



BILL MOYERS IN CONVERSATION WITH BILL MCKIBBEN

WELCOME TO DOOMSDAY

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(applause)

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: That was a sign to the congregation to calm down, I suppose. My name is Paul Holdengräber, and I'm the Director of Public Programs here at the New York Public Library, now known as LIVE from the New York Public Library. I'm delighted that we are cosponsoring this series with the Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers, and I would most warmly like to thank Jean Strouse for putting this event together with me. We've done a few events before and we'll continue in the future. We had one magnificent evening on "Eavesdropping," the very evening that Michael Hayden

was nominated. We're going to do an event in the spring with Ben Katchor, an opera in the Reading Room called *The Rosenbach Company*, so I encourage you all to join our e-mail list, so that you might know when it is happening. Anybody who joins the e-mail list tonight will get two free tickets.

I'm also delighted to be putting on this event with the *New York Review of Books*. As you know, the *New York Review of Books* matters greatly to us. We work very closely with it, and very closely with Bob Silvers, its editor, and so it's a great pleasure to be doing this with them. And as you also perhaps knows, Bill Moyers's new book *Welcome to Doomsday*, which has a preface by Bill McKibben, is published by the New York Review of Books Books and Mr. Moyers has agreed to sign his book after this event. I would to thank Jenny Hederman and Catherine Tice, who have helped me greatly put this event together very quickly. We did this in about two weeks. Rea Hederman, the editor of the *New York Review of Books*, will be in fact introducing Bill Moyers and Bill McKibben. We have a number of evenings coming up and I would like to encourage you to come to hear David Rockwell, Jan Morris, Alberto Manguel, Vartan Gregorian, Samantha Power with Kati Marton, and Bob, there's a lecture by Daniel Mendelsohn in honor of Bob Silvers which is on December 5, also cosponsored by the *New York Review of Books*.

Rea Hederman has been the publisher, not the editor, forgive me, of the *New York Review of Books* since 1984. He is also the director and member of the editorial board of *La Revista dei Libri*, an Italian-language publication published in Florence, and the former publisher of *Granta* magazine. Before coming to the *New York Review*, Hederman was

executive editor of the *Clarion-Ledger* in Jackson, Mississippi. During his tenure the newspaper won every major journalism award in America, including among others the Pulitzer Prize, the Robert Kennedy, and the George Polk Awards. It was a very nice profile I read this afternoon about Mr. Hederman in the *New York Observer* a couple of weeks ago, I encourage you to read it.

In closing, I would like to read one short paragraph of this most amazing book, *Welcome to Doomsday*. The title seems quite depressing, but I think the message is quite uplifting. I was saying to Mr. Moyers and Mr. McKibben in the green room that there are very—in my life I have met very few intelligent optimists **(laughter and applause)**. But I think if I read this paragraph to you, you'll see why I think that Mr. Moyers is one.

"I myself," he writes at the end of *Welcome To Doomsday*, "don't know how to be in this world without expecting a confident future and getting up every morning to do what I can to bring it about. I confess to having always been an optimist. Now, however, I remember my friend on Wall Street, whom I once asked, 'What do you think about the market?' 'I'm optimistic,' he answered. 'Then why do you look so worried?' **(laughter)** And he answered, 'Because I'm not sure my optimism is justified.'" **(laughter)** Rea Hederman.

(applause)

REA HEDERMAN: I'd like to thank Paul for all of the work that he's done in setting this up. This has been put together in two weeks, maybe three weeks at the most, so it's

an extraordinary job, and thank you for turning out in such large numbers to hear Bill Moyers and Bill McKibben, and of course we thank them as well, for taking the time to come and join us here this evening.

In August of 2002, it became clear to the editors of the *New York Review*, as well as to a number of the *New York Review* contributors, that war with Iraq was inevitable. Since then the *Review* has published literally hundreds of articles about the recklessness of the war, how incompetently it's been waged, and the consequences of the decisions and often equally disastrous decisions, made by the Bush administration, decisions that have affected our safety as well as the safety of our fellow citizens in the world. We felt these articles were of such importance that a number of them needed to be published in a more permanent format. The article—the latest article in the series of little books is Bill Moyers's *Welcome to Doomsday* with an introduction by Bill McKibben, as Paul mentioned earlier. The information in the article was so fresh, and so startling, that we felt it had to be a part of this series. In this book, Bill Moyers describes the serious threat to the environment from the religious right, a threat essentially allowed by this administration.

As a longtime participant in American political life, ever since he worked in the Lyndon Johnson White House, and as a lifelong observer of American religion, Bill Moyers was uniquely well equipped to explain how the true believers of the religious right support the war in Iraq on biblical grounds, and how they see environmentalism as hostile to God's purposes. And I'll quote from the book one sentence: "We are witnessing today a

coupling of ideology and theology that threatens our ability to meet the growing ecological crisis.” He and Bill McKibben will discuss these threats and others in just a few moments.

Bill Moyers has been everything—has been many things in his long and distinguished career. A broadcast journalist who’s won over thirty Emmys, nine Peabodys, and three George Polk awards. The publisher of *Newsday*, a founding organizer of the Peace Corps, special advisor to President Lyndon Johnson, a best-selling author, and, if Molly Ivins has her way, the Democratic nominee for the President. **(applause)** His new three-part CBS series, *Moyers on America*, will begin tomorrow evening. **(applause)**

Bill McKibben wrote *The End of Nature*, which was the first book for a general audience on the global warming. He wrote this in 1989, one year after his first contribution to the *New York Review*. The book was serialized in the *New Yorker*, where Bill was a staff writer, and it has since appeared in twenty-four languages. He’s written nine books since then and he has a forthcoming book, *Deep Economy*, which will appear in March. Bill and his wife Sue are both frequent contributors to the *New York Review*. I’ll turn it over to you. Thank you.

(applause)

BILL MOYERS: Thank you very much, Rea, for that introduction, and thank *you* for being here this evening and for that very warm welcome you gave to Bill McKibben and

to me. Bill McKibben and I are longtime soulmates, we are colleagues on the board of the Schuman Center for Media and Democracy. He helped open my eyes to the larger dimensions of the environmental crisis with *The End of Nature*, his major book of some years ago. He was featured in the four-part series that Judith Davidson Moyers, my partner and wife of fifty-two years, and I created on the Hudson River called *America's First River*, a few years ago, and Bill took us on a tour through the Adirondacks by canoe that became one of my favorite parts of that series, so it's a deep pleasure to be with Bill tonight.

