



SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Evangelicals, Scientists Reach Common Ground on Climate Change

As chief lobbyist for the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Reverend Richard Cizik never imagined spending a day with a bunch of climate-change scientists, much less leaving such a meeting convinced that working to mitigate global warming was consistent with his religious beliefs. But Cizik says a 2002 gathering in Oxford, U.K., was “a conversion ... not unlike my conversion to Christ.” And he’s not alone: This month, 86 influential leaders in the U.S. Christian evangelical movement came out for “national legislation requiring ... economy-wide reductions” in carbon emissions. Quoting the Bible on the need to protect God’s creation, the statement says that climate shifts “will hit the poor the hardest.”

The 8 February statement (www.christiansandclimate.org) is seen as an important boost for supporters of mandatory



Warming trend. From left, Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals talks with ecologist Calvin DeWitt and atmospheric scientist John Houghton.

controls on U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. The Evangelical Climate Initiative also represents the fruits of a 5-year effort by a handful of scientists, most of them devout Christians,

to find common ground with an influential Republican constituency that is often an implacable enemy in science policy debates. The signers include the president of Wheaton College, a preeminent evangelical school in Illinois, and Reverend Rick Warren, pastor of an 85,000-member church in Lake Forest, California, and author of the bestseller *The Purpose Driven Life*. “What’s going on here is peacemaking at its most basic level between the religious and scientific worldview,” says forester Jim Furnish, former deputy chief of the U.S. Forest Service and an organizer of the effort.

The 2002 Oxford meeting that advanced the cause was organized by John Houghton, former co-chair of the science assessment for the 2001 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, and ecologist Calvin DeWitt of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. As evangelicals whose speeches often quote the bible, the scientists hoped to raise awareness of global warming on both sides of the Atlantic. “U.S. evangelicals’ information [on global warming] had predominantly been from the active misinformation campaign you have in [the U.S.],” Houghton says. ▶

NUCLEAR PHYSICS

Accelerator Delay Stuns U.S. Scientists

Plans for a nuclear physics facility that would mimic stellar explosions have been pushed back 5 years, U.S. Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman told Congress last week. U.S. researchers developing the Rare Isotope Accelerator (RIA) say the new timetable could put other countries in the lead.

“This catches me completely by surprise, and it’s quite alarming,” says Konrad Gelbke, director of the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory at Michigan State University in East Lansing. Robert Tribble, a physicist at Texas A&M University in College Station and chair of the Department of Energy’s (DOE’s) Nuclear Science Advisory Committee, says the delay “will be a significant loss for the field.”

Researchers at Michigan State and Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois are vying for RIA. Meanwhile, researchers at the Japanese

laboratory RIKEN in Wako and the German laboratory GSI in Darmstadt are developing their own machines. “They’ll get a first crack at the science while we’re standing on the sideline,” says Argonne’s Robert Janssens. But he adds that RIA’s ability to generate beams 10 to 100 times more intense than those at other facilities makes it still worth the wait.

Generating unstable nuclei normally produced only in stellar explosions, RIA might allow researchers to develop a comprehensive theory of the nucleus. But DOE couldn’t fit the \$1 billion facility into its 2007 science budget, Bodman told the House Science Committee—even if Congress approves the president’s request for a 14% increase (*Science*, 10 February, p. 762).

DOE will continue to spend \$5 million to \$6 million a year on research and development

and will aim for a preliminary engineering design by 2011, Bodman told legislators in response to a question from Representative Joe Schwarz (R-MI). “So in effect, the project will be put off for 5 years,” he said. “I know that’s not happy news, ... but those are the facts.”

Conceived in 1999, RIA tops nuclear scientists’ wish list and stands third on a 2003 ranking of 28 major facilities DOE hopes to build (*Science*, 14 November 2003, p. 1126). In 2004, it passed the first of five major reviews. But last year, DOE canceled a “request for proposals,” and the White House Office of Management and Budget ordered a review of its scientific potential. That review is now being conducted by the National Academies’ National Research Council. NRC’s Donald Shapero says the committee may issue an interim report this spring.

—ADRIAN CHO

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