

Acquisition of environmental science knowledge and the development of theological position between human and nature

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Presented at SCCS Conference
Jan. 27, 2018

US withdrew from the Paris Accord

- ▶ President Trump's Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said:, “Our position on the Paris agreement has not changed...US withdrawing unless we get pro-America terms.”
- ▶ The Paris agreement asks each nation to set its own greenhouse gas reduction targets and report the progress every 5 years.
- ▶ The US Supreme Court defined greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act as dangerous pollutants that must be regulated by EPA.



Tweet on cold weather and Climate change



Donald J. Trump ✓

@realDonaldTrump



In the East, it could be the COLDEST New Year's Eve on record. Perhaps we could use a little bit of that good old Global Warming that our Country, but not other countries, was going to pay TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS to protect against. Bundle up!

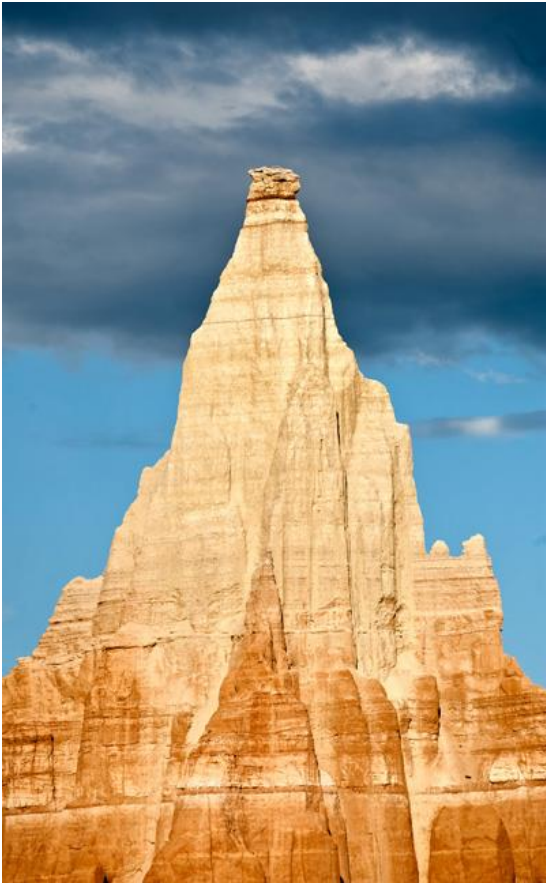
Comments: He used cold weather to cast doubt on climate change, but he failed to differentiate **weather** and **climate**.

Reduction of National Monuments

- ▶ President Trump reduced the size of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments in southern Utah from 3.25 million acres to 1.23 million.
- ▶ This is unprecedented. The only exception is that in 1915 President Woodrow Wilson cut more than 300,000 acres from the Mount Olympus National Monument in Washington state.



Where is Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument?



Where is Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument?



Where is Olympics National Park?



Why bother to preserve the natural environment?

- ▶ An Oklahoman senator said, “God is still up there, and the arrogance of people to think that we, human beings, would be able to change what he is doing in the climate, is to me, outrageous.”
- ▶ A Rabbi said, “God can handle the amount of Carbon dioxide that’s still in the world...I am sure God designed the world in such a way that no matter how many humans we have, there is a way to feed everybody.”



Why bother to preserve the natural environment?

- ▶ “God is still out there to protect my body. If I keep drinking and smoking, and think that I, as a human, would be able to change my body, this is outrageous!”
- ▶ “God can handle the amount of nicotine and alcohol in my body...I am sure God designed the human body in such a way that no matter what we take into our body, there is a way to maintain our health.”



Why bother to preserve the natural environment?

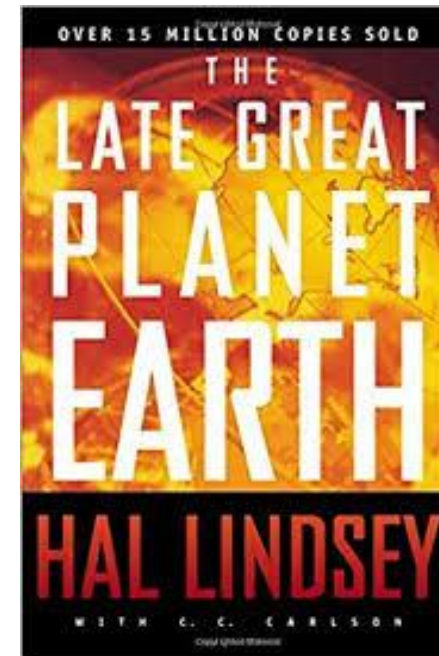
- ▶ Baptist Evangelical Church in Idaho: “Forget ‘Save the earth’; What about your soul? The earth is going to burn; what about you?”
- ▶ Someday I will die anyway. Why bother to exercise, eat nutritious food, take vitamins, see a doctor, sleep well...etc.?



