

# Determining the Content of Excellent Creation Care and the Need for a Center for Environmental Stewardship and Dialogue

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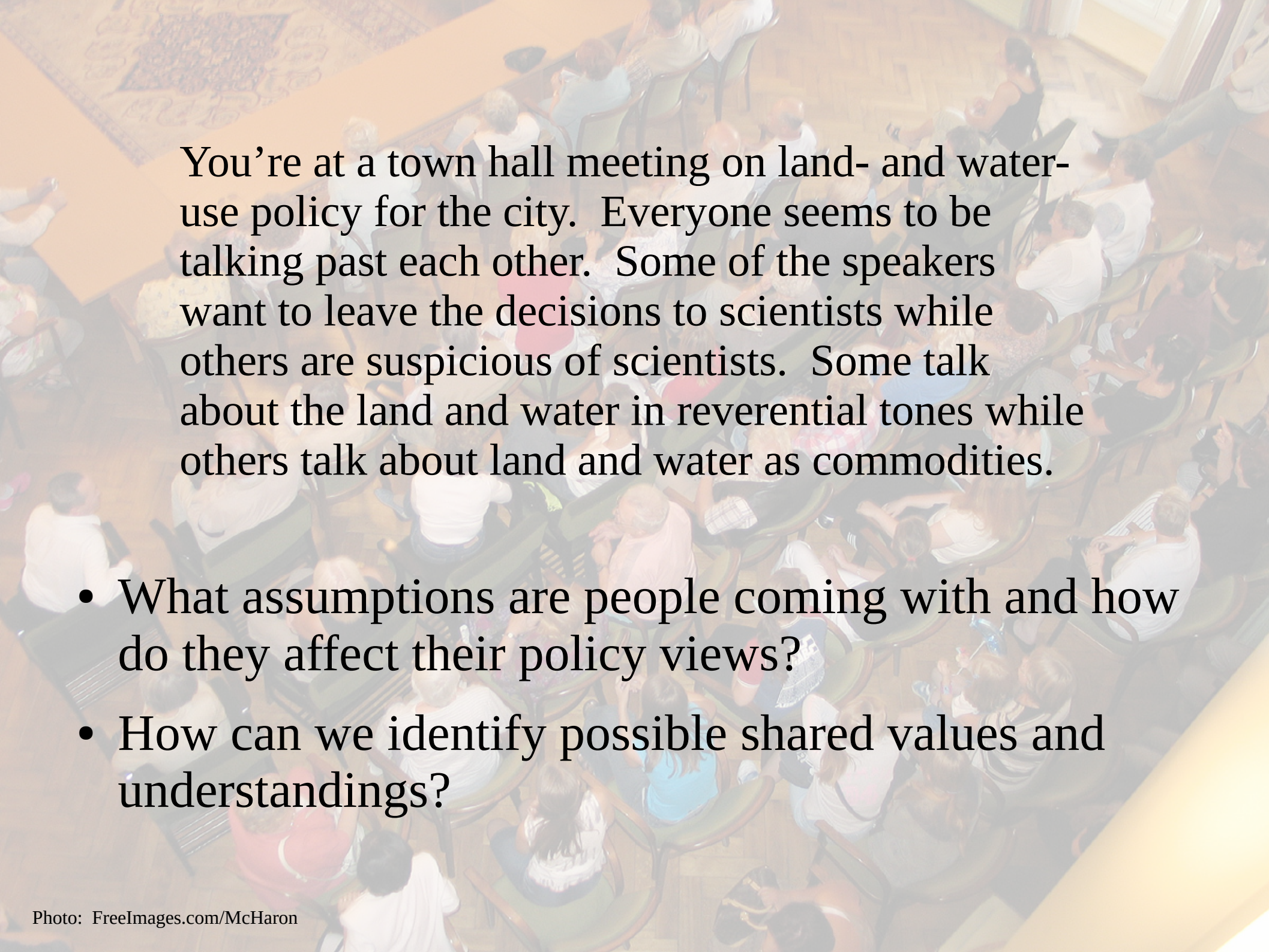
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Imagine the Following Scenario ...







