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[00:00:01] **Narrator** This is a story about today. That started yesterday. And impacts tomorrow.

[00:00:09] **(archive video)** Hi, I'm Nancy Pelosi. And I'm Newt Gingrich. We don't always see eye to eye, but we do agree our country must take action to address climate change. Together, we can do this.

[00:00:21] **(archive video-Rev. Al Sharpton and Rev. Pat Buchanan)** We couldn't be further apart. I'm on the left and I'm usually right. And we strongly disagree except on one issue. Tell him what it is, Reverend Pat. That would be our planet. Taking care of it is extremely important. We all need to work together, liberals and conservatives.

[00:00:47] **Narrator** Mark Twain was reported to have said history doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes. In the 1960s, auto and industry pollution got so bad that Republican President Richard Nixon established the Environmental Protection Agency and signed the Clean Air Act. And then, a lot of things happened. Energy wars, culture wars, policy wars. And then came the scientists with proof that the planet is warming. And yet -.

[00:01:25] **(archive video-Republican Senate Debate)** Is climate change a fact? No. No, God controls the climate. No.

[00:01:32] **Narrator** So the Religion, Race and Democracy Lab at the University of Virginia ask the question, when did climate change go from a scientific metric to a political hot potato? And what does God have to do with it? Here's what a few people had to say.

[00:01:53] **Bob Inglis** Imagine you're a conservative member of Congress. For some of you here in Boston, Massachusetts, that's going to take a powerful imagination. All right.

[00:02:04] **Bob Inglis** But imagine with me that I said that climate change was nonsense. I didn't know anything about it except that Al Gore was for it. And in as much as I represented a very conservative district in South Carolina that was the end of the inquiry, for me.

[00:02:20] **Rev. Mariama White-Hammond** We have gotten such a toxic point where we don't even stop to listen to what somebody is saying once we know what team they're on, it's like oh-psh can't listen to you.

[00:02:31] **Joel Salatin** When a conservative says the phrase "property rights," what the environmentalist hears is "destruction." And when an environmentalist says "protect the Earth," the conservative Christian hears "bureaucracy, regulations." That's why when I when I embrace creation stewardship as a Christian, people say, "Well, what happened to you? You know, have you been drinking lefty Kool-Aid?"

[00:03:01] **Richard Cizik** I earned my spurs for many years as a conservative, a faithful conservative. I came to work for the National Association of Evangelicals at the start of the religious right's rise in American politics. It was 1980. Ronald Reagan was president. I worked there for a total of twenty-eight years. And so I saw the shift from evangelicals and fundamentalists being not involved in politics, not engaged, to being hyper engaged.

[00:03:31] **Richard Cizik** When I was invited to the climate change conference in Oxford in 2002, I accepted. But I said, don't expect me to change my mind. Don't expect me to sign any statement.

[00:03:42] **Narrator** But then he came back and he bought a Prius.

[00:03:46] **Richard Cizik** The point is, I had a conversion. There's no other way to describe it.

[00:03:52] **Narrator** He took the position that the Bible says "man must care for the Earth." But even worse, he went on NPR and said:.

[00:04:01] **Richard Cizik** I would willingly say I believe in civil unions.

[00:04:04] **Narrator** Ten days later, he was fired.

[00:04:09] **(archive video-Ted Cruz)** Climate change is not science, it's religion.

[00:04:14] **Richard Cizik** We hear from Christian evangelists even today that, well, we don't need to listen to scientists on climate. You meld that with a biblical fundamentalism that is a bit rigid and you have together a noxious brew.

[00:04:32] **Bob Inglis** I think that there is an unholy alliance that formed between the leaders of what passed as the Moral Majority, let's say. And some people with some very specific economic interests when it comes to climate change. When you allow your faith to be used by people with economic interests, how does it get corrupted pretty quickly.

[00:05:01] **Rev. Mariama White-Hammond** For me, one of the starting places has got to be, how did we get ourselves into this mess? We've got to look at our history and understand how we've gotten here, the racism that has caused some people to be hurt so much more than others.

[00:05:23] **Ashish Jha** African-Americans in this country breathe air that's 50 percent more polluted than non African-Americans.

[00:05:29] **Rev. Mariama White-Hammond** We don't tackle that. We'll just be putting bandaids on top of a pustulent and ugly wound.

[00:05:41] **Narrator** Right at the beginning of environmentalism, let's say the 1960s, evangelicals were okay with it. Even Francis Schaefer, famous for his anti-abortion crusade, was onboard.

[00:05:54] **Darren Dochuk** One of his first texts is on pollution. Francis Schaffer comes along and writes this book and says, "We are as evangelicals concerned about pollution, but we never must lose sight of the Christian roots of our environmental concern that man needed to be privileged over nature." At this early stage, there was enough synchronicity for evangelicals to support the movement. This changes by the end of the 70s.

[00:06:22] **Anthea Butler** The story about how evangelicals came into power is about taxes, actually. Taxes and race. Evangelicals masked behind Bob Jones University when it was pressed to integrate the school and allow interracial dating in the 1970s. When the IRS came after Bob Jones, Evangelicals got very upset about this.

