements and the emphasis on the moral and ethical reasons for engaging climate and that

⁷³ GreenFaith, Interfaith Statement for Toxics Policy Reform, obtained in 2012

will be the avenue where there will be acceptance where there presently is rejection.”⁷⁴

NCCC observes that while they rely on science to substantiate their argument, they do not see that alone as touching people’s hearts, whereas religion can serve as a pathway towards reaching that deeper level. They also highlight that the volume of faith statements in support of climate legislation from Catholics, Evangelicals, Jews, the National Council of Churches, Southern Baptists, the Eastern Orthodox, Methodists and Episcopalians indicates a majority of support by the US population, and a majority of the electorate that counts with policymakers. NCCC joined IMAC in lobbying every Congressional office on climate change and plans to work with the administration, scientists, and religious groups on crafting legislation that is based on a moral and ethical approach, but that also includes provisions for placing fees on fossil fuels while allowing rebates to all users in a similar manner to the tax return or dividends paid to residents in Alaska. In their Congressional meetings, NCCC noted that Senators, such as Senator Boxer, expressed that religions are the most powerful voice on the Hill, but they are not as visible as other interests from the fossil fuel, pharmaceutical, insurance and other industries.⁷⁵ IMAC noted similar experiences during their Congressional visits where they were positively received, with some staffers noting how no other groups are addressing climate change directly in the current political climate. Another example of a positive response from RWE came during a public hearing on energy issues when a religious leader came to testify from a faith-based perspective and was uncertain how the message would be received. A group afterwards thanked her for speaking and was relieved to see someone from the Church attend to speak

⁷⁴ Interview with NCCC, May 3, 2012

⁷⁵ http://nrccc.org/site/Topics/About/washingtonWeek_part5.html, and NCCC interview May 2012

from the perspective of moral authority, lending a voice of tradition along with a larger perspective. RWE also observed that persons of faith coming in to speak to legislators are seen as coming from a different place, where secular ENGOS tend to be ‘boxed in’ to a category that is more politically polarized.⁷⁶

One of the IMAC original partners, FCNL, also observed (from the perspective of working on legislative issues) that secular ENGOS have become highly technocratic, and that presenting a different perspective proved to be a challenge during the 2009 American Clean Energy and Security Act advocacy. Greater inclusion of different viewpoints, such as those of faith groups, and the willingness to integrate more into the process was seen as an obstacle to having the legislation move forward. NCCC, though they have engaged with secular partners, finds it more productive to work within the religious spectrum. In part, they view some of the ENGOS as bringing a certain amount of ‘baggage’ and counter productivity in having a lower comfort level with representing religious positions as well as needing to be ‘politically correct.’ NCC also stresses a consensus based and positive affirmation model in their decision making.⁷⁷ CCC, which focuses on the Chesapeake watershed region, centers their work on water issues. They engage in advocacy, but are looking for ways to go ‘beyond advocacy’ and work in a participatory model with local authorities. CCC proposed serving as a liaison in working with Baltimore county authorities and congregations to help in the implementation of small, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) watershed management plans. Given that congregations are often

⁷⁶ Interview with RWE, May 16, 2012

⁷⁷ NCCC interview, May 2012

landowners, they can become part of the watershed planning solution while advocating for an improvement of the ecosystem.⁷⁸

Role in the Environmental Movement

Coalitions and Level of Engagement

The interfaith REGs also engage in a broad range of secular partnerships. GreenFaith has worked with the Sierra Club and Greenpeace on their campaigns, and partnered with NRDC on an environmental justice lawsuit. NCCC engaged with the Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, Earth First and 350.org. CCC works closely with the Maryland Sierra Club and the Maryland League of Conservation Voters, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, as well municipal authorities. NCCC works directly with White House and Congressional offices to foster the development of legislation and ethics, such as their recent Ethic of the Sea campaign. 350.org is a members of the board for RWE, and the two organizations are mutually supportive of each other's goals. IMAC, which is A NCCC partner, has also been supported by the GW IP&L. RWE has collaborated with the MA IP&L chapter, and GreenFaith works with several IP&L affiliates in developing the Ground for Hope Conference. The Ground for Hope conference was focused on evangelical audiences and is also engaged with EEN. Several IP&L affiliate leaders have attended and completed GreenFaith's fellowship program. COEJL and the National Council of Churches, both NRPE partners, also engaged with GreenFaith on campaigns. Other REG national partners included the Franciscan Action Network. Interfaith REGs mainly focus their work in the US, though GreenFaith, NCCC and RWE have participated in climate summits over the years. The expense of international work does limit their engagement.

⁷⁸ CCC interview, June 15, 2012

Wider Environmental Movement:

In their interaction with the mainstream environmental movement, these interfaith REGs either view their role as being part of multiple and overlapping movements or as a more distinct faith-based environmental movement. They view their voice as adding a novel approach towards ecological degradation and climate change, and the majority view themselves as overlapping with the wider environmental movement, but not as a subset of it. As NCCC explained:

“it’s prudent with such an overwhelming amount of evidence that we have to change our lifestyle, that climate change is an indictment on the consumer mentality and our addiction to fossil fuels; it cannot be sustained and every issue has hidden in it moral and ethical questions that often are part of the subconscious of the environmental movement, but we are able to bring those principles up to the forefront which is how religion is unique from the environmental movement; we do things because the scriptures and our principles and our theology lead us to those conclusions, and so ours is an extension of the life of religion into the life of society.”⁷⁹

Some groups, such as CCC and RWE, point out that while the fundamental message may be similar from a religious or secular view point, the way it is framed and portrayed is where the key differences lie. Other IMAC partners at FCNL point out that faith groups can reach across the aisle in Congress in a way that is not feasible for many other issue-based advocacy groups. They also observed that environmental groups have a tendency to perceive themselves as being apart from the larger social justice or progressive platform, so there is a need to acknowledge that the environment or climate change are embedded in these other issues areas where other partners, such as faith groups, have their own distinct contribution to make. One member also noted that in conversations with ENGOs they

⁷⁹ NCCC interview with May 3, 2012

observed that as they became more professionalized over the years, they also became distanced from their grassroots origins, which is the perspective many of the REGs provide.⁸⁰ One of the climate marches that IMAC helped to organize involved a multi-faith ceremony that included perspectives from all Abrahamic traditions as well as minority faiths, such as Hindu, Baha'i, Buddhist, Sikh and Native American. The day culminated in a procession to Capitol Hill for the purposes of lobbying legislators for climate action. The aim of that event was to show a united and diverse voice in support of climate legislation, but also to link these ecological issues with spiritual significance and personal impact.⁸¹

NCCC provided an example of how their initiatives helped to bring about a successful policy outcome where secular groups struggled for some time. The Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, and the Highland Conservancy tried for ten years to pass legislation in West Virginia that would establish wilderness areas in the central Appalachians. NCCC was invited by these secular groups to develop a religious statement on this issue. The statement was circulated to the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA), the Catholic Church, the West Virginia Council of Churches, and some Evangelical groups. It caught the attention of Senators Rockefeller and Burg, who endorsed the religious position along with several other representatives, and the legislation passed through Congress resulting in a federally mandated wilderness site.⁸² In this context, the religious position coupled with secular efforts resonated with political support and demonstrated a successful policy outcome.

⁸⁰ FCNL interview, May 28, 2012

⁸¹ Personal Observation April 2012 and interview with organizer

⁸² Interview with NCCC, May 3, 2012

Overall, these interfaith REGs observed that the faith-based environmental movement has grown in the past ten years, receiving wider acknowledgement and recognition. Most faith groups now have their own statements on ecology, and people recognize environmental degradation and climate change to be an issue of faith. GreenFaith observes that while 10 years ago the main issue was building legitimacy for the movement, now it is a matter of implementation--turning belief into action at an individual and collective level. There are a number of recognized REGs in the US, the UK, and around the world whose track record is making them leaders in the field, with many more small local or regional grassroots efforts emerging. In brief, GreenFaith views this faith movement as long lasting and not a temporary phenomenon. RWE and NCCC perceive their role as being part of multiple environmental movements which are, to a certain extent, connected. NCCC notes that they do not use the word ‘environment,’ and instead prefer the term creation care movement, since ‘environment’ implies an anthropocentric detachment from the world that they disagree with. They also note the long history of faith groups engaging in social movements, such as the soil conservation movement in the 1900s in the US. They also view grassroots mobilization as critical to achieving wider societal transformation that may take many years with substantial challenges. The interfaith REGs all concur on the growth of this faith-based environmental movement and foresee it’s continuous expansion in the future, particularly in the light of increasingly visible impacts of climate change.

NRPE and Partners:

Policy Beliefs and Advocacy Coalitions

NRPE, with its five partner organizations representing main religious groups in the US, includes about 80% of the US population.⁸³ The organization describes itself as being “inter-religious with many faiths walking different paths side by side.”⁸⁴ The NRPE is grounded in its shared Judeo-Christian beliefs, such as those expressed in the Old Testament. The partner organization’s views concerning climate change are all grounded in the scientific consensus that anthropogenic causes are responsible climatic changes. The science of climate change is not questioned by the partner organizations, though they use scientific findings in a variety of ways, some focusing on their message and response rather than the technical details. One NRPE member noted that scientists are not always clear about communicating their findings to the general public, which can be doubtful of its findings without a clear message explaining the ramifications. In respect to policies, NRPE and its partners are driven by their religious beliefs and moral convictions, with a unifying theme of carrying for the poor and vulnerable. As an organization, NRPE tries to:

“Advance a moral argument on environmental issues including climate change, water and air protection as well as the protection of people who might suffer. An issue that becomes, especially complicated are energy sources, where the need to move to cleaner, renewable sources is challenged by the conflict of jobs versus the environment.”⁸⁵

This is true in particular for faith groups in the US who try not be seen as partisan or associated with one side or the other. As described by an NRPE advisor, “Within the faith community you’ve got...both I’ll call them both liberal and conservative elements...the Gulf is a good example. We have a lot of people of faith in that Southern Louisiana, Mississippi area, some are involved in the fishing industry, some are involved

⁸³ Interview with NRPE, May 2012

⁸⁴ Interview with NRPE, May 2012

⁸⁵ Ibid

in the oil industry, you've got owners, you've got workers...so, it's like all the same people in the same pew...the environmentalists don't have that."⁸⁶ Faith organizations have to contend with members who share diverging views on economic policies, income levels, and priorities where framing their objectives on climate change is concerned. The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, an NRPE member partner which provides a US Catholic response to climate change, emphasizes the moral implications of our actions through the "Whose Under Your Footprint" campaign. CCCC director believes that 'drastic lifestyle changes' will be necessary, including ending the continuous consumption of resources. The entire planet has a responsibility that may require some sacrifices. Those who are:

"wealthier, live in wealthier countries or have personal wealth are also seen as having a special responsibility towards those without those advantages due to accident of birth situation."⁸⁷

The current levels of consumption and focus on material wealth in the US is perceived as limiting, where 'sacrificing' some of those habits can be an enriching experience.

"We're saying that sacrifice can also be a freeing thing. If you spend less time worrying about all the stuff of your life then it leaves room for other things to grow-for relationships to grow, for getting back in touch with nature, and with each other in ways that wouldn't be there if we just kind of continue this mindless consumerism that we seem to be locked into."⁸⁸

CCCC, as well as one of its Catholic partners, the Franciscan Action Network (FAN), also worked with EEN in support of new EPA pollution standards that would limit the amount of mercury exposure, emphasizing the impact on pregnant women and unborn

⁸⁶ Interview with NRPE advisor, December 2, 2011

⁸⁷ Interview with October 21, 2011

⁸⁸ Interview with October 21, 2011

children, framing the issue as a ‘right to life.’ FAN expressed that one cannot be pro-life without supporting a healthy environment and diverse ecosystem.⁸⁹ Other religious traditions, such as Judaism, may not frame their messages by way of sacrifice as much as restraint, or use concepts including ‘Tikkun Olam’ (restoration/repair of the world) and ‘Bal Taschit (using only what is needed and not wasting) to talk about material consumption.⁹⁰

A key feature of these groups, especially in the US, is the promotion of both ecological and human needs when pressing for reform. NRPE partners emphasize the groups in society who may be impacted adversely by certain policies, and push for them to be adequately compensated or provided for. For instance, in the effort to support comprehensive climate legislation with the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 NRPE and their partners advocated in favor of the legislation and stressed the importance of making provisions for those who could not afford higher costs of heating fuel. NRPE and its member partners (EEN, NCC, USCCB, COEJL) worked on developing legislative proposals on international adaptation since 2003, and bills such as the McCain-Lieberman bill. Their policy emphasis was placed on carbon mitigation and adaptation funds, making sure that people in developing countries have the means to adapt, as well as looking for provisions to offset the higher energy costs to low-income groups in the US. NRPE members, including the Reformed Action Center (RAC), also testified in support of the Endangered Species Act, using the example of Noah’s ark to show the sense of responsibility humanity has in caring for the natural world.⁹¹ When the Bishops Conference

⁸⁹ FAN interview June 1, 2012

⁹⁰ Interviews with COEJL, GW IP&L, Hazon

⁹¹ Interview with RAC, May 15, 2012

testified regarding comprehensive climate legislation, they did not specify whether cap and trade or a carbon tax is the best approach, but stressed the need for any program to relieve the burdens of climate change for people living in poverty, for instance a rebate for those who could not absorb higher energy costs domestically. The argument in favor of climate legislation for the US emphasizes the moral dimensions of such legislation in regards to people living poverty, the injustice of climate change towards future generations, and the obligation to care for the Earth and its creatures.⁹² As the NCCC noted regarding their perspective on climate change and the environment: “We don’t separate God’s creation into human and non-human, it’s all together, it’s interrelated.”⁹³

NCCC looks at four core principles when evaluating a piece of policy: justice, stewardship, sustainability and sufficiency. They focus on preventing damage to God’s creation and to future generations, calling for legislation which aims for mandatory and aggressive emissions reductions that limit the Earth’s temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius as well as a 15-20% percent US carbon emission reduction by 2020 followed by an 80% reduction by 2050 to 2000 levels.⁹⁴ The need to make meaningful changes to lifestyles and current practices is also deeply shared among NRPE members and other REGs. NRPE observes that they were among the leading voices pushing for international climate adaptation and mitigation funds beginning in 2007, an issue strongly supported by all main partners. All four partners testified before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in 2007, issuing a strong message favoring adaptation funds for vulnerable

⁹² Interview with NRPE December 2011 and March 2012

⁹³ Interview with NCCC Eco-Justice Program, June 2012

⁹⁴ ‘Faith Principles on Climate Change’, http://nccecojustice.org/climate/climate_principles.ph, accessed June 7, 2012

populations impacted by climate change. The NRPE agenda focused on poverty and global climate change, pushing for revenue to be set aside for programs that would limit economic burdens on low-income and working families at home and abroad, and calling for the creation of new jobs during the economic transition. The emphasis was placed on ecological as well as economic justice.⁹⁵ A letter from representatives of major US denominations to Congress stressed the following spiritual and moral imperatives for action on climate change:

“On this issue, our various religious organizations, which serve millions of Americans from every income level, race, age group, cultural tradition, and community, are guided by scripture. Because God declares creation to be “very good” (Gen. 1:31), we work “to till and to tend the garden” (Gen. 2:15). Because “the Earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Ps. 24:1), we seek to assure that its gifts are used for the well-being of all. Because we will be judged by how we care for “the least of these” (Mt. 25:35), we consider first and foremost the impact of our actions on the most vulnerable. And in God’s covenant “which I make between me and you and every living creature for perpetual generations,” (Gen. 9:9-10) we are bound to act today to assure the well-being of life now and in the future.”⁹⁶

After the climate bill was defeated in the House, NRPE partnered with the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions at Duke University in developing a climate adaptation workshop focused on funding international efforts in Global South countries in the absence of federal climate legislation. The workshop drew a wide variety of stakeholders including ENGOS, government agencies, faith-based and secular development organizations, international organizations and religious partners. It focused on evaluating policy options and mechanisms for financing climate adaptation and

⁹⁵ ‘A Religious Agenda on Poverty and Global Climate Change’ NRPE (USCCB, NCC, COEJL, EEN), <http://www.nrpe.org>, accessed in 2011

⁹⁶ ‘Statement of Senior Religious leaders on Global Climate Change and Poverty’, <http://nrpe.org/~nrpeorg/images/stories/pressmaterials/lettertomemofcongress.pdf>, accessed June 17, 2013

mitigation including Green National Appropriate Mitigation Action Bonds, small taxes on international transactions, and “Green Funds” for climate investment among other options. Discussions included best options for how to promote these mechanisms, with EEN supporting a diverse portfolio of innovative finance mechanisms, and Catholic Charities stressing the needs for climate and other relief advocates to stick together in tight funding environments. NRPE also pointed out that faith communities may wish to focus on the larger value questions rather than on detailed policy mechanisms.⁹⁷

NRPE noted that some of the language they had proposed on climate adaptation and mitigation funding was reflected in several versions of the proposed legislation including the Waxman-Markey Bill and the Lieberman-Warner Bill, through meetings held with Senators Boxer, Waxman and Markey.⁹⁸ NRPE and its partners were hopeful that the faith voice would be able to push the legislation through, though the issue was seen as “toxic” in Congress and highly polarized.

Perception of Moral Authority

Some NRPE members noted that while religious groups can be perceived as having a different type of legitimacy and moral authority than other actors on the Hill, they do not always gain unquestioned support. When testifying on the Endangered Species Act one member from RAC reported receiving a very critical reception from one of the committee members, while others were more receptive. EEN observed that often when they speak with Christian members of Congress, they can relate to them through their own sense of

⁹⁷ Schncek, John (April 2011) ‘Funding International Climate Adaptation: Supporting Developing-Country Needs in the Absence of a Federal Climate Bill, Workshop Summary Report; Nicholas Institute Policy Brief, nicholasinstitute.duke.edu

⁹⁸ NRPE Interview, December 2011

values, which can serve as a powerful message. Given the highly polarized state of Congress, conveying a message regarding climate change can be especially difficult, though NRPE and its partners continue to press the issue with legislators. COEJL, RAC, CCCC and other NRPE partners noted that as representatives of major religious institutions they are not seen as having a ‘hidden’ and self-centered agenda when coming in to speak with policy makers, which is not the case with most advocacy groups. They also note that speaking from their religious values and beliefs, they are seen as being faithful and coming from a position of integrity. As a leading rabbi commented:

“The vast number of people in Congress understand that we have a distinctive moral perspective on these issues. We don’t come as a matter of self-interest, we don’t represent you know self-interest on these issues. We speak out of fundamental moral perspective and concerns of religious communities that have brought into the public debates from the time of the prophets until today. And I think that evokes a significant respect on Capitol Hill and in the public generally.”⁹⁹

In some cases, a conservative lawmaker skeptical of climate change is more willing to meet with a religious leader of similar faith, where they may not be as willing to speak with a secular group on the same topic. That does not automatically change their vote on the issue, but it does initiate dialogue and allows a ‘foot in the door’ to begin the discussion. NRPE members do not claim to be scientific experts on the issue, but they strive to be “experts in the human dimension of climate change.” This does not translate to NRPE as having a higher moral ground than other organizations, as they recognize that those groups are also guided by their own sense of ethics, but it provides for a more unique perspective.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Interview with RAC, May 15, 2012

¹⁰⁰ NRPE interviews, December 2011 and March 2012

Role in the Environmental Movement

Coalitions and Level of Engagement

The NRPE partners focus most of their work on the US at the national level, though some engage in international conferences. The NRPE office has sent representatives to the climate summits before, though due to size and budget limitations this is not a major focus of their work. EEN has also sent representatives to the summits, while for CCCC, other parts of the Catholic Church such as Caritas Internationalis engage in international climate negotiations. The National Council of Churches has also attended the COP summits and participates as part of the World Council of Churches, though they observed that direct access to negotiators at the summits is very limited. COEJL similarly relies on other partner organizations for international engagement in climate talks. NRPE does not have formal transnational partners, though they communicate with a number of groups outside the US including ARC in the UK, Tearfund, and Christian Aid. CCCC also attended ARC's Windsor conference in 2009 and has shared its materials through on-line distribution. COEJL is similarly in touch with Jewish colleagues in the UK and Israel, though their main mission focus lies in the US. Most NRPE partners feel that with the US being a major contributor to global warming and reluctant to make international treaty commitments, most of their focus should be on working to transform that climate both through advocacy as well as cultural change.

NRPE and its partners collaborate with a wide variety of groups, principally focusing within their own faiths and the other partnership members. Their affiliates also include secular organizations, though not necessarily close partnerships. The director of

NRPE, for example, is a member of the Green group--a working group of CEOs and senior staff of major environmental groups. Some of the members engage with secular groups such as National Audubon Society and the Arbor Day Foundation, with NRPE seeking to collaborate on outdoor projects that allow their congregants time outside “getting their hands dirty.” NRPE partners also look to utilize some of the scientific reports and policy analyses provided by secular ENGOS, though they emphasize maintaining their distinct role. Other affiliates include development and relief agencies, with NRPE participating in a joint consortium that tracks and discusses pertinent legislative issues and encouraging faith-based development agencies to engage on international climate adaptation.

The NRPE partner organizations draw from a variety of traditions with different areas of ethical and religious emphasis. For instance, both Catholic and Evangelical groups share an interest in the impacts of mercury pollution on unborn children, and collaborated on a joint Hill briefing on the topic in support of enhanced air pollution controls. NRPE also stresses that their work through the partnership is not always meant to have a completely common focus due to the differences between their partner organizations. They are representative of the majority of denominational structures in the US, so the approval process for some is more complex than others. The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change is part of the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, so their approval process for policies can be extensive.

The other partners, such as EEN, work with the National Association of Evangelicals, which represents millions of US Evangelicals. COEJL is a collaboration of 28 Jewish entities, with leading Jewish bodies and partners as members. From a structural and organizational point of view, these denominational partners have a different

mechanism for moving forward on decisions and policies, where grassroots based organizations such as IP&L and GreenFaith do not need to deal with such formal processes. The partnership is in touch with and works with those organizations but not in a formal alliance. For CCCC, close partners include other Catholic agencies such as the Bishops Conference, Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities USA, the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, the Council of Catholic Women, and the National Catholic World Life Conference among others. Their work with environmental groups tends to be informal, mostly utilizing their expertise and knowledge of climate issues. FAN, a partner of CCCC, works to establish Franciscan networks in all US states and works with their colleagues in other countries, for instance the Franciscan Network in the UK. Franciscans International also has a UN office where they focus on global issues such as pushing to establish a special repertoire on climate change, a move that has not been supported by the US.

COEJL is part of a larger Jewish initiative, called the Green Hevra, aimed at organizing Jewish environmental initiatives. COEJL partners with other Jewish groups as part of the Reformed and Liberal Jewish movement, keeping in touch and exchanging ideas or resources. They have also partnered with IP&L affiliates and GreenFaith on projects. EEN has working ties with Sir John Houghton's group, the John Ray initiative, as well as Tearfund and Christian Aid.¹⁰¹ NCCC notes that they work closely with their constituents, NRPE partners, and other REGs such as GreenFaith, and maintain an open dialogue with secular ENGOs, but do not necessarily partner with them. They perceive the faith-based

¹⁰¹ Interviews with NRPE, EEN, COEJL, RAC, FAN October 11-June 2012

work as having a distinct perspective from secular groups. As the head of the NCC Eco-Justice office remarked:

“We really don’t partner with anybody because we do want to maintain a ...separate identity from them...Well, we’re different. I mean...every time before we have meetings, we pray and that’s not really what the secular community does.”¹⁰²

Wider Environmental Movement:

NRPE and its partners perceive that the faith-based movement has expanded over the past ten years, with new organizations forming, and an increase in interest among its congregations. Most partners perceive their role to be part of both, a religious movement as well as the mainstream environmental movement. They note greater concern for creation care among ‘people in the pews,’ and anticipate the movement and their interest to increase, especially as a younger generation takes leadership positions and becomes active in their congregations. The role of youth groups and education is expressed by all partners, and is mirrored in EEN’s Young Adult Ministries and outside of NRPE in other efforts such as the Green Seminaries Initiative. The Green Seminaries Initiative is an effort to work with major US seminaries in including eco-theology in their academics, worship, building and grounds, community life and public ministry. The effort stemmed from a concern among some theologians that the environmental component was not embedded in existing training for future clergy. The Green Seminaries Initiative works with a diverse range of seminaries in assessing the challenges in making an ecological focus present throughout academic life.¹⁰³ While the interest is growing, NRPE members note that there is much work to be done to introduce and embed creation care in their schools, seminary curricula, and

¹⁰² Interview with NCCC, June 2012

¹⁰³ Interview with the Green Seminary Initiative, June 18, 2012

worship. Younger audiences in the Jewish community are seeing the environmental concerns as part of Judaism's teachings on social justice and the proliferation of Jewish environmental groups, such as Hazon, Teva. Jews Against Hydrofracking exemplifies that interest. Other partners, such as CCCC, observe that many people need to be motivated by how an issue impacts their personal lives, community, family, and for people of faith, their relationship with God and God's creation. In those cases, an approach that focuses mainly on 'saving polar bears' will not work and has to go deeper by creating other partnerships and alliances. The issue of climate change will take a long time to handle, and the need exists to form a movement as opposed to pursuing single-issue approaches.

