

WHAT WOULD MOSES DO?
ON APPLYING THE TEST OF A FALSE PROPHET
TO THE CURRENT CLIMATE CRISIS

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Desertification brought on by drought. Coastal cities swallowed by the sea. Seasons whose end comes too soon, or not soon enough. Famine. War. These events sound like a description of the day of Y_{HWH},¹ a day when Y_{HWH} judges humankind for the sins they have committed on the earth—and perhaps it is. But the voices declaring the immanence of such events are not those of ancient Israelite prophets but of modern day scientists. These scientists suggest that the amount of carbon dioxide accumulating in the atmosphere is having an adverse effect on the earth's climate by trapping solar radiation which causes temperatures around the globe to rise. As these temperatures rise, some arid and semi-arid regions of the earth succumb to desertification, while polar regions of the earth experience longer melting seasons which lead to rising sea levels. These events spark social changes as large populations of humans are forced to relocate and either share or compete for resources, resources which themselves might become scarce due to the effects of climate change.

The picture is a dire one with frightening consequences, but scientists do not believe the worst case scenario is an inevitability—at least not yet. The primary forces driving climate change are recognized to be anthropogenic. The role that humanity has played in creating this crisis also suggests that we can contribute to reversing it. Currently a campaign exists that promotes a scientifically-endorsed human-based solution to the climate crisis—reducing atmospheric CO₂ to 350 parts per million (ppm).²

¹ See Isa 13:6-9; 34:8-12; Jer 46:9-12; Eze 30:1-9; Obad 15-19; Joel 1:1-2:27; Zeph 1:14-2:15.

² 350.org is an international organization that works to promote a global, grassroots movement aimed at informing and promoting the goal of reducing atmospheric CO₂ levels to 350ppm. More information about this campaign and their activities can be found at their website, <http://www.350.org>. See also the most recent book written by the founder of the organization, Bill McKibben, *Eaarth: Making A Life on a Tough New Planet* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2010).

If humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted, paleoclimate evidence and ongoing climate change suggest that CO₂ will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm to at most 350 ppm, but likely less than that. . . . If the present overshoot of this target CO₂ is not brief, there is a possibility of seeding irreversible catastrophic effects.³

In layman's terms, this means that humanity's dependence on the fossil fuels driving our industrial civilization must be curbed. This does not mean that we must merely refrain from increasing our fossil fuel consumption, but that we must drastically reduce our consumption levels with the ultimate goal of eliminating them altogether. Our existing infrastructure dedicated to the consumption of fossil fuels must find alternative sources of sustainable and renewable energy or shut down operations. This includes those aspects of our society that may not at first seem heavily vested in fossil fuel consumption. One such change concerns industrialized agriculture and the need to pursue an increasingly localized, agrarian lifestyle.⁴ While a specific time frame for action is uncertain, the scope of the project facing humanity invites immediate action.⁵

Just as the consequences of unbridled fossil fuel consumption leading to catastrophic climate change can be compared to the biblical imagery for the day of Y_{HWH}, so also the modern scientific voices calling for human intervention find an analogue in the biblical prophets who

³ James Hanson *et al.*, "Target Atmospheric CO₂: Where Should Humanity Aim?" *Open Atmospheric Science Journal* 2 (2008) 217. This open source journal is available for free download online at <http://www.bentham.org/open/toascj/>

⁴ In her recent book, *Scripture Culture and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible*, Ellen F. Davis outlines many of the theological and ethical problems surrounding modern day land use, with particular emphasis placed on the practices of industrialized agriculture. Her book represents a dialogue between biblical studies and modern agrarianism, allowing each to influence and inform the other.

