

THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

**THE CENTER FOR HEALTH AND THE GLOBAL
ENVIRONMENT AT HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL AND
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS**

PRESS CONFERENCE

**LEADING EVANGELICALS, SCIENTISTS LAUNCH
ENVIRONMENTAL COLLABORATION**

SPEAKERS

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DR. ERIC CHIVIAN: Welcome to this historic press conference, organized by the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School and the National Association of Evangelicals. I am Eric Chivian, director of the center – and I want you to notice that Jim McCarthy and I are both wearing polar bear ties for this event.

All of us are here this morning to tell you about the start of a remarkable new coalition of scientists and evangelicals who have joined forces to protect the Creation – the global environment. When my close friend Richard Cizik and I were having lunch more than a year ago, we talked about the dangerous degree of distrust between many scientists and evangelicals because despite well known differences on some issues, these two groups clearly shared a deep reverence for life on Earth and a profound concern and sense of urgency about what human activity was doing to it.

It was critically important, we believed, that if we were to make any progress in addressing such issues as global warming and habitat destruction, these two enormously powerful communities in our society had to work together, and yet they were hardly speaking to one another. Richard and I proposed that we convene a meeting of prominent scientists and evangelical leaders to break this impasse, and we soon asked Ed Wilson to join us.

Some 30 leading scientists and evangelicals met over three days at a private retreat last month. We reviewed the science, about which there was no disagreement, that the natural world is imperiled by human behaviors and policies, especially by our unsustainable burning of fossil fuels and our degradation of living systems. Human health and life are also highly endangered by these activities, with the disadvantage placed at the greatest risk.

We agreed that there was no such thing as a Republican or Democratic, a liberal or a conservative, a religious or secular environment, that we all breathe the same air and drank the same water and relied on the same organisms for our survival. We discovered that we shared a deep moral commitment to preserve this precious gift we have all been given, and we pledged, all of us, to do everything in our power to protect it. That is why we are here today and that is why we are releasing this joint statement that you have in your packets.

This coalition is but six weeks old. It has only just begun. And we don't yet know how it will be organized, how it will develop, and all the activities that it will plan. But what we do know is this: that we have begun a critically important dialogue, that we scientists and evangelicals are committed to speaking with one voice about the global environment, that we will reach out broadly to involve other colleagues in our work, that we will inform political leaders and policymakers from both parties of our efforts,

including at meetings this afternoon and tomorrow morning on Capitol Hill, that we will bring our two communities together for a large public meeting in the near future, and that this initiative, we are convinced, will grow in size and influence, and that it has the capacity to capture the attention and imagination of millions of Americans to awaken them to the urgency of our concerns and to move them by our shared commitment to protect life on Earth.

Now I turn the podium over to my friend and colleague in this initiative, Richard Cizik.

REVEREND RICHARD CIZIK: Good morning. Thank you.

DR. CHIVIAN: Thank you.

REV. CIZIK: Good morning. My name is Rich Cizik and I'm the vice president for Governmental Affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals. It's my great delight to be here with all of these men and women, particularly Eric, who I would have to say, as head of the Center for Health and Global Environment at the Harvard Medical School – this event would not have happened, Eric, without you – without your passion, your intellect, your sensitivity to spiritual things. Sensitivity to the things of God I think have made this possible, and it's extraordinary.

The National Association of Evangelicals began its own journey toward responsible care of the Creation in 2004 when we released this landmark document called "For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Engagement," an extraordinary document that chronicles our responsibility in public life and for the care of Creation.

After the release of that document four years ago, in 2006 in February, many of our leaders in the NAE and other evangelical leaders released this document called "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action," and as a result, I think many leaders outside our two communities of religion and science, they would say that global warming has turned from a partisan issue of debate among politicians into a moral concern for all Americans, and that's an extraordinary development. It's right.

In the summer of 2006, Eric suggested lunch with E.O. Wilson, probably the world's most renowned scientist. And I'll have to admit to being intimidated, in spite of having met world leaders and president. Intimidated – no need. What I discovered of course was a man of great intellect, warmth and humility. And the three of us shared – Eric and myself – this desire to do something different to protect our Creation. And thus was born the idea that Eric and I had discussed a number of weeks earlier: a dialogue between science and religion, which was held in December at Melhana Plantation in Georgia. It's my hope and prayer that the conversation that began that day will blossom and grow into a national and international movement.

Obviously as evangelicals, we believe that God will judge us if we destroy, through the loss of biodiversity, human-induced climate change and the like – God will judge us for destroying the Creation, and therefore we as evangelicals have a special obligation, a duty of stewardship to be more vigilant in fact than others. And so next month, in this same vein, the NAE will announce a first-ever partnership with the EPA, the Environmental Protection Association’s Energy Star program to reduce energy consumption in our respective 45,000 churches from 54 denominations.