NRPE and its members view their approach to be broader than that of some secular groups even though many of their goals align. For one, NRPE, through its denominational members, represent about 80% of the US population along with the diversity of views that accompany that large of a constituency. They see their approach towards creation care as inclusive of "things that crawl and fly" as well as all people and places. NRPE is concerned with ecological issues as well as issues of equity, resources, and the economic transition. They also seek a "reinvigoration of religious life in the United States and around the world."¹⁰⁴ As the director of NRPE observed:

"It would be great if the climate crisis weren't happening, but we'd still be at this because for us it's about becoming more fully ourselves as religious people. In addition to doing what's right and making and caring for vulnerable people and caring for real places and real people that are hurting. So, it's dual for us and I don't know that we share that necessarily with all our secular friends and allies and that's fine."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ NRPE interview, March 23 2012

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

NRPE works to build bridges between their organizations' core missions of caring for the vulnerable and providing community services, and environmental issues. It sees itself as part of both--a distinct faith-based movement that can overlap with the wider environmental movement.

Evangelical REGs:

Policy Beliefs and Advocacy Coalitions

Evangelical environmental organizations focus on building a creation care movement, and engage with various partners while primarily focusing their efforts on their own community. Some of the groups address climate change and climate science directly while others prefer to engage in efforts that do not explicitly target climate change. For the evangelical community, climate change remains a controversial issue. Especially for more conservative evangelical Christians, science and climate change can serve as polarizing issues, making the approach critical to furthering the creation care message. EEN, which has a strong emphasis on advocacy on climate change, works on linking the science of climate change with a biblical mandate to care for creation and to care for the vulnerable. They work with scientists who are evangelical Christians who can speak to their target audience and specifically point out that for people in developing countries, climate change is happening right now.

EEN views climate change as a moral issue, supporting international adaptation measures as a means of alleviating poverty. Notable climate scientists and evangelical Christians include Sir John Houghton and Dr. Katherine Hayhoe, who are supporters and collaborators, having written books on climate change and the link to Christian ethics.¹⁰⁶ It

¹⁰⁶ Houghton (2004); Hayhoe and Farley (2009)

was Sir John Houghton, a former head of the IPCC panel, who convinced Rev. Richard Cizik, then the President of the National Association of Evangelicals in 2002, that climate change was an issue for Evangelical Christians. Other evangelical groups such as Restoring Eden, A Rocha, and Blessed Earth all affirm the science of anthropogenic climate change, but do not always lead with that issue due to its divisive nature in their community. The president of Evangelicals for Social Action, Dr. Ron Sider, who hosted EEN offices for many years and is a current board member, also emphasized the strength of climate science in his book on ‘Just Politics,’ explicitly countering arguments from certain evangelicals who view the earth as purely a resource for human consumption.¹⁰⁷ Restoring Eden mentions beginning the discussion a few steps back from climate change, in ways that make it easier for people to accept, such as learning to love nature and then engaging in the political process. They are working on efforts to push against the tide of ‘anti-EPA’ sentiment with a young evangelical campaign called ‘Greening the Golden Rule.’

Restoring Eden notes that climate change risks the immediate loss of interest for some, so instead they focus on what needs to be addressed in a given community such as cleaning a stream, protecting forests, or finding space for community organic gardens. They see these projects as a means towards establishing relationships while developing a wider conservation ethos. Blessed Earth believes that there is ample evidence to support climate change from a scientific standpoint, but does not believe that more science will change conservative positions, viewing the problem not as scientific, but cultural. As Blessed Earth commented:

¹⁰⁷ For the specific reference see Wayne Grudem’s ‘Politics According to the Bible’ (2010) with sections that support unchecked use of resources.

“If people are going to be able to...be presented with the facts of climate change and not come to believe in it or come to be changed by it then clearly it’s not a scientific problem, it’s a cultural problem...it is first a cultural problem. We think we can-or at least people in our culture think they can...burn as much fossil fuel as they can get their hands on and that there will be no consequences for that. And that’s certainly a scientific problem of sort of the highest level ,but on the most basic level it’s a cultural problem. People consume too much. And I think that’s part of what we bring to the table as well, to the overall conversation, is that sense of values.”¹⁰⁸

Transforming entrenched mindsets and working with young evangelicals is a major focus of these REGs, though political advocacy work is carried out by EEN, ESA, YECA, Restoring Eden, but not by Blessed Earth or A Rocha. EEN has been engaged in lobbying on various policies since its inception in 1994. Major efforts with which ESA and EEN were involved include support for the Endangered Species Act and proposed climate change bills. In 1995, the newly elected Republican majority in the House were in favor of far-reaching reversal of the Endangered Species Act, including not re-enacting the act. ESA and EEN held a conference in Washington DC in conjunction with NRPE and Restoring Eden where they focused on addressing that Evangelicals care about the environment because they worship the creator. The event was well attended and received praise for helping to stem the ESA attack with what ESA described as ‘shock value’ for those who assumed all Evangelicals would support the Republican right wing in every effort.¹⁰⁹

More recently, ESA and EEN have focused on climate legislation beginning in 2003, pushing along with other NRPE partners for international climate adaptation funds. EEN views any legislation that does not have mechanisms for helping the poor at home and abroad as morally unacceptable. It, along with Catholic groups, was involved in supporting improved power plant standards, with the slogan of “creation care: it’s a matter

¹⁰⁸ Blessed Earth interview, May 14, 2012

¹⁰⁹ ESA, EEN, Restoring Eden and NRPE interviews December 2011- May 2012

of life.” The EEN position favored the new EPA rules due to restrictions of mercury pollution, a neurotoxin with significant impacts on unborn children. Similarly to Catholic groups, the Evangelical position saw that a pro-life position must also relate to a clean and healthy environment. EEN supported the failed 2009 climate bill, and were very vocal in pushing the Obama and Romney campaigns to make climate change a priority issue in their administrations if elected. EEN along with YECA, ESA, and other leading evangelical Christians held meetings with major environmental groups including the World Wildlife Federation and Sierra Club in an effort to push for greater visibility for climate change as an advocacy issue. EEN was concerned that after the failure of Copenhagen and of the 2009 climate bill, many environmental groups decided to address other issues, such as pollution and health, without explicitly linking them to climate change. EEN saw the need to make sure that the passage of federal climate legislation remains a top priority. EEN, with support from the National Association of Evangelicals and other evangelical partners, also hosted a 2012 ‘Prayer Breakfast for Creation Care,’ focusing on addressing the climate crisis and the moral imperative of creation care, especially where development assistance was concerned.

The event was followed by an afternoon of advocacy. The heads of Christian Aid and Tearfund joined EEN for their advocacy work including a meeting with White House officials from the Council of Environmental Quality. They were also joined by a speaker from Malawi who spoke to environmental groups and White House officials about the present struggles his country deals with as a result of climate change, making the appeal a personal and immediate issue. Tearfund and Christian Aid leaders both expressed their feeling that the religious voice is a powerful one in the US with the ability to change

opinions, which is why they were engaged in those discussions. YECA representatives spoke of the growing interest among young US evangelicals in creation care as being part of their faith, and the campaigns they have to mobilize college age students across the country. YECA was also focused on targeting presidential candidates, in part by holding a rally outside of one of the debates to focus attention on climate change.¹¹⁰ An observation made by several evangelical leaders is that evangelical youth are increasingly moving away from some of the political stances their parents were firm on and that they felt alienated by. EEN, ESA, and YECA supported federal legislation that provides funds for climate adaptation for poor communities while placing a price on carbon pollution.

During IMAC's lobby day in Congress, a representative from the World Evangelical Alliance told Republican staffers (McConnel and Sessions offices) that with campaigns such as 'Greening the Golden Rule,' young Evangelicals may move away from the Republican party if their position on creation care does not change and encouraged their offices to be leaders in the party for taking on that challenge. While the full impact of these efforts may be hard to determine, it is worth noting that several days after these meetings President Obama announced that climate change would be one of his campaign issues during a Rolling Stone interview,¹¹¹ which was enthusiastically received by the REGs involved in the campaign. EEN did acknowledge that in the current political climate, they did not see much hope for a comprehensive climate bill and were primarily focusing their efforts building both grassroots and grasstops support for creation care in their own

¹¹⁰ Personal observation during the Prayer breakfast for Creation Care and advocacy meetings with environmental groups and CEQ, April 2012.

¹¹¹ Berman, Dan, 'Climate change will be a campaign issue', April 25, 2012, Politico <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0412/75590.html> Berman

community. ESA noted that though the two presidential candidates had very different positions on climate change, the inability to reach agreement on legislation has shown both democratic and republican in an irresponsible light. Restoring Eden, which encourages participants to care for the environment through experiences in the wilderness, describes their work as “building a case that ultimately leads to climate activism,” but does not lead with it due to the highly divisive nature of the issue among conservative circles. Restoring Eden, through a newly funded project by RE-AMP, begins that journey with nature encounters, giving people a chance to appreciate nature, introducing them to the variety of issues, and following up with meetings with governors and other policymakers. Restoring Eden observed that while they are winning the battle on the appropriateness of the issue, they may not necessarily be winning the priority debate, with creation care not making it to the list of top five concerns. While interest is growing, they believe they need a big enough block of leaders to make this a core issue and that one of the most effective areas of engagement is to mobilize the youth vote. Restoring Eden sees that later on in life, people’s “evoked sets” of beliefs are more entrenched and difficult to sway, where working with a younger audience allows for greater flexibility in accepting the creation care message. They also point out that with the present situation in the Republican Party in the House, there have been hundreds of anti-environmental pieces of legislation proposed, with much of campaign finance support going to candidates who support dirty energy. In this atmosphere, Restoring Eden finds a diminishing place for moderates and noted that the group they would normally try to work with, moderate Republicans, are even hard to identify anymore with the Party’s turn to the right.¹¹²

¹¹² Restoring Eden interview, May 15, 2012

Perception of Moral Authority

Perception of REG's moral authority among evangelical groups is seen as most influential when speaking with policymakers of a similar or Christian faith that can relate to their message. The Endangered Species Act example showed that Evangelical groups were able to exert a level of influence among a certain segment of legislators. EEN stresses that they wish to be seen as coming from a perspective of integrity and faithfulness. YECA sees that their level of influence varies depending on the legislator's own views, but can often use their common views as leverage. For example, when speaking with a senator about why he would wish to reverse new standards that limit the amount of mercury in the air, they address the issue as being a Christian one, and offer that if the Senator is a Christian, then he should care about the issue. Restoring Eden believes that the moral argument helps, but that it is best to have it reinforced through personal experience, helping people to reconnect disconnected ideas to make them stronger. As the director of Restoring Eden noted:

“It's not even so much moral authority; it's showing how you know they hold two beliefs that aren't harmonious. And then they have to choose which of those two beliefs matters the most...Do I believe loving my neighbor matters more than I believe that the government is bad. And is so then do I see a role for good government in protecting my neighbor.”¹¹³

Role in the Environmental Movement

Coalitions and Level of Engagement

The Evangelical REGs focus on trying to develop a strong base of supporters for creation care in their community. The focus for most of these groups is national, though EEN has had members attend several of the COP summits with a focus on showing US

¹¹³ Restoring Eden interview with May 15, 2012

policymakers that they are serious about this issue. They also see that with the US being a major contributor of greenhouse gases, much of their focus should be national in order to foster more meaningful progress in international negotiations. As Rev. Jim Ball commented:

“The United States is you know the world’s second leading emitter with the largest economy, the largest ability to really help the world in overcoming global warming. Evangelicals have a disproportionate political impact here in the United States, and therefore our responsibility, our unique moment, our unique role, the place where we can have...the biggest bang for the buck so to speak is to engage our own policymakers...and help move them in the direction of you know protecting the poor of the consequences of global warming.”¹¹⁴

EEN notes that while it would be easier to focus on like-minded individuals, their role must be to change attitudes among Evangelicals in the US, which they observed had been one of the most intransigent groups on climate change. EEN firmly believes that federal legislation will be essential in dealing with climate change, and even though a federal law has not been enacted, progress has been made with campaigns such as What Would Jesus Drive, targeting fuel-efficiency standards.¹¹⁵ YECA, which is a new organization, is open to partnerships outside the US, but is choosing to first focus at home. ESA, Restoring Eden, and Blessed Earth focus on national level initiatives as well. ESA’s efforts also focus much effort on issues of global economic poverty. A Rocha is mainly engage with partners in their conservation efforts, projects such as those in Texas and Santa Barbara. They exchange ideas with colleagues in other A Rocha branches, including the UK, and note that A Rocha International is also a member of the IUCN. EEN, ESA, and

¹¹⁴ EEN interview November 11, 2011

¹¹⁵ EEN interview November 11, 2011

YECA look to engage with secular groups, such as 350.org and WWF, though most partners are part of the evangelical community, notably the National Association of Evangelicals, the World Evangelical Alliance, World Vision and World Relief. ESA also noted that they will partner with other groups on issues provided they have similar goals in preventing disastrous impacts of climate change, even if those groups do not share the same religious foundation.

A Rocha, being principally a conservation organization, has extensive partnerships with other secular conservation groups as well as local authorities that help with management issues. For instance, in Texas Hill Country they partnered with The Nature Conservancy, local Frio river authorities, and other groups in forming land restoration and management plans for a 7,000-acre ranch, which was home to orphaned youth, a charter school, and a couple of endangered species.¹¹⁶ A Rocha has also worked with a Christian retreat center on organizing a creation care event that would bring church leaders together with Christians from business, academia, government, and the media in an effort to provide information and influence decision makers. A Rocha also partnered with EEN on the Creation Care prayer breakfast and has written articles for their Creation Care magazine.¹¹⁷ Blessed Earth, as a fairly new organization with a small staff, stresses their need to focus on the projects they were funded for--the Seminary Alliance and Creation Care Year. They generally do not partner with secular groups. They have engaged in discussions with Second Nature regarding help with energy audits, though they mainly see their role in partnering with churches rather than environmental organizations.

¹¹⁶ A Rocha interview January 17, 2012 and A Rocha; Christians in Conservation publication obtained April 2012

¹¹⁷ A Rocha interview, January 2012

Wider Environmental Movement:

Evangelical REGs primarily view their role as fostering a creation care movement, one that has similar goals to the wider environmental movement, but uses different frames and messages to reach their audience. Many of these REGs express acting as a bridge between the two worlds of secular environmentalism and evangelical Christianity, some from a lifestyle transformation/education approach, and others through more direct political action. EEN observes that the culture experienced a shift from the time of its founding to the present in support of creation care. When EEN was founded in 1994, they received criticism from some evangelicals suggesting that they should not get involved with an issue, perceived by some, as too liberal, secular-oriented, or pantheistic. By the year 2000, conservative evangelical groups were coming out with their own creation care statements having accepted that as a biblical mandate, though favoring market-based mechanisms as the way to address climate change. The Evangelical Climate Initiative is a group of over 300 senior Evangelical leaders, including prominent figures such as Rick Warren, who believe the US needs to address global warming. They support that effort in a way that would “create jobs, clean up our environment and enhance national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil.”¹¹⁸ The ECI statement calls for action and affirms human-induced climate change. It encourages a market-based approach, such as carbon-trading, which it notes has received support from several energy companies.¹¹⁹ EEN commented on this change by stating that:

“The mere fact that when EEN started in 94 people were saying don’t even be involved in it, and 6 years later said...not necessarily the same people that were criticizing us, but conservative groups were putting out their own

¹¹⁸ <http://christiansandclimate.org/>, accessed June 23, 2013

¹¹⁹ <http://christiansandclimate.org/statement/>, accessed June 23, 2013

creation care statements, because they saw that well both the culture and other Evangelicals are talking about this and we want to get our own message out there about it. That's a pretty significant shift..."¹²⁰

The creation care initiatives, in the course of six years, gained wider support and prominence among evangelical leaders who were originally more reluctant to engage in the issue. This shows a change in perspective, though evangelical REGs point out that more remains to be done. Some noted that this initiative also helped to "draw a line in the sand" where climate change was concerned. Restoring Eden noted that it can be more challenging to get churches engaged in political activism, especially where a given congregation can have people with strong views on both sides of the climate debate. Groups such as the Wise Movement, who believe the earth is meant for unchecked human use, still exist, though the level of support for creation care as a biblical mandate, including climate change, has shifted in the last 10-15 years. This change is due to a growing number of leaders supporting action on climate change, but also due to the engagement of young evangelicals.¹²¹ Groups such as EEN and NRPE helped to galvanize support over twenty years, and evangelical REGs feel that that momentum is growing, even if it encounters some setbacks along the way. A Rocha points out that one of the reasons the environmental movement has been criticized as failing is because it became too technocratic and did not focus on the underlying human values driving people's choices, which is also the realm of faith.¹²² The work of the creation care movement aims to fill that gap and galvanize a morals and faith-driven response.

¹²⁰ EEN interview, November 2011

¹²¹ ESA interview May 16, 2012

¹²² A Rocha interview, January 2012

CHAPTER SEVEN: RESEARCH ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Introduction

The aim of this study was to examine what factors motivate Religious Environmental Groups (REGs) to engage in climate change activism. The study was designed as a comparative of case studies in the United Kingdom and the United States. Initial case studies were selected after identifying existing REGs, which had a level of engagement with climate change activism and policy change oriented goals. The groups selected were either Christian or interfaith in composition, which best reflected the demographics of each country. Additional case studies were identified through snowball sampling or field observations. A total of 60 semi-structured interviews were conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom, along with participant observation, attendance of lectures/events, and collection of archival information required to answer the research questions. The main research questions addressed in the study were:

- Do REGs utilize terms such as stewardship/creation care and sacrifice in their messaging?
- What is the role of religious beliefs in driving REG objectives or do other environmental beliefs serve as drives of activism?
- What is the role of religious beliefs and values in determining REG policy beliefs and advocacy coalitions?
- How do REGs perceive their moral authority and legitimacy when interacting with the public and political elites and what is their role in and relationship to the environmental movement?

The key questions sought to address to the underlying focus of the research study, which aimed to elucidate the relationship between religious beliefs/values and climate change activism. The emphasis was placed on motivation of these religious environmental groups in the context of national and multilateral politics in two comparable settings, the US and the UK. The method of constant comparison was applied both between each country's various REGs as well as comparatively between countries.

Analysis and Analytic Categories

The main findings reflect the questions addressed as well as several observations that emerged during the research and analysis process. The first analytic category discusses the use of stewardship, creation care, sacrifice, and other religious language concerning climate change and the environment. This analytic category also examines how religious beliefs drive motivation, and the reliance on other drivers such as science-based environmental beliefs. The second category identifies frames utilized by REGs to portray their message to their target audience. The third category discusses REG's policy beliefs and advocacy coalitions. The fourth analytic category will cover the REGs perception of moral authority and legitimacy relative to other secular actors. The fifth analytic category explores the REGs role in the wider environmental movement, evaluating their participation in a faith-based environmental movement and its relationship with the mainstream movement. This category also discusses REG's role in challenging modernity. Each of the five analytic categories is discussed for the United States and United Kingdom case studies, followed by a comparative analysis of the two countries.

Research Analysis United Kingdom REGs

The UK research analysis focuses on three sets of REGs--Green Christian REGs, Church organizations, and faith-based development/aid agencies. The Green Christian groups are non-profit organizations, which collaborate with but do not constitute part of any church hierarchy. The UK groups researched were Christian, with less emphasis placed on interfaith REGs than in the US. Though other religious groups, including Muslims and Hindus, have programs concerning the environment, the collaboration is based more so on dialogue exchange rather than focusing on an interfaith approach.

Stewardship, Creation Care and Sacrifice

Stewardship and creation care are terms that are used in varied ways among UK REGs with the term 'stewardship' being highly contested, especially by Green Christian groups. Stewardship is viewed as being too anthropocentric and reinforcing humanity's control over the rest of the natural world by many Green Christians, in particular CEL and Operation Noah. The preferred terminology calls for 'servantship rather than stewardship,' and is highly critical of the 'church's ruthless anthropocentrism.' These groups often refer to the notion of a 'Cosmic Christ,' thus emphasizing a more holistic approach to how they view the human role in the world. Creation care in the UK is associated more so with evangelical Christians, though the care for creation is preferable over stewardship. Some of the Green Christian REGs are less negative toward the use of stewardship, including Eco-Congregation, where CEL, Operation Noah, and the Columbans prefer alternative language. The term is still applied by other REGs, including the church organizations, though what is clear is that studies which attempt to define a groups' degree of environmental interest based on the use of terms such as 'stewardship' need to consider that the meaning of the term is contested and will have varying interpretations between

groups. For instance, in the UK context the Church of England or the Methodist church may have a more positive view of the term, whereas a Green Christian group such as CEL is likely to have a negative reaction, even though their version of ‘servantship,’ or participation in creation, heavily favors pro-environment behavior. Stewardship and care for creation can occasionally be used interchangeably, with green Christian groups preferring care for creation as being more inclusive of other species and ecosystems. Faith-based development REGs use stewardship as well as sustainability more to focus on their core mission, which is based on human development and aid. None of the UK REGs use ‘stewardship’ or ‘dominion’ in a way that implies or justifies human domination over the natural world. The famous Lynn White critique was referenced by a Church of England participant who (along with other participants) refuted the claim that Judeo-Christian values favor environmental destruction.¹ Stewardship and care for God’s creation are terms commonly used, especially by church organizations with caring for God’s creation being viewed overall as having a clear biblical emphasis on responsibility to take care of the environment. Stewardship, in Christian settings, is a very familiar term, though also used to refer to stewardship of finances, and not solely ecological in context. In sum, though some REGs are critical of the term stewardship, the concept and its derivatives are widely applied to their mission and values, with the focus being on human beings as participants in the larger web of creation, while being responsible to care for it as a fundamental Christian teaching.

The use of the notion of ‘sacrifice’ by REGs as it relates to climate and environmental issues was also explored in this study. Maniates and Meyer explored the

¹ White, Lynn (1967)

socio-political tensions behind applying the concept of sacrifice in the present popular context, with sacrifice being viewed as a ‘taboo’ term, especially where sacrifice for the environment is concerned. Politicians steer clear of the idea, and public sentiment makes that a hard message to accept. Ann Peterson, however, postulated that while sacrifice is viewed in such negative terms, it is widely applied in people’s daily lives, as in the case of sacrificing for one’s children or family. She further proposed that religious groups with a history of utilizing such concepts may be uniquely positioned to apply the concept to the public audience and make it more widely accepted. Karen Liftin further emphasized the origin of the word as a meaning ‘to make sacred.’²

In the UK, REGs support the notion of sacrificing for the environment, though most often the actual term ‘sacrifice’ is not used when interacting with their target audience, either the public or political elites. Green Christian REGs find that the term is difficult to use with the public, who shy away from the notion of sacrifice. The Methodist Church and Joint Public Issues Team support the message of sacrifice, but address it in terms of repentance for the extent of ecological damage and fossil fuel consumption that lead to climate change. Quakers also do not discuss sacrifice, and instead focus on sustainability and achieving the ‘right relationship’ with the world. CEL does talk about the concept of Christ’s sacrifice and resurrection as a transformative journey that serves as a model for confronting the ‘darkness’ of dealing with the climate crisis and its consequences. Operation Noah also highlights that sacrifice did not used to be such a politically charged and negative term, with people giving up many resources and comforts

² Maniates and Meyer (2010)

during World War II in support of defeating Hitler. The concept of justice is utilized more often to reflect the needed changes, for instance by drawing on Catholic Social Teaching in the case of Cafod, Progressio and the Columbans as well the other REGs. Cafod, as well as Eco-Congregation, also stress lifestyle changes approaches through their Live Simply and Congregation award programs. Tearfund addresses the concept of sacrifice through practices such as the carbon lent, whereas CEL leads the eco-cell program, called a 'radical journey to carbon-free discipleship,' emphasizing carbon-neutral lifestyles. The actual word 'sacrifice,' however, is not applied directly in their messaging, with preference in all the groups for a hopeful and positive approach. REGs feel that their role is to offer a religious witness to what they experience, the Quakers emphasize this in particular. These REGs do not want to give the impression that transitioning to a carbon-neutral economy will be simple and pain-free, but also feel that the role of religion is to offer people hope and a way forward, as opposed to despair. Climate change is a complex issue that might turn many listeners off, partly because they feel powerless to make an impact.

Part of what the UK REGs try to accomplish is infusing this sense of empowerment in every day transformation, acknowledging that while there will be pain and loss along the way, the effort will be rewarded by living more just and equitable lifestyles. Changing those lifestyles in that sense is not seen as a negative way of giving something up, but rather of gaining more enriching lives, as well as improving and preserving civilization to create a holistic and sustainable way of life. In short, while the UK REGs do not explicitly reference sacrifice they do foster and support practices that result in reducing carbon footprints and ecological degradation, exemplifying Liftin's point regarding the original

meaning of sacrifice--to make sacred--rather than to transform that act into a negative experience.

