

SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION: AN INTERFAITH CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE

Joshua P. Banis

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APPROVED:

Pankaj Jain, Major Professor

Andrew Nelson, Committee Member

George James, Committee Member

Lisa Henry, Chair of the Department of
Anthropology

David Holdeman, Dean of the College of Arts
and Sciences

Victor Prybutok, Vice Provost of the Toulouse
Graduate School

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This thesis is a study of religion and the environment in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and how participants define and interpret their religious duty toward nature. The literature is focused on the field of Christianity and Ecology from its historical development, culminating with a discussion of contemporary religious environmental activism. Utilizing a participatory action research framework, a sustainable education program was developed, focusing on the environmental ethics of Christianity. With my participants we address the topics of sustainability and climate change, religion and the environment, consumption, and advocacy. While the final product of the study was a program on Christianity and Ecology, interfaith ideas can be found throughout the work.

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ACRONYMS

IPL – Interfaith Power & Light

IRB – Institutional Review Board

PAR – Participatory Action Research

SfAA – Society for Applied Anthropology

UNT – University of North Texas

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is a term that has come to the forefront of discussion in the 21st century. World leaders have finally decided to publically speak of the perils of anthropocentric climate change and its effects on the environment. Religion has officially re-entered this discussion, Pope Francis spoke out for “the right of the environment” (2015) drawing environmental inspiration from his namesake St. Francis of Assisi. My master’s thesis is a study of religious environmental ethics and activism in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

This project is twofold, as an applied project, I am creating a sustainable education program focused on the benefits of Christian environmental ethics for Dallas Interfaith Power & Light (IPL), a local chapter of the national organization Interfaith Power & Light. Academically, this work is intended to expand the dialogue of religion and ecology, particularly in the context of religious environmental ethics.

To fully illustrate this project and my journey to the field of religion and the environment, let’s rewind to the Fall of 2011. I moved to Denton, Texas in the Summer of 2011. I had recently finished my service in the U.S. Army and decided to complete the degree I had been working towards since 2003. I was a Medic in the Army, so naturally, my intent was to obtain a degree in biology and then become a Physician Assistant. However, my first semester at the University of North Texas (UNT) created a series of events that led me to leave the field of medicine and enter the field of religious studies.

While studying at UNT, two courses that caused me to gain interest in religion and the environment were English II and Great Religions. English II primarily focused on environmental literature, for 16 weeks we studied contemporary environmental issues such as those discussed within Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Great Religions focused upon the history and philosophy of world religions. This course frequently provided examples of world religions intervening in support of the environment, peaking my interest, and creating a marriage of ideas that over the next two years would lead me to apply to the UNT Anthropology department and seek a master's degree in applied environmental anthropology.

In the Spring of 2015, I was introduced to Dallas IPL through my advisor Dr. Pankaj Jain and the UNT department of Sustainability. Dallas IPL wanted someone to create an interfaith sustainable education program for them to share with participating congregations in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. UNT Sustainability did not have experience working with religious communities thus creating an opportunity for me to study religion and the environment as it is applicable to religious environmental advocacy and activism.

CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLIED THESIS PROJECT

Description of the Client

Dallas Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) is a local Dallas-Fort Worth area non-profit organization with the goal of promoting “love, justice, and care for creation through local action, education, and dialogue about climate leadership” (dallasinterfaith.org 2014). This local chapter of Texas Interfaith Power & Light and the national organization Interfaith Power & Light formed in early 2012. While initially aimed at promoting “creation care” for participating Christian congregations, Dallas IPL has since broadened their membership to embrace participation from all faiths. Interfaith Power & Light initially started in 1998 as a coalition formed to purchase renewable energy, such as solar panels (interfaithpowerandlight.org 2016).

Dallas IPL believes that through interfaith participation they have enhanced their impact on global environmental change. Their members come together to promote positive interactions and create a future that accounts for the well-being of those living today, as well as future generations. By providing an interfaith forum, members are able to learn and share perspectives while building bridges to others who are equally passionate about religion and protecting the environment (dallasinterfaith.org 2014).

Stephen Fuqua, a member of the Dallas IPL steering committee, was the lead point of contact during this project. In the next section, I will discuss how this project was brought to UNT and myself in particular. Now, I would like to reflect on my first meeting with Stephen at the premier of the film *The Wisdom to Survive*, held at White Rock United Methodist Church in

Dallas.

White Rock United Methodist Church is a participating congregation in the Dallas IPL community. They have an old parking lot in the rear of their Church that has been converted to a community garden. The community garden is full of raised beds that are utilized by the neighboring community. The garden was full of fruits and vegetables grown on a physical space that most would find useless.

I met Stephen, along with the film's directors and other members of the community in a small dinner before the premier. During the dinner conversation a frequent theme emerged, environmental stewardship. The Pastor for the White Rock congregation was able to articulate environmental stewardship eloquently. I spent my childhood growing up in the Christian community, however I never heard a religious leader speak of anything but transcendence and personal salvation. This dichotomy finds itself ever present within the realm of Christianity and ecology, often identified as the crux of Christian environmental ethics. With this project, I hope to spread awareness of the environmental ethics of Christianity and the importance of this articulation will come to fruition in my literature review.

Stephen, like myself, has a vision of partnering religion and environmental ethics. His work with Dallas Interfaith Power & Light is only supplemented from his full-time job and any designated funds from Texas IPL. I find Stephen to be unwavering in his dedication to the environment. A friend of Stephen's recounted that his care for the environment is such that he brings his own silverware and bowls to community dinners, not wanting to partake in the use of non-environmentally friendly or disposable goods. Stephen's environmentalism and the utilization of lost space at White Rock Methodist Church has stuck in my head throughout this

project.

Description of the Project

In the Spring of 2015, Stephen contacted UNT's department of Sustainability to create an interfaith sustainable education program. UNT Sustainability did not have experience working with religious communities and contacted my advisor, Dr. Pankaj Jain, to assist in this project. Dallas IPL was very excited about this opportunity with UNT Sustainability, but as we began our first tele-conference with members of the steering committee, UNT Sustainability, Dr. Jain, and myself, that excitement soon extinguished. UNT Sustainability, now an established entity on-campus, wanted to start conducting projects on a for-fee basis. As we will later discuss, Dallas IPL does not have any required dues and functions solely from funds appropriated for them by donation to Texas IPL. I heard nothing back from UNT Sustainability or Dallas IPL for a few weeks. Collectively with my advisor we decided to take on this project and provide Dallas IPL with an interfaith sustainable education program, later tailored to a program on Christian environmental ethics.

The original proposal provided to Dallas IPL was for an interfaith sustainable education program; keeping with a participatory action research (PAR) framework, the participation and data pared the project to concentrate specifically on the environmental ethics of Christianity. The original research questions are still applicable, only narrowed in context from interfaith to Christian.

Original Research Questions:

- Define climate change and sustainability from an interfaith perspective.

- Should climate change and sustainability become a priority for interfaith communities?
- How can interfaith communities take action to advocate for climate change and sustainability?

