

Testimony of David Barton in the June 7, 2007
Hearing on Global Warming in the
U. S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

My name is David Barton. I represent a group that works to integrate faith with the many practical issues of daily life. I was honored to be named by *Time Magazine* as one of the twenty-five most influential Evangelicals in America,¹ and I will generally speak from that Evangelical perspective. I personally address hundreds of religious groups each year – Jewish and Christian, Catholic and Protestant, including Protestants in dozens of different denominations. The overwhelming majority of those would be categorized as conservative people of traditional faith, especially as mainstream Evangelicals.

Evangelicals are estimated to number as high as 125 million by Gallup and as low as 75 million by others; but most estimates conservatively place the number at about 100 million.² Evangelicals are characterized by an adherence to a conservative Biblical theology, and significantly, statistics demonstrate that the religious groups and denominations in America adhering to conservative theological views are growing in membership and affiliation,³ whereas those adhering to liberal theological views are declining.⁴

In my experience, three factors influence how people of conservative religious faith – especially Evangelicals – approach the issue of man-caused Global Warming. The first is their theological view of man and the environment as derived from the Scriptures (attached on the electronic version); the second factor is the perceived credibility of the scientific debate; and the third is how Evangelicals prioritize the Global Warming issue among the many other pressing cultural and social issues that currently capture their attention.

Concerning the first, a very accurate rendering of their general theological position is presented in the Cornwall Declaration (attached on the electronic version), prepared by twenty-five conservative Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant theologians. In general, conservative people of faith view the creation in Genesis as moving upward in an ascending spiritual hierarchy, beginning with the creation of the lowest (the inanimate) and moving toward highest (the animate), with the creation of man and woman being the capstone of God's work. Man (which I use in the generic sense of mankind and not in the sense of gender) was the apex of creation and was placed over creation, not under it.⁵ Adam and Eve, and mankind after them, interacted with nature and the environment; they were not isolated from it.⁶ As the Cornwall Declaration explains, there is no conservative theological basis for the often current view that "humans [are] principally consumers and polluters rather than producers and stewards," and that "nature knows best," or that "the earth, untouched by human hands is the ideal."⁷ Religious conservatives believe just the opposite; and as my Rabbi reminded me just last week, the Scriptures teach conservation, not preservation. Man was the steward of nature and the environment, and while man definitely is to tend and guard it, it is to serve him, not vice versa.⁸ From the beginning, God warned about elevating nature and the environment over man and his Creator.⁹ This summarizes the general overview of the theology that is common among most Evangelicals.

The second factor influencing conservative religious adherents is the credibility of the scientific debate. When something is still debated as heavily as is the issue of man-caused Global Warming, and when there is not a clear consensus, Evangelicals tend to approach that issue with great skepticism. In fact, just this past Saturday in a major Canadian publication, a Gallup Poll was cited revealing that “53% of scientists actively involved in global climate research did not believe [man-made] global warming had occurred; 30% weren’t sure; and only 17% believed [man-made] global warming had begun.”¹⁰ And although up to 2,500 of the world’s top scientists agree with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assertions about man-caused global warming,¹¹ well over 10,000 scientists still do not.¹² And similarly, while more than 100 religious leaders signed onto the Evangelical Climate Initiative on Global Warming,¹³ some 1,500 religious leaders signed onto the Cornwall Declaration that reached quite different conclusions.¹⁴

The reason for skepticism among the conservative religious community on the hotly-debated issue of man-caused Global Warming is based on lengthy experience. Recall that twenty years ago the scientific community asserted that fetal tissue research held the solution for many of the world’s health problems; science eventually proved the opposite. Similarly, in the 1960s, environmental science alarmists warned that the Global Population Bomb would soon doom the entire planet and that by the year 2000, economic growth would be destroyed¹⁵ and there would be a worldwide unemployment crisis;¹⁶ yet the worldwide unemployment rate this year was at 6.3 percent¹⁷ – hardly a crisis by any measurement. In the 1960s, environmental science alarmists similarly claimed that DDT harmed humans and caused cancer, thus leading to a near worldwide ban on the use of DDT and now resulting in the deaths of between one and two million persons each year from malaria.¹⁸ In fact, four decades later, the scientific community still has found no harm to humans from DDT,¹⁹ so the World Health Organization, the Global Fund, and U.S.AID have once again endorsed the use of DDT in fighting malaria²⁰ – after millions of lives were needlessly lost. And let’s not forget that in the 1970s, aerosols were considered a leading cause of harm to the environment,²¹ but recent reports note that “Aerosols actually have a cooling effect on global temperatures” that helps “cancel out the warming effect of CO2.”²² Environmental science has a demonstrated pattern of announcing strong conclusions, and then reversing itself following further time and study.