The REGs interpretation of sacrifice is further expressed as a counter-cultural critique of neo-liberal capitalism. The UK REGs place strong emphasis on western-style excessive consumerism (and the constant growth economic model that supports it) as a fundamental challenge in achieving ecological sustainability and carbon neutrality. The most critical of the three groups are the Green Christian organizations, which promote more 'radical' economic changes and perceive the current version of capitalism as failing. The eco-cell program run by CEL exemplifies this counter-cultural approach to living on a 2 ton of carbon dioxide limit per year, with many participants restricting their travel to comply with that requirement. Eco-Congregation encourages congregations to become 'green' and energy efficient through their certification and award scheme. In the words of the UK based ecological theologian Edward Echlin:

“Affluent people are reluctant to make the lifestyle changes necessary if we are to mitigate climate change before we reach the tipping point. Addiction to car and cheap air travel ‘carbon offsets’ the words of some otherwise green environmentalists. Confirmation strengthens us for the sacrifice necessary. The Christian tradition of sacrifice, of letting go of comforts within our grasp in commitment to Christ, is a contribution we can offer today. Jesus surrendered comforts even to death on a tree. So did Peter and Paul and many early Christians. Armenian, Palestinian, and Chaldean Christians have made singular sacrifices in our time. When car and air fuel and transport are cheap, it is a sacrifice to ‘cut the carbon’, especially when neighbors are in shiny cars or jets overhead. Confirmation strengthens us to live sustainably locally, to holiday bioregionally, to cut the carbon, shrink our footprint...The Christian ascetical tradition of sacrifice is a gift we can share with the earth community today.”³

³ Echlin, Edward P. (2007) pp. 26-27

The church organizations are also critical of excessive consumerism, seeing that one of the first steps they can take is to reduce their organization's own carbon-footprint, as exemplified by the Church of England's Route 2050 campaign. The Methodist Church also works with investors in fostering an ethics-minded investment strategy. This type of mission is also exemplified by the Ecumenical Council on Social Responsibility (ECCR), which works closely with Quaker Peace and Social Witness. The Quakers as an entire community have also committed to implementing carbon-reduction and sustainability in their daily practice as individuals and Meetings of Friends. For many in the Green Christian groups, capitalism in its present form will not last, and they promote alternative versions of defining capital including 'spiritual capital,' a concept promoted by Jonathan Porrit, as well as economic justice and the notion of a 'living wage.' The Occupy London movement, which was camped outside of St. Paul's Cathedral, also received a warm welcome from Operation Noah, CEL, Columbans, Churches, and partner organizations, being viewed as more aligned with Christian values than structures which support maintaining the status quo.

The question of whether values influence environmental behavior is not new. There are studies analyzing which world views drive environmental behavior and whether utilitarian perspectives dominate altruism, or whether the negative perception of giving up material comforts for the sake of environmental conservation impedes pro-environmental behavior. Lynn White's controversial hypothesis has been examined and tested by various scholars.⁴ Peterson and Lieu, for instance, examined the relationship between environmental worldviews and political affiliation in Teton Valley, relying on indicators

⁴ Hobon (1994); Volkomir and Woodrin (1997); Sherkrat and Ellison (2007).

such as respondents' answers to questions regarding human use of the natural world and concern with ecological degradation⁵. Nooney et al evaluated a sample of respondents in North Carolina based on linked environmental world views with a degree of religious fundamentalism.⁶ Eckberg and Blocker looked at 40 measures of environmental attitudes in relation to whether they support White's thesis that Christian theology has an "anti-environmental" effect, noting a correlation between those attitudes and fundamentalism.⁷ While these findings contributed to advancing understanding of the relationship between religious values and environmental behavior, their studies had certain limitations in understanding how religious beliefs relate to environmental behavior. For one, studies that use pre-existing categories in defining what constitutes pro or anti-environmental views rely on certain assumptions regarding those indicators. As discussed above in the question of 'stewardship' as an indicator of pro-environment views, the answer provided will be highly contingent upon that individuals' or group's interpretation of the word.

As this research shows, 'stewardship' is not a monolithic term and varies in use and meaning among UK REGs. Discussing sacrifice for the environment may yield similarly misleading results unless the notion of sacrifice is further defined--a yes or no answer does not fully reflect how this concept is utilized or reflected in messaging. As Raymond DeYoung notes, sacrifice for the environment is usually associated with deprivation and an unwillingness to sacrifice for the environment without compensation. In this view, sacrifice is seen in negative terms, where for REG members in the UK, this sacrifice is related to living justly, sustainably, and in balance with the natural world. The living

⁵ Peterson and Lieu (2008)

⁶ Nooney et al (2003)

⁷ Eckberg and Blocker (1996)

simply aspect is also seen as having strong Christian roots, and so pro-environment behavior is linked with living in accordance with God's plan and laws.⁸ DeYoung found a similar contradiction to the negative association with pro-environment behavior in that a sense of satisfaction came from this type of lifestyle irrespective of reduced material consumption. Fostering such stewardship behavior, according to De Young, and living in a low-consumption society can bring "bright points" that include a sense of well-being that comes from living lightly upon the Earth.⁹ This is a view reflected in the beliefs of REGs, where a holistic lifestyle approach is not seen as a great loss, but rather a gain.

Other Religious Beliefs

UK REGs share a core set of religious beliefs that motivate their engagement in climate change and environmental activism. These beliefs represent a common theme across the three groups of UK REGs, though some groups place more emphasis on some beliefs versus others. The key beliefs include: Caring for God's creation; Love your neighbor; and Justice. Caring for God's creation is seen as a mandate from God, to be stewards of the earth and to care for all creatures in addition to human beings. The three way Noahatic covenant between "God, man and every living creature" is interpreted as defining creation in broader terms than just as a resource for human use. While this concept is emphasized by all three groups of REGs, the Green Christians show the strongest emphasis on human beings as a part of creation, with the need to support the care of other species and ecosystems. This also holds true for the interpretation of justice, and climate justice in particular. Green Christian REGs do not emphasize the climate justice as strongly

⁸ DeYoung (2012), p. 230 in DeYoung and Princen.

⁹ Ibid

as the development organizations do because they see the need for the concept of justice to be applied across all of creation. This does not mean that they object to the notion of humanitarian based climate justice, but feel that the concept is emphasized strongly by larger groups such as Cafod, Christian Aid, and Tearfund, and prefer to focus on the notion of God's creation as moving beyond the anthropocentric focus.

The concept of loving your neighbor, to UK REGS, means loving your human as well as your non-human neighbor. For Church organizations and development agencies, this applies especially to the poor in the Global South and the idea that your neighbors can include people in different parts of the world who are greatly impacted by your actions, and not only people living in close proximity. One way to link this issue is to work with sister congregations and parishes in countries dealing with climate and other environmental disasters, which the Church of England does through its AMMA network of Anglican churches. This is a particularly strong emphasis for faith-based development groups, which engage in climate change primarily due to its impacts on the developing world as experienced by their in country partners. Christian Aid, for instance, is careful to stick to its core mission of poverty eradication and engage in climate justice through that lens. The Catholic Church, Cafod and Progressio, who draw deeply on Catholic Social teaching, focus on the impact climate change has on the poor and the need to care for the poor. There are Catholic orders, such as the Columbans who are inspired by eco-theologians including the works of Thomas Berry and the concept of a universal, cosmic Christ that are more closely aligned in their motivation with Green Christian groups. The role of steward of creation and the responsibility to care for the poor are more closely aligned with other

church teachings, and church organizations and development groups are comfortable in stressing those meanings.

Another significant religious belief related to climate change and environmental degradation by all groups is the concept of ‘sin,’ confession for those sins, and redemption. The behaviors that resulted in industrialized countries’ contribution to degrading the environment are seen as exemplifying excessive and sinful behavior that should be a confessional issue for the church. This was also emphasized by Operation Noah and CEL, as well as the churches, in material consumption being identified with a form of idolatry for Christians--worshipping the false idol of wealth and consumption. The foundations of these beliefs as they relate to Christian theology in the UK have been elucidated by eco-theologians including Father Sean McDonagh, a Columban priest and leading activist, Edward Echlin, and Tim Gorrage, who are all closely engaged with the faith movement and UK REGs. Other notable theological influences include father Thomas Barry, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and Brian Swimme, who wrote about the world’s religions “entering their ecological phase,” as well as the journey of the universe that links all life on earth. What many eco-theologians have called for is a renewed vision of how human beings interact with the natural world, calling for a more holistic and “integrated cosmological perspective.” These views are reflected in the religious beliefs of UK REGs, which emphasize the need for a transformation of the existing values system and reclamation of viewing the world around humanity in cosmic and sacred dimensions, as is exemplified by this quote from Thomas Berry:

“Now a new way of understanding values is required. The *Summa* that is presently being written is the story of the universe in its cosmic-Earth-human phases as this is now emerging into consciousness.”¹⁰

Religious and environmental values are not static, they are shaped by experiences, contextualized and sometimes re-interpreted to address changing societal demands. It should also be noted that these religious beliefs are reinforced by scientific based findings regarding ecology, climate change, and the extent of ecological degradation. All of the participants in UK REGs based their drive for addressing the climate change on the weight of research regarding the issue. The Eco-Congregation, for instance, is driven primarily through its conservation mission, which, due to its mandate for conservation work and hands on projects Christian values and environmental beliefs, go hand in hand. For some of these organizations who work with or in developing countries, seeing the direct impacts of climate change almost further bolsters their urgency to act now rather than seeing climate change as a futuristic crisis. Science-driven environmental beliefs do make an impact on the REGs approach, however, their motivation to act regarding the evidence provided is grounded in and defined through their religiosity. Those sets of values are not competing, but complimentary. Understanding how the values expressed lead to behavior changes and actions can aid researchers in understanding how values motivate and translate into activism.

Issue Framing: collective action frames applies to climate change

In linking their values and beliefs with concrete actions, UK REGs utilize a variety of frames to express their message to their target audience. Their target audience includes congregations, church leadership, and policymakers. Benford and Snow trace the use of

¹⁰ Berry, Thomas (2003) in Arthur Fabel and Donald St. John (eds.) pp. 86-87

collective action frames in social movement research to Goffman's 1974 definition of "schemata of interpretation," which help to "render occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action" while also serving to mobilize supports. Furthermore, movement actors in Snow and Benford's analysis are not static, but serve in the "production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists... and bystanders or observers."¹¹ As Evans pointed out, these collective action frames can vary depending on the field in which the SMO operate, with many operating in a multi-organizational field, where frames will be adapted based on the group they are aimed at.¹² Snow et al (1986) identified four frame alignment processes, which include: frame bridging; frame amplification; frame extension; and frame transformation. As Snow et al point out, participation in an SMO often relies on the reinvigoration and clarification of interpretive frames that can also include the two types of frame amplification--value and belief amplification.¹³ Given that REGs rely strongly on amplification and clarification of existing norms, it is worth noting how framing relates to their engagement in environmental activism, though it was not a primary focus of this research. In the context of UK REGs, frame amplification is utilized to enhance the religious and moral imperative to act on climate change. The notions of justice and loving your neighbor are amplified to relate the full moral impact of current carbon-generating practices on people in poor counties, but also on other species and ecosystems.

¹¹ Benford and Snow (2000) Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment, *Annu. Rev. Sociology*, pp, 613-614.

¹² Evans, John H. (1997) Multi-Organizational Fields and Social Movement Organization Frame Content: The Religious Pro-Choice Movement, *Sociological Inquiry*, Vo. 67, No. 4, pp.451-469

¹³ Snow et al (1986)

Frame extension is also utilized to extend the notion of stewardship and care for creation in a manner that stresses integration and interdependence of all life, and moves away from dominion as human domination and right to control the natural world. Stewardship, in that sense, is transformed into CEL's concept of servanthship, thus transforming the biblical notion to emphasize kinship with the rest of creation in familiar terms to other Christians. The concept of loving your neighbor is extended through the inclusion of people in the Global South suffering the impacts of climate change. This is utilized in particular by the faith-based development organizations. Tearfund, for example, names steps to take during 'carbon lent' to help to reduce one's footprint, and links those steps to help for other 'neighbors.' Progressio and Cafod both frame water issues in terms of justice for people in the Global South as well as an issue linked with climate change. Climate justice campaigns aim to amplify the notion of justice to include negative humanitarian consequences of unabated fossil fuel consumption in the West, and link those with values of equity. The Quakers frame their message in terms of having the "right relationship with people and planet" that includes a focus on simplicity as well as economic and intergenerational justice. UK REGs, as described above, utilize a variety of framing techniques in order to amplify, extend and transform their message, linking it with core religious and moral concerns. UK REGs also utilize frames to establish links with desired political outcomes. Noha, in a study of the Jubilee 2000 movement, observed the framing utilized and how it linked to political outcomes, with both "diagnostic and prognostic functions" helping to "characterize a problem and identify its causes and assign responsibility for it, as well as responses to the problem." In short framing's objective is to

define a problem, identify its source and define possible policy solutions.¹⁴ Much of the focus of REG's framing efforts relate to identification of a problem as major moral challenge and describing the causality of the problem, as well as its solution, though the lens of religious language. For instance, Operation Noah's 'Ash Wednesday Declaration' was framed as a 'call to Church.' It describes the magnitude of the climate crisis and the Christian moral imperative to act, while also calling out Church's in having had a slow response to this crisis and urging actions that include a fundamental transformation of the carbon-based economic system.¹⁵ These frames serve UK REGs as a means to shape and project their message to their target audience while allowing them to articulate socio-political goals.

Policy Beliefs and Advocacy Coalitions:

As discussed in the previous section on frames, REGs in the UK link their core religious values and beliefs with policy issues and recommendations on how to address them. These deep-core policy beliefs are driven primarily by the moral implications attributed to the issue addressed, such as climate change, and are focused on the obligation to care for God's creation, love for all human and non-human neighbors, and justice. UK REG near-core policy beliefs and advocacy coalitions are centered on a two-fold goal of encouraging lifestyle changes in individuals, congregations, and society at large, along with a push for institutional change both with the UK government and the Churches. Near-core policy beliefs are channeled toward national as well as international changes, with Green Christian groups focusing more on the national level and international aid

¹⁴ Noha (2010), pp. 205-206

¹⁵ <http://www.operationnoah.org/ash-wednesday-declaration>, accessed August 1, 2013

organizations focusing more on the global/multilateral level. Secondary beliefs are reflected in support for given policies and actions.

A major unifying campaign for UK REGs as well as secular and religious coalitions was broad support for the passage of the UK 2008 Climate Act. The Green Christian groups, Church organizations, and faith-based development agencies all supported this act. Operation Noah, which is the only UK REG with the sole mission of a Christian response to global warming, called for even more ambitious targets in its 7-year plan--namely an 80% reduction of CO₂ levels by 2030, as opposed to the UK's intended target of 2050, over 1990 levels. Operation Noah and CEL also call for a carbon exodus, a zero-carbon economy for the UK, and work with their members in the eco-cell program to limit annual emissions to 2.5 tons, calling this a journey in carbon-free discipleship. CEL focuses their activism on more grassroots based initiatives, terming their organization as a home for the 'green sheep' of their congregations and working with members to then spread their green activism to their own congregations as well as encouraging them to join secular ENGOs, such as Friends of the Earth.

Secondary beliefs for the Joint Public Issues Team, the Methodist Church, and the Church of England support the UK's 2050 emission reduction target and implement that through their own institutional framework, and plans such as the Route 2050 at the Church of England, and the adaptation of the "Hope in God's Future" guidelines by the Methodist Church. Faith based development agencies do engage in advocacy campaigns, lobbying the UK government for action on climate change and other issues that relate to international development. For instance, Cafod was engaged in the Jubilee 2000 debt forgiveness campaign, as were other religious organizations in the UK. For Progression, Cafod,

Tearfund and Christian Aid, the core policy focus on climate change must relate to their main mission areas of international aid and poverty eradication. While they support the efforts of the environmental organizations, their interest in attending climate summits, engaging in climate justice campaigns, and pressing the UK to reduce its emissions is aimed towards humanitarian goals. These core (policy) beliefs are reflected in support for campaigns which illustrate the secondary beliefs. Progressio launched a ‘Waterproof Rio!’ campaign ahead of Rio+20 to raise attention to the scarcity of water in global south countries. They called for ‘fair and sustainable access to water’ building on their earlier campaigns in Copenhagen and Cancun ‘Just Add Water’, encouraging UK delegates to take action. Cafod, which is also engaged in advocacy work on climate change, launched the ‘Live Simply’ award to encourage Catholic congregations and individuals to reduce their contribution to climate change as well as its global humanitarian impacts.

The Deep core beliefs, near (policy) core beliefs, and secondary beliefs as identified by Paul Sabatier relate to the core values driving these organizations.¹⁶ Deep core beliefs are centered on caring for God’s creation, loving your neighbors, justice for the poor and marginalized groups, as well simplicity in everyday life. For green Christian groups, the primary focus is on the servanthship model of human beings as being a part of creation, not masters of other species/ecosystems. It is the belief system that is eco-centric and most ‘radical’ in their support for policy reforms. The care for creation as responsible stewards applies as a deep core belief of church organizations, while faith-based development groups’ beliefs are embedded mainly in the justice framework. Love for your neighbors is a deep belief shared by the three groups, with the concept of ‘neighbor’ as inclusive of non-

¹⁶ Paul Sabatier (1988)

human neighbors and neighbors in global south countries impacted directly and most severely by a changing climate. Near Core policy beliefs that reflect the deep-core beliefs are expressed by support of national climate legislation, individual and society wide lifestyle changes that encourage simplicity and economic justice, as well as support for binding international agreements and action on other environmental causes linked with climate change, such as water accessibility. UK REGs share core sets of beliefs that bind their advocacy coalition, allowing collaboration and mutual support of near term policy goals. Secondary aspects may be adjusted when working with broader secular coalitions. Appropriate framing to suit all the partner's perspectives is also taken into consideration. Secondary beliefs are reflected in the REGs support for given policies. Examples include the 2008 Climate Act, and Christian Aid's stance against new coal-power plants and participation in marches in favor of a binding treaty, as well as internal policies aimed at reducing emissions.

Perception of moral authority

The role of civil society actors, including religious groups, is acknowledged as having value-based drivers as noted by Florini and, Keck and Sikkink. The, notion that civil society actors possess a moral legitimacy in global governance has not remained without question. One critique emphasizes that these actors can lack transparency and democratic accountability. Furthermore, they may have a large member base, but that may not be synonymous with the ability to speak for or reflect the perspective of all its members.¹⁷ That question, of the moral authority and legitimacy, applies to religious actors in particular given their 'traditional' role as purveyors of such societal standards. Mary

¹⁷ Bexell, Tallberg and Uhlin (2010)

Evelyn Tucker observes that the institutional moral authority of religions can be both oppressive and liberating, as the history of religion's abuse of power signifies. Tucker further observes that in the twentieth century, religions have come to embrace teachings on social justice and human rights, and called for racial and economic equity as exemplified by their role in the Jubilee 2000 campaign. Even though religions are not without criticism in their approach to societal problems, Tucker states that "No other group of institutions can wield the particular moral authority of the religions, notwithstanding the abuses this authority has also been subject to."¹⁸

The question of UK REG perception of their moral authority and legitimacy relative to their activism was explored in this study, with the overall conclusion that UK REGs do not perceive themselves as having any greater moral authority than secular civil society actors. Legitimacy of REGs is seen as having a degree of influence, though many participants observed that the UK is a highly secularized society where the role of religion is not what it once was. The Lords Spiritual are viewed as a source of moral authority in Parliamentary discussion, but not decisive where policy decisions are concerned. For instance, in the 2008 climate act campaign, one of the engaged groups pointed out that the act had broad support and did not result in split coalitions, so while the faith voice helped to secure support, the decision was driven by factors other than the moral authority of religious actors. Some groups point out that religious groups do have a way of reaching people's hearts in ways that secular organizations do not, and that spiritual dimension can serve as a powerful motivator for some. In sum, the UK REGs do not view their voice as

¹⁸ Tucker, Mary Evelyn (2003) *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter Their Ecological Phase*, pp.41-43

being morally superior to secular organizations, but with a capacity to exert their legitimacy as respected organizations. That is true for groups with a solid history of working in the development field as well as for those who recognize their voice as representative of an electoral group. In some instances, the Churches also noted that their taking a stance on a significant societal issue, such as climate change, actually helps to raise the moral authority for the church in a secular, and at times, skeptical audience. The Green Christian groups are grassroots based, governed by boards and inclusive of members in decision-making. The Churches' goals are also well in line with those set by UK legislators and enacted through their institutional structures. In some cases, even though the institutional goals are set it takes time to diffuse those among various parishes, schools and individuals.

The most democratic model of those REGs is found among the Quakers, who make decisions based on a participatory model. Issues are raised by individual Quakers at meetings houses followed by internal discussions through regional meetings, and lastly a national meeting. In order for any issue to gain support and be supported by Quakers at the national level, it requires a wide-level of support that is generated at the level of each meeting house, making the process directly democratic. This was exemplified by the passage of the Canterbury commitment that launched a nation-wide sustainable living initiative among UK Quakers.¹⁹ In that context, institutional structure and organization matter in terms of how quickly and effectively these goals can be spread among members.

Role in the Environmental Movement

A part of this study sought to understand how REGs interact with the wider environmental movement, secular actors, and how they perceive their role in climate

¹⁹ QPSW and ECCR interviews January-March 2012

change activism. This section will address those findings by looking at how UK REGs engage with secular actors and their scope of engagement relative to global environmental politics. It will also touch on the UK REG's role in challenging the structures of modernity.

Religious actors' surge of engagement in political activism, as well as the rise in global religiosity, has been observed by numerous scholars with the theory of secularization misinterpreting the fading role of religion in public life.²⁰ Numerous scholars have also noted the rise of transnational advocacy networks, global civil society, and pluralism in variety of actors in the global stage in response to and as a consequence of globalization.²¹ Religious actors are by no means a novelty in transnational and civil activism, having formed some of the earliest transnational advocacy networks with the establishment, in 1839, of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, serving as one of the earlier moral agents shaping world politics.²² As Ann Florini points out, transnational civil society grew partly in response to the nation-states' inability to cope with the growing number of transboundary problems becoming a piece of the larger puzzle of global governance.²³ Florini further notes that these transnational civil society networks, a developing "third force" in global politics, are bound together more so by "shared values than by self-interest," thus constituting a "global conscience, grappling with questions of morality."²⁴ Craig and Gobay, on the other hand, critique both liberal-cosmopolitan as well as neo-Gramscian approaches to analyzing the role of global civil society actors, citing a lack of emphasis on understanding the actor's own self-conception of motivation and

²⁰ Haynes (1998), Jurgennmayer (2006), Hefner (2001, 2010)

²¹ Keck and Sikkink (1998), Langhorne (2001), Rosenau (2003)

²² Florini, Ann ed. (2000) *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*, p. 9

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 3-7

meaning in their agency. They further observe that the “most effective social movements operate non-hegemonically rather than counter-hegemonically, promoting radical change without seeking to influence state power.”²⁵ With respect to the UK REGs, it is important to understand their motivation and strategy for engaging in climate activism in order to better assess their role in global environmental politics as a civil society actors. Simultaneously, as observed by Berry and Gabay, it is easy to label actors as ‘global civil society’ or ‘transnational’ without fully investigating their own self-perception and goals.

The investigation of UK REGs focused primarily on groups that sought to transform politics in the UK, focusing on more localized or national approaches in their activism. The development agencies are a noted exception in that their level of engagement in UK politics is driven mainly by international partnerships and aims. Other REGs, such as the Church organizations, may on the surface and by their very definition constitute transnational civil society networks, with partners in numerous countries and offices such as the World Council of Churches and the Quakers UN Geneva and New York offices, however the level of engagement found in the UK groups is primarily domestic, with transnational ties. The same can be said of Green Christian groups, which focus their efforts primarily in the UK, with an emphasis on transforming ‘local’ politics with a view towards the global impacts and changes driven by those reforms at home. The approach of UK REGs can be termed as ‘glocal’ or localized rather than global. The focus on the ‘local’ is not isolationist in nature, but rather reflective of their support for localized rather than globalized forms of organization, especially where the neoliberal economic order is concerned. Thus the ‘glocal,’ to coin the term applied to the juxtaposition of globalizing

²⁵ Berry, Carig and Clive Gabay (2009) Transnational Political Action and ‘global civil society’ in practice: the case of Oxfam, *Global Networks* 9, 3, pp. 339-358

and localizing dynamics,²⁶ is more reflective of their role rather than from the perspective of globalism alone. In their approach, the REGs vary in utilizing counter-hegemonic and non-hegemonic approaches. Green Christian REGs, being grassroots organizations that are not part of the institutional structures reinforcing the neoliberal world order, are more critical and ‘radical’ in their approaches, placing less emphasis on working within state structures. Their focus lies in transformation from the ground-up, from the individual ‘green sheep’ through the congregation, church, town and wider society. This can be partly reflected by their strong emphasis on lifestyle transformation, support for the Transition Towns movement, as well as a radical economic transformation. For Church organizations that deal with institutional hierarchies, embedded to a greater extent in the workings of the state as well as for the development agencies supported by state funding, the approach is more counter-hegemonic than non-hegemonic in nature. Both those groups of REGs work within the hegemonic system to influence state policies and actions. While they propose transformation of the overall neoliberal order, that transformation is not as radical as that supported by the Green Christian REGs.

