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Economics versus Environmentalism: Core Belief Systems in Conflict

Abstract

In recent years economists and environmentalists have often found themselves on opposite sides of important policy debates. In some cases the differences have reflected narrow and technical disagreements. But the conflicts have often also related to basic ways of perceiving the world – to the core belief systems that shape the thinking of economists and environmentalists. The thinking of economists and environmentalists typically reflects certain fundamental assumptions about the world that cannot be defended exclusively on "rational" grounds. In some cases the advocates for belief systems may misleadingly seek to defend them in exclusively "scientific" terms, perhaps hoping to appeal to the great prestige of science in our times. They may not even be fully aware of the powerful normative assumptions shaping their own ways of thinking. Both economics and environmentalism, for example, have their own ways of understanding the relationship of human beings and nature. For economists, the perception of nature typically is as a "natural resource" that is a factor of production to be used to advance human welfare. Environmentalists often see nature as having an "intrinsic value." Rather than using resources to

maximize benefits minus costs, public policy should seek to minimize negative human impacts on nature. Wilderness "cathedrals" are thus places of minimal human impact. The criteria of "natural" and "unnatural" play a normative role in environmental thinking similar to that of "efficient" and "inefficient" in economic thinking. Many policy disagreements between economists and environmentalists are so difficult to resolve because they simply reflect the fact that much different criteria are being applied to obtain policy conclusions. This paper briefly summarizes the key differences between the core belief systems – the secular religions -- of economics and environmentalism (recognizing that each in fact covers a considerable range). It then examines the challenge posed for analysis of public policy making when the participants may be separated by basic differences in belief systems of a virtually religious character.

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This paper is not your usual APPAM conference research paper. It is instead a brief overview of my conclusions from more than 20 years of writing and thinking about the character of economics and environmentalism as core belief systems, and some possible implications for policy analysis.¹ Actually, I think of them as secular religions (which in my framework count as real religions) but some people may be more comfortable thinking in terms of competing “belief systems.” My basic idea is that both economics and environmentalism are derived from, reflect, and advocate particular ways of thinking about the world, including core value judgments. If often more implicitly than explicitly, many (not all) economists and environmentalists thus function in the world as advocates for their belief systems and associated values (their religions).

This is not the usual understanding of the social sciences and ecological science which have long professed an objective to be “value-neutral.” Depending on the audience, however, I often find a surprising degree of agreement with my religious assessment. I find that among economists (and policy analysts, if perhaps less predictably) there is little disagreement when I characterize environmentalism as a religion – it seems fairly obvious to them. When I speak with environmentalists, I get a similar reaction but the other way around – economics, it seems rather clear to them, is a religion. Neither group, however, is really comfortable with the characterization of their own thinking as religious (the economists are admittedly more uncomfortable than the environmentalists).

I should also say that economics and environmentalism are not always religious. Economics can be turned into a pure exercise of mathematical or other formalism; other things equal, it is not religious to say that having more goods and services is better than fewer. Similarly, other things equal, having less risk of cancer is better than having a greater risk. So I

am mainly concerned with the intersection of economics and environmentalism with public policy making. Here most policy positions taken reflect in part the core convictions of economic religion and environmental religion. I might also add that it is possible to have supplemental non-economic and non-environmental beliefs relating to strictly private aspects of life or matters such as life after death, derived from other religions such as Christianity.

Economic Religion

Economists believe in the idea of economic progress as an end in itself. Or rather, economic progress is not the ultimate end but is the correct path to the ultimate end – the elimination of material deprivation as an important factor in human existence, thus freeing human beings to realize their higher and better selves. As in many areas, John Maynard Keynes was more articulate about this than other economists. In 1930 in “Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren,” Keynes wrote that rapid economic growth would soon “lead us out of the tunnel of economic necessity into daylight.” It will all come about, he explains, as a result of “the greatest change that has ever occurred in the material environment for human beings in the aggregate.” After this happens, and thus relieved of the pressures of economic scarcity, we will finally be “able to rid ourselves of many of the pseudo-moral principles which have hag-ridden us” for all of prior human history.²