Today we want to explain the consensus that led to the call to action, signed by those here and in the audience. And by standing together, we as evangelicals are saying that science can be an ally in helping us to understand what Creation is telling us about itself and about its maker. Great scientists are people of imagination. So are people of great faith. We desire to imagine a world in which science and religion cooperate together, minimizing our differences about how Creation came to be to work together to reverse its degradation. We will not allow – evangelical Christians with scientists here today – we will not allow it, the Creation, to be degraded, destroyed by human folly.

Thank you. Eric?

DR. CHIVIAN: We will now hear from our extraordinary panelists to my right and left, esteemed leaders in the scientific and evangelical communities who will speak about their environmental and associated moral concerns and about our new collaboration. Their bios are in your packets, so we will introduce them only by name. Their statements are also in your packets.

Jim Hanson and Cal DeWitt will start by addressing the question, what is the magnitude of the threat we face to life on Earth, scientifically and morally. Jim?

DR. JAMES HANSEN: Thank you. Climate change is happening. Animals know it. Many are trying to migrate to stay within their climate zone, but some are running out of real estate. They are in trouble.

Humans are beginning to notice climate change, but most people are unaware of the urgency for actions to avoid real dangers. Dangers most irreversible include extermination of species, disintegration of ice sheets and sea level rise, and increase of climate extremes.

One quarter of carbon dioxide that we put in the air by burning fossil fuel will stay there forever – more than 500 years. If we burn all fossil fuels without capturing and sequestering the CO₂, we will create a different planet. We will destroy Creation. We do not blame anyone for the present situation. Until recently, the consequences of our actions were not clear. We can still avoid dramatic climate change. We must stop the growth of CO₂ emissions now and reduce emissions in the next few decades, and by perhaps 80 percent before the end of the century. Other air pollutants must also be reduced, and there will be many benefits of reducing emissions, especially to energy independence and national security.

And my comments that touch on policy are my personal opinion, but I believe it is time for us to support and even demand policies that adequately address these climate and energy matters. We owe that to our children and grandchildren so they can enjoy the full wonders of Creation.

Thanks.

DR. CAL DEWITT: If we listened – if we listen to what Earth is telling us, both directly and through a scientist like Dr. Hansen, if we stop to behold the Creation around us and also to see what we are doing to it, we can hear the voice of the biblical prophet Ezekiel: “Is it not enough for you to drink the pure water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?” Echoing this in our day: Is it not enough for you to enjoy a pleasant climate? Must you also destroy the climate system? Is it not enough for you to enjoy the great myriad of creatures? Must you also extinguish them? Such destruction and extinction as we now face brings sorrow to their maker.

Our immediate moral imperative is to stop for a moment, or a day or more, to behold the beauty of the Earth and to observe its degradation. Biblically, Jesus still invites us to behold the birds of the air, to behold the lilies of the field, and God invites us, everyone, to behold the magnificent animals. But scripture laments, “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.” If we stop to behold as we now must, we can rediscover the beauty of the Earth, and through this we can find that we ought not only be takers from the Earth, but ought to return its service with service of our own in gratitude, a “con-service” – a conservation.

Many American police cars carry the motto, “To serve and to protect,” from Genesis 2:15, reminding us that we ought to be more than takers. This motto reminds us that everyone ought to serve – the Hebrew word “avad” – and protect – the Hebrew word “shamar” – the garden and the Creation. More than takers, we are caretakers. By returning Creation’s service with service of our own, we care for Creation, we restore what has been spoiled, we preserve the species and care for the climate system we hold in trust.

REV. CIZIK: Drs. Peter Raven and Randy Isaac will next speak.

DR. PETER RAVEN: The projected loss of perhaps half of all species of plants and animals on Earth during the course of the century that we’ve just entered represents and extinction as catastrophic as that which ended the age of dinosaurs 65 million years ago, but the cause in this case is us and us alone. We are the ones who are responsible.

Current mass extinction results from pressures associated with rapidly growing numbers of human beings, our increasing expectations for individual consumption, and our continuing and spreading use of often unsustainable resources. In the words of Patriarch Bartholomew I, the destruction of nature is, quote, “brought about by an

economic and technological progress which does not recognize and take into account its limits.”

Each of the species we’re driving to extinction represents a unique entity that once gone will never exist again. Species of course have become extinct regularly over the course of time and the species that are alive today represent only a very small proportion of those that have ever lived, perhaps something like 3 percent. Today, however, the rate of extinction for which we are responsible is thousands of times faster than the rate at which new species originate, and that rate is growing rapidly.

Because we’re entirely dependent for our lives on other organisms and simply would not exist without them, I am delighted to be working with Christian evangelical leaders to try to find new ways to protect them. The abundant productivity and diverse properties of these organisms hold vital keys to attaining social justice and alleviating poverty around the world. Whether we realize it or not, our continued existence, many of our dreams of a better life, and much of our inspiration and joy depends on them. In caring for our common home, we share a cause that inspires us all. As Edward Brown points out, the church must be mobilized if all the rest is to happen. So must we all, which is why we delight in trying to do it together.

DR. RANDY ISAAC: I’m Randy Isaac, director of the American Scientific Affiliation, a fellowship of Christians in science.