[00:06:46] **Narrator** Bob Jones University hired lawyers. They took their case to the Supreme Court and said:.

[00:06:52] **William B. Ball** All of the policies followed by the University are obligatory upon the University as dictated by scripture.

[00:07:00] **Narrator** The Supreme Court did not agree.

[00:07:03] **Anthea Butler** When they had their tax exemption stripped, Evangelicals began to write in. They were upset, you know, started to come into this space of anti-abortion activism and also the ERA, the Equal Rights Amendment.

[00:07:17] **Narrator** And gay rights. And before long, the planet's rights.

[00:07:25] **Kyle Schaap** The environment and environmentalism as an "ism" was understood to be a world view devoid of God and his creative purposes and his eminence in creation. The solutions put forward by environmentalism were perceived to be a threat or contrary to Christian values.

[00:07:47] **Darren Dochuk** But there are other issues as well. In 1970s, and I argue that we need to remember them as well.

[00:07:52] **Narrator** The energy crisis.

[00:07:54] **Darren Dochuk** As far as oilmen in the Southwest are concerned, the reason why America is going to suffer in those energy crises is because they have ceded power, ceded control of oil to foreign powers such as Saudi Arabia, such as OPEC countries.

[00:08:12] **Narrator** And so, they seized on the phrase America first. Sound familiar?

[00:08:17] **President Donald Trump** America first.

[00:08:20] **Darren Dochuk** And these independent oilmen of the Southwest wrap these all these issues altogether and bundle them in. By 1979, an anti-Jimmy Carter pro-Reagan movement.

[00:08:31] **Narrator** Reagan goes on to champion domestic fuel and family values - and wins.

[00:08:37] **Darren Dochuk** Reagan is defending the rights and the freedoms of independent oilmen across the Southwest to drill, drill, drill.

[00:08:47] **Narrator** The fact is, we oil industry has been in an epic battle with itself to control America's political and ideological landscape since oil was first discovered.

[00:08:59] **Narrator** On one side, Big Oil pushing their brand of American Protestantism.

[00:09:04] **Darren Dochuk** Which I call kind of a civil religion of crude that is the opposite of wildcat Christianity. The religious, political, economic culture of these small oil producers.

[00:09:15] **Narrator** Pushing their brand of evangelical Christianity.

[00:09:20] **Darren Dochuk** Well, on the civil religion of crude side, we have, of course, one family that absolutely dominates and it's multiple generations for generations.

[00:09:29] **Narrator** The Rockefeller's. The oil empire begins with John Senior in the late eighteenth hundreds.

[00:09:36] **Darren Dochuk** By the 1890's, Standard Oil controls upwards of 90 percent of oil refining around the globe.

[00:09:43] **Narrator** By John Junior's time, the family is loaded, so he becomes a philanthropist.

[00:09:49] **Darren Dochuk** Perhaps the leading philanthropist in America at that time.

[00:09:53] **Narrator** But a philanthropist pouring profits into the Rockefeller Foundation.

[00:09:58] **Darren Dochuk** Supporting missionaries supporting liberal Protestant causes around the globe, extending kind of the Rockefeller vision of ecumenical religion and internationalist, democratic, progressive politics.

[00:10:12] **Darren Dochuk** By the 1970s and 80s, are the fourth generation of the Rockefeller has in fact begun to use the Rockefeller money to support environmental and other progressive causes around the world. On the other side, this kind of wildcat Christianity rooted again also in the early stages of oil in Pennsylvania, families such as the Stewarts.

[00:10:36] **Narrator** The Stewarts of Union Oil poured and their profits into evangelizing America.

[00:10:42] **Darren Dochuk** All the way to his death in the early 1920s, Lyman Stewart will be really the most important, most powerful funder of fundamentalist Christianity, of wildcat Christianity.

[00:10:53] **Narrator** Lyman starts a church, funds missionaries and builds a conservative Christian college.

[00:11:01] **Darren Dochuk** The notion, too deeply rooted in the oil patch and in the churches of the oil patch, that oil is God given. This is a good thing. The divine blessing on America.

[00:11:12] **Narrator** The next wildcat oil family to fuel the cause was the Pugh's.

[00:11:17] **Darren Dochuk** J. Howard Pugh will have his own charitable trust that will be absolutely essential to the rise of evangelical and political conservatism in the 1940s and beyond. Oil is always in motion. You're always chasing the next frontier, be it the untapped soil or unsaved souls. When J. Howard Pugh passes away, the mantle is passed to the Hunt family, especially Bunker Hunt, who uses his family's oil money in the late 70s and 1980s to help support several religious right causes.

[00:11:59] **Anthea Butler** Evangelicals are very effective in changing the dial politically because they were very media savvy. They knew how to grab a headline. They had networks. There was also oil money being put into some of these organizations.

[00:12:12] **Narrator** Including the Cornwall Alliance, a group of Christian right theologians and scholars who said environmentalism is one of the greatest threats to society and the Church today.