The enthusiasm for economic progress was at its greatest at the end of the nineteenth century and in the years leading up to World War I when it was widely believed in western civilization that economic progress was leading on a path to a new heaven on earth. Richard Ely, who helped to found the American Economic Association in 1885, believed that economics would provide the base of scientific knowledge to sustain “a never-ceasing attack on every wrong institution, until the earth becomes a new earth, and all its cities, cities of God.”³ The

American progressive movement has been described by historians as seeking to advance a “gospel of efficiency,” representing a “secular Great Awakening.” The leading political scientist Dwight Waldo once wrote that in the progressive era “it is yet amazing what a position of dominance ‘efficiency’ assumed, how it waxed until it had assimilated or over-shadowed other values, how men and events came to be degraded or exalted according to its dictate.”⁴

The carnage of World War I shattered this faith for many leading western intellectuals and the many terrible events of the 1930s and World War II were even more disillusioning. Still, economists have been perhaps the leading holdouts for progress. They no longer speak with the religious zeal of the progressives and adopt a posture of rigorous analytical neutrality. Yet, when asked why he entered the economics profession, William Baumol replied that “I believe deeply with Shaw, that there are few crimes more heinous than poverty. Shaw as usual, exaggerated when he told us that money is the root of all evil, but he did not exaggerate by much.”⁵ In advising professional economists on the role they should play in government, Charles Schultze said that they should be “partisan efficiency advocates,” advancing the highest cause of the economist, the efficient use of the resources of society.⁶

In the nineteenth century there were solid grounds for believing that economic progress was transforming the human condition on earth for the better and it seemed reasonable – at least until World War I -- to think that this might continue indefinitely, leading eventually (Keynes was optimistic it might be a mere 100 years or so) to a virtual heaven on earth. Economic historian Gregory Clark reports that there was no large improvement in the living standards of the great majority of the people living in England until 1800. Indeed, for the world as a whole “the average person in ... 1800 was no better off than the average person of 100,000 BC.” It was not until the nineteenth and twentieth century that there occurred “the first break of human

society from the constraints of nature, the first break of the human economy from the natural economy” – the moment when very large numbers of people first overcame the state of material deprivation that had always previously characterized human existence for the great majority.⁷ An average person today lives better materially than a member of a royal family a few hundred years ago. It does seem almost like a miracle.

Many economists would not disagree fundamentally with the observations I have just made. They would argue, however, that economics long ago shed its progressive religious zeal and is now based on a set of analytical tools that merely assume that more is better than less. Utility depends on goods and services consumed, and more of each good and service necessarily means a higher level of utility for each individual. Distributional issues obviously factor in but, assuming we address them reasonably, the total welfare of society will increase as the total goods and services increases. More rapid growth means more rapid increase in social welfare.

Implicit in this way of thinking, however, is a whole range of strong unstated value assumptions. First, it assumes that human happiness and well being depends on consumption. Many leading religious thinkers in the history of western civilization have believed, to the contrary, that labor is the key to human happiness. Having more possessions for the purpose of consuming may pose large dangers. This can happen in at least two ways: a focus on pursuit of riches can too easily tempt us to betray our higher principles and, second, the possession of the wealth itself can corrupt our morals. This is no minor matter but is a central message in the history of Christianity. It says in the Bible that “woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort;” “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God;” and “Love your enemies, ... lend to them without getting anything back.” It is the poor who are the blessed of the earth.

The economist Donald Hay is somewhat unusual in being well regarded in the economics profession and a devout Christian. He observes that the idea of the pursuit of self interest falls well within the Christian concept of fallen human beings. He thinks that much of what economists currently do would survive in a newly “Christian economics.” However, he finds that the central “emphasis on ‘efficiency, growth and progress,’ as defined within the neo-classical research program, is missing from the list” of acceptable Christian purposes of the economic system. This is due, he thinks, “to the contrast between the biblical framework and the normative framework of economics with its utilitarian roots.”⁸ Maximum happiness is not the Christian idea of the highest end of life; economic growth and progress becomes a false idol for economists.