CHAPTER III

PROJECT DESIGN

Participant Recruitment

Initial recruitment was limited to Dallas IPL members. This proved difficult as Dallas IPL does not have a formal membership policy. Due to lack of a formal membership policy, participants were recruited via Dallas IPL's listserv. For the context of this project, I defined membership to Dallas IPL as recipients of their listserv. Stephen sent out monthly emails promoting opportunities for IPL members to participate or advocate for climate change and sustainability. I developed several outreach statements during the university's institutional review board (IRB) process to attract participants to complete semi-structured interviews as well as a quantitative survey. Stephen sent out multiple emails during the duration of the project to solicit recruitment. Recruitment for semi-structured interviews occurred during the summer of 2015, while recruitment for the quantitative survey occurred during fall of 2015.

Data Collection

The primary methods of data collection were semi-structured interviews and a quantitative survey. Quantitative data was used to enhance the findings of the qualitative portion of the study. I decided to include the quantitative survey to reach participants that were not able to meet for in-person interviews. Several participants were willing to meet, however due to work and time constraints the meetings were often canceled or abandoned by the participants.

The initial IRB was approved on May 28, 2015. I conducted 10 semi-structured interviews over the course of the summer. These interviews involved participants from Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, and Jain faiths. During this initial part of research, I was hopeful that participation would facilitate the creation of an interfaith program. Considering participation, the program was narrowed in scope to cover the environmental ethics of Christianity. The revised IRB was approved on September 17, 2015. The survey was able to generate 22 respondents, 16 of the respondents fully completed the survey. The respondents were from Atheist, Baha'i, Buddhist, and Christian faiths.

Data was collected from an Atheist, two Baha'i, a Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain; however, these voices were removed from my final deliverables after a discussion with the client. A member of the steering committee had concerns of participant backlash from the inclusion of religious thought that did not coalesce with all of the religious groups. They did not want to present Christian ideologies to Buddhists or Hindu ideologies to Christians. Christians accounted for the greatest percentage of participants so I decided after initial analysis to re-align and narrow the focus of the study to the environmental ethics of Christianity.

Semi-Structured Interview

I created a series of research questions while developing my client proposal. These research questions were used to create an interview protocol (Appendix A) and guide the semi-structured interviews. During the initial interviews some questions were removed. All interviews were audio recorded and ranged from 28 minutes to 67 minutes. The 10 interviews produced 326 minutes of audio recordings.

Interviews were conducted in a location of the participant's choosing. The locations included their home, work, Starbucks, a combination of the preceding, or via Skype. Skype became an option as many of the participants were spread throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Participants involved in sustainable activities such as composting, gardening, rainwater catchment, or having sustainable amendments to their homes, such as solar panels, were visited in person, when possible. Each interview was conducted in one meeting as predetermined during the irb process. At the end of the interview participants were asked to complete a demographic survey. Eight of the participants completed the demographic survey while two declined. I did receive emails from several potential participants that did not believe climate change existed. I attempted to contact each of these individuals but was unable to conduct any in-depth interviews with climate change deniers.

Quantitative Survey

The qualitative survey (Appendix B) was created and distributed using Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com), the survey was also made available via the qualtrics mobile survey tool giving participants the option of completing the survey on a mobile device. Of the 22 survey respondents, six dropped out without completing their survey. The amount of time respondents engaged with the survey ranged from five to twenty-five minutes from start to completion. Participation was geared towards an interfaith audience to keep to the original theme of the research. As previously addressed, participation was further narrowed and focused to Christian participants. Christians were the bulk of participants and the client was

worried about rejection of interfaith ideologies. The survey was limited to participants 18 years of age or older.

Analysis

The semi-structured interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word. The interviews were inductively coded to identify emerging themes. The emerging themes were then utilized to create a quantitative survey that was distributed via Qualtrics. The emergent themes will be discussed in detail in the following section entitled Results and Findings. The quantitative survey was analyzed through use of qualtrics and IBM SPSS Statistics, a statistical software program for the social sciences. Qualtrics is able to complete SPSS operations and convert the data into a format that is transferable into SPSS for further analysis. In retrospect, the survey contained more open-ended questions than I would have liked. In future projects I may limit the use of open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were included so that the respondents voice would be present in the survey data. Participation was limited during the quantitative survey, some participants skipped the open-ended questions and answered only the questions that were multiple choice or multiple select. While I may limit open-ended questions in future quantitative surveys, I will never discourage their use completely.

Preparation of Deliverables

The deliverables will include two forms of written reports, one to the Dallas IPL steering committee and the other to the department of anthropology. The written report for Dallas IPL will include a description of the applied thesis project, context of work, findings, and

references. Dallas IPL will also receive a PowerPoint presentation of Christianity and Ecology. The presentation will mirror the stylistic format of Dr. Jain's presentation of Jainism and Ecology. The PowerPoint will include the definitions of climate change and sustainability as provided by members of Dallas IPL. I will then address contemporary environmental problems in the United States followed by Christian scriptures that contain environmental motifs. Historical Christian figures, such as St. Francis of Assisi, will then be introduced to the audience. During the study, the participants created a list of sustainable everyday best practices that will be shared followed by local Dallas-Fort Worth resources for no, to low-cost, sustainability courses provided by Texas A&M Agrilife Research & Extension Center at Dallas. A separate PowerPoint will present the project design, theoretical methods, and final results and will be presented to the steering committee of Dallas IPL.

CHAPTER IV
CONTEXT OF WORK

Introduction

The field of Religion and Ecology came to light with the 1967 article *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis* published in *Science* by Lynn White Jr. White largely attributed the declining state of our environment to Christianity's anthropocentric nature. Within this literature review I intend to depict the historical development of the newly developed interdisciplinary field of Christianity and Ecology. I also intend to frame Christianity's role within the discussion of the environment, moving from the abstract to the concrete, and provide a glimpse of Christian environmental action.

Historical Development of Christianity and Ecology

Lynn White Jr. is frequently credited for opening the dialogue of religion and ecology in contemporary discourse with his essay *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*. White attributes the root of our ecological problem to the spread of Christianity and its alleged anthropocentric nature. Since the industrial revolution we have increased our anthropocentric or a human-centered hold on the environment. Technology has forced us to pillage our lands of its "potash, sulphur, iron ore, and charcoal" causing erosion and deforestation of the mountains and forests that these resources are harvested (White 1974:1). Our use of fossil fuels has also threatened the global atmosphere.

According to White, the Christian narrative told of an all-powerful God who created the “light and darkness, the heavenly bodies, the earth and all its plants, animals, birds and fishes” (White 1974:4). After creating nature, God created humans to inhabit this land. Thereafter, man established their dominance over all the animals of the land for “God planned all of this explicitly for man’s benefit and rule” (White 1974:4). White (1974) defines Christianity as the most anthropocentric religion in the world. This dualism, created in the Christian tradition, separated humanity and nature.

