

Arguing on thin ice
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STS300 Essay

Student Number: 3101137

Environmental problem: Climate Change in the Arctic

Environmental Principle: Equity

Theories and characters:

- Christianity: The Pope
- Atheism: Death

Arguing on thin ice

Death¹ taps the lifetimer impatiently as the last few grains of sand spiral into the bottom of the hourglass chamber. Silently, in one sweeping motion he brings his scythe up and around in arc and directs the thin blade down through the blue thread connecting the body to the soul in front of him. There is a sudden commotion and the ghost of the late Pope² jumps up and throws himself down in front of the hooded figure, in a well rehearsed fashion. Slow realization dawns on the Pope, and his eyes travel from the tapping skeletal toe, up 7 feet of black robe, and finally to the two blue globes of fire residing in the eye sockets of a well polished skull.

Pope: (*shakily*) ...GGod???

Death: NOT QUITE...SORRY DID THE LACK OF VIRGINS GIVE IT AWAY? NO, DAMN, THAT'S ISLAM ISNT IT³...IM ALWAYS GETTING CONFUSED WITH THESE THINGS, IT SEEMS THAT YOU HUMANS

¹ Death is an anthropomorphic personification featured in all but one of Terry Pratchett's Discworld series. He is the "Ultimate Reality", and is not cruel, just exceptionally good at his job which is to cut the souls of humans from their bodies. His voice is felt rather than heard and he smells of the air in old forgotten rooms. (Pratchett and Briggs, 2003).

² According to Levillain and O'Malley (2002) the Pope is the spiritual leader of the Roman Catholic Church who is believed by Catholics to be the Vicar of Christ. He is the sole patriarch to the Western Church and has supreme authority to decide on all questions of faith and morals. The Pope is also head of state of the independent city-state Vatican City.

³ It is a belief of Islam that martyrs will be greeted in heaven by 72 black eyed virgins as described in Overall (2006)

HAVE AN EXTRAORDINARY KNACK FOR FABRICATING⁴ NEW RELIGIONS... FORGIVE ME, SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO KEEP UP WITH THE TIMES.

Pope: (*hysterical and stuttering*) fffabricating...vvvirgins...no...no NO! Alas how could this be? Jesus died for my sins on the cross! He promised that, "He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live again"⁵.

Death: WELL THAT WAS A BIT OF A BIG THING TO PROMISE DON'T YOU THINK? MAYBE IT GOT LOST IN TRANSLATION⁶.

Pope: (*Shaking his head violently*) Do you know who I am?

Death holds up the lifetimer and squints at the plaque

Death: IT SAYS HERE THAT YOU ARE THE ELECTED VICAR OF CHRIST.

Pope: Yes exactly! I demand you take me to God! (*Pausing*) What are you anyway?

Death: LET'S JUST SAY I'M THE ULTIMATE REALITY.

The Pope goes to speak but Death holds up a skeletal finger and tilts his head to the side, listening to something that the Pope cannot see. The Pope falls silent looking too shocked to speak. The air in the room shimmers and thickens.

Death: (*reproachfully*) DAMN, NOT AGAIN, (*turning to look down at the Pope*) YOU WILL HAVE TO COME WITH ME. I HAVE BEEN EXTRAORDINARILY BUSY IN THE ARTIC⁷ LATELY.

Pope: (*looking scared*) the Arctic? But why?

⁴ Atheists are either skeptical about the existence of God ("weak atheists) or reject the existence of God ("Strong atheists"), and are lacking faith or are indifferent to religion. (Poidevin, 1996).

⁵ This is Jesus' promise of afterlife in John 11:25 of the bible, which is a major tenant of Christianity.

⁶ Quotes in the bible are open to interpretation, and have been interpreted differently by different scholars and believers. This stems from the fact that the bible has been transcribed, interpreted, re-interpreted and re-written many times. The bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, and has been translated first into Latin and then on into English (and many other languages around the world). The fact that both Catholics and Protestants, who both call themselves Christians, follow different versions of the Bible is an example of the level of debate within the Bible.

⁷ According to the WWF the Arctic is expected to experience the most dramatic changes as a result of climate change, and at the same time undergo more rapid warming than any other biome on earth. (Sommerkorn, 2008). The Arctic has already experienced a 20% decrease in sea ice extent, and air temperatures in the region have on average increased by 5° over the past 100 years. (Flannery, 2005).