Global civil society and social movements:

Religious actors have engaged in activism on various global social causes including human rights, debt forgiveness, ending poverty and support for democratization. The past thirty years have been marked by an increase in religious actors’ participation in environmental causes, in particular by the growth of religious environmental groups. As illustrated by the UK case studies, these REGs who address climate change range from

²⁶ Rosenau, James (2003) in *Distant Proximities*, Rosenau provides a definition of ‘glocalization’ but preferred his term ‘framgregation’ to describe the global-local nexus, p. 11

grassroots organizations to church hierarchies and faith-based development agencies that work with partners around the world. This level of activism depicts a network of actors operating on the basis of shared values, beliefs, and policy goals, with implications for the mainstream environmental movement at the local as well as transnational and global level. In spite of the failures of numerous COP summits, resistance to economic change in Western countries, and skepticism regarding the immediacy of the climate crisis, environmental activism has flourished in a diverse range of initiatives. The ‘Death of Environmentalism’ proposed by Shellenberger and Nordhaus then, is not imminent, though its transformation and conceptualization continues to evolve.²⁷

The inclusion of religious actors in climate change activism has helped in shaping a justice agenda related to impacts on human beings and other species and ecosystems. In the UK, most REGs do not make clear distinctions between a religious environmental movement and the wider environmental movement. The two are seen as symbiotic with ‘green’ goals closely aligned. REGs also engage in a wide range of coalitions with secular groups, notably Stop Climate Chaos, the Climate Alliance, Campaign Against Climate Change, and Time for Climate Justice, as well as events such as the ‘Wave’ climate march before COP-15. As Dimitrov, Orr, and Okerke et al observed, the failure of COP-15 and other summits to yield a global climate agreement does not necessarily mean that no further action will take place regarding climate change, but that climate governance is expanding beyond the domain of the international regime.²⁸ That action may take different forms from a multilateral agreement, including local carbon footprint and conservation schemes such as those promoted by Eco-Congregation, Cafod’s Live Simply, and CEL’s Eco-cell

²⁷ Shellenberger and Nordhaus (2004)

²⁸ Dimitrov (2010), Orr (2011) and Okerke et al (2009)

and ‘LOAF’ campaigns.²⁹ UK REGs play a unique role in the wider environmental movement and try to inspire people with a capital ‘I,’ as was observed by one activist, linking values and behavior with moral choices as well as scientific evidence for why action is necessary. UK REGs find that their capacity for dealing with grief, repentance and hope can offer a profound spiritual message that is not readily available in the secular environmental movement, helping to reach people’s “hearts.” They stress the significance of this given the sheer complexity of dealing with climate change, and most often confronting “ourselves” as the source of the problem and change.

As Peter Newell observed, religious groups have the potential to galvanize a “truly global movement.”³⁰ Scholars’ definitions of what constitutes a social movement and where to draw the line differ.³¹ Some insist that protest action against hegemonic institutions is a key component, others deemphasize the role of protest. Diani and Bison note that collective identity is essential in stating that: “a social movement process is in place when collective identities develop that go beyond specific campaigns and initiatives.”³² Gillian further elaborates that studies of social movements should not reduce them to broad categories with specific protest activities, but examine them in the context of ‘orientational frames’ that “capture participant beliefs and alternative visions of societies in which they live.”³³ These UK REGs constitute part of a broader faith-based effort to transform ecological awareness and the neo-liberal model of economic globalization. The UK REGs engage in various forms of social mobilization including grassroots activism,

²⁹ Dimitrov (2010), Orr (2011)

³⁰ Newell, Peter, quoted in Anne Chaon and Marlowe Hood, AFP, Nov. 2, 2009

³¹ Tilly (2008), Tilly and Wood (2009), Diani (2004), Tarrow (2012)

³² Diani and Bison (2004), p. 284

³³ Gillian (2008) p.247-248

protest and advocacy, and challenge the ‘growth paradigm’ through their actions at the individual, congregational, and denominational levels. In contrast to Alcock, description of conflicts within the ENGO community along lines of groups working within “existing governance institutions and those challenging them,” the UK REGs appear to merge these two approaches and have them complement each other as part of a larger movement rather than being in conflict with each other.³⁴

While some of the Green Christian groups have a more radical stance than the churches or development agencies, they do share a common core of value-driven principles that are unified in an advocacy coalition and part of a larger faith and ecology movement found regionally within Europe and globally. This movement in the UK has close ties to the secular green movement, but is also embedded in the religious actors’ earlier work in social justice including anti-slavery campaigns, the struggle against apartheid, and debt-forgiveness. In one sense, the work of UK REGs serves to “re-enchant the world” or modernity, challenging the post-enlightenment worldwide view described by Weber as ‘the disenchantment of the world’ where the mystical and sacred fade from everyday life.³⁵ The role of the UK REGs lies partly in bridging the domains of the sacred and the secular, reinventing them to address modern crises.

³⁴ Alcock, Frank (2008), p. 69

³⁵ Rucikbie, Leo (2004), p. 217

CHAPTER EIGHT: RESEARCH ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES

The analysis of United States research finding follows the same key questions and five analytic categories outlined for REGs in the United Kingdom. The United States represents a larger sample of REGs, which is reflective of the size of the country as well as the extent of faith based activities. In the US, groups are more likely to be interfaith in structure, hence this sample includes numerous groups with a more diverse religious make-up than the UK case studies, though the membership is primarily Christian and Jewish in most cases. The categories of REGs discussed in this analysis include IP&L national and state affiliates; other interfaith grassroots groups; NRPE and its partners; and Evangelical Christian groups.

Stewardship, Creation Care and Sacrifice

Stewardship and creation are terms widely utilized by US REGs in their organizations and in communication with the public and policymakers. The use of stewardship and creation care shows variation between groups, often depending on the target audience. The conceptualization of these terms, though, does show many commonalities between the US REGs. Among IP&L affiliates, ‘stewardship’ is widely applied in messaging, with some IP&Ls, such as Georgia IP&L, seeing it as term that resonates well with their predominantly Christian audience. Other IP&Ls note that ‘stewardship’ applies well in some Christian settings, but denominations such as Unitarian Universalists may prefer ‘earth care’ over stewardship, whereas Jewish audiences will relate better to ‘Tikkun Olam.’ The use of ‘stewardship’ then can be dependent upon the demographic of the state and the audience. Each IP&L affiliate is also shaped by their

leadership and members, often reflecting the differences between states. Some IP&L members expressed that ‘stewardship’ is not the best phrase and prefer the term ‘kinship,’ seen as reflective of the ‘Earth Community’ integrative model of the human-nature relationship. Creation care is at times used interchangeably with stewardship, with several affiliates noting that they view stewardship as a form of creation care, with creation care seen as the overarching concept. They also observe that ‘creation care’ is a term often associated with an Evangelical audience.

The other interfaith grassroots groups, including GreenFaith, NCCC, RWE, IMAC and CCC, apply stewardship and creation care in their activism, noting that the relationship between human beings and the ‘natural’ world needs to be re-invented to emphasize living in a “right relationship” with the Earth, rather than one that results in its degradation. One rabbi used the term ‘shomer’ to describe this concept, noting that ‘stewardship’ was not the ideal word, but that this relationship had to do with human beings acting as custodians rather than owners of the earth, with the earth belonging to God. For Christian and Jewish perspectives, living life out of balance with this relationship is a violation of Ten Commandments. The impact on the poor and vulnerable is also a major focus of this message, especially for Catholic groups. The interfaith REGs further point out that for many people and religious traditions, spending time in the natural world provides a source of solace and spiritual inspiration. ‘Stewardship,’ while utilized, is still critiqued by some members as preserving this false division between humanity and the rest of the world. NRPE and its partner organizations, USCCB, CCCC, NCCC, COEJL and EEN view stewardship as one of the main components of their interreligious message about the care and protection of the environment as an edict from God. . Eco-justice and sustainability

are also common messages used by NRPE and its partners. Stewardship is also viewed as a specific form of creation care, with creation care being the wider objective. Creation care is applied most often by Evangelical partners, such as EEN. COEJL, on the other hand, relies on other Hebrew terms such as ‘Tikkun Olam,’ ‘Bal Taschkit’ or the ‘mitzvahs,’ or commandments that relate to caring for creation.

Evangelical Christian groups including EEN, ESA, Blessed Earth, Restoring Eden and A Rocha emphasize the message of creation care and its biblical mandate, with stewardship seen as the practice of creation care. Blessed Earth, for instance, portrays creation care as “faithful and wise stewardship,” which means that destroying God’s creation is also going against His will. In EEN’s terminology, creation care means stopping acts that are hurtful to God’s creation, including pollution. A Rocha on the other hand does not differentiate as much between stewardship and creation care namely due to their role as a hands-on conservation organization. None of the Evangelical groups in this study viewed the stewardship role as one of human domination, with ‘dominion’ perceived as a duty to care for creation as representatives of God. In summary, all four groups of US REGs rely on the concept of stewardship and creation care, though with varying interpretations. Some of the grassroots interfaith organizations, including IP&L show greater reservations about the applicability of the term ‘stewardship’ as depicting the right relationship between humanity and the rest of the world. Others, such as the NRPE partners and Evangelical groups, emphasize creation care as a meta-concept, but are comfortable with the notion of stewardship. The Evangelical groups in particular rely on biblical language to reach their audience.

In this context, it is difficult to generalize about the use of ‘stewardship’ without understanding the underlying meaning and alternative expressions associated with this term. As previously noted, studies often relying on frameworks such as the New Environmental Paradigm (NEP), which examine the link between religiosity and environmentalism and use ‘stewardship’ or ‘creation care’ as indicators, need to be careful about the implied meaning they assign to those terms.¹ Evangelical groups, for instance, when asked if they ‘view nature as sacred’ as one indicator would likely respond negatively, but that would not be a reliable representation of their environmentalism. Worship of creation would be seen as a form of blasphemy or idolatry by most Evangelicals, with groups such as EEN clearly stressing that while they care for God’s creation, they worship God and not his creation. That theological distinction, however, would not mean that an Evangelical necessarily views forms of environmentalism as antithetical to their beliefs, and may skew survey results.

There is, however, variation based on the demographic composition of the organization in question. This is most readily visible in the IP&L case study given the country-wide affiliate structure. Each affiliate adapts practices based on their population, so more liberal-leaning areas such as the Washington DC, Northern Virginia, and Maryland will approach their messaging differently than an affiliate in Georgia or Utah, which are both more conservative states. To that extent, political affiliation and level of conservatism do have an impact of how organizations’ views and beliefs are expressed.²

¹ Eckberg and Blocker (1996), Peterson and Liu (2008)

² Nooney et al (2003), Eckberg and Blocker (1996)

Another aspect explored in this study was whether REGs utilize the notion of sacrifice in their activism and communication with target audiences. Following Maniates and Meyer's exploration of sacrifice in the environmental context, and the political stigma associated with it, the concept was evaluated as it relates to religious environmental groups in the US³. Peterson observed that sacrifice for the environment is a concept that may be successfully promoted by religious actors. The assumption being that a religious group may have greater leeway in promoting 'sacrifice' than secular environmental organizations⁴. Many US REGs support the concept of sacrifice, though they acknowledge that it is a politically sensitive term. Some groups, including several IP&L affiliates and the national office and NCC, do not visualize the changes they ask of people as sacrificial acts. Several IP&L affiliates, including Texas, Utah and North Carolina, expressed interest in exploring the concept, though they have not actively used it to date. They also point out that there is a historical basis for sacrifice, such as sacrifices made by the US public during World War II to support the war efforts. An Ohio IP&L leader noted that victory gardens used to be common, and that those concepts were being slowly revitalized across the US. Sacrifice is also seen as having greater resonance in Christian groups than in other religious traditions, such as Judaism.

In many cases, the concept of sacrifice is expressed in other terms, such as lifestyle changes that simplify and de-clutter lifestyles. Lifestyle changes are viewed by most as necessary, though they are not seen or portrayed as a sacrifice but as enrichment to overtly consumption/capital oriented lifestyles. For Interfaith groups, such as GreenFaith and Interfaith Power and Light, the message of changing lifestyle patterns and consumer

³ Maniates and Meyer (2010)

⁴ Peterson (2010)

oriented choices is projected to a broad audience of different faiths, denominations, and regions across the US. GreenFaith confronts consumption by talking about self-restraint, the value of frugality, and the struggles people go through to change the way they live. They also approach a lifestyle change as a process of developing spiritual and moral maturity, but they would not refer to that change as a sacrifice given that:

“on global terms it doesn’t represent a sacrifice...when you’ve got people living in the developing world who would die to have one-tenth of what we have in terms of material sufficiency.”⁵

IP&L has a combined approach of education, outreach, and advocacy, working with 30,000 congregations to ‘green’ daily practices as well advocating in favor of policies and laws that regulate climate change, enhance clean energy, and curb pollution. The approach of IP&L is not as ‘radical’ as some of the UK Green Christian groups in calling for drastic changes to the nature of the neoliberal capitalism, its focus is more on working within the governance system to provide cleaner alternatives, regulate hydro-fracking, and mobilize congregations to embrace energy saving schemes, local/organic gardening, and reduce fossil fuel use. In the words of Rev. Sally Bingham, president of IP&L:

“Our message is more about change. You can put in a compact fluorescent light bulb where you had an incandescent on and you’ll get even better lighting...so it’s not sacrificing light, its changing light. It’s keeping the lights on in your house but using the energy from the sun rather than fossil fuels. And its’ joyful, it’s not about sacrifice...it’s about giving back.”⁶

NRPE and its partners have varying interpretations of ‘sacrifice,’ though they all note that the term has negative connotations in public discourse and they prefer to talk about sacrifice without actually using the word. The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change,

⁵ Interview with GreenFaith April 6, 2012

⁶ Interview with President of IP&L, May 29, 2012

an NRPE partner, also expressed that the notion of sacrifice resonates well with Catholic teaching and that de-cluttering one's life from excessive consumption can be a spiritual and freeing experience. CCCC uses the climate covenant and St. Francis Pledge as a way to inspire Catholics to reduce their carbon footprint. NRPE points out that sacrifice as it has been applied in the secular environmental context is about taking something away, whereas in the religious context, sacrifice is portrayed as an act of love for God and other people. EEN does not support using the term sacrifice regarding climate change activism because they do not believe that that kind of 'dour' approach will be effective and prefer to focus on the positive changes that can be accomplished to combat the climate crisis. Sacrifice may be necessary in the Christian faith and in dealing with climate change, but their focus remains on a transformational mindset that looks as 'climate friendly' approaches rather than focusing on deprivation. Other Evangelical REGs stress the notion of 'sacrificial love' noting that people will sacrifice for what they love.

Looking at Peterson's notion that religious groups are well suited to promote the notion of sacrifice, it seems that while US REGs support the implications of sacrifice they prefer more hopeful, optimistic language and generally do not view lifestyle changes that reduce consumption to be acts of sacrifice but rather of enrichment. DeYoung's (2012) findings regarding the satisfaction found in simple, eco-friendly living is confirmed by how the message is approached by US REGs. Furthermore, this notion of beneficial simplicity seems to cut across denominational and regional differences.

Other Religious Beliefs

In addition to stewardship, creation care, and sacrifice, other religious beliefs that drive US REG activism include care for God's creation and responsibility to care for the Earth, a holistic relationship with 'creation' as mandated by religious teachings, justice for the poor and vulnerable including other species and ecosystems, and love of neighbors, including people in the Global South. For IP&L and its affiliates, caring for God's creation and not having the right to destroy it is a major focus. The belief is shared by other grassroots interfaith REGs who also highlight that the decree to care for the Earth and the notion of interconnectedness is expressed in Christianity and other faiths including Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. The notion of a three-way covenant between God, people and all living creatures is stressed by the REGs. In the case of IMAC and GreenFaith, RWE and certain IP&L affiliates, their membership base draws on a diverse religious spectrum including Baha'i, Quaker, Native American, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and New Age spiritual and Neo-Pagan perspectives. In those cases, the common messages from those diverse faiths are utilized, for instance during a multi-faith service that draws on a multitude of traditions in support of 'moral action on climate change.' RWE, IMAC and GreenFaith view the relationship with creation as one of partnership rather than human control. In the case of NRPE, the perspective is described as inter-religious rather than interfaith, with the partners 'walking together separately,' meaning that each religious group focuses on their own traditions to reach their constituents while sharing a joint basis in Judeo-Christian teachings that bind the partnership. Evangelical partner, EEN, stresses the biblical call to care for creation and care for 'the least of these,' including the 'five loves of Christ' including loving your neighbor, and loving God. CCCC has a strong focus on caring for the poor and vulnerable, and a sense of responsibility in Western countries, which

contribute disproportionately to climate change. Their sense of caring for the poor draws heavily from Catholic Social Teaching. Humanitarian consequences of climate change are a strong focus for both EEN and CCCC, the National Council of Churches, and COEJL. The notion of social justice is emphasized by COEJL, which resonates with Jewish teachings. Care for the poor and vulnerable is a core message shared by all NRPE partners.

Other Evangelical groups also emphasize the literal directive of the bible to care for God's creation, noting that--in their target audience that believes in a literal interpretation of the bible--if the Bible says to care for creation, then that is what they should do to obey God's law. Blessed Earth, for instance, stresses 'keeping the Sabbath' as a day of rest for creation and a break from material consumption. Restoring Eden believes it is the duty of all Christians to care for creation while also noting that Evangelical Christians who view their faith through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ tend to favor individual action as an approach to dealing with social problems rather than focusing on the global scale.⁷ While this study focused on Evangelical REGs, which try to combat climate change and other environmental issues through creation care, there are other organizations more aligned with Christian Right politics that oppose creation care and favor more eschatological interpretations of their relationship to the planet. Evangelical REGs do not share these beliefs and reject them as a valid interpretation of scripture, but the Cornwall Alliance and the Wise Use Movement have tried to oppose their promotion of creation care.⁸ It should be noted that while these anti-environmental groups exist within

⁷ Interview with Restoring Eden and Wilkinson (2010)

⁸ Wilkinson, Katherine K. (March/April 2010) 'Climate's Salvation? Why and How American Evangelicals are Engaging with Climate Change, *Environment*, Vol. 52, No. 2, pp. 47-57; Stephanie Hendricks (2005) *Divine Destruction: Wise Use, Dominion Theology, and the Making of American Environmental Policy*, Melville House Publishing; Starr, Penny 'Christian Theologian on Earth Day: 'Climate Change is the Totalitarian's Dream Come True' *CNSNews.com*, April 22, 2010

Evangelical circles, they do not appear to represent the majority opinion of US Evangelicals on creation care, with support among Evangelical leaders and institutions growing in recent years with the launch of the Evangelical Climate Initiative (ESI) and supporting faith statements including Southern Baptists.⁹ The growth of support for addressing climate change is especially visible among young Evangelicals as is reflected by the launch of Young Evangelicals for Climate Action (YECA).

Overall, many similarities in beliefs link the US REGs, though with grassroots REGs stressing the need to re-frame the stewardship message in holistic terms that redefine the human connection with the planet in a model of ‘Earth community’ to a greater extent than mainline organizations. NRPE partners represent larger denominational structures and their focus tends to reflect a greater emphasis on the humanitarian consequences of climate change in poor countries and regions of the US. That does not mean that IP&L, GreenFaith, and other interfaith grassroots groups do not have strong beliefs on social justice. GreenFaith, for instance, has programs and focuses on environmental justice in the US, stressing the racial inequalities of environmental degradation, in particular exposure to toxins. Shared messages include the need to care for the Earth as a mandate from God, love others by not harming life support systems, and show justice towards vulnerable populations both human and non-human.

These views have been shaped by eco-theologians who have called for a re-analysis of the way religions have perceived their teachings concerning the environment and humanity’s role. Much of that debate started following Lynn White’s controversial article linking Judeo-Christian beliefs with the ecological crisis. Many eco-theologians have

⁹ ‘Southern Baptist Leaders Go Green: Actions have often been too timid, especially on climate, they say’, Associated Press, March 10, 2008, accessed on msnbc.com; <http://chsirtiansandclimate.org/>

disputed that and explored concepts such as Thomas Berry's Earth community discussed above, as well as the responsibility to care for other 'living creatures'.¹⁰ Dominion as domination was clearly rejected. These views are reflective of the eco-theology embraced by US REGs, and trace their roots to the eco-justice and eco-theology movements that emerged in the 1960s. Environmental justice perspectives questioned the fundamental meaning of the 'good life,' abundance, and the moral implications from a faith-based perspective.¹¹ Scholars also point out that this disconnect between Christian faith and interaction with the natural world was not solidified until the 19th century, noting that the:

“Biblical myth of creation and redemption is ploughed so deep into Western consciousness that we forget how powerful its influence has been and how distorted the otherworldly interpretations of Christianity are when compared to the Hebraic origins. God created earth, and it was good-good even before the creation of human beings from dust.”¹²

Religious beliefs can be deeply entrenched in secular societies, and this re-awakening of religious beliefs related to care of the Earth can serve as a driver of social change. Haluza-Delay observed that in a post-modern world there is a tendency toward “relativism in discourse about values and experiences, along with a rejection of normative claims, including many ‘truths’ promoted by religion.” He further notes that given the growth of individualism and erosion of the notion of the ‘common good,’ “religion remains one of the social institutions that challenges the acceptability of individualistic self-indulgence.”¹³

¹⁰ Berry (2003, 2009) Hessel (1996), Tucker and Grim (1994), Gottlieb (2006), Bingham(2009)

¹¹ Engel 2011 and Wright (2011) Christianity and Environmental Justice

¹² Engel (June 2011) Democracy, Christianity, Ecology: A Twenty First Century Agenda for Eco-Theology, pp.226-227

¹³ Haluza-Delay, Randolph (2000) Green Fire and Religious Spirit, The Journal of Experiential Education

Spirituality in this example is seen as central to the human experience and especially critical in instilling people with the sense of “a green fire,” where spiritual values and experience can challenge the dominant notions of materialism and self-interest. As Haluaza-Delay observed:

“Modernist thought strips the mystery from the mundane and desecralizes the ordinary as it privatizes spirituality and promotes individualism...In a religious worldview, the universe glows with the immanence of the divine. All space becomes sacred, not just faraway mountains and pristine lakes.”¹⁴

This perspective is reflected in belief systems of United States REGs that emphasize a holistic worldview, one that includes human beings as a fundamental part of ‘creation’ and ecosystems, without creating an artificial construct of the ‘environment’ that is to be preserved while remaining detached from human existence and experience. These US REGs have strong beliefs concerning eco-justice, transforming the present neo-liberal paradigm of unchecked ‘growth’ to a sustainable and equitable way of life.

Issue Framing: collective action frames applied to climate change

US REGs utilize a range of frames to connect their beliefs with their message on climate change/environment and target audience of congregations, religious institutions, and political elites. The four groups of US REGs share many similar frames, though they are adapted based on their audience and religious affiliation. The common frames relate to eco and economic justice, care for the poor and vulnerable, motivation through hope, and ‘localized’ experience. The framing utilized by US REGs reflects Snow et al’s (1986) model of frame bridging, extension, amplification, and transformation. For IP&L, reaching

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 148

congregations means framing their message in a way that resonates with them. Framing climate change in terms of impacts on ‘polar bears or removed places’ does not always raise the issue to imminent importance for their target audience. IP&L notes that for many people, seeing the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on human beings makes a greater impact, and this is especially true when that impact is linked with a local issue that they and their families can relate to. In order to make climate change ‘real,’ IP&L bridges frames on health impacts with sources of climate change. For instance, in addressing air quality and related respiratory ailments in children in cities including Atlanta, Houston or Richmond, IP&L links concerns for health with the polluting production of fossil fuels that results from dirty power plants.

In another case in Utah’s Salt Lake City, the amount of mercury reached dangerous levels in lakes, and consequently, fish caught in those lakes. For a state concerned with recreational fishing, connecting power plants, their contribution to global warming, and local fishing resonates more with their audience than framing that message in terms of parts per million of carbon dioxide. When poor communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by air pollution, for example in Metro-Atlanta, IP&L can show their constituents and policymakers how this is a moral issue of justice for the poor and vulnerable. Economic justice is another focus of IP&L. Since they aim to include human well-being and concerns into any environmental discussion and in framing any policy solutions, they will also look for ways to mitigate impacts on low-income communities. Climate justice is a significant frame for IP&L, with the faith message amplifying the religious values of concern for the poor and not harming ‘neighbors.’ This

message is also extended to include non-human neighbors, since IP&L wants to emphasize the holistic need to care for all of creation.

While IP&L does not shy away from discussing climate science, they note that climate science alone does not frame their message in the right context. One issue is that climate change can be perceived as too big a topic for people to comprehend, and framing the message in terms of concrete examples and their negative consequences helps to make the problem more tangible. For instance, NCIP&L frames their message on climate change in the context of supporting local food in their ‘sacred foodscapes program.’ They discuss the benefits of organic, fresh fruit and vegetables, and link the reduced use of fossil fuels for transport with a way to cut down greenhouse gas production. For many people, bridging the two concepts is a surprise because they did not at first make the connection between local food and climate change. Many state affiliates of IP&L emphasize the need to ‘avoid the political swampland,’ especially when dealing with a more politically conservative audience, as is the case in Utah or North Carolina. They try to “meet people where they’re at” rather than confronting climate denial outright. Their frame, in that case, transforms climate change into a ‘moral obligation to care for what God has created,’ something they note that a secular group cannot do. As an interfaith organization, IP&L believes they can frame their message to reach their audience on a different level than a secular organization, in part because people ‘listen with a different set of ears’ when they are engaged in a religious setting and are more open to the values-based message. In this sense, IP&L

operates through ideologically structured action by bridging, amplifying, and transforming its values based message.¹⁵

Other interfaith grassroots REGs utilize similar framing approaches to IP&L, with a major emphasis on climate justice, economic justice, and intergenerational justice, especially in the US urban areas. GreenFaith, for instance, emphasizes that it is significant for them to extend the message of eco-justice to include poor US urban areas, an area they feel has been historically neglected by secular environmentalism. NRCCC relates God's intent with the values of mercy, justice, and compassion, and frames those as being contradictory with extreme energy initiatives, thus extending these biblical concepts to modern day energy use and practices such as mountain top removal. These grassroots REGs also find that even when they work from an interfaith organizational perspective it is best to frame the message on climate change/environment in ways specific to each faith-tradition. For instance, CCC found that struggling to find the right interfaith language can relate in a more diluted message that neither religious group relates to, so having several faith-specific statements rather than one universalized statement is more effective in amplifying their values and beliefs related to care for the Earth. GreenFaith and NRCCC also found that an effective way to bridge people's spiritual experience with environmental values is through direct exposure to the outdoors, helping them to see how most religions talk about finding God and enlightenment by spending time in the wilderness.