We're simply going to have a conversation, in a few moments, after each of us talk about the compelling motive that brought us together on this issue. For me it is the power of *fantasy*, for me it is the migration of ideas and how in the twenty-first century we can be so deeply affected by ideas that are two hundred, two hundred and fifty, three hundred years old, which many people outside the frame of reference of fundamentalist religion never take seriously and never believe that anybody else takes seriously. But the fact of the matter is so much of what is happening today in America, both politically and environmentally, is *driven* by the reality of this fantasy as it is embraced by millions upon millions of American Christians.

I say this is about ideas in migration because the essence of what these present-day fundamentalists believe began with a nineteenth-century British preacher, evangelist, and crusader who was a very well educated gentleman. He was born in 1800, John Nelson Darby, born in 1800 in Westminster, London, which was a high-rent district of London in

that day. He was Westminster School and then attended and graduated from Trinity College in Dublin and there he was converted to Christianity. He was also the 1819 Gold Classical Medalist, which was the highest award for academic educational achievement you could reach at Trinity College in Dublin then and even though he never studied theology, he became one of the most powerful divines, one of the most powerful preachers in the rest of that century. He became a missionary to the Irish Catholics, which is something of a Sisyphus-type challenge, but he claimed credit later for converting hundreds of Roman Catholics.

He took several missionary trips to North America, all the way from Ontario through the Great Lakes region down to San Francisco and, like Johnny Appleseed in the classic story, he dropped his seeds of ideas, which became seeds in the minds of later people, and I'll come back to that in a moment. But somewhere in the course of a very good education, and in a serious study of religion, and he was quite a serious man, he came upon something he called the Secret Rapture. The Secret Rapture, as he developed the idea, was the theory that one day Jesus would come again and secretly sweep all of his true believers into Heaven and on into Eternity. This was an idea that caught hold in the circles where Darby worked and lived. He was apparently a very compelling man. His ideas and his persona could have a powerful impact upon those who heard him. He was also a very intelligent man, as I said, and quite well educated.

And it's an interesting phenomenon to me that while today so many of the people who hold these ideas are not well educated, the ideas themselves came out of a succession of

highly educated Romantic imaginers. The power of religion to shape the human imagination is something that we keep negating or marginalizing at our expense. In the series that we did this summer on faith and reason my first interview was with Salman Rushdie, and I asked him how a 100 percent atheist could spend so much of his time obsessed, as he himself acknowledged, with the question of God. And he said that as a writer, when he would go out on the streets in Bombay or Calcutta or New Delhi, he could not ignore the fact that five hundred gods sat on every shoulder he saw on the streets there, and he said religion is such a driving force in the human persona and therefore in human history, that a writer, a journalist, a politician, ignores religion at considerable peril.

Darby had this notion of the Secret Rapture. He studied history and he studied the Bible and he decided that the story of God and God's relations with human beings could be divided into seven dispensations from the time of creation until the end times, when the world would be swept away and the believers would join God in eternity. The Rapture itself was the one that triggered this incredible skein of events that would lead to Jesus's coming, then to the Apocalypse, and then to the battle of Armageddon, where the Antichrist would appear, with 666 on the sleeves of the Antichrist and his followers, and there would be a huge battle at a site in Israel, where I'm sure many of you have been, and it would be the consummation of human history. It's so fantastical you can hardly believe that it would take root. But it did. It took root among some of the followers of Darby and Darby's successor in this country after he visited Ontario and San Francisco.

One of them was an American, born in 1843, who served in the Seventeenth Tennessee Brigade in the Civil War. Went to Kansas after the war. Was a Republican, was elected to the state legislature and then became a judge. And his name was—I wrote down the first name, because I grew up knowing his name but didn't know he had a first name, that was the thing, because we always referred to the Scofield Bible. The *Scofield Reference Bible* became a best-seller in the American Midwest and the American South over the years. Cyrus Ingerson Scofield. He was a theologian, a minister, a writer, he was converted to Christianity in 1879 and he became pastor of the First Congregational Church of Dallas, Texas, where my wife was born and 150 miles from where I grew up. The church had fourteen members. He was such a charismatic and powerful man that it soon had five hundred members, and he became a leader in what we would call the forerunner of fundamentalist Christianity.

Somehow, he seized on Darby's ideas. Of course their lives were not parallel, they never met. But he seized on this idea and it provided a charismatic, compelling aura to his ministry. He founded the Philadelphia School of the Bible, came to New York and founded the New York Night School of the Bible. In 1909, Oxford University Press published *Scofield's Reference Bible*, which argued that between Creation and the Final Judgment there were, as Darby had taught, seven distinct eras, dispensations of God's dealing with humanity, and these eras were the framework around which the Bible could be understood and explained.

So here you have the migration of an idea from a well-born English divine to an intrepid American evangelist that became the seed of a Bible that became so popular—when Judith and I met, one of the first members of her extended family that she introduced me to was her grandfather, right? And he had a Scofield Bible and he lived by it. He was a scholar of that Scofield Bible. I grew up in a branch of the Christian faith that didn't recognize the Scofield Bible, looked askew at it, and didn't take it seriously. What I didn't know at the time is that so many hundreds of thousands and then millions of people *were* taking it seriously and that it would become the kernel of the fundamentalist story as it's played out in the last part of the twentieth century and the first part of the twenty-first century, where fundamentalists, *millions* of them, believe *literally* that there will be a Rapture, that it will lead to this Armageddon and this apocalypse and that if you so embrace the idea of the future dispensation, the consummation of life in God and in eternity, you don't have to pay much attention to the world as it is today.

We were filming for a documentary last fall. I went to a Biblical prophecy conference in Florida with one of my longtime veteran colleagues, and we filmed for a week, for a few days, at this Biblical prophecy conference. I cannot exaggerate the impression left on me by the number of middle-class people who came to this Biblical prophecy, including two women who drove up all the way from Miami, very intelligent, very winsome, very compelling women, who stood in the interview with me and said, one of them said, "The reason I drive a car with a"—what do you call it—"sunroof on it with the sunroof open is because I do believe in the Rapture, I do believe that Jesus is coming back and I will be taken up and I just want to make sure the skyroof, the sunroof is open." **(laughter)** What

is so difficult about this is how sincerely they believe it and how seriously they act on it. And I asked all of these people at this conference, “Do you take seriously the stewardship of the earth, do you take seriously our obligation?” “Well, we know we need to watch after it, but it doesn’t really matter.” And if you go through the fundamentalist literature, you see that there’s no reference to the environment, except as it will become part of the burnt earth that will happen at the time of the apocalypse.