Should Christians take the full blame for our current environmental situation? The Occidental notion that man is solely concerned with transcendence and the mastery and dominion over nature should be looked at in a deeper sense. White (1974) suggests, our environmental condition will continue to deteriorate until we reject “the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man” (White 1974:6). White (1974) concludes that the state of the environment is now a problem that will need to be addressed within the realm of religion.

In their introductory narrative, Christopher Key Chapple and Willis Jenkins illuminate the importance of the field of Christianity and ecology and show the “connections between patterns of environmental thought and practice as well as patterns of religious thought and practice” (2011:442). This field is a marriage that includes anthropology, geography, philosophy, and theology.

The field of Christianity and ecology has been bolstered by Harvard University Press and their series entitled *Religion of the World and Ecology*, this 10 book series is the cornerstone for the study of religion and ecology.

The series *Religion of the World and Ecology* aims to:

(a) [show] that religious worldviews shape environmental behavior; and (b) that a global environmental crisis therefore represents a religious crisis, which, in turn, requires that (c) scholars reexamine religious traditions with the ecological ideas needed to develop a more sustainable worldview. (443)

Chapple and Jennings (2011) summarize the general field of religion and ecology as a robust and interdisciplinary field facing critical questions and developing the intersection of religion, nature and ecology. Environmental responses must come from within religious traditions, influencing both social and political realms.

Religious leaders must highlight our need to “underscore a pivotal human obligation, in every place and pursuit, to express respect and show care for Earth as God’s creation and life’s home, while seeking justice for biodiverse other kind as well as mankind” (Hessel and Reuther 2000:xxxiii).

As most religious traditions of the world suggest, we must be charitable; wealth and materialism are destructive in nature (Wilk 2009). “For a genuinely sustainable outcome, the angle of vision of marginalized people plays a particularly decisive role. Economic poverty coincides with ecological poverty, for, as liberation theologies have argued, the poor suffer disproportionately from environmental destruction” (Johnson 2000:15).

We are part of this intrinsic network that is the environment. Johnson (2000) calls for us to look at creation as part of the divine that is present in all of us. This is our initial look into intrinsic value that can be found for creation within the Christian religion.

Why should we be concerned with the environment? Climate change has damaged our earth. We are losing biodiversity and forests and the wilderness is vanishing. We have seen unsustainable patterns of consumption and biota is changing with the increasing use of genetic engineering. Religious people must enter into this arena, they must become both political and environmental activists (Gottlieb 2006). I make the claim that Religious people should enter the conversation because they have an ingrained ethic that can provide some relief to the environmental degradation that we are currently facing.

Christianity and Ecology: Framing Connections

Within this section we will frame Christianity's role within our current ecological crisis. Tucker (2006) notes that scientists have acknowledged religion's role in creating a sustainable future since the early 1990s. I am going to highlight the current ecological complaint that is being placed on Christianity's shoulders as well as discuss the problems with these arguments.

As Steven Bouma-Prediger points out in his essay *Is Christianity to Blame? The Ecological Complaint Against Christianity*, since the mid-nineteenth century, theological minds such as Ludwig Feuerbach have accentuated Christianity's lack of concern for the environment. In the essay, Bouma-Prediger sets out to discover exactly what the ecological complaints against Christianity are, whether or not they are well-founded, and in the end, will prove that the argument against Christianity is not cogent.

The central focus of Bouma-Prediger's argument is scriptural interpretation. Here Bouma-Prediger finds four-fold examples of an anti-ecological narrative. The crux of this anti-ecological argument is based upon Genesis 1. Does dominion over earth give us permission to

dominate the earth? Many arguments made are suppositions giving “absolute domination” over the earth. In the Genesis account, humanity is set “against nature and this encourages humans to conquer and exploit the natural world” (Bouma-Prediger 2009:6). The second argument revolves around a world-negating dualism, interpreted as justification for the anti-ecological narrative. Should we care less about creation because our body is to be shed and only our soul will continue to exist? The third argument is, as Lynn White pointed out that Christianity is a contributor and supporter of Modern western science and technology. Christianity allowed for the exploitation of nature. The final argument places blame on Christian eschatology. Since the world is facing rapture, we do not have a duty to protect nature, as this is God’s intention and is a sign of the second coming.

Bouma-Prediger sets out to examine the problematic aspects of these arguments. Genesis 1 calls for dominion over creation, but does dominion mean domination? Nature has been viewed often with feminine qualities, these feminine qualities have led mankind to want to dominate nature (Merchant 2003). Instead of viewing nature as a separate entity, Bouma-Prediger recognizes that we are an inherent part of nature. He then points to Wendell Berry for the poignant example, “If God loves the world, then how can any Christian be justified in destroying it?” Lynn White made the historical claim that Christianity is to blame for the world’s ecological problems, yet I make the critique, there is not an explanation for the damage caused to eco-systems in regions without Christian influence. The truth is that “ecological degradation is no respecter of religions. It predates Christianity and can be found in places where Christianity has asserted little or no influence” (Bouma-Prediger 2009:19). Bouma-Prediger (2009) analyzes the linguistic aspect of the Bible, looking towards various translations of the

Bible. His interpretation is then that the literal translation does not point to rapture and does not refer to the earth's destruction, but rather refers to the purification and renewal of creation.

Within his post in Yale's forum on religion and ecology, Dieter T. Hessel calls for Christians to begin deriving new insights from re-reading their Bibles. This re-reading of the Bible should be brought with a background of environmental awareness and use this light to interpret and uncover the hidden motifs of the Bible. Hessel does conclude contemporary Christian ethics are providing a disciplined reflection on the urgent environmental problems that we are facing. Church communities are beginning to foster environmental stewardship and develop earth-keeping habits that can be used to impact our environmental crisis. Hessel looks at examples of Christianity's past, such as St. Francis of Assisi, and not be concerned solely with the hereafter, that has been the common case for clerical and lay Christians (Hart 2006).

Macguire (2000) reminds us, as written in the Hebrew Bible or the Christian Old Testament that the land belongs to the father and he has allowed us to use it. Bouma-Prediger (2000) also draws attention to nature's finite resources, citing a moral obligation to preserve what God has provided, and live within our means. These thoughts can be built upon in the creation of a new Christian environmental ethic.

Bron Taylor (2010) would like us to utilize *Dark Green Religion* and identify an interconnectedness with man and nature. Dark green religion, Religion that promotes emphasis toward nature, will lead to a deep interconnectedness with nature and focuses on deep ecological, eco- and bio-centric models of existence. Within these dark green models, Taylor highlights a need a for a recognition of intrinsic value, otherwise stated as essential in the

natural world. Drawing upon the thoughts of Aldo Leopold, John Muir, and Henry David Thoreau, Taylor highlights missing intrinsic properties of our relation to nature. Taylor looks for a rapid social change that has found itself present when there has been a perceived grave emergency; however, this change is usually far from rapid. Dark green religion often finds itself unrecognized in the religions of the world and has trouble fusing with long standing traditions. The flexibility Taylor lends to his definition of religion has found him with no direct home for dark green religion. However, this theory should be used in conjunction with Christian environmental action.