Death: IT SEEMS THAT YOU HUMANS ARE SO INTENT ON MANUFACTURING THE IDEA OF AFTERLIVES THAT YOU HAVE NEGLECTED THE LIFE THAT YOU HAVE ON EARTH⁸. GLOBAL WARMING HAS CAUSED ME TO BE OVERWORKED, I'M CONSIDERING GOING ON STRIKE. I HAVE EVEN HAD TO TAKE ON HIRED HELP WHICH IS EXTREMELY HARD TO COME BY IN MY LINE OF WORK. IF YOU HUMANS KEEP IT UP IM GUESSING I WILL HAVE TO CUT GAIAS⁹ LIFE LINE AS WELL AND THEN YOU WILL BE IN TROUBLE. (*Muttering to himself*) HUMANITY INTRIGUES ME. MANKIND HAS AN EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY TO COMPLICATE EXISTENCE. (*Turning to look at the Pope who is still standing there speechless*) COME ON SHAKE A LEG.

Death wraps a bony hand around the bewildered Pope's wrist and walks towards the wall, stepping through it on to the cold vast surface of permafrost¹⁰, glistening under a never setting sun¹¹. To the Pope it seems like another world, he turns around in circles gazing at the jagged peaks, frozen seas and glaciers that make up the largest and least fragmented of the inhabited¹² regions on Earth¹³. Across the ice and snow a man approaches on a sled drawn by a team of Husky dogs¹⁴. Suddenly the sled hits a thin patch of ice¹⁵. With a yell the man and the dogs fight to regain firm ground but the weight of the sled pulls them down into a deep abyss of the black water. Death swings. Startled the Pope looks down to see the Inuit¹⁶ man sitting next to him in the snow.

Death: AHH GOOD AFTERNOON TALIRIKTUG¹⁷. UNFORTUNATELY YOUR TIME HAS COME.

⁸ Some Christians believe that life on Earth is just a stepping stone to reach God in heaven, and that the human soul is somehow detached from earth. Attfeld (1983). It is atheist belief that life is about pursuing goals that give meaning to life on Earth. They don't wish for eternal life, rather, they try and make their lives count by having an influence on other people who will live on. (Mathew, 1997;Nielsen, 1985)

⁹ James Lovelock created the "Gaia theory" that states that the Earth is a living and self-regulating "superorganism" that struggles to maintain equilibrium (Lovelock, 1998). The inappropriate use of technology is causing Gaia to grow weak. Lovelock proposes that Gaia will with either fight back, or die (Lovelock, 2006).

¹⁰ Geologically speaking permafrost is soil at below freezing point for more than two years. (Cone, 2005).

¹¹ Due to the high latitude of the Arctic it is subject to extreme hours of summer daylight and winter darkness. (Fairbanks, 2007)

¹² Approximately, 4 million people inhabit the Arctic (Flannery, 2005).

¹³ WWF (2007).

¹⁴ The Inuit use Husky dogs for transport (Bonvillain, 1995).

¹⁵ According to Calamai (2008) there has been a widespread reduction in sea ice thickness of 40 per cent since 1960, and last year only 13% of the new ice layer survived the melt.

¹⁶ The Inuit people are the indigenous inhabitants of the Arctic region. Outsiders know the Inuit as "Eskimo". (Cone, 2005).

¹⁷ Traditional Inuit name meaning "strong arm". (Brown, 2002)

Taliriktug Inuit: (*nodding and sadly looking back at the hole in the ice in which he had fallen*)
That hunting track has been a traditional route of my ancestors for centuries. I can no longer predict the weather patterns of this environment, and the look and feel of the land is different¹⁸.

Taliriktug pokes at the thin ice with his transparent finger. The Pope bends down to comfort him, apparently forgetting the strangeness of the situation.

Pope: What do you mean my friend?

Taliriktug Inuit: Global warming¹⁹ has melted the shores, draining all the freshwater and fish. The animals are dying and we can no longer hunt our beloved Caribou²⁰.

The Inuit looks up at the Pope with a forlorn look in his eyes.