Now, the best-selling nonfiction books in America today are the books under the series called *Left Behind* by Timothy LaHaye. Timothy LaHaye was the cofounder in 1980 with Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority. Timothy LaHaye became one of Ronald Reagan’s strongest backers and supporters on the Christian Right. He has gone on to be a very powerful member of the right-wing establishment in this country and the Christian Right. He founded an organization called the Center for National Policy, which is a very secretive organization of top right-wing politicians and theologians. They exert an enormous power over it. And Timothy LaHaye’s books are based upon an even more fantastical interpretation of this fantasy of Darby and Scofield that has been translated into these stories read by—well, at the last count I think 65 million copies of the *Left Behind* series have been sold.

So I’ll stop right here and ask how many of you have actually read any of the *Left Behind* series? Can I just see your hands? **(laughter)** This is revealing because it is so tempting to dismiss and ridicule these ideas, which *do* deserve to be ridiculed for their fantasy, but which are taken so seriously by people as to form the basis of today’s political religionate

in America. This little book came about because I was scheduled to make a speech at the Harvard Medical School's School of Public Health and Environment, here in New York. Meryl Streep and I were participating that evening. And I worked on this—I had been reading about some of Timothy LaHaye's books just to be acquainted with it, and I was seized with the imperative to share what I'd been reading with the folks who were attending the Harvard Medical School event here in New York. None of them believed me. They didn't believe me. And I asked them the same question that I asked you. "Have you read this?" And they haven't read this. This is one reason why we are bicoastal politics today, is because so many of us on both coasts do not appreciate the full extent to which these people hold to these views. I'm going to read you just a short description of what they believe, and then Bill and I will engage in a conversation about it. I'm not making this up, I say. **(laughter)**

The plot of the Rapture—the word never appears in the Bible, although some fantasists insist it is the hidden code to the Book of Revelation; it actually is more traceable to the Book of Thessalonians, the letter written to the Church in Thessylionis, where this imagination comes into play. Once Israel has occupied the rest of its biblical lands, legions of the Antichrist will attack it, triggering a final showdown in the Valley of Armageddon. As the Jews who have not been converted are *burned*, the Messiah will return for the Rapture. True believers will be transported to heaven, where, seated at the right hand of God, they will watch their political and religious opponents writhe in the misery of plagues, boils, sores, locusts, and frogs during the several years of tribulation.

I'm not making this up. On my weekly broadcast for PBS, we reported on these true believers, following some of them from Texas to the West Bank. They are sincere, polite, serious, as they tell you they feel called to help bring the Rapture on as fulfillment of biblical prophecy. To this end, they have declared solidarity with Israel and the Jewish settlements, and backed up their support with money and volunteers. For them, the invasion of Iraq was a warm-up act predicted in the Book of Revelation, where four angels bound in the great River Euphrates will be released to slay the third part of man. A war with Islam in the Middle East is not something to be feared, but welcomed, an essential conflagration on the road to redemption. The last time I Googled it, the Rapture Index stood at 144, approaching the critical threshold when the prophecy is fulfilled, the whole thing blows, the son of God returns, and the righteous enter paradise while sinners will be condemned to eternal hellfire.

What does this mean for public policy and the environment? Listen to John Hagee, pastor of the seventeen-thousand-member Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, who is quoted as saying—by the way, he is a very close advisor of Karl Rove and the Bush White House, talks to Rove rather regularly—“Mark it down, take it to heart, and comfort one another with these words: Doomsday is coming for the earth, for the nations, and for individuals, but those who have trusted in Jesus will not be present on earth to witness the dire time of tribulation.” You can sum up the message in five words: the world cannot be saved. It leads to appalling ethics because the faithful are relieved of concern for the environment, violence, and everything else, except their own personal salvation. The earth suffers the same fate as the unsaved. All are destroyed.

Drive across the country with your radio tuned in to some of the 1,600 Christian radio stations, or turn to some of the 250 Christian TV stations, and you can hear the gospel of the apocalypse in sermon and song. Or go as the *Toronto Star*'s Tom Harper did to the Florida Panhandle, where he came across an all-day conference at one of the largest Protestant churches he had ever seen, the Village Baptist Church in Destin. The theme of the day was Left Behind, a conference on biblical prophecy about end times, and among the speakers were none other than Tim LaHaye and two other leading voices in the religious right today. Here is what Harper wrote for his newspaper: "I have never heard so much venom and dangerous ignorance spouted before an utterly unquestioning, otherwise normal-looking crowd in my life. There were stunning statements about humans having been only six thousand years on earth and other denials of contemporary geology and biology, and we learn that the Rapture, which could happen any second now, but certainly within the next forty years, will instantly sweep all the saved Americans—perhaps one-half the population—to heaven. But these fantasies were harmless compared with the hatred against other religions. Here are some direct quotes: 'Islam is an intolerant religion and it's clear whose side we should be on in the Middle East.' Applause greeted these words. 'Allah and Jehovah are not the same God. Islam is a Satanic religion—they're going to going to attack Israel for sure.' Gary Frazier shouted at the top of his lungs 'Wake up! Wake up!' and roughly eight hundred heads at twenty-five dollars per went nodded approval as he went on to call for a war."

This is a reality in the minds of millions of people that are driving American politics today from the right out. And I said in this speech that the biggest change in politics in my lifetime, since I went to work for John F. Kennedy in 1960 is that the *delusional* is no longer *marginal*. It has come in to the center of power. And sits in the seats of the House, the Senate, and the White House. Tom DeLay is one of the great fundamentalist Rapturists of our time, quoting from this material all the time. This is the reality that we have to deal with. It is why, as a journalist, we come back again and again to this story. That's the origin of this very modest little book, that gratefully, I am, to the *New York Review of Books* for picking up the speech and publishing both first as an article and then as this book. So, Bill, can you do any better than that about making us feel good?

(laughter)

BILL MCKIBBEN: Not really, because the great irony of the way that this fantastical reading of Revelation has spread at the moment—the great irony of it is that for the first time in human history, we actually *do* face a doomsday scenario of sorts. You know, I've spent most of my career working on, among other things, on questions about global warming and climate change. When I started out doing this in the late 1980s, you know, this was still on the order of a hypothesis. I thought it was a strong one, and hence wrote *The End of Nature*, but it took awhile, five or six years, for science to really establish the contours of what we were facing. It's only in the last four or five years that we've understood that this is not necessarily going to be a kind of slow-motion century-or-two-long disaster, but one that may break on our heads much, much more quickly than that.