Where Taylor fails to make the connection with Christianity is the view of Christianity where nature is a sacred product of God. In the Christian narrative, the environmental motif is often overlooked. While I believe that Taylor sees and agrees that Christianity has an environmental motif, it is easier to suggest looking to nature worshipping religions than trying to convince readers of Christian environmental motifs.

As defined by Gottlieb, religious environmentalism is “a worldwide movement of political, social, ecological and cultural action” (2006:113). This worldwide movement is not limited in scope to Christianity, but should be brought together with all world religions. It is a combined effort that is needed to conquer the problem of anthropocentric climate change.

Roger Gottlieb’s (2006) *A Greener Faith*, further frames Christianity into the contemporary ecological paradigm. Religious and world leaders have begun to address the impending environmental crises we have found ourselves in and they are now seeking answers to environmental problems rather than neglecting the issue. While Christianity was originally framed as dualistic and without concern for the environment, we have found ourselves in an

age where environmental stewardship is being brought to the forefront of the religious environmental paradigm.

Gottlieb expresses the importance of using religious environmentalism while addressing environmental crisis. Religious environmentalism is important because it is able to frame what is wrong, but, also what is right and what can be right. We need this positive aspect in the battle of the environment. Religious environmentalism does not look solely to religious text, but rather utilizes science along with religious teachings. He describes ecotheology as “the sense that we live communally with nature, that we can communicate with it, and that therefore communion with it is possible” (Gottlieb 2006:43).

Thomas Berry’s (2009) *The Role of the Church in the Twenty-first Century* should also help to bring some clarity to the issue of anthropocentric climate change. Christians find themselves invested in personal salvation and personal transcendence. Berry claims Christians have forgotten the divine order that was established at the beginning of creation and replaced it with a system promoting the rights of humans alone.

We no longer have an intimacy with the earth and no longer an intrinsic value in nature. Berry (2009) supports we have three natural tendencies, “differentiation, subjectivity, and relationality.” We are all inherently different yet we are all part of the universe and we provide a different function and purpose that no other can provide.

Berry (2009) has thus defined the role of the church in the 21st century to speak about the primordial divinity of the earth. Christian concern should be not only the transcendence of the soul, but also on the natural world. Not only is this the realm of the secular naturalist, but

also the role of the Christian as representative of the divinity that was imprinted during creation.

We are not separate from nature or ecology; we must begin to consider ourselves as an integral part of nature. No longer should man be lead to domination over nature, but we should have dominion over nature, and therefore respect nature for the intrinsic value that it has been granted as being part of creation. Religious environmentalists need to follow the example of leaders such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. and combine religion, social action, and moral teaching.

Religious Environmental Activism

To create a lasting change, we need to move beyond the abstract and adopt a practical activist model of interacting with the environmental. Gottlieb (2006) describes activist religious environmentalism as moving beyond theology and public declarations, making a direct impact. Gottlieb calls for a political, ecological, and moral compass to guide mankind in its interaction with the environment. The Sisters of Earth in Fayetteville, Arkansas focus on healing the connection between humankind and nature. The sisters live in harmony with nature, they are growing their own foods and developing a permaculture framework in their community. The community centered approach is important to this project, by utilizing community centric activities we can gain sustainable knowledge and begin to heal the earth.

In separate studies Djupe and Hunt (2009) examined congregational effects of environmental concerns, while Guth, Green, Kellstedt, and Smidt (1995) studied religious beliefs and attitudes on environmental policy. Both of these studies showed that conservative

Christians, defined as fundamentalist and conservative evangelicals, were less likely to be involved with environmental activities. However, each study admitted a lack of clarity in the data due to the quantitative nature of the findings. Qualitative studies can be used to complete this missing link in the research process, particularly when studying human-environment interactions (Crate and Nuttall 2009).

Hallman (2000) calls for us to change and re-evaluate contemporary lifestyle centered around materialism. The Church also has a role, it should derive direction from those that have a greater interconnectedness with nature, particularly native spirituality and ecofeminist thought (Hallman 2000). Christianity, in collaboration with other world faiths, has a responsibility to actively engage with the challenge of climate change, as it poses a challenge to the global community (Hallman 2000).

With the goal of sustainability in mind, the goal of churches' mission should address social and ecological questions (Rasmussen 2000). Rasmussen encourages Christians to engage with the task of making social justice and sustainability changes. We presently find ourselves on an unsustainable earth, with goals of moving ourselves to a sustainable one (Rasmussen 2000). Although the Christian church is being called to the center of the eco-justice movement, it is not being called to divorce individual salvation, to gain environmental prosperity (Ruether 2000). Christianity is undoubtedly not the only source of religious environmental ethics; however, it should be used as a framework to inspire us. Christians are members of the world's largest religious community. While Christians have been assigned blame for many of the environmental problems we see today, they should not find themselves being alienated because of their past, but develop a new vision of the future (Ruether 2000). God is often

viewed simply as the external creator rather than being present within nature. All ecosystems must be protected, churches and worship spaces should be designed with conservation in mind, and stewardship should be a central tenet of an environmentally responsible ministry (Ruether 2000).

Gottlieb (2006) interviewed five faces of religious environmentalism. The modern thinkers were brought to the topic of religion and the environment because they could see the interwoven nature of religion and the environment. While some are trained in the natural sciences, they do not feel that their training has moved them away from their beliefs as a Christian. Their beliefs were further strengthened by work with minority communities that strengthened their bond with religion and social change.

Anthropology

Anthropology is the study of the complexity of human beings and human cultures through history. As an Anthropologist, I am primarily concerned with ethnographic, qualitative data, that can provide an in-depth detailed description of everyday culture and customs. During this project I attempted to gain a detailed experience of the participant's thoughts about culture and climate change. The culture often discussed was religion. As an anthropologist I look to culture, in this case, the religious communities as a guiding force on the battle of climate change.

Anthropology's role in the study of climate change is to translate the cultural frameworks in ways people "perceive, understand, experience, and respond to key elements of the worlds which they live in" (Roncoli, Crane, and Orlove 2009:87). With this project I wanted

to understand and experience how members of Dallas IPL perceive, understand, and experience climate change and how the participants respond to this phenomenon in their personal lives. Anthropologists look for cultural perceptions of phenomena, cultural and social models of knowledge, shared meaning and valuation, and produce a collective response to the issue (Roncoli, Crane, and Orlove 2009). Ethnographically, anthropologists look toward the phenomena of religion to study the praxis side of Religion, or the “interplay of belief and practice” (Townsend 2009:65).

Virginia Nazarea (1999) has been the most influential anthropologist for my journey to becoming an environmental anthropologist. Nazarea draws upon the thoughts of Conklin (1954, 1961), Goodenough (1957), Frake (1962), and Sturtevant (1964) to develop the field of ethno-ecology (1999). Ethno-ecology is the “attempt toward the understanding of local understanding (the so-called native point of view) about a realm of experience” (2006:34) Anthropology is no longer limited to the studying of foreign cultures in far-away lands we are now looking to the local understanding of phenomena such as climate change.