You're at a town hall meeting on land- and water-use policy for the city. Everyone seems to be talking past each other. Some of the speakers want to leave the decisions to scientists while others are suspicious of scientists. Some talk about the land and water in reverential tones while others talk about land and water as commodities.

- How do we figure out good environmental stewardship given such a range of views?
- How can we enable dialogue to identify shared values and understandings?



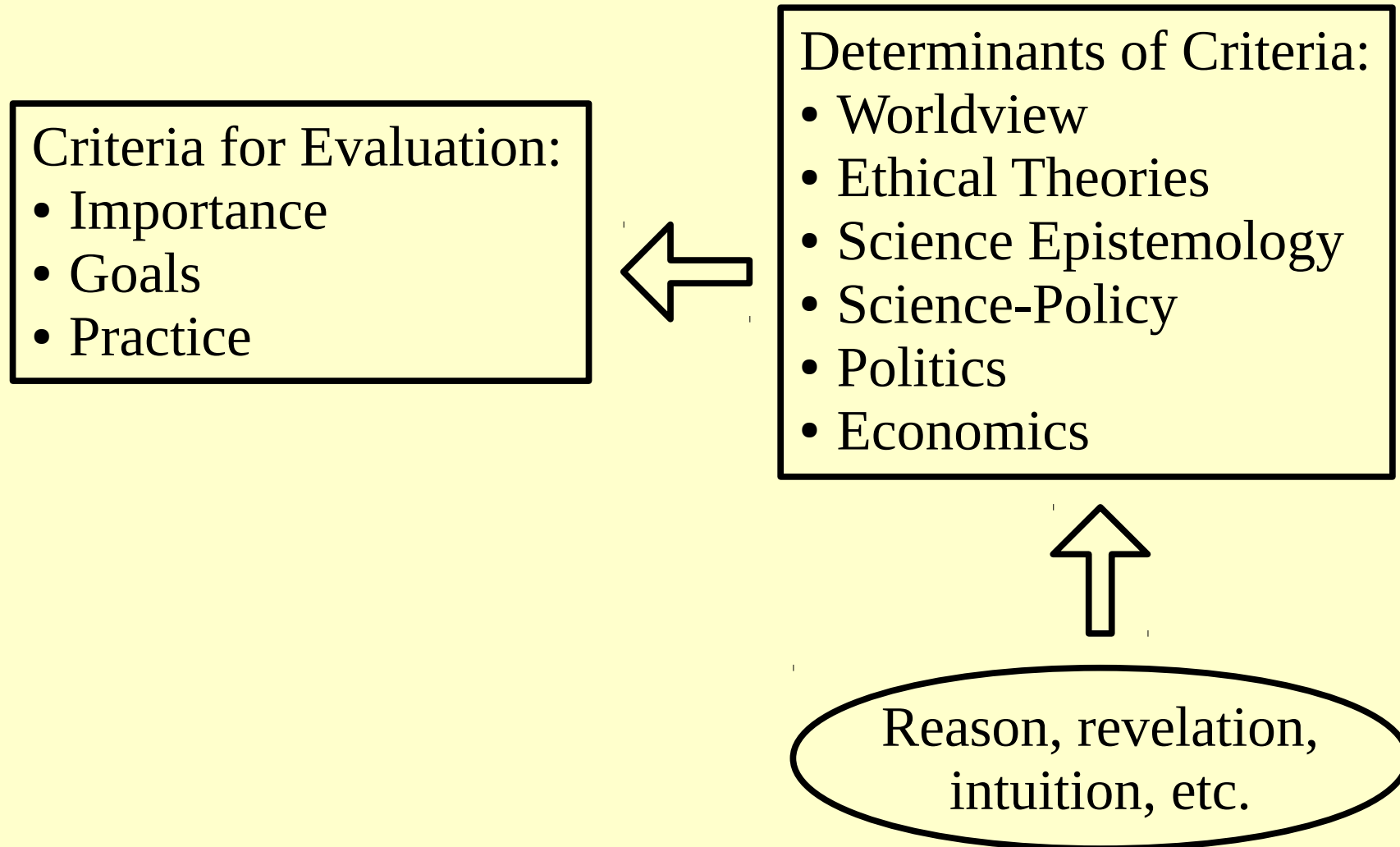


# Preview

- Good environmental stewardship requires synthesizing many fields of knowledge.
- Goals in a synthesis of the determinants of good environmental stewardship.
- Presuppositions can prevent a good synthesis.
- Fruitful alternative approaches to synthesis.
- The need for a Center for Environmental Stewardship and Dialogue.



# Good Environmental Stewardship Requires Synthesizing Many Fields of Knowledge







Spiral Staircase, Vatican Museums (photo © User:Colin / Wikimedia Commons)



# Examples of the Determinants of the Criteria for Evaluation

- Worldviews: E.g., nature as created by a good God, matter in motion, monism.
- Ethical Theories: E.g., intrinsic vs. instrumental value; deontology, virtue ethics, and consequentialism.
- Science Epistemology: E.g., hypothesis testing, Popperian falsification, Kuhnian paradigm shift.
- Science-Policy: E.g., policy prescriptive, fact-value dualism, etc.
- Politics: E.g., individual vs. societal action.
- Economics: E.g., market vs. governmentally-based solutions.





Photo: Pexels.com/Pixabay



# Goals in a Synthesis of the Determinants of Good Stewardship

- Logically consistent between determinant conclusions.
- Properly weighted: Not just 1-2 determinants.
- “Guardrails” to prevent destructive logical extremes.
- Provides guidance on both well-known and lesser-known issues.
- Example of a weaker synthesis: Bible teaches us God cares for His creation and science teaches us what to do: Just 2 determinants.







# Presuppositions are Ways of Understanding We Uncritically Use

- Affects how we process the meaning of the determinants.
- If left unexamined can impede our synthesis of determinants.
- Example: “Sin model”: Preference for solutions that remove the cause of a problem.
- Some kinds of predispositions: Worldview, ethical theories, and processing predispositions.