I'm not going to belabor the science. Most of you have seen the movie by this point, but suffice it to say that the scientists I've spent many years talking with, in the last eighteen months have a whole new note of panic in their voice. It's gone from concern to real alarm. Because of data on all kinds of things. Every—if you read *Science* or *Nature* every week, every study that comes back, the data is at the upper end or off the charts of what had been predicted. We learned a few weeks ago that the rate of methane release from the tundra of the North is five times what people had—computer models had projected. We know within the last year that the ice shelves over Greenland and the West Antarctic, which we had long believed were stable on a kind of century timescale, may in fact be eroding much, much more quickly than that, with the real possibility that we could see rises in sea level, in this century, not of two or three feet, which is the old projection and *plenty* bad enough, but of ten, twenty feet, or more, inundating coastal cities around the world and the projections for what go with that—well, you know, if it's not creating a hell on earth, then it's creating something of a similar temperature.

You know, the computer modeling indicates that at any given moment in fifty years, there may be a hundred and fifty million environmental refugees on the move around the world, far more people than refugees that were created by all of the wars of the bloody century we just came through. Disease—the World Health Organization estimates that dengue fever, a mosquito-borne disease, will be *the* emergent disease of this century, in fact, there's a terrific outbreak underway in Delhi this week, killing all kinds of people. On and on and on one could go. Suffice it to say that that in the amazing symbolism of

Revelation, there are those four white horses that emerge, you know, to run across the stage of history, and, traditionally, we've called them Famine, Pestilence, War, and Death. Well, these are precisely the horses we're unleashing as we burn more and more fossil fuel and release more and more carbon.

And the trouble is—and here's where I think this really becomes a deep problem—there's no way, in the U.S.—which produces, with the 4 percent of the world's population, produces 25 percent of the world's carbon—there's no way that we're going to be able to politically solve this problem in time without some kind of coalition or movement that includes large parts of organized Christianity in this country, so I think it becomes important for us to talk about what the *possibilities* are for carving out, from other branches of Christianity, some more creative response to the trouble that we're in, and I know that you have a TV show that will be on next week about some of the really interesting developments with evangelicals. I'd like to hear some about that, and I have a little bit to add, too.

BILL MOYERS: We have three documentary specials that Judith and I and our teams have done. The first one airs tomorrow night. It's on the four horsemen of the early Apocalypse, Abramoff, DeLay, **(laughter/applause)** Reed, and Rove. It's called "Capitol Crimes," it runs tomorrow night at nine o'clock on PBS. **(applause)** Check your local listings. But next week we take a look at a question called "Is God Green?" And we report on the growing phenomenon of a division within conservative evangelicals over global warming. Now, for years, progressive or liberal evangelicals, and there are a lot of

us, have been on the right side of the environment as we see it. I mean, this is the Jim Wallis school, this is the Paul Gorman school. Most of the time when I ask people, “Do you know what an evangelical is?” most people here say, “No, we don’t.” An evangelical has had a born-again experience, a personal experience as he or she would say, with Jesus. They take the Bible as the word of God and they believe that that has transformed their lives. Four out of five white evangelicals voted in 2004 for the reelection of George Bush although just fifteen years earlier, they had voted, one-third of them had voted for Bill Clinton.

William Jennings Bryan, known for the “cross of gold” speech in the Scopes Trial, was however a populist fervent progressive evangelical, whose preachings had a lot to do with the populist and then the progressive growth of ideas in this country back in the period between the Civil War and 1912. And progressive and liberal evangelicals have been concerned about the state of the environment for some time. But not so with the *conservative* evangelicals. That is changing, because despite the parallel worlds in which science on the one hand and fantasy or faith on the other hand collide over the issue of global warming, reality has intruded. Even Pat Robertson, who appears in our documentary, after he finished the documentary says that “It got so hot this summer that it almost made a convert out of me,” over global warming. And there is some evidence, as you will see in the documentary a week from tomorrow night, that conservative evangelicals, not the fundamentalists, not the people I’m talking about in this little essay, are waking up and hold out the promise of a nascent coalition.

But I got interested in doing this documentary because after the 2004 election, I read a letter to an environmental magazine from a pastor named Joel Gillespie in North Carolina. And Reverend Gillespie said, “I went into the voting booth and had an attack of agony, because I know that George W. Bush has the most horrendous record on the environment of any president of modern time,”—I’m paraphrasing here—but he said, “but I know he’s right on gay marriage, abortion, family values, and stem-cell research, and I didn’t know how to pull the lever, so I pulled the lever for George W. Bush, even though I knew his record on the environment is horrendous.” That’s the conflict between these believers that somehow has to be dealt with before there can be a sufficient movement on the part of a sufficient number of them—a strong enough movement on the part of a sufficient number of them—to join in a coalition. Because remember, George W. Bush has not been only opposed to the environment, he has set his face dead-set against *science*. And the great conflict that’s going on right now, the great thrust of this right-wing movement is to undermine the Enlightenment, to undermine reason, to undermine science, and no administration in my lifetime has been not only so *indifferent* to science but so *hostile* to science, to empirical evidence, whether it’s Iraq or New Orleans, or the toxins in the river and the heat in the atmosphere. I’m not as optimistic as Bill is that there can be an alignment sufficiently strong enough to confront the realities of global warming in time to spare us from *that* empirical, as opposed to this fantastical, Rapture.

BILL MCKIBBEN: You know you’re in trouble when the optimist on stage has written a book called *The End of Nature*. (laughter)

BILL MOYERS: And the other optimist has written *Welcome to Doomsday*. (laughter)

But there is something to be said for Gramsci, the Italian philosopher's, argument that he practiced the "pessimism of the intellect and the optimism of the will." And that's why I'm a journalist. I do believe that I have an obligation, as I know *you* do, to look around and describe the world as it is, and that makes you pessimistic. The data grow, the evidence mounts, the behavior aggravates, and you can be a pessimist looking at the empirical data, unless you then switch the other light on, and say, "I'm going to practice the optimism of the will and believe that"—as we used to believe in politics—"we could tackle these problems and do something about it."