Consider further that the clamor about radical climate change is not new. In the 1920s, the newspapers were filled with scientists warning of a fast approaching Glacial Age; but in the 1930s, scientists reversed themselves and instead predicted serious Global Warming.²³ But by 1972, *Time* was citing numerous scientific reports warning of imminent “runaway glaciation,”²⁴ and in 1975, *Newsweek* reported overwhelming scientific evidence that proved an oncoming Ice Age, with scientists warning the government to stockpile food; in fact, some scientists even proposed melting the arctic ice cap to help forestall the coming Ice Age.²⁵ In 1976, the U. S. Government itself released a study warning that “the earth is heading into some sort of mini-ice age,”²⁶ but now, a mere two decades later, the warning of the imminent Ice Age has been replaced by the warning of an impending Global Warming disaster. In eighty years, environmental science has completely reversed itself on this issue no less than three times.

Furthermore, the scientific community is even reversing itself on its current claims. Just a few years ago scientists predicted that the seas would rise from 20 to 40 feet because of Global Warming,²⁷ with “waves crashing against the steps of the U.S. Capitol” and “launch[ing] boats from the bottom of the Capitol steps”; additionally, one-third of Florida and large parts of Texas were projected to be under water.²⁸ Now the estimates have been revised to anywhere from a few inches to a few feet at most.²⁹ Clearly, the science on this issue continues to oscillate; in fact, Senator Inhofe has been one of many who have tracked the number of leading scientists who, after announcing their position in support of anthropogenic Global Warming, have reversed their position after further research. Such a lack of consensus and so many forceful assertions and repudiations merit a very cautious and guarded approach to any policy on this subject.

Evangelicals and people of conservative religious faith tend to be comfortable with theological teachings that have endured millennia but not with science that often reverses its claims on the same issue. And while science is still deciding where the ocean waves will end up, religious conservatives rest in the Old Testament promise of Jeremiah 5:22 wherein God reminded His people: “Will you not tremble at My presence, Who have placed the sand as the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree that it [the sea] cannot pass beyond it? And though its waves toss to and fro, yet they cannot prevail.” To date, neither science nor experience has disproved the promise of that passage, so the skepticism of religious conservatives on the rapidly-changing science surrounding anthropogenic Global Warming is understandable.

The third factor affecting Evangelicals’ approach to man-caused Global Warming is how they rank that issue within the much larger scope of numerous other issues of importance to them. Interestingly, Evangelicals as a group are concerned about many issues, not just one. In fact, polls regularly indicate that it is not conservative Christians who are fixated with single issues such as abortion but rather it is liberals. As one poll recently reported concerning views toward the judiciary, for liberals, “no other issue rivals abortion in importance”; but among Evangelicals, “three-quarters . . . view abortion as very important, [and] nearly as many place great importance on court rulings on the rights of detained terrorist suspects (69%) and whether to permit religious displays on government property (68%).³⁰ Very simply, Evangelicals tend to have many issues of importance on their list of concerns, not just one. So where does the issue of Global Warming fall on that list of concerns?

Polling clearly shows that Evangelicals are not yet cohesive about the issue of man-caused Global Warming but that they do remain the most cohesive group in the nation in their opposition to abortion, gay marriage, and civil unions;³¹ in teaching teenagers to abstain from sex until marriage;³² and in support of public religious expressions.³³ In fact, among Evangelicals, 99.5% support public displays of the Ten Commandments; 99% support keeping the phrase “In God We Trust” on the nation’s currency; 96% support keeping “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance; 86% support teaching Creationism in the public school classroom; and 94% oppose allowing the use of profanity on broadcast television.³⁴ Global Warming is nowhere near these numbers among Evangelicals, nor is it likely to overshadow these issues anytime in the near

future. (The fact that so many groups that ardently push a climate change agenda also regularly oppose Evangelicals on issues of faith and values further exacerbates Evangelicals' suspicion concerning anthropogenic Global Warming.)