Theoretically, I looked toward participatory action research (PAR) to guide my project. PAR has a strong focus in ethnography, and the participants are involved with all facets of the research. The participant’s knowledge and practices will collaboratively shape the research. The use of PAR will generate and promote action within the community. This was important when looking at this problem from a standpoint of benefit for my client. Dallas IPL is particularly involved with action and participation from the community to combat climate change. The product of this research will be a collective view of their thoughts, actions, and advocacy of the issue. While I was not able to speak directly to participants in the initial creation of the study, I

was able to use their input to shape the second phase of the research. The materials created from the research is also guided by the participants and their shared values as a community.

Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research (PAR) is an anthropological method that focuses on long-term, bottom-up participation. I chose this methodology, in part, because Dallas IPL is concerned with action and advocacy. It seeks first to advocate and take action against climate change and then to participate in the creation of a sustainable education program that is intended to teach sustainable activities to member congregations in Dallas. Their ideas and thoughts were essential for the creation of the sustainable education program. I was lucky to have participants that cared for the environment.

PAR is traditionally a long-term commitment. Although I spent approximately six months conducting interviews and surveys, this work is intended to be a long-term partnership that can be continued in the future. PAR is also essential in reflecting “the actual needs, desires, and aspirations of real people” (Erwin 221). I intend this program to be developed from the needs of the members of Dallas IPL. The participants input during phase one of the research process led to the creation of the second phase. PAR gives ownership of the program to the participants in the study; without them, this project would not have been possible.

PAR is used to help participants “investigate the meanings of their own experiences and situations” (Erwin 222). I used this process to highlight what sustainability and climate change mean to the members of Dallas IPL. I also used this to highlight how the participants view the intersection of religion and the environment. The process of PAR is not always linear, it ebbs

and flows with the research; sometimes the participants drop out and do not finish the participation.

Sustainable Education

Stephen Sterling (2001) provided another theoretical basis for the pairing of sustainable education and anthropology. Sterling, while not an anthropologist, frequently highlights the methodological importance of utilizing ethnography to develop sustainable practices. When creating a sustainable education program, we must look to making first and second/third order changes. That is, we must make changes to the existing system as well as make changes to our current educational paradigm.

Education should be based upon a transformative, not a transmissive, model. Transmissive models are often rigid, top-down programs that are expert led. Transformative models are responsive and dynamic, bottom-up approaches, that are led by everyone in a PAR fashion. Managing the ecological models should utilize a democratic and participative process. These programs are focused on facilitating change through adaptive, critical, and creative learning. The effects of ecological management will provide a diverse and innovative product.

Sterling (2001) suggests a praxis based framework that is central to applied anthropology. Sterling's three-point model is extended, connective, and integrative. The program needs to be future oriented and develop an ethical, holistic, and purposeful values. It needs to be focused on real world issues and collect patterns of change. It should also promote a balanced, process oriented learning style providing a coherent framework.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This applied project was created to provide Dallas Interfaith Power & Light with an interfaith sustainable education program. Through data analysis and participation, the course was narrowed in scope to introduce the environmental ethics of Christianity. The goal of this project is to begin moving the field of religion and the environment from the abstract to the concrete. The project covered four topics: (1) climate change and sustainability, (2) religion and the environment, (3) consumption, and (4) advocacy.

Demographics

The qualitative demographics of the project included six male participants and four female participants. Education levels ranged from associates degree to graduate level education. Six participants identified themselves as Caucasian. The remainder identified as Latino, Filipino, Jain, and Hindu. Religious denominations represented were five Christians, two Baha'i, a Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain. The participants identified themselves as belonging to lower-middle, middle, and five identified as upper-middle class. Three participants refused to answer estimated annual income. Initially this lead me to believe that climate change and sustainability is only an issue of relevance for educated, affluent, White members of society. However, this claim proved to not be the case.

The quantitative demographics of the project included eight males and eight females. All participants obtained education beyond high school, ranging from an associate's degree to

Ph.D., 63 percent of the participants have attained a master's degree. 88 percent of my participants identified as Caucasian, while six percent were representative of both Hispanic and African-American. I was pleased to have participation from several different ethnicities. Sixty-seven percent of the participants were Christians. Christian participation in the study and consultation with the client lead me to pare down my project from an overarching interfaith sustainable program to one geared to the environmental ethics of Christianity. Class structure was equitably distributed among respondents in the quantitative survey.

Dallas IPL is a relatively young chapter of Interfaith Power & Light. As stated in the description of the client, Dallas IPL was formed in the fall of 2012. On average, participants of the study have been involved with Dallas IPL for greater than two years. Participation ranged from less than one year to four years.

As discussed previously, Dallas IPL has no formal membership and I found this troubling. Dallas IPL has the goal of advocating and educating for the environment, but they do not seem to have abundant funds to complete this mission. While Dallas IPL does accept donations, they are funneled through Texas Interfaith Power & Light. Sixty-nine percent of the participants have donated money to environmental/ecological associations within the last five years. The overwhelming willingness to donate to environmental associations leads me to recommend implementation of formal membership fees.

Climate Change and Sustainability

How do Dallas IPL members describe the phenomena of climate change and sustainability? When I probed the participants for their thoughts on climate change and

sustainability, I was not looking for a book definition; however, I wanted a general representation of their perception of climate change and how we could address this issue. Climate change was talked about as “changing weather patterns,” and attributes it to a “manmade effect.” Lori, a retired Caucasian Christian in her 70’s, provided the following description of climate change:

Whatever the source, industrialization, the elevated levels of CO₂, methane, and other unnatural gases already in the atmosphere is causing temperatures to rise in the air and in the ocean by the greenhouse gas capturing and retention of sunlight. This integral rise in temperature by single digit degrees can cause disruption of climate patterns, like rainfall, drought, ocean and air currents, ground temperature, ocean temperature and hence weather patterns like long term seasonal changes and disasters like drought, flood, hurricanes and tornadoes. Not to mention changes in vegetation and temperature which drive animals and plants to extinction or changing living places. Higher latitudes, higher elevations, further locations from equator, loss of habitat completely (no sea ice), ocean too hot for living patterns etc. Changes in climate will also drive humans out of homes. Severely destructive hurricanes, tornados, floods, higher sea levels make homes impossible to rebuild. – Lori

Morgan, a Caucasian Baha’i in his 30’s, defined climate change as:

Climate change refers to the extreme variability in weather patterns, and overall global heating...that has already begun occurring due to human activity, primarily, through the exploration for and use of fossil fuels in our transportation and agricultural sectors. – Morgan

These definitions highlighted human’s consumptive nature. Consumption was a theme frequently addressed during the study. The problems and solutions addressed during this study revolve around addressing our consumptive nature and striving to become more sustainable. Next, I asked the members to describe the term “sustainability” and what it meant to them. The definitions were often centered on future generations. Morgan described sustainability as:

The practice of sustainability ultimately means living in balance with the Earth's ability to recycle and replenish itself; put another way, it means not robbing from future generations. –Morgan

The participants believe sustainable practices should involve balancing our use of natural resource. Tara, a Caucasian Christian in her 70's, described sustainability as:

Behaviors and practices that are made within the limits of which the earth can go on providing the same resources rather than creating shortages, depletions, extinctions or anything that cannot maintain balances of nature. –Tara

Religion and the Environment

My thesis argument is that religion has a beneficial impact on the environment. I want to depict a religious responsibility to care for the environment. The participants of this study enabled me to delve into this subject. While my final project is tailored to Christian environmental ethics, in this section, I will discuss generally how participants related religion with the environment.