My concern here is not of course the actual validity, or lack of such, of Christian teachings; the point I am making is that, if economics by its very framework of thought is significantly antagonistic to at least some Christian values, then it is impossible to argue that economics is value free. Indeed, it takes a religion to stand in opposition to the teachings of another religion. Economics, therefore, must be an opposing religion, if of a secular kind.

In Calvinism in particular, human existence in this world since the fall in the Garden is deeply sinful, indeed “totally depraved” in John Calvin’s own writings. In his sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” America’s greatest Calvinist, Jonathan Edwards, preached to his congregation that “your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell.”⁹ The pursuit of more leisure and consumption will only make matters worse; hard work is at least a possible remedy for our unruly souls. If the core Calvinist worldview had informed the development of economics, the whole set of initial assumptions of economic analysis would have had to be radically altered. Economics, however,

implicitly dismissed such Calvinist ways of thinking as a throwback to a much less enlightened past and instead embodied modern progressive values in its founding assumptions. Implicitly, by treating these assumptions as foundational and universally true, economics was in effect preaching a new religious view of the human condition.

The course of economic progress involves the radical transformation of a society. What is less efficient must be routinely cast aside in favor of what is more efficient. The market is the most effective instrument of progress because it makes these decisions the most ruthlessly, without political or other social constraints. That is why most economists today – having seen that socialism is actually a conservative force by allowing politics to block the rapid pace of change necessary to maximum progress – strongly favor a market organization of the economy. But what if, however, the very processes of social transformation themselves involve large costs – at some point conceivably becoming greater than the benefits of progress itself. Perhaps material progress itself, like most things, and contrary to economic religion, is subject to diminishing returns. Could we perhaps have even reached this point today? I am not making this argument but it is certainly within the realm of possibility. Economists, however, implicitly dismiss it as a matter of their faith in progress. They generally make no effort to demonstrate it scientifically.

Consider trade with China. This has no doubt worked to maximize total available goods and services in the United States, helping the poor above all with the low prices at places like WalMart – and produced large material benefits for the poor in China too. But it has also thrown millions of workers in the United States out of their jobs, caused thousands of businesses to close their doors, and undermined the vitality of many U.S. communities. How can we know for sure that the social gains for the United States from much greater trade with China are greater than the

social costs. Economists are actually not very interested in this question; as I said, they simply assume implicitly that it is worldwide economic progress that is the point of the economic system – and a world market will most effectively advance this objective. Few if any economists have ever sought to do a truly comprehensive benefit-cost analysis from the U.S. point of view of trade with China. Against the benefits, there have been large costs that have included the psychic demoralization of U.S. workers thrown out of jobs and of U.S. businessmen who have failed, plus the transitional costs – conventionally monetary and again, also in significant part psychic – of possibly having to move to another job in another community and otherwise put their lives back together. For some people displaced by “progress,” they never recover their level of “utility” of the past.

If economists had to factor in all the costs in every dimension of life associated with rapid gains in economic efficiency and thus “progress,” there would be no way of saying objectively whether the gains are today worth the costs (it is admittedly easy enough to say that the gains today of the past burdens of progress borne by others in the nineteenth and twentieth century were worth it for us in 2011). Yet, economists routinely advocate efficiency enhancing measures of public policy such as trade with China without reservation. This is not a “scientific” conclusion; it requires a faith in the transformative benefits of economic progress. We can ignore the many social costs of rapid economic change because the ultimate goal is a transcendent one, not subject to ordinary benefit/cost calculations. Progress, after all, is leading us to the salvation of the world.

Some economists have taken up the study of “the environment,” creating a new field of environmental economics. When I speak next of environmentalists, I am excluding this group. Most environmental economists are still believers in economic religion who are now trying to

introduce greater consideration of nonmarket environmental factors into the main body of economic thought and analysis. The goal is to further advance the cause of progress with improved economic science.