⁵ "The time available to reduce the human-made forcing is uncertain, because models of the global system and critical components such as ice sheets are inadequate. However, climate response time is surely less than the atmospheric lifetime of the human-caused perturbation of CO₂." Hanson, 2008, 228. Regarding the timetable for action, McKibben argues that the days of identifying this as a problem for our grandkids are over; "Forget the grandkids; it turns out this was a problem for our *parents*." McKibben, *Eaarth*, 16.

called Israel and Judah to repentance. Naturally, it is possible to overextend the analogy, so this study will focus on two points of correspondence. First, as biblical prophets were known to do on occasion, climate scientists observe cosmological phenomena and interpret their significance for the society around them. The prophet Joel observed the massive destruction of the agricultural bounty of the land brought on by a plague of locusts and interpreted its significance as a foreshadowing of the day of Y_{HWH}, a warning to the people of Y_{HWH} that they should repent (שוב) by redirecting their loyalty to Y_{HWH}. The methodologies employed by climate scientists are no doubt radically different than those of the biblical prophets, but, at least insofar as climate change is concerned, their conclusions are less dissimilar. In the case of climate change, the interpretation of the relevant data—rising air temperature over land, oceans, and in the troposphere, rising sea level, surface temperature, and ocean heat content, rising humidity, and declining sea ice, glaciers, and snow cover in the northern hemisphere⁶—confirm the reality of global warming. By tracing the source of this warming to human activity, scientists conclude that a massive and collective act of reversal is necessary to avert an immanent disaster. The Hebrew word for repentance, שׁוּב, could aptly be applied with both its senses, as a turning away from an unhealthy and destructive lifestyle and a turning towards a more healthy and sustainable one. In essence, climatologists have and continue to call out for the necessity of human repentance.

The second way in which modern climatologists find an analogue in biblical prophets is in the resistance they face from those who do not share their occupational insight. The response to the scientific clarion call that humans curb their fossil fuel addiction has more or less fallen on

⁶ This list derived from supplemental material to D. S. Arndt, M. O. Baringer, and M. R. Johnson, Eds., "State of the Climate in 2009." *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*, 91 no 6 (2010) S1–S224, located at <http://www1.ncdc.noaa.gov/pub/data/cmb/bams-sotc/2009/bams-sotc-2009-brochure-hi-rez.pdf>.

deaf ears. In typical prophetic parlance, our society has ears, but they do not hear! Eyes, but they do not see! According to the projections made by the non-profit organization Climate Initiative, an organization that “creates, shares and uses credible models, accessible simulations, and related media in order to improve the way leaders and citizens around the world think about the climate,”⁷ the full implementation of all proposed (official and unofficial) emissions standards made by parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will result in temperatures rising 4°C (7.2°F) over pre-industrial global temperature by the year 2100. This can be compared to the current rise of .74°C (1.332°F) in the 100 year interval 1906-2005.⁸ This type of (in)action, according to Bill McKibben, means that in 2100, we might not be living in hell but “in some place with a very similar temperature.”⁹ And this represents the part of our society that is, more or less, persuaded about and acting on the threat posed by climate change!

Significant portions of society believe climate change is at least a misguided theory,¹⁰ and at most a well orchestrated scientific scandal. The popular fiction book *State of Fear* by Michael Crichton embodies this extreme form of American skepticism surrounding climate change. In the book, a group of eco-terrorists manufacture natural disasters in effort to promote their global warming agenda. The idea that global warming is a conspiracy among scientists does not belong exclusively to the realm of fictional literature. In November of 2009 when an illegal hack

⁷ From the “About Us” page at <http://climateinteractive.org>.

⁸ “Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report. Summary for Policymakers.” Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007, 2. http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr_spm.pdf.

⁹ McKibben, *Eaarth*, 20.

¹⁰ A recent Gallup poll shows that in America (my own context), concern is decreasing and skepticism is increasing. F. Newport, “Americans' Global Warming Concerns Continue to Drop,” March 11, 2010. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/126560/americans-global-warming-concerns-continue-drop.aspx>.

resulted in the release of over a thousand emails from the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit, climate change skeptics fixated on a few select emails whose contents they believed demonstrated that scientists were manipulating data, and the mainstream media dubbed this scandal "Climate-gate." This so-called "scandal" gave an already uncertain and wary public the rational excuse to reject the science supporting anthropogenic climate change and continue about their carbon emitting lives. When the official investigations of the University of East Anglia, University of Pennsylvania, and the British government dismissed any notions of scientific misconduct for all parties concerned, the mainstream media paid little attention.¹¹ It has now been months since the reports of these investigations have been publicly released, and I still find myself explaining to people within my social circle that all allegations suggesting scientific misconduct have been rejected, that there was no hoax. Many remain unconvinced.