“Environmental stewardship” was the most frequently referenced term throughout the study. Of the participants, ninety-four percent described environmental stewardship as a personal responsibility. Carl, a Caucasian Christian in his 50's, described during his interview that we have a duty to “be good stewards of the resources God has provided. And to respect those resources, animals and plants.” Stewardship means we have a duty to responsibly manage the environment that we have been provided. For Daryl, a Christian participant, environmental stewardship was a central unwavering tenet of their religious environmental ethic: “God made the body and the earth to be self-sustaining. He gave us all that we need to be so. It is what we do, put into body and earth and what we take out that causes the issues”

Dale, a Baha'i participant, verbalized a feeling that seemed to resonate with the participant's: "no one faith has a monopoly on virtue." We have a collective obligation to care for the environment. This is not a Christian issue, this is a collective issue of humanity and includes all faiths. The interfaith perspective of the project allowed me to view members of all faiths working together for the common goal of the environment. The participants expressed that they came together collectively, not to argue about the virtues of their individual faiths, but the collective responsibility to care for the environment.

Christian participants rejected the notion that dominion meant domination of the earth. Although none of the participants memorized or could recall environmental specific portions of scripture during interviews, they all looked toward faith for guidance when considering the environment. Of the survey respondents, Sixty-nine percent looked to scripture when thinking of the environment. Thirty-one percent of the participants pointed to scripture that could describe religion and the environment.

Maggie, a Caucasian Christian environmental philosopher in her 50's, spoke of the benefits of pairing religion and the environment during our interview, "Religion is a natural vehicle that can incorporate the notion of sustainability to change behavior." The members of Dallas IPL rely upon religion as a cultural vehicle that can be used as a guiding force to create change. The notion that we can become sustainable is dependent upon our behavior. While the participants were of different faiths, they collectively congregate for the betterment of the planet. Religion is the umbrella under which they congregate.

Consumption

The field of religion and the environment started with Lynn White Jr.'s article attributing our ecological crisis to Christianity's anthropocentric nature (1967). It was our consumptive behavior that was troubling for White. This consumptive nature was also troubling for the participants of this study. Four of the ten participants in the qualitative portion of the study were actively pursuing green activities in their personal lives. They had gardens, solar panels, water catchment systems, and various other amenities for sustainability.

I want to unpack a theme that was first addressed by Dale in an early interview, Dale said we have to develop a "thoughtfulness about consumption." As I previously addressed the participants were educated and affluent members of society. They lived in large homes, and often produced more waste and consumed more than they would have liked. None of the participants were happy with their current ecological footprint.

Three participants stressed the importance of addressing the problems associated with industrial farming, all were from eastern religions. Phillip, a Latino Buddhist monk in his 60's who holds a Master's degree in public health felt, "The single biggest contributor to environmental decay is animal farming. I feel a lot of green people don't look at animal farming. They look at fossil fuels, there is a whole crowd that is about agriculture or this and that." Industrial farming is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse admissions. The products of industrial operations often travel farther and accumulate a higher carbon footprint. The Christian participants did not specifically mention industrial farming. These participants were more concerned with "moderation of use" and the use of locally grown sustainable goods.

The participants want a holistic view and solution to the problem of climate change. Phillip would further address, “You cannot address a problem by putting your finger on one little thing. When the whole dyke is coming down you cannot put your finger in one hole.” Our environment is in a state of decline, “we are poisoning the air we breathe and the water we drink.”

Glen, a Filipino Baha’i in his 50’s who also has a Master’s degree in Public Health added, “Presently resources are accessible to a few. A lot of the world doesn’t have access to all of the basic needs.” While the participants were generally comfortable in their personal life, they realize that their consumptive nature directly impacts the less fortunate. When Glen addresses that basic resources are only accessible by a few, he does so in the context that the major contributors to environmental degradation are the richest in the world. Not everyone can live the lifestyle of the American middle class, resources should be easily accessible for all in a sustainable form.

While consumer practices were often addressed, I did not find many solutions suggested from the participants. The Christian participants were able to identify the issue of consumption but did not have any on-hand solutions. The Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu participants recommended removal of meat consumption to significantly reduce one’s carbon footprint. The collective solution to the problem of consumeristic excesses was to advocate and educate against it. While the participants may not have had the answers, they were willing to contribute to the dialogue while advocating for the environment. This encompassed the PAR framework that I used to model this project, we were working to develop a solution together.

Advocacy

Environmental advocacy was a theme found during research. Dallas IPL has a long history of effectively advocating for the environment but more solutions need to be created. The participants want to move from advocacy to action. However, most are still looking for a source of information to educate themselves on how to increase their sustainable activities.

When looking for solutions, the participants think “solutions should come from the inside out” or from the “ground up.” These solutions are intended to “inspire confidence” while creating a “culture of encouragement.” Participants want to “advocate and educate” others on the benefits of being environmental stewards.

Participants overwhelmingly wanted participation to include children. Seventy-five percent of those surveyed did not believe that future generations would have a healthy planet. Carol, a Caucasian Christian in her 40’s, echoed a sentiment that was shared during this study, “We have to really motivate adults...we have to start with children.” Children are often the focal point of a parent’s life. My participants were all older and had children, most of whom had already left home. I agreed, we are doing this for children and they must be included in education. By molding the thoughts of future generations we will ensure that they are equipped with the proper skills to live sustainable lives.

Some of the participants advocated for the environment through action. Carol is the “environmental services representative on PTA of local school district, local school environmental/grounds representative, head of Green Team at church, host of semiannual community recycling events.” All of these activities are conducted to “reduce [her] burden on the environment.” She often holds composting classes at her church, facilitated by the City of

Dallas. Carol also uses her bike to travel, reducing her dependence on her car. During grocery shopping, she uses the child cart that was originally bought for her children to carry her groceries home.

Another participant, Rick a retired Christian in his 60's, grows approximately 400 pounds of vegetables in his garden each season. He teaches sustainability courses for his church, teaching participants how to successfully grow in the types of soil found in Texas. Rick has had years of experience growing crops in the changing Texas seasons. To maximize the limited space surrounding his home, Rick started to grow crops vertically along trellises. Rick's garden was full of roma tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, melons, banana peppers, eggplants, beans, pecans, figs, grapes, and blackberries.

