

HST 203: ONLINE U.S.History Sp19 (Escobar)

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Environmentalism as Religion
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, May 25, 2019, 2:24 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Environmentalism as Religion topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, which clearly describes the parts, pictures, and questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Environmentalism as Religion

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion
by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Monday, May 27, 2019, 4:53 PM

The specific piece of Ruben’s article that I believe to be accurate is his comment: “It is this identity-creating function that environmentalism provides. As the world becomes less religious, people can define themselves as being Green rather than being Christian or Jewish.”(Environmentalism as Religion, page three) I wholeheartedly agree with this statement because I have experienced it first hand. I myself eat a plant-based diet, something that can be lumped into the category of environmentalism. I have only met two other people that eat this diet as well, and both times I did, there was an immediate connection. We talked about the different aspects of it, both good and bad, and why we chose to make the switch in the first place. The fact that we were both eating plant-based instantly connected us, in the same way that religion connects people. Even if all of the other aspects of our lives were drastically different, we had one big part of our lives in common, and that was all that mattered.

However, there was a lot in Ruben’s article that I didn’t agree with. For example, I strongly disagree with his statements, “there are self-sacrificing rituals that are not particularly useful,”(in reference to prayer and recycling), and “These two beliefs(believing in God and environmentalism) co-exist based on faith, not reason.” I didn’t like these specific ‘reasons environmentalism is a religion’ because they are not entirely accurate, especially when considering it from a religious or environmentalist point of view. Ruben said that both prayer and recycling a “self-sacrificing rituals” that have no use. I believe that neither prayer nor recycling are self-sacrificing because neither of them truly demand a sacrifice. Prayer is something that can be silent, personal, and helpful. If Ruben could prove that prayer involves sacrifice, I may be more inclined to agree with him. However, he also says that recycling is self-sacrificing, and I believe that simply sorting trash can not be deemed sacrificial.

I also don't believe that they are "not particularly useful". As I said before, believers often pray for God to help them or fulfill their wishes, so if the things they prayed for came about, I don't see how it could be considered useless. And the same goes for recycling, even if it doesn't accomplish a lot, recycled bottles and paper can help to create new items, thus contradicting useless by very definition.

The other thing that I disagree with is that the beliefs are based solely on faith. I have read about people that, when analyzing history, see things that they believe to be evidence of God, and become a believer in that way. Saying that religion is based solely on faith is close, but not entirely true. Environmentalism is not solely based on faith either. There have been both research done on global warming, and plastic found in sea creatures stomachs that would constitute as evidence of a need for change; environmentalism embraces these changes. Therefore I must say that environmentalism isn't only backed by faith. There are a multitude of facts that back their beliefs as well.

It's hard to say whether or not the images provided are intended to be propaganda or not. The left image in the image pair #2 seems to be propaganda while the one on the right, and image #3 almost appear to be ridiculing environmentalism. None of them seem particularly useful or informative either, notably the top two as they don't give any information or strictly propaganda like imagery. Image #3, however, does seem to carry more information. In the past I have seen videos that portray what would happen to the earth if humans went extinct(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zrNGBi5ldk>), so, although the banner, "Save the planet. Kill yourself.", might come across as mockery of environmentalism, there are people in the world that believe the planet would be better off without us. I'm not sure that the banner could be considered as propaganda, but it does somewhat display what environmentalists stand for: humans are damaging the planet.

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion

by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 1:39 PM

Hi Genevieve,

I really enjoyed your post and I think you made a lot of important points in it. When I first read Ruben's article- particularly the sentence regarding going green as new way of identifying oneself instead of being Christian or Jewish-I admit that my first reaction was to dismiss this out of hand. I thought the very idea of environmentalism replacing religion as a tribal identifier was ludicrous. However, after reading your comments on the instant connection you have with others who eat the same diet as you, it began to make more sense to me. It made me think of an experience which I had on Mother's day this year. I took my wife and kids to the zoo in Portland. I was wearing a Marine Corps hoodie and a Boston Red Sox hat. Throughout the day I found myself engaged in conversation with two different strangers as we walked around the zoo: one was a former Marine, one was a Red Sox fan. While I would not put either of these things in the same category as religion, they certainly are great icebreakers and it did give me a feeling of connection with these two people whom I had never met. I would even say that this is one of the reasons I wear these articles of clothing. I want other Marines and Red Sox fans to see me and know that we have something in common. I was not looking to engage in conversations with strangers that day, but both were pleasant interactions and I'm glad they took place. As I said, I do not consider this the same as religion, but there are certainly people in the world who would put the Marine Corps or the Boston Red Sox on a higher pedestal than I do and might even consider them religion. In this way, I can see how people like Ruben who don't support or fully understand environmentalism could see it in this light. Ruben may even feel threatened by environmentalism, which could be causing him to feel this way. I admit that I do not fully understand environmentalism, and there are aspects of it that I think I understand but do not agree with. There are also other aspects of it which I participate in, like recycling. As I said in my initial post for this forum, I think religion and environmentalism are focusing on two very different things: the future of the earth and the future of one's spirit. While there are certainly aspects of the two which overlap, I still believe that the overall focus of each is entirely different. Thank you for your thoughtful post, you gave me a lot to think about.

Cliff

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Aspects of Religion pertaining to Environmentalism

by [Kaiser Slocum](#) - Tuesday, May 28, 2019, 9:39 AM

The Bible says in Genesis 1:26-30, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground-everything that has the breath of life in it-I give every green plant for food.' And it was so."

