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Amanda J. Baugh, *God and the Green Divide: Religious Environmentalism in Black and White*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017. Paperback. 213 pages. $29.95 USD. ISBN 9780520291164.

White liberals wringing their hands over the question "Why don't people of color care about the environment?" haven't reflected on the extent to which middle-class white folks have defined "the environment" and environmental problems. Amanda Baugh's ethnographic study of Faith in Place—a Chicago-based interfaith non-profit organization—reveals how one environmental coalition has tackled the "eco-divide" and "green ceiling," which refer to the demarcations and limitations of non-white people in sustainable energy programs and upper administration positions. At the root of the green divide is the fact that if "the environment" means wilderness, "environmental problems" means endangered species, and "environmentalism" means a universal anti-anthropocentric appreciation of nature's intrinsic value then the purview of environmental ethics will be determined by white, liberal, middle-class Americans. Baugh's research demonstrates how one organization used religion pragmatically to change these definitions in order to create a racially and ethnically diverse community. Specifically, Faith in Place attracted racially diverse participants by being unapologetically theological and focusing on social justice. As Director Clare Butterfield put it, "changing bulbs is an act of worship" (43) and that "with global warming, the poor are hurt first and worst." (131)

Baugh's book is a case study on Faith in Place to see how perceptions of race, ethnicity, and class have influenced religious environmentalism. The first chapter places the organization within the context of American environmentalism and shows how it was able to achieve diversity when other groups struggled. The secret, so nicely put in the title, was their primary concern for people, not polar bears. The second chapter focuses on the green cities movement as the particular environmentalism to which Faith in Place did subscribe. Baugh investigates leaders' conception of nature in urban settings and discovers that, despite an attempt to reimagine urban spaces as natural, they still maintain romantic notions of nature as wilderness. Chapters three and four shift to the lay-workers of the organization, articulating people's motivations for joining it and how they were able to attract African-Americans specifically (the trick, it turns out, is to focus on food) and develop a "self-consciously black environmentalism" (85). Chapters five and six turn to Faith in Place's religious characteristics, looking at how its religious underpinnings are liberal white Protestantism masquerading as interfaith commitments. The last chapter looks at Faith in Place's development from distancing itself from mainstream environmentalism as a small non-profit to a thriving urban environmental organi-

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zation. As Faith in Place became more popular and successful it adjusted its message and identity toward more mainstream agendas without alienating its racially diverse base.

One of the real benefits to the field the book offers is that Baugh exposes how scholars of religion and ecology reinscribe racial divisions and limitations when they appeal to a universalist logic in their approach to the study of religions and nature. Insofar as religions have been cast in the mould of "caring for all creation" and ethics is about operationalizing each tradition's inherent "greenness" the appearance of commonality and universality that privileges white interests and experiences simultaneously occludes non-white concerns. Faith in Place achieved a diversity not by solidifying a common ground but by addressing the main obstacles to African American interest and access in environmental issues, namely while elitism. This is a lesson for both organizations and scholars with a concern for racially-diverse coalition building: don't begin with the metaphor that we're all in the same boat or that all religions are the same (i.e., green), but rather with the fact that the experiences and effects of climate change are uneven. The primary aim, then, is not to establish a global ethic but rather to address the needs of those most vulnerable to the political and economic issues that climate change exacerbates.

Baugh's work is both timely and fascinating. Others in the field of religion and ecology would do well to follow her research. Baugh looks at how practices have shaped religion rather than analyzing how green religious ideology could or should be implemented. An ethnographic approach here is helpful, especially through Baugh's analytic that investigates how various religious qualities are integrated into environmental social practices rather than replace traditional faith. In other words, Baugh's presentation of Faith in Place goes beyond the typical ways plurality and diversity are sought, which is by gathering together as many religions as possible. In fact, Baugh shows how such assemblages create only a façade of diversity since assumptions and attitudes for how this plurality should approach environmental problems from within religions is actually window-dressing for addressing concerns primarily connected to race and ethnicity.

Baugh also analyzes the power dynamics that Faith in Place both faces and institutes. On the one hand, Faith in Place's success is in large part because of its leaders' ability to challenge the inherent whiteness of environmentalism. In one compelling story, Veronica Kyle, an African-American woman hired specifically to reach out to African-American communities, attends a conference for religious environmental leaders. After three days of vegetarian meals Kyle calls out the organizers for privileging the tastes of affluent white participants saying, "if you had more black folks here to begin with they wouldn't be

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here by now. They would have left the conference to go look for some meat." (107) On the other hand, Baugh also reveals the dynamics at play within Faith in Place's evaluation of religions. Though Faith in Place presents itself as interfaith there are latent presuppositions about what counts as religion. Members use extra-traditional definitions of sustainability and ecological health to determine when a person is faithful or when a community is aligned with what is posited as its own "green" ideology. Baugh argues that this positions Faith in Place as an example of modern secularism, not as a rejection of religion but as a way to use environmental initiatives to shape both the contours of religious life as well as the criteria for evaluation.

One of Baugh's primary motivations, and a big part of her book's effectiveness, is the desire to show the "messiness" of the relationship between religion and ecology in life on the ground. The reasons why religious practitioners engage in environmental movements are varied and complex. On this important point of departure, Baugh's work could be pushed further by considering two critical thoughts. First, Baugh is an excellent ethnographer with appropriate reflections on her positionality. She includes Kyle's ambivalence of Baugh's work as yet another white scholar building a career by studying "the ghetto." Whether or not ethnographers repeat the clichéd anthropologist observer (and Baugh doesn't) the public still perceives them that way. The power dynamics at play between white ethnographer and black subject are not ignored but neither are they addressed beyond their acknowledgment. Given the unequivocal interest in theology diverse faith-based organizations like Faith in Place exhibit, others who are concerned by these issues and want to follow Baugh down the ethnographic path in religion and ecology should perhaps begin to reflect on how the field can break down the binary between constructivist and descriptive approaches.

A second critical point also related to methodology is that Baugh's use of lived religion as the interpretive framework focuses on participants' motivation. This approach helpfully addresses the complexity of analyzing and describing what is happening when a group of people in one organization coalesce around an environmental initiative for varieties of reasons in a way that focusing on shared ideology ignores; however, shifting the framework from a religion's proof-texted green-ideology to participants' alleged reasons for participating in the organization still focuses on internal experiences as the key to social practices. Both Baugh's and constructivist's approaches attend to attitudes, it is just that Baugh looks at assumptions about race, religion, ethnicity, and class rather than about nature, humans, and salvation. In this scenario, "messiness" seems only to refer to participants' mixed motives. But what about the messiness of outcomes and practices? One of the notorious difficulties in

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analyzing actions pertaining to climate change are unknown results of well-intended behavior. Analyzing land-use practices that are good for the economy but bad for the environment in vulnerable communities will depend on whether one uses a social justice or an ecological framework, but if the analyst wants to show the connection between social justice and ecological issues—as Baugh does—it indeed becomes quite messy to describe these practices. Ethnographers would do well to partner with ethicists and others who use constructive approaches to understand the meaning and significance of land-use practices, local economies, and communal relations with place.

These are friendly critical engagements. There is much to be excited about in the directions scholars of religion and ecology are taking right now. Many would do well to learn from Amanda Baugh's lead.

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