Another frame utilized by the interfaith REGs is linking simple living with a higher quality of life. The REGs emphasize that conspicuous consumption does not bring more happiness, and US society has become too focused on "quantity versus quality of life,

¹⁵ Zald (2000) on ideologically structured action, and Snow et al (1986) on frame amplification

measuring personal worth in terms of material wealth”. They find that religious values can resonate deeply and serve as more powerful motivators than looking at the “financial and scientific bottom line and hearing from voices that touch our imaginations, souls and conscience.”¹⁶

NRPE and its partners share similar frames to the ones described for interfaith grassroots REGs in terms of focusing on social justice, equity for the poor and vulnerable, and linking ancient religious teachings with current environmental crises. For NRPE partners, such as the National Council of Churches, talking about issues of justice is not divided into human and non-human categories, but emphasizes the need to frame that message in terms for caring for all of God’s creation. This, they believe, is one of the major contributions of religious groups that differentiates their frames from those utilized by secular environmentalists. They also prefer not to use terms such as ‘environment’ and ‘natural resources,’ noting that in religious terms they speak of God’s creation and gifts from God, framing the message in terms of divine gifts rather than materials for human consumption. NRPE is unique from the other interfaith grassroots groups in that most of their members represent large denominational bodies with ministries which represent the myriad interests of their congregations. Consequently, their ecological message must be framed in a manner that makes it accepted as a part of their wider ministry work. They also have to frame their message so it aligns with broader frames used by their parent institutions. Similarly religious denominations reflect the wide spectrum of society, with liberal and conservative members who may have different views concerning climate science and the role of regulations, yet may be sitting the same pews. Their frames, then,

¹⁶ Interviews with interfaith REG activists, May-June 2012

must reflect the organization's cognizance of this diverse composition of their constituents by finding ways to reach audiences that may be more suspicious of climate science and environmentalism due to their association with liberal politics. For NRPE, a key way to frame the climate change debate was in support for climate adaptation and mitigation measures in any policy proposals as a way for stressing the humanitarian components of climate justice. Their framing emphasizes longer time-scales than those set by the electoral cycle, including inter-generational justice and a reliance on ancient teachings that stress the practice of 'Sabbath,' or the Jewish 'Shmita year,' as ways to break free from the constant pattern of material use.

The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change frames their message in terms of asking 'Whose Under Your Footprint?' making that a deeply personal connection to the direct impact of western greenhouse gas production on people in the Global South, and utilizing the teachings St. Francis of Assisi as the patron saint of Ecology thereby encouraging Catholics to take the 'St. Francis Pledge.' NRPE members are able to reach out top down through their denomination structures while at the same time trying to influence bottom-up efforts through their congregations, noting that showing a localized impact of climate change can aid in accepting it as a major concern. In short, NRPE and their other partners seek to utilize motivational framing that amplifies their constituents' current belief systems and extend those values to climate change and ecological degradation¹⁷.

Evangelical REGs frame their messages in ways that seek to target a more conservative audience, one that has been resistant to arguments presented by climate scientists. The Evangelical REGs included in this study, EEN, YECA, ESA, Restoring

¹⁷ Benford and Snow (2000)

Eden, Blessed Earth, and A Rocha, show somewhat divergent approaches towards discussing climate change, with EEN, YECA and ESA taking a direct approach in framing climate science in terms of Christian duty as followers of the Risen Lord. Restoring Eden, Blessed Earth, and A Rocha do not frame their message directly in terms of climate change given that it can be a ‘non-starter’ among more conservative Evangelical audiences. The Evangelical REGs share a concern for eco-justice and economic justice with the other US REGs, though usually that message will not be framed in terms of climate justice or social justice, because of that term’s association with liberal policies. EEN prefer to frame that message in terms of fairness, loving your neighbor and loving the least of these, stressing that the ultimate motivator is ‘love and loving others,’ thus extending the frame of love to include ‘creation and damage caused by its degradation.’ EEN frames its campaign by referring to creation care as a matter of life bridging the Evangelical pro-life position with support for emission regulation. With a pro-life position, EEN believes that Evangelicals have the moral obligation to care about the health of children and unborn children who are impacted by mercury and other air pollutants. In that sense, the causes of climate change and their negative consequences are framed as a pro-life issue. This message is also reflected in the Catholic approach, with Catholic and Evangelical groups collaborating on the pro-life /anti-pollution message.

A well-known EEN campaign, which framed personal transportation choices as a moral issue for Christians, is ‘What Would Jesus Drive?’ The campaign, which received a high amount of media attention, linked fuel-inefficiency in cars with their negative health and environmental consequences, thus bridging two previously unconnected frames in their message.

Promoting a message of hope and not helplessness is another key frame of Evangelical and other US REGs since they see that people are not motivated to act if they do not feel their actions can make a difference. Restoring Eden, which mainly targets a younger Christian audience, works with college-age groups by taking them to experience first-hand accounts of the consequences of extreme energy extraction. By first showing these groups how, for example, mountaintop removal coal mining can impact the health of the local population, Restoring Eden frames the message in terms of personal experience; it shows people what policies and lifestyles need to change in order to ameliorate that problem. REGs note that framing climate change in abstract statistical terms can make people feel overwhelmed and powerless. While EEN, YECA, ESA, and Restoring Eden focus on counter-hegemonic approaches that work through existing governance structures to seek political change, Blessed Earth and A Rocha focus more on non-hegemonic approaches that work outside the spectrum of the political system and focus on cultural change. As Billings and Samson observed, Evangelical activists do not view themselves as environmentalists, but rather as “advocates of creation care,” given the negative association for many conservative Evangelicals with environmentalism.¹⁸ A Rocha frames its role as bridging political differences through shared conservation efforts. Blessed Earth believes that “the system will take back what the culture has not granted,” meaning that policy change alone will not fundamentally alter the system. They frame their message for an audience that believes in a literal interpretation of the bible, emphasizing that what is needed is a change of heart. A Rocha stressed that “it’s not just the head, it’s the heart,”

¹⁸ Billings and Samson (2012)

noting that people will not change their behavior based on statistical information and dire scenarios alone. What matters to people is what they value. REGs believe that unless people learn to value the ‘creation’ around them, their behavior will not change. Blessed Earth prefers to frame their message in an educational way, not using the term ‘climate change,’ but showing churches how they can practice creation care through simple living or by incorporating creation care into their Seminary curriculum, thus working to influence the people who will preach to the people in the pews. This message that avoids a discussion of climate science does not confront the mistrust of science or of environmentalism, but rather frames the message in terms of living life based on scripture, rejecting excessive consumption in favor of simpler and more frugal lifestyles that allow more time for family and worship.¹⁹ That frame transforms the environmental message into one of personal and family well-being, as well as spiritual growth. Billings and Samson propose the use of Ideologically Structured Action (ISA) in studies of social movements utilizing the example of the Christians for the Mountains, the evangelical movement against mountaintop removal coal mining.²⁰ Billings and Samson suggest that frame based analyses are limited because they do not explore the role of ideology in driving social movement action. Part of the analyses presented here has tried to show how ideology shapes and constructs frames by linking religious values and beliefs with policy responses on identified social problems in what Shoki referred to as prognostic and diagnostic frames.²¹ These structured beliefs, then, are utilized in the construction of operational frames, which promote the ideology of

¹⁹ See Nancy Sleeth’s (2008) *Almost Amish*, as an example of Blessed Earth’s messaging on lifestyle transformation.

²⁰ Billings and Samson (2012)

²¹ Shoki (2010)

the social movement organizations.²² It also shows how similar ideologies, i.e. beliefs and values in ‘care for God’s creation, loving your neighbor, care for the poor,’ are adapted and ‘framed’ to target specific groups such as conservative Christians.

Policy Beliefs and Advocacy Coalitions

Sabatier (1988) designed the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) as means of analyzing the correlation between deeply held beliefs of actors, the policies those beliefs lead them to support, and the coalitions they engage in. As discussed earlier in the UK analysis, the ACF framework is divided into deep-core beliefs, near (core) policy beliefs, and secondary beliefs with coalitions. Among US REGs, policy choices are driven by deep core beliefs, grounded in their religiosity with near-core policy beliefs reflecting those beliefs. The aim here is to characterize the policy beliefs related to the religious environmental movement on climate change in the US and the UK. As Sabatier observed, policy subsystems tend to have a large number of diverse actors, where the focus is placed on the advocacy coalitions of religious actors. The four categories of US REGs share similar deep-core beliefs that relate to their policy beliefs and advocacy coalitions. The main deep-core beliefs are: care for God’s creation; loving your neighbor (including people in other countries and non-human neighbors); and justice/fairness. These deep-core beliefs, those sharing many commonalities, are adapted to suit the advocacy coalition members’ faith-specific frame’ or perspective. For IP&L and their affiliates, caring for creation, stewardship, loving others, and justice are reflected in their support for federal climate legislation, regulation of hydro-fracking and forms of extreme energy extraction, emission reduction from coal-fired power plants, and support for alternative energy sources such as

²² Gillian (2008)

wind and solar. These near-core policy beliefs define the secondary policy beliefs supported by IP&L including advocacy for the 2009 American Clean Energy and Security Act, support for EPA coal-fired power plant regulations, advocacy in favor of Maryland offshore wind energy, and opposition to the Keystone XL pipeline.

For other interfaith grassroots organizations, deep-policy beliefs are driven by their conceptualization of eco-justice, simple living, and care for creation. Those beliefs, in turn, are reflected in their near-core policy goals of federal climate regulation, racial and income equity relative to environmental burdens, opposition to extreme energy development, and promotion of improved toxics regulation. Those near-core policy beliefs have impacted the policy choices of the grassroots interfaith groups. For instance, GreenFaith supported the Safe Chemicals Act of 2010 as well as the 2009 American Clean Energy and Security Act. Religious Witness for the Earth engaged in civil disobedience concerning drilling in ANWR, and NRCCC has engaged with White House officials on developing a climate ethic to guide US decision making as well as supporting congressional action on climate change. IMAC issued a Congressional report card on climate change, and lobbied Senate and House of Representative members on the moral and ethical need to address the climate crisis. CCC developed plans to work as a ‘bridge’ between congregations, secular groups, and local authorities in developing small-scale watershed plans for congregations in the Chesapeake Bay area, connecting other macro-environmental issues such as climate change to water as a source of life.

For NRPE and its partners’, deep core policy beliefs are represented by stewardship/creation care, justice/fairness and love for neighbors. With these deep policy beliefs, the NRPE has supported near-core policy goals of federal climate legislation,

climate adaptation and mitigation, and improved air quality through emission regulation. Secondary policy beliefs on which NRPE and its partners have advocated in favor of include the 2009 American Clean Energy and Security Act, as well as an earlier version of federal climate legislation and support for EPA measures on coal-fired power plants. The particular emphasis in the proposed climate legislation for NRPE partners was on providing climate adaptation and mitigation funds for people in the Global South as well as low-income families in the US who would need financial assistance to absorb higher energy costs. The NRPE advocacy on this topic did not advocate for cap-and-trade versus a carbon tax, but emphasized the humanitarian impacts of proposed legislation with support for the passage of the bill. NRPE's Catholic and Evangelical partners were supportive of better controls on mercury as a major air pollutant with significant (neurotoxic) impacts on fetal development making that a 'right to life issue.'

Evangelical REG's deep policy beliefs stress creation care, fairness, and loving your neighbor and the least of these. The near-core policy beliefs associated with these deep beliefs are reflected in support for federal climate legislation by EEN, YECA, and ESA through their advocacy work. Restoring Eden, ESA and EEN also advocated in support of the Endangered Species Act when it was threatened in the 1990s. Prior to the 2012 presidential election, EEN, YECA, and ESA were active in advocating for climate change to become a major policy issue during the campaign, irrespective of a lack of legislative and executive action on the topic. Restoring Eden, EEN, and Blessed Earth also work through their campaigns to expose the negative impacts of mountaintop coal removal. A Rocha and Blessed Earth emphasize non-political approaches towards their activism, focusing on local conservation efforts, education, and simplifying lifestyles.

The deep beliefs of all four categories of REGs regard the role of human beings as a part of ‘creation,’ thus advocating for all policies to consider impacts on disadvantaged and low-income communities along with other ecological considerations. Some of the REGs, such as IP&L, IMAC, and EEN, wanted to challenge the US public and environmental groups who had shied away from using the term climate change, to talk about the science and not avoid use of the term in favor of “green jobs or health impacts” alone.²³ This was especially true after the failure of the 2009 proposed climate bill and the lack of a climate agreement in Copenhagen. It should also be noted that while many ENGOs are divided between groups working ‘within the system and outside of it’ (Alcock 2008), US REGs do advocacy work within current governance institutions while simultaneously stressing grassroots, socio-cultural transformation outside the bounds of the political system. The ACF framework proposed by Sabatier relates how deeply held beliefs can drive the formulation of policy-related positions, and consequently, policies which are promoted or opposed by certain actors. The framework’s broader context includes the composition of the policy sub-system and the advocacy coalitions that form within it. One of the concepts applied in this study is the adaptation of the ACF concept to the analysis of religious environmental groups, with the aim of characterizing how religious beliefs are translated into activism on climate change. The links between religious beliefs and policy choices have been outlined in the preceding section. The next section will address the coalitions of REGs in the US. The advocacy coalitions from the US and the UK will then be contrasted in the comparative analysis.

²³ Interview with GW IP&L, April 6, 2012

Perception of Moral Authority

The moral authority of religious actors and their role in guiding social standards is not new and spans a long history of abuses of that authority as well as its triumphs.²⁴ Religious actors constituted some of the earliest transnational advocacy networks, working to abolish slavery, and served to foster and empower the Jubilee 2000 movement for debt-forgiveness.²⁵ The legitimacy and contribution of these civil society actors toward democratic societies has also been scrutinized.²⁶ One of the questions addressed in this study was how REGs perceived their moral authority and legitimacy when dealing with the public and policymakers.

Overall, all four groups of US REGs held similar perceptions on their moral authority and legitimacy. None viewed their moral authority as coming from a superior position to that of secular organizations, or as an automatic way to change public and political elite opinion on an issue such as climate change. IP&L observed that people tend to listen with “different ears” when they are in a religious setting, perhaps making them more open to a moral-based message on climate change than in a different context. Others observed that people in the pews are also used to hearing sermons about social justice issues, and felt that their interaction with legislators provides more of a reaction partly because they are not used to seeing clergy members lobbying them. GreenFaith also pointed out that as policymakers become more accustomed to faith engagement in environmental issues, they are more demanding regarding details of specific policy

²⁴ Tucker (2003)

²⁵ Keck and Sikkink (1998), Shawki (2000)

²⁶ Jordan and Maloney (2007)

proposals and expect the REGs to be well-informed on the issue. The reception received by REGs can depend on the legislator's own religiosity as well as that of his/her constituents. For instance, EEN observed that when they are speaking with a fellow Christian, they can relate to that lawmaker on the basis of shared faith and values and explore why they opposed an issue that EEN sees as being a fundamental Christian concern. Some lawmakers can remain skeptical regarding the faith-voice on climate change or other environmental issues, so coming in with a moral-based, religious voice does not guarantee a change of position when opposition is strong and politically divided, as is the case with climate change.

Religious groups, though, have noted that policy makers respect the faith perspective and overall view it as largely apolitical and not engaged out of self-interest, but the greater good, whereas secular ENGOS are seen as representative of the liberal left. In some cases, REGs have been able to reach and meet with policymakers opposed to climate change, where secular groups did not gain the chance at a meeting, partly because they shared the same faith perspective as that lawmaker, enabling them to get a 'foot in the order' and open the discussion. Democratic staffers and lawmakers, for instance, expressed to REGs during lobby visits that they do not hear from the faith voice enough (versus other interests) on energy/climate change, and that their influence will be needed to engage Republicans on these issues. REGs have also engaged with campaigns that resulted in legislative success, including support for off-shore wind energy in Maryland and opposition to coal-fired power plants in Washington and Connecticut. In the Washington example, a coalition that involved Earth Ministry, the state's IP&L, and other religious and secular partners including the Sierra Club, worked at moving beyond bi-partisan politics to

push for the gradual phase-out of coal burning in the state. The effort emphasized phasing out coal power while also advocating for economic transition plans for the plant's workers to prevent massive layoffs. That coalition was able to engage with the coal company, TransAlta Corporation, labor unions, religious groups, and secular groups to pass the bill, 'Coal Free Future for Washington,' marking a major success for REG activists.²⁷ In that sense, the campaign demonstrated the positive role religious actors in a broad coalition can play in trying to maintain a non-partisan perspective of moral authority and move legislation forward. EEN, ESA, and Restoring Eden were also successful in advocating for support of the Endangered Species Act in the 1990s, promoting the message that Evangelical Christians care about creation and support regulation such as ESA. That argument served as a powerful voice to tell Republican lawmakers that this constituency supported protection of endangered species, and showed the extent of their legitimacy as influential group in swaying policy decisions.²⁸

In summary, while a religious perspective does not guarantee advocacy success it can help in positioning the argument in moral, value-based terms that can resonate with some on a more profound level than most interest groups. For now, US REGs can maintain their non-partisan stance during policy discussions, and be viewed more as honest-brokers whose aim is the common good of both people and planet. Whether that perception results in future legislative success or greater scrutiny of religious actors remains to be seen, but having a unique faith-based voice does lend a degree of moral authority, in particular when addressing a religious audience. In respect to the legitimacy of REGs in speaking for the faiths they represent, the mix of US REGs represents both grass-roots and grass-tops based

²⁷ Beres and Dye (2012), pp. 117-133

²⁸ EEN, ESA and Restoring Eden interviews 2012

organizations. In essence, grassroots groups such as IP&L and GreenFaith rely on direct participation of individuals and congregations giving them a very democratic model. For REGs such as NRPE, whose members represent large hierarchical institutions, the engagement tries to combine support from the top decision-making levels of those institutions with efforts to engage their grassroots constituency in support and dissemination of their positions on climate change.

Role in the Environmental Movement

This section will address some of the key aims of this study: how REGs interact with other actors including secular groups; the scope of their activism; and their relationship to the wider environmental movement.

Global Civil Society and Social Movements:

Contrary to the claims of the theory of secularization, religion has not faded into obscurity along with the ascent of modernity. Quite to the contrary, in recent decades it appears to be making a global-scale come back. This resurgence of religious activism, and in particular engagement socio-political issues, has occurred in the West as well, though the US has been defying the proponents of secularization theory for years with its marked religiosity.²⁹ Along with the engagement of religious actors, scholars of global politics have observed the growth of global civil society and transnational actors seeking change and new governance mechanisms in the fields of human rights, transboundary environmental problems, and world trade in what has been called the ‘third force’ in world politics.³⁰ Others have pointed out that ‘global civil society’ can be difficult to characterize and that

²⁹ Berger (2005)

³⁰ Florini (2000, 2003), Ford (2010), Bexell et al (2010)

too often divisions within the ENGO community are poorly characterized without sufficient scrutiny.³¹ Scholars of global environmental politics have sought to characterize what global civil society and transnational activism means for global environmental governance, how these actors work beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, and whether they challenge or reinforce the current hegemonic system.³² These changes are often portrayed as a form of civil resistance to the growth of global neoliberal capitalism, and along with other partners of resistance, represent contributions to the global social justice movement.³³ Given growing emphasis on the global, other scholars have also worked to define the interplay between globalizing and localizing dynamics that appear to coincide in global affairs.³⁴

One of the main aspects of this study investigated how religious environmental groups operate at the national, global, and transnational level, with a particular emphasis on their role in national climate politics. In the quest of understanding globalizing dynamics, it is easy to overlook the role of domestic actors and how they relate to the global system, in particular where climate change is concerned. The involvement of US REGs in climate activism illustrates the growing role of local climate initiatives in the US, particularly in the absence of federal legislation and a global treaty. REGs engage primarily at the state and national level with occasional engagement in global summits. They enter into partnerships with other religious actors as well as secular groups and coalitions in order to facilitate their efforts. In the US case, certain REGs are engaged with secular groups to

³¹ Stackhouse (1998), Botezagias et al (2010)

³² Betsill and Hochstetler (2006), Lipschutz (1996), Lipschutz and Kütting (2009), Arts (1998), Newell (2008)

³³ Della Porta and Diani (2006)

³⁴ Rosenau (2003), Lipschutz and Kütting (2009), Jasanoff (2004)

a greater extent than others, while all groups seek to maintain their unique faith-based voice in any collaboration.

Most US REGs, especially the grassroots organizations, focus their efforts on the state and national level in part due to funding constraints, but also because they see the urgency in transforming the US approach on climate change among the public and policymakers. EEN, for instance, noted that while they have attended the COP summits, it was in an effort to reach US negotiators and emphasize the importance of the climate agreement to US Evangelicals. They noted that Evangelicals have substantial political influence and wanted to stress the moral significance of climate change among their constituents. IP&L, CCC, and other US REGs also attended the Alliance of Religion and Conservation (ARC) summit in Windsor held prior to COP-15 to show the world religions' support for action on climate change. While the focus of US REGs is on the 'local' building of support among congregations and state and national political elites, their wider perspective emphasizes global impacts and consequences of climate change, especially where impact on poor and disadvantaged is concerned.³⁵ In sum, their focus bridges local engagement with a global focus, making their activism 'glocal' in scope.

In terms of transnational activism, many US REGs have collaborators in other countries, including the UK, where they exchange ideas and practices. This is often more of a 'loose collaboration' rather than a transnational network, however, organizations such as the National Council of Churches are connected to the World Council of Churches, which is how they engage in global campaigns such as the climate summits. EEN also has close ties to Tearfund and Christian Aid in the UK, and in particular with Sir. John

³⁵ Steinberg and VanDeveer (2010), p. 11

Houghton of the John Ray Initiative, a former IPCC chair and fellow Evangelical Christian who was very influential in mobilizing US evangelical leaders such as Rev. Cizik on this issue.³⁶ A Rocha USA is also part of an international conservation organization, A Rocha, with a headquarters in Portugal. Its UK partner, A Rocha UK, currently hosts the Eco-Congregation program. A Rocha is also a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Jewish groups, such as COEJL and RAC, also have transnational ties through their partners in the Reform movement, especially in Israel but also in the UK. Many of NRPE's partners also engage with their faith-based development partners, for instance in workshops or routine conference calls. In the Case of the Catholic Church, it has an extensive transnational network and has agencies such as Caritas Internationalis that represent its interests at the global level on issues such as climate justice, where CCCC focuses on US efforts. In short, these ties act as a means for coordination of transnational activism, but do not serve as the main focus of REG activities and are periodic rather than continuous.

As mentioned above, US REGs engage with secular as well as religious partners. Secular ENGOS that have collaborated with REGs include the Sierra Club, World Wildlife Federation, League of Conservation Voters, The Nature Conservancy, NRDC and others. Many US REGs highlight that they do not have the resources to hire a large staff, so they rely on these larger ENGOS for information on climate science and policies. IP&L state affiliates also work with secular organizations that focus on the state or regional level, such as RE-AMP in the Mid-West. In the DC metro area, GWIP&L engages in several coalitions including Solar DC, Wind Works for Maryland, Wise Energy for Virginia, Stop

³⁶ Cizik (2009), 'What If?' in Bingham 'Love God Heal Earth', pp. 1-10

Keystone XL Tar Sands Action, and the Climate Ethics Campaign among others. Many state affiliates have also partnered with utility companies to improve energy efficiency in congregations.

While the secular collaborations are extensive, many REGs, especially those from conservative states such as Georgia, highlight their emphasis on remaining a distinct faith-based voice. They see themselves as religious groups engaged in stewardship or care for creation, but not as environmental groups. This is also true for Evangelical groups who deal with a conservative segment of the US population often distrustful of ‘environmentalists.’ As such, they are clear to say they engage in the creation care movement rather than the environmental movement. The main reason why US REGs are cautious about being seen as a sub-set of the broader environmental movement is to remain as politically neutral as possible and not associated with US partisan politics. REGs stress that, as religious groups, they have constituents on ‘both sides of the (political) aisle’ and do not wish to alienate them or be seen as biased when engaging in discussions. For many religious activists, the faith-voice is their strength, foundation, and source of motivation. Consequently, they feel the need to emphasize that aspect of their climate change/ecological work rather than trying to lead with climate science or technocratic view points, which are not their main focus.