Rick is very direct in his thoughts and methods. He provided me with a list of ways to grow in the North Texas environment. To be successful these ways were not to be deviated. As we talked we shared stories about our gardens. While I was having a successful squash crop this year, all of his had died. Rick also had a lot of suggestions on building a sustainable home. Everything he did was calculated.

I was often confronted with abstract ideas. Abraham, a Caucasian in his 50's who was raised in a Christian household, suggested we "promote a constant discourse, a necessity of a just, sustainable world, meaning post-consumerism and post-carbon living." I do not view this as a sustainable solution. With the creation of this program I intend to close the gap between being abstract and having meaningful action. Lucille, a Caucasian Christian in her 30's who is particularly active in her Church and community suggested:

Encourage faith communities to lower their ecological footprints. Engage with individuals in a positive way to encourage individual awareness and change. Be a consistent model of (more) sustainable practices. Advocate for legislature that protects, conserves, and preserves ecosystems and services. Volunteer with all ages to engage in outdoor experiences, which help foster a spiritual appreciation for nature and greater awareness of our interconnectedness.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dallas IPL should begin holding more service-oriented projects and workshops. This project will provide Dallas IPL with supplementary material and resources so lay people can become more environmentally friendly. Eventually Dallas IPL, being an interfaith organization, should create and tailor programs to fit each religious and ethical need. However, creation and promotion of sustainable skills will not require a religious commitment or affiliation. These skills can be part of the larger interdisciplinary nature of the project. There are an abundance of programs and projects available within the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex that teach a variety of sustainable activities. While I will provide Dallas IPL with an introductory program on Christian environmental ethics, this is not enough.

The participants have the obligation to follow through with their wishes to become more sustainable. While some of the participants are involved in sustainable practices, many are not. The best way, as gathered collectively from the participants, to have a positive effect on climate change is to take effective action as individuals in their community, and seek to be the change, rather than wait for change to happen in a top-down approach. Collectively the participants of this study concluded that they would rather join together for grassroots mobilization rather than have government mandated climate initiatives. They are supportive of government interest in climate action. But they do not want to wait for a time when government intervention is necessary. Many also felt that if the government was intervening the battle against climate change was already lost.

The participants of this study have come up with several areas that Dallas IPL needs to improve on in their fight against climate change. Dallas IPL should consider accepting direct donations, or member dues, to build internal funds to facilitate community impact classes. The members are interested in learning about religious environmental ethics, native landscaping, and native gardening. I am providing them with an introductory course on religious environmental ethics as well as local resources to learn environmentally sustainable skills. Texas A&M Agrilife Research & Extension Center at Dallas provides no to low-cost sustainability courses on a regular basis. These courses include: container gardening, edible landscaping, drip irrigation, rain barrel making, and native landscaping. The previous list is a sample and not an exhaustive list of the courses that Texas A&M Agrilife provides on a monthly basis. The environment is ever changing and our impact on the environment is ever changing. A common theme that continually re-emerged was that we must be accountable to future generations.

Dallas IPL should start cataloging the sustainable skills of members and appoint volunteers to teach classes on sustainable activities with participating congregations on a quarterly basis. During this project, I met with two participants, Carol and Rick, who already teach sustainable skills for their individual congregations. These skills should be spread to the partnering congregations of Dallas IPL. While Dallas IPL has looked externally for classes on sustainability the teachers are present and active already in their organization.

Dallas IPL should strive to achieve their own 501(c)(3) non-profit status like their counterpart Texas IPL. This of course would require it to become a full-time venture. I suggest that Texas IPL should enlist and train additional grant writers so that Dallas IPL can become a full-time venture.

Sasha, a Christian participant in her 60's, suggested Dallas IPL needs to take on the role of and "be the catalyst for a North Texas interfaith summit on environmental stewardship and advocacy. My experience is that one church/mosque/temple cannot organize the whole thing, but needs a central convener." Dallas IPL needs to increase their outreach in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Abraham suggested that Dallas IPL "Reach out directly to people and congregations/communities where they are, at their places of worship." Dallas IPL needs to become more active in their outreach. I would suggest partnering with congregations minimally on the quarterly level. There is a desire for environmental knowledge to be taught. Many of the participants also suggested utilizing church time as a time to point out these opportunities. This will start to enrich their congregations and get them more active in green opportunities.

The desire to learn was present in all of the participants of this survey. Michonne, an African-American Christian participant in her 60's, spoke of what Dallas IPL can do to improve their environmental outreach "More advocacy through churches where there is the opportunity to frame the issues so people understand them and how they are impacted by them." While many of the participants of Dallas IPL are educated not all members of their congregation have had that opportunity. Dallas IPL should utilize the opportunity to frame issues of environmental justice and religious ethics so that the members of their partnering congregations can gain knowledge and make the environment an important part of their life. As Townsend (2009) noted, religion has long been effective in the United States as an intermediary for environmental justice.

Dallas IPL should focus future research on Baha'i and Ecology. Dallas IPL has good participation from the Baha'i community who have already begun developing green practices to

promote environmental stewardship. The Dallas Baha'i community has developed best practices at home to conserve energy, water, and reduce consumption of non-renewable goods. The Baha'i community also encourages the participation of youth groups to conduct service projects to support a healthy environment. These practices should guide future research to incorporate a more hands-on activist approach to the research.

CHAPTER VII

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Initially this project was designed to facilitate the creation of an interfaith sustainable education program. I decided to use a participatory framework at the beginning of the study and this framework forced me to narrow the scope of the project to cover the environmental ethics of Christianity. Looking back at the project design I wish I had narrowed the scope of the project from the beginning and not after the data was collected from both the ethnographic and quantitative portions of the study.

As I addressed in the previous section, I feel the best project would have been paired with the Dallas Baha'i community. Meeting with Stephen, I believe he did not want to push sole participation towards his personal religious community, Baha'i; however, the community had already internally begun promoting and teaching environmental education. I would have like the opportunity to learn more about the Baha'i faith and build upon the work that they had already begun.

I wanted to have a hands-on portion during my study. Dallas IPL most often meets in virtual space. Participation even in the virtual realm could have been improved. Dallas IPL was a member of MeetUp.com, but let their membership lapse as participation did not justify their monthly dues. They have mainly moved to interaction on Facebook as their main form of communication, outside of their listserv. Facebook still did not produce a lot, or any recent, personal interaction between the members of Dallas IPL. The moderators do a good job of posting opportunities for climate change advocacy to the group, but this has still not generated

a lot of conversation between members. As a researcher, I find this limiting as I didn't have the opportunity to observe members of different faiths together and visualize their interaction, even interaction in the virtual realm.

The participants of this study often felt that I should be the one providing them the reasons for being environmentally friendly. It is my view that we should have care for creation, yet, I did not want to impose my beliefs on any of the members. I wanted all of the data, both good and bad to come directly from them. As the interviews went on I was able to develop some probative questions. These probative questions would have definitely help earlier in the study to flesh out the discussion of religion and the environment and the downfalls of our consumptive nature.