Additionally, 90 percent of Evangelicals believe that America should be involved in global efforts to fight AIDS and extreme poverty, and 87 percent of Evangelicals cite their Evangelical faith as the reason for “helping those less fortunate than [them]selves.”³⁵ Therefore, if implementing the proposed “cap and trade” Global Warming solution results in a disproportionately negative impact on the poor in developing nations and will significantly impede their hopes for a better and more prosperous life – which the recent Congressional Budget Office report (attached on the electronic version) indicates will certainly be the case,³⁶ as does “A Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Response to Global Warming”³⁷ (attached on the electronic version) from the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance – then it is even more likely that Evangelicals will oppose placing the theoretical needs of the environment over the actual needs of the poor.

In summary, the three primary factors that influence how Evangelicals will respond to the current vigorous debate on Global Warming will be, first, their theological views of man and his relationship to nature and the environment; second, their skepticism over scientific disputes until a clear and unambiguous consensus has emerged; and third, whether there is sufficient weight in the issue to cause it to rise within the list of the many other issues of concern to them. Currently, I do not find any substantial widespread movement within the mainstream Evangelical community to support a massive policy proposal on Global Warming that would significantly alter their current lifestyle, or that might inflict additional burdens on the poor and even potentially confine them permanently to a state of poverty. I therefore urge extreme caution in any approach that this body might take in crafting any policy on this issue.

¹ David Van Biema, “The 25 Most Influential Evangelicals In America,” *Time*, February 7, 2005, at 42 (at <http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101050207/photoessay/3.html>).

² See, for example, http://www.wheaton.edu/isa/defining_evangelicalism.html.

³ Such as the National Association of Evangelicals, which now represents about 30 million people from 50 member denominations as well as individual churches from 24 other denominations, at <http://www.nae.net/>.

⁴ For example, mainline churches that make up organizations such as the National Council of Churches have lost over 35 percent of their members since the 1970s (at <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=19-02-057-r>), and “the National Council of Churches (NCC) now receives more funding from private foundations, most of them secular and politically liberal, than from its member denominations, it was revealed at its fall 2005 Governing Board meeting. In the fiscal year ending in June 2005, the NCC received \$1,761,714 from liberal foundations, compared to \$1,750,332 from its 35 member churches. The foundations include the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Tides Foundation, the Better World Fund, the Sierra Club, the AARP, the Ocean Conservancy, and the National Religious Partnership on the Environment” at NCC’s New Money at <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=19-02-057-r>.

⁵ In Matthew 10:31 and Luke 12:, Christ reminds man that “You are of more value than many sparrows,” and Psalm 8:6-8 declares: “You have made man to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all animal, birds, and fish, whether on land or in the sea.”

⁶ In Genesis 1:25-29, God created all, and then placed man over his creation to interact with all of it, whether animate or inanimate.

⁷ <http://www.interfaithstewardship.org/pages/aboutisa.php>.

⁸ Genesis 2:8-20 records man's stewardship and interaction with creation, not his removal from it. God put him in the Garden to tend and keep it; and God brought his creation before Adam, who named it all.

⁹ See, for example, Romans 1:20-25; for instances where man wrongly turned their primary focus toward animals and the creation rather than the Creator; see also Exodus 32:7-9, 34-35; 2 Kings 17:14-16; 2 Kings 18:3-5; 2 Chronicles 11:14-15; Nehemiah 9:17-19; Psalms 106:19-23; Ezekiel 8:9-12; Acts 7:40-42; etc.

¹⁰ Lawrence Solomon, "They call this a consensus?," *Financial Post*, June 02, 2007, at <http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/financialpost/story.html?id=c47c1209-233b-412c-b6d1-5c755457a8af>.

¹¹ Lawrence Solomon, "They call this a consensus?," *Financial Post*, June 02, 2007, at <http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/financialpost/story.html?id=c47c1209-233b-412c-b6d1-5c755457a8af>.

¹² See Arthur B. Robinson, Sallie L. Baliunas, Willie Soon, and Zachary W. Robinson, "Environmental Effects of Increased Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide"; <http://zwr.oism.org/pproject/s33p36.html>; and "The Heidelberg Appeal" and a partial list of signatories at www.heartland.org/perspectives/appeal.htm.

¹³ <http://www.christiansandclimate.org/statement>.

