# AC

## FW

God exists – 5 reasons.

**First**, Pascal’s Wager means any risk of God outweighs neg offense. **Kreeft 94** writes[[1]](#footnote-1)

But **the only chance of doing infinite justice is if God exists and we believe, while the only chance of doing infinite injustice is if God exists and we do not believe.** If God does not exist, there is no one there to do infinite justice or infinite injustice to.

**Second** is the Cosmological argument. **Kreeft 94** writes[[2]](#footnote-2)

[non-bolded text is optional]

Everything that is has some adequate or sufficient reason why it is. Philosophers call this the Principle of Sufficient Reason. We use it every day, in common sense and in science as well as in philosophy and theology. If we saw a rabbit suddenly appear on an empty table, we would not blandly say, "Hi, rabbit. You came from nowhere, didn't you?" No, we would look for a cause, assuming there has to be one. Did the rabbit fall from the ceiling? Did a magician put it there when we weren't looking? If there seems to be no physical cause, we look for a psychological cause: perhaps someone hypnotized us. As a last resort, we look for a supernatural cause, a miracle, but there must be some cause. We never deny the Principle of Sufficient Reason itself. No one believes the Pop Theory: that things just pop into existence for no reason at all. Perhaps we will never find the cause but there must be a cause for everything that comes into existence. Now the whole universe is a vast, interlocking chain of things that come into existence. Each of these things must therefore have a cause. My parents caused me, my grandparents caused them, et cetera. But it is not that simple. I would not be here without billions of causes, from the Big Bang through the cooling of the galaxies and the evolution of the protein molecule to the marriages of my ancestors. **The universe is a vast** and complex **chain of causes. But does the universe** as a whole **have a cause?** Is there a first cause, an uncaused cause, a transcendent cause of the whole chain of causes? **If not, then there is an infinite regress of causes**, with no first link in the great cosmic chain. If so, then there is an eternal, necessary, independent, self-explanatory being with nothing above it, before it, or supporting it. It would have to explain itself as well as everything else, for if it needed something else as its explanation, its reason, its cause, then it would not be the first and uncaused cause. Such a being would have to be God, of course. **If** we can prove **there is such a first cause,** we will have proved **there is a God.** Why must there be a first cause? **Because if there isn’t then the whole universe is unexplained** and we have violated our Principle of Sufficient Reason for everything. **If there is no first cause, each particular thing in the universe is explained** in the short run, or proximately, **by some other thing, but nothing is explained** in the long run, or **ultimately**, and the universe as a whole is not explained.

**Third** is the ontological argument. **Plantinga 74** writes[[3]](#footnote-3)

**There is a possible world in which maximal greatness is instantiated.** And the analogues of (27) and (28) spell out what is involved in maximal greatness: (30) Necessarily, a being is maximally great only if it has maximal excellence in every world. And (31) **Necessarily, a being has maximal excellence** in every world **only if it has omniscience, omnipotence, and moral perfection in every world.** Notice that (30) and (31) do not imply that there are possible but nonexistent beings -- any more than does, for example, (32) Necessarily, a thing is a unicorn only if it has one horn. But if (29) is true, then there is a possible world *W* such that if it had been actual, then there would have existed a being that was omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect; this being, furthermore, would have had these qualities in every possible world. **So it follows that** if *W* had been actual, **it would have been impossible that there** be no such being. That is, if *W* had been actual, (33) “There **is no omnipotent**, omniscient, **and morally perfect being**” would have been an impossible proposition.

**Fourth** is the argument from mathematical reality. **Goldstein 10** writes[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Mathematical truths are necessarily true.** (There is no possible world in which, say, 2 plus 2 does not equal 4, or in which the square root of 2 can be expressed as the ratio of two whole numbers.) The truths that describe our physical world, no matter how fundamental, are empirical, requiring observational evidence. (So, for example, we await some empirical means to test string theory, in order to find out whether we live in a world of eleven dimensions.) Truths that require empirical evidence are not necessary truths. (We require empirical evidence because there are possible worlds in which these are not truths, and so we have to test that ours is not such a world.) The truths of our physical world are not necessary truths (from 2 and 3).**The truths of our physical world cannot explain mathematical truths [because]** (from 1 and 4). **Mathematical truths exist on a different plane** of existence **from physical truths** (from 5). **Only something which itself exists on a different plane of existence from the physical can explain mathematical truths** (from 6). 8. **[Therefore] Only god can explain mathematical truths** (from 7).

**Fifth**, Christianity is most likely correct. Only the existence of the Christian God can explain historical facts. For example, in the Old Testament there were over 300 prophesies made about Jesus hundreds of years before his birth, and every one was correct. The probability of any one man fulfilling just 8 of these prophesies by present day was found to be 1 in 10 to the 17th power. **Stoner and Newman 44** write[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Suppose** that **we take 1017 silver dollars and lay them on** the face of **Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep.** Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and **tell [a man]** him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but **he must pick** up **one** silver dollar and say that this is the right one. **What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man**, from their day to the present time, **providing they wrote using their own wisdom.**

When considering all 300 plus prophecies, the odds are even smaller.

**Stoner and Newman 44** write5

There are more than three hundred prophecies dealing with Christ's first advent. If this number is correct, and it no doubt is, you could set your estimates ridiculously low on the whole three hundred prophecies and still obtain tremendous evidence of inspiration.

