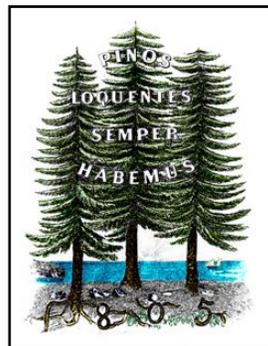


# CHRONICLE

## Resolution

*The quest to save the environment ought to replace religion as the goal to unify culture*



### SIGNIFICANT THEMES

- ⊗ The Purpose of Religion
- ⊗ Unification of Culture
- ⊗ Regress vs. Progress

### Affirmative

Mr. Wesley Hartwell '11, delivering the affirmative address, began by describing what he termed, "The Global Environmental Crisis," asserting that our unsustainable status quo was "indeed a cause for alarm." Citing Yale Economist Gustav Speth, Mr. Hartwell detailed seven stages of response, noting that the best stage, that of "solutionism," revealed a path forward. Mr. Hartwell viewed the Crisis not as a plague, but as a tremendous opportunity to unite humanity in a common pursuit of a "Pax Gaia" or peace between earth and man.

### Negative

Mr. Timothy O'Brien '10, presenting the negative opinion, asserted that religion, to be considered religion, must have deep meaning beyond the utilitarian goals of instilling morality or preserving the environment. Skeptical of environmentalist values, Mr. O'Brien doubted that they included the family and societal codes of the Christian faith, and he expressed his disdain for the consumerist and hypocritical environmental movement of the present. On a higher spiritual plane, he affirmed, religion would forever trump environmentalism.

### THE SOCIETY DEBATE

The fifth disputation of the semester began, following a short reading from the Poet Laureate, Mr. Samuel Smith '10, with orations by each of the two disputants. With these complete, debate commenced in earnest.

President Ross Jacobs '10 opened the floor with the general remark that Bowdoin, considered one of America's most "godless" campuses, provided one of the few forums in which a serious debate could occur on the emergence of an environmental religion. He therefore encouraged serious treatment of the subject and full participation.

Following Mr. Jacobs's remark, the two disputants engaged in a brief dialogue clarifying their respective ideas, and others

quickly joined the foray. Defending Mr. Hartwell, Mr. Jacobs proposed that the latin root of "religion" (*religio*, "that which binds us together") might allow us to consider credible the goal-driven religion of environmental religion. Mr. John Cunningham '10 responded by asserting that environmentalism would not advance morality or society, but would in fact amount to regress. Some, like President Julian Chryssavgis '10 and Mr. Peter Newman '12, asserted that Christianity and environmentalism may share significant common ground ("protecting the creation").

In the final tally, 10-4 opposing, the majority voted against the resolution. Nevertheless, many great points were made and discourse continued into the night.



## QUESTIONS CONCEIVED

“Does environmentalism reconstitute the doctrine of original sin?” — Mr. Julian Chryssavgis ‘10

“What virtues is environmentalism capable of producing?” — Mr. Samuel Smith ‘10

“Is Christianity’s belief in the afterlife vulgar?” — Mr. Archibald Abrams ‘09

“How do we kill the environmental god?” — Mr. Jeffrey Jeng ‘09

“For those who believe science can elevate the soul, should we reject environmentalism based on our higher belief in science?” — Mr. John Cunningham ‘10

“Is atheist environmentalism really about paganism?” — Mr. Timothy O’Brien ‘10

“Can we only unify in times of crisis?” — Mr. Hassan Muhammad ‘10

“Will we always perceive the children of science as enervating our souls?” — Mr. Daniel Jose ‘10

“What kind of intellectual virtues might noble environmentalism call for?” — Mr. Ross Jacobs ‘10

“Will environmentalism follow egalitarianism or carve a new course?” — Mr. Wesley Hartwell ‘11