

## What is taught about climate change?

An exemplary look at two opposing groups that work within the US-American Evangelicalism. American evangelicalism is not a monolith in which one size fits all, we rather speak of a kaleidoscope (Wuthnow 1995:110ff; Sweeny 2005: 21, Pally 2011) or a mosaic, which is held together by a glue of core beliefs, history, and a certain practice of faith rather than an institutionalized church (Bebbington 1989, Noll 2003, Marsden 1989). Throughout the history of evangelicalism in the United States of America, there has never been one movement, one way of thinking, or one denomination, rather there have been grassroots movements that have been at odds with each other on a primary doctrinal basis (Noll 2003, Bebbington 2005, Marsden 1989, Wolff 2007, Hatch 1989). Robert Wuthnow has shown extensively that a shift within the US-American Christianity occurred in the twentieth century: The cultural and political changes of the 1960s and 1970s of the twentieth century have not gone by the churches and left them unscathed, rather the church landscape shifted from denominational based to what I would call political ideology based (Wuthnow 1989: Chapter 5–7). This means that alliances were built between different forces of different denominations. So instead of Baptists would stand alongside other Baptists in certain political and cultural topics, rather conservative Baptists with conservative Methodists or people from other denominations even with conservative Catholics and conservative Jewish groups. Something unthinkable in the 19th or early 20th century (Wuthnow 1989 Chapter 1-2; Marsden 1989). It is important to state here that in the early 1970s special interest groups started to gain influence within evangelical churches, which can be seen as the major reason for the described shift (Wuthnow 1989: 7). This paper aims to look at two special interest groups which have a different stance on concepts of ESD. On the one hand, there are „Evangelicals for climate change“, a group that lobbies within churches to combat climate change. A 2014 study from the PRRI (Public Religion Research Institute) and AAR (American Academy of Religion) showed that 54% of white evangelicals don't seem to see climate change as a huge problem, and even 39% of white evangelicals describe themselves as climate change skeptics (PRRI 2014: 12-20). On the other hand, the Cornwall Alliance will be examined which questions man-made climate change (Walniss: 2014). They are a special interest group including theologians, economists, and other scientists labeling ecological movements as „anti-Christian“ (<https://cornwallalliance.org/about/what-we-do/>). Wilkinson (2012) has shown in her book „Between God and Green“ how polarized evangelicalism is on climate change.

The empirical study by Marcia Pally (2011) and the work of Thomas Feldmann (2019) shows how complex the relationship between theology, ethics, and political stances is. The paper will examine how the above-mentioned exemplary groups teach on the subject of climate change and how conflicting theological concepts influence their arguments.