For example **you may place all of your estimates at one in four. You may say that one man in four has been born in Bethlehem: that one** of these children **in four was taken to Egypt,** to avoid slaughter; that one in four of these came back and made his home in Nazareth; that one in four of these was a carpenter; **that one in four** of these **was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver;** that one in four of these has been crucified on a cross; that one in four was then buried in a rich man's tomb; yes, **even that one in four rose from the dead** on the third day; **and so on for all** of the **three hundred prophecies and** from them I will **build a number much larger than the one** we obtained **from** the **forty-eight prophecies.**

The existence of God commits one to theological voluntarism. God’s will is the source of moral goodness – 8 reasons. **Murphy 12** writes[[6]](#footnote-6)

Some of the considerations in favor of metaethical theological voluntarism are historical. Both theists and nontheists have been impressed by the extent to which at least some **[First,] moral concepts developed in tandem with theological concepts, and** it may **therefore** be the case that **there could be no** adequate **explication of** some **moral concepts without** appeal to **theological ones.** On this view, **it is not** merely **historical accident that** at least some **moral concepts had their origin in** contexts of **theistic belief** and practice; rather, these concepts have their origin essentially in such contexts, and become distorted and unintelligible when exported from those contexts (see, for example, Anscombe 1958).

Theological considerations in favor of theological voluntarism Some of the considerations in favor of theological voluntarism have their source in matters regarding the divine nature. Several such arguments are summarized in Idziak 1979 (pp. 8–10). Some appeal to omnipotence: **[Second,] since God is** both **omnipotent** and impeccable, theological **voluntarism must be true: for** if God cannot act in a way that is morally wrong, then **God's power would be limited by other normative states of affairs** were theological voluntarism not the case. Some appeal to God's freedom: **[Third,] since God is free** and impeccable, theological **voluntarism must be true: for if moral requirements existed prior to God's will**ing them, requirements that an impeccable God could not violate, **God's liberty would be compromised. [Fourth,]** Some appeal to **God's status as supremely lovable** and deserving of allegiance: if theism is true, then **[means]** the world of **value must be** a **theocentric** one, **and so any moral view that does not place God at its center is** bound to be **inadequate.** Even if individually insufficient as justifications for adopting theological voluntarism, collectively they may suggest some desiderata for a moral view: that God must be at the center of a moral theory, and, in particular, that the realm of the moral must be dependent on God's free choices. It seems that any moral theory that met these desiderata would count as a version of theological voluntarism. Metaethical considerations in favor of theological voluntarism A third set of considerations in favor of theological voluntarism has its source in metaethics proper, in the attempt to provide adequate philosophical accounts of the various formal features exhibited by moral concepts, properties, and states of affairs. One might claim, that is, that theological voluntarism makes the best sense of the formal features of morality that both theists and nontheists acknowledge. Consider first the normativity of morals. **[Fifth,]** Both theists and nontheists have been impressed by the weirdness of normativity, with its very otherness, and have thought that whatever we say about **normativity**, it **will** have to **be** a story **not about natural properties but nonnatural ones** (cf. Moore 1903, section 13). John Mackie, an atheist, and George Mavrodes, a theist, have both drawn from this the same moral: if there is a God, then the normativity of morality can be understood in theistic terms; otherwise, the normativity of morality is unintelligible (Mavrodes 1986; Mackie 1977, p. 48). As Robert Adams has suggested, given the serious difficulties present in understanding moral properties as natural properties, it is worthwhile taking seriously the hypothesis that morality is not just a nonnatural matter but a supernatural one (Adams 1973, p. 105). For the standard objections against understanding normativity as a nonnatural property concern our inability to say anything further about that nonnatural property itself and about our ability to grasp that property (see, e.g., M. Smith 1994, pp. 21–25). But **if morality is** to be understood **in** terms of **God's commands, we can give an informative account of what these unusual properties are;** and if it is understood in terms of God's commands, then we can give an informative account of how God, being the creator and sustainer of us rational beings, can ensure that we can have an adequate epistemic grasp of the moral domain (Adams 1979a, pp. 137–138). **[Sixth,] Consider** next **the impartiality of morals.** The domain of the moral, unlike the domain of value generally, is governed by the requirements of impartiality. To use Sidgwick's phrase, the point of view of **morality is not one's personal point of view but rather “the point of view … of the Universe”** (Sidgwick 1907, p. 382). But, to remark on the perfectly obvious, the Universe does not have a point of view. Various writers have employed fictions to try to provide some sense to this idea: Adam Smith's impartial and benevolent spectator, Firth's ideal observer, and Rawls' contractors who see the world sub specie aeternitatis come to mind most immediately (Smith 1759, Pt III, Ch 8; Firth 1958; and Rawls 1971, p. 587). But theological **voluntarism can** provide a straightforward understanding of the impartiality of morals by **appeal**ing to the claim **that** the demands of **morality arise[s] from** the demands of **someone who** in fact **has** an **impartial** and supremely deep **love** for all of the beings that are morality's proper objects. **[Seventh,] Consider** next **the overridingness of morals.** The domain of the moral, it is commonly thought, consists in a range of values that can demand absolute allegiance, in the sense that it is never reasonable to act contrary to what those values finally require. One deep difficulty with this view, formulated in a number of ways but perhaps most memorably by Sidgwick (1907, pp. 497–509), is that **it is hard to see how moral value** automatically **trumps other kinds of value** (e.g. prudential value) when they conflict. **But if** the domain of **the moral is** to be understood in terms of **the will of a being who can** make it possible that, or even **ensure that**, **the balance of reasons is always** in favor of acting in accordance with the **moral** demand, **then the overridingness of morals becomes far easier to explain.** Consider next the content of morals. There is a strong case to be made that **[Eighth,] moral judgments** cannot have just any content: they **must be concerned**, somehow, **with** what exhibits **respect for** certain **beings**, or with what promotes their interests (cf. Foot 1958, pp. 510–512; M. Smith 1994, p. 40). Theological **voluntarism has a ready explanation** for the content of morals being what it is: it is that **moral demands arise from a being that loves** that being's **creation.**

Thus the **standard** is **what would Jesus do?**

Ignore permissibility and presumption because moral uncertainty means we’ll always have a non-zero credence in the existence of morality, so there’s always a risk of offense in favor of one action.

