

## April 27, 2009: Our Values

(<http://www.readthespirit.com/ourvalues/2009/04/hoffman1-are-you-green.html>)

### Are you Green? ... Yes? But how "Dark" or "Bright" Green is that?



***THIS WEEK, I'm welcoming Dr. Andrew Hoffman, the Holcim (US) Professor of Sustainable Enterprise at the University of Michigan. He teaches in the Ross School of Business and the School of Natural Resources & Environment, has written seven books (see a couple of them linked below) and is a leading expert in balancing our desires for development and environmental health. [Please, add your Comments this week to what I'm sure will be a fascinating series.](#)***

#### **And here is Dr. Hoffman ...**

There's a schism emerging between two camps within the environmental movement.

On the one extreme, the dark green groups—such as Greenpeace USA and Friends of the Earth—seek radical social change to solve environmental problems, most often by confronting the corporate sector. As Alex Steffen explains it, they tend to “pull back from consumerism (sometimes even from industrialization itself).”

On the other extreme, the bright green groups—such as Conservation International and the Environmental Defense Fund—work within the market system, often in close collaboration with corporations, to solve environmental problems. Again, as Steffen explains: This “is a call to use innovation, design, urban revitalization and entrepreneurial zeal to transform the systems that support our lives.”

Steffen coined these terms in 2003. Now, six years later, this division now is widening and resulting in serious sniping.

New books with titles like *Green Inc.* and *Hijacking Sustainability* criticize the bright greens as having been co-opted by companies—and helping them to greenwash their polluting activities.

In return, bright greens dismiss the dark greens as out of touch radicals that only complicate the environmental agenda by resorting to extreme tactics like burning down chalets at Aspen or genetic engineering labs at Michigan State University.

I think this antagonism is unhealthy for the movement. The reality is that both sides are mutually dependent. They both need each other to accomplish their goals.

But what do you think?

Have you heard these terms: bright green and dark green?

Do they make sense to you—or do you see the challenges of the environmental movement, perhaps, from an entirely different perspective. Get involved this week and tell us what think.