How should our modern society navigate between conflicting oracles of well-being and doom? What is the criterion for examining the veracity of truth claims? For a scientific subject like climate change, it comes as no surprise that people are concerned with scientific proof. The conflict our society faces today is that what the scientific community offers as proof, the skeptical community rejects as either insufficient or insignificant. Moreover, the skeptical community is not simply unconvinced by the proof provided, they further contend there is conflicting evidence, proof that global warming is not occurring. The winter of 2009-2010 was a particularly cold one with significant snowfall throughout much of the United States. I was personally overwhelmed by the number of my friends who made numerous assertions on

¹¹ These reports can be found at the following websites: <http://www.uea.ac.uk/mac/comm/media/press/CRUstatements/SAP>, http://live.psu.edu/fullimg/userpics/10026/Final_Investigation_Report.pdf, <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm79/7934/7934.pdf>.

Facebook that the snow falling outside was sufficient proof that global warming was not occurring! Naturally, the scientific community interpreted the snow differently.

The role of proof in helping determine the veracity or falsity of a truth claim is another point of correspondence between our own society and that of ancient Israel. One place in the Hebrew Bible where proof functions in such a way can be found in a section of Deuteronomy where the legislation regarding prophets anticipates a predicament that will arise in the ensuing narrative of the Hebrew Bible. Deuteronomy 18:18-22 reads,

I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brothers, one like yourself. And I will place my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them everything I command him.
¹⁹And whoever does not keep my words, the ones which he speaks in my name, I myself will hold that person accountable. ²⁰However, the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I do not command him to speak or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. ²¹Should you say to yourself, “How shall we know the word which Y_{HWH} did not speak?” ²²If a prophet speaks in the name of Y_{HWH}, and the word does not take place or come true, that is a word which Y_{HWH} did not speak. Presumptuously did the prophet speak; do not fear him.¹²

I see this type of thinking reflected in the way my own social circle approaches the issue of climate change. The question is framed in the negative; the anticipation is that the audience will be more concerned about the identity of the false prophet—the one whose message they need not fear—than the identity of the true prophet—the one to whose message they will be held accountable. For my Facebook friends, the cold winter of 2009-2010 was incontrovertible evidence against global warming. Those same friends were noticeably silent on the subject throughout the uncharacteristically long and hot summer of 2010.

This generally negative posture raises an interesting question regarding the text in Deuteronomy: How does one go about authenticating a true prophet? One could reason that the

¹² All translations are my own.

principle regarding a prophet who speaks presumptuously works in reverse—“If a prophet speaks in the name of Y_{HWH}, and the word *does* take place or come true, that is a word which Y_{HWH} *did* speak.” While this reasoning is certainly possible, certain considerations discourage such a reading. Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (MT 13:2-6) entertains the possibility that some prophets might deliver omens or portents, signs of future destruction that ultimately come true, but that they would use these to persuade Israel to pursue “other gods.” Such prophets are looked upon negatively. According to verse 5, they are to suffer the same fate as the prophet in 18:20 who speaks in the name of Y_{HWH} a word Y_{HWH} did not command him—they are to die. Given that in chapter 13, a prophet in Israel whose prediction comes true may yet be a prophet whom the people are to reject, even kill, it seems unlikely that the logic of chapter 18 would function differently.¹³ According to Robert Alter, the “general sense” or operating assumption within this passage is that “a true prophet will speak the truth.”¹⁴ As to whether the passage sufficiently establishes the means by which to actually determine the veracity of a prophetic message, this seems doubtful.