Even if I lose that Christianity is the correct theology, WWJD is still the best moral standard.

First, secular ethical theories all reduce to virtue ethics. It’s the only way to make morality motivational. Jason **Kawall 09** writes[[7]](#footnote-7)

**One** of the **major problem**s **that ethical theories face** today **is to determine the** precise **connection between** the **recognition of ethical dilemmas** by a moral agent **and** his subsequent **motivation to act.** Frequently, philosophers argue, it is not enough for a moral agent to know ethical principles that apply only to universalized situations; something else has to occur for the agent to truly jump into gear. Simply knowing theoretical ethical principles does not provide the agent with the fine-tuned perception necessary to actually recognize a specific situation as deserving of action. This is one of the reasons why rule-based systems of ethics are problematic, as they already assume that the moral agent has discerned ethical salience in a given situation. However, that is not necessarily the case. In other words, knowing that “one should be benevolent to those less fortunate” does not give any specific information as to what action to take when one is faced with a homeless person on the street, for instance. In such a situation, one first has to recognize that the other person has a good of his or her own, is in need, and thus deserving of help. In the same way, the rule does not provide information regarding what form the aid should take: should one simply give the person money for food? Or should one try to help in more profound ways, such as finding him or her a job etc.? All these scenarios already depend on the moral perception of the moral agent; that is, the situation first has to be perceived to be a moral one, for otherwise moral activity is not at all required. As Blum puts it: The point is that perception occurs prior to deliberation, and prior to taking the situation to be one in which one needs to deliberate. It is precisely because the situation is seen in a certain way that the agent takes it as one in which he feels moved to deliberate. 40 Therefore, the significance of moral perception for subsequent action is undeniable. The question now becomes: What is moral perception and how does it develop in a moral agent? Clearly, rules and regulations in and by themselves are not guides to moral perception, since they only prescribe how to act once a moral situation is already perceived as requiring action. **Therefore, deontological and utilitarian theories** of ethics generally **begin too far down the road, as they already presuppose the moral perception of the** moral **agent.** The principles provided can only be applied if the situation has been recognized as a moral one. **However, moral perception appears to be a component of the characteristics** and dispositions **of a person, as they are** an integral **part of how a person** dwells in and **interacts with the world. Thus, moral perception**, which is essential and prior to any moral judgment, **is closely linked to** ethical theories of **virtue, as the virtues** are generally regarded to **shape an agent’s understanding of** his or **her moral environment.**

Fostering virtue requires role models. Therefore, a moral agent ought to emulate virtuous people. Rebecca **Carhart 09** writes[[8]](#footnote-8)

Another strength of **virtue ethics** is that it **emphasizes the development of personal character through the** teaching and **practice of virtues. A key component of this process is the imitation of individuals who are recognized as examples of virtuous character.** A pacifist would thus emphasize studying the lives of figures recognized for their peace-promoting standards in order to develop the same positive traits as those people. Different individuals may be upheld as examples of different virtues, and the same may be true for vices. **According to** William **Frankena, the recognition of a moral ideal is critical in motivating one to be a certain kind of person** (1993). One interesting implication of these concepts is a high valuation of history, art, and other disciplines that offer insight into human character. **Considerations of particular people** and whole societies **may lead to an understanding of how actions are shaped by character and values, knowledge that is valuable in making** practical **decisions.**

Jesus is the best role model. He represents the perfection of all virtues.

**Mahatma Gandhi** writes[[9]](#footnote-9)

 [All ellipses were in the original text.] Love is the strongest force the world possesses. And yet it is the humblest imaginable. The more efficient a force is, the more silent and subtle it is. Love is the subtlest force in the world. **When I read the Sermon on the Mount, especially such passages as ‘Resist not evil,’ I was simply overjoyed** and found my own opinion confirmed where I least expected it. **The message of Jesus Christ**, as I understand it, **is contained in the Sermon on the Mount**… which competes, on almost equal terms, with the Bhagavad Gita for the domination of my heart. It is **that sermon which had endeared Jesus to me. The gentle figure of Christ, so patient, so kind, so loving, so full of forgiveness that he taught his followers not to retaliate when abused** or struck **but to turn the other cheek… it was a beautiful example**, I thought, **of the perfect man.**

Second, practicing religion is key to Eudaimonia. Atheists get all angsty.

**BBC 08** writes[[10]](#footnote-10)

**A belief in God could lead to a more contented life, research suggests. Religious people are better able to cope with shocks such as losing a job or divorce**, claims the study presented to a Royal Economic Society conference. **Data** from thousands of Europeans **revealed higher levels of "life satisfaction" in believers.** However, researcher Professor Andrew Clark said other aspects of a religious upbringing unrelated to belief may influence future happiness. **This is not the first study to draw links between religion and happiness, with a belief among many psychologists that** some factor in either **belief, or its observance, offer**ing **benefits.** Professor Clark, from the Paris School of Economics, and co-author Dr Orsolya Lelkes from the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, used information from household surveys to analyse the attitudes of Christians - both Catholic and Protestant - not only to their own happiness, but also to issues such as unemployment. Their **findings**, they said, **suggest**ed **that religion could offer a "buffer" which protected from life's disappointments.**

## Advocacy

I advocate that developing countries should accept the Precautionary Principle on resource extraction issues. I reserve the right to clarify.