This passage says that humans are to rule over the earth, not worship the earth. I do not worship my stuff that I own. It is mine to deal with as I want; same thing with the earth. Now, of course, humans should be very careful to take good care of what God has given us, just like I take care of my belongings, but the "earth" should not be a religion! The problem with the more fanatical few that are turning environmentalism into a religion is that they are creating this connection that many environmentalists disapprove of – causing friction and outsiders to lump environmentalists all under a radical, religiously environmental group.

Professor Rubin, though a very bright man no doubt, obviously either does not participate in "religion" or simply lumped the normal characteristics of a religion together. I can honestly say that "Belief systems are embraced with no logical basis" is completely false. Many if not most belief systems have a lot of logical basis. Granted there are parts of belief systems that are based on no logical basis. For instance, does a random explosion out of nothing that created things as complex and revolutionary as the human body seem logical to you? What about a supreme being that created everything? Although people can come up with wonderful arguments for almost all cases, you cannot "scientifically" prove these things because they are grounded in belief. However, there are many things that make logical sense. There have been numerous archaeological digs that have proven the Bible and none that have disproven it. Also, it makes sense why we should not revenge on each other like Romans 12:19 says; because if we revenged on each other for everything we wanted to, there would be nothing but chaos. Despite this, I totally understand where Rubin is coming from when he said, "Skeptics are not merely people unconvinced by the evidence: They are treated as evil sinners. I probably would not write this article if I did not have tenure." If you even so much as not recycle your paper, people will look down on you. Despite what environmentalists say, though, the amount of garbage on the side of the road and on the ground makes me think that some of them agree with the "religion" in theory but not in practice.

The images, the article, and the cartoons all point to an increasingly alarmingly fact that environmentalism has been becoming some sort of religion. While environmentalism has its root in a worthy cause, to protect and preserve the world that we have been given, the length that it has been taken to, is becoming increasingly dangerous because once the environment becomes more important than fellow human beings and their livelihoods, terrible things will inevitably happen.

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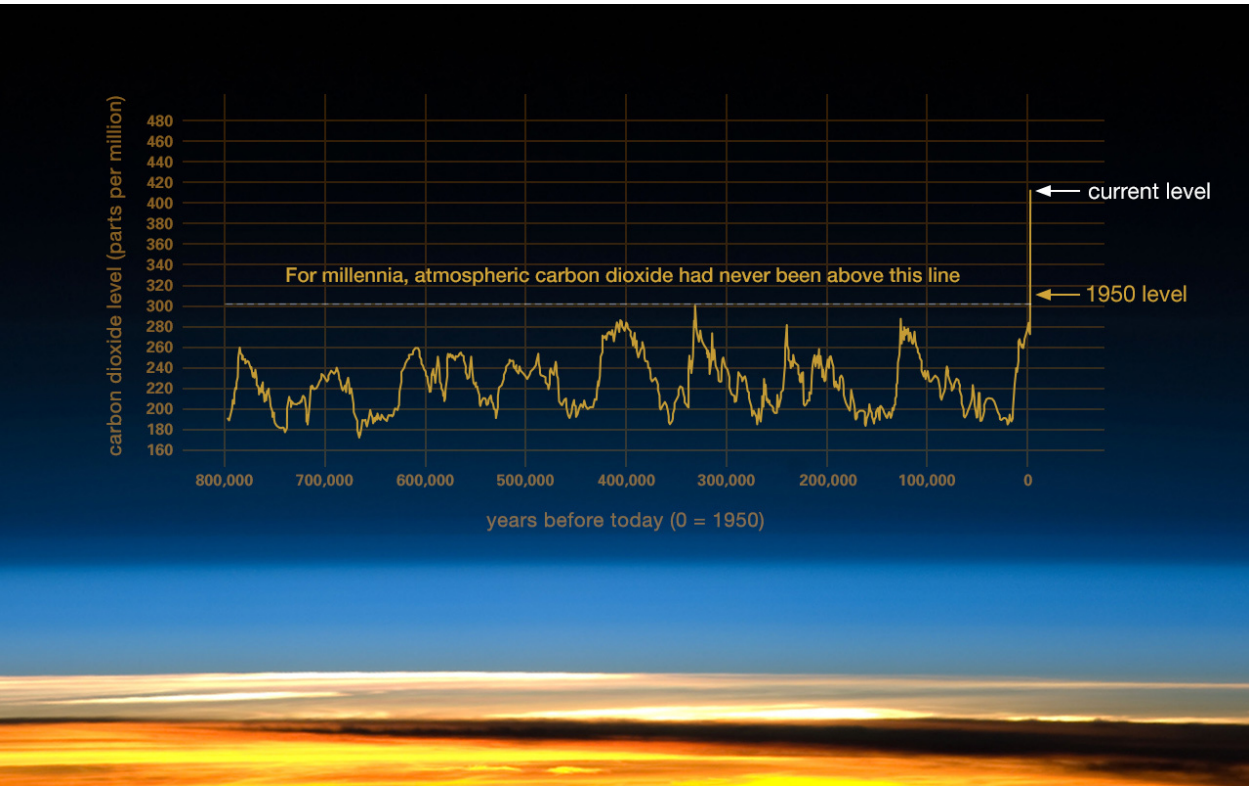
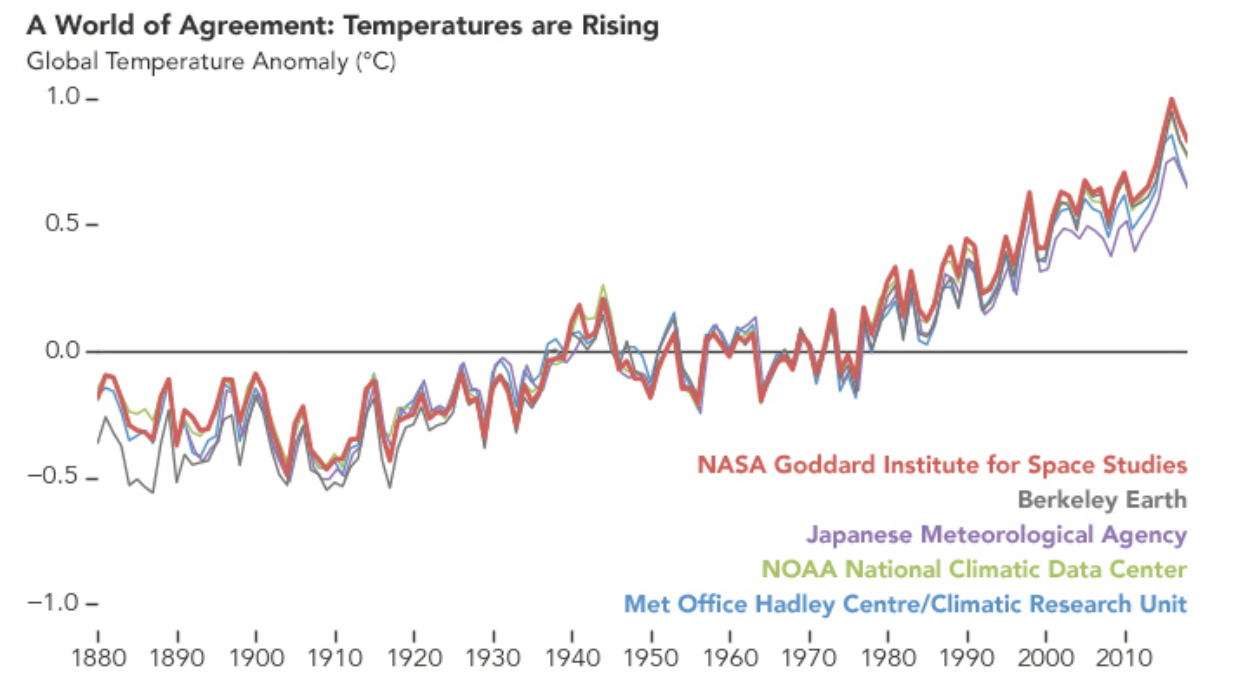