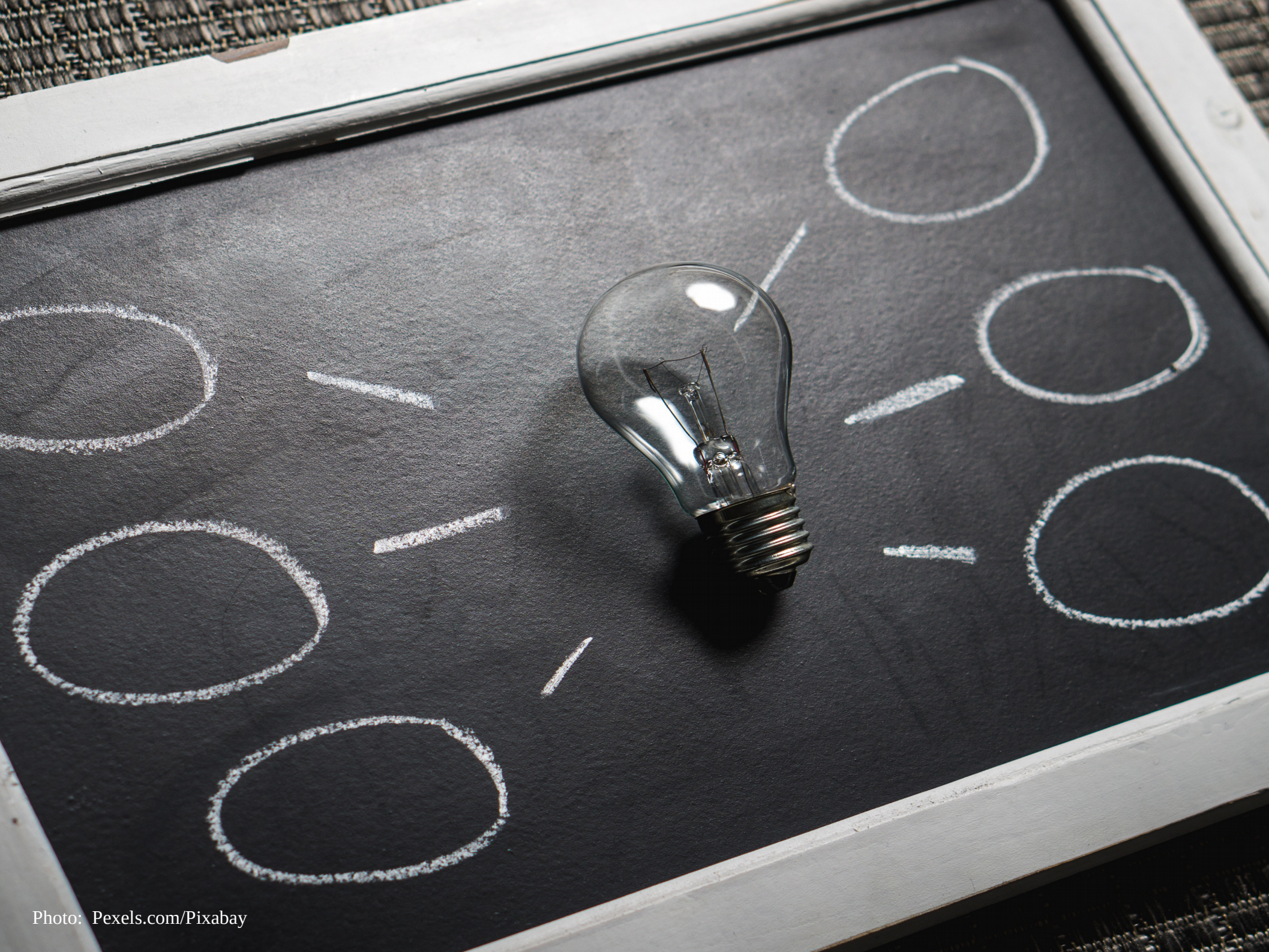


# Presuppositions Can Unknowingly Pre-condition Our Synthesis

- “Is” dictates “ought”
- “Positive pristine wilderness”
- Implicit Romantic worldview
- Static nature worldview: Preserve nature in current form
- Biological disciplinary perspective
- Default to categorical imperative
- Default to consequentialism
- Dialogue to convince vs. understand
- “Sum of the parts”









# Weaknesses in Our Current Practice of Creation Care

- Premature narrowing of policy options.
- Unrealistic expectations of policy prescription from the Bible and science.
- Solutions that lack social stability.
- Dynamics of destructive conflicts.



# Fruitful Alternative Approaches to Synthesis

- Consider a multiplicity of solutions.
- Utilize multiple understandings of environmental value.
- Recognize multiple forms of knowledge.
- Avoid zero-sum thinking: E.g., consumption and environmental destruction.
- Acknowledge inherent paradoxes and legitimate differences.
- Realize people and relationships matter.



# The Need for a Center for Environmental Stewardship and Dialogue

- Counteract mutual suspicion and distrust.
- Provide a neutral meeting ground for dialogue.
- Provide an incubator for synthesizing many views.
- Nearly all environmental issue-related organizations are:
  - Advocacy-oriented, or
  - Focused on 1-2 determinants.

## Determinants of Criteria:

- Worldview
- Ethical Theories
- Science Epistemology
- Science-Policy
- Politics
- Economics



# A “Third Way”: Analyzing What Makes Good Creation Care

*The Nature of Environmental Stewardship*  
(Pickwick Publications, 2016)

<http://nature.johnny-lin.com>

- Sample chapter on website
- Amazon: Print, Kindle