The PP prioritizes environmental protection. **Raffensperger 4** writes[[11]](#footnote-11)

It is quite simple. It has three building blocks. One is scientific uncertainty. The second is the likelihood or the plausibility of harm. The third element is precautionary action. **The mandate of the P**recautionary **P**rinciple **is to take preventive action in the face of uncertainty to prevent harm. The focus is no longer** on **measuring and managing harm, but preventing harm. Critics of the P**recautionary **P**rinciple **say that it is going to stop all action** or stop all progress**, and yet** the Precautionary Principle invites action: **it says you've got to take action.** **That** has in many ways galvanized us; it **gives us a way of operationalizing environmental protection.**

The PP is key to solving environmental harms. We can’t afford to wait for scientific certainty. **SEHN 98** writes[[12]](#footnote-12)

What is the precautionary principle? A comprehensive definition of the precautionary principle was spelled out in a January 1998 meeting of scientists, lawyers, policy makers and environmentalists at Wingspread, headquarters of the Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wisconsin. The Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle, summarizes the principle this way: "**When an activity raises threats of harm to the environment** or human health, **precautionary measures should be taken even if** some **cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically**." Key elements of the principle include taking precaution in the face of scientific uncertainty; exploring alternatives to possibly harmful actions; placing the burden of proof on proponents of an activity rather than on victims or potential victims of the activity; and using democratic processes to carry out and enforce the principle - including the public right to informed consent. Is there some special meaning for "precaution"? It's the common sense idea behind many adages: "Be careful." "Better safe than sorry." "Look before you leap." "First do no harm." What about "scientific uncertainty"? Why should we take action before science tells us what is harmful or what is causing harm? **Sometimes if we wait for proof it is too late**. Scientific standards for demonstrating cause and effect are very high. For example, smoking was strongly suspected of causing lung cancer long before the link was demonstrated conclusively - that is, to the satisfaction of scientific standards of cause and effect. By then, many smokers had died of lung cancer. But many other people had already quit smoking because of the growing evidence that smoking was linked to lung cancer. These people were wisely exercising precaution despite some scientific uncertainty. **Often a problem** - such as a cluster of cancer cases or global warming - **is too large**, its causes too diverse, or the effects too long term **to be sorted out with scientific experiments** that would prove cause and effect. It's hard to take these problems into the laboratory. Instead, **we have to rely on** observations, case studies or **predictions based on current knowledge.** According to the precautionary principle, when substantial scientific evidence of any kind gives us good reason to believe that an activity, technology or substance may be harmful, we should act to prevent harm. **If we always wait for scientific certainty, people may suffer and die, and damage to the natural world may be irreversible.** We have lots of environmental regulations. Aren't we already exercising precaution? In some cases, to some extent, yes. When federal money is to be used in a major project, such as building a road on forested land or developing federal waste programs, the planners must produce an "environmental impact statement" to show how it will affect the surroundings. Then the public has a right to help determine whether the study has been thorough and all the alternatives considered. That is a precautionary action. But most environmental regulations, such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act and the Superfund Law, are aimed at cleaning up pollution and controlling the amount of it released into the environment. They regulate toxic substances as they are emitted rather than limiting their use or production in the first place. These laws have served an important purpose - they have given us cleaner air, water and land. But they are based on the assumption that humans and ecosystems can absorb a certain amount of contamination without being harmed. We are now learning how difficult it is to know what levels of contamination, if any, are safe. Many of our food and drug laws and practices are more precautionary. Before a drug is introduced into the marketplace, the manufacturer must demonstrate that it is safe and effective. Then people must be told about risks and side effects before they use it. But there are some major loopholes in our regulations. If the precautionary principle were universally applied, many toxic substances, contaminants, and unsafe practices would not be produced or used in the first place. The precautionary principle concentrates on prevention rather than cure. How would **the p**recautionary **p**rinciple change that without bringing the economy to a halt? It **would encourage** the **exploration of** **alternatives -** better, safer, cheaper ways to do things- and the development of **"cleaner" products and tech**nologies. Sometimes simply slowing down in order to learn more about potential harm is the best alternative. **It would shift the burden of proof** from the public **to proponents of** a **tech**nology. The principle would ensure that the public knows about and has a say in the deployment of technologies that may be hazardous. **Proponents would have to demonstrate** through an open process **that** a **tech**nology **was safe or necessary and that no better alternatives were available.**

## Contention

I contend that Jesus would value the precautionary principle.

First, all Ten Commandments justify environmental protection as per the PP. **Cloer 11** writes[[13]](#footnote-13)