BILL MCKIBBEN: And then you've got to find some sort of embers to blow on and see what happens, see if they can spread. One of the things that was—one of the few really hopeful in the last year, came in the spring of this year when eighty-six evangelical leaders signed a statement saying that they believed global warming was real and calling on Washington to take action against it. These included a lot of prominent people, including—here's another writer probably not many people in this room have read, a guy named Rick Warren, the author of a book called *The Purpose-Driven Life* that's been the—the Left Behind books are some of the biggest fiction sellers, but nothing's come close on the nonfiction list to *The Purpose-Driven Life* in recent years.

This was the first break, first political break of any kind between the social conservative wing of the sort of Republican monolith and the rest of it. Paul Gorman, of the National

Religious Partnership for the Environment, called it the sort of first act of the post-Bush era in a sense and it was—it took some courage to do that. The back-story behind it is kind of interesting, and it goes back to England. One of the leading climate scientists in the world is a man named Sir John Houghton, who led one of the scientific working groups of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, the international body that's responsible for our understanding of the science of global warming. He's not only a great scientist, he's also one of the leading evangelical Christians in Britain, where evangelical Christianity isn't a polarized political force in the same way it is in this country. So he was able, at a couple of retreats in the last few years, to sit down with a number of these evangelical leaders and really be heard by them. And the fact that they were willing to sign on to this, and it was a *big* step outside their comfort zone to take on the president and the administration in any way, I think is a reasonably good sign.

BILL MOYERS: It is, Bill, but here's the back-story to your back-story, (**laughter**) and you'll see this in the documentary. These eighty-six evangelicals decided to break ranks with their more conservative brethren, they're all conservative theologically. They decided to break ranks and sign this statement calling on the government and all of us to take action on global warming, but two weeks before they issued that statement, orchestrated by the White House, they received a letter signed by some of the prominent political leaders in the evangelical movement—Chuck Colson, of Watergate fame, who is very active on the religious right, Richard Land, who's the political czar of the Southern Baptist Convention—the largest Protestant denomination in America with seventeen million members. They've turned the pews of the Southern Baptist Convention, where

Judith and I grew up, into precincts of the Republican Party. And a host of—and James Dobson, head of Focus on the Family—they sent a letter to the National Evangelical Association, of which these eighty-six dissidents belong—to which they belong—and they said to them, you know, there is no consensus on the science, and don't sign a letter, don't take a position. Well, the National Evangelical Association backed down, and these eighty-six individuals, including Rick Warren, who has the largest church in America, eighty thousand members in California, whose book has sold twenty-five million copies on *The Purpose-Driven Life*, went ahead and took a stand. That *is* encouraging, but they have been threatened, and intimidated, and if they persist there will be some kind of retaliation, particularly in the last two years of the administration.

The other big change in politics in my lifetime other than the delusional becoming no longer—the delusional moving in from the marginal, is the rise of *political* religion, religion used as a *weapon*. And that weapon can be fiercely aimed at your own kind if you break ranks with the rigid orthodoxy of the corporate, political, and religious right. So you're right, you will see Sir John Houghton—who called that conference at Oxford, who is a leading evangelical scientist, and headed the British Meteorological Service for many years, teaches at Oxford, just recently got one of the rare honorary degrees from Oxford—you'll see him in our film, but what you don't see is the behind-the-scenes battle that is going on to make sure that the hierarchy, the leaders of the evangelical community, stay on-line when it comes to the position of the administration.

BILL MCKIBBEN: I think what we're saying is that this battle going on within conservative American Christendom has a—the stakes are enormously high. They are high in part because I don't think—I think it's very difficult to imagine any kind of environmental movement in this country that gets the size of change that we need in the time that we need. Remember, James Hansen, the NASA climatologist who will win the Nobel Prize before long and is our greatest climate scientist, when he was able to buck the federal government's gag order last year, said we have ten years, and now it's *nine* years, to reverse the flow of carbon into the atmosphere or we will live on a totally different planet.

Well, if we're going to accomplish anything *like* that in that period of time, it's going to require a movement of at *least* the size and power and scope of the civil rights movement, something with the same kind of—not just technological change, not just policy change, the same kind of moral urgency, and churches and synagogues and mosques, for all their flaws, remain—are one of the very few institutions left in our society that, at their best, can posit some reason other than, you know, material gain for human existence and hence they have a big role to play if we can mobilize.

BILL MOYERS: But remember that these very churches we're talking about, not the liberals and progressives, were the churches that set out the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s and were when I was in the White House working on the Civil Rights Act of '64, the Voting Rights Act of '65 and the Civil Rights Acts of '66 were among our strongest opponents of passing those bills, and in fact, the day after we passed the Civil

Rights—that LBJ signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 there was a large moment, the week after, a large movement of the pastors of these churches to take children out of the public schools in the South and start parochial schools. What I’m saying is that they are so *fiercely* relentless in pursuing their theology and their ideology that I don’t *see* the hope that you see for an alliance. I’ve found that you can’t argue with these people—you can listen to them. You have really good times with some of them. Filming in the biblical prophecy, I mean, these were decent, nice people, it’s when they come to their views—

BILL MCKIBBEN: There’s no way to get the percentage of Christians who are hardcore fundamentalist believers in the Rapture—they’re off on their own trip and that’s—but that leaves still the majority even of evangelical Christians in play, in this scenario, and we *have* to figure out ways to get them. One of the problems is that for most American Christians, as for most Americans, it’s not that they’re so—it’s not that they’re too different from the rest of our culture, it’s that in many ways, they’re too *similar* to the rest of our culture.

BILL MOYERS: What do you mean?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Well, there’s an evangelical pollster, guy named George Barna, who does a series of polls every year designed to test biblical literacy among Christians, and like all polls that ask anybody any questions, the results are always depressing.

(laughter) Only 50 percent of people can name any one of the Gospels, 12 percents of Americans are firm in their belief that Joan of Arc was Noah’s wife **(laughter)**, you

know, things like that. But the depressing finding is this: 75 percent of American Christians believe that the phrase “God helps those who help themselves” comes from the Bible, you know, instead of from that paragon of American individualist vigor, Ben Franklin. And one of the tasks for figuring out how we’re going to deal with the first civilization-scale challenge that human beings have ever faced, which is what climate change is, one of the battles that’s going to be fought in this country is whether that view of the world—the, you know, “It’s all about me, I’m the center of the world,” sort of, “God helps those who helps themselves”—whether *that* view is going to win out or whether the Gospel message that the imperative is to love one’s neighbor as oneself will carry the day, and the stakes are very high in that theological dispute, and I guess I’m guilty of—out of the despair of twenty years of thinking about climate change and working on it, looking for shards of possibility, and I think that there is, you know, that the fact that among those eighty-six evangelicals who signed that list, were the heads of most of the seminaries in the evangelical movement. You know, there are—I was out the last few weeks speaking at a lot of schools, pretty conservative seminaries in the South and in the Midwest, it’s not that people were all jumping up and down to hear what I had to say, but five years ago wouldn’t have gotten in the front door. And they’re beginning, I think, to realize that there are deep theological issues at play here.