In our vast universe, as far as we know, Planet Earth is the only place where a rich diversity of life exists. God has created a diverse array of species that thrive in a web of interdependence. Each species has a purpose-driven existence, to paraphrase Rick Warren’s best-selling book. Each species fills a critical niche in the dynamic balance of nature. Throughout the history of life on Earth, the number and types of species have changed in response to changes in the environment. But whenever the environment changed too rapidly for species to adapt, large numbers of species became extinct.

As human beings, we are dependent on a healthy ecological system for our own survival. If our environment changes too rapidly for the current balance to be sustained, the very existence of many species, and even of our human race, could be threatened. But long before we reach that stage, the poor and the weak segments of human population will suffer more than anyone as their sources of food and water dwindle.

Scientific analyses have shown clearly that human activity is causing an acceleration of changes on Earth. Without urgent, prudent action, the pace of change could accelerate alarmingly, causing irreversible damage to the ecological system upon which human survival depends. We have a collective moral obligation to work together and do all we can to reduce the factors that could cause loss of biodiversity and ultimately massive human suffering.

Those of us who are Christians in science recognize that both our faith and our professional vocation call us to unite in action to preserve God's creation and to help humankind.

DR. CHIVIAN: Now David Gushee and Edward Wilson will examine the question, what is unique about our collaboration and what contribution can it make? David?

DR. DAVID GUSHEE: Scientists and evangelicals, some at least in each community, have been locked unfortunately in a relationship of conflict and mutual misunderstanding since at least the Scopes Monkey Trial. The dialogue that occurred at Melhona demonstrated the possibility of a significant healing of the breach between our two communities. We discovered surprising common ground on a shared concern for the endangered creation. We likewise shared a deep sense of moral obligation to address the most important environmental or creation-care issues of our time.

I think it is fair to say that most of us were not just surprised but astonished by the depth of our shared moral commitment, despite the obvious theological differences that exist in some cases. I believe that leaders of the scientific and evangelical communities have the capacity to change the national dialogue about the environment. From science, from faith or from both, we feel morally compelled to address pressing environmental problems before it is too late. This is not just a technical policy question; it is a moral imperative and must be taken on as such with the kind of energy, passion and commitment that only a morally compelling cause can generate.

The statement that we released today reflects the shared moral passion that animates us and that we hope and pray will spread across our nation. It is my hope that our primary achievement will be to light a fire under all irrelevant sectors of American life to move much more aggressively to address the needs of an ailing created world, leading to changed personal lifestyles, business decisions, social attitudes and government policies.

As we engage in this work together, it may lead to a second historic achievement, improving the relationship between the scientific and religious communities in America.

DR. EDWARD O. WILSON: Science and religion are the two most powerful social forces in the world. The so-called culture wars between them needlessly blocked full cooperation, as the previous speakers have noted, between secular scientists and religious faithful in solving some of the greatest problems facing humanity today, among which the most fundamental is the deterioration of the environment of Earth. Although climate change and exhaustion of natural resources are by themselves paramount in importance, there is one less well understood process linked to them that is both huge and irreversible, and that is the ongoing loss of Earth's biodiversity, or, if you will, the Creation.

If current deterioration of the environment by human activity continues unabated, half of Earth's surviving species, plants and animals – as noted by Dr. Raven – will be extinguished or critically endangered by the end of the century. One quarter, it's been estimated, could leave us in the next 50 years due to climate change alone. The price for human generations into the far future is going to 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.

The problem of global conservation can be solved. The resources to do it exist. The cost will not be high. We've already made estimates of how much it would cost. And the benefits are immense beyond calculation. At the end of the day, however – and this is the point substantially – the main point of today's meeting – the direction we take will be an ethical decision. It will have to have a religious intensity. A civilization able to envision God and an afterlife and to embark on the colonization of space is surely going to find the way to save the integrity of this magnificent planet and the life that it harbors because, simply, it is the right thing to do and an ennobling responsibility for all of us.

REV. CIZIK: Joel Hunter and Rita Colwell will answer this question: Where do we go from here in terms of educating the public and policymakers?

DR. JOEL HUNTER: My name is Joel Hunter and I'm one of a growing number of local pastors who intends to do what is right in caring for God's creation. For the evangelical Christian, God's mandate to protect the garden is still a moral imperative for today. There is an emerging awareness among churches that protecting the environment is another way of protecting life – preserving life, specifically for the poor, who are least able to be insulated from environmental deterioration. And unless we protect the vulnerable, we are not representing Jesus very well.

We are glad to be working with our friends in the scientific community. They have the facts that we need to present to our congregations. We have the numbers of activists that will work through the church and the government and businesses to make a significant impact.

We believe that in these days, God is putting together groups with a common cause who may have been adversarial at times in the past, but in this new collaboration, the world will be healthier and safer for everyone.