US REGs focus their activities on a combination of bottom-up activism, lifestyle transformation, and advocacy. Some organizations, such as Religious Witness for the Earth and certain IP&L and IMAC members, also engage in marches and civil disobedience. Most of these organizations approach climate activism through working within the existing governance system and outside of it, or counter-hegemonically and non-

hegemonically. This differentiates them from many ENGOs who tend to favor one approach over the other.³⁷ A major aim US REGs is to mobilize action on climate change and care for creation through individuals, congregations, and denominations. It is also aimed at gained support from political elites including members of the executive and legislative branches of the US government. REGs including IP&L and A Rocha refer to their roles as providing a home for the ‘green sheep’--either those who felt isolated in their congregations as ‘environmentalists’ or those who, as Christians, felt isolated in secular circles. Djupe and Olson investigated how environmental ideas and policies are diffused by religious organizations across US states, asking whether these groups were capable of influencing policy.³⁸ They pointed out that the diffusion of these ideas is shaped by individual states political cultures and that analysis needs to go beyond focus on the role of the minister, or denominational bodies. Their hypothesis predicted that local culture will constrain the degree of environmental policy diffusion among congregations and communities, noting that religious actors remain embedded in those local systems and are both shaped and constrained by them.³⁹

The present study did not evaluate a large sample set of individual respondents, but focused instead on religious environmental groups’ beliefs as motivators of climate activism as well as the mechanisms through which they engage with the public and policymakers. The US REG sample did cover a wide geographic range for the US, and in doing so concurs with Djupe and Olson in the role of local political culture in enabling or constraining the dissemination of environmental policies. IP&L, with its state affiliate

³⁷ Alcock (2008), Berry and Gabay (2009)

³⁸ Djupe and Olson (2010)

³⁹ Ibid

structure in about 40 states, serves as a good example of how each affiliate adapts its organizational focus and approach based on their local congregations and state political cultures. Conservative states such as Utah are less likely to lead their discussions with the science of climate change than more politically progressive areas, such as the Washington DC metro area. This cultural deference is also visible among Evangelical groups, who are aware that their constituency tends to be resistant to scientific and environmental arguments, with some groups such as Blessed Earth not addressing climate change directly. EEN framed the message on vehicle fuel-efficiency in terms of ‘What Would Jesus Drive?’ Diffusion of policy ideas, though, quite often appears to be driven by ‘green’ individuals in congregations, as well as interested ministers. It is also spurred by grassroots networks and outreach to congregations who join projects such as IP&L’s ‘cool congregations’ or GreenFaith’s renewable energy program. At the ‘top-down’ level, NRPE aims to develop denominational support at the institutional level while also working to disseminate those idea through ‘on the ground’ networks, such as that provided by CCCC. The model of dissemination, then, represents multiple points of entry as well as regional, ‘localized’ adaptation to suit the target audience.

United States REGs were also analyzed by Smith and Pulver who evaluated about 42 groups to see whether their approach reflected issue-based or ethics-based environmentalism.⁴⁰ Following Shellenberger and Nordhaus’ critique of main stream, issue-based environmentalism’s limitations, Smith and Pulver sought to elucidate which type of work US REGs engage in.⁴¹ Pulver and Smith emphasized that most US REGs focus on their ethics approach, stressing a fundamental value transformation as critical to

⁴⁰ Smith and Pulver (2009)

⁴¹ Ibid

addressing the environmental crises, with several groups utilizing a mix of both issue and ethics based approaches.⁴² As reflected by Smith and Pulver's findings, US REGs do operate from the basis of their beliefs and ethics, with their activism grounded around principles of caring for God's creation, justice, and love. However, creating a division between 'issue and ethics based' environmentalism may serve to cloud the interplay of these dimensions, which is bound to influence both secular as well as religious groups, albeit in different ways.

The US REGs researched in this study showed a firm grounding in their religiosity as a motivator for climate/ecological activism. None the less, they have also engaged in multiple-issue specific campaigns. IP&L's main role is a 'religious response to global warming,' IMAC was formed as means of fostering action on the 'climate crisis,' and GreenFaith has very specific programs on energy conservation and toxic policy reform. NCCC has worked with scientists and religious actors on developing ethical statements on forest conservation, climate change, and most recently the oceans. The CCC is focused on the Chesapeake--region watershed, including the development of watershed plans for congregations. In short, all of these efforts could be described as issue-specific, yet grounded in and motivated by an ethical framework where the division into opposing camps obfuscates the full range of engagement of REGs. Furthermore, it should be noted that secular groups may take issue-based approaches, which are also driven by their own internal ethics and additional research should explore that dynamic.

The 'Death of Environmentalism' study carried out by Shellenberger and Nordhaus (2004) did result in alternative analyses of whether the environmental movement in the US

⁴² Ibid

can be perceived as failing. Schloseberg and Bomberg presented a volume dedicated to addressing American environmentalism, highlighting that the environmental movement has never been a single entity but rather a multitude of groups, organizations, and networks operating at the local, state, and global level through a variety of approaches.⁴³ These approaches include interest group, ‘science-based paternalistic’ strategies favored by many mainstream environmental groups, but also local, environmental justice and sustainability inspired ‘populist’ efforts that look for more radical cultural change and a preservation of the social reproduction of communities. They further point out that the usual critique of the ‘environmental movement’ applies mainly to the interest-based, technocratic approaches that have defined climate change in terms of ‘parts-per-million or regulator status without the ability to address a broader discourse focused on a ‘major restructuring of contemporary life.’⁴⁴ Doherty and Doyle point out that not all environmental movements can be defined as social movements, with social movements being characterized by a long-term collective identity, composed of networks rather than organizational membership, engaged in protest activities or counter-cultural lifestyles, and the idea that they must challenge existing socio-political norms.⁴⁵ They further note that US scholars (Tarrow, Tillley) have placed greater emphasis on the characterization of social protest than on ideology.⁴⁶

The research presented on US REGs illustrates the observations made by Schloseberg and Bomberg in exemplifying that American environmentalism is not dead, but rather expanding in the range of actors, networks, and approaches utilized in reaching socio-political change in a challenging context. US REGs illustrate that climate activism is

⁴³ Schloseberg and Bomberg (2008) *Perspectives on American Environmentalism*

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Doherty and Doyle (2007)

⁴⁶ Ibid

not the sole purview of mainstream environmental groups focused on adversarial, interest-based politics, but rather representative of a congruence of movements that draws both on ‘environmental’ perspectives as well as human rights and social justice. The stalemate in US federal level policy and legislative action spurred action at the ‘local,’ state, and regional levels, with many religious organizations taking a hybrid approach of counter-cultural transformation from the ground up and political activism. As Moser (2007) observes, federal inaction has spurred the growth of a climate movement focused on ‘lower-level’ efforts that may, as has historically been the case in the US, evolve into federal legislation. Moser also notes that these activities have occurred “at the boundaries between traditionally separate groups and activists,” including social justice and moral perspectives.⁴⁷ In essence, US REG activism aims to transcend more ‘traditional’ and politicized approaches in favor of acting as ‘bridge builders’ between polarized groups, as well as serving to re-shape the fundamental nature of how the human-nature relationship is conceptualized, into an integrated model without false dichotomies between the two.

US REGs, is seeking to foster morally-driven policy making processes that favor an Earth community, kinship-based, model challenge technocratic, reductionist practices and offer ‘alternative’ versions of modernity--ones that reclaim the sacred aspect of the world. In doing so, they also counter consumerist oriented lifestyles and the dogma of unchecked growth with practices that emphasize frugality, taking a ‘Sabbath’ from constant consumption, and quality versus quantity of life. Religious activism may reinvigorate ‘environmentalism’ and serve as the potential source of larger social mobilization on the contentious issue of climate change. As defined by Doherty and Doyle

⁴⁷ Moser (2007)

above, REGs constitute part of a broader faith-based environmental or creation care movement. This movement has grown substantially over the past thirty years, and most visibly in the past ten years when looking at the range of activities, groups and networks involved. It remains too soon to determine the long-range implications of this movement and how it influences social practices and policies, but past examples of religious actor engagement, including fights against slavery and apartheid, illustrate how powerful a value-based, moral appeal can be for fostering change.

CHAPTER NINE: UNITED KINGDOM AND UNITED STATES REG COMPARISON

Introduction:

The field of global environmental politics has examined the nature of ecological problems, including the role of institutions and regimes in managing transboundary issues, interest groups such as NGOs, and other actors ranging from nation-states to epistemic communities, in setting agendas and implementing policies. The role of values in driving environmental action has not been extensively examined in detail from the perspective of motivation driving religious actors and global environmental politics, though these actors have been increasingly engaging in environmental issues over the past thirty years.¹ The goal of this study was to examine the values and beliefs which motivate religious actors to engage in environmental activism, specifically on climate change, and how those values impact national and multilateral policies advocated for climate change.

Five main categories of findings were examined including the interpretation of stewardship, creation care, and sacrifice; other religious beliefs; frames utilized by REGs in their messaging; policy beliefs and advocacy coalitions; REG perception of their moral authority; and the role of REGs relative to the environmental movement. Two countries were examined as part of this study, the United States and the United Kingdom, with the aim to conduct a comparative assessment of the motivating values of religious environmental groups (REGs) in each country and a comparison of how the belief systems vary by country and the reasons for this variation.

US and UK comparison overview:

¹ For a US evaluation of issue vs. ethics orientation of REGs see Smith and Pulver (2009).

The US and the UK were selected for comparative purposes for their shared cultural values, definition of church-state relations, and religious composition. Institutional systems vary between a parliamentary system and a federal system, the shared history influencing the notions of democracy, liberty, and free-market/capitalist economies makes the two suitable candidates for a ‘most-similar’ country comparison, though differences in government systems should be noted. As stated above, the US has a presidential, federal government where the president and members of both lower (House of Representatives) and upper (Senate) houses of the legislature are elected by the public. While a president is the head of state and can veto Congressional decisions, a supermajority of Congress can override the presidential veto.

In Great Britain’s parliamentary system, the voting public elects members of the legislature, with the party that wins the majority of seats ‘forming the government,’ or a coalition government if a clear majority is not achieved. The head of government is the prime minister, the leader of the majority party. The prime minister elects cabinet ministers for major posts, but the ministers must also be members of the legislature. This represents a key difference from the US system, which calls for the separation of power between co-equal branches of government. In the UK system, this division between executive and legislative branches is less defined.² Some political scientists view parliamentary systems as being more accountable to the voters based on their election promises, given that members of the legislature are required to vote along party lines making enactment of promised policies easier than in the US’s presidential system. The US policy process is often described in terms of ‘gridlock’ and virtual standstills on major policy issues when

² Steel, Clinton, Lovrich (2003), pp. 99

opposing parties in Congress cannot reach agreement, and more so if the Executive branch is headed by an opposing party to the Majority of Congress.³ One difference to note is that religion and state are separated constitutionally in the US, with religious freedom mandated but with no official religion. In the UK, while freedom of religious practice also applies, the (Anglican) Church of England remains the official national church, with Bishops having representative seats in Parliament and the House of Lords as Lords Spiritual with 26 seats.⁴

This section provides a brief overview of climate policies in the United States and the United Kingdom, and a comparison of the institutional political arrangements found in both countries. On the whole, based on national policy measures, the UK is ahead in terms of enacted national legislation. The 2008 Climate Change Act called for the inclusion of climate policy objectives throughout all segments of the UK government, and established the goal of an 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 based on 1990 levels, with a mid-range goal of a 20% reduction by 2020. This call included the need for more stringent policies, especially in carbon pricing, technology development, and stimulation of behavior change in order to meet those targets.⁵ As Parag and Strickland stated in support of personal carbon trading, the level of reductions will require more radical and systemic changes than can be achieved by increased efficiency measures, especially given that nearly 42% of emissions come from the domestic sector.⁶ Authority for handling climate change related issues, including energy policy, rests with the Department of Environment,

³ Ibid, pp. 100-101.

⁴ For more information see Maer and Makwana (Oct. 26, 2009) Standard Note SN/PC/05172, <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons/lib/research/briefings/snpc-05172.pdf>

⁵ Ekins, Anandarajah and Strachnan (2011), pp. 865-867.

⁶ Parag and Strickland (2010), pp. 30-31.

Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC).⁷

At the multilateral level, the UK has signed and acceded to the UN Convention on Climate Change and made strides toward compliance with its Kyoto targets. According to Dalton (2008), the UK has been at the forefront of responding to climate change for two decades, initially as a key actor in establishing the IPCC, leading in climate science, and later on in placing climate change at the center of the UK's Group of Eight presidency in 2005. By 2008, the UK was seen as on track in meeting its Kyoto obligations and set a long-term domestic policy target of reducing its emissions 60% by 2050 as part of the UK's Climate Change Program.⁸ Carbon dioxide emissions were 4% lower in 2004 than in 1990, this was in part attributed the Climate Change Program initiated in 2000, which helped to reduce emissions from the energy sector and across industry. "Emissions from methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated compounds declined by 41% since 1990 due to integrated pollution prevention and control, diversion away from landfill for waste, increased utilization of landfill gas and the United Kingdom Emissions Trading Scheme."⁹ Soon after gaining power in 1997, the Labour government, and in particular Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, played a key role in reaching an EU-burden sharing agreement, resulting in the first legally binding targets for six main greenhouse gases and committed the UK government to reducing UK emissions by 12.5% by 2010 based on 1990 levels.¹⁰ The Labour Manifesto of 1997 pledged to place the environment at the core of policymaking,

⁷ DECC website: http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/legislation/cc_act_08/cc_act_08.aspx, accessed Dec. 3, 2011

⁸ Dalton (2008), pp. 175-176.

⁹ Ibid, pp. 185-186.

¹⁰ Ibid

representing a new focus given Labour's traditional concentration on economic and social agendas. In 2001, the parties' manifesto stressed the need for the UK to show strong international leadership on climate change. The 2005 Labour Manifesto was even stronger than the previous ones, and clearly stated that the government promised to "remain committed to achieving a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions on 1990 levels by 2010" and how to get back on track with that target.¹¹ Labour had also taken steps to promote environmental sustainability through all levels of the UK government and to highlight the role of business in responding to environmental challenges.¹² One new institutional measure was the formation of the Carbon Trust as a means to provide funding for businesses to help the transition to a low-carbon economy by reducing their emissions. In 2004-2005, the Carbon trust had worked with over 2800 companies on increasing energy efficiency, design of new buildings, and other measures. The program represented an important move for the UK to show that businesses can create a competitive advantage by taking the lead in emissions reduction.¹³ Labour's success was in part attributed to combining dual goals of environmental sustainability and socio-economic progress, namely by focusing on energy efficiency and cost-reduction measures, though as Darkin points out, the two do not always coincide.¹⁴

A 2011 OECD report found that the UK was one of the top countries in the EU for emissions reductions, with a 'larger percentage reduction in greenhouse gas emissions than OECD countries on average from 1990-2005.' Much of the methane reduction was due to improved landfill and waste management policies and the overall reduction in emissions

¹¹ 2005 Labour Manifesto cited in Darkin (2006), pp. 268

¹² Darkin (2006), pp. 257-258.

¹³ Ibid, pp. 266-267.

¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 270.

being spurred on by the economic downturn, which decreased faster on average between 2005 and 2009. In terms of adaptation, the 2008 Act is seen as introducing a number of complicated assessment regimes and failing to push for sufficient adaptation measures. The UK was encouraged to evaluate areas of policy overlap and interaction, with a more uniform carbon price across sectors.¹⁵ The UK has been criticized for needing to tackle the more difficult policy measures, including reducing emissions from the public sector (not included in its climate legislation), and being able to reduce overall emission levels to reach its policy goal of a 80% carbon dioxide emission reduction by 2050.¹⁶ It also remains unclear whether the current Conservative government, which claimed to strive to be the greenest government ever, will maintain the reduction pledges in light of the economic crises.

In the US, as described above, power is divided between three branches of government, with a federal system where multiple levels of government including national, state, and local governments are all involved in environmental policy making to some degree.¹⁷ The main agencies for the handling of climate change policies include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is a federal agency with the mission of regulatory oversight of environmental pollution controls nation-wide, including the enforcement of key US legislations such as the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts. On the multilateral level, the US State Department has the authority to negotiate treaties and functions as the lead US agency in international climate change negotiations. Given the federal design of the US systems, authority is divided among multiple agencies, including

¹⁵ Bowen and Ridge (2011), OECD, pp.5-7; 30-34.

¹⁶ Parag and Strickland (2010)

¹⁷ Ibid, pp.134-136.

divisions of authority between national and state agencies. Moves towards decentralization had granted increasing authority to state governments and public-private partnerships, with some states such as California frequently taking a leading position on emission controls, and for states to form pacts towards the reduction of emissions.¹⁸

The Northeast/Mid-Atlantic states entered such a regional agreement, called the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, though the measure faltered with the recent economic sanctions and the withdrawal of states, notably NJ, from the agreement by the end of 2011.¹⁹ The RGGI was formed in 2003 and included ten participating states. It represents the first US market-based regulatory program for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The aim of RGGI is to cap and reduce emissions from the power sector by 10% by 2018 in the participating states.²⁰ At the time of signing in 2005, the agreement was seen as a break with President Bush's administration, which pulled the US out of the Kyoto protocol in 2001 citing economic reasons.²¹ Control over climate change policies is also divided at the federal level, with no single agency acting as the sole source of decision-making. While the EPA has a regulatory lead in the executive branch, numerous other agencies are concerned with monitoring of climate change impacts, emissions, and long-term scientific and societal impacts (NOAA/Department of Commerce, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Department of Interior, Department of Defense and Department of State). In the legislative branch, authority over environmental issues including climate change is divided between numerous oversight (authorizations and

¹⁸ Ibid, pp.144

¹⁹ http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2011/05/gov_christie_to_announce_nj_pu.html, accessed Dec.3, 2011

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ BBC (2005) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4548406.stm>

appropriations) committees and sub-committees in the House and Senate, which handle the ratification of foreign treaties, energy, and scientific research. While this system was originally intended to protect individual liberties and limit governmental power, Vig and Kraft point out that in the years since the 1970s, it has served to slow down the implementation of timely environmental policies.²²

With the increasing polarization of the US Congress in recent years, especially in the current Congress, climate change has come to a stand-still with close to no expectations of seeing a bill raised to a vote. Previous legislative attempts including the Boxer and Kerry bills failed to make it past either the House or Senate, and none reached a vote of passage by both houses, with the most recent bill attempted being the American Power Act proposed in 2010 by Senators Kerry and Lieberman, which called for a 17% emission reduction by 2020, and an 83% reduction by 2050.²³ The closest that a climate bill came to Congressional approval was the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, which was passed by the House in a historic vote that marked the first passage of legislation in the US that set a binding target of a 17% emission reduction by 2020. While the bill passed the House it did not obtain approval in the Senate and was never enacted into law.²⁴ Steel et al noted that while the US system of environmental policymaking is often referred to as interest-group access and bargaining dominated or pluralistic, other political scientists including Charles Lindblom did not see pluralism as the best way to characterize the US

²² Vig and Kraft (2000), pp. 2-7.

²³ See <http://www.usclimatenetwork.org/policy/congress>, and <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1989130,00.html> accessed November 6, 2011

²⁴ <http://www.usclimatenetwork.org/policy/congress>, accessed November 6, 2011

policymaking process, in particular where access to all groups is not equal in a capitalist system heavily biased towards business interests.²⁵

According to Busby, in the UK, passing environmental policies requires fewer steps or “gate keepers” to implementation than in the US, which is one factor in why the UK has an enacted climate act and ratified climate treaty, while the US does not.²⁶ The US requires a two-thirds majority of the Senate to approve all treaty ratification, as opposed to a simple majority. Also, in the UK, ratification is a simpler process, where treaty ratification does not have to go through Parliament.²⁷ Busby, in his analysis of moral movements and moral policy, discusses how the framing of climate change as an imminent and all-encompassing disaster set the stage for the types of policies that were deemed to be ‘green’ enough for governments to support if they wanted to be seen as pro-environment. Back in the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, ENGOs were seen as the arbiters of what was deemed an appropriate climate change response, and the focus on legally binding emission reduction targets set the policy stage for the mechanisms that were considered acceptable. Ironically, Busby concludes that these measures made it harder for states such as the US, which have a high difficulty level for treaty verification to ratify an agreement such as the Kyoto protocol. The framing of climate change as an imminent crisis that required legally binding targets and timetables may have, in Busby’s analysis, backfired in the case of implementing climate change policies in countries such as the US.²⁸

During negotiations in Kyoto, the US pushed for flexible market mechanisms, including emission trading to lower cost. After achieving that goal, the Clinton

²⁵ Steel, Clinton, Lovrich (2003), pp.147.

²⁶ Busby (2010), pp.

²⁷ Ibid, pp132-133.

²⁸ Ibid, pp. 120-127.

administration signed the Kyoto Protocol in November of 1998.²⁹ In the US case, however, even though Bill Clinton had signed the treaty, his administration did not achieve domestic support for Senate ratification.³⁰ A key point that Busby makes relates to the motivations for nation-states to ratify treaties, which occurred in the case of other countries with a high-degree of ratification difficulty. This motivation is the perception of being seen as a ‘good’ international partner and environmental supporter. In the UK case, the government stressed how it wished to uphold its international image as a leader in climate change policy change. Interest-based motivation is not enough to explain the behavior of states, and ‘shaming’ at the international level plays a role as well. The role of moral and religious values in driving action on social and environmental issues has a long history. Keck and Sikkink detailed the history of transnational principled advocacy networks established between the UK and US and led by religious organizations, namely the Quakers in the campaign to end slavery, which was at the time a very lucrative trade. Keck and Sikkink concluded that the movement to end slavery in the US was fostered primarily on moral and religious grounds, rather than any economic arguments, making values a critical driver of political and policy change.³¹

The previous sections outlined the overall structure of the US and UK government systems and provided an overview of climate policies in each country. Those analyses are oriented at the macro-level influences driving climate policies and politics in each country, and they are relevant in analyzing and comparing the structure and belief systems of religious environmental advocacy coalitions. The goals of this study were to evaluate

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 112-113.

³⁰ Pearlburg in Vig and Axlerod (1999), pp.236-255.

³¹ Keck and Sikkink (1998), pp. 39-78.

whether religious values motivate action on climate change, what types of frames and policies are utilized by religious environmental groups (REG), and how these advocacy coalitions compare within the context of the larger climate change and environmental movement discourse. REGs included in this study consisted of faith-based, religious NGOs and organizations, which had climate change as either a core of their operating mission or one of the major issues. The REGs in question are primarily Christian, with the exception of the US, which also included Jewish, Baha'i and other faith coalition members, given their interfaith structure.

The aim of this study was to explore the motivation of religious groups that are most representative of the US and UK. Based on the demographics, each country is predominantly Christian (US 78.4%; UK 74%), with a substantial Jewish minority in the US and a substantial Muslim minority in the UK.³² While Church attendance in the UK has been decreasing for years, many people still identify as being Anglican. The religious environmental groups identified in each country reflect this demographic, with Christian REGs found in the UK and in the US, with a minor Muslim presence in the UK and more active Jewish presence in the US. Jewish groups were not as active in the UK's environmental context,³³ so the religious environmental sector there is predominantly Christian. While Muslim REGs are also active in the UK and the groups share loose coordinating mechanisms, the engagement is not as direct and integrated as those that

³² Pew Trust survey on religion in the US (2007) <http://religions.pewforum.org/affiliations>; <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=religion&newoffset=0&pageSize=50&sortBy=&sortDirection=DESCENDING&applyFilters=true> (Office of National Statistics, UK 2001) and BBC (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/3725801.stm)

³³ Based on research looking into Jewish REGs active in the UK and personal communication with a British Rabbi and leading environmentalist- Jewish groups in the UK are presently starting to engage more in the public activism on the environment, and will likely be more prominent in the near future, however at present there is insufficient basis for a US-UK comparison, given the high-level of Jewish REG engagement in US environmental activism.

constitute the US ‘interfaith’ component.³⁴ The sections below constitute a comparative analysis of the five major research finding categories for the UK and US as noted in the introduction.

Stewardship, Creation Care and Sacrifice

REGs in the United States and United Kingdom both utilize the concept of stewardship and creation care. Overall, stewardship is seen as a more contested term among UK REGs, in particular Green Christian groups, than in the US. While some US grassroots interfaith REGs, such as GreenFaith, CCC, and certain IP&L affiliates, point out the limitations of the term ‘stewardship’ and prefer ‘kinship,’ the term is not as contested as by UK groups such as CEL who emphasize the use of ‘servantship’ instead of ‘stewardship.’ For Church organizations in the UK, as well as NRPE and its partner organizations in the US, stewardship remains a suitable model to convey their messaging, with the understanding that it is not meant to support human exploitation or domination, but rather a caring and responsible relationship with ‘God’s creation.’ In that sense, both US and UK REGs discount Lynn White’s (1968) argument that Judeo-Christian values were at the root of the ecological crises, it was rather their interpretation that resulted in the negative association. US and UK REGs also highlight that the separation of religious values and beliefs from human understanding of the world occurred as result of enlightenment philosophy, which sought to conceptualize them in mechanistic and reductionist terms where mystical notions of the sacred did not exist.

Anna Peterson proposed that while sacrifice for the environment is not a well-received message in popular culture, religious groups may be able to tackle that concept to

³⁴ Gilliat-Ray and Bryant (2011) ‘Are British Muslims Green?’

make it socially acceptable.³⁵ Karen Liftin stressed that the notion of sacrifice should be rooted in “a cosmology of interdependence that understands people as an integral part of the participatory universe.”³⁶ She perceives the environmental crisis as a ‘crisis of meaning’ and notes that the root meaning of sacrifice is ‘to make sacred,’ thus stressing the interconnectedness of the individual rather than focusing on promotion of human consumption. This type of participatory individualism, Liftin observes, can serve to offer a sense of holism to secular modernity while challenging the global commodity chains that serve to distance individual behavior from “the global underclass, past and future generations, and nonhuman nature.” Most REGs utilize alternate concepts to express the message of sacrifice, such as simple living practices that reduce material consumption and carbon footprints, and focus on quality rather than quantity of life. Cafod’s Live Simply’ award, CEL’s Eco-cell program, IP&L and GreenFaith’s renewable energy initiatives, and EEN’s ‘What Would Jesus Drive’ campaigns reflect how these REGs are conceptualizing sacrifice in practice. The practical application that both UK and US REGs share in respect to sacrifice lies in emphasizing a holistic, interdependent model that places humanity back in ‘God’s creation’ rather than viewing people as distinct from their isolated ‘environment.’ This integrated model looks at creation theology and the works of Thomas Berry, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and other eco-theologians in re-conceptualizing the relationship between world religions and ecology in the twenty-first century. In that sense, the concept of sacrifice as ‘to make sacred,’ as proposed by Liftin, is the one applied by REGs in the UK and the US.