Environmental Religion

In significant part, the rise of environmental religion arose as a backlash against economic religion and its powerful faith in progress.¹⁰ One environmental philosopher even once wrote an article on “why environmentalists hate mainstream economists.”¹¹ It was not the only such backlash. In the twentieth century the doctrines of the mainstream Protestant denominations were thoroughly infused with modern, progressive themes. To the surprise of these denominations, who had assumed that they were part of the vanguard of religion, they steadily lost out in the last part of the twentieth century to evangelical and fundamentalist branches of Christianity, and even to Pentecostal faiths, some of whose practices (speaking in tongues) seemed virtually incomprehensible by modern rational standards.

It is perhaps not so surprising that progressive economic religion has faced a crisis of faith. As I mentioned, the world history of the first half of the twentieth century dealt some strong blows. We can admit that modern living is obviously far better materially than almost all of previous human history – including life expectancies that have risen from the range of 30 years to more than 70 years today in the developed world. It should not be a great surprise, however, that progressive economic religion could not realize the utopian hopes that characterized progressive thinking in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In some ways it had been naïve to think that a whole new condition of human existence, including morally and spiritually, would soon arrive on earth, owing to material developments. Progressive religion was really part of the millenarian tradition of Christianity that, while

expressed in much different ways in the modern age, has seemingly been as strong as ever (Marxism was the clearest example). But Christian hopes for an imminent coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, and now secular progressive hopes of a related character, have always been frustrated historically. It is a very old story.

At one level, environmentalism has simply spoken up for all the losers, human and nonhuman, in the headlong pursuit of rapid economic change – of progress. When the losers are in the human category, the resistance to change is often described as a form of “NIMBYism” (not in my backyard). For environmentalists, it is no longer enough simply to argue that a new power plant or highway is necessary at a particular location because it advances the greater cause of economic “progress.” Environmentalists, one might say, are demanding that the benefits of progress have to be weighed against the full costs – including those typically ignored by economists -- in each specific case. Going forward should not be a matter simply of religious faith.

Economists have long advocated doing benefit/cost analyses but they have always been selective in what they count as a benefit and a cost. The psychic losses associated with the demolition of an old building which detracts from the “historical character” of an area, for example, have seldom been considered in the social cost calculus (while the new building clearly counts on the social benefit side). All the various psychic costs of rapid social change itself (most people are risk averse and don’t like such change) have been ruled out as legitimate costs for most economic calculations. The large human importance of belonging to a “community” is almost impossible to factor into benefit/cost calculations, even as it is one of the most important elements of the human experience.

But it has been on the nonhuman side that environmentalists have been most critical of the results of “progress” and its economist defenders. J. R. McNeil is a professor of history at Georgetown University and the author of *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century World*. McNeil wrote there that “communism aspired to become the universal creed of the twentieth century but a more flexible and seductive religion succeeded where communism failed: the quest for economic growth. Capitalists, nationalists – indeed almost everyone, communists included – worshipped at this same alter because economic growth disguised a multitude of sins. ... It continued to legitimate, and indeed indirectly to cause, massive and rapid ecological change” to the great detriment of the non-human creatures of the earth.¹² For some plant and animal species, it meant their complete extinction, a veritable nonhuman “genocide” in the eyes of some environmentalists.

I have described environmentalism in various writings as a new secular form of “Calvinism minus God.”¹³ Rather than more goods and services, the rituals of environmentalism typically celebrate less consumption – lower the heat, drive fewer miles, use less water, live in smaller houses, have fewer children, etc., etc., all this as a matter of religious principle, not of utility maximizing. Rather than simply a more efficient way to get rid of solid waste, the act of recycling has become another religious ritual for environmental religion -- in some ways analogous to eating kosher food in Jewish religion. The old Calvinist sense of human beings as being corrupted and depraved creatures on the earth has been revived among some leading environmental figures of our time. David Brower, who was for many years the executive director of the Sierra Club in the 1950s and 1960s, spoke regularly of the human presence as being a “cancer” of the earth – just as a cancer cell begins to grow uncontrollably until it destroys its human host, so the exploding populations of human beings are now doing this to the whole

earth.¹⁴ The clear implication (Brower does not draw this out) is that the earth would be better off without any human beings. There is even a small branch now of utopian environmental literature that dreams of an earth without human beings.