DR. RITA COLWELL: As you've heard repeatedly this morning, it's very clear, from the very fact that this group stands here today together speaking in unison about the need for protecting our environment, that this moment is in fact historic. We've made some remarkable discoveries about each other, the most significant being that we do agree that we have to act, and we must do so quickly. The task of informing and educating our constituencies – our students, our congregations, the public, policymakers – is critical, urgent and monumental.

I speak as a scientist, trained as a microbiologist and a molecular biologist. My world has revolved around the microorganisms, those creatures that are too small to see with the naked eye, but comprising the unseen world that works prodigiously in our behalf. Their diversity is absolutely essential to the well being of all life on this planet. And we don't know the full diversity of these life forms, those that we can't see, yet we know that if we lose untold numbers of microbial species, that occurs each time an organism, a plant or an animal becomes extinct because of the commensal symbiotic flora that is associated with them. How to explain this unseen life and the value of it? That makes our task difficult, but it's one example of the magnitude of the challenge that we have to meet.

Another aspect is that infectious diseases are global in nature. We're just beginning to understand how significant climate and seasonality are in the rise and fall of epidemics. The infectious diseases that are driven by vectors – and a good example are the mosquitoes that carry the malaria parasite – they are being altered, the mosquitoes, in their patterns of distribution and behavior by global warming. So we're going to be affected by climate change in ways that we really don't understand fully. And so therefore it's a mutual intent to determine how we can best educate all of our constituencies to every avenue of communication and to employ all of the tools of the media. And not least is the task of educating our young people so that they can assist us in protecting their future.

Our environment is complex. The biology that exists in the environment comprises the biocomplexity that maintains the equilibrium and the robust nature of our living planet. We simply cannot continue the experiment we are presently carrying out – namely to allow global warming to go unchecked. The continuing loss of biodiversity surely is going to have consequences that are unknown as yet but that will determine the survival of our human species, the survival of our grandchildren and their children.

Thank you.

DR. CHIVIAN: And finally, Jim McCarthy and Cheryl Johns will address the question, where do we go from here in terms of educating the scientific and the faith communities?

DR. JIM MCCARTHY: Good morning, and thank you, Eric.

The joint statement issued today is newsworthy and remarkable, in part because it demonstrates how mistaken perceptions of a different community's perspective can at times mask opportunities for the pursuit of common interests.

Some of us who were drawn to the December meeting of scientists and Christian evangelical leaders at the Melhana Plantation in Southern Georgia were surprised to find that we had previously harbored significant misperceptions about the perspectives of the other community.

At this meeting, scientists discovered among our evangelical colleagues a deeper respect for knowledge generated by science than some of us had thought likely. Moreover, I think that some of our evangelical colleagues were equally surprised by the scientists' widespread respect and reverence for all life on Earth. Professor Wilson's recent book entitled "The Creation" served as a crucial icebreaker in our conversations.

Speaking more generally, many scientists' preconceived notions regarding the faith community have left them unprepared to imagine the cooperative spirit and anticipated synergies articulated in our urgent call to action. It is incumbent upon the scientists in this endeavor to use our various forums within the scientific community, publicly, including publications, lectures and meetings, to broaden understanding of the opportunities for this cooperative effort.

And among the scientists at Melhana, there was also a sincere expression of interest in responding to requests from our colleagues in the faith community for scientific information relating to biodiversity and climate change which could be used for pastoral position statements and continuing education programs.

Thank you.

DR. CHERYL JOHNS: My name is Cheryl Johns. I think that Richard and Eric took a great risk asking a Pentecostal preacher to stand in front of a camera and turn a maybe – the possibility of turning a news conference into a revival meeting. However, I do want to convey passion this morning and a sense of urgency.

It's difficult for us to translate to our faith communities the rapport, the mutual respect, the critical awareness that was present at our recent meeting between scientists and evangelicals, but we are compelled to do so. Our task is to help our communities overcome the illness of nature deficit disorder that affects not only our culture at large, but also our churches.

This task is multifaceted. First, it is a matter of transforming the affections, teaching our people that love of Creation is an extension of the love of God. Second, it is a matter of transforming lifestyles and values, creating awareness that conservation and stewardship is part of the Christian life and witness. And third, it is a matter of transforming Christian theology, raising awareness that God's mission to save people is part of God's intention to restore all of creation. Finally, a matter of educating for justice and compassion, realizing that it is the poor of the world that are most acutely affected by global climate change.

So we call upon those responsible for theological education, for Christian discipleship, for pastoral ministry to integrate materials from both the scientific and Christian communities regarding Creation care into their programs of discipleship and study. The educational task ahead is a prophetic one, done so with an awareness that the Creator's spirit, who brooded over the face of Creation at the dawn of time, compels us to

speak with urgency and passion regarding our vocation as caretakers of God's beautiful and glorious world.

DR. CHIVIAN: Thank you, panel, for those remarkable presentations.

Richard and I will moderate the Q&A discussion – open the floor – but before doing so, I want to announce that we just received a statement of support from Senator Obama. We will have them at the door for press who want them on their way out. In your packets there is a statement from Senator Lugar, and I believe we also have copies available, perhaps at the door, from Senator Olympia Snowe. So those three are all available too.