Hal Lindsey: The author of “The late great planet earth”

“As the end of this Age of Grace nears, we are warned by the Apostle Paul that, “Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” (2 Timothy 3:13)

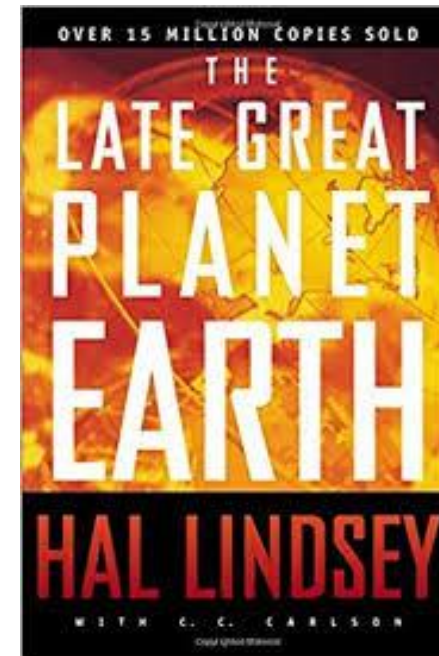
I believe we are witnessing deception practiced on a grander and more pervasive scale than at any time in history. Not only is Satan, the Father of Lies, working feverishly to deceive individuals into hell, but he is working to deceive nations into following his proxy, the man of lawlessness, who will soon appear on the world stage.”



Hal Lindsey: The author of “The late great planet earth”

“Climate change” is “being used to consolidate the governments of the world into a coalition that may someday facilitate the rise of the Antichrist.”

“I believe God guarantees that as long as this old earth is floating in space, there will be no man-made climate change!”



Do we correctly understand Christian Eschatology?

- ▶ Early Christians did not view the eschatological salvation as something wholly future. Jesus said, “The Kingdom of God is at hand.”
- ▶ Early Christians believed that at the end the entire creation would be fully restored and will be even better than before.
- ▶ In Revelation 21, God dwells on earth; the Kingdom of God is no longer in Heaven. There is no sharp contrast between Heaven and earth in the new creation.

Why “eschatology as doomsday” is so appealing? Psychological explanations

- ▶ It is easier to start over than to heal the damage and to preserve what is existing.
- ▶ It justifies our consumerism and lifestyles.



Sample

- ▶ 37 students enrolled in a Chemistry class at a Southwestern Christian University
- ▶ The class has a faith integration component: Environmental stewardship

How many people changed their position after the faith integration treatment?

Climate change is...

1 = Caused mostly by human activities

2 = Caused mostly by natural changes in the environment

3 = Others

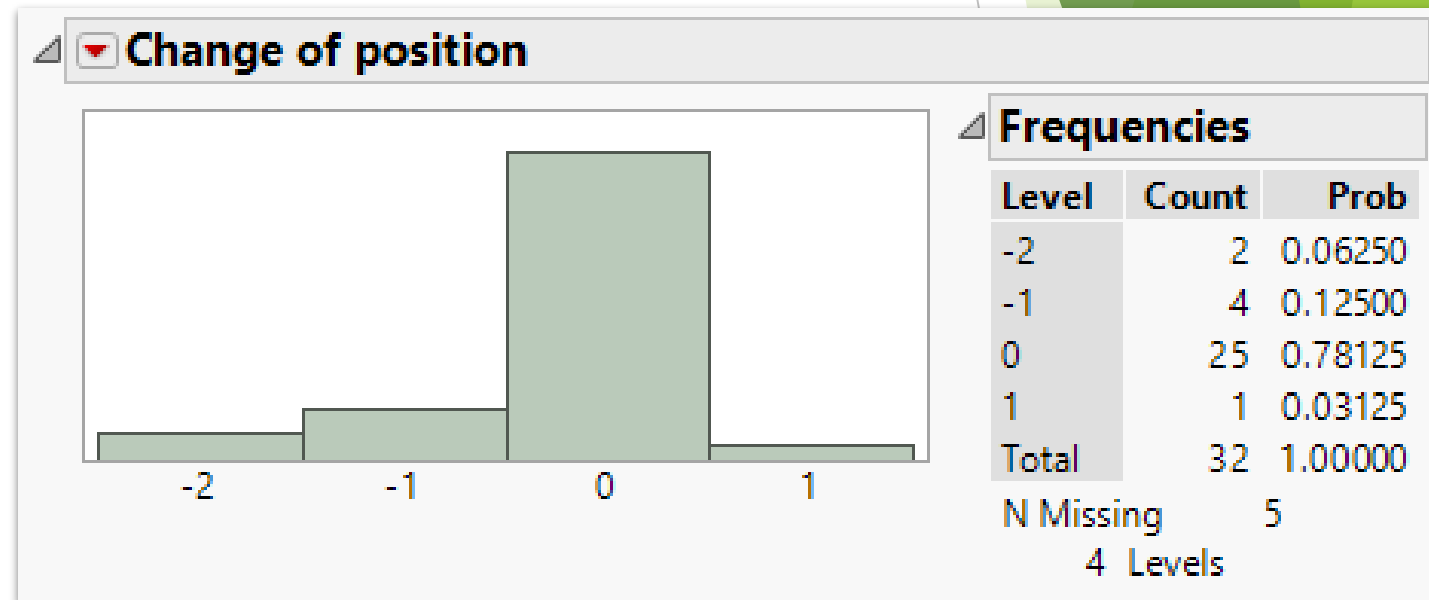
Changes:

-2 = Change from “Others” to “human”

-1 = Change from “Natural” to “Human”

0 = Unchanged

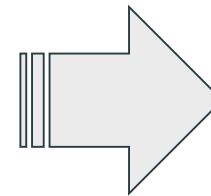
1 = Change from “Human” to “Natural”



Where did they find info about climate change?

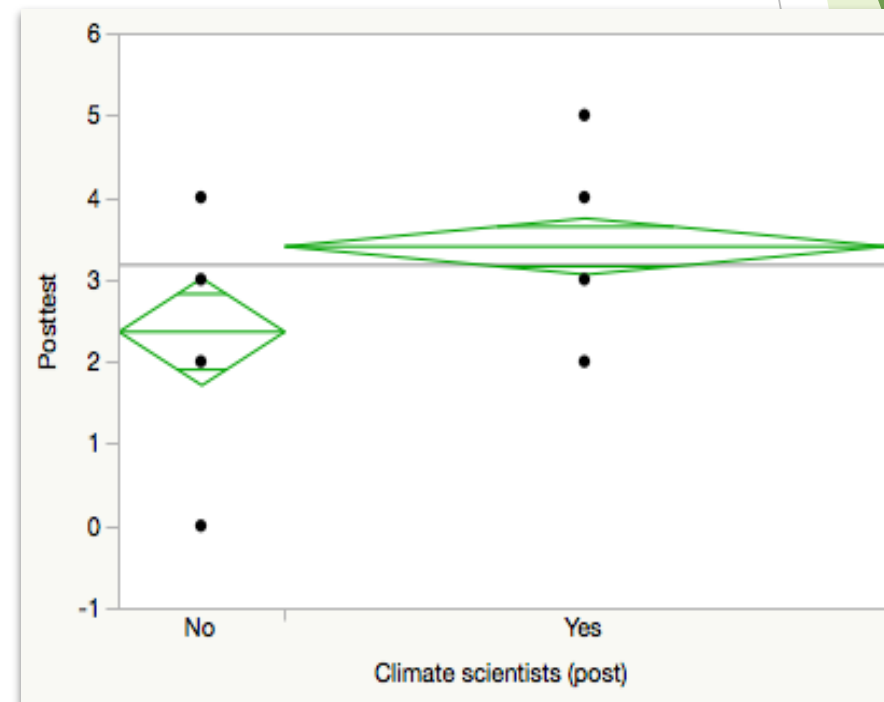
After the faith integration treatment, students turned to Fox News and family/friends for climate change info more than climate scientists

	No	Yes
Pre-treatment		
Climate scientists	1	36
Family and friends	32	5
Fox News	33	4
Post-treatment		
Climate scientists	8	29
Family and friends	29	8
Fox News	30	7