³⁵ Peterson (2010)

³⁶ Liftin (2010), p. 117

For many REGs, ‘sacrifice,’ viewed in terms of loss and deprivation, is also not reflective of the message they want to portray. US and UK REGs view this type of lifestyle transformation as positive transformation, an improvement in the quality of life, emotional well-being, health and spiritual growth. This is true for REGs in the UK and the US, though it was most strongly rejected by US groups. A key message embedded in the UK and US REG’s approach to ‘sacrifice’ is a critique of excessive consumerism, which is portrayed as having become as ‘false idol’ of worship. They emphasize transformation of the economy to a sustainable, renewable base, along with an emphasis on practices such as Sabbath, Seder and carbon lent to emphasize a model of progress that is decoupled from unsustainable growth. Overall, UK REGs are more direct in critiquing neo-liberal capitalism, where in the US specific practices, rather than ‘capitalism,’ are targeted. Certain groups such as EEN also embrace technological solutions that aid global south countries in their climate adaptation. Given the highly polarized state of US political discourse, that is not surprising, with religious actors trying not to become ‘lumped’ with the liberal left. Trying to maintain political neutrality and maintaining support across the aisles makes this approach more suitable to conservative audiences.

Other Religious Beliefs:

REGs in the US and UK are driven by similar religious beliefs and values, with common foundations reflected in the care for God’s creation; love of neighbors (including people in the global south and non-human neighbors); justice; and the moral obligation to help those who least contributed to the climate crisis, yet suffer the worst consequences. Those beliefs are shared across the UK Christian REGs as well as the US interfaith and Christian groups. In the US, even though interfaith organizations can include minority

faiths, the dominance in membership comes from Christian and Jewish perspectives, being reflective of demographics in the country and in states. Care for God's creation and the expansion of creation to include a holistic, integrated approach to the human-nature relationship is expressed by both US and UK REGs.

For Christians, living life in accordance with Christ's teachings is of tremendous importance, and often the analogy of redemption and resurrection is used to describe climate change associated struggles with moving away from sinful, degrading practices, dealing with loss associated with ecological destruction, and being hopeful that traveling that path of darkness will result in transformation and resurrection. Another common notion between US and UK groups is that of a three-way Noahitic covenant made between God, human beings, and every living creature, meaning that the obligation to care and preserve 'creation,' or the environment in secular terms, for future generations is paramount in obeying the will of God. The counter-cultural applications of practicing the Sabbath as well as practices such as carbon lent are shared by US and UK REGs. The Sabbath as a time for taking a break from material pursuits and consumption is promoted by UK church organizations, green Christian groups, and interfaith, Evangelical Christian and Jewish groups in the US, having broad support in both countries. Eco-justice, seen as the right to a clean, healthy environment for all 'neighbors'--human and non-human--is a strong focus of REGs. Climate justice, seen as an emphasis on the humanitarian consequences of climate change, is a major focal point for UK's faith-based development groups and is their entry point for engaging the issue. A focus on domestic economic impacts is emphasized to a larger extent by US REGs. Given the negative public perception of environmental groups as being detached from job and economic impacts, US REGs

work to dispel that image and eliminate the choice often portrayed as ‘jobs vs. environment.’

Issue Framing: collective action frames applies to climate change

UK and US REGs both utilize framing techniques including bridging, extension, amplification, and transformation as identified by Snow et al (1986) to present their ideology to their target audience. These frames, in both cases, are reflected in the broader categories of beliefs, which include care for God’s creation; love for your neighbor and love for the poor or ‘least of these’; and justice/fairness. The particular frames applied reflect a means of interpreting the REG’s message to congregations, church leaders, the public, and policymakers. REGs in both countries rely on the language of hope and spiritual journey as a way to frame the ways of confronting the climate crisis. Their framing extends the climate crisis from a technical, complex issue to a value-based, rights issue that includes the rights of low-income communities, especially in Global South countries, and the divine mandate to be responsible caretakers of the environment or ‘creation.’ Both US and UK REGs extend the notion of ‘creation’ to frame it as an interconnected, holistic world where human beings live in the ‘right relationship’ with other species and their eco-systems. REGs in both countries use the frame of ‘intergenerational justice’ as a means of extending the concept of justice beyond immediate needs. The notion of extending ecological concerns beyond electoral cycles and short-term campaigns is also evident in how REGs transform climate change into a moral, religious issue.

While UK development agencies frame their engagement on climate change in terms of human justice, more US REGs are likely to frame climate change as a problem of immediate human welfare, including air pollution and impact on child development. One

difference in the framing of ‘justice’ between the US and the UK lies in how Evangelical groups can associate social justice with liberal politics and consequently prefer to frame that message in terms of fairness, love for our neighbor, and love for the least of these. REGs in both countries rely on scientific information from sources such as the IPCC to inform them of the consequences of global warming; however, US REGs feel more strongly that their audience is mistrustful of the basis of climate science. This is particularly true for US Evangelical groups. Though climate skeptics exist in both the US and the UK,³⁷ in the US climate change remains a more politically polarized and divisive issue. In some conservative framing, the initial message as one of ‘dealing with climate change’ can result in a negative response, where the audience does not wish to engage with that discussion. In the UK, none of the REGs mentioned explicitly avoid the term ‘climate change’ in their message framing. In summary, the frames utilized by US and UK REGs share similar ideologies that look to characterize the issue and identify possible solutions. Differences emerge in part due to how politically polarized climate change is in the US, and the type of framing that will resonate best with each audience. As Snow et al (1986) observed, frames are applied as a means of amplifying and extending existing values, as well as bridging previously unconnected concepts.

Policy Beliefs and Advocacy Coalitions

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) developed by Sabatier focused on the role of beliefs in driving interest group coalitions within a policy sub-system.³⁸ The

³⁷ For a study of public opinion on climate change in Britain and the association with Conservative, right-wing views see Ben Clements (2012) ‘Exploring public opinion on the issue of climate change in Britain’, *British politics* Vol. 7, 2, pp. 183-202.

³⁸ Sabatier (1988) and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993, 1999)

framework was developed in order to account for policy change over time with a focus on the interaction of people/political elites in a policy sub-system or policy community relative to broader, changing socio-political (macro level) conditions.³⁹ Sabatier's framework relied on three central concepts, one of which is policy-change over time, with at least a ten-year time frame to account for "policy-oriented learning"⁴⁰ while focusing on policy subsystems, which are equated with belief systems. Sabatier defines policy subsystems as:

"A set of actors who are involved in dealing with a policy problem such as air pollution control, mental health, or energy"⁴¹ and belief systems as: "sets of value priorities and causal assumptions about how to realize them."⁴²

In developing these criteria, Sabatier believed that policy actors are capable of learning and changing over time and that the policy subsystem provided a more comprehensive and realistic unit of analysis than focusing on single governmental institutions or, "iron triangles," specifically in looking at the interaction of multiple actors in a given issue area. Lastly, the ACF is based on the linkage of policy actions and political involvement with belief systems. Sabatier's framework relies on the assumption that policy choices are dependent upon values, perceptions of causal relationships, and other factors, which translate into a belief-system. Coalitions are most likely to form between parties that share similar "deep-core values." Change over time and policy-learning is seen as a function of changes in secondary belief systems of coalitions, while changes of 'core' beliefs are predicted to occur due to larger systemic external changes, thus differentiating

³⁹ Sabatier (1988), pp.130.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 131

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 138

⁴² Ibid, p. 131

between stable and dynamic factors. Sabatier points out that the influence or social-standing of interest groups (including their resource base) is usually a slowly changing process, and along with constitutional/legal norms, will impact the process of policy-learning along with impacts stemming from other policy subsystems. Policy subsystems are composed of a varied and broad set of actors including, but not limited to, national government agencies including members of the executive and legislative branches, local governments, business/industry groups, Environmental NGOs, research institutes, the media, and others.⁴³ In order to better group actors in large and complex policy subsystems over time, Sabatier applies the concept of ‘advocacy coalitions’ as being the most useful for analysis of policy change, which are defined as:

“People from a variety of positions who share a particular belief system-i.e a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problem perceptions-and who share a non-trivial degree of coordinated activity over time.”⁴⁴

The advocacy coalition concept uses “shared beliefs” as the factor binding political coalitions over time, specifically ‘core beliefs’, which are least likely to change and rejects long-standing coalition formation on the basis of short-term interests and convenience.⁴⁵ Sabatier focuses on how coalitions seek to change their beliefs over time into policies or programs, with three categories of beliefs- deep core, near (policy) core and secondary aspects, with the first being the most resistant beliefs to policy change.⁴⁶ Deep core beliefs reflect fundamental philosophical positions, such as the “nature of man,” while near (policy) core beliefs reflect fundamental beliefs about policies, which reflect the execution

⁴³ Ibid, pp.139

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp.139

⁴⁵ Ibid, pp.141

⁴⁶ Ibid, pp.143

of deep core beliefs, and secondary aspects reflect instrumental decisions needed for implementation of policy interests.⁴⁷

Sabatier had illustrated the structure of advocacy coalitions within a (competitive) policy subsystem using the example of air pollution in the United States, which reflected slow change over time in policies with ongoing debates between members of different or opposing coalitions, often mediated through policy brokers, or neutral agents in the debate. While Sabatier and Weible defined policy subsystems as being territorially bound,⁴⁸ and largely applied the ACF to nationally-bound policy issues such as the Lake Tahoe Basin, it has been argued since that the ACF can be applied to transnational and global policy issues. Karen Liftin applied the ACF for a study of Canadian climate policy, and applied Rosenau's concept of domestic-foreign frontiers in order to show how globalization is blurring the 'territorial' boundaries of policy subsystems in certain issues.⁴⁹ Liftin points out that the ACF is particularly suitable to analyzing environmental issues, given the multiple levels of stakeholder/actor involvement as well as the critical role of scientific/technical knowledge in guiding policy decisions, demonstrating a theory of continuity over long periods of time as much as a theory of policy-learning.⁵⁰ She further elaborates that policy debates are increasingly driven by the "twin dynamics of globalization and internationalization,"⁵¹ thus requiring an expansion of the ACF framework to account for global policy processes, which are increasingly becoming

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp.144 ,Table 1

⁴⁸ Weible and Sabatier (2007) pp. 126.

⁴⁹ Liftin,(2000), pp.236-252.

⁵⁰ Ibid, pp. 238

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 239

transnational in character for a range of social, economic and environmental issues. In the case of Canada's environmental coalition, Liftin assessed that their:

“globalized understanding was based upon causal beliefs about the Earth's climatological systems and moral beliefs about the special environmental responsibility of affluent peoples.⁵²

Moral beliefs played a key role in forming the environmental advocacy coalition, which was comprised of ENGOs, leaders within the Department of Environment, and scientists.⁵³ Liftin describes how this coalition worked along the “domestic-foreign frontier” by aligning itself with transnational advocacy groups such as the Climate Action Network. Although the ACF has been widely applied, some scholars of policy analysis have criticized the approach as being limited in “pin-pointing” when specific policy change will occur and on how advocacy coalitions develop, as well as prioritizing more significant coalition members and collaboration between actors who do not share similar core beliefs.⁵⁴ Kim and Roh modified the ACF approach to focus on the unit of analysis used in the policy arena, collective action, and the role of macro-level factors in the policy process.⁵⁵ They focus on distinguishing between broader policy domains and policy issues in analysis, as well as different levels of analysis that include policy actors and policy networks; coalitions, and institutional settings; and culture/state-society relations corresponding to the micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis. The aim of this model is not to focus on prioritizing one level over another, but highlighting that all three levels combined provide a more complete picture of the policy process. Kim and Roh's study also

⁵² Ibid, pp.240

⁵³ Ibid, pp. 241

⁵⁴ Kim and Roh (2008), pp.677.

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp.676.

shows that coordination among policy actors is dependent on the level of belief congruence, as well as interdependence and the importance of resources. In addition, they focus on the roles of institutional arrangements and national culture in influencing how policy actors interact to express their policy interests. Sabatier's ACF model also accounts for 'macro' level influence, but conceptualizes these influences as external to the advocacy coalition and responsible for changes in core beliefs.

The aim of this analysis was to apply Sabatier's ACF model to religious environmental groups in the US and the UK, and use their core 'religious beliefs' as the focal point of analysis for the structure of the advocacy coalitions on climate change. Similarly to Lifton's application, the ACF will be applied in the context of global/local (climate change) dynamics and existing transnational linkages.

Deep Core Beliefs:

The US and UK REGs share comparable deep core policy beliefs. Variation exists with how some US and UK REGs interpret care for creation, with UK Green Christians preferring the term servanthship as opposed to stewardship, and UK faith-based development agencies emphasizing sustainability and climate justice. Overall, both US and UK REG's deep beliefs emphasize the need for a transformed human-nature relationship, such as reflected in the concept of an "Earth community." That concept stresses an integrated, holistic relationship, with notions of justice based on the inability to separate human and non-human creation. Love of neighbors is reflected in the need to care for neighbors in the broad context of people and their ecosystems worldwide. That is especially reflected in how local and national actions impact those other 'neighbors.'

Near Core Policy Beliefs:

Near core policy beliefs are reflected in the US and UK's expression of their deep beliefs in the approaches taken to address climate change and other ecological problems. Both US and UK groups utilize a mix of life-transformation, bottom-up approaches that work largely outside of the governance system, as well as advocacy pushing existing institutions to take immediate action to mitigate climate change. Their common core policy beliefs are reflected in support of national or federal climate legislation, support for a binding multilateral treaty to control emissions, and calls for limits to extreme forms of energy extraction, in particular hydro-fracking. Other shared core policy beliefs are seen in the support for development assistance and the need to change high-consumptive western lifestyles that are responsible for a large share of ecological degradation. US REGs placed a greater emphasis on domestic environmental justice concerns as well as alleviating raised energy costs for lower income groups. UK groups strongly emphasized fair trade and were supportive of the occupy movement in London and around the country, seeing it as a just critique of global inequalities caused by neoliberal capitalism. In short, core policy beliefs are reflective of the deep beliefs driving them, and are further adapted by REGs in each country to suit their domestic policy concerns. Religious partners represent key allies for US and UK REGs in their respective faith-based coalitions. These faith-based coalitions function as sub-advocacy coalitions concerning climate change, with other members including secular ENGOs.

Secondary Policy Beliefs:

Specific policies supported reflect the secondary policy beliefs of REGs. Those secondary beliefs can be constrained by external system events, such as an economy in

recession, as well as relatively stable parameters including socio-cultural values and social structure.⁵⁶ In the case of climate, REGs in both countries supported the passage of such laws. While the UK Climate Act was passed successfully in 2008 with broad support, the US closest attempt for passage of federal climate legislation failed in 2009. The US REG advocacy coalition was very actively supporting the legislation, however, the degree of political polarization between both parties on the issue, and the level of climate denial amongst some lawmakers, overwhelmed the process. Some US REGs felt that had certain secular ENGOs allowed greater access to religious actors and other stakeholders, the level of support may have changed; however many perceived that political support in Congress was not strong enough given the contentious nature of climate change in American politics. In the UK, a strong coalition including religious actors was able to pass the proposed legislation with cross-party support, though at the time of enactment, the legislation was not politically divisive.⁵⁷ Other policies supported by both US and UK advocacy coalitions include calls for limiting extreme energy extraction such as the Tar Sands/Keystone pipeline. Some groups also try to focus on ‘smaller components’ of climate change to push for policy support where it might be more feasible. For instance, in the global context, Progressio made water a major issue during Rio+20, and in the US air pollution and health concerns over mercury resulted in legislation to limit those emissions. In summary, US and UK REGs adapt their secondary policy beliefs relative to the structure of their advocacy coalitions as well as broader socio-political factors driving the climate change discourse in each country. Table one below summarizes the advocacy coalition and belief system structure for US and UK REGs.

⁵⁶ Weible and Sabatier (2007)

⁵⁷ <http://www.clientearth.org/reports/climate-and-energy-lessons-from-the-climate-change-act.pdf>.

Table 1: ACF Summary

Summary of Advocacy Coalition Framework as applied to REGs engaged in climate activism in the United Kingdom and the United States

ACF Component	Climate Change UK	US
Relatively Stable Parameter		
-Problem Area	Anthropogenic Climate Change	
-Scope of issue	Action on climate change	
-Cultural values and social structure	Moral obligation to care for people/environment; Mitigation of climate change impacts; Civil society sector, government agencies, churches	
Policy Subsystem		
-Territorial Scope	UK/global	US/global
-Substantive Scope	Climate legislation, air/water quality, conservation	
-Policy Participants	<p>Non-profit faith-based organizations, Church organizations/leadership, congregations, faith-based development agencies, secular ENGOs, state/local authorities, MPs, DEFRA (UK), Members of Congress, EPA, DOS (US)</p> <p>Friends of the Earth, Stop Climate Chaos Coalition, (UK); Sierra Club, WWF, League of Conservation Voters (US) and other secular ENGOs</p> <p>World Council of Churches, Alliance of Religion and Conservation, Caritas Internationalis (global level)</p> <p>CEL, Operation Noah, Eco-Congregation/A Rocha UK, Columbans Peace and Social Justice, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Church of England, Methodist Church/JPIT, Cafod, Progressio, Christian Aid, TearFund, ECCSR</p> <p>IP&L (National and state affiliates); GreenFaith, NRCCC, CCC, RWE, IMCAC; NRPE, COEJL, NCCC, USCCB/CCC, FAN, EEN; ESA, YECA, Blessed Earth, Restoring Eden, A Rocha USA</p>	

Belief Systems

-Deep Core Beliefs	Care for God's Creation; Love your neighbor, the poor and the least of these; Social/Eco Justice
-Policy Core Beliefs	National and Multilateral greenhouse gas regulation; reduction of fossil fuel use; climate change mitigation/adaptation; renewable energy; sustainability; stewardship/servantship/creation care; US-stewardship/kinship/creation care; simplifying lifestyles/anti-consumerism
-Secondary Beliefs	Regulation of greenhouse gases, air and water policies, conservation efforts. Ex: UK Climate Act 2008; US American Clean Energy and Security Act 2009; EPA air quality standards; Tar Sands and fracking opposition
Advocacy Coalitions	Pro action on climate change, faith-based sub-advocacy coalitions
-Policy Broker	Scientists; religious witness
-Resources	Religious teachings/ scripture, scientific evidence
-Venues	Churches, rallies, protest marches, advocacy days/ government offices, collaborative action, local conservation projects, public lands,
Mechanisms of Policy Change	Scientific consensus on climate change, empirical observation of climate change impacts
-Accumulation of Evidence	Growth of scientific evidence of climate change, frequency of extreme weather events
--Hurting Stalemates	Political polarization, climate denial, 'climategate,' focus on economic growth
--External Shock	Global Economic Recession, housing market crash, slow recovery

Note: Table is based on Wieble and Sabatier's (2007) summary of the Lake Tahoe Basin ACF structure and adapts their structure to the religious environmental groups in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Perception of Moral Authority

The role of religious groups as moral, value-based civil society actors has been discussed by Keck and Sikkink, Tucker, Berry, and Gabay. One of the questions evaluated in this study was how REGs perceived their moral authority and legitimacy when interacting with their target audience on climate change and environmental issues. Both REGs in the US and the UK highlight the historical role of religious actors in swaying political change during anti-slavery and apartheid campaigns, and express optimism in their ability to have a similarly profound impact on climate change, but they do not see that type of impact as a given due to their religious standing. In the UK, REG participants note that the UK is a highly secular country, where the role of the church as a moral actor has diminished. Certain UK activists did note that the religious presence is positively received when they work with broader coalitions, and people find the spiritual connection uplifting. In that sense they see that that a Church perspective still carries weight, though perhaps not to the extent it once did.

Both US and UK REGs observe they are mostly viewed as groups with integrity and positive societal impact by the policymakers they interact with. REGs believe some of that impact is the surprise of seeing people in religious garb coming to a Congressional office to speak about an issue from a moral point of view. They are respected in part due to the fact that they do not represent special interests groups and are seen as advocating for the common good. While that ‘surprise’ factor may not last as religious actors engage in climate change and environmental advocacy, there are situations where the voice is viewed differently from other activists. Also, the US is viewed as the more religious country,

where a faith voice has a greater chance to influence the public and policymakers. This sentiment was expressed by members of UK and US REGs. Leadership from British faith-based development NGOs attended advocacy meetings on climate change with US government representatives stating that one of their reasons for engaging was the belief that the religious coalition is influential in US politics. Most REGs, though, realize that while powerful and necessary, their voice is not sufficient to eliminate policy road blocks. To that extent, they do not see their perspective as having a higher moral standing than other actors.

Role in the Environmental Movement

This study explored the beliefs and values that motivate REG activism on climate change. It has also sought to establish links between religious actors and secular groups, and how REGs impact the environmental movement. The next section will discuss at what level REGs engage in climate issues and their role as religious actors in fostering a faith-based movement with respect to global environmental politics.

Contrary to what was proposed by secularization theorists, modernity did not bring about the demise of religion, as illustrated by the reappearance of religious organizations in world politics.⁵⁸ As Peter Berger highlights, it failed especially in explaining the differences in religiosity between the United States and Europe.⁵⁹ Scholars of religion and politics have noted that religious groups are becoming more politically engaged, and even in the West are not content with disappearing into the realm of private life.⁶⁰ Jurgensmeyer observes that religion has a complicated relationship with globalization, at times seen as

⁵⁸ Hefner (2001)

⁵⁹ Berger, Peter (2005) *Religion and the West*

⁶⁰ Haynes, Jeff (1998)

its critic, while also providing a sense of shared values, universal sensibility and a global ethic. What is often projected is the violent aspect of religious extremism, though that is only a part of the picture since religion has also produced more positive forms of resistance.⁶¹ Religious actors represent some of the earliest forms of transnational activism,⁶² yet GEP has until recently not placed much focus on the emergence of faith-based environmental activism or the impact these coalitions may have on the nature of environmental discourse.

Berger sought to characterize religious non-governmental organizations (RNGOs) from the perspective of UN-affiliated groups, noting that even though RNGOs represent a growing set of global actors, they have been largely overlooked as an organizational field. She further points out that even though religion in modern society is seen as the purview of private life, RNGOs “represent a unique hybrid of religious beliefs and sociopolitical activism at all levels of society.”⁶³ In this analysis, Berger excluded congregational and denomination structures from her definition, not viewing them as focused exclusively on public missions. She found that these groups were driven and organized around their core religious values and that type of organization was excluded from many definitions.⁶⁴ This research sought to explore the motivating values and beliefs of REGs from the perspective of groups based in the US and the UK. In their scope of activism, Berger is correct in stating that religious groups constitute a set of actors that is able to reach multiple levels of society—local, national, transnational, and global. The concept of REGs presented here, however, does include denominational structures, in part because the membership of REGs,

⁶¹ Juergensmeyer (2005)

⁶² Keck and Sikkink (1998)

⁶³ Berger, Julia (2003)

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 19

including RNGOs, tends to blur the division between denominations and non-profits. This can be seen through the overlapping affiliations of some members, as well as the formation of groups such as REG whose parent organizations are indeed denominational institutions.

The US and UK REGs analyzed here engage primarily at the local and national level to shape change in the form of policies, as well as to push for a larger transformation of cultural values related to the human-nature relationship. In the case of faith-based development agencies, their role in the UK sought to push for UK policies in the area of development and aid for the poor, which is their primary mission and area of engagement in ‘climate justice.’ In that sense, these groups showed some of the strongest global connections and activism during climate summits and other multilateral fora, such as Rio+20. In the US, several of the groups researched participated in global summits such as the ARC run Windsor summit held before COP-15, various COP meetings, and Rio+20. The National Council of Churches, for instance, engages with the global climate negotiations through its role with the World Council of Churches. For the majority of the REGs, especially UK’s Green Christian groups and grassroots organizations in the US, attending global level events and engaging with them is out of scope of their work, as well as cost-prohibitive. Green Christian groups also have a strong position regarding limiting personal carbon footprints and do not feel justified in flying to far away destinations. In the US, REGs highlight that they can exert the most influence on the global climate discourse through facilitating meaningful action and support in the US, which has been a major obstacle in these global negotiations.

Similarly, a major focus of REGs in both countries is countering excessive consumption and unsustainable lifestyles, hence there is strong recognition that local actions and issues have a direct impact on global problems of environmental degradation, a warming climate, and equity. Furthermore, following the failure of Copenhagen/COP-15, many groups turned to alternative ways of dealing with climate change in the absence of a binding global treaty. This is especially true in the US, where the lack of federal legislation has prompted a rise in local and regional initiatives as well as alternative approaches. Both US and UK activists observe that when climate change is portrayed as such an all-encompassing technical issue, it makes it difficult to campaign on and draw public attention. Focusing on local, immediate impact issues, such as air quality, that are linked with global climate change is a more effective strategy than framing the message in terms of parts-per-million CO₂ and removed impacts.