If this passage and its characteristically negative posture is not sufficient for establishing the veracity of a prophetic word, this poses the question as to its sufficiency for adjudicating

¹³ I do recognize, however, that this passage does not concern itself with whether or not the words spoken by these prophets are words which Y_{HWH} placed in their mouth. It is possible, given that the words of these prophets function as a divine test of loyalty (verse 3 [MT 4]), that their message originates from a divine commission of deception (1 Kgs 22:19-23). In such a case, the words are those which Y_{HWH} placed in the mouths of his prophets, but based on other criteria are to be rejected by the people. These are words that Y_{HWH} did speak, but not ones that Y_{HWH} intends them to heed. The question then remains, does the theology of the Hebrew Bible support the supposition that every prophecy that comes true, whether deceptive or upright, is ultimately rooted in a divine commission? Regardless of the answer to this question, it is clear that the criterion of Deuteronomy 18:22 is not the paradigmatic approach to prophecy in the Hebrew Bible—a point to which this paper will soon arrive—but rather one that must be used in conjunction with other criteria and considerations.

¹⁴ R. Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004) 971.

between conflicting claims like those of climate scientists and their skeptics. This is not to suggest that the criterion of Deuteronomy 18:22 be cast aside, but rather that a distinction be made between recognizing the criterion as basically true and as paradigmatically true (or, as true in the general sense versus true in the literal form). The former need not necessarily imply the latter. Israel's own prophetic history—her engagement with and development of this criterion—will help establish this point.

The concerns of Deuteronomy 18:20 are two-fold—a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods and a prophet who speaks what Y_{HWH} does not first speak to him—and each is addressed in turn in the narratives of 1 Kings 18 and 22. In the former passage, the conflict lies between the prophets of Baal who speak in the name of other gods and Elijah who speaks in the name of Y_{HWH}. The narrative unfolds consistent with the theology of Deuteronomy 18, the prophets who call upon the name of Baal are discredited and Elijah who calls upon the name of Y_{HWH} is vindicated; it is his word, not theirs, that comes true. The narrative of 1 Kings 22 addresses the other concern of Deuteronomy 18:20, that of a prophet who speaks what Y_{HWH} does not first speak to him. Zedekiah son of Chenaanah and about four hundred prophets prophesy in the name of Y_{HWH} in favor of battle against Ramoth-gilead. Though encouraged to align his message with the popular consensus, Micaiah son of Imlah echoes the sentiment of Deut 18:18—that Y_{HWH} places Y_{HWH}'s words in the mouth of his prophet—when he says, “As Y_{HWH} lives, what Y_{HWH} says to me, that I will speak” (1 Kgs 22:14; also reflected in Num 22:38; 24:13). Ultimately, Y_{HWH}'s message conflicts with the consensus when he prophesies disaster. When Micaiah is imprisoned until the peaceful return of the king of Israel as prophesied by

Zedekiah and the other prophets, Micaiah responds saying “If you return in peace, Y_{HWH} has not spoken by me” (1 Kgs 22:28). Thus, the entire narrative reflects well both the general sense and the literal form of the criterion of Deuteronomy 18:22. If Micaiah's word does not come true, then Y_{HWH} has not spoken by Micaiah. This is the point that receives emphasis. While the subsequent narrative records the fulfillment of Micaiah's prophecy, it is unconcerned with explicitly establishing within the narrative the veracity of his prophetic commission. As in Deuteronomy, the posture of the passage is framed in the negative. If Micaiah's word does not come true, then Y_{HWH} has not spoken by him.

If this were the only occasion in the Hebrew Bible where the situation reflected the concerns of Deuteronomy 18, the prophetic criterion could be construed as not just basically true but as paradigmatically true. This, however, is not the case as demonstrated by the narrative of Jeremiah 28. In a similar vein to the previous narrative, two prophets, both of which speak in the name of Y_{HWH}, deliver conflicting prophetic messages. The situation is also similar in that the prophet who speaks presumptuously, Hananiah, prophesies peace while the prophet eventually vindicated, Jeremiah, prophesies destruction. The way in which this narrative diverts from the 1 Kings 22 narrative is that the application of the Deuteronomy 18:22 criterion is not applied to the prophet prophesying destruction but of the one prophesying peace: “For the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes true, it will be known that the prophet is one whom Y_{HWH} has truly sent” (Jer 28:9). As James Crenshaw points out, the criterion in Deuteronomy 18:22 concerns specifically prophecies of doom. “The assurance that the people of God need not be afraid of the prophets who speak a word that does not come to pass (Dtn 18₂₂)

would be meaningless unless the prophecy were one of woe.”¹⁵ What Jeremiah has done is effectively rework the criterion from a posture of skepticism to an avenue of affirmation. In so doing, he retains its general sense—a true prophet will speak the truth—but develops it beyond its literal form and original application.