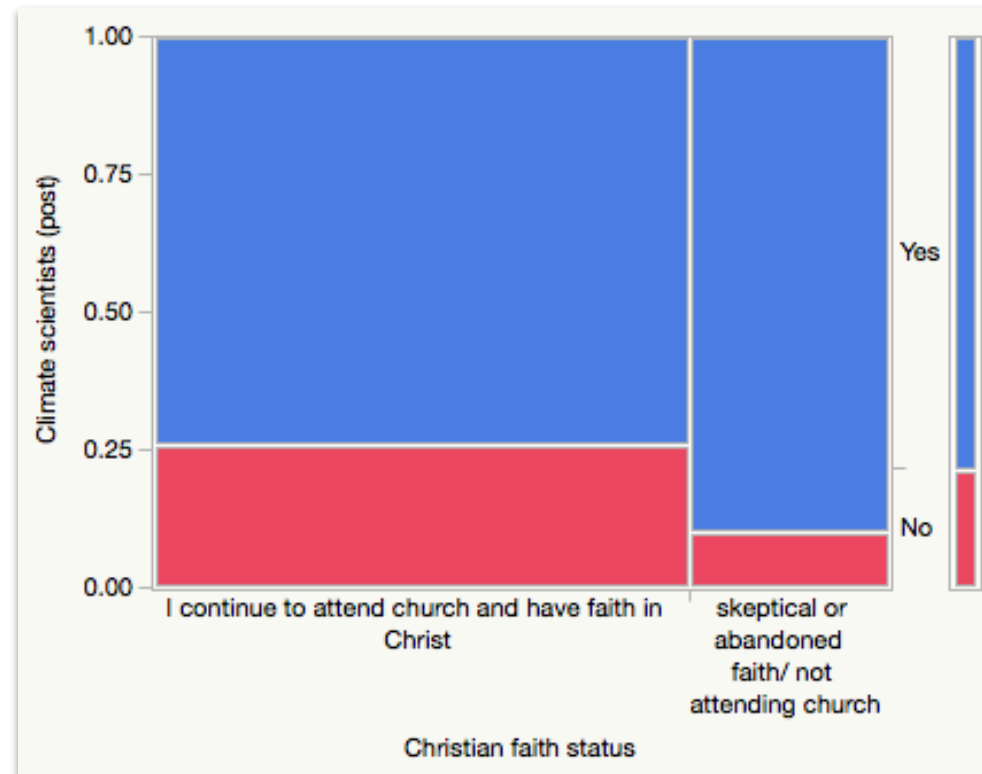
Relationship of knowledge about ecology and counting on climate scientists

- ▶ Students who turned to climate scientists tend to have better knowledge about environmental issues, as measured by objective tests, than those who didn't.
- ▶ $p = .0071$
- ▶ However, why did those students turn away from climate scientists?



Faith status and counting on climate scientists for climate change information (post treatment)

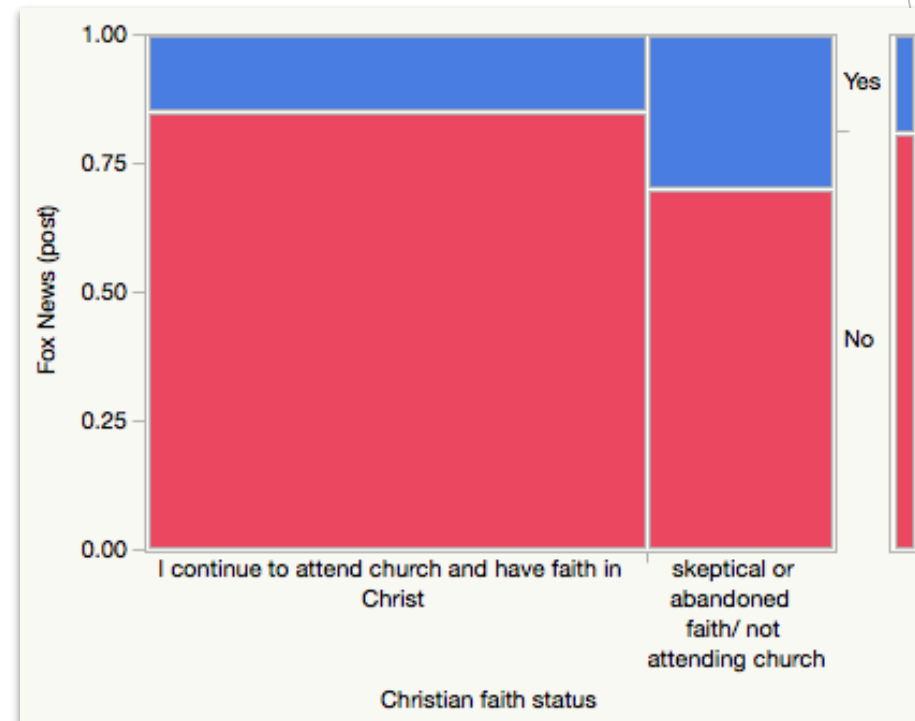
- ▶ Fisher's exact test $p = 0.4041$
- ▶ No relationship



Faith status and counting on Fox News for climate change information (post treatment)

Fisher's exact test $p = .3496$

No relationship



Discussion

Some findings are puzzling.

- ▶ Very few people changed their position regarding the cause of climate change after the faith integration treatment.
- ▶ After the treatment, more students turned away from climate scientists for info. Rather, they count on conservative media, such as Fox News.
- ▶ Apparently there is no relationship between Christian faith and how people obtain information about climate change.

Discussion

- ▶ Students who do not listen to climate scientists tend to be less knowledgeable about climate change. But why did they choose this route?
- ▶ Possible explanation: Willful ignorance.
- ▶ Prior psychological research indicates that conservatives are more prone to confirmation bias and willfully choose to ignore or downplay information that contradicts with their existing belief.
- ▶ The faith status variable in the study is about whether they keep their faith or not, not about how conservative they are. The preceding conjecture awaits further investigation.