



(Update) GLOBAL WARMING IS NOT AVENUE TO EVANGELICAL VOTE
Confusion Persists in Presidential Primaries about Evangelical Electorate

Washington, DC; January 11, 2008 – As the presidential primaries heat up, there continues to be much confusion about where evangelicals, a key voting bloc, stand on environmental issues. Widespread references to supposed evangelical support for global warming policies highlight this misunderstanding, according to the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, a leading voice in the faith community on environmental issues.

The executive committee of the 30-million member National Association of Evangelicals officially recognizes that global warming is not a consensus issue among evangelicals, and the Southern Baptist Convention – at 16 million members, the largest Protestant denomination – continues to affirm its skepticism of the media hype surrounding both the human causation and the predicted catastrophic effects of global warming.

“There is not a consensus among evangelicals on the causes or severity of—much less the solutions to—global warming,” says Dr. E. Calvin Beisner, national spokesman for the Cornwall Alliance. **“I’ve been writing and speaking about Christian environmental stewardship for nearly two decades, and have yet to meet an evangelical who doesn’t highly value the care of God’s creation. Yet despite a relatively recent effort to portray evangelicals as increasingly embracing the trendy premise of a planet in peril, the great majority of evangelicals understand that our stewardship of creation must be based on Biblical principles, not speculative fears.”**

Although some surveys, which loosely define “evangelicals,” have yielded the notion of broad support for mandatory caps on CO2 emissions, a recent poll by the respected Barna Research Group (which employs a much more standard definition of “evangelicals”) concluded that, when it comes to global warming, **“evangelicals would rather think about other things. [Even] non-evangelicals...are far from convinced that global warming is as important as everyone says.”** And, in a survey last fall that asked them to list the “top issues of concern to American evangelicals today,” **the National Association of Evangelicals’ board of directors placed environmental concerns—including global warming—last, after the changing culture in America, abortion, helping the hurting, and evangelism.**

Dr. Russell Moore is not surprised. The dean of theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, he says that **“Christians can and do disagree on the causes of climate change and the costs of global warming policies. To tie the authority of the Bible to the shifting and revisable scientific and public policy proposals of a global warming agenda is unhelpful at best and trivializing of the Christian faith at worst.”** Nevertheless, as he testified before the U.S. Senate, **“the refusal of many conservative evangelicals to accept at face value the arguments for drastic government involvement and action regarding global warming should not be seen as a lack of concern for the care of creation.”**

In a 2006 report, the Cornwall Alliance found that the harm caused by mandatory reductions in energy consumption to reduce global warming would far exceed its benefits. Reducing energy consumption requires significantly increasing the costs of energy, which can spell the difference

between life or death for the world’s two billion or more poorest inhabitants. The study, “A Call to Truth, Prudence, and the Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Response to Global Warming,” can be read at <http://www.cornwallalliance.org/call-to-truth>.

“Mandatory caps on carbon emissions are based on faulty science, bad economics, and an unbiblical anthropology,” says the Rev. Dr. James Tonkowich, president of the Institute for Religion and Democracy. **“Far from being primarily polluters and consumers, people are our most important and precious natural resource. With billions still suffering in poverty, any policies that would harm the world’s poor by denying them basic needs like affordable energy are unconscionable – especially when based on exaggerated theories of environmental doom.”**

Beisner, Moore and Tonkowich are among the more than 170 pastors, theologians, religious leaders, and science, economics and policy experts who have signed the “Call to Truth” (listed in the “Open Letter” at <http://www.cornwallalliance.org/open-letter>). And they’re among the over 1,500 individuals who have endorsed the *Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship*, the Cornwall Alliance’s founding document.

“Rank and file evangelicals are eager for leadership on environmental stewardship – leadership that fosters human creativity, emphasizes personal responsibility, and nurtures local self-government,” states Beisner. “The issue of climate change is complex, and the stakes for the poor are high, but we’ve been entrusted with God’s Word, and are accountable to Him for how we care for the world and its inhabitants.”

The Cornwall Alliance is a leading voice in the American religious community on the issues of environmental stewardship, ethics and development, with a track record of thorough research and sober analysis. Its founding document, the Cornwall Declaration (2000), has been endorsed by over 1,500 pastors, religious leaders, laymen and policy experts, including Chuck Colson, Dr. James Dobson, the late Dr. D. James Kennedy, Father Richard John Neuhaus, the late Dr. Bill Bright, Dr. R.C. Sproul, Marvin Olasky, Father Robert Sirico, and Dennis Prager.

The Cornwall Alliance’s multidisciplinary study of global warming is, with over 170 expert endorsements, the most widely-endorsed such paper, and the only one of its kind by evangelicals with relevant expertise.

This fall, the Cornwall Alliance launched the ground-breaking Cornwall Stewardship Agenda, a detailed analysis written by a panel of highly-qualified experts, religious leaders and theologians to address specific policy principles of environmental stewardship. The Agenda, which so far addresses poverty, energy needs and climate change, has been enthusiastically welcomed on Capitol Hill and in the broader policy community.