Thus far, little has been said that directly challenges the criterion of Deuteronomy 18:22. The Hebrew Bible clearly develops the criterion beyond its literal form; the question remains as to whether or not and how far the Hebrew Bible will diverge from this literal form. If treated absolutely or paradigmatically, this criterion for identifying a false prophet would ultimately undermine the rich prophetic tradition in Israel and Judah; certain classical and literary prophets would be implicated as false prophets or as prophets who sought to subvert the criterion set forth in Deuteronomy. In Ezekiel 26, Ezekiel receives a word from Y_{HWH} concerning the utter destruction of Tyre. Sixteen years later after Nebuchadrezzar's forces fail to capture the city, Ezekiel receives another word from Y_{HWH} wherein Y_{HWH} offers Egypt as a consolation prize (Eze 29:17-21). The blatant failure of the first prophecy should have, according to Deuteronomy 18:20, 22, implicated Ezekiel as one who spoke presumptuously, perhaps even leading to his death. Because the word which he spoke did not come true, it must not have been a word spoken by Y_{HWH}. But far from having been a word which Y_{HWH} did not speak, the text explicitly introduces the prophecy as one which Y_{HWH} does indeed speak. If one follows Deuteronomy 18:22 absolutely, the prophetic failure was not Ezekiel's, but Y_{HWH}'s! It becomes significant, therefore, to recognize that the Hebrew Bible is not of one voice when it comes to the prophetic

¹⁵ J. Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict: Its Effect Upon Israelite Religion*, BZAW 124 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1971) 53.

word. Another significant deviation from the standard set forth in Deuteronomy 18:22 is that of Jeremiah 18:1-10. In this passage, Jeremiah receives a word from Y_{HWH} regarding the potter and his clay. This word, like that of the one Ezekiel receives, operates according to a different logic than that of the criterion in Deuteronomy. For, like the potter who can rework the clay when it spoils in the potter's hands, so also can Y_{HWH} rework Y_{HWH}'s intentions when the nation about which Y_{HWH} speaks turns, either away from or toward Y_{HWH} (see also Jer 26:17-19; Ezek 33:13-20). This belongs to the larger theme in the Hebrew Bible concerning the “repentance” of God or of God changing his mind.¹⁶ In so far as prophecy in the Hebrew Bible is recognized as conditional, the nonfulfillment of such prophecy is, as Jeffrey Tigay observes, “the result of the people repenting, not a sign that the prophecy was false.”¹⁷

One final aspect of the Hebrew Bible which ultimately prevents the literal form of the criterion in Deuteronomy 22:18 from serving as the paradigmatic treatment for validating the authenticity of a prophet or prophetic message concerns the scope of the predictions in the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible. While some prophecies, like those mentioned above in 1 Kings 18, 22, and Jeremiah 28, involved prophetic predictions that would come true in the immediate future, much of the Hebrew Bible addresses events that fall beyond the immediate horizon of human cognizance. For these prophecies, a standard that essentially says “wait and see” is of very little usefulness. It is on this basis that Alter posits “that this text does not have in mind literary prophets but rather prophets who addressed mundane issues of everyday life,

¹⁶ For example, J. Willis, “The ‘Repentance’ of God in the Books of Samuel, Jeremiah, and Jonah,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 16 (1994) 156-175, and R. B. Chisholm Jr., “Does God ‘Change His Mind,’” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 152 no 4 (1995) 387-399.

¹⁷ J. H. Tigay, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996) 178.

making short-range predictions that might be quickly verified or falsified by the events.”¹⁸ In a similar vein, Tigay believes that “the predictions in question were of natural events, . . . marvels unrelated to the content of the prophecy.”¹⁹ He takes passages like 1 Samuel 9:6 to suggest that prophets built up their credibility by these short-range predictions.