Science is not religious
by [Jamie Atkins](#) - Tuesday, May 28, 2019, 2:21 PM

I don't see any use in Mr. Rubin's examples of religious-environmental connection, and honestly, the implication that peoples' concern for the environment is akin to religious fanaticism without merit or proof is harmful. While I acknowledge there are fanatics(picture #3), I would say that any given ideology or belief will have them. "Since we cannot prove or disprove the existence of God, science can't help us answer questions about the truth of religion as a method of understanding the world." -P. Rubin, from article. This statement invalidates any point he is trying to make in it. Science does answer questions about every other aspect of the understanding our world. What science has given us is absolute proof of global warming(see graphs below). The facts and research are more proven every day by scientists around the world. Science deniers and climate change skeptics like to present the natural trend of warming and cooling of the planet, denying the fact our carbon emissions have an effect on this. The chemical makeup of our atmosphere can be measured, global temperatures have also been measured(see graphs below). To come to the conclusion that there is no correlation must involve some bias. There are many who try to discount this science and spread propaganda to further their main concern of capitalist greed. It is troubling to me that environmental issues seem to be mostly a concern on the left side of the spectrum when it should be a concern of all. Persons of influence on the right consistently confusing weather and climate shows their level of disinterest and alarming ineptitude. People on the left should avoid making it a political issue.

Some of the statements made by Mr. Rubin seem ill-considered and biased. This for one, "environmentalists almost universally believe in the dangers of global warming but also reject the best solution to the problem, which is nuclear power. These two beliefs co-exist based on faith, not reason." I myself would reason that there are safer and better alternatives to nuclear power, solutions that cause less environmental damage if they go wrong. Perhaps we should ask the residents Pripyet (Chernobyl) or Okuma (Fukushima) if they think it is the best solution. Mr. Rubin also states "there are self-sacrificing rituals that are not particularly useful, such as recycling. Recycling paper to save trees, for example, makes no sense since the effect will be to reduce the number of trees planted in the long run", This is using the fact that there are now managed forests grown just for paper, which would be unnecessary if we could use only recycled paper, ignoring the fact that all wood used for making paper does not come from these managed forests. I think it's a bit silly to call recycling a "self-sacrificing ritual", and say that we have built "shines to garbage"; remember the actual phrase environmentalists use is first "reduce" then "reuse" and lastly "recycle", so it is known by them and most that recycling is not the best solution to the reduction of waste, but it still does have an impact. Moving forward and doing the best we can while figuring out better solutions is useful.

I do agree with Mr. Rubin where he points out that environmentalism is becoming part of some people's identity, but there are many facets to a person's identity and they aren't all concerning or relational to religion. I think there are some who would agree that environmentalism is like a religion to them and some who would not. A rational and founded concern for our planet is expressed by many people, in many ways. If we are to consider it as a new religion, should we consider science denial one also, or is it already part of one?



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Re: Science is not religious
by [Carisa Snell](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 6:17 PM

Hi Jamie,

I appreciated your take on Rubin's article and the fact you brought up global warming and nuclear power. I agree with you that Rubin's statement about Nuclear Power being the cure for global warming doesn't make much sense when you consider the fact that using Nuclear power then leads to radioactive waste and that our uranium resources are not in endless supply. (<https://timeforchange.org/pros-and-cons-of-nuclear-power-and-sustainability>) I agree that his article is biased, however he does state at the end of his article that he's an "environmental skeptic," so that definitely have him leaning the opposite direction of the Green movement on the spectrum.