¹⁴ <http://www.interfaithstewardship.org/pages/aboutisa.php>.

¹⁵ "Get Serious About Population," *The New York Times*, April 12, 1984, A-26.

¹⁶ Warren Brown, "A Population Bomb: Report Warns Increase in Children May Trigger Third-World Unrest," *The Washington Post*, March 10, 1979, A-2; see also "The Right Number of American," *The New York Times*, February 2, 1989, A-24; "We are too many," *The Globe and Mail* (Canada), September 14, 1983; "Our crowded planet," *The Globe and Mail* (Canada), December 26, 1985.

¹⁷ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/download/trnden03.pdf>.

¹⁸ "Dr. Conyers, I Presume," Editorial, *Wall Street Journal*, April 28, 2007, at <http://www.fightingmalaria.org/article.aspx?id=785>; Paul Driessen, "Forty years of perverse 'social responsibility'," *Canada Free Press*, March 26, 2007, at <http://www.canadafreepress.com/2007/driessen032607.htm>; Roger Bate, "Without DDT, malaria bites back," Article 24, April 2001, <http://www.spiked-online.com/Articles/000000005591.htm>.

¹⁹ "Dr. Conyers, I Presume," Editorial, *Wall Street Journal*, April 28, 2007, at <http://www.fightingmalaria.org/article.aspx?id=785>; Roger Bate, "Without DDT, malaria bites back," Article 24, April 2001, <http://www.spiked-online.com/Articles/000000005591.htm>.

²⁰ "Dr. Conyers, I Presume," Editorial, *Wall Street Journal*, April 28, 2007, at <http://www.fightingmalaria.org/article.aspx?id=785>.

²¹ See, for example, W. Sullivan. "Tests Show Aerosol Gases May Pose Threat to Earth," *New York Times*, 26 September 1974, A1.

²² Noam Mohr, "A New Global Warming Strategy: How Environmentalists are Overlooking Vegetarianism as the Most Effective Tool Against Climate Change in Our Lifetimes" at <http://earthsave.org/globalwarming.htm>.

²³ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 9, 1923, "Scientist Says Arctic Ice Will Wipe Out Canada"; *Los Angeles Times*, October 7, 1932, "Fifth Ice Age Is On The Way"; *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1924, "New Ice-Age is Forecast"; *Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 1929, "Is Another Ice Age Coming?"; *New York Times*, February 24, 1867, "The Glacial Period"; *New York Times*, February 24, 1895, "Prospects of Another Glacial Period"; *New York Times*, October 7, 1912, "Sees Glacial Era Coming"; *New York Times*, June 10, 1923, "Menace of a New Ice Age to be Tested by Scientists"; *New York Times*, September 28, 1924, "MacMillan Reports Signs of New Ice Age"; *New York Times*, January 27, 1972, "Climate Experts Assay Ice Age Clues"; *New York Times*, May 21, 1975, "Scientists Ask Why World Climate Is Changing"; "Major Cooling May Be Ahead"; *Washington Post*, August 10, 1923, "Volcanoes in Australia"; "Ice Age Coming Here"; *Washington Post*, October 28, 1928, "An Ice-Free World, What Then?"; *Washington Post*, August 2, 1930, "Hot Weather"; *Washington Post*, May 3, 1932, "Second World Flood Seen, if Earth's Heat Increases"; *Washington Post*, January 11, 1970, "Colder Winters Held Dawn of New Ice Age"; *Atlantic*, December 1932, "This Cold, Cold World"; *Fortune*, August 1954, "Climate – the Heat May Be Off"; *International Wildlife*, July-August 1975, "In the Grip of a New Ice Age?"; *Newsweek*, April 28, 1975, "The Cooling World"; *Science News*, Nov 15, 1969, "Earth's Cooling Climate"; *Science News*, March 1, 1975, "Climate Change: Chilling Possibilities"; *Time*, January 2, 1939,

“Warmer World”; *Time*, October 29, 1951, “Retreat of the Cold”; *Time*, June 24, 1974, “Another Ice Age?”; *U.S. News & World Report*, May 31, 1976, “Worrisome CIA Report; Even U.S. Farms May be Hit by Cooling Trend”; at <http://wizbangblog.com/2006/04/02/before-global-warming-there-was-global-cooling.php>; <http://www.businessandmedia.org/specialreports/2006/fireandice/fireandice.asp>.