Taliriktug Inuit: Where is the equity²¹?

Pope: (*looking confused*) Excuse me?

Taliriktug Inuit: We have lived in harmony with our surroundings for millennia, but now your western pollution is taking away our ability to do so²². In your society you hardly notice the

¹⁸For years Inuit hunters and elders have reported changes to the Arctic environment. Many experienced hunters have been lost falling through ice in areas that traditionally were safe. It is now dangerous for the Inuit to get to many of their traditional hunting and harvesting places. (Johansen, 2006)

¹⁹ Global warming is the increase in the average temperature of the Earth's near surface and oceans. The greenhouse effect, that traps infrared radiation from the Earth's surface in the atmosphere, is needed in order to support life on Earth. However, since the industrial revolution the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has increased dramatically (e.g. carbon dioxide has increased by 35% in the atmosphere). These have caused too much radiation to be trapped in the atmosphere resulting in an increase in temperature. (Henderson, 2006).

²⁰ The Caribou is a type of reindeer which is vital to the Inuit people. Global warming has caused the creature's winter food supply to disappear and as a result the number of Caribou dropped from 26,000 in 1961 to 1000 in 1997. As a result it became classified as endangered, meaning that the Inuit people can no longer hunt it. (Flannery 2005).

²¹ The Environmental Equity Principle aims to rectify the inequity that is experienced between people of different sex, race, and socio-economic background within the same generation (Intra) and for future generations (Inter). (Beder, 2006). The damaging effects of climate change do not hit everyone equally. The poor are more affected than the rich, who can choose to live in places that are less exposed to the negative effects (Sachs and Santarius, 2007). Indigenous groups, such as the Inuit, who directly depend upon nature, will feel the effects of climate change more greatly than those in industrial urbanized areas. (Page, 2006). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) describes equity within and among communities, including future generations, as important in the international response to the climate change problem (Metz *et al.* 2007).

²² IPCC found that more than 40% of emissions come from Industry, 31% from Buildings, 22% from transport and 4% from agriculture (Metz *et al.* 2007). The US is responsible for around 30% of cumulative CO2 emissions since the industrial revolution began, and the US represent only about 5% of the world's population so that six times its rightful share. Other countries such as China, Australia and Europe contribute significantly to emissions, yet are less likely to be affected by the ramifications of climate change due to the geographical location and size (Henderson, 2006).

warming of the days²³ but without snow and ice, our way of life, our culture and our economic security is lost²⁴. If nothing is done, the sun will rise on a day in which all you see around you will be just a black turbulent sea, and the Inuit, like the great *nanuk*²⁵, will be extinct from this world forever.

Death places a skeletal hand on the shoulder of the Inuit, and he begins to fade. The Pope sits down abruptly on a rock and put his head in his hands.

Pope: Alas how saddening this all is! This has all come about because mankind has rebelled against God²⁶, and atheism is tainting the minds of so many people!

The Pope gets up and starts pacing. Death simply watches him.

Pope: I do hope that he was a believer in Jesus Christ our Saviour so that he can find his place in heaven²⁷. At least I am at rest in the knowledge that I did my part to help the Inuit. I have given many talks on the importance of spreading the Gospel in the changing culture of Inuit's and I fought for their right to adequate land resources²⁸. I'm thankful that Christianity has helped their situation by fighting for the rights of the impoverished, the marginalized, the minorities, and the unwanted²⁹. I am thankful that I have done the best I can to help them. I prayed for them.

Death: (*skeptically*) HMM YES I SUPPOSE IT CAN BE SAID THAT CHRISTIANITY DOES STAND UP FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, HOWEVER, AS AN ATHEIST I MUST DISAGREE WITH YOUR CLAIM THAT YOU HAVE DONE EVERYTHING YOU COULD FOR THE INUIT.

Pope: (*Stopping his pace and swiveling to face Death*) You! You are an atheist?

²³ It is clear that the Inuit people subject to inequity as they are much more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than the rest of the world. Sheila Watt Cloutier, president of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, said: "My Arctic homeland is now the health barometer for the planet" (2004). (Johansen, 2006)

²⁴ The culture and survivorship of the Inuit people is closely dependent on the natural environment which is central to their identity. (Beder, 2005). It is predicted that the Intuits' ancient connection to their hunting culture may disappear within the next generation's lifetime. (Johansen, 2006).

