

Evangelicals and Global Warming

by Jerry Falwell There is a developing cultural divide occurring within the evangelical community over an unlikely subject: global warming. On one side, we have Southern Baptist-in-name-only Al Gore touting the potential ruin of the planet in his film "An Inconvenient Truth." Joining with him, somewhat surprisingly, has been the upstart Evangelical Climate Initiative (ECI), which has called for sweeping reform to combat global warming in what it terms a Bible-based response to the issue.

Curiously, the ECI, which includes 86 prominent church leaders, has linked with abortion-on-demand and population control organizations that are touting global warming as genuine science. The ECI's decision to join the global warming wars compelled two conservative evangelical think tanks — the Institute on Religion & Democracy and the Action Institute for the Study of Religion & Liberty — to suggest the ECI has been "exploited" by the abortion-rights community. They note that this strange union could actually "give anti-Christian ideologies unmerited moral and theological cover." Indeed, it could. On the other hand, a position from which I am writing, there are those who believe that, while the earth appears to have slightly warmed in recent years, there is legitimate question as to whether this has been caused by human activity or by natural cycles. So, a group of evangelicals has united to counter the efforts of the ECI. This group, the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance (ISA), is a gathering of scholars and pastors (yes, they can coexist) who believe that "evangelicals should be wary of the politicization and bad science of global warming alarmism." The problem is that when evangelicals jump on board with liberal groups that are advancing climate alarmism, the so-called major media is there to trumpet their action. As such, when the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance's released its "Call to Truth, Prudence and Protection of the Poor," which contains a "detailed biblical and scientific response to the much-heralded Evangelical Climate Initiative," it was virtually ignored by the media. Another frequently ignored element in the global warming debate is the fact that so-called solutions to the problem will damage the American economy. Bill Saunders, director of the Family Research Council's Center for Human Life and Bioethics and Human Rights Council, recently wrote: "If the effects of global warming are real and, in the future, humans face hotter summers and higher sea levels, the solution is not restricting energy access and limiting economic growth. That is quite unlikely to solve the problem. It is certain to lead to economic recession in developed countries, invariably keeping undeveloped countries in poverty as their growth is dependent on the strength of developed nations." So we must address any real climate changes with legitimate solutions that do not hinder economic development in our nation. The world will certainly suffer if America is monetarily punished. Nevertheless, the United Nations is touting global warming as an issue as problematic as terrorism. This week, Sen. James Inhofe dismissed a U.N. meeting on climate change as "a brainwashing session," proclaiming that "The idea that the science (on global warming) is settled is altogether wrong." He'll certainly be pilloried by those who believe we should not question the facts of global warming. I thank God that we have reasonable men like Sen. Inhofe (R-Okla.) who are willing to take a stand. Finally, I think it's interesting that, according to the NOAA National Climatic Data Center, the last two months in the continental U.S. have been cooler than average. The organization reported: "The combination of a cooler-than-average September and October dropped the year-to-date national temperature from record warmest to third warmest for the January through October 2006 period. The record warmest January through October occurred in 1934." I imagine if the scientists of 1934 had the technology we enjoy today, they would have been predicting global warming in their era, as well. The only problem would have been that their fellow scientists in the 1970s would be predicting a massive global freeze in the near future. Of course, that didn't happen. In other words, cooler heads must prevail in this global warming debate, especially in the evangelical community.