

Evangelicals join scientists in fight against global warming

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Some evangelicals join scientists in battle against global warming

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WASHINGTON (ABP)—A new alliance between prominent evangelical leaders and their secular scientific counterparts to fight global warming is drawing bipartisan support in Washington—but also has some evangelical detractors.

A coalition of 28 scientists, theologians, ethicists and pastors announced a new collaborative effort on human-caused climate change. The announcement marks an escalation in the budding evangelical environmental movement and signals a willingness for some scientists and conservative Christians to put aside their differences over how and when creation came about in order to prevent its premature end.

The group outlined its concerns in a document called “An Urgent Call to Action” and addressed to President Bush, political leaders and evangelical and scientific communities.

“We agree that our home, the earth, which comes to us as that inexpressibly beautiful and mysterious gift that sustains our very lives, is

seriously imperiled by human behavior,” the statement read.

“The harm is seen throughout the natural world, including a cascading set of problems such as climate change, habitat destruction, pollution, and species extinction, as well as the spread of infectious diseases, and other accelerating threats to the health of people and the well-being of societies. Each particular problem could be enumerated, but here it is enough to say that we are gradually destroying the sustaining community of life on which all living things on Earth depend.”

The letter’s signers include Eric Chivian, Nobel laureate and director of the [Center for Health and the Global Environment](#) at Harvard Medical School; David Gushee, a Christian ethics professor at [Union University](#); Rich Cizik, vice president for governmental affairs at the [National Association of Evangelicals](#); NASA climatologist [James Hansen](#); and [Joel Hunter](#), the pastor of a church near Orlando. Hunter recently declined to become the president of the Christian Coalition after disputes with the group’s board over broadening its focus to include environmentalism, among other things.

A rival group of evangelicals who dispute human-caused climate change pooh-poohed the announcement. A statement from the [Interfaith Stewardship Alliance](#) called the latest announcement “just another attempt to create the impression of growing consensus among evangelicals about global warming. There is no such growing consensus.”

Tony Perkins, president of the Washington-based conservative group [Family Research Council](#), said in an e-mail to his supporters: “The media seeks to spin the story as a coalition of evangelicals, when in fact it’s fueled by only a few outspoken voices on global warming, some of whom have used their organizations as a platform for airing personal views. ...Unfortunately, the liberal media are using some groups’ mixed message to focus away from the protection of life and marriage to global warming, a subject on which scientists—let alone evangelicals—have yet to form a

consensus approach.”

But the document’s signers said climate change is real, harmful and can be avoided.

“If current deterioration of the environment by human activity continues unabated, best estimates are that half of Earth’s surviving species of plants and animals will be extinguished or critically endangered by the end of the century,” said [Edward Wilson, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author](#), in a statement on the collaboration released by the National Association of Evangelicals. “The price for future generations will be paid in economic opportunity, environmental security and spiritual fulfillment. The saving of the living environment is therefore an issue appropriately addressed jointly by science and religion.”

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