²⁵ The *nanuk* is Inuit for polar bear. It is predicted that the *nanuk* will be extinct by the end of next century as a result of starvation due to climate change. (Flannery, 2005).

²⁶ Isaiah 24:1-6 states that mankind's rebellion against God has caused violence, poverty and the ruining of earth.

²⁷ It is a belief of some Christian sects that those who do not accept God into their heart will have to endure eternal punishment (Mark 9:43-48). The only way to get to heaven is to accept Jesus Christ (John 1:1).

²⁸ In trips to Canada Pope John Paul II discussed the need for Christian faith in God, and talked to the Inuit's about their basic human rights (Catholic News Service, 2005).

²⁹ Christians are morally and religiously obligated to follow the equity principle. In the New Testament Jesus taught his followers to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, assist the ill and shelter the homeless (Hollenbach, 2003).

Death: YES, IS THAT HARD TO BELIEVE? IM AN ATHEIST AND FROM WHERE I STAND IT SEEMS THAT CHRISTIANS ARE NOT ACTIVELY INVOLDED IN PROVIDING AN EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT WHEN IT COMES TO CLIMATE CHANGE³⁰.

Pope: (*Snapping back*) How so?

Death: WELL THE USA, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS THE LARGERST NUMBER OF PRACTISING CHRISTIANS WORLD-WIDE³¹, YET IS THE BIGGEST CONTRIBUTER TO CARBON DIOXIDE EMMISIONS³².

Pope: You cannot be suggesting that Christians are not environmentally active! (*Angrily*)

Death: (*Smiling*) PROVE ME WRONG.

Pope: That is simply absurd, we have to be. God will judge all of us on our treatment of nature³³ and the poor³⁴. Catholics understand that we need to move to adopt protection of the environment as a “moral” cause³⁵ as climate change poses the greatest threat to the poorest residents³⁶. Look at all of the charities that we have that help people affected by climate change³⁷.

(*Pausing for breath*)

³⁰ This was evident in the interview with Philip Bramley. See appendix.

³¹ 76.5% (159,030,000) of Americans are Christian according to American religious identification surveys conducted in 2001 by The Graduate Centre (2006).

³² USA contributed 25% of the world total carbon dioxide emissions and refuses to join the Kyoto protocol which was set up in an effort to provide equity to future generations. (Brown, 2003).

³³ Revelation 11:18 – “And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou should’s’t give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and should’s’t destroy them which destroy the earth”. Psalm 24:1 “The earth is the LORD’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it”.

³⁴ Matthew 25:31-46 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'"

³⁵ Macintyre (2007) states that the Pope has led movements to emphasize issues such as climate change on the principle that believers have a duty to “protect creation”. The Pope also pointed out that climate change effects the poorest people on the planet, and Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, head of the Catholic Church in the UK, said, "This is a crucial issue both today and for all future generations. We are the stewards of creation and we need to take that responsibility seriously and co-operate to care for the created world."

³⁶ As discussed in Beder, (2006).

³⁷ Tearfund is a Christian charity that is a founding member of Britain’s “Stop Climate Chaos” coalition. (Henderson, 2006). Other nonprofit Christian charities help people exposed to inequity. These include: Amnesty international, Christian Relief Services and World Vision.

You must realize that although millions of people profess to be Christians, relatively few are well enough informed on the scriptures, to appreciate the environmental implications of the Bible. As for your argument about America, only 23.9% of Americans are Catholics and they share quite different interpretations of the Bible to some of the other sects of Christianity that dominate America. And you are wrong! Groups of Christians in America are working towards fighting climate change. Haven't you heard' about the "Earthly evangelists"?³⁸

Death: YES, AS I SEEM TO RECALL ONLY ONE HUNDRED CHRISTIANS, OUT OF THE THIRTY MILLION THAT LIVE IN AMERICA,³⁹ SIGNED THE STATEMENT OF SUPPORT⁴⁰. I ALSO RECALL THE GROUP'S TAGLINE WHICH WAS "WITH GOD'S HELP, WE CAN STOP GLOBAL WARMING". THIS HAS YET TO BE SEEN.