Applying the precautionary principle, then, becomes a game of number crunching and never-ending ruminations. The debate is sure to go on until we have to do something. Even then, would the expedient course be the right course? An often overlooked set of principles can help us accurately gauge actions and their impact on others. When we come to accept that **the** biblical **Commandments provide** valid **insights into a way of thinking that guards against** unwanted, **dangerous** and often destructive **consequences**, these 10 statements become a powerful guide to behavior that does not produce unwanted consequences. Unfortunately, the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17 and Deuteronomy 5:6–21) are often viewed as merely a list of “thou shalt nots.” This is not surprising; the majority are restrictive in nature, but not because they exist to take the fun out life. They are actually protective; knowing what not to do directs one down the better path. Several are simply instructive (telling the reader to know, remember or honor, for example). As Jesus explained, the Commandments provide a holistic outline of how to manage one’s relationships with God and with fellow man. They provide a baseline or metric from which one can evaluate one’s actions in the world. They give insight into the very nature of God (Matthew 5:17–48; Matthew 19:16–22; Luke 10:25–37; 2 Peter 1:4). **The first four are reminders that humankind does not own creation but that we have an obligation to our Creator. The other six are** a summation of what could be called **the simplest precautionary principle:** to **care for another as one cares for self** (Matthew 22:35–40). Thinking beyond self is at the core of the Commandments. Providing a guide for right relationships—with both God and fellow man—is their purpose. Not only do they protect others, but they give context to our lives by helping us see all of creation as an integrated whole. **Because** the human tendency for **selfishness** and disregard for others **remains,** however, **the Commandments are a** constant **reminder of better options that are** always **available**, always possible and never outdated. **Raw materials** to support industrialization and the invention of new synthetic materials (including new organisms and bioreactors requiring new feedstocks) **will be subject to increasing global competition** in the coming decades. In view of this, **a set of green commandments would prove invaluable** for helping us think through the consequences of our actions. Suggestions that reach deeper than “change from incandescent to LED” or “use ceramic rather than plastic” will be needed as we navigate the transitions ahead. With this in mind, the Commandments are reconfigured below as behaviors that would lead us away from unintended consequences in our increasingly globalized relationships**. 1. All** of our **tools of creation originate with God. Use all things with care. 2.** God exists outside of created objects. **God is not in what you build**, nor does what you build make you God. **3**. We acknowledge and honor God by our right actions; **belief in God requires** certain **behaviors that see the world in** increasingly **inclusive ways. 4.** **All creation follows specific cycles. The Sabbaths are for the benefit of all. 5.** Humans practice honoring God by **honor**ing **the human family. 6. Failing to care for fellow man** is wrong; it **is tantamount to murder. 7. Seek purity in all things. 8. Strive to give. 9. Deception destroys relationships. 10. Seek contentment, not consumption.**

Second, Scripture proves. Jesus obligates us to promote sustainability.

**Phillips 11** writes[[14]](#footnote-14)

**In the first instructions** given **to humans, we are told to rule** the **creation** (Genesis 1:28), **and** to **take care of** and look after **the Garden of Eden** (**[See] Genesis** 2:15). **To rule** the **creation is to be** a **wise and benevolent** ruler**, looking out for** the welfare of **all** parts **of the earth.** To take care of the garden is to help it flourish while providing food for people and animals. It is clear that **discerning ways to balance** the **use of** natural **resources in a sustainable way is God’s work**.“The kingdom is also like what happened when a man went away and put his three servants in charge of all he owned” (Matthew 25:14, CEV). God created a world in which life can flourish, and entrusted humans with its care. The apocalyptic story often known as **the Parable of the Talents**, or A Story about Three Servants (Matthew 25:14-30; cf. “A Story about Ten Servants” in Luke 19:11-27) **is an allegory for** our temporary **stewardship of the** created **world**. In the story, **a master puts his servants in charge of all he owns, giving each of them money** to keep **while he is away. Two servants invest and grow the money, while the third hides the money in the ground**, not helping it to grow at all. **The master praises the first two** servants**, and banishes the third.** Likewise, **Jesus suggests that humans** are called to do more than simply conserve God’s resources—rather, they are to help them flourish and increase (Matthew 25:14-30). People of faith **must fully commit themselves to caring for the land and helping all of creation** to **flourish until the master returns.**

And third, prioritizing resource extraction is disingenuous for pursuing God’s work.

**Phillips 11** writes[[15]](#footnote-15)

**Many** North Americans **are** well **aware that our lands and waters are being depleted of** the very **natural resources that sustain us.** We struggle with the tension between conservation and consumerism, not wanting to acknowledge that our own consumption contributes to the depletion of resources. **Management** and dispersal **of natural resources was an issue in Jesus’ day as well. Jesus calls his followers to live lightly on the earth, not hoarding resources** but instead using only what they need. **In** this way, all people and all of creation can continue to flourish. “Don’t be greedy! Owning a lot of things won’t make your life safe” (**Luke** 12:15, CEV). **Jesus taught that there is no security in material things.** Safety comes not through storing up resources, but rather through relying on God’s provision for all of creation. The Parable of the Rich Fool explains this point: a rich man’s farm produced a bumper crop one year, yielding so much grain that the man didn’t have space to store it. He tore down his barns to build bigger ones so that he could store the grain, relax, and live off his savings. But God said, “You fool! Tonight you will die. Then who will get what you have stored up?”(Luke 12:20, CEV). This parable suggests that resources, when they are available, are to be distributed rather than hoarded (Luke 12:13-21). “Don’t worry about having something to eat or wear… Look at **the crows**! They **don’t plant or harvest**, and they don’t have storehouses or barns. **But God takes care of them**” (Luke 12:22-24, CEV). **Jesus continues his teaching, challenging people to have faith in God’s provision for them just as plants and animals do** (Luke 12:22-31, Matthew 6:25-34). The bottom line: “Don’t keep worrying about having something to eat or drink… **Your Father knows what you need. But put God’s work first, and these things will be yours as well”** (Luke 12:29-31, CEV). These lessons not only teach what we should not do; they also teach what we should do: put God’s work first, and our needs will be filled. **The** whole **earth is interconnected, and humans must** support one another and **respect** the needs of **the rest of creation.**

## Theory Preempts

Neg burden is to defend a competitive post-fiat advocacy. Offense-defense is key to fairness and real world education. This means ignore skepticism.

**Nelson 8** writes[[16]](#footnote-16)

And **the truth-statement model** of the resolution **imposes an absolute burden of proof on the aff**irmative: if the resolution is a truth-claim, and the afﬁrmative has the burden of proving that claim, in so far as intuitively we tend to disbelieve truthclaims until we are persuaded otherwise, the afﬁrmative has the burden to prove that statement absolutely true. Indeed, one of the most common theory arguments in LD is conditionality, which argues it is inappropriate for the afﬁrmative to claim only proving the truth of part of the resolution is sufﬁcient to earn the ballot. Such a model of the resolution also gives the negative access to a range of strategies that many students, coaches, and judges ﬁnd ridiculous or even irrelevant to evaluation of the resolution.