[00:12:25] **Katherine Stewart** They tell us that the environmentalist movement is actually unbiblical. And they produced that DVD series, "Resisting the Green Dragon," a biblical response to one of the greatest deceptions of our day.

[00:12:37] **Kyle Schaap** Resisting the Green Dragon cast environmentalism as this threat to the Christian worldview as an idolatrous worldview that was infiltrating churches and had to be resisted.

[00:12:50] **Katherine Stewart** The idea is for pastors to create teams of congregants that will, as they describe it, advance kingdom values in the public arena. And then they give them tools to create messaging materials to vote their so-called biblical values.

[00:13:02] **Rev. Mariama White-Hammond** A lot of folks look at this term "dominion" that's in Genesis. And basically, people have interpreted it that some people have a right to be on top, the right to be on top of everything. That's what white supremacy is. The belief you have a God given often right to be on top. They don't necessarily think about if we're coal mining, that's stripping out the Earth, that is making things horrible for people. It's making the environment terrible. They believe God will come down and have this great battle with his angels, renew the earth, beat the devil, and then there will be a new heavens and a new earth.

[00:13:41] **Kyle Schaap** There's been this tension for centuries between science and religion.

[00:13:46] **Rev. Mariama White-Hammond** You could go back to the 19th century and begin to talk about how Darwin's theory of evolution really confronted evangelicals.

[00:13:54] **Kyle Schaap** There were these two major camps within the US Church, the modernists, who believed that the teaching of evolution could be consistent with the teachings of the Bible; and the fundamentalists, who said this is a bridge too far. And that kind of culminated in the early 20th century with the Scopes monkey trial. A teacher in Tennessee was taken to trial for teaching evolution.

[00:14:17] **Narrator** During this very public trial, William Jennings Bryant famously won the case for the fundamentalists and the teacher was told to knock it off.

[00:14:27] **Kyle Schapp** But in the court of public opinion, the fundamentalists were kind of laughed into oblivion, but they didn't disappear. They invested in institutions and have come back in later years in the form of a resurging modern evangelical movement.

[00:14:45] **Joel Salatin** Just imagine if the Moral Majority had said, you know what, we think God created the Earth and it's his and we're gonna dedicate keep to ourselves a fresh and a new to taking care of it, which means we're going to start pushing for compost instead of chemicals. And the fact is that factory farming, it pollutes the ground, it

disrespects the chicken. It stinks up the neighborhood. Everything about it is terrible, is against being a good neighbor. So we're going to start buying from local farmers. We want to have it be connected to our food. We want it - you know, you can see the narrative.

[00:15:24] **Anthea Butler** You would think that evangelicals would be involved with environmentalism. After all, this is part of God's creation. But for evangelicals, there was a sense in which this whole push for environmentalism was about liberalism.

[00:15:38] **Bob Inglis** It just became a tribally marked thing that, you know, liberals are for action on climate. We conservatives, we don't talk about that. I mean, from our first six years in Congress, I said that climate change was nonsense and I had the opportunity run for the same seat again. And my son came to me. He said to me, "Dad, I'll vote for you, but you're going to clean up your act on the environment."

[00:16:05] **Narrator** He went to Antarctica in search of evidence. He found it, and then he went to Australia and witnessed the Great Barrier Reef turning white. Denial was no longer an option.

[00:16:20] **Bob Inglis** So I came home and introduce the Raise Wages Cut Carbon Act of 2009. It didn't go well at all. After twelve years in Congress, I got 29 percent of the vote in a Republican runoff. And the other guy got the other 71 percent of the vote, a rather spectacular faceplant in politics.

[00:16:40] **Kyle Schaap** I believe Bob was a pioneer and a visionary and a trailblazer. I think his story may have been a cautionary tale when it happened in 2010. I don't think it is anymore.

[00:16:54] **Richard Cizik** A lot of those religious right leaders that took exception to my advocacy are gone, gone to meet their creator. And yet there is a whole new generation of young evangelicals for climate action.

[00:17:09] **Kyle Schaap** Millennials and Generation Z behind them kind of recognized the danger of marrying their religious commitments with a particular political agenda. They're thinking more deeply about how does my faith inform my politics rather than how does my politics and form my faith.

[00:17:31] **Rev. Mariama White-Hammond** Young people are rising up and speaking truth and naming what's happening. I think the same thing may happen in greater proportion within the Church. I think young people are going to rise up calling for something different. I think the original sin was both a violation of the environmental creation, but also a violation of some of the other members of our same species who we did not treat with dignity. We want to shift. I don't think we can choose either emissions and environmental shift or social justice and relief for the poor. That's one of the things I love about Pope Francis, is he says these two things. They come from the same root. They must be addressed together.

[00:18:32] **(archive video-John Lewis)** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for holding today's hearing. Each and every one of us must cherish this planet. Well, it is likely the only home we may ever know. Combating climate change is not a Democratic or Republican issue. It is the question of preserving this piece of real estate that we call Earth for generations yet unborn.