BILL MOYERS: I concede that. I also am quick to acknowledge that it isn’t just these millions of fundamentalists who are responsible for our benign neglect or hostile opposition to changing our behavior to meet global warming. How do you explain the fact that you wrote a seminal book, *The End of Nature*, which should have led so many

people to become born-again believers in the threat to the environment, and yet that advice went unheeded, and has gone unheeded for so long. I mean, we Americans seem to be struggling with a difficult challenge of acting on empirical evidence, and that's very troubling. I grew up in the South. We drove the truth about slavery out of the pulpit, out of the classroom, out of the newsroom, and it took a bloody civil war to drive the truth home. I served in the Johnson Administration, where we circled the wagons and mocked the reporting of the David Halberstams and the Morley Safers on Vietnam. This denial that is real in the bosom of American consumerism is not just applicable, is it, to the right-wing Christians?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Not at all. This is a lesson that, this is a question that we're going to have to—the idea that we're going to have to change our habits and economies in significant ways is a notion that almost nobody really wants to hear. And in fact, you know, secular consumer society resists it at least as adamantly as anyone else. In a sense it's almost easier to imagine, you know, deeply committed religious believers of whatever faith who got behind—who understood this question—it's almost easier to imagine them making these kind of changes. Say what you will about fundamentalists or Southern Baptists or—once they decide to do something, they generally *do* it as opposed to, you know, those of us in the more liberal world who are *excellent* about announcing our good intentions and not so good about following through on them.

(applause)

BILL MOYERS: But there is something very powerful, by the way, there is something very powerful and *real* in the evangelical experience when they talk about their born-again conversion. I have seen lives literally changed by that born-again experience. I disagree with almost every public policy espoused by George W. Bush, but I acknowledge, because I come out of that culture and recognize change when it is real, that his experience as he describes it, of a born-again experience, was responsible for *his* coming to terms with alcoholism. There is—actually—Americans should appreciate this because America is the place of second chances and the fact that these people have a perception on the ability of a spiritual experience to turn you around in the direction you're heading on should be *encouraging* to us as we try to look at ways to be born again ourselves on the issue of our transgressions against the environment, our pollution of our rivers, the congestion of our highways, and all of the other evident, obvious wreckage that we are inflicting on the environment. And I think born-again people have something to offer us there.

You'll see in the first act of our broadcast a week from tomorrow night, "Is God Green?" Marvelous story of a rancher and pastor at the Boise Vineyard Church in Boise, Idaho. In every respect he is a Western conservative, he is a Republican, he is opposed to abortion—is something wrong with the mike?

BILL MCKIBBEN: Here, put on this one.

BILL MOYERS: Can you hear me now? I was saying that in the first act of the broadcast next week, a week from tomorrow night, there's a marvelous story of a conservative evangelical pastor who's also a rancher in Boise, Idaho, who came to believe that he needed to challenge his congregation on the issue of the environment. He'd never preached on it from the pulpit in his life. He spent hours, days, even weeks, studying the scripture, he prayed, he meditated, and he came to the conviction that he had to call his congregation to act, to be born again, this time as green. They were. Within a week after that sermon—we have that sermon, part of that sermon, in the film—within a week after that sermon, his members of the church were out doing practical—taking practical steps in Boise to deal with the environment.

You'll see some evangelical Christians in West Virginia, who formed an organization called Christians for the Mountains, who are opposing the powerful forces in West Virginia on coal mining, and mountaintop mining, which is ruining their rivers, their hollows, and their lives, not to mention their health, in West Virginia. So, I do recognize, Bill—I recognized it growing up. I grew up in a marvelous Baptist church, the Central Baptist Church in Marshall, Texas. I learned about democracy there—everyone was equal. I learned about the priesthood of the believers there—that we didn't need an intermediary to—for spiritual experience. In fact one of the things I admire about John Nelson Darby—by the way, the Nelson was after their close family friend, Lord Nelson—but Darby, who thought it was a sin, that the whole notion of being a clergyman was a sin because it meant that God only spoke to—through his chosen—through God's

chosen agents with the cloth on. There is something very powerful about the capacity of evangelicals to change their direction, so I do think there is something hopeful there.

BILL MCKIBBEN: Bill, we don't disagree about any of this. We've done our best to disagree, to manufacture a tiny bit of excitement for you all **(laughter)** but I think maybe now might be a good time to see if there were some questions or comments or things from out in the audience, and I think, Paul, is it true that there are microphones someplace for people to use, maybe microphones that work a little better than the ones we are employing here? Here they come, there's a microphone right here, so if people would like to ask a question, that'd be the place to ask it from, I guess.

BILL MOYERS: If you want to confess your sins, you can do that, too.

(laughter)

Q: Two things—one of the reasons for the opposition of conservatives to environmental issues and global warming is because of the association of Al Gore with that topic, and you know, and would you support Al Gore if he ran for president?

(laughter)

BILL MOYERS: I didn't understand the first part of the question—the sound was dipping.

Q: I feel that one of the reasons why the right is so opposed to the concept of global warming is because it's Al Gore's issue, and he's popularized it, and he's a highly partisan figure to those people, and I think that's why they oppose it. And then, do you think that Al Gore, who has been gaining a lot of prominence recently with his book and his movie. Would you support him if he ran for president?

BILL MOYERS: I think Al Gore would make a terrific president, I really do.

(applause) Because he would arrive in the White House immersed in all that we're talking about. He would not have to be tutored; he would not have to be educated in what the office is. I also think he's a smart man who understands the importance of empirical evidence in the shaping of public policy. They have demonized him, and I'm sure that's one reason that—I don't think they oppose doing something about global warming *because* of Al Gore, but because he is so conspicuous an apostle, if you will, of doing something about it, they close him out. They don't listen to him.