The approach reflects a ‘glocal’ perspective, addressing local initiatives while linking them with global-level consequences. This pattern is reflected by Okereke et al, who observed that climate governance has moved beyond the international regime, occurring at domestic and international levels with a broad range of actors. This “wide range of actors--from individuals through local communities to transnational organizations, reflects the emergence of novel governance arrangements at all levels of social organization, such as the Transition Towns Movement in the UK (and increasingly in the US).”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Okereke et al (2009), pp. 65-66

US and UK REGs reflect a significant sub-set of this governance arrangement, as they seek to utilize their networks to effect value-based changes and spiritual transformation coupled with an engagement in the policy-making process. Wapner argues that analyses of global civil society or world civic politics will be incomplete unless scholars acknowledge a less narrow notion of the political engagement of these actors, one that includes their role in fostering societal transformation instead of defining their role solely on influence exerted relative to nation-states.⁶⁶ The definition of what constitutes the realm of political influence needs to include dimensions both beneath and beyond nation-state boundaries. That definition should also reflect social transformation efforts of civil society actors such as religious groups that drive change through multiple levels of engagement.

Kütting provides a conceptual framework for analyzing the environmental dimensions of global or international political economy by exploring the concept of an “eco-holistic” approach to GEP/IPE. By using the term ‘eco-holistic,’ she distinguishes that her analysis will include social, political, economic and environmental dimensions without subordinating the other components. In the neoliberal economic paradigm driven by market de-regulation and free-trade, the moral, ethical, and justice components are overlooked or not taken into account.⁶⁷ Many REG efforts in both countries reflect counter-cultural positions, which challenge the constant growth paradigm and material conceptualizations of the ‘good life.’ The way they seek to ‘make sacred’--by framing lifestyle changes and calls for simplicity as means for attaining a higher quality of life as

⁶⁶ Wapner (1995)

⁶⁷ Kütting, Gabriela (2004) *Globalization and the Environment: Greening Global Political Economy*, Albany: State University of New York Press

well as spiritual growth--work to “re-enchant modernity” and bring back mystical experience into daily life.⁶⁸

Similarly, the REG’s approach to dealing with environmental degradation and climate change reflects a long-term perspective that moves beyond the electoral cycles that many secular organizations focus on in their efforts. The time-frames of religious actors are centered on notions of intergenerational justice, as well as their perspective of relying on old-standing traditions and institutions that have witnessed many social changes. In this regard, religions can be seen as mobilizing slowly on an issue. But as some REG activists observed, once they do, they can make a powerful impact. As portrayed in this study, REGs constitute part of a broader social movement. The UK REGs place less emphasis on seeing the secular groups as a distinct movement, while US REGs, especially in conservative areas, place greater emphasis on being part of a distinct religious movement. While not all environmental movements are social movements, these social movement organizations reflect the shared ideologies among faith based environmental activists, who are linked together by common values, goals, networks, and approaches.⁶⁹ Furthermore, while some of these REGs engaged in protest and civil disobedience, those tactics represent only a portion of strategies utilized to challenge dominant social norms and practices. As O’Neill points out, environmental movements and the social movement organizations that participate in them cover multiple perspectives and can include local as well globally engaged organizations.⁷⁰

Summary

⁶⁸ Ruickbie (2004)

⁶⁹ Doherty and Doyle (2006)

⁷⁰ O’Neill (2012), p. 115-142

Overall, US and UK REGs constitute part of a global religious environmental movement, which draws on its origins in earlier social justice, liberation, and environmental campaigns. It does not fit into a sub-set of the wider environmental movement or social justice movement, but exemplifies a hybrid of these efforts, unified under a shared framework for building a holistic and integrated “Earth community.” Charles Taylor observed that with the advent of the secular age there is a general sense in society of having lost something profound along with the transcendent, the disenchantment of modernity.⁷¹ It is in this sense that REGs try to re-instill a sense of the ‘sacred’ in everyday life, a lived religion that embraces, as Casanova would say, a ‘public sphere’ that relies on democratic norms, while contesting the mechanization of modern life. That is evident in their emphasis on simple living and viewing the world in terms of a God given ‘creation’ rather than a resource for consumption. In a sense, it promotes localization “as a process of social change pointing toward localities and adapting institutions and behaviors to live within limits of natural systems,”⁷² thus providing an alternative vision of the world than the one promoted through economic globalization.

⁷¹ Taylor, Charles (2007) p.307-309

⁷² DeYoung and Princen (2012)

CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter is to provide a conclusion and recommendations based on the study's findings regarding the motivation of religious environmental groups (REG) to engage in climate change activism in the United Kingdom and the United States. The conclusions will be focused on the major findings, followed by recommendations for future research.

Stewardship, Creation Care, Sacrifice

This study sought to explore how certain religious terms and concepts including stewardship and sacrifice are utilized by religious actors in their environmental activism. Stewardship, while commonly applied, is not a uniform term to REGs. It is subject to various interpretations, with many UK and US REGs seeing it as too anthropocentric. The other terms preferred by REGs include servanthship and kinship. Stewardship is also viewed as a form of creation care, especially by Evangelical groups. Creation care, or care for God's, creation is most commonly applied by REGs and reflects their approach toward ecological issues more so than 'stewardship' alone. REG's main emphasis is on the notion that God created the Earth or, 'creation,' and that this creation is a gift from God. It is not conceptualized as a resource for use or domination, thus countering Lynn White's hypothesis that Judeo-Christian values are essentially anti-environmental. Human beings are viewed as trustees of creation, not its owners, and are expected to care for it responsibly. Clearly much is left so subjective interpretation of teachings and scripture.

The concept of ‘sacrifice’ was examined following Peterson and Liftin’s reference to religion’s ability to use the term more effectively in connection with the environment, and as a return to the original meaning of ‘sacrifice’ as to make sacred. The term ‘sacrifice’ is not widely used by REGs in the US and the UK due to its negative connotations, however the actions supported by REGs reflect the original meaning of the term ‘to make sacred.’ REGs stress simple living practices while countering the modern culture of endless growth and material accumulation. Many REGs also do not view ecologically sound behavior as a sacrifice; they see it as a way to enrich lives, to make them more holistic and in balance with the rest of creation. An important lesson here for scholars and activists studying the politics of sacrifice is that the term does not have to be associated with negative tradeoffs and loss. It seems best to re-claim its original meaning, ‘to make sacred,’ as this type of spiritual and enriching connection is more encouraging than speaking of giving up certain products and practices without relating the practice to a sense of personal affirmation and growth. REG activists highlighted that people sacrifice for what they love, so a critical step in changing ecologically degrading habits is to reconnect human existence with the natural world, or ‘creation,’ and foster the essence of an “Earth Community” as advocated by Thomas Berry.

Other Religious Beliefs:

The core message of REGs concerning ‘care for creation,’ and one of their main motivations, is the belief that human beings are not distinct from the ‘environment.’ The term ‘environment’ is seen as unsuitable because it externalizes creation as something detached from human existence. In this sense, REGs differ from secular groups in how terminology is applied. Some also feel that the environmental movement began by

emphasizing preservation of an environment devoid of human presence and see their role as supporting ecological well-being that also fosters human well-being. REGs are strongly motivated by concern for ‘their neighbors,’ defined in broad terms as human, non-human, and far away neighbors. Consequently, eco-justice includes ecological and human welfare, with those two seen as inseparable. While some groups emphasize human welfare more so than others, the underlying message of holism, interconnectedness, and moral obligation to care for the ‘Earth community’ is shared by all US and UK REGs. REGs in both countries are motivated by their religious values and beliefs. They are informed by scientific findings concerning climate change and other ecological problems. However, their main driver for engaging in activism is a spiritual, morally driven belief that caring for God’s creation is a religious mandate, a “confessional” issue.

REGs believe that western societies must re-define how they view their relationship with the natural world in holistic terms that will serve to protect human and ecological well-being for present and future generations. In that sense, ‘creation’ is not perceived in instrumental terms as valuable because it is of worth to humans. Intrinsic value, value irrespective of human benefit, is also not the most suitable term because REGs do not conceptualize ‘the environment’ as either non-beneficial or beneficial to human existence. This dichotomy between human needs and an external environment is precisely the approach they feel is inadequate in dealing with the climate crisis. As Dietz, Fitzgerald and Shwom point out, research on values has often overlooked in-depth interviews and participant observation in favor of surveys and experiments.¹ As this research has illustrated, religious values and the terms used to describe them are highly subjective and

¹ Dietz, Fitzgerald and Shwom (2005)

context-dependent. Thus, without a deeper understanding of their application it would be challenging for researches to fully comprehend how values drive behavior.

Collective Action Frames:

REGs utilize various frames to express their value-based message in terms that are best suited to their target audience. Various framing techniques including frame bridging, extension, amplification, and translation are applied by REGs to amplify existing values (Snow et al). For instance, evangelical and Catholic groups frame mercury air pollution in terms of a pro-life issue, where caring for the “unborn” is extended to providing a healthy environment. Frames that are shared by UK and US REGs include care for God’s creation, love for neighbors and, the least of these, justice/fairness. As Billings and Samson observed though, frames will not adequately reflect what drives social movements without understanding their ideologies.² Such ideologically structured action is reflective of REG activism. The frame analysis adopted here has sought to include ideology in the construction of frames to elucidate their deeper meaning. Shoki concludes, in analyzing the Jubilee 2000, that coherently expressed frames that resonate with notions of justice and moral values can lead to successful outcome for social movements.³

The challenge that remains for the religious environmental movement, both in the US and the UK, is the ability to link a complex issue such as a climate change with specific collective action frames that reflect the REG’s ideology. To the extent that REGs can maintain emphasis on climate change as a major issue while framing their message in moral and value based terms, they should succeed more than if they framed climate change as a

² Billings and Samson (2012)

³ Shoki (2010)

technocratic, elite issue. Many REGs are already utilizing this approach by ‘breaking down’ the overwhelming problem of climate change into localized applications, as well by adapting messages that are faith-specific and actionable, such as the practice of carbon lent, Sabbath, and linkage of local food sovereignty with large scale climate impacts.

Policy Beliefs and Advocacy Coalitions:

This study adapted Paul Sabatier’s Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) model and applied it to religious environmental group coalitions in the US and the UK. The main aim of that analysis was to show how REG beliefs and values are linked with policies supported and actions taken. Sabatier’s original model was developed for domestic-level ACFs while Karen Liftin extended that analysis in her evaluation of advocacy coalitions along the ‘domestic-foreign frontier’ in the Canadian climate change policy process. Liftin emphasized the need to move beyond the rigid definition of national boundaries, especially when dealing with global ecology issues increasingly driven by internationalization and globalization.⁴

This adaptation of the ACF emphasized deep core, near core, and secondary belief linkages. It began with an analysis of the religious ideology driving REGs then continued with an analysis of frames applied to translate that message. Lastly, this ACF adaptation examined the correlation between beliefs and policies advocated. This framework was intended to elucidate ‘deep’ causal factors that enable religious groups to engage in environmental activism, as well as to understand the relationship between beliefs, values, and actions taken to express them. It also illustrated how the ACF can be adapted to

⁴ Liftin (2000)

situations beyond the realm of ‘domestic’ politics, and indeed illustrates how that boundary has blurred in an increasingly ‘glocalized’ context. While the ACF has been used to describe opposing coalitions within policy sub-systems, the goal here served to identify the REG advocacy coalition within each country by exploring its internal structure, relationship with other actors, and transnational linkages. In that sense, the religious environmental groups serve as their own sub-advocacy coalitions, given their coalitions with other secular groups in support of certain policies. Even within religious coalitions, there are different types of REGs whose internal mission, organization, and values will drive or constrain their actions within a given advocacy coalition and policy sub-system. Thus, the analysis of ACFs should move towards further exploration of their nuanced structure and belief formation.

Perception of Moral Authority and Legitimacy:

In researching the perception of REG’s moral authority and legitimacy, it was evident that neither UK nor US groups believed that their religious status granted them any higher moral ground than other secular ENGOs. They were generally perceived by political elites as legitimate actors who represented the common good rather than self-interest. They were also perceived to represent organized, civically minded constituencies who vote and consequently can influence electoral outcomes. The REG message was best suited to political elites who shared the same faith as the lawmaker in question, allowing them an entry point that might not be granted to a secular organization. This was especially true in the US, where climate change remains a deeply divisive and politically polarized issue.

While REGs perceived that they are a welcome and necessary voice that can exercise a measure of moral authority on climate change and other issues, they do not feel as though they are sufficient element in the advocacy process. Broader coalitions and support must be mobilized than that which can be achieved by lobbying members of Congress or Parliament. Both UK and US REGs also believed that religious groups in the US have greater moral authority when dealing with the public and policymakers due to the religiosity of the US population. The UK is seen as a highly secular country where religion plays a lesser role than in the United States. In examining research results, it appears that the religiosity of the public and policymakers is an advantage to US REGs, however, both groups are in a position to present a unique perspective and framing of environmental degradation that is not been widely available in secular circles. Secular groups are certainly guided by their own morals and values; however, leading with a spiritual and faith-grounded message may be perceived as more legitimate stemming from faith groups. That is not to say that ‘values’ are not part of secular approaches and may be gaining ground, however, the framing of that message would need to tailored.⁵ This analysis was limited by the exploring the perception of REG’s moral authority. Further analyses should also include extensive interviews with secular NGOs and political elites. That work, however, was outside the scope of the present research.

The Environmental Movement and Global Politics:

A major focus of this research was on understanding what role religious actors play within the broader environmental movement, global civil society and whether they

⁵ ‘The Common Cause: The Case for Working with our Cultural Values’ (September 2010), published by COIN, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Friends of the Earth, Oxfam, WWF

constitute a distinct religious environmental movement or a novel component of mainstream environmentalism. It has also explored how REGs interact with secular ENGOs and political elites.

Level of Engagement:

US and UK REGs operate at the local, national, global, and transnational levels depending on the organization's mission and size. In the UK, most Green Christian organizations have a local and national focus. Church organizations have a local/national focus as well, but share wider transnational ties through their organizational network and structure, such as the Quakers. Faith-based development agencies operate at the global and transnational level with numerous partners in the Global South and engagement in multilateral fora. US grassroots organizations also focus more on local and national level activities rather than multilateral venues. Certain groups that represent larger denominational structure engaged more directly in the climate summits and work through global bodies such as the World Council of Churches. Many of those constraints are imposed by staffing and funding limitations. UK groups also focus on reducing carbon emission and prefer to restrict travel for that reason as well. US groups, such as EEN, also point out that with the significant role the US plays in climate negotiations, ensuring domestic support is their critical area of focus.

Glocality:

A key perspective of REGs in both countries is an emphasis on the 'glocal'-- meaning a localized focus on activism and change coupled with a global understanding of the consequences of climate change and other ecological issues. This is seen in their

conceptualization of ‘love thy neighbor’ as a moral obligation to care for human and non-human creation at home as well as in other parts of the world. This moral obligation is strengthened by the role affluent states have played in contributing more to greenhouse gas emissions, with countries in the global south suffering from the consequences already visible through drought and changes in their growing season. In this sense, REGs resist economic globalization and neoliberal capitalism, which is seen as a driving force of ecological degradation, social instability, and lack of justice. Many REGs, especially in the US, do not oppose capitalism but rather favor its transformation. The term used by some in the UK is ‘spiritual capital,’⁶ which they feel is an overlooked component of how the economy is measured. The model they promote is one of localization, which is not synonymous with localism or with the opposite of globalization. As defined by DeYoung and Princen:

*“Localization cannot be only about a specific locality. While localization is a place-based transition, it also must include a nested set of goals, agreements, and practices supporting a regional, national, and global transition.”*⁷

In essence, this type of transformation to low consumption and self-sufficiency sought by REGs requires a wide-scale societal shift in values that relates to ecological holism, but is also intimately linked with human well-being and quality versus quantity of life.

Role in the Environmental Movement:

⁶ Jonathan Porritt referred to spiritual capital as growth in spiritual, values based terms; growth as human beings in learning and quality of life as opposed to continuous material consumption (personal observation during CEL 2012 annual meeting)

⁷ Raymond DeYoung and Thomas Princen (2012) *The Localization Reader: Adapting to the Coming Downshift*, MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts , p. 57

One of the questions explored in this study was how REGs interacted with the mainstream environmental movement--whether they were a sub-set of this movement or constituted their own distinct movement. In evaluating research results from the US and the UK, REGs constitute a developing religious environmental movement that developed as a hybrid of earlier environmental and social justice movements rather than being a sub-set of mainstream environmentalism. In the UK, the affiliation with secular groups appears to be less distinct than in the US. That distinction, however, is the result of environmentalism's association with the liberal left, which US REGs try to avoid in favor of having a non-partisan image, as they work with groups across the political divide. That level of sensitivity was not found in the UK, as these groups were less concerned about maintaining a unique and separate identity.

The origins of religious environmentalism go back to earlier campaigns led by religious groups and institutions, which were grounded in human justice and equality--namely, the campaign against slavery and the anti-apartheid movements. The work of churches and religious leaders in liberation theology and pro-democracy movements also served as an inspiration for some activists, as well as environmental justice campaigns that highlighted the racial and income inequalities associated with exposure to toxic environments. Furthermore, the role of eco-theologians, including Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Thomas Berry, Laurel Kearns, Mary Evelyn Tucker, Shawn McDonagh and others, served as sources of inspiration and theological guidance on the faith-environment connection for US and UK REGs. Those origins point to a hybrid-movement that is rooted in its religious roots and informed by modern-day environmentalism. This religious environmental movement has shown considerable growth in outreach, number and

diversity of participants, and activism over the past ten years. It is anticipated that this movement is not transient and will continue to expand and evolve over the next decades. The scope of its impact and influence in transforming existing socio-political structures and values can then be fully investigated.

Recommendations for Further Research and Implications for Religious Environmental Groups

This study presented how beliefs and values motivate religious environmental groups to engage in climate activism. Over the course of the research, several areas were identified for future exploration, as well as recommendations for students and participants in the religious environmental movement.

Defining Religious Beliefs:

First, while all research will make assumptions about how concepts and beliefs are used, it is best to supplement survey questions and existing worldview indicators with in-depth interviews and participant observation that help to elucidate how terms such as, ‘stewardship,’ ‘creation care,’ or ‘sacrifice’ are applied and defined by different participants. A worldviews survey that assumes what the use of terms such as stewardship or ‘seeing the environment as sacred’ mean in terms of the participant’s pro-environment position, may skew those indicators without fully understanding how they are defined for that group or individual without a more detailed investigation. For instance, ‘sacrifice’ can be seen by some REGs such as EEN as an inappropriate term, however, they would not oppose the actual practice of sacrifice in the right context. Consequently, the full meaning

of certain terms may be obscured by an assumption made by the researcher at the onset of the study.

The aim of this research was to focus on Christian and interfaith REGs. However, there are religious environmental groups active from many world religions. Additional research outside of the current scope would examine the belief systems of Jewish groups (outside of the interfaith context), Muslim, Hindu, Baha'i, Buddhist, and other faiths as it relates to their motivation to engage in climate/environmental activism. Also a more detailed analysis of each faith perspective would shed light on additional frames and meaning applied by REGs. It would also help to draw more on fields, such as psychology and the sociology of religion, to better understand individual behavior and forms of resistance or support for ecological practices.

The Global Context:

This research was also limited in scope to a two-country comparative analysis, and did not focus extensively on the global-scale activities of REGs, including those with national partners such as the World Council of Churches and the Quakers. Those networks within religions can be extensive and would warrant their own mapping analysis that could not be included in detail in the present study. The Catholic Church, with its multiple orders and transnational networks, would provide an excellent field of study, in particular given the interest and activism of Franciscans, Columbans, and Benedictines in social justice and eco-theology. A regional-level analysis would also help to elucidate further the transnational advocacy coalitions of REGs as well as the variation in belief systems. The European Union, for example, could be used in that type of multi-year study.

Changing Patterns of Religiosity and Lived Religion:

The REGs addressed in this study illustrate how religious life and religion in public life are not antiquated concepts about to be swept away by secular societies, but have expanded in recent years and been engaged in activism on multiple issues, including environmental degradation. An observation based on current research is that there is a growing segment of individuals engaged in REGs --in the US, the UK, and likely in other Western countries--that affiliates with being 'spiritual but not religious.' This group is interesting because it seeks spiritual values and experience while moving away from traditional, hierarchical institutions associated with 'religion.' Those types of individuals seem to find a home among faith-based, grassroots organizations, and may or may not participate in a church or temple outside those groups. In that sense, they are emblematic of 'lived religion'--religion as it is experienced in real life, while also demonstrating the need for a level of 'deeper meaning' not available through secular rationality alone, and for many, not found in traditional religious institutions. Declining levels of affiliation with organized religious groups may be one reflection of that pattern. It would also signify that while traditional forms of religious expression are losing ground, religiosity in its own right is not; it is transforming rather than disappearing. While this study could identify this type of pattern among REG 'green sheep' members, to what extent this perspective represents the membership of faith-based NGOs and what this may represent regarding the changing nature of western religiosity would require further exploration.

It is plausible that while church organizational membership is declining, the growth of such religious environmental groups (outside the scope of denominations) is representative of lived religion as it is experienced in the increasingly post-modern context.

This is a tenuous hypothesis derived from this research that was not one of the key questions explored, but that may provide valuable insight to students of religion as well as religious institutions looking to keep ‘people in the pews’ and encourage high levels of participation. Educational efforts, such as the Seminary Alliance and the Green Seminaries Initiative are a valuable beginning towards ‘greening’ traditional institutions.

The End of Nature:

The end of nature has been addressed by activist and writer Bill Mckibben as well as Paul Wapner. They argue that humanity’s role in ecological systems has extended so far that we are now living in age where a remote, pristine ‘nature’ removed from human contact is nonexistent. The environmental movement began in an effort to preserve nature, while at times failing to acknowledge early on the inseparability of human existence from the wilderness that it sought to preserve.⁸ A key finding of this study is that REGs seek to restore the human-nature relationship by removing the dichotomy between human survival and a remote ‘environment.’ Their emphasis on interconnectedness epitomizes where environmentalism in its various forms may need to lead--a more integrated model where human survival is dependent on ecological well-being and not a trade-off between jobs or the environment. It is also highly contingent on much broader societal transformation than that can be accomplished by either lobbying or changing individual lifestyles. Both

⁸ Wapner (2010)

strategies are required in order to re-shape societal values, but also to implement them through governance mechanisms and institutions. In essence, an ecological, holistic framework is required that defines environmentalism as an integral part of social and spiritual life. Whether religious groups can enable this large-scale transformation remains to be seen, and scholars should also remain critical of how religion's rise can impact democratic governance--that is dependent on the actors involved. There are religious groups which focus on an anti-environmental message and while they are in the minority, one should not assume that they are insignificant. A better understanding of this anti-environmental perspective would help to illustrate further how religious ideology is being applied and to what extent it resonates with its intended audience. That being said, the majority of religious environmental activism identified in the US is pro-environmental and this counter-movement was not evident in the UK.

In summary, there are multiple facets of religious environmental research that require further exploration and provide multiple opportunities for improving understanding of the significance of religious actors in global environmental politics. The movement described here is part of a global effort to support improved ecological practices. It is not solely a western movement and can be found worldwide.

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APPENDIX A

Coding Scheme for Data Analysis: Categories (based on key research questions)

Motivation:

1-Types of religious beliefs/values that motivate environmental activism:

- A. Stewardship
- B. Creation Care
- C. Sacrifice
- D. Scriptures/specific religious teachings related to the environment and climate change (ex. Genesis, love thy neighbor)
- E. Creation Theology (Thomas Berry, Des Jardin,)
- F. Earth Spirituality

2- Scientific perspectives on the environment and climate change

- A. -reliance on scientific data, climate model predictions, ecosystem impacts, anthropogenic climate change
- B. -technical aspects of climate change- renewable energy, alternative technology
- C. –scientific vs. religious drivers

3- Policy Subsystems and Beliefs (ACF)

- A. -Deep Core beliefs
- B. -Policy core beliefs
- C. -Secondary beliefs

4- Historical Reasons for Activism/Organization and Mission

- A. -personal inspiration
- B. -organizational drivers and structure
- C. -Key leaders/role models
- D. –Mission
- E. -Funding Sources

5- Issue Framing (frame extension, frame amplification, frame alignment, frame transformation):

- A. Humanitarian consequences of climate change
- B. Climate justice
- C. Responsibility for impacts of Western countries
- D. Holistic approach (all beings matter; life in balance)
- E. Linkage with other issues (ex. Mercury for the unborn campaign, fracking)
- F. Religious Frames applied to Climate/Environment
- G. Hope/gloom and doom scenarios
- H. Target Audience
- I. Secular vs. Religious

6- Transforming Lifestyles

- A. -simple living
- B. -more fulfilling lifestyles
- C. -resisting neoliberal capitalism (ex. fair trade products, local food)
- D. -greening congregations
- E. -glocality- focusing on local issues with global lens

7-Re-enchantment of the World

- A. -Bringing the elements of the sacred back to the modern world
- B. -Challenging/Diverging from Church Hierarchy
- C. -Green sheep
- D. -Lived religion

8-Perception of Moral Authority/legitimacy:

- A. perception of moral authority/legitimacy as different from secular ENGOs
- B. public perception of religious perspective
- C. political elite perception of religious perspective

9- Level of Engagement (Local, Domestic, Global, International)

- A. -Domestic
- B. -Regional
- C. -Transnational
- D. -Global/Intergovernmental

10- Policy sub-system/ Belief Coalitions (key members)

- A. -secular organizations (ENGOS, human rights NGOs, coalitions, others)
- B. -religious groups/organizations
- C. -government agencies/parties/ lobbying activities
- D. -Movements (separate faith / Green movements or versions of one; perceptions of environmental movement)
- E. -others

CURRICULUM VITAE

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