In economic religion, nature is seen as a “natural resource,” providing the food, wood, metals, and other material foundations for a rapidly growing economy. In environmental religion, by contrast, nature is seen as something to be protected from the adverse impact of human actions. Calvin had once written that in nature a good Christian can encounter the direct handiwork of God (put in place at the Creation), thus opening a mirror into the mind of God, stimulating powerful feelings of religious awe and wonder. Environmentalists today see the experience of wild nature in similar terms, a place where a person can go to feel a powerful sense of spiritual inspiration – another aspect of “environmental Calvinism.”¹⁵ That is why we have to go to such lengths to protect wild nature – we are protecting a key surviving means of access to the divine. Again, this is altogether outside a utilitarian framework, or that of economic religion.

The cathedrals of economic religion were power plants, superhighways, space travel, and giant dams such as Hoover and Grand Coulee. Progressive pilgrims traveled to feel inspired by these dams. These objects symbolized the new human power to control nature for human betterment and ultimately for the arrival of a whole new human condition on earth. For environmentalism, in contrast, the new cathedrals are wilderness areas, symbolizing the exact opposite set of values. The Wilderness Act of 1964 defines a wilderness as an area “untrammeled by man.” In place of good and evil in Christianity, economic religion substituted “efficient” and “inefficient” (efficiency being the measure of progress and thus of movement along the path of economic salvation). In environmental religion, the new ethical standard instead became “natural” and “unnatural.” Environmentalism today advances a host of “green

values” that serve to provide overall guidance for “green living.” In virtually every case, something “green” is something that is supposed to reduce the human impact on the earth, serving the transcendent cause of making it a more “natural” environment, a place less corrupted by human impacts. Living a full green lifestyle is making a deep religious statement.¹⁶

Implications for Policy Analysis

For the purposes of discussion, let me now simply assume that you accept – broadly at least, if not in every detail – my assessment that the beliefs in economic progress (with economists the leading priesthood) and in environmentalism are modern secular religions and that their policy disagreements are fundamentally of a religious character. Economic religion was the most powerful religion of any kind in the twentieth century, although it was increasingly challenged in the later part of the century by environmental religion.

This will certainly be interest for the general study of religion (my writings in this area have attracted at least as much interest among theologians as among economists and environmentalists). But does it hold any practical significance for the conduct of public policy analysis? Economists give symbolic expression to the belief in economic progress and seek to provide the knowledge to guide society on a path of rapid economic growth. They did not, however, create this belief; it was part of a broad faith that emerged in the eighteenth century and was much strengthened in the nineteenth century over large segments of society. (Although in some cases such as Marxism, the specific form of the belief in progress originated with one economist.) Ironically, the American economics profession emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, not long before the events of World War I precipitated a crisis of confidence in progress. One might argue that in their current role as professional economists,

they are simply doing their job of providing priestly services for the most powerful religious force of the twentieth century. What reason would there be to change?

Economists, however, market themselves as scientists who discover universal truths (at least in the domain of economic affairs). As I described above, this is misleading in that economists apply a selective value lens in evaluating the benefits and costs of alternative public policy proposals. In their thinking and research, they in effect incorporate a strong value bias in favor of public policies that promote the most rapid pace of material advance in society. The self image of economists that they take values as “given,” and simply work from there, is mistaken. The very methods of economics implicitly embody this powerful value system which economists thereby actively work to promote in American life, both as a matter of providing supporting symbolism and more concrete policies.

