

# Theologies of anthropology and creation

## Distinction: Natural theology vs. Theology of Nature (Creation theology)



### Entry Point<sup>1</sup>

<p>Genesis 2.15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.</p>	<p>Most Christians believe that God gave human beings a special responsibility within creation to cultivate it, guard it and use it wisely. This is called stewardship. Man has to work within creation and to look after it:</p>
<p>Genesis 9.3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.</p>	<p>Humans are given everything for their needs, implying that they can use whatever they want from creation for their survival:</p>
<p>Psalms 24.1 The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it;</p>	<p>However, as the Earth belongs to God, humans must respect it and hand it back to God unspoiled:</p>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zr3c7ty/revision/3>

## Erickson<sup>2</sup>

- The doctrine of creation prohibits dualism – Ex Nihilo<sup>3</sup>
- Therefore anthropologically humanity cannot blame nature for evil
- Interconnectedness of all creation (The Canticle of the Sun<sup>4</sup>)

We praise You for all Your creatures, especially for Brother Sun, who is the day through whom You give us light. He is beautiful and radiant with great splendour, of You Most High, he bears Your likeness.

## Tad Delay<sup>5</sup> and Pew Research<sup>6</sup>

Tad points out that many white evangelicals in America hold a belief in the immanent return of Christ, that is within a lifetime. What this means is that they have an ideology which rejects ‘the future’ in any meaningful sense. That ideology when translated to questions of climate change for example, deny its existence or relevance.

The theological anthropology and the apocalyptic theology combine to create a world denying view.

The world can then be utilised in whatever way is desired by humanity, because it has no real future.

**Most White Evangelicals Expect Jesus Christ’s Return to Earth**

	<i>Probably/Definitely</i>		<i>DK</i>
	<i>Will Happen</i>	<i>Will not Happen</i>	
	%	%	%
Total	41	46	13=100
Protestant	54	32	15=100
White evangelical	58	25	16=100
White mainline	27	58	15=100
Catholic	32	57	12=100
Unaffiliated	20	72	8=100
College grad+	19	64	17=100
Some college	35	51	14=100
HS or less	59	31	10=100
East	29	64	7=100
Midwest	39	47	14=100
South	52	33	15=100
West	35	51	14=100

Pew Research Center/Smithsonian magazine April 21-26, 2010. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

**More Hispanic Catholics, Unaffiliated Say Earth Is Warming Due to Human Activity**

*% of U.S. adults in each group who say the Earth is getting warmer because of human activity/natural patterns in the atmosphere/or that there is no solid evidence that the Earth is getting warmer*

	<b>Human activity</b>	<b>Natural patterns</b>	<b>No solid evidence</b>	<b>Don’t know</b>	
	%	%	%	%	
U.S. adults	50	23	25	2	=100
<b>Religious affiliation</b>					
NET Protestant	40	30	28	1	=100
White evangelical	28	33	37	1	=100
White mainline	41	24	33	2	=100
Black Protestant*	56	24	20	0	=100
NET Catholic	45	19	34	1	=100
White Catholic	45	19	34	2	=100
Hispanic Catholic*	77	15	8	0	=100
NET Unaffiliated	64	13	20	3	=100

<sup>2</sup> Erickson, M. 1998 *Christian theology*

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ex\\_nihilo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ex_nihilo)

<sup>4</sup> <https://brigidine.org.au/st-francis-of-assis-prayer/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://podtail.com/en/podcast/tad-delay/3-against-against-future-climate-change-and-the-ev/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2015/10/22/religion-and-views-on-climate-and-energy-issues/>