I also see your point about recycling, and do agree that it can help when done effectively. I think the problem there is that most people don't recycle properly, leading to batches ending up in the dump regardless. Perhaps we need more education in those areas to help get everyone on the same page?

I myself think that I am fairly environmentally conscious, and see how you could view his article as extreme and biased, but I think that was partly his point. Overall, those people he's talking about that believe Environmentalism is their religion, *are* extreme. At least they are when you view them as part of a wide range of people. I think his article is meant to shock people reading it who don't know about that extreme group and have people question themselves as far as where they lie on the spectrum. It's sort of like if today's Democrats were to write an article about Republicans or say Dixiecrats from the early/mid 1900s.

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Over Exaggeration

by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 11:25 PM

I consider myself an environmentalist. I recycle, care about global warming, and am a long-term vegetarian. I am also an unreligious person. From this perspective I must disagree with Rubin's theory. Not because I feel offended. But because I feel he exaggerates the similarities in environmental behaviors and religious behaviors.

First off, he calls Earth day a holy day for environmentalists. But I don't know anybody who celebrates earth day. In fact, I could not even tell you what day Earth day is on without looking it up. If it was viewed as a holy day for environmentalist, you would figure they would make more of a fuss on the day. Since environmentalism is growing as Rubin points out, we would expect to see a growing hype on their "holy day."

He calls recycling a self-sacrificing ritual. How is recycling self-sacrificing? As he points out there are recycling bins everywhere and if you regularly recycle you have separate bins at your house. So, what is self-sacrificing about taking a couple extra seconds to put part of the trash in one bin and part in another? You must feel yourself and your time extremely important if a couple seconds out of your day is self-sacrificing.

Recycling bins as sacred structures is just ludicrous. The Merriam Webster definition of the word sacred is: dedicated or set apart for the service or worship of a deity. What deity would a recycling bin be in service to? Nobody revere a recycling bin. Even the staunchest environmentalist is not out there treating recycling bins like they are sacred.

While I agree with Rubin that some environmentalists today are so gung-ho that it would seem religious. But the majority are not like that. Rubin has generalized an entire group of people on the actions of a few. I also believe that he is biased in these thoughts. At the end of the article he pits himself with the environmental skeptics.

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Re: Over Exaggeration

by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 1:21 PM

Kimberly,

Just like you, I consider myself an environmentalist. I use reusable bags and water bottles and refrain from eating meat, all things that I believe are good for the planet. However, I do not celebrate Earth day. Although Earth Day does sound as though it would be a holy day for environmentalists, in my experience, it's mostly the non-environmentalists that celebrate it. It less like a holy day, and more like a day where people post a picture of trees on social media.

I also agree with you in that calling recycling self-sacrificing in any way a complete exaggeration. Simply putting something in a different bin in no way demands a sacrifice. Both in the home and in public, placing a different piece of trash in a different bin is super simple and hardly requires any extra effort. And as I described it, I believe that a recycling bin is “just a different bin”, so I in no way revere it as sacred.

All things considered, I can see how Ruben could think that environmentalism is a religion- especially if he is not an environmentalist himself. Almost any lifestyle can appear like a religion from an outsider. Even different political beliefs or dedicated athletes can appear as though they are following a religion. People become so consumed with their lifestyles and beliefs that those that do not agree with them see it as intense or even cult-like. I once had a woman tell me she thought that eating a vegan diet was demonic! It just goes to show that any belief can be construed and twisted into a religion(or cult) by those that don't agree with the methods, whether it's true or not.

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Re: Over Exaggeration
by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 12:54 AM

Hi Genevieve,

I liked your comment that any lifestyle can look like a religion to an outsider. It is a matter of faith. Having faith in something when there is no evidence to prove it. To have complete trust in something despite the science. To many who are unaware of or who doubt the scientific evidence of global warming. The thought of people believing in and practicing environmentalism is on the same level as blind religious faith. Rubin obviously lies within that group of people. So we see how he connects it to a religion. But I have to wonder if he sees his unfailing belief in nuclear power as a religion? His obstinate disbelief in climate change despite the science could be seen as blind religious faith to environmentalist as well.

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Did Samuelson get it right?
by [Kaiser Slocum](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 1:11 PM

Samuelson’s article is, in my opinion, spot on. The only way to go about environmentalism perfectly would be to have everyone on the exact same basis, i.e. everyone is willing to give up some comfort in order to protect the environment. The obvious problem here, is that this will never happen. Everyone will never agree. This means that now, governments and large groups of people will have to resort to complex rules, suppressive actions, and/or mass propaganda to get environmentalism rolling smoothly. Even with massive amounts of pressure on people to be more “green,” it still may never happen as people are naturally self-centered and will do what it takes to make sure their life is better; even if others/the environment is worse because of it. In our study of America’s post-WW2 era, it is obvious by the amounts of belongings and stuff the average America amassed that people like to get as much “fun” as they can, even if minorities or the environment get the raw end of the deal.

Governments will be so busy that they will probably never have time to really work on conserving the environment, a lot of governments can barely maintain a decent standard of living for their citizens! Also, there will always be anti-environmentalists who (like in the images) will make fun of the environmentalists and try to show the “horror” of what they are supporting. I feel like most of the images were too harsh on environmentalists. Perhaps some are that radical, but most environmentalists, I believe, are just trying to look out for the world and conserve it, they aren’t interested in punishing others and oppressing them to conform. I feel like environmentalism is important and that people should do their best to preserve the environment, but people need to realize that shaming people who are very environmental or anti-environmental is not going to be the solution.