If economists were more widely recognized in American public life as working to advance one particular value system, a particular economic religion, this very perception might diminish the influence of economists in policy debates. Rather than serving a consensus goal of the nation, they would be seen as partisans, not for a private interest group, but for a particular religion in American life. Of course, much the same could be said of the self image and the symbolic and policy roles of environmentalists. If both were generally recognized as competing secular religions, perhaps the reduced influence of economics and of environmentalism would roughly cancel out. But there are, of course, other religions. Christianity might be a winner. At present, given American ways of thinking about church and state, economics and environmentalism are preferentially advantaged in the affairs of state. Environmental religion is, for example, actively proselytized today in public elementary and secondary schools, while any similar proselytizing of Christian religion would be strictly prohibited.

The biggest question being raised here may be the following. America is historically a Christian nation. The Christian religion has always advertised itself as teaching the one universal truth of the world, sending missionaries across the globe to convert every nation to this message. Protestants and Catholics may have fought fiercely at times with each other over the details of Christianity but this conflict was hopefully a temporary aberration. When they advertise themselves as revealers of the one correct – the one “scientific” – set of truths of society and the world, economics and environmentalism thus both follow in the Christian tradition. In a sense, economics and environmentalism are competing to replace the paramount Protestant Christian role of old. The American constitutional design assumed a balance among competing private interests but it also required a substantial amount of religious homogeneity in order for it to work. Protestant Christianity once provided the religious glue to hold together the American nation but it no longer does.

But we may now simply be entering into a new era of genuine full religious pluralism. Americans elected their first Roman Catholic President in 1960. Many of the larger waves of immigrants arriving in the United States since 1960 have come from nations with no long history of Christian belief. Even within secular religion, as described here, there has been a new pluralism. Capitalists and socialists may have fought fiercely over the best path of economic progress but they still had the same ultimate goal. Now, environmentalists are suggesting that progress itself is gravely suspect. Human beings could even be a malign influence in the world, posing threats not only to their own future existence (with atomic weapons) but to the future of all the plant and animal species of the world. One form of scientific progress, genetic engineering, is even raising difficult questions of what it may mean to be “human” in the future.

As this seems to suggest, our contemporary political and constitutional crisis may ultimately have a religious explanation. Recent polls suggest public approval of the U.S. Congress at about ten percent. Political debate and practice within the Congress and in Washington in general seemingly have taken on increasingly the character of a “holy war.” American political institutions designed to work with a certain amount of religious glue holding things together perhaps no longer function when religious pluralism reaches the extent we are seeing at present.

No matter what, there will always be critical public issues. There will always be a need for policy analysis, whether it is specifically labeled that or not. But the manner of doing policy analysis may change in a world of wider religious pluralism. Certainly, any claims to exclusive scientific authority in policy matters are likely to be met with growing skepticism. The various paraphernalia of scientific authority that currently adorn the social and policy sciences may have to be scrapped. Policy analysts may have to learn to be more humble. Certainly, in the future conduct of policy analysis a greater recognition of the role of culture and especially of religion seems likely to be needed. This may require some rather bruising and wrenching shifts in professional direction among younger policy analysts (we may simply have to wait for the old policy analysts to retire). At present, the level of religious knowledge among most policy analysts is low – and whatever such knowledge exists is not likely to be part of their professional education but to have arisen from family and other personal circumstances.

Very broadly speaking, one can imagine two possible scenarios. Perhaps a new (or modified) religion will emerge in American life with a greater degree of consensus, thus providing the social glue that Protestant Christianity once provided. It is difficult, however, to imagine that this would be an explicitly Christian form of religion. Thus, while it may draw

heavily on the Christian (and Jewish) heritage, it would seem that it will have to be a secular religion. It is conceivable but unlikely that policy analysts will play an important role in the basic development of any such religion. They may, however, come to function as its priesthood in matters of detailed policy making and implementation. This will also necessarily, assuming the new religion is not just the old economic religion in a new guise, require the creation of new policy analysis methods to reflect the new core religious values.

