

Gore Urges New Covenant Baptists to Take Up Mantle of Creation Care

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ATLANTA—Former Vice President Al Gore challenged 2,500 fellow Baptists at a Thursday luncheon with prophetic zeal to take up the mantle of reversing global warming.

Speaking to a luncheon crowd at this week's New Baptist Covenant Celebration, Gore recalled words of an old Sunday school teacher who taught the purpose of life is to glorify God.

Former
Vice
President
Al Gore
speaking
at the
New
Baptist
Covenant
meeting
in
Atlanta,
Ga.

“If we heap contempt on God’s creation, that is inconsistent with glorifying God,” he said.

Most of Gore’s speech was an adaptation of the slide show that was basis for his Oscar-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, presenting evidence an impending climate crisis if governments do not act to reduce greenhouse emissions. Along with new data, the customized presentation featured new slides peppered with Bible passages to “put it in the context of my own faith as a Baptist.”


“The evidence is there,” he said. “The signal is on the mountain. The trumpet has blown. The scientists are screaming from the rooftops. The ice is melting. The land is parched. The seas are rising. The storms are getting stronger. Why do we not judge what is right?”

Gore expressed hope that creation care would become a major initiative of a new coalition of Baptists across North America united around issues like justice and concern for the poor.

“I think that there is a distinct possibility that one of the messages coming out of this gathering and this new covenant is creation care—that we who are Baptists of like mind and attempting in our lives to the best of our abilities to glorify God, are not going to countenance the continued heaping of contempt on God’s creation,” he said.

Gore joked about losing the controversial 2000 presidential campaign, but insisted the environment is neither a Democratic nor Republican issue.

“This is not a political issue,” he said. “It is a moral issue. It is an ethical issue. It is a spiritual issue.”


<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See latest photos and the latest video clips from the New Baptist Covenant Meeting. (And go here to see our complete coverage of the event).

America has the power to do something about global warming, but what is lacking is the political will, Gore insisted.

“Don’t tell me we can’t solve this climate crisis,” he said. “With one week’s worth of the money spent on the war in Iraq, we’d be well down the road.”

Politicians in Washington will get serious about addressing the issue when public opinion reaches a tipping point and demands it, Gore said.

“Come let us reason together,” he challenged Baptists, “and tell one another the truth, inconvenient though it may be, about the crisis, including the opportunity that we now face.”

“The ancient prophet laid the choice before the people,” he said: “Life or death, blessings or curses. Therefore choose life so both thou and thy seed may live.”

Gore recounted numerous large challenges that Americans have overcome in the past, from the Declaration of Independence to the “greatest generation” during World War II.

“We have to take a different perspective on this crisis,” he said, “because never in the past has all human civilization been at risk.” That perspective, he said, is the one taught in the Scripture, “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have set in place, Lord what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?”

“This is our home,” Gore said of planet Earth. “We will make our stand here. It is at risk.”

“It is not ours,” he continued. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.”

“We have everything we need to do the right thing to save its grace and beauty for our children and their children,” he said, “everything, that is, with the possible exception of political will.

“But ladies and gentlemen, as Americans we know that political will is a renewable resource.”

Gore said he was disappointed that some Baptists have tried to undermine his message of stewardship of natural resources.

“Too many spokespersons—who don’t really speak for me but who claim to—have said global warming’s not real, this is just a myth and etcetera,” he said. “When did people of faith get so locked into an ideological coalition that they’ve got to go along with the wealthiest and most powerful—who don’t want to see change of a kind that’s aimed at helping the people and protecting God’s green earth?”

Mercer University President Bill Underwood, an organizer of the New Baptist Covenant Celebration, thanked Gore for a “prophetic voice” on global warming, which he described as “the great moral crisis of our age.”

Former President Jimmy Carter stepped to the microphone to announced, “We’re going to be considering what to do as a result of this New Baptist Covenant meeting.”

“How many of you think we should join Al Gore in being one of the strongest voices on earth?” Carter asked to resounding applause. “Does anyone disagree? OK, now you see that was a unanimous vote. Thank you very much.”

Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center of Ethics, introduced Gore with a plaque honoring him as 2007 Baptist of the Year and a symbolic Bible with a green cover.

“The Bible is God’s green book,” Parham said. “The green Bible gives us the responsibility to guard the garden. The green Bible calls us to love our neighbors. And my friends the only way we can love our neighbors across time is to leave them a decent place to live.”

Parham said he hoped Gore would carry his green Bible with him in his travels. “I think that with this green Bible and good science he will awaken and activate goodwill Baptists to become active in caring for the earth,” he said.

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