Pope: Everybody is responsible for global warming. How dare you suggest that Christianity has anything to do with this whole mess! You, an atheist, who has no moral code whatsoever. I suppose that you would just suggest that future generations can fix this through technology⁴¹ and science, which so many atheists have now come to rely on⁴².

Death: (*Blue eyes flashing with annoyance*) YOU ARE MISTAKEN. ATHEISIST HAVE CORE BELIEFS ABOUT THE NATURAL WORLD AND HUMANISM WHICH AFFIRMS THAT ALL PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF RELIGION, CLASS OR RACE, SHOULD BE TREATED WITH DIGNITIY AND RESPECT⁴³. ATHIESTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE AWARE OF INEQUITABLE SITUATIONS AS THEY LOVE THEIR FELLOW MAN INSTEAD OF WASTING TIME ON LOVING GOD⁴⁴. AND AS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, WE BELIEVE THAT DEEDS SHOULD BE DONE INSTEAD OF PRAYERS SAID.

Pope: Yes but you have no moral obligation to draw you to do anything about climate change. Who will bring atheists into line if they are not environmentally motivated⁴⁵?

³⁸ A Christian group that made news in 2006 signing a statement in support of the fight against climate change (Henderson, 2006).

³⁹ 303,824,646 (July 2008 est.), according to the world fact book (2008).

⁴⁰ The "Earthly Evangelists" only had 100 people sign their statement of support (Henderson, 2006).

⁴¹ A weak argument for sustainability is that future generations will have the 'human capital' (technology, knowledge and skill) and 'human-made capital' (machinery etc.) to compensate for the loss of natural resources. (Beder, 2006).

⁴² Atheism is often linked to science. Studies have found that eminent scientists tend to be atheists, and the conclusion is that science leads people to abandon faith in God. (Graham, 1884).

⁴³ As described in Poidevin (1996). These beliefs are similar to those described by Beder (2006) in regard to the equity principle.

⁴⁴ Refer to www.athiest.org

⁴⁵ This was brought up by Hannah McCall in her interview. See appendix.

Death: WE DO NOT NEED TO BE BROUGHT INTO LINE. WE DETERMINE WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG BY BRINGING REASON TO IT. OUR HOLISTIC VIEW OF REALITY MEANS THAT WE ARE MORE LIKELY TO TAKE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE, THAN A PERSON WHO “BELIEVES” THAT GOD WILL INTERVIEN IN THE UNIVERSE⁴⁶, AND THAT JESUS WILL RETURN ONE DAY TO FIX THE PROBLEM⁴⁷.

Pope: But Christians are stewards of this Earth, we were asked by God to look after the Earth and care for it⁴⁸. Climate change is evidence that we are failing to fulfill God’s wishes and exercise proper stewardship.

Death: AHH I WAS WAITING FOR THAT ONE. CHRISTIAN’S STEWARDSHIP OF THE EARTH IS OPEN TO INTERPRETATION. A GROUP OF CHRISTIANS KNOWN AS THE “INTERFAITH STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE”⁴⁹ CLAIM THAT “GLOBALWARMING IS NOT A CONSENSUS ISSUE”⁵⁰. AS THEIR LEADER SAYS “A TRULY BIBLICAL ETITHIC OF CREATION CARE SIMPLY CANNOT IGNORE THE BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR MAN TO FILL, SUBDUE AND RULE THE EARTH”⁵¹. IN MY OPINION THE PRINCIPLE ROOTS OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE PROBLEM LIE IN THE MIX OF BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER CULTURAL TRADITIONS, OR PERHAPS IN THE LIBERTIES TAKEN WITH THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLICAL TEXTS.

Pope: So what would you, (*looking disgusted*) an atheist skeleton in a black robe, have us humans do about climate change? It would take millions of dollars to have any effect on climate change. We could use that money to lift millions out of poverty.

⁴⁶ A prominent belief of most branches of Christianity. (Ridgeon, 2003).

⁴⁷ Many conservative Protestant Christians deny that the climate change exists, where as some believe that the climate change doesn’t matter because Jesus Christ will return to Earth and fix climate change before it is too late. (www.religioustolerance.org). This can be seen in Revelation 20:1 to 7 (New Testament) which talks extensively about Jesus’ “second coming”. However, this view is not shared by most Catholics who do not believe in rapture.

