



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
May 1, 2008**

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<b>Who:</b>	Scientists and evangelical leaders
<b>What:</b>	The Friendship Collaborative workshop at Ohio State University
<b>When:</b>	May 2, 2008
<b>Why:</b>	To bring scientists and people of faith together to share concerns and foster understanding about global environmental threats to people and wildlife.

**Workshop Convened by Ohio State University  
To Build Bridges Between Scientists and Faith Leaders**

***Participants at Friendship Collaborative Workshop to Share  
Mutual Concerns About Caring for Our Natural World***

**Columbus, OH** -- Scientists and local evangelical leaders will gather at Ohio State University on Friday, May 2 for a workshop intended to foster understanding between the science and faith communities about environmental threats to our planet.

The Friendship Collaborative ([www.friendshipcollaborative.org](http://www.friendshipcollaborative.org)) workshop at the Byrd Polar Research Center will be led by Dr. Calvin DeWitt of the University of Wisconsin Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies and Ken Wilson, senior pastor of Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, Michigan. More than 30 scientists and faith leaders are expected to attend the workshop, which was convened by Ohio State University Faculty Christian Fellowship.

Scientists will learn about the diverse evangelical American landscape so they can reach out more effectively across the cultural divide; evangelical leaders will learn about pressing global environmental concerns, including climate change. Together they will

search for new avenues of mutual understanding within their respective communities for the sake of our threatened planet.

“What I really would like to see is some pastor and some scientist striking up a conversation and finding out how much they have in common and their shared common interests,” said Howard Van Cleave, founder of OSU’s Faculty Christian Fellowship, adding that he’s hopeful individuals will get together after the workshop to continue their discussions.

“We are excited to spark a vision for a new period of cooperation between scientists and religious leaders at Ohio State and beyond,” said Dr. Greg Hitzhusen of Ohio State University’s School of Environmental and Natural Resources, who helped convene the workshop. “To respond to the global environmental crisis, we must search for common ground, rooted in the best that science and faith have to offer.”

Among the scientists who will join nine OSU science professors are: James Hansen of NASA’s Goddard Institute, Stephen Weeks of the University of Akron, and Marah Hardt of Blue Ocean Institute, a marine conservation nonprofit that is collaborating with Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, Michigan to organize similar workshops around the nation. Van Cleave, who attended the first Ohio Friendship event at the University of Akron last year said he was impressed with the open and honest dialogue between the groups.

The religious leaders at the Ohio State University Friendship Collaborative workshop will include representatives from 15 churches, including Liberty Presbyterian, Grace Brethren, First Church of God, and the Latino Church of Columbus.

“For millennia people have relied on the ocean for transportation, food, and other products, but given back only waste,” said Blue Ocean’s Hardt. “Our endless plunder and pollution of nature’s bounty threatens the valuable life-sustaining resources the earth provides. Faith leaders and scientists share mutual concerns about the moral implications of our actions, especially climate change.”

Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor Senior Pastor Ken Wilson noted that polarization between scientists and faith leaders is as much a product of poor communication as ideological differences.

“Most people of faith are not hostile to science and most scientists are not hostile to faith,” said Wilson. “Rather than accepting the myth that science and faith must be at odds with each other, wouldn’t it be better to have them pulling together for positive change?”

### **About the Friendship Collaborative**

The Friendship Collaborative is a joint initiative of Blue Ocean Institute, headed by its founder, scientist/author Carl Safina, and Wilson. The program grew from their participation in a larger national effort that brought together top environmental scientists with evangelical leaders at a retreat co-sponsored in 2006 by the Harvard Center for Global Health and the Environment and the leaders of the National Association of Evangelicals. Following the retreat, Wilson and Safina hosted the first Ohio Friendship event at the University of Akron in August 2007 and then

traveled to Alaska with members of the group to witness the effects of climate change on an Arctic village.

### **About Blue Ocean Institute**

Founded in 2003 by MacArthur Fellow Dr. Carl Safina ([www.carlsafina.org](http://www.carlsafina.org)) and Mercédès Lee, Blue Ocean Institute ([www.blueocean.org](http://www.blueocean.org)) uses science, art, and literature to inspire a closer connection with the sea. Blue Ocean developed the first sustainable seafood guide (and made it scientifically transparent) and forged a significant, rapidly expanding sustainable seafood movement. Blue Ocean develops conservation solutions that enlighten personal choices, instill hope and inspire people to take action in a growing effort to restore living abundance in the ocean. Safina's award-winning books include *Song for the Blue Ocean*, *Eye of the Albatross*, and *Voyage of the Turtle*.

### **About Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, Michigan**

The Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, Michigan is part of a growing number of evangelical churches bringing a community outreach and activist ethos to the issue of environmental stewardship. They view care for God's creation as rooted in their religious worldview, seeking to tap the power of faith for the sake of better care of the earth, with a special interest in alleviating the impact of environmental degradation on the vulnerable poor both at home and abroad. To that end, they are actively integrating principles of environmental stewardship, called Creation Care, into the life and outreach of the church and helping other churches to do the same. Wilson is one of the founders of the "creation care for pastors project" which provides an introduction to environmental stewardship to fellow pastors. Wilson is also author of *Empowered Evangelicals* (co-author with Rich Nathan) published in 1995 (Servant) and most recently, *Jesus Brand Spirituality: He Wants His Religion Back* (Thomas Nelson, May 2008, [www.jesusbrandspirituality.com](http://www.jesusbrandspirituality.com)).

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