CHAPTER VIII

PERSONAL REFLECTION

This is only the beginning of the journey. Conducting research and writing an applied thesis initially seemed like a never ending task. I wanted to bring something both to the field of anthropology and to the study of religion. I have often critiqued the field of Philosophy and Religion as being too abstract. While many modern philosophers are writing about contemporary issues; what are they doing to take effective action against specific problems? That is where applied anthropology enters the picture.

Graduate school is about leaving the limited boundaries academia has placed on you from grade school. One is no longer provided a direct map from start to finish. To be honest, I did not think that I had the skills to complete a project of this nature. Nonetheless I designed, conducted, and completed a research project.

While attending the 2015 Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) conference in Pittsburgh, PA the idea of this project arose. I was happy to have this opportunity to work in the field that I have spent the last five years training toward. While I see the benefit of pairing religion and ecology, I wanted to see if others view these fields as intersecting.

As a researcher, I know I still have things to improve upon. Anthropology is based upon qualitative research, initially my introverted nature did not help in conducting research. However, I hastily overcame this condition and was able to interact with participants effectively. While I now see times where I should have been more probative and delve into deeper issues of climate change, sustainability, consumption. Initially I did not have the

qualitative ability initially to do so. Later, I was able to read these subtle queues in later interviews, and correct this deficit.

As the project concluded, I found flaws, but I do not think any research is without flaws. Research is not static, but a dynamic process. I have learned to always expect the unexpected and to look for what the research points to, and nothing else. While it is easy to have pre-conceived notions and find the result you want, it is only ethical to present what you have found and use that as a building block for future research. The flaws of research are what makes each project unique.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

1. What is your history with Dallas Interfaith Power & Light?
2. How would you define climate change?
 - a. Do you believe climate change exists?
3. What does sustainability mean to you?
4. How would you describe your religious duty towards nature?
5. What religious texts or scriptures do you associate with nature and sustainability?
6. Do you believe that climate change should be a priority for interfaith communities?
7. How would you describe your carbon footprint?
 - a. How are you environmentally friendly?
 - b. Example. Do you use environmentally friendly products?
8. How could you improve your carbon footprint?
9. How could your place of worship improve their carbon footprint?
10. Do you personally advocate for sustainability?
11. How would you suggest interfaith communities advocate for sustainability?
12. If Dallas Interfaith Power & Light created a sustainable education program what topics would you like addressed?
13. How would you rate the current state of the environment?
 - a. What do you think went right/wrong?
14. What spiritual solutions would you recommend to help heal the current state of the environment?

APPENDIX B
WEB SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Web Survey Instrument

- 1) Are you 18 years of age or older? (filter question – if no, redirect to page that says, “Thank you for your interest but, unfortunately, you are not eligible to participate in our survey at this time”)
- 2) Are you currently a member or involved with Interfaith Power & Light (filter question – if no, redirect to page that says, “Thank you for your interest but, unfortunately, you are not eligible to participate in our survey at this time”)
- 3) How long have you been a member of Interfaith Power & Light?
 - a) Less than 1 year
 - b) 1-2 years
 - c) 2-3 years
 - d) 3-4 years
 - e) 4 years or more
- 4) During the past five years have you given money to an ecological association?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 5) During the past five years have you participated in a demonstration for some environmental cause?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 6) How would you define the term “climate change”? (open-ended)
- 7) How would you define the term “sustainability”? (open-ended)
- 8) Within the last year, have you (check all that apply):
 - a) Recycled plastic, glass, or paper goods using curbside recycling
 - b) Purchased an energy efficient appliance for your home
 - c) Installed compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) in your home
 - d) Installed energy efficient windows in your home
 - e) Installed solar panels on your home
 - f) Purchased a hybrid vehicle
 - g) Collected rainwater
 - h) Composted household waste
 - i) Limited your household water usage

j) Used alternative transportation or cut back on driving time

9) Indicate how important Religion is in your life.

- a) Very important
- b) Rather important
- c) Not very important
- d) Not at all important

10) Indicate how important Environmental Stewardship is in your life.

- a) Very Important
- b) Rather Important
- c) Not very important
- d) Not at all important

11) Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

- 1) You have a religious duty to protect nature.
- 2) You look to religious texts for guidance when considering the environment.
- 3) Western religions are more conscientious of the environment.
- 4) Eastern religions are more conscientious of the environment.
- 5) Climate change exists.
- 6) Climate change is currently degrading the world we live in.
- 7) Children should participate in environmentally friendly activities.
- 8) It is your religious duty to be an environmental steward.
- 9) You think of your personal consumption when considering environmental change.
- 10) Americans lack any sort of religious environmental ethics.

12) Which of the following is part of your diet? (check all that apply)

- a) Meat
 - i) beef
 - ii) chicken
 - iii) pork
 - iv) fish
 - v) other
- b) Vegetables
 - i) Non-root vegetables
 - ii) Root vegetables
- c) Fruit
- d) Vegan
- e) Pescatarian

- f) Paleo
- g) Vegetarian
- h) Gluten-free
- i) Dairy

13) What activities would you like to learn to complete:

- a) Composting
- b) Gardening
- c) Native Gardening
- d) Native Landscaping
- e) Solar Energy
- f) Religious Environmental Ethics
- g) Rain water harvesting

14) What religious texts do you associate with the environment? (open-ended)

15) How do you personally advocate for the environment? (open-ended)

16) Do you feel the next generation is going to have a healthy environment?

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

17) What would you like to see Dallas Interfaith Power & Light do to improve their environmental outreach? (open-ended)

Please answer the following demographic questions:

18) Age

- a) Under 20
- b) 20 – 29
- c) 30 – 39
- d) 40 – 49
- e) 50 – 59
- f) 60 – 69
- g) 70 – 79
- h) 80+

19) Gender

- a) Male
- b) Female

20) Ethnicity- check all that apply

1. Caucasian
2. African-American
3. Hispanic
4. Asian-American
5. Hindu
6. Latino
7. Other (please explain) _____

21) Country of Birth (open ended)

22) Employment status

1. Full time
2. Part time
3. Retired
4. Unemployed
5. Student
6. Homemaker
7. Other (please explain) _____

23) Educational background – please select your highest level of formal education

1. Less than high school
2. High school
3. Some college
4. Associates degree
5. Bachelor's degree
6. Master's degree
7. PhD
8. Trade school
9. Other (please explain) _____

24) Religious affiliation

- a) Baha'i
- b) Buddhist
- c) Christian
- d) Hindu
- e) Jain
- f) Judaism
- g) Muslim
- h) Other (please specify) _____

25) Political Affiliation

- a) Democrat
- b) Republican
- c) Independent
- d) Green
- e) Libertarian
- f) Tea Party
- g) None
- h) Other (Please specify) _____

26) What was your religious upbringing? (open-ended)

27) Income level:

- 1. < 12,000/year
- 2. 12,000 – 20,000/year
- 3. 21,000 – 35,000/year
- 4. 36,000-50,000/year
- 5. 51,000-75,000/year
- 6. 76,000 – 100,000/year
- 7. 100,000 – 120,000/year
- 8. > 120,000/year

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