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Spectrum of green colors
by [Carisa Snell](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 2:54 PM

As a whole, I agree with the conclusions that Paul Rubin makes in his article regarding Environmentalism as a religion, however he does make a few points that I would like to address. Rubin talks about the idea that organized religions have filled our basic need to feel part of a group, particularly the fact that “Identification with a religion has replaced identification with a tribe.” (5th paragraph Rubin WSJ article) I believe he is correct with his assessment

that humans, as a whole, have an inherent need to be included and have an identity that they could put a label on. In contrast, I do disagree with him when he states “As the world becomes less religious, people can define themselves as being Green rather than being Christian or Jewish” (6th paragraph Rubin article) as the sole or main reason people turn to environmentalism as an identity. Sure, people who aren’t into modern religions will find another way to have an identity, but I do think that not mentioning the state of our planet as partly responsible for why people become “Greens” is discounting those that aren’t “environmental skeptics” as he claims to be. It’s no secret that with the amount of garbage we have, the state of our oceans, and global warming, that our planet is not getting any healthier. And, I think that some people do feel it’s their responsibility to “give back” to the planet and preserve it for future generations. Do some take it too far and worship recycle bins? Maybe. But, as we know from many major events in history, there is a wide spectrum of views on most all subject and some will take it to the extreme.

It’s not a surprise to me that environmentalism has become such a revered thing. In chapter 21 in our text, we learned about FDR and his support of the “conservationist” movement (page 706-707 Murrin text), and I think that way of thinking has just increased as the years have passed and our population has grown. We see environmentalism again mentioned in chapter 29 about the activism movement stating “disparate movements based on deeply held values—involving issues such as war and peace, race relations, gender politics, the environment, and sexuality—took shape.” (page 963 Murrin text) However, I think Rubin’s last bullet point in his article in which he says “Environmentalism is a proselytizing religion. Skeptics are not merely people unconvinced by the evidence: They are treated as evil sinners.” takes things a little too far. Sure, there are people that criticize those who don’t recycle or aren’t eating 100% organic, but like I said earlier, those are people belonging to the far side of the spectrum of those considered “green.” I don’t think it’s a fair assumption that everyone is thought to be an “evil sinner” if they don’t worship in the ways of the environmentalists.

In conclusion, I do agree that some choosing Environmentalism "Green" as a religion are probably the extreme, tree-hugging, garbage worshipers Rubin describes. However I believe that just like in politics, there is a spectrum ranging from mild to extreme. Or, in this case, light green to dark green.

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Rubin's hypothesis and picture set one
by [Kara Miner](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 5:42 PM

At first reading Rubin’s article, I was surprised by the connections he made from human nature in regards to tribalism. I definitely agree that modern wars over religion, very well could be a replacement for that form of tribalism in our nature. However, I failed to follow how being “green” could also act in the same way. In his article, Rubin listed off several points to support the idea that environmentalism has become a religion. I found myself disagreeing with most of his points. His first point connected Earth day to Environmentalists version of the “Holy day”, when in fact Earth day is just intended to be an awareness day for ways we can improve our environment. The idea that it is a “Holy day” implies that there is practice of worship on the day. While there may be some extremists who get spiritual with it, I think that the general public uses the day to start a conversation. Another point Rubin made was that “greens” are only eating locally produced foods in comparison to the practice of fasting or abstaining from eating pork. It seems like a sound conclusion however, purchasing locally grown foods is known to help local economies as well as the environment. Almost all of the point’s Rubin makes in his article, has a justification for the environmentalists. In summary I believe that there are extremists that take a mindful practice and make it look silly, these extremists serve as the subject of Rubin’s criticism. But there are a whole lot more people who are practicing environmentalism as a tool to protect the planet, not to fill a void as a lack of religion.

I believe the first set of pictures are a form of propaganda. Since the creation of religion it has pretty much been used to control people. The bible is open to interpretation, and people have twisted the bible’s words to justify all kinds of bad behavior. While this is true, the bible can also be interpreted and used in a way that sends a positive message. While I don’t know the content of these books, it appears to me that these make a connection from a preexisting religion and uses it to justify a mindfulness towards the planet.

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Environmentalism is Temporary, Religion is for Eternity
by [Clifford Lyon](#) - Thursday, May 30, 2019, 8:30 PM

I can understand the claims made by Paul Rubin in his article, although I do not necessarily agree with them. I see this article as being written by someone who does not believe in either organized religion or environmentalism, and therefore is attempting to discredit both with the same article. While I agree that scientific studies have not backed up the creation of the earth by God, I also take heart knowing that the principal call of Christianity is to have faith. Faith only exists in the absence of proof, therefore mankind is called to believe in something which others will ridicule as untrue based on the evidence. I admit that I have never considered the environmentalist movement in this light, and it would have given me a new respect for the movement if it weren't for the fact that it has always been presented as "scientific fact" with insufficient scientific evidence to sway many opponents. I have long been a supporter of the science which I do not believe backs up the "green movement," but I understand that the science does not support my own personal religious views either. I think the difference is that the Judeo-Christian doctrine has not been presented as science historically, it has been presented as faith. The "green movement" has been presented as science and therefore the law of the land. The problem is that the proponents of this movement have had a hard time presenting enough science to back up their claims, leading people to see this movement as more of a "religion" to be disregarded by all except the true believers.