Please identify yourselves and your affiliation. With your questions, address a question to a specific person on the panel when you speak.

Open.

Q: Adele Banks, Religion News Service. I'm wondering if Richard Cizik could explain the NAE's role in this, given that some people who criticize this movement say that the entire board isn't on board. Could you speak as to whether there are just individual evangelical leaders involved, or whether the NAE has endorsed this?

REV. CIZIK: I think it's really important for everybody to understand the changes that are occurring within evangelicalism from just the last year. And the answer to your question, Adele is this: The NAE board has endorsed this dialogue. I think that's really important because it indicates that we acknowledge as the NAE that there are evangelicals who are not yet with us on this, and we understand that, and we reach out in comity and friendship to those and are saying, if you have questions, doubts, if you're a skeptic, please join us in dialogue with these ladies and gentlemen here. That's our answer. The board has affirmed, endorsed this dialogue and looks forward to what may ensue in terms of achieving a consensus in full about all of these issues, not just climate change but the threats to biodiversity and the like.

Q: (Off mike.)

MR. : Why don't you wait for a mike, sir? Thank you.

Q: My name is Michael Fishman (sp). I'm a member of the National Press Club. I address my question to either of the co-chairs. Are there any plans that you have for expanding your membership to other religious and scientific organizations?

DR. CHIVIAN: Well, we intend to reach out to our colleagues in the scientific and evangelical communities. We want them to join us in this effort. Over the next several months we will do that. We are planning a large public meeting some time this year with our two communities. We haven't yet had the discussion about whether we will reach out to other religious faiths. We need to have those discussions.

Richard, do you want to comment on that?

REV. CIZIK: I think it's important to know that there are organizations that already endorse the dialogue, such as the Evangelical Environmental Network, EEN as it's called, and one of the signers of EEN is Dr. Jim Ball. So we already have other organizations in the religious community that have endorsed the dialogue, and we will expand our numbers. I'm confident. I'm expecting that we will have scientific as well as religious groups join us. And in the short term, that's how we will define success. We are committed to goals – not necessarily specific public policy goals, but we are committed to achieving goals in reaching out to others and having them join us officially.

DR. CHIVIAN: Yes.

Q: Felicity Barringer with the New York Times. You are in Washington at a moment when there has been virtually daily a new bill on climate change dropped into the Senate hopper and more expected today and in the coming weeks. You just said that you are not here specifically to talk about public policy, but you are in Washington at a moment when this policy does seem to be shifting. Are you all going to take a stand on any of the measures before Congress? Or how are you going to interact with the political process?

DR. CHIVIAN: Well, I mentioned the letters from various senators. We're going to be meeting with Senator Boxer this afternoon and Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart tomorrow. We're also meeting with the offices of Congressman Dingell and Pelosi and Senators Obama and Lugar. We will let them know about this initiative. I believe our call to them is the call that we have to others, which is to put aside whatever political and ideological differences they may have with their colleagues. We have to work together on these global environmental changes.

This group has demonstrated that we have the ability to put aside whatever things we don't agree on to focus on the most important issues of our time: how the climate is threatened, how living systems on this planet are threatened. And we will make the same call to our political leaders and our policymakers.

Others on the panel want to comment on that as well? Richard?

REV. CIZIK: We as evangelicals happen to be, in a certain sense, American exceptionalists, and that's to say that we believe, we passionately accept the notion that America should lead on all of these issues, from climate change to biodiversity, habitat destruction, et cetera. And we are implicitly saying we do not believe that America has led as it should.

So we're putting politicians and other governmental leaders, public servants on notice that this is a priority to us and we want to see action.

DR. CHIVIAN: Our country had a leadership position in the Montreal Protocol, which has protected the stratospheric ozone layer. We believe it should assume that same leadership position on issues of climate change and loss of biodiversity.

Q: Rachel Martin with National Public Radio. Several of you touched on this particular issue, but I'll put the question to Jim McCarthy because he talked about it most.

You mentioned that during the meeting in Georgia there were a lot of misconceptions that both groups had about one another. Could you articulate what those misperceptions and how you got to the other side, how you built consensus out of that?

DR. CHIVIAN: Well, I expected that some of my evangelical colleagues would see me as a latte-sipping, Prius-driving, New-York-Times-reading, endive-munching person – (laughter) – and I might see them as Hummer-driving, Bible-thumping, fire-breathing pastors.

REV. JOHNS : Tongues-speaking Pentecostals. (Laughter.)

DR. CHIVIAN: And we discovered that we were both speaking from our hearts and our minds, that we really liked each other, that we were there because we shared a very deep and profound concern for what was happening to the Creation, to the global environment, and that we had an enormous sense of urgency that the general public and our political leaders and our policymakers were not understanding that sense of urgency, and that whatever differences we might have on some issues, we had to focus on the things we passionately agreed upon, which you have heard about this morning.

REV. CIZIK: Jim?