⁴⁸ Catholics follow Genesis 2:15 – “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it”.

⁴⁹ A group that contains some of America’s best known Christian conservatives such as Charles Colson and James Dobson (Henderson, 2006)

⁵⁰ One of the founders of the group E.Calvin Beisner, even drew an analogy between coal and Jesus: “Vegetation is sown a natural body. Then, raised from the dead as coal and burned to enhance and safeguard our lives, it becomes a spiritual body – the carbon dioxide gas – that gives life to vegetation and, through that, to every other living thing”. (Spencer *et al.* 2005)

⁵¹ This links to Genesis 1:28 which states “God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Protestants, who look to the words of the bible as the sole authority for Christian belief’s and practices, tend to take this literally.

Death: IM NOT SUGGESTING THAT CHRISTIANITY IS A BAD THING FOR THE EARTH. I CAN SEE THE GOOD IT DOES AND I UNDERSTAND THAT HUMANS REQUIRE A SET OF GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW.

Pope: So what is it that you are saying?

Death: IM SAYING THAT PEOPLE NEED TO BE MORE PRO-ACTIVE ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE. HUMANS NEED TO ACT NOW, TIME IS RUNNING OUT. THERE IS NO SECOND CHANCE, THERE IS NO HEAVEN. EARTH IS YOUR HEAVEN, AND YOU SHOULD TREAT IT LIKE ONE.

Pope: (*defensively*) But we have started moving towards sustainability.

Death: MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE IF YOU WANT TO CREATE A FAIR FUTURE FOR YOUR CHILDREN, AND A FAIR PLANET.

Pope: But what have I got to do with this?

Death: MORE THAN ONE BILLION PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD LOOK TO YOU EACH DAY FOR GUIDANCE AND LEADERSHIP. WORLD LEADERS NEED TO START USING THEIR INFLUENCE ON THIS MATTER⁵².

Pope: (*Thoughtful*) Maybe we can teach people how to reduce the risk of climate change trauma.

Death: HOW DO YOU MEAN?

Pope: Well if people move away from coastal areas they would be safe regardless of the extent of global warming?

Death: AND WHERE WILL THE ARCTIC PEOPLE, WHO LIVE ON A FROZEN SEA, GO? AND HOW WILL THE ANIMALS AND ECOSYSTEMS COPE? YOUR SUGGESTION DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT EQUITY, AND DOES NOT FIX THE PROBLEM.

Pope: (*disheartened*) I suppose you are right. But by the sounds of it, Global warming is too urgent to worry about Intragenerational equity, I heard James Lovelock say once that “We

⁵² The issue of global warming needs to be dealt with politically. Countries need to establish a single achievable goal for emission reduction, and adhere to it within a certain time frame. The Kyoto protocol is an example of a world wide effort to address climate change. However, whether or not countries participate in such efforts is up to world leaders. For example US president George W. Bush stated in March 2006 “I told the world I thought that Kyoto was a lousy deal for America”. (Henderson, 2006).

desperately need a Moses⁵³ to take us to the Arctic and preserve civilization”.⁵⁴ Maybe we should concentrate more on Intergenerational⁵⁵ equity...or even just survival. Alas how can we get ourselves out of this predicament?

Death: HUMAN INGENUITY MANAGED TO GET YOU ALL INTO THIS MESS, MAYBE YOU COULD APPLY IT TO GET YOU OUT.

The Pope looks up at Death questioningly

Death: REDUCE VEHICAL EMMISIONS⁵⁶ THROUGH IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF CONVENTIONAL VEHICLES⁵⁷. IMPROVE THE EFFIECINCY OF BUIDINGS⁵⁸ AND MOST IMPORTANTLY TRADE CHEAP ENERGY SOURCES SUCH AS FOSSIL FUELS FOR ALTERNATIVE ENERGY⁵⁹ SOURCES.

Pope: It’s not just that though. People need to work on an individual level to cut down on consumerism and reduced their own carbon footprints. However, our society has become so selfish that I can’t see us ever being able to reduce what we consume.