See also George Will, “Cooler Heads Needed on Warming,” *Washington Post*, April 02, 2006: citing *Science* magazine (Dec. 10, 1976) warned of “extensive Northern Hemisphere glaciation.” *Science Digest* (February 1973) reported that “the world’s climatologists are agreed” that we must “prepare for the next ice age.” *The Christian Science Monitor* (“Warning: Earth’s Climate is Changing Faster Than Even Experts Expect,” Aug. 27, 1974) reported that glaciers “have begun to advance,” “growing seasons in England and Scandinavia are getting shorter” and “the North Atlantic is cooling down about as fast as an ocean can cool.” *Newsweek* agreed (“The Cooling World,” April 28, 1975) that meteorologists “are almost unanimous” that catastrophic famines might result from the global cooling that the *New York Times* (Sept. 14, 1975) said “may mark the return to another ice age.” *The Times* (May 21, 1975) also said “a major cooling of the climate is widely considered inevitable” now that it is “well established” that the Northern Hemisphere’s climate “has been getting cooler since about 1950.” . . . “About the mystery that vexes ABC – Why have Americans been slow to get in lock step concerning global warming? – perhaps the . . . problem is big crusading journalism.”

²⁴ “Another Ice Age?,” *Time*, November 13, 1972, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,910467,00.html>.

²⁵ “The Cooling World,” *Newsweek*, April 28, 1975.

²⁶ “Worrisome CIA report; Even U.S. Farms May Be Hit By Cooling Trend,” *U. S. News & World Report*, May 31, 1976.

²⁷ See, for example, “Long Island Queens, Trouble on the Rise,” at <http://www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/Pages/CoastGISMaps/Newsday-Future.htm>; “Climate Changes Futures: Health, Ecological and Economic Dimensions,” A Project of: The Center for Health Harvard Medicine (at <http://www.climatechange-futures.org/>); “Global Warming’s Increasingly Visible Impacts” http://qu1cJ:www.environmentaldefense.org/documents/4891_GlobalWarmingImpacts.pdf.

²⁸ Robert Locke, AP Science Writer, January 8, 1979, covering the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting, *Christian Science Monitor*, October 8, 1980.

²⁹ See, for example, “Global Warming’s Increasingly Visible Impacts” http://qu1cJ:www.environmentaldefense.org/documents/4891_GlobalWarmingImpacts.pdf; *Washingtonpost.com*, “We’re All New Orleanians Now” http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/18/AR2006081800984_pf.html; “Long Island Queens, Trouble on the Rise” <http://www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/Pages/CoastGISMaps/Newsday-Future.htm>; “Climate Changes Futures: Health, Ecological and Economic Dimensions,” A Project of: The Center for Health Harvard Medicine (at <http://www.climatechange-futures.org/>).

³⁰ “Abortion and Rights of Terror Suspects Top Court Issues; Strong Support for Stem Cell Research,” Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, August 3, 2005, at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=253>.

³¹ “Pragmatic Americans Liberal and Conservative on Social Issues; Most Want Middle Ground on Abortion,” Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, August 3, 2006, at <http://people-press.org/reports/print.php3?PageID=1071>.

³² “Abortion and Rights of Terror Suspects Top Court Issues; Strong Support for Stem Cell Research,” Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, August 3, 2005, at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=253>.

³³ “Abortion and Rights of Terror Suspects Top Court Issues; Strong Support for Stem Cell Research,” Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, August 3, 2005, at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=253>.

³⁴ “33 Percent of Adults Agree with Declaring America a ‘Christian Nation’,” Barna Poll, July 31, 2004, http://www.christianpost.com/article/20040731/20420_Barna_Poll:_33_Percent_of_Adults_Agree_with_Declaring_America_a_%22Christian_Nation%22.htm.

³⁵ Adelle M. Banks, “Poll: Faith Sometimes Drives Support for AIDS, Poverty Relief,” Religion News Service, at http://www.socialpolicyandreligion.org/article_index/article_print.cfm?id=2155.

³⁶ “Trade-Offs in Allocating Allowances for CO2 Emissions,” Congressional Budget Office, April 25, 2007.

³⁷ http://www.cornwallalliance.org/docs/Call_to_Truth.pdf; and <http://www.interfaithstewardship.org/pages/home.php>.