DR. MCCARTHY: Yes, thank you. I think that was an excellent answer, Eric. I think we could just take this issue that has been mentioned in other comments, and in my comment as well that – I actually wasn't certain that many of my scientific colleagues would be comfortable using in discussion the term that Professor Wilson chose for his book, to be talking about what we talk about every day as scientists as the Creation, and yet I was surprised; we quickly became very comfortable with that term.

And with respect to "the Creation," I wasn't certain that we could sit together for a couple of days and talk about the Creation without finding what might be differences lurking in our perceptions as to how it came about tangling our discussion. So just to reiterate, it was remarkable that we quickly came to realize that we shared exactly the same reverence and the same concern about what is happening to the Creation, and this became the central focus of the rest of our meeting.

Q: (Off mike) – with Prime Time America. I have a question first for the faith-based people on the panel, which is, Dr. Cizik, you mentioned something about churches becomes involved in Energy Star programs. Can you see this playing out to the point

where pastors would be asking parishioners to support companies that are pro-green, or boycott companies that are egregious in their environmental stands?

REV. CIZIK: I think that's going to happen indirectly. Incidentally, this man is a real leader in our movement, Matthew Sleet (ph). Thank you, Matthew.

MR. : (Off mike.)

REV. CIZIK: (Chuckles.)

Let me say this: Some of those choices are already going to be made for us. For example, evangelical leaders have met with the management of Wal-Mart, and Wal-Mart is going to be putting products on their shelves which are prescreened, in effect, to be green. In other words, they will go to suppliers who are already enacting measures that will be green, in effect.

And so, yes, we're going to be saying to our constituency, first and foremost, that you can do something about your church and your home. And those are, for example, choices that we have made, my family, the Ciziks, have made those decisions, not just about how we heat and cool our home, but the kind of car we drive. And so, yes, we're going to be challenging our constituency on those personal lifestyle choices as well as the church decisions that need to be made to conserve energy, and ultimately, yes, the choices we make as consumers, absolutely.

DR. CHIVIAN: Any other – Dr. Hunter?

DR. HUNTER: Yes, we have putting together just a rudimentary pastors' toolkit, as it were. There are 350,000 churches in this country, and most of the pastors feel a sense of responsibility to train their people in Christian discipleship, and they will do so if they have the knowledge and the tools. And so what we want to do is we don't want to go right away to the, okay, let's boycott this company because it's not green. That's a divisive kind of strategy, and pastors are very sensitive about dividing their congregations. But most pastors want to know biblical references. They want to know resources. They want to know what they can teach: Give us 10 things to do as individuals; give us 10 things to do as a church; give us a sense of legislation that could be helpful.

We're not specifically ready to recommend particular legislation yet, but with a broad education – (audio break) – NAE, but there is far more. I mean, when you take – the Roman Catholics have a very responsible social policy, Southern Baptists, others. With that broad education, there will be a very, I think, quick turnaround on this issue. This is one of those issues that's not going to take a long learning curve. If people are given what they can do, and it's from a personal and a church and a community and a national constructive manner, then they're going to respond.

So we're putting together some materials for them. There is just a – this is just a very rudimentary prototype that you can see out there, but there will be other things included in this pastor starter kit that will help pastors really educate their congregations.

REV. CIZIK: I'll follow up to say one thing additionally. In our household, it's the mom and the wife who challenges the husband and father, and that's been our case in the Cizik household with Virginia, and I daresay that we will be reaching out to pastor's wives.

Just incidentally, Becky, Joel's wife, is the leader of the National Organization of Pastors' Wives, and we're going to them and saying, will you urge your husband to take what you already know to be the case, the truth about these issues?

Q: My question for the science part of the panel is I travel and have spoken at a couple hundred churches in the last year. One question which seems to be a hot button is the denominator which drives some of this, which is population. If you cut carbon emissions in half in 70 years but our population in the United States doubles in 70 years, you're right back at square one. Are you going to wrestle with this difficult issue, and how are you going to do that with the religious community?

DR. MCCARTHY: I could say something about that. I think it would be important to look not at just the United States but look at the globe. That is to say, we're talking about a truly global problem. We've mentioned several times this morning being concerned about United States leadership in solving this problem. But the population growth that's anticipated over the century, projected by demographers, are numbers that are probably not in huge error, certainly not for 20 years from now, 40 years from now become a little less certain. But we know that you could change dramatically the effect of that population, either today's population or the one that's larger, by maybe mid-century – rather than 6 (billion) to 7 billion people, maybe 9 (billion) or 10 (billion). You can change dramatically their impact by what we're talking about today.

And we must be mindful also of the issues that were raised by Richard and Joel that there are many people in the world today who are not only more vulnerable to the negative consequences of these changes – loss of biodiversity and climate change – but also who have been denied many of the opportunities that people like us have because they haven't had the same major development.