When we take Rubin's view and start analyzing the green movement as a religious one, it changes the conversation concerning this movement. I understand Rubin's claims likening the green movement to a religion, but I do not think this is fair because-as I said- I think this is an attempt to cheapen both religion and the green movement simultaneously. I think that religion and the green movement are two separate beliefs, although they may overlap in areas, and I don't think it is right to lump them together for the sake of political posturing. While I would agree that there is a certain tribalism which is displayed in modern society based on one's belief or disbelief in the green movement, I do not think this is tantamount to a new religion. I think religion is something which someone undertakes to explain the beginning and the end of our existence, while I think the green movement is simply something which has been undertaken in an honest effort to preserve the earth so we can prolong our existence. As I said, I have never considered myself a supporter of the green movement, but I also do not see it on the same playing field as an organized religion. I think it is simply a set a lifestyle choices which some people enact out of their personal concern for the earth-which sounds like religion now that I say it that way-but I do not think it is a movement which is necessarily worshipping a higher power. It is rather a movement which is trying to "save" the earth, which is a short-term goal in the eyes of eternity, but not necessarily save the souls of its inhabitants, an eternal goal.

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Re: Environmentalism is Temporary, Religion is for Eternity
by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 11:15 PM

Clifford,

I really appreciate that you addressed the fact that many environmentalists do not follow that lifestyle based on faith. All of the people I've ever met that are environmentalists use science and factual/physical evidence to show why they live this way. This puts a serious hole in Rubin's theory. Even our book uses solely science to explain environmentalism! "Accounts such as *The Silent Spring* (1962) by Rachel Cason raised concern that the pesticides used in agriculture, especially DDT, threatened bird populations." (Liberty, Equality, Power. pg.978) No religion(at least, no religion that I've ever encountered) has science as their main source for their belief.

You also said that you believe that one of the roles that religion plays is the explanation of how we got here, why we're here, and where we're going. And I completely agree with you! All religions have a beginning, middle and end- environmentalism doesn't even attempt to explain any of these questions! It is simply a movement to try to stop the earth from melting, chocking with plastic, and losing more animals.

Rubin made a list on why he believed Environmentalism should be considered religion, well here's a list on why it shouldn't:

- it's based on science, not faith
- it offers no explanation of life on earth
- there are no deities/higher powers
- there is no worship
- it's main purpose is to save the earth(temporary) not their souls(eternal)

With this new list, we definitely have enough information to create a compelling email to Rubin, explaining why he's wrong! 😊

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1

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Satirical Humor Not Helpful

by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 3:00 AM

While I appreciated the satirical humor in the Audi commercial, it is however thinking like this that causes people to pull back from promoting environmental solution acts. Even further alienating people from the changes that need to happen. It incurs that people will be punitively punished for these crimes and makes them think there is no peaceful solution. But there are already many peaceful solutions to these problems in place already. Solutions that are similar to some of Samuelson’s ideas, but less severe. By limiting supply and imposing heavy tax.

The first person to be taken down by the “Green Police” is a man who is asked paper or plastic at the grocery store. Well funnily enough plastic bags have been banned here in Lane county. Actually, as of last month the whole state has banned plastic bag usage for retail spaces. Unlike the commercial though people are not being arrested for plastic bags, they are simply just not given the option for them. As well as a five-cent charge for any paper bag. These are designed to encourage people to use reusable bags on their own without punitive measures. All these are peaceful solutions and smaller scale versions of Samuelson’s tax ideas on fossil fuels.

While these are peaceful well thought out solutions, they are slow. The main point that Samuelson makes. A slowness that causes many environmentalists to want to push for harsher and faster solutions. Causing many people to see environmentalists as akin to communists, like in pictures #5 and #7. By seeing environmentalists as people who want to use the government to enforce their own social beliefs, like communists.

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2

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Mission *not* impossible (part 2)

by [Jamie Atkins](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 11:22 AM

I think Mr. Samuelson's opinion in the given article is very pessimistic. How useful is it to have this defeatist attitude in any aspect of life? His first statement, “we don’t have the technologies to reduce and eventually eliminate emissions from fossil fuels” is untrue. We do have the technologies to reduce emissions, and what facts does he have to support that we can’t eventually eliminate then, that is a very vague statement. Does he mean not in 5 years, 20 years, or never? Next, we have, “Electric vehicles don’t solve the problem, because natural gas and coal are the underlying energy sources for much of the electricity”. While all can agree that they don’t solve the problem, the point is to move forward doing less harm, as opposed to going backward in the way of progress. Solar and wind power are now competitive with fossil fuels in terms of production costs. Innovations in this area are, like all other areas of technology, advancing exponentially.

I agree completely about the reluctance of political figures to take chances on an economic downturn for environmental gains. Unfortunately, we have lobbyists from corporations whose interests lie solely in profit, not the greater good of humanity. Politicians will continue to serve these interests until the voice of the people becomes too loud to ignore. Education is the key to individuals caring about the issue. I have seen many polls about the percentage of Americans concerned about climate change, those range from 52-65%. I imagine this percentage will become higher as the population ages, because the younger a person is the more they seem to care about this issue. Legislation will have to be the driving factor for industry and large corporations. We have examples of citizen-driven governmental action and positive results in our current chapter with President Nixon and The Clean Air Act, which although initially caused an unforeseen problem, it still reduced major airborne pollutants by one-third in a single decade(Murrin text pp. 978-979). Industrialists and corporations will do nothing unless they have to pay more not to, so Mr. Samuelson’s idea of a carbon tax is a good one. As we move forward with “greener” energy the economics will be figured out, as the ups and downs of the economy have always been.

Although the notion of actual “Green Police” (Audi commercial) is disturbing, I don’t see radical environmentalism becoming so mainstream in America. We do have eco-terrorism, and the flag of LNSGP (shown in picture #10) does exist, but these are radical fringe factions. In my opinion, this would be the least alarming of dystopian futures one could imagine.