If the **neg**ative **need only** prevent the affirmative from proving the truth of the resolution, it is logically sufficient to negate to **deny our ability to make truth-statements or** to **prove** normative **morality does not exist** or to deny the reliability of human senses or reason. Yet, even though most coaches appear to endorse the truth-statement model of the resolution, they complain about the use of such negative strategies, even though they are a necessary consequence of that model. And, moreover, **such strategies** seem fundamentally unfair, as they **provide the neg**ative **with functionally inﬁnite ground**, as there are a nearly inﬁnite variety of such skeptical objections to normative claims, while continuing to bind the afﬁrmative to a much smaller range of options: advocacy of the resolution as a whole.

Instead, it seems much more reasonable to treat the resolution as a way to equitably divide ground: the affirmative advocating the desirability of a world in which people adhere to the value judgment implied by the resolution and the negative advocating the desirability of a world in which people adhere to a value judgment mutually exclusive to that implied by the resolution. By making the issue one of desirability of **[Under] competing world-views** rather than of truth, the affirmative gains access to increased flexibility regarding how he or she chooses to defend that world, while the **neg**ative **retains equal flexibility while being denied** access to those **skeptical arguments** indicted above. Our ability to make normative claims is irrelevant to a discussion of the desirability of making two such claims. Unless there is some significant harm in making such statements, some offensive reason to reject making them that can be avoided by an advocacy mutually exclusive with that of the affirmative such objections are not a reason the negative world is more desirable, and therefore not a reason to negate. Note this is precisely how things have been done in policy debate for some time: a team that runs a kritik is expected to offer some impact of the mindset they are indicting and some alternative that would solve for that impact. A team that simply argued some universal, unavoidable, problem was bad and therefore a reason to negate would not be very successful. It is about time LD started treating such arguments the same way.

**Such a model** of the resolution has additional benefits as well. First, it **forces both debaters to offer offensive reasons to prefer** their worldview, thereby further **enforcing a parallel burden structure.** This means debaters can no longer get away with arguing the resolution is by definition true of false. The “truth” of the particular vocabulary of the resolution is irrelevant to its desirability. **Second, it is intuitive. When people evaluate** the truth of **ethical claims, they consider their implications in the real world.** They ask themselves whether a world in which people live by that ethical rule is better than one in which they don’t. Such debates don’t happen solely in the abstract. We want to know how the various options affect us and the world we live in.

**Aff gets RVIs** on I meets and counter-interps because

(a) 1AR timeskew means I can’t cover theory and still have a fair shot on substance.

(b) no risk theory would give neg a free source of no risk offense which allows him to moot the AC.

I’m willing to clarify or alter my advocacy in cross-ex.

The neg must defend one unconditional advocacy. Conditionality is bad because it makes the neg a moving target which kills 1AR strategy. He’ll kick it if I cover it and extend it if I undercover it, meaning I have no strategic options. Also, it’s unreciprocal because I can’t kick the AC.

Gutcheck against dumb theory. Competing interps leads to a race to the bottom where every round comes down to theory, killing substantive education. Intervention is inevitable in blippy theory debates.

## Util Underview

Prioritizing environmental protection over resource extraction is key to solving African wars.