So what we're talking about is a strategy – and there are many scenarios for this – whereby, with a growing population – not a hugely growing population – a developed world that perhaps continues to develop, a developing world that becomes more supportive – better able to provide the basic resources for the population without these negative effects. And as Jim Hansen spoke, simply with respect to fossil fuel, we know that one could reduce dramatically the consumption of fossil fuel, have the same population or slightly larger population, have a higher degree of economic stability for all people of the world, and have a diminished impact on the climate.

The big multiplier here is whether we continue to fuel this economy with fossil fuel or we move to other things.

DR. CHIVIAN: Rita?

DR. COLWELL: Yes, I would like to emphasize that one of our major objectives is improving the quality of life especially for those who will be most affected by the effects of climate change. That is, if we can provide clean, safe drinking water; if we can provide an understanding of how epidemics are driven by climate; and if we also will fully understand that we are going to lose areas of countries to sea-level rise, that it's imperative for us to work to improve the quality of life.

With the improved survival of children under the age of five, then there is an effect that occurs and has been measured on families that if the children survive, then the numbers of children generally is fewer.

DR. RAVEN: I think a reasonable religious view on population is that which was stated repeatedly by Pope John Paul II that it's morally irresponsible to have more children than you can care for properly. It's also very important for those of us who live in the United States to remember what I've stressed, that it's actually the product of population consumption levels and uses of technology that produce the ill effects, not simply population. All of those need to be addressed.

In that sense, the 165 million people who have been added to the population of the United States since the end of World War II, living at 30 to 40 times the level of consumption of those people who live in rural Brazil or rural Indonesia, for example, consume about as much as the entire population of the developing world put together. Those are the kinds of moral relationships and practical relationships that we're going to have to bear in mind as we address this problem, which is a very complicated but utterly fundamental one.

Q: Dennis Crowley with United News & Information. Is there any one particular area of environmental problems that concerns you, and could that possibly have multiple causes? As an example, in Australia, the Melbourne, Victory area has a problem with air pollution, which is brought about by brush fires, which is brought about by the blokes that set the fires. So if they could solve that problem, that would solve multiple environmental problems.

DR. HANSEN: Well, yes, there are a number of feedbacks that occur, and so we have to get at the root cause of the climate change. And I think that there is still a large gap between our scientific understanding of what the source of the problem are and the public and policymaker knowledge of that. And in particular, I mentioned that one quarter of the CO₂ that we put in the air stays there forever.

So that means we're going to have to find sources of energy that don't produce CO₂, or, in the case of coal, for example, if we are going to use that, we're going to have

to capture the CO₂ and sequester it. Otherwise, we will produce a different planet. And the fact that – we can't solve the problem by simply reducing modestly the amount of energy use or something. We're going to have to find technologies that do not produce CO₂. And that is possible, but we need to focus on that and we need U.S. leadership in addressing that problem now because it can't be talking about technologies that are 15 years downstream. We need to begin to do things now.

And frankly, I think we need a moratorium on things like new coal-fired power plants that don't capture CO₂ because we can readily, with available technology, achieve the efficiencies that would avoid the need for more power plants until we get the technologies that will solve the problem.

DR. CHIVIAN: We are clearly going to focus a lot of attention on global climate change, but as you've heard from Professors Colwell, Raven and Wilson this morning, we are also going to be looking at great deal at other threats to biological systems.

Q: John Heilprin, Associated Press. I was wondering, if the evangelical vote is so important, what will you do to nudge the Bush administration? That's one question. And the other question is this group has touted its connections previously with environmentalists yet you're holding a competing news conference with them. Is there any message there?

REV. CIZIK: We've scheduled a number of meetings today that include with Senator Boxer, Senator Lugar, as well as Congressman Dingell and Diaz-Balart, and so we will be meeting with both Republicans and Democrats. We have a letter that you have in your packet to the president, and in the letter you'll see that we asked to meet with the president, and so we're not oblivious to the political here, but we're not here primarily for the political. We have our own work to do and our constituencies, and as we do that we believe the political landscape will move, as it already has in the last year. I think everyone in this room acknowledges that the acknowledgment of this issue of creation care has gone from here way over to here, and we intend to push it further – that is to say, push politicians, absolutely. That's not primary, but it is certainly essential.

DR. CHIVIAN: We sent the materials to major environmental groups to inform them of this initiative. We reserved this room in the National Press Club weeks ago. My guess – you all know this much better than I, but there are always other events in this building, some of which may be from groups that are somewhat similar to some of what we're saying. We had no idea there were other events today.

We just were told that Senator McCain will meet with us tomorrow at 2:00 p.m.

Q: Thank you. I'm John McCormick with the Energy Policy Center. I really welcome this event. Some of us have been waiting a decade for it to occur.

I say that I represent my son and my daughter on global warming. And when I consider the issue, I consider my generation as perpetrator and my children as victims.

And I believe it would really enhance your message to make the world's community understand that it is the obligation – moral, ethical, even instinctive – for the generation to make sure that the next generation has a better world to come in to. And I think you would find that that would resonate even more with the world community when they look at their children.