It is clear from this survey of select passages that Deuteronomy 18:22 is not the paradigmatic standard for navigating the complicated issues surrounding true and false prophecy in the Hebrew Bible. While the argument could be put forth that its general sense is in force throughout the Hebrew Bible, its literal form is both reworked and rejected. In particular, the negative posture of the criterion required reworking so that it could serve, not just for the identification of a presumptuous prophet, but also the verification of an authentic prophetic word. There was also a stream of tradition in Israel that accepted prophets whose prophecies failed to materialize. This, at least in part, reflects the conviction that much of prophecy is conditional. Y_{HWH} is free to change Y_{HWH}'s mind, particularly in light of the people's response to the prophetic word. Finally, that some of the prophetic tradition spoke of events beyond the horizon of human cognizance rendered the criterion insufficient in itself to capture the fullness of Israel's prophetic tradition.

What implications can our own society, the one that remains unconvinced and unconvicted by the scientific voices declaring what essentially amounts to modern day destruction oracles, draw from this prophetic tradition? I would like to propose three suggestions. First, I suggest that the limits of a negative posture toward these scientific voices along with the

¹⁸ Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, 971.

¹⁹ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 178.

merits of a more positive posture receive due consideration. Skeptical Science, a website dedicated to addressing global warming skepticism, addresses this negative posture on their main page:

Scientific skepticism is healthy. Scientists should always challenge themselves to expand their knowledge and improve their understanding. Yet this isn't what happens in global warming skepticism. Skeptics vigorously criticize any evidence that supports man-made global warming and yet uncritically embrace any argument, op-ed piece, blog or study that refutes global warming.²⁰

Healthy skepticism does not fixate on the negative or dissenting side of a discussion, but considers *both* the weaknesses *and* merits of any argument. The re-framing of Deuteronomy 18:22 seen in Jeremiah allowed Israel to move beyond an exclusively negative posture of refutation wherein only a presumptuous prophet was identified to incorporate a positive avenue of affirmation whereby a prophet could be identified as divinely commissioned. A skeptical society, if it is to foster healthy skepticism, should foster an avenue of affirmation, a way for the scientific community to bring the science of climate change into the public square in a meaningful way. Snow outside one's window is hardly a reason to close one's ears to the possibility of a warming planet. To adopt a saying of Jesus, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear!"

Second, I suggest our society consider the limits of a proof-centered approach to the subject of climate change. I am not suggesting the scientific community bears no responsibility for making cogent arguments based on verifiable empirical evidence. Absolutely they should be

²⁰ The Skeptical Science website maintains a running list of arguments made by climate change skeptics, each with a scientific response. The responses are hyperlinked, most often to peer-reviewed scientific literature. Each response is written at three different levels of scientific proficiency, basic, intermediate, and advanced. The website also offers free cell phone applications making their material readily available in a number of different social contexts. Their website is located at <http://www.skepticalscience.com>.

held to the highest standards of excellence! Nevertheless, when we, non-specialists recognize the complexity of the data and science involved, we must come to terms with the fact that our limited knowledge makes it difficult for us to serve as the definitive arbiters of this crisis. If catastrophic warming is the only conclusive proof we will accept, then we are essentially embracing our judgment at the expense of our own salvation. The day of Y_{HWH} was never about Y_{HWH}'s capricious decision to needlessly threaten humanity; it was Y_{HWH}'s means of calling the people of Y_{HWH} to repentance. When confronted by the reluctant prophet Jonah, the king of Nineveh choose to presume upon Y_{HWH}'s grace and repent in hopes that the disaster could be averted (Jonah 3:9). Repentance is difficult; it means confronting oneself and coming to terms with the destructive path of one's life. If our society has indeed lived a destructive life, we owe it to ourselves and especially to subsequent generations to presume upon grace and to repent in hope that a better future awaits us.

At a practical level, what will it take for such a widespread movement of repentance to sweep across the societies of the earth? Perhaps the story of Jonah can service us here as well. The repentance of the entire community in Nineveh was achieved by the decree of the king (Jonah 3:7-8). My third suggestion is that we take seriously the positive role that government can play in mobilizing our society to action.