**UNEP 9** writes[[17]](#footnote-17)

Since 1990 at least eighteen violent conflicts have been fuelled by the exploitation of natural resources. In fact, recent research suggests that over the last sixty years at least **forty percent of** all **intrastate conflicts have a link to natural resources. Civil wars** such as those **in Liberia, Angola and the** Democratic Republic of **Congo have centred on** “high-value” **resources like** timber, diamonds, gold, **minerals and oil**. Other conflicts, including those in Darfur and the Middle East, have involved control of scarce resources such as fertile land and water. As the global population continues to rise, and the demand for resources continues to grow, **there is significant potential for conflicts over** natural **resources to intensify in the coming decades.** In addition, the potential consequences of climate change for water availability, food security, prevalence of disease, coastal boundaries, and population distribution may aggravate existing tensions and generate new conflicts. Environmental factors are rarely, if ever, the sole cause of violent conflict. Ethnicity, adverse economic conditions, low levels of international trade and conflict in neighbouring countries are all significant drivers of violence. However, the **exploitation of natural resources and related environmental stresses can be implicated in all phases of** the **conflict** cycle**, from** contributing to the **outbreak and perpetuation of violence to undermining prospects for peace.** In addition, the environment can itself fall victim to conflict, as direct and indirect environmental damage, coupled with the collapse of institutions, can lead to environmental risks that threaten people’s health, livelihoods and security. Because the way that natural resources and the environment are governed has a determining influence on peace and security, these issues can also contribute to a relapse into conflict if they are not properly managed in post-conflict situations. Indeed, preliminary findings from a retrospective analysis of intrastate conflicts over the past sixty years indicate that **conflicts associated with** natural **resources are twice as likely to relapse** into conflict in the first five years. Nevertheless, **fewer than a quarter of peace negotiations** aiming to resolve conflicts linked to natural resources **have addressed resource management** mechanisms. The recognition that environmental issues can contribute to violent conflict underscores their potential significance as pathways for cooperation, transformation and the consolidation of peace in war-torn societies. Natural resources and the environment can contribute to peacebuilding through economic development and the generation of employment, while cooperation over the management of shared natural resources provides new opportunities for peacebuilding. These factors, however, must be taken into consideration from the outset. Indeed, deferred action or poor choices made early on are easily “locked in,” establishing unsustainable trajectories of recovery that can undermine the fragile foundations of peace. **Integrating environment** and natural resources **into peacebuilding** is no longer an option – it **is a security imperative.** The establishment of the UN Peacebuilding Commission provides an important chance to address environmental risks and capitalize on potential opportunities in a more consistent and coherent way. In this context, UNEP recommends that the UN Peacebuilding Commission and the wider international community consider the following key recommendations for integrating environment and natural resource issues into peacebuilding interventions and conflict prevention: 1. Further develop UN capacities for early warning and early action: The UN system needs to strengthen its capacity to deliver early warning and early action in countries that are vulnerable to conflicts over natural resources and environmental issues. At the same time, the effective governance of natural resources and the environment should be viewed as an investment in conflict prevention. 2. Improve oversight and protection of natural resources during conflicts: The international community needs to increase oversight of “high-value” resources in international trade in order to minimize the potential for these resources to finance conflict. International sanctions should be the primary instrument dedicated to stopping the trade in conflict resources and the UN should require Member States to act against sanctions violators. At the same time, new legal instruments are required to protect natural resources and environmental services during violent conflict. 3. Address natural resources and the environment as part of the peacemaking and peacekeeping process: During peace mediation processes, wealth-sharing is one of the fundamental issues that can “make or break” a peace agreement. In most cases, this includes the sharing of natural resources, including minerals, timber, land and water. It is therefore critical that parties to a peace mediation process are given sufficient technical information and training to make informed decisions on the sustainable use of natural resources. Subsequent peacekeeping operations need to be aligned with national efforts to improve natural resource and environmental governance. 4. Include natural resources and environmental issues into integrated peacebuilding strategies: The UN often undertakes post-conflict operations with little or no prior knowledge of what natural resources exist in the affected country, or of what role they may have played in fuelling conflict. In many cases it is years into an intervention before the management of natural resources receives sufficient attention. A failure to respond to the environmental and natural resource needs of the population can complicate the task of fostering peace and even contribute to conflict relapse. 5. Carefully harness natural resources for economic recovery: **Natural resources can only** help strengthen the post-war economy and **contribute to economic recovery if** they are **managed well**. The international community should be prepared to help national authorities manage the extraction process and revenues in ways that do not increase risk of further conflict, or are unsustainable in the longer term. **This must go hand in hand with** ensuring accountability, transparency, and **environmental sustainability** in their management. 6. Capitalize on the potential for environmental cooperation to contribute to peacebuilding: **Every state needs** to use and protect vital natural **resources** such as forests, water, fertile land, energy and biodiversity. **Environmental issues can thus serve as an effective** platform or **catalyst for** enhancing **dialogue,** building **confidence,** exploiting shared interests **and** broadening **cooperation** between divided groups, as well as between states.

African resource wars cause destruction of the Congo River Basin.

**Sites 4** writes[[18]](#footnote-18)

**In the Congo River Basin, conflict** has been a recurring nuisance for the development of several countries. Natural resources play a significant role in feeding conflicts, many of which **involve securing control and access to natural resources. Communities and forests pay the price**. Wars in the Congo River Basin involve groups of combatants that are always on the move, gaining temporary control over towns and settlements, but who are almost never able to subdue the surrounding areas. The constant movement of militias and the unpredictability of their actions have a devastating impact on human lives. Estimates of war-related deaths in eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) range from 3.3 million to 4.5 million. To avoid conflict, refugees and displaced rural populations avoid major roads and move into the forests and protected areas, where they are less likely to encounter soldiers and rebels.1 How natural resources fuel war Natural resources such as timber, as well as other commodities such as diamonds, all play roles in motivating these wars because of their characteristics (accessibility, weight-to-value ratios and the ability to loot, conceal and sell them later)2. In the DRC, rebel groups, government troops and their foreign allies have used the country’s diamonds, gold, timber, ivory, coltan and cobalt to pay for their war-related expenses.3 Perpetuating conflict… A United Nations panel of experts on the illegal exploitation of natural resources of the DRC recently stated that "**illegal exploitation remains one of the main sources of funding for groups involved in perpetuating conflict**". According to the panel, neighbouring countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and Zimbabwe have all helped themselves to the DRC's gold, diamonds, timber and coltan; systematically stripping factories, farms and banks in the process.4 What are the impacts of conflict? A breakdown in the rule of law and other controls during and immediately after conflicts. Mass movements of people and human rights abuses. Decline in agricultural production, trade and food availability as conditions become unsafe to carry out such activities and transport is disrupted. Increased dependence on wild natural resources (such as bushmeat) for survival when other livelihoods are made impossible: As refugees seek means to sustain themselves away from their home areas and hold their families together, **they often invade poorly protected areas** in search of housing materials, bush foods and products that they can sell. Protected areas also often contain more wildlife than other areas and can thus provide a ready supply of meat for rebels or small armies. Moreover, when it becomes too dangerous for the staff in protected zones to continue patrols, **the frequency of illegal** mining of gold and diamonds, hunting for ivory and bushmeat, **felling of timber** and agricultural encroachment often **increases**.5

The Congo River Basin is extremely vital to the environment, and its destruction ensures extinction.