"Yes, the planet got destroyed. But for a beautiful moment in time we created a lot of value for shareholders."

Economic Sociology and Political Economy Community

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Global Warming, Harder to Fight than it Seems

by [Connor Antich](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 1:32 PM

The Samuelson article really opened me up to how hard it would be to actually do the necessary things to prevent global warming. I have always been pro environment and believe that global warming is a major issue that our country and the world needs to address. But this particular line in the Samuelson article stood out to me: If suppressing global warming is as hard as I've argued, one likely response is a series of half measures that don't much affect global warming but do weaken economic growth. Taking this quote into mind, imagine a president that absolutely shut down greenhouse gases and major actions to prevent global warming. This would terribly cripple the economy and cause many to lose their jobs. I think people in America would come to hate this president because our nation would be in poverty and many without jobs. I think this a realistic example and I think this point that Samuelson is making is very accurate. What president is willing to risk economic collapse and nationwide poverty for trying to stop global warming? I find it very hard to imagine that through legislation and congress that the government will pass laws that help global warming but cause millions of Americans to lose their jobs. Another factor that goes into account, is what if we as a country rapidly shut or slow down industrialization, fossil fuels and greenhouse gases but other countries don't. For example, countries like China and Russia. They would see us as weak. Who knows what they might do to obtain a better economy or more resources, influence or territory? I feel like it would be very hard to get the countries of the world at once to agree to take permanent action against global warming. Like Samuelson said in his article, poor countries would not want to give up things that keep them alive. And countries with dictators or that are more isolated or independent in their own affairs, would likely close their borders closed and wouldn't sacrifice their economy and well being. In the end, I agree with Samuelson. It is extremely hard to take legitimate action against global warming that won't hurt the economy. I think once global warming gets to a breaking point the government will have to forcefully take action to prevent it from getting worse. I feel like there could be a major panic in the future.

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The Hypocrisy of Environmentalism

by [McKay Luke](#) - Friday, May 31, 2019, 10:32 PM

The article prefaced the basis of the original religion as the ritual of tribalism. Rubin states tribalism allowed unity within small often related groups and the strength of the tribe dictated how strong their God(s) was. As time advanced and mankind further developed, universally accepted deities replaced tribal rituals and wars. This is used to segway into the relationship that Environmentalism has with secular beliefs, as a modern, "scientifically unreligious" religion.

There are many accurate connections that Professor Rubin makes to place Environmentalism as a secular religion. I believe some of the stronger points Rubin makes in regard to this “scientific” theology are the connections he makes to global warming and recycling. Many of the statements pose hypocritical ideologies, much like the determined irrationalities declared by scientists when analyzing organized religion. Recycling is decidedly “not particularly useful” because the result would “reduce the number of trees planted in the long run” (Rubin Article, bullet point 3). I feel this can be related, in a way, to tithes within a religion; sacrifices made of faith, usually untraceable, which will likely not directly affect the one sacrificing. Coupled with this is the treatment skeptics receive of being “evil sinners” if not entirely accepting of these precepts (Rubin Article, bullet point 6). Likewise, I found the hypocrisy of nuclear power and global warming to be interesting. I feel many environmentalists believe in the need for global sudden and absolute change, without regard for the monumental economic and industrial cooperation to achieve desired goals. Things such as nuclear power, which reduces far less carbon, is a step in the right direction for a gradual shift.

I don’t believe it to be possible that in a few years from now we could have a turbine on every corner, solar panels on every roof and nothing but Teslas on the road. I know that not all environmentalists have such a hasty vision, but there seem to be a concentrated number of them with such farfetched goals. I believe that caring for the environment on the basis of ethics and responsibility is important (much like the book covers shown in image #1) but I can only support a realistic, practical vision of change. I consider myself a religious person and therefore can understand the conviction one can have for an arguably impossible belief, but I do believe in the bill of rights, that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; “. With this being said, there is blatant hypocrisy in teaching environmentalism in school as a concrete science, with so much of it being speculation.

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Religious environmentalism
by [Steph McGuire](#) - Saturday, June 1, 2019, 1:10 AM

Mr. Rubin’s article is correct in describing environmentalism as a religion. I especially liked his examples of how environmentalism provides meaningful rituals. One thing I would add to the list is that as with any religion there are always extremists. There are definitely extremists in the “religion” that is environmentalism.

Growing up I was never a religious person. But four years ago I became a Christian. I do see a lot of similarities between my religion and environmentalism. There are important days, people to follow, rules and the sacred structures. Being able to see the similarities is eye opening.

Picture number 3 (black and white with the protesters holding a sign that reads “Save the planet, kill yourself) speaks to me. I believe that photographs like this are propaganda. Environmentalists use these types of photographs to prove a point and recruit new followers. Although I think they are more hurtful than anything, they can be helpful. We do need to take care of the planet. But we do not need to make it a religious experience.

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Environmentalism as Religion... or Lifestyle?
by [Trey Husko](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 12:08 AM

The way Rubin described environmentalism as religion came across as a huge stretch to me. Maybe this is because I have a different interpretation of what a religion is, but I don't consider environmentalism to be a religion. He links many of environmentalism's behaviors to that of religion, but you could do the same with lots of ideologies. That's where I draw the line and believe that environmentalism isn't a religion but rather a philosophy or way of life. If you consider it to be a religion then you could really make the same points with political or economical beliefs. Someone who chooses to be more democratic follows a god (a politician), has certain lifestyle beliefs (like supporting gay marriage or abortion), votes for democrats and democratic philosophies, and so forth. While these may not be the strongest connections to that of a religion, I think the same could be said of Rubin's connection of environmentalism.

