

**An Urgent Call to Action:
Scientists and Evangelicals Unite to Protect Creation**

**January 17, 2007
National Press Club, Washington, D.C.**

Summary

Scientific and evangelical leaders recently met to search for common ground in the protection of the creation. We happily discovered far more concordance than any of us had expected, quickly moving beyond dialogue to a shared sense of moral purpose. Important initiatives were already underway on both sides, and when compared they were found to be broadly overlapping. We clearly share a moral passion and sense of vocation to save the imperiled living world before our damages to it remake it as another kind of planet. We agree not only that reckless human activity has imperiled the Earth—especially the unsustainable and short-sighted lifestyles and public policies of our own nation—but also that we share a profound moral obligation to work together to call our nation, and other nations, to the kind of dramatic change urgently required in our day. We pledge our joint commitment to this effort in the unique moment now upon us.

Background

This meeting was convened by the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School and the National Association of Evangelicals. It was envisioned as a first exploratory conference, based on a shared concern for the creation, to be held among people who were in some ways quite different in their worldviews. It now seems to us to be the beginning point of a major shared effort among scientists and evangelicals to protect life on Earth and the fragile life support systems that sustain it, drawing on the unique intellectual, spiritual, and moral contributions that each community can bring.

Our Shared Concern

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 harm is seen throughout the natural world, including a cascading set of problems such as climate change, habitat destruction, pollution, and species extinctions, as well as the spread of human 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 costs of this destruction are already manifesting themselves around the world in profound and painful ways. The cost to humanity is already significant and may soon become incalculable. Being irreversible, many of these changes would affect all generations to come.

We believe that the protection of life on Earth is a profound moral imperative. It addresses without discrimination the interests of all humanity as well as the value of the non-human world. It requires a new moral awakening to a compelling demand, clearly articulated in Scripture and supported by science, that we must steward the natural world in order to preserve for ourselves and future generations a beautiful, rich, and healthful environment. For many of us, this is a religious obligation, rooted in our sense of gratitude for Creation and reverence for its Creator.

One fundamental motivation that we share is concern for the poorest of the poor, well over a billion people, who have little chance to improve their lives in devastated and often war-ravaged environments. At the same time, the natural environments in which they live, and where so much of Earth's biodiversity barely hangs on, cannot survive the press of destitute people without other resources and with nowhere else to go.

We declare that every sector of our nation's leadership—religious, scientific, business, political, and educational—must act now to work toward the fundamental change in values, lifestyles, and public policies required to address these worsening problems before it is too late. There is no excuse for further delays. Business as usual cannot continue yet one more day. We pledge to work together at every level to lead our nation toward a responsible care for creation, and we call with one voice to our scientific and evangelical colleagues, and to all others, to join us in these efforts.



Rev. Jim Ball Ph.D.
Executive Director
Evangelical Environmental Network



Steven Bouma-Prediger Ph.D.
John H. and Jeanne M. Jacobson Professor of
Religion
Hope College



Eric Chivian M.D.
Director
Center for Health and the Global Environment,
Harvard Medical School
Shared 1985 Nobel Peace Prize



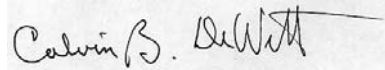
Rev. Richard Cizik D.Min., M.Div
Vice President for Governmental Affairs
National Association of Evangelicals



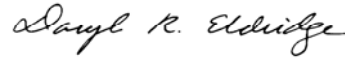
Rita R. Colwell Ph.D.
Distinguished University Professor
University of Maryland College Park and at the
Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of
Public Health



Judith A. Curry Ph.D.
Professor and Chair of the School of Earth and
Atmospheric Sciences
Georgia Institute of Technology



Calvin B. DeWitt Ph.D.
Professor of Environmental Studies
University of Wisconsin-Madison
President
Academy of Evangelical Scientists and Ethicists



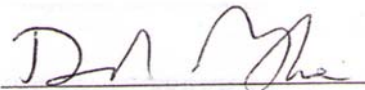
Rev. Daryl Eldridge Ph.D.
President
Rockbridge Seminary



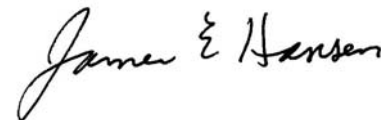
Paul R. Epstein M.D., M.P.H.
Associate Director
Center for Health and the Global Environment,
Harvard Medical School



Howard Frumkin M.D., Dr.P.H.
Director
National Center for Environmental Health and
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry,
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Rev. David P. Gushee Ph.D.
University Fellow and Graves Professor of Moral
Philosophy
Union University



James E. Hansen Ph.D.
Director
NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies
Adjunct Professor
Columbia University Earth Institute



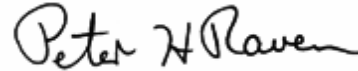
Bernd Heinrich Ph.D.
Professor of Biology
University of Vermont



James J. McCarthy Ph.D.
Agassiz Professor of Biological Oceanography
Harvard University



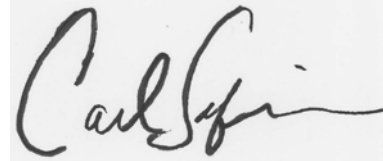
Rev. Joel C. Hunter, D. Min.
Senior Pastor
Northland—A Church Distributed



Peter H. Raven Ph.D.
President
Missouri Botanical Garden
George Engelmann Professor of Botany
Washington University



Randall D. Isaac Ph.D.
Executive Director
American Scientific Affiliation



Carl Safina Ph.D.
President
Blue Ocean Institute



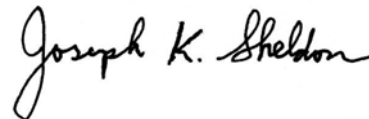
Rev. Cheryl Bridges Johns Ph.D.
Professor of Christian Formation and Discipleship
Church of God Theological Seminary



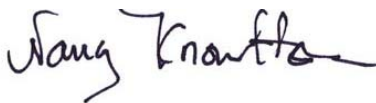
Peter Seligmann Ph.D.
Chairman and CEO
Conservation International



The Rt. Revd. James Jones
The Bishop of Liverpool



Joseph K. Sheldon, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor of Biology and
Environmental Science
Messiah College
Professor of Environmental Studies
The Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies




Nancy Knowlton Ph.D.
Director
Center for Marine Biodiversity and Conservation
John Dove Isaacs Professor of Natural Philosophy
Scripps Institution of Oceanography



James Gustave Speth J.D., M.Litt.
Dean, and Sara Shallenberger Brown Professor in
the Practice of Environmental Policy
Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies



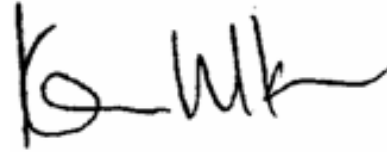
Rev. Eric Steinkamp Ph.D.
Chair of the Department of Natural Sciences and
Math and Professor of Environmental Sciences
Northwest University
Professor of Environmental Studies
The Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies



Loren Wilkinson Ph.D.
Professor of Philosophy and Interdisciplinary
Studies
Regent College



Edward O. Wilson Ph.D.
University Research Professor Emeritus
Harvard University



Ken Wilson
Senior Pastor
Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor

Institutional affiliation is given for identification purposes only. All signatories do so as individuals expressing their personal opinions and not as representatives of their organizations.