Death: YES, UNFORTUNATLEY IT SEEMS THAT YOUR WORLD IS INFECTED BY AFFLUENZA⁶⁰.

⁵³ Moses is an important Old Testament prophet, and is often a symbol of God’s law. (Hollenback, 2003).

⁵⁴ James Lovelock suggests that the situation is so dire that we don’t have time to consider equity. He says “By 2020, 2025, you will be able to sail a sailboat to the North Pole. The Amazon will become a desert, and the forests of Siberia will burn and release more methane and plagues will return”. He also said that "There's no realization of how quickly and irreversibly the planet is changing....Maybe 200 million people will migrate close to the Arctic and survive this. Even if we took extraordinary steps, it would take the world 1,000 years to recover." This poses a bigger problem than the equity of the Inuit people.

⁵⁵ Intergenerational equity focuses on the rights of future generations. It argues that each generation has the right to inherit the same diversity in natural and cultural resources enjoyed by previous generations, and to have equitable access to the benefits and uses of these resources. (Beder, 2006)

⁵⁶ Vehicle emissions are responsible for around a quarter of green house emissions (Metz, 2007).

⁵⁷ This has already been done with the introduction of the hybrid engine; however, these cars are only available to affluent societies. The government should place subsidies on products such as hybrid cars that promote sustainability. Biofuels- such as ethanol and biodiesel- that are made from plants are alternative ways to power vehicles; however, they have a huge demand for land. (Henderson, 2006), (Flannery, 2005).

⁵⁸ Products such as energy efficient light bulbs, solar hot water systems, and insulating windows could reduce the huge amount of energy consumption that comes from buildings (almost half of all energy consumption). Governments should make such things mandatory in housing plans (Brown, 1991), (Metz, 2007).

⁵⁹ For example geothermal energy, wind power, solar power tide power etc. Philip Bramley commented on the need for renewable energy in his interview. See appendix.

⁶⁰ Our society is infected with “affluenza”, a disease which can be described as an “unsustainable addiction to economic growth” (Hamilton 2005). We consume more than our incomes permit, and our unhealthy preoccupation with money has led us to bury our identities and our sense of belonging in the world, defining ourselves predominately through our consumption activity.

Pope: But maybe if we apply both the sustainability principle and the equity principle we might have a chance at helping the Inuit?

Death: BOTH PRINCIPLES ARE IMPORTANT IN ORDER TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESTORE THE RIGHTS OF THE INUIT. (*Pauses looking uncomfortable*).

Pope: (*sensing that Death was holding back*) what is it that you are not saying?

Death: WELL I AM SKEPTICAL ABOUT HUMANS ABILITY TO APPLY THOSE PRINCIPLES.

Pope: Why is that?

Death: HUMAN NATURE, TO MY MIND, WILL ALWAYS UNCONCIOUSLY FORM GROUPS THAT MARGINALIZE OTHERS IN SOCIETY, AND MORE OFTEN THAN NOT THOSE GROUPS WILL ULTIMATELY TAKE PREDENCE.

Pope: (*nodding sadly in agreement*) It was once said that “the greatest inequalities stem from those who pursue excess, not those who are driven by necessity. One does not become a tyrant to stop feeling cold”⁶¹

Death: SO MAYBE THE QUESTION IS NOT HOW CAN HUMANS REDUCE GREEN HOUSE EMISSIONS THROUGH TECNOLOGY AND MITIGATION, BUT, HOW CAN HUMANS CHANGE FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN NATURE?

Pope: (*working through this concept in his head and looking terrified*) Oh, I have never thought of it like that before.

Death: (*throwing his hands up in relief*) FINALLY. I HAVE MANAGED TO GET THROUGHT TO ONE OF YOU, I AM.... (*Death trails off as he noticed that the Pope has jumped up and his pointing his finger at him*)

Pope: (*exuberant, and dancing around like a madman*) Ah ha! I have caught you out, I win I was right...lull la la lala.

Death: EXCUSE ME?

Pope: If you are an atheist then how could you be here?

⁶¹ Aristotle

Death: THAT IS BESIDE THE POINT, GLOBAL WARMING IS BIGGER THAN THE BATTLE BETWEEN ATHEISM AND CHRISTINAITY.