REV. CIZIK: Yes, there is an issue here we acknowledge of generational equity. There are those who say, well, how much emphasis on what are humans and how much emphasis on plants and animals? Well, they're all part of the diversity. We all need each other. And I say my children are certainly people and people matter, absolutely.

DR. CHIVIAN: Children aren't always people when they're teenagers – (laughter) – but please don't quote me on that.

(Cross talk.)

Q: My name is Kathy Heart (sp). I'm with Power Daily. I was wondering if you could talk a little – you did mention about coal-fired plants and the urgency of some of this. I wonder if both the evangelical and some of the scientists can talk about if you talk to utility leaders and CEOs of the utility companies in the United States and bring them into this as well.

DR. WILSON: Well, I might as well, although that's not my immediate field of expertise, comment that it's entirely in the interest of the economy of this country and of the future of individual corporations to proceed aggressively in the area of energy production and transmission and to innovate in that.

I think that we should keep in mind that to call for less material and energy consumption – and American are simply over the top in that respect – to call for it – and take note that America has to provide the kind of leadership that we all have in mind – does not imply that America should reduce their standard of living, their quality of life at all; quite the contrary. I think that the history of economics demonstrates that surges in economic growth in the GDP follow upon innovation of the right kind, and typically that has included the reduction of cost, both direct and indirect, of production and transportation. The information technology revolution, the digitization of our society that has occurred, is a good demonstration of just how this could be accomplished with an improvement in efficiency and the quality of life.

So it's not an argument about cutting back on the economies of the respective industries in this country, but should reinforce what is already a perception among economists and many planners that it's only through a near-revolutionary shift to production and management that can move this country ahead.

DR. CHIVIAN: Jim?

DR. HANSEN: The question about utilities I think is a good example of where national leadership is needed because very often the utilities make more money if they sell you more electricity. Well, we really should structure the incentives such that we minimize the impact on the environment, and that requires some leadership.

DR. CHIVIAN: May I ask a question of our PR firms? It's now 10:30. We have the room until 11:00. Should we continue for those who want to stay?

MS. : (Off mike.)

DR. CHIVIAN: Okay.

Q: Hi. Halley Falquet (sp) from Capital News Service. I'd like to direct my question to Dr. Hunter and Dr. Colwell, if I may.

In terms of public outreach in education, do you foresee a hindrance with some of the stereotypes that we talked about today, the Bible thumping and the latte sipping, and if so, how do you plan to overcome this?

DR. HUNTER: It's a very good question. Yes, there will be skeptics – we have them in our community – from several standpoints. There are people who have read Michael Crichton's "State of Fear" and think that this is all a conspiracy. And there are people who link environmentalists with some sort of pagan religion and so on and so forth. We are posturing this packet for skeptics, and we expect that, but even as we say that, we're not facing an ignorant people here. We're facing people who are open, who will be willing to learn. There are very, very few Christians that are not at least open to the facts, and when they understand the facts, then they're on board. They just want something to present to their congregations so that they can be credible.

And that's why we need the partnership with the scientific community because it makes that pastoral leadership credible, and when they have that, then we can give them the tools that they can present in their normal course of duties. We're not calling for all of the pastors to make this their first priority, but certainly included in their portfolio of spiritual growth.

DR. CHIVIAN: Rita?

Dr. COLWELL: Yes, let me just comment that from the scientific side, the experience in Melhona was highly enlightening – the camaraderie and the focus in a way on that which we agree upon so strongly – leads me to believe, as the past president of several major scientific organizations – the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Society for Microbiology, the National Science Honorary Sigma Xi – I believe that by having conversations as we had on a smaller scale but on a larger scale at these national meetings, we can do a great deal to break down the unofficial barriers and the assumptions that are not born in reality. And I do think that the environment, the Creation, the biodiversity, is going to be better off for it.

DR. CHIVIAN: Cal?

DR. DEWITT: Evangelical Christians take the Bible very seriously, and I think this has to be recognized as really at the heart of the richness of the response that's coming, because the Bible, in many ways, is a book for learning how to live rightly on Earth, and richly – richly laced with teachings on caring for Creation, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. And these rich teachings of this very green book, the Bible, will be part of this pack, and it's just loaded.

One of the things that I think you should remember is that Christianity has survived for now several millennia, or two millennia, and that book has some survival value. It is an ecological handbook. I know a farmer, for example, who, on his coffee table in Northern Michigan, has Mother Earth News and the Bible, and I asked him, George, why do you have those books there? He said, those are my two books on how to farm. And really, the Bible is a book for right living. And we have encapsulated just some of the pieces of this scripture, and what we're going to be doing now is opening up the hole so that everyone can look at its ecological teaching as well.

DR. CHIVIAN: One more question? Yes.

MS. : (Off mike.)

DR. CHIVIAN: Oh, I'm sorry.

MS. : Thank you.

REV. CIZIK: Thank you. That's it. Thank you very much.

DR. CHIVIAN: Thank you very much for coming. We appreciate your interest.

(Applause.)

(END)