In fact, you'll see in our documentary a week from Wednesday, one of my most interesting interviews in a long time is with E. Calvin Beisner, who's the theologian who's become the official spokesman for the right-wing evangelicals who oppose global warming. And today he issued a statement, he was quoted in a story issued by the Associated Press. Attacking the science of movies, meaning *An Inconvenient Truth*. He said, "How can people get their science from movies?" meaning Al Gore's *Inconvenient Truth*. So they have been very successful in discrediting the mainstream media,

discrediting liberals and progressives, and discrediting anyone who is opposed to their worldview. So I think that is an issue in Al Gore's failure to reach his own southern people with that case.

Q: This is a fairly terrifying scenario and I don't mean to demonize, but I was curious if there is any threat that you've come across in your conversations that implicates that the right that you're talking about would make political, religious, corporate decisions to further destabilize the environment and to put into motion a series of events that frankly would help to support a doomsday actually unfolding.

BILL MOYERS: I can't imagine anyone—I mean, there is, there is a chord of this theology which welcomes as I say in the little essay, that welcomes doomsday because it is the culmination of biblical prophecy and the fulfillment of their expectations for eternal life. In this interview with Calvin Beisner, the Reformed Presbyterian theologian, I say to him, "What does it mean to you to be an evangelical?" And he says, "I believe that I will be saved and be at the right hand of God for all eternity." And later on, I come back and say to him, "Well, what happens to the—what happens if you're wrong about global warming?" And he says, "Well, I've been wrong before, and I'll be wrong this time, I might be wrong this time." And I say, "But you will be rewarded in heaven?" He said, "Well, yes, and so will anybody else who wants to believe."

I mean, there is—I don't think they would take steps. I don't know any of them who would take steps to trigger those events. I know many of them who believe that the

events they are participating in, particularly with the conflict in the Middle East between Israel and the Arabs, is a biblically prophesized event that they would not resist, because it means—it's a sign of the times. It means that the biblical prophecy is about to be fulfilled. So it's not what they do overtly, it's what they *fail* to do, that encourages the doomsday scenario.

Yes?

Q: It is my accent that will make it difficult. Thank you. You know, you are optimist or you are pessimist with the warming. The warming, of course, is one of the results of this tremendous mechanical scientific progress. Now, let me start my question with the old story that Eve and Adam ate the apple of knowledge. Why they call it the apple of knowledge? Did they mean all this playing God, all the scientific—mechanical, scientific—progress will lose the Paradise? Do you believe that we can really reverse all this artificiality in our life? This and that and the other so we will save this planet? I cannot see how this can happen—and I'm finishing—

BILL MOYERS: I would like to direct that question to Bill. The question as I heard it, is can these trends be reversed? And nature is itself a very resilient phenomenon, and I'd rather have Bill address that.

BILL MCKIBBEN: The problem at the moment is that we seem to be very near a set of physical thresholds past which reversal is difficult: i.e., that at the moment we're driving

change in the climate because we're pouring carbon into the atmosphere and the molecular structure of that carbon traps heat that would otherwise radiate back out to space. Past a certain point, that begins to trigger sets of positive feedbacks from the environment itself that are, at least on human timescales, impossible to reverse. So, for instance, the last two winters, Arctic sea ice has failed to fully re-form. Indeed, the water in the Arctic Ocean has gotten warm enough that it's now melting ice even during the winter. One result of that is that we always had this beautiful white cap across the North that reflected about 90 percent of the sun's rays back out to space as they came in. When you melt that, and replace it with blue water, that blue water absorbs about 90 percent of the sun's rays as they come in, amping up, positively feeding back in this reaction, and there's five or six of these major positive feedbacks that are emerging and they're emerging more quickly and in greater magnitude than before.

Which is why Hanson, a cautious man and a very careful scientist, is talking, in fact did a wonderful piece in the *New York Review of Books* earlier this year, about the fact that we need this—we have ten years in which to make such a thorough transformation around the world that the amount of fossil fuels that we're using begins to decline instead of continuing to increase. For that to happen, we have—it's a stretch, at best—we have some of the technology available now. We're beginning to understand much better things like wind power and solar power, energy conservation techniques, things like that. But if it's going to happen in time, it's going to require, as I said before, a tremendous movement that generates powerful legislation out of our Congress and then leads it around the world, and the most important part of that legislation, and the reason it will be

so difficult, is that we'll need very quickly to raise the cost of burning fossil fuels. Carbon will have to become expensive.

Now, the only reason to hold out any particular hope that we might do it is the odd one that we haven't really *tried* yet to see if this movement might be possible. A few of us in Vermont, where I live, organized this summer a five-day march across the state of Vermont, about fifty miles, drawing people in from around the state as we went. By the time we got to Burlington, we had a thousand people walking. That, believe it or not, was the largest demonstration yet in this country about climate change. It was enough to turn the political tide—even our very conservative Republican candidates for federal office signed on, as a result of that, to extremely ambitious global-warming legislation.

It makes me think—Vermont is obviously not the United States—**(laughter)** but it makes me think that it's possible, at least, definitely we should be—the global warming idea has existed. We have all the analysis, we have all the economists, we have all the science.

The only part of the movement that we haven't had is the *movement*, you know.

(laughter) Any attempt to really get people mobilized around it, and that's one of the reasons that, you know, we're reaching out to young people, we're reaching out to religious people, we're reaching out to every group that we can think of, because her question is so correct—that the difficulty of this turnaround makes every other feat that human beings have tried to pull off in the past pale by comparison.

BILL MOYERS: Movements shape politics. I come back to politics. Movements shape politics. The Civil Rights Acts of '64, '65, and '66 would not have passed if there'd not been a long train of suffering, sacrifice, and challenge on the part of southern blacks to the injustices of segregation. Lyndon Johnson was—I was in the room when Lyndon Johnson received Martin Luther King. He was trying to talk Martin Luther King out of conducting marches in the South because he said, "Give me time and I will bring the southern senators around and we will pass this legislation," and King said, "We don't have time for you to persuade them," and King talked long enough that when LBJ walked him to the door, he put his arm around him and said, "Dr. King go out there and make it possible for me to do the right thing," in other words, build a movement that makes it possible for the president to pass these acts.