**Boukongou 5** writes[[19]](#footnote-19)

This is not a revival of “good savage” ideology which is useful for the “civilized world,” but it is simply a matter of understanding that **the forests of the Congo basin is the entire humanity’s precious “lung.”** Beyond the traditional quarrels1 of the sycophants of environmental protection and the relevance of advocated public programs2, one notices the intensification of multilateral initiatives, which try to respond both to the stakes of protecting the Congo basin as well as to the challenge of preserving life on Earth. Nevertheless, even the advocates of sustainable development cannot forget that “bio-humanity” is a naturally complex vision of society. As far as one can go back in time, and on the principle of the divine message, man will always return to nature. This implies an organization and structuralization of spaces, which cannot be strictly limited to the protection of the fauna and flora. Consequently, international concern about the ecosystem of the Congo basin is neither the result of sudden philanthropy, nor the outcome of triumphant environmentalism. The region is a dynamic geopolitical area, where forests are a source of oil and conflicts. I think that it is fundamental not to separate the issue of forests from the less media-covered question of the rich oil and mineral resources in the hinterland and maritime zones of Central Africa. The predators are in the forests and on the political scene, and they are searching for democratic legitimacy3. Thus, I’m calling for combining the “green” debate with the “political” debate in order to promote better governance of the geopolitical basin of the Congo, give rise to concrete and multilateral awareness of the problems of Central Africa which aren’t only environmental but also political. It is a matter of emphasizing political and civil implications, on one hand, and legal instruments and institutional frameworks, on the other, in order to assure a better progressive transition in Central Africa from “Black governance” (in other words, oil-based governance) to “green governance”. A Geopolitical Basin The geographic entity called the “Congo basin” includes territories extending from the end of the Sahelian areas of Chad and Sudan and the edge of the plains along the Zambezi. The voluntarily extensive vision of this basin challenges the thesis that this forest area is confined to narrow post-colonial zones in Central African States, which doesn’t challenge the principles of international law relating to boundaries. **This basin is a vast forest area that covers** approximately 2,300,000 sq. km., or **26 percent of the world’s rainforests**4. **The forests are well known for their exceptional biodiversity** and contribute, in an important way, to countering the greenhouse effect by absorbing the carbon dioxide which is emitted into the atmosphere5. **This is the natural environment of more than half of the world’s wildlife and vegetable species**. Some consider it the compost of numerous diseases, such as the terrible Ebola fever.The Congo basin regroups several countries (Cameroon, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Burundi, Rwanda, Angola and Chad), which form (with Sao Tome e Principe) the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). On the one side, one may identify the Congo basin area itself to the ECCAS, and on the other, consider it as the logical construction of a regional area where sustainable governance of ecosystems should contribute, via the mobility of people, to economic links and ecological flows, to restoring and strengthening peace. One must remember that during the Millenium Summit held in New York in 2000 the Heads of State and Government declared their intention not to spare “any effort in order to assure that the entire humanity, and especially our children and grandchildren, will not live on a planet irreversibly degraded by human activities whose resources can no longer meet their requirements6.” This appeal is in line with the dynamics of building the concept of sustainable development, advocated by the UICN7 in 1980 and resumed in the Bundtland report in 19878. States have to cooperate in a spirit of world partnership in order to preserve, protect and restore the integrity of the ecosystem. Of course, according to Resolutions 1803 (XVII) and 1514 (XV)9 of the United Nations General Assembly and Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration, “States have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources according to their environment and development policies.” In other words, they can implement their proper environmental policies. But these actions do not produce concrete effects. The degradation of the environment and certain natural or industrial disasters directly affect the Earth as a continuous portion of space. It is only on this scale that adequate initiatives can be taken in order to obtain durable and adequate results. International CooperationActually, environmental protection has become one of the most important issues in contemporary world relations. International cooperation is necessary to protect humanity’s common heritage. No country can do it on its own, because this is a common responsibility. Therefore, the quality of air and the atmosphere depends on world coordination in many domains. The protection of the quality of the waters of a boundary river, or of a lake common to several countries, requires international coordination and cooperation. As the International Court of Justice reminded in the case Gabcikovo-Nagymaros: “During ages, man did not stop influencing nature for economic and other purposes. In the past it often accomplished this without taking into account the effects on the environment. Due to the new horizons opened by science and the increasing awareness of the risks of these interventions for humanity – whether it is for the present or for future generations – new standards and requirements have been put in place, enounced in a substantial number of instruments over the past two decades. These new standards must be taken in consideration and these new requirements appropriately appreciated, not only when States envisage launching new activities, but also when they pursue projects that have already been launched. The concept of sustainable development expresses the need for reconciling economic development and environmental protection10.” Since the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 the pressure exercised by NGOs and the international financial backers prompted governments to adjust their institutional frameworks and to work out coherent policies, in particular environmental action plans relating to the national, regional and international dimension. At the sub-regional level, such initiatives led to setting up mechanisms and processes such as the Conference of Ministers for Forests of Central Africa (COMIFAC)11, Conference on Central Africa’s Moist Forest Ecosystem (CEFDHAC) and the Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Process (AFLEG)12. Organized in March, 1999 in Yaoundé, the summit of leaders of Central African States on the conservation and sustainable management of rain forests confirmed the Rio commitment to lead common policies for sustainable management of forested ecosystems. This regional dynamics led to the elaboration and adoption of a “convergence plan” for the Congo basin, whose main objective is the “conservation, restoration, development and durable use of biologic resources in the framework of management adapted to the social and cultural economic development of populations and the protection of the global environment13.” This convergence plan covers a ten-year period (2004-2013 and will globally cost an estimated US$ 1.5 billion, or 840 billion CFA Francs14. Regional dynamics led to international participation in efforts to respond to this universal concern, and the Johannesburg summit on sustainable development in September 200215 paved the way to a multilateral initiative: the United States of America and South Africa inspired, along with many other actors, the idea of a multilateral partnership for the protection of forests in **the Congo basin. Considered as the left lung of the earth, these forests are** a vegetable and wildlife reserve **inextricably bound to human life**16. According to Walter Kansteiner, **they are a “world treasure,” a “world lung” necessary for preserving biologic diversity**.

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