

## Our Children Are At Risk

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[Evangelical Environmental Network](#) needs to get it right, before it preaches to others

Once again, partisan political activists are defending job-killing regulations that will harm the most vulnerable people, while providing no demonstrable environmental benefits. Unfortunately, these activists are also working hard to seduce sincere church leaders.

Well-meaning, prominent liberal evangelicals are using radio spots to target Republicans on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. We know and respect several of these leaders. Yet the activists' panic over speculative or imagined risks to American children dominates their proclamations, even as they condemn legions of Third World children to death from real diseases the simplest of modern technologies and living standards would prevent.

The [Evangelical Environmental Network's](#) ads claim the congressmen want to "delay" and "disarm" Environmental Protection Agency regulations that the EEN asserts would safeguard the health and neurological development of unborn children, by reducing mercury emissions from power plants.

In our opinion, this is another misinformation campaign.

As pastors and parents, we stand tall in protecting children. But as concerned civic leaders actively engaged in energy and environmental discussions, we know the EEN radio spots are partisan and misleading. We cannot leave them unchallenged.

First, we must look at the facts. There is no credible evidence that American children are born with dangerous levels of mercury in their blood, or have impaired mental or neurological abilities due to mercury. The Centers for Disease Control says mercury in US children is well below even EPA's "safe" levels.

The Food and Drug Administration, US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and World Health Organization have all established risk levels that are 2-3 times less restrictive than EPA's. Under those guidelines no American children, in the womb or otherwise, are remotely at risk from mercury from power plants, fish or other sources.

As independent natural scientist Dr. Willie Soon has documented (read his report at [www.AffordablePowerAlliance.org](http://www.AffordablePowerAlliance.org)), US power plant emissions account for barely 0.5% of mercury in America's air. The rest comes from forest fires, volcanoes and other sources. Even closing every US power plant will not make us safer than we already are.

Disregarding these facts, EPA's proposed mercury, cross-state pollution and "maximum achievable control technology" rules for major power plants and other generating systems will increase electricity prices by up to 24% in just a few years, NERA Economic Consultants and other experts predict. That means factories, schools, offices, shops and hospitals will be forced to raise prices, cut services and lay people off.

The result will be more families unable to afford proper heating, air conditioning, nutrition, healthcare and prenatal care, or even pay their rent or mortgage. More children will have trouble in school and suffer impaired mental, physical and emotional well-being.

The EEN religious leaders claim they want to "protect life," and "believe children are entitled to abundant life." However, their actions, alliances and political agendas violate those proclaimed beliefs at every turn.

Christian organizations need to balance their concern for the environment with a healthy concern for human life. In our book, *Personal Faith Public Policy*, Tony Perkins and I note:

"Unfortunately, a number of religious leaders have joined the alarmist crusade and are attempting to make the environment the most important issue in the church. In some ways they are correct in pushing for the church to get involved. In other ways, many

of them are like the young prophet who ran to King David before he heard the message. (See 2 Samuel 18:22–28.) They have zeal and a desire to change things, but they do not have the message the church needs at this time.”

A million abortions are performed in the United States every year, according to the “pro-abortion rights” Guttmacher Institute. Hispanic women are 2.7 times more likely than non-Hispanic white women to have an abortion, while Black women are four times more likely.

Can EEN cite even one instance where it expressed outrage or even concern about these deaths? Can it cite one instance when it criticized abortionists, or supported calls to reduce federal funding from abortion clinics that end so many minority lives?

In poor, tropical regions, hundreds of thousands of children die in agony every year from preventable insect-borne diseases. But radical environmentalists campaign against the use of insecticides and the powerful insect repellent DDT – ensuring that the carnage continues.

Environmentalists also oppose hydroelectric, coal, nuclear and natural gas for generating abundant, reliable, affordable electricity. Yet hundreds of thousands of children die every year from lung diseases, caused by breathing toxic pollutants from heating and cooking fires, and from intestinal diseases resulting from spoiled food and unsafe water – because their communities lack electricity.

Can the EEN cite one instance when its belief that “children are entitled to abundant life” caused it to condemn these radical green policies...or resulted in a call for access to insecticides and plentiful, dependable, affordable electricity?

The EEN should proclaim a universal right of access to modern, life-enhancing, life-saving technologies. It needs to recognize that regulations too often impose unacceptable costs on the poorest and most powerless among us. It needs to terminate its alliances with groups whose policies result in imposed poverty and racial genocide.

Until then, EEN’s warnings, advice and radio spots should be taken with a shovel of salt.

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