

# **A Sustainable Environment: Our Obligation to Protect God's Gift**

by  
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## **What is the Significance of 10-10-10 and 350?**

Every weekend, many planned events take place that are of interest to a few people or many people, events like sporting games, weddings, conferences, rallies, etc. Sunday, October 10, 2010, also written as 10-10-10, is no different. On this date in Chicago there will be a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of a Greek Orthodox church, the annual Chicago Marathon, and probably many weddings, baptisms and parties. However, a much larger event will take place worldwide. What is it and why is it taking place?

Climate change is becoming a bigger and bigger an issue every year – or at least it should be. The year 2010 is on track to be our planet's hottest on record. The hottest temperature ever recorded on earth was in Pakistan this past May when it reached almost 130° F. or 54° C. While this issue has been a concern for over 20 years, our administration in Washington has done nothing. Last year in June 2009, the House passed the Waxman-Markey bill, known as the Cap-and-Trade bill, but it is really worthless and caused the U.S. to be embarrassed in Copenhagen last November. The carbon emission reductions required by 2020 are so little that the current economic downturn will satisfy the reduction. With the Senate doing nothing this year, we have now gone through two decades with no action on this issue.

Bill McKibben, who first wrote about global warming in 1989, is mild-mannered and a Methodist Sunday school teacher, but he has “gotten mad” about this issue and has decided to do something about it. Having scientists present data and explanations to CEOs and politicians has not worked. So he decided to mobilize the public and get them on the street demanding action. The competition is the large companies like Exxon and BP that have plenty of cash. The people's “currency” is bodies, spirit and passion. McKibben co-founded 350.org, a movement that last year managed to organize what has been called the “largest ever recorded global rally of any kind” on any issue – 5,200 demonstrations in 181 countries, 2,000 of them in the U.S. The name of the organization, [350.org](http://350.org), represents the maximum concentration of carbon dioxide that we can have in the atmosphere if we want a planet “similar to the one on which civilization developed and to which life on earth is adapted”. This level was determined by James Hansen, one of the top climatologists with NASA. Even Patriarch Bartholomew stated “Global warming is a sin and 350.org is an act of redemption”.

So on 10-10-10, 350.org plans a Global Work Party that should be bigger than last year's. On this day, all around the world people will be putting up solar panels, planting trees, laying out bike paths, and walking everywhere rather than driving. This year the movement should be bigger than ever as we need to make a sharp political point to our

leaders. They need to be shamed and it can be done with everyone working together. Fortunately, it is not just 350.org that is taking action