Pope: *(the Pope seems in a daze)* Ha ha ha, I was right! *(Clapping his hands)*

Death: *(talking to himself)* DAMN, THE IGNORANCE OF HUMANITY AND THE BLINDNESS OF FAITH, WILL IT EVER STOP? WHY DOES THIS ALWAYS HAPPEN, I GET SO CLOSE AND YET HUMANS CANNOT EVER ACCEPT THE FACT THAT THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE.

Death looks over at the Pope, who is still wearing a smug look on his face

Death: BELIEVE, WHAT EVER IT IS YOU WANT TO BELIEVE. YOUR ACTIONS OR INACTIONS AFFECT EARTH AND ALL OF ITS INHABITANTS. YOU MUST TAKE CARE OF YOUR PLANET BECAUSE I AM THE ULTIMATE REALITY, AND AFTER ME THERE IS.....

Scene fades to nothingness, complete and utter, never-ending, ever-lasting nothingness.

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Appendix

Interview 1.

Name: Philip Bramley

Age: 63

Stance: Atheist

1. What do you know about climate change and how it is affecting the Arctic?

The evidence, through scientific observation and measurement, has clearly shown that there is a direct correlation between our use and consumption of fossil fuels to an increase in CO₂ in our

atmosphere. The CO₂ has an effect of creating a similar condition to a greenhouse in the upper levels of our atmosphere thereby reflecting and radiating heat, which would otherwise be lost to space, back to the earth's surface.

Climate change manifests itself most clearly in the Arctic through the faster than normal melting of the ice pack. Visually this manifestation of climate change is the most visible of all. While higher global temperatures are also part of the natural cycle of climate variability this indicator is a much harder one to ascribe to global warming through the use of fossil fuels.

2. What are your main sources of information about climate change?

James Hansen – NASA – climate scientist. In the 1980's was one of the first scientists to alert the world community to global warming and climate change.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Hansen)

Tim Flannery, scientist and author – The Weather Makers

Climate science from climate scientists - <http://www.realclimate.org/>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – IPCC - <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

3. What do you think are the main cause of climate change?

Principally our reliance on fossil fuels for energy and the way we extract, refine and use those fossil fuels. Modelling clearly shows the rise in greenhouse gases and the effects of global warming since the start of the Industrial revolution. With the rapid increase in global population the reliance on plentiful (coal) and cheap fossil fuel will be catastrophic.

4. What, if anything, should be done about climate change?

Drastically reduce our reliance on cheap energy from fossil fuels. Invest hugely on alternative energy sources.

5. How should decisions be made about climate change?

Intergovernmental panels under the UN umbrella. Unified decisions including all countries subscribing to global outcomes of climate change policy.

6. Do you think that atheists are more proactive than Christians at trying to combat climate change? Give reasons.

Not necessarily. Non religious persons may be more aware and pessimistic about global warming and climate change and may come to a conviction to do something about it quicker than someone who relies on some religions being to make it all right again. In other words, an atheist is more

likely to be more pragmatic in their approach to identifying and rectifying the climate change problem. Praying won't help but direct action will.

Interview 2.

Name: Hannah McCall

Age: 48

Stance: Christian

1. What do you know about climate change and how it is affecting the Arctic?

I know that Climate Change is a big issue at the moment and that global warming is melting the ice in the arctic. I also know that climate change is affecting sea level rise because there was a warning about the area that we live in being underwater in the future. On Sunrise breakfast show last week there was a section on the fact that the polar bear might go extinct within the next 50 years or so. I found it very sad.

2. What are your main sources of information about climate change?

Mainly the news and the news paper.

3. What do you think are the main cause of climate change?

Cars and big industry. Also people are not following the traditional way of life and are deviating away from the guidelines we were given to be on this planet.

4. What, if anything, should be done about climate change?

I'm not really sure, but I would say if we could reduce our transport by taking public transport or carpooling that would help the situation.

5. How should decisions be made about climate change?

I think that it's up to the government, but I think that we can all do our own bit to try and reduce global warming.

6. Do you think that Christians are more proactive than atheists at trying to combat climate change? Give reasons.

I don't really know the answer to that question either but I think that Christians have a reason to do something about climate change, where as atheists do not have that same motivation.