I think we need a movement. Culture doesn't change politics as much as human behavior, and politics responds when there is a movement. The conservatives have shown that. They set out in 1964, after they had been roundly defeated by the Democrats in that election—Johnson got the greatest plurality ever, then. Within nineteen days Bill Buckley met with a group of very wealthy philanthropists, right-wing philanthropists, I believe in Oklahoma City, and they talked about starting a movement—that the election would not mean the end of the campaign but the beginning of a movement. And twenty-five years later, they had ascended to dominant power in this country. I happen to think that all they have is power now, I think they're morally and intellectually bankrupt—that's what happens in one-party states. **(applause)** But they have shown the value of politics, and one of the best books in this series from the *New York Review of Books* is by our

colleague Garry Wills—what’s the name of it, Rea?—it’s called *Fringe Government* and it shows how in policy after policy after policy the Bush administration is a radical government representing a small minority of voters, relatively, but that they seized the levers of power, and in this Tom DeLay was brilliant at how to seize the levers of power and use it to enforce their agenda, even though that agenda represented only a minority of American opinion.

What we need—I get discouraged because so many people as I travel around the country seem to have become depoliticized—they seem to no longer see themselves as moral and political agents of change, so that on the non-conservative side there isn’t any evidence of a movement that will turn—you know, you don’t solve policy until you solve politics. We’re lacking in a movement that is sustained. I saw this week that George Soros has said, “I’m giving up on politics and I’m going to go give my money to policy.” Well, George, that’s a mistake, because until you get the politics right, you *cannot* get the policy right, and you cannot get the politics right until this country is streaked with the kind of marches that Bill and these young people in Vermont staged recently on global warming. We talked today about how do you do that nationwide, because if we don’t have a movement *soon*, it won’t matter what the religious right does or the evangelicals or even the scientists—we will have passed the tipping point that Bill articulates so astutely and so accurately, in my judgment, and then we will all be depoliticized, dehumanized, and everything else that comes with that state of affairs.

(applause)

Yes?

Q: It seems to me that throughout everything you've said tonight there's an implicit argument about the relationship between, to put it crudely, the religious right wing of the Republican Party and the big-business wing of the Republican Party, and I'd like to ask you to make that argument a little bit more explicit in terms of what the relationship between those two wings is and what you expect to see happen if some of the religious right folks start voting green and start organizing green in terms of how the leadership of the Republican Party will operate to bring them back into the fold and what the real prognosis is for the opportunities for breaking them off.

BILL MOYERS: You will hear in the documentary a week from Wednesday night a reporter for the *Idaho Statesman* in Boise say that if these—if this church, Boise Vineyard Church, if enough of them around the state begin to vote on the environment the way they've voted on abortion and gun control, and issues like that, it could change, radically—it could alter Idaho politics. I think that is exactly why the political leaders of the religious right came after the National Association of Evangelicals in advance of their statement, because they *knew* once this erosion starts, it's hard to stop it, because I think they know that their control is waning. So I think that even if it made a shift of 10 to 12 to 15 percent in an election like 2004 or a close district congressional race, it could be a deciding factor.

There is no question about the fact that twenty-five years ago the corporate, political, and religious right for different interests and different reasons formed a coalition. With the corporations funding the American—the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, the Cato Foundation and all of these think tanks that started pushing policies that would benefit the corporate world. The political right saw this as a means of power, the religious right saw it as a means of changing “moral values,” and that triumvirate, that trilogy of power, over the last twenty-five years has been one of the most powerful amalgams in American political history. As I say, it *only* has power now, they’re morally and intellectually bankrupt. But they still—I’m not as sanguine as some people are about what will happen in November, because that infrastructure of power is still so strong. The most important book on that recently is a new book by Thomas Edsel, of the *Washington Post*, who’s covered issues of economic inequality and civil rights for a number of years, it’s called *Building Red America*, and he marches you right through how the corporate, political, and religious right put together this incredible coalition that achieved one-party government in Washington over the last twenty-five years.

BILL MCKIBBEN: But that unholy alliance is what somehow has to be taken down, and part of it just involves all the issues that you’ve worked so hard on over the years about economic populism and things. One of the really interesting evangelical leaders, a guy named Cal DeWitt, who started something called the Evangelical Environmental Network, I was talking to him a few weeks ago about this and he said, “We’ve really got to start talking seriously about what, you know, we talk all the time about ‘sin’ in our churches and things. Sin is Exxon-Mobil spending millions upon millions of dollars to

confuse people about the environment.” Well, if that’s—if we can figure out—how to—I mean, as troublesome as you know the religious right and whatever is, the real enemy in this fight and in this country are the Exxon-Mobils of the world (**applause**) and figuring out how to unite people in that understanding has been so much at the core of so much of the good work you’ve been doing, and let’s hope it—*something* shows up this November.

BILL MOYERS: Yes, sir, and Paul, you tell us when you have to close the Library.

(laughter)

Q: I was wondering if maybe part of the problem with creating a movement is that not that many people really feel actually physically affected by global warming, it’s not as if we walk out of our house and go, “Gee, this is horrible,” I mean, it might be a little warm—but doesn’t it need to get to the point maybe—I think the governor of Alaska had a group of governors up to his state because he was concerned about tourism, so isn’t the effect, once it starts to effect people both economically and personally that they will begin to think, “Well, gee, maybe there’s a point to all of this.”

BILL MCKIBBEN: One of the things that makes global warming difficult is that there’s a lag time between when you’re creating the problem and when the problem fully manifests itself. If we wait until the point when it’s entirely obvious to everyone every day of their lives what’s going on, then it will be—we will have waited—put so much carbon in the atmosphere it won’t be worth even thinking about it. It is becoming obvious

more and more and more and Hurricane Katrina did a good job of beginning to open our eyes to this problem. One of the good things to remember about political movements, and Bill, who has more political history than I do, can tell me if I'm right or wrong, is that it doesn't take 51 percent of people getting upset and vigorous and vocal and out in the streets about something to take change. It takes 5 or 10 percent of people caring really deeply about something, enough to do something about it, to really effect political change. I think we're reasonably close to that. I think that the failure of the environmental movement around global warming is not to give anyone anything to do about it, not to act. When we started asking people, "Are you willing to walk fifty miles?" we had hundreds of people. Everybody we asked said, "Yes, I'm there, sign me up, and who else can I tell?" and it was quite moving. And it makes me think that there's at least the possibility that we may be on the edge of something better.

BILL MOYERS: And your question inspires me to remember there is a powerful role here for writers—which is why it's so appropriate we're at the New York Public Library—journalists, politicians, and preachers, like Tri Robinson, who's the minister of this church in Boise that I told you about and you will see in the documentary and that is the power of the moral imagination to awaken people who cannot see what the world is like on their own.