An alternative would be the continuation of a state of deep religious pluralism within American society. Perhaps, as the American constitution was devised to accommodate a balance of power among many competing private interests, we can devise new constitutional forms that are better suited to accommodating the much greater religious pluralism we are experiencing today. If that does not work, it may be necessary to undertake a geographic sorting across the nation whereby people of common religious conviction increasingly live amongst one another, thereby avoiding the deep public tensions that can easily arise when a state of common agreement among widely divergent forms of religious belief is necessary. In that case, we might have competing methods of policy analysis, representing competing religious foundational values.

I have sketched the outlines of such a “libertarian” political possibility in the last chapter of my most recent book, *The New Holy Wars: Economic Religion versus Environmental Religion in Contemporary America*, and in some of my other writings.¹⁷ But I would put these ideas more in the category of preliminary thoughts than of an actual statement of any political philosophy.

In conclusion, a greater recognition of the underlying religious character of economics and environmentalism could serve policy analysts well in several respects. It might give them a better intellectual understanding of why economists and environmentalists often have so much

trouble talking to one another. It might help in crafting policy proposals with a greater chance of acceptance by the other side. It might also encourage a healthy greater modesty among policy analysts in advancing their ideas in political debates. As a further possible benefit, it might also help to reduce the level of hypocrisy involved when powerful religious values are frequently advanced in the name of objective economic or environmental (and sometimes policy) “science.”

Endnotes

¹ This includes three books, Robert H. Nelson, *Reaching for Heaven on Earth: The Theological Meaning of Economics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1991); Robert H. Nelson, *Economics as Religion: From Samuelson to Chicago and Beyond* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2001); and Robert H. Nelson, *The New Holy Wars: Economic Religion versus Environmental Religion in Contemporary America* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2010).

² John Maynard Keynes, "Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren," (1930) in Keynes, *Essays in Persuasion* (New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 371-72.

³ Richard T. Ely, *Social Aspects of Christianity and Other Essays* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1889), p. 73.

⁴ Dwight Waldo, *The Administrative State: A Study of the Political Theory of American Public Administration* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1984; first ed. 1948), pp. 19-20.

⁵ William J. Baumol, "On my Attitudes: Sociopolitical and Methodological," in Michael Szenberg, ed., *Eminent Economists: Their Life Philosophies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 51.

⁶ Charles L. Schultze, "The Role and Responsibilities of the Economist in Government," *American Economic Review* (May 1982), p. 62.

⁷ Gregory Clark, *A Farewell to Alms: A Brief Economic History of the World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 195, 1, 33.

⁸ Donald A. Hay, *Economics Today* (Leicester, UK: Appollo, 1989), p. 124.

⁹ Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," in J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson, eds., *The Great New Wilderness Debate* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998), p. 26.

¹⁰ My first examination of environmental religion was in Robert H. Nelson, "Unoriginal Sin: The Judeo-Christian Roots of Ecotheology," *Policy Review*, (Summer 1990). Many more professional and popular articles have followed. Besides *The New Holy Wars*, see Robert H. Nelson, "Environmental Religion: A Theological Critique," *Case Western Reserve Law Review* (Fall 2004).

¹¹ Bryan G. Norton, "Thoreau's Insect Analogies: Or, Why Environmentalists Hate Mainstream Economists," *Environmental Ethics* (Fall 1991).

¹² J. R. McNeil, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century World* (New York: Norton, 2000), pp. 334, 336.

¹³ One of the earliest times was in a *Forbes* magazine column, Robert H. Nelson, "Calvinism Minus God," *Forbes* (October 5, 1998).

¹⁴ David Brower, Comments cited in John McPhee, *Encounters with the Archdruid* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1971), p. 83.

¹⁵ See Robert H. Nelson, "Environmental Calvinism: The Judeo-Christian Roots of Environmental Theology," in Roger E. Meiners and Bruce Yandle, eds., *Taking the Environment Seriously* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993).

¹⁶ See Bron Taylor, *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

¹⁷ The rise of private community associations may be facilitating such a sorting. See Robert H. Nelson, *Private Neighborhoods and the Transformation of Local Government* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, 2005).