This is from my view as someone who is not at all a religious person who doesn't strongly believe in any religion. I'm not sure if this makes me more biased to view environmentalism the way I do, yet I do believe people should be advocating for advancements in technology and our society to make an effort to be greener. The images #2 do act more as propaganda to get people to start believing or change their views to a more greener view. This is touching more into the part 2 Green Police video, but while it may seem silly to worry over *just a plastic bottle* but in the grand scheme of things this all adds up. While you may or may not believe in global warming/environmental change, I ask what's wrong with wanting with people on the planet to care for it more and the inhabitants that live on it? People say the change of the planet is over exaggerated, but what's wrong with wanting to **guarantee** a better future? This is where I'm stuck not understanding why people choose to deny science because it goes against their beliefs that has no evidence supporting it, but again this may just be a bias of mine.

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Environmentalism - The New Religion of the World
by [Christina Dukes](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 9:10 PM

Before this forum post, I never really thought about environmentalism so much as an overall concept and the impact that it has all around the globe. Of course I understand how widely used the topic is and how much interest it has around the globe, but the fundamental aspect behind "environmentalism" as a whole and what it exists as today shows just how big of a concept it is. An article written by Paul Rubin states:

"Many observers have made the point that environmentalism is eerily close to a religious belief system, since it includes creation stories and ideas of original sin. But there is another sense in which environmentalism is becoming more and more like a religion: It provides its adherents with an identity." (Rubin, Green Spirit- The intersection of religion & environmentalism). This first sentence really drew me in with interest about thinking into the topic more, especially the second half where it claims that "environmentalism provides its adherents with an identity." The topic of environmentalism as a whole is such a widely discussed and frequented subject, that it in fact does have an identity associated with it.

Sure Catholicism and Christianity have more people involved and a lot more history behind them (which are two very recognizable religions associated with individuals all around the globe), but I believe that we are seeing the start of environmentalism as a religion. If you trace religion and its history in every context, few people started belief in the system of the given religion and moved to show others why they should believe as well. Several religions start off throughout history as mocked upon or widely criticized, or small followers, and then they just blossom into this widespread ideal that we have in modern times.

I can picture how invested the world was in the environment just about a decade ago, and now more and more people are growing concerned and incorporating the idea of environmentalism into their every day lives. Many people lead their lives and their lives choices based on the concept of environmentalism - which I think can be attributed to the likeness of a religion and religious identity.

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Re: In Nature We Trust
by [Alexandra Selig](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 9:49 PM

The idea that environmentalism is a form of religion was made very clear by the ideas and images presented in this topics resources. Environmentalism's following is growing and growing. In watching the Green Police Commercial I was awestruck. This could be a future that some political leader and strong supporters of the Go Green movement would support. But is going Green and all the beliefs put forth by environmentalism really what is best for the world and all of its residents. Will those who do not support the Green movement condemn us and future generations. This same question could be asked in regards to any religion....Is Christianity the one and true religion and will those who do not follow this version of God's word be saved?

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Re: Environmentalism as Religion
by [Sarah Willis](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 10:17 PM

The accurateness of Rubin’s atrican can be attributed to his ability to make some comparisons and look at things differently for example Earthday being their holy day instead of having a holy day once a week looking at it as they have a holy day once a year the food taboos are another one that is good to look at many relagines have strict diets as do environmentalist. Religions have a foundation to worship a god or divine power, were environmentalist worship the earth. Environmentalist seek to better the earth and preserve it, were a religion seeks to better oneself and proserve the sole.

The image that stood out the most to me was the one where it said repent reuse recycle least you burn and has everyone bowing to the globe because it uses the metaphors from the christian bible which most people associate with and puts a propaganda spin on it.

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Environmentalism as Religion

by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 11:07 PM

When I was first reading about this "religion" I thought what a strange thing to believe! As I was reading more and more of Rubin's article I realized that I know people with similar beliefs. They aren't exactly the same, and they wouldn't consider it a religion; but they do have same/similar beliefs. Living in Eugene and traveling to Portland I have seen people promoting the same concept. This isn't exactly the green religion, but many Eugene people protest for the Earth. They are very passionate about serving and saving the planet. I know that's not the green religion, but in Oregon we have people who are extremely passionate about the Earth. I am not surprised this green religion has become a serious thing. Anything can become a religion, and it seems that enough people believe the same ideas for this one. I personally see this "religion" as more of a way of life. Or specifically people who are strong advocates for the earth. Some of the things they believe contradict each other. They want to help the earth and make it as green as possible, but don't support nuclear power. "Environmentalists almost universally believe in the dangers of global warming but also reject the best solution to the problem, which is nuclear power. These two beliefs co-exist based on faith, not reason." This point is interesting to me. They do have a holy day which is earth day, they have sacred structures, and taboos. They do have "rules" or a belief system that help it grow as a religion. I personally would find this religion hard to follow. This religion doesn't seem like it has much of a purpose. The people who follow it want to help the earth, but thats really as far as it goes. I think this religion needs more to it and purpose to be taken seriously. It is very interesting learning about it though, and realizing how many people are passionate about the earth.

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Propaganda

by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Sunday, June 2, 2019, 11:53 PM

I think these propaganda posters do a lot more harm than good. "The save the planet kill yourself" may draw people away then pull people in. It is very important to save our planet and promote a healthy planet. But presenting that in a negative way may make people made and dislike the cause more. If you took out the "kill yourself" I think the phrase would be taken a lot more seriously. But with that phrase people are going to be upset and probably tell others about it. So it turns into a domino effect and then they are actually turning more people away from what could be a great cause. Its important to make propaganda positive people will be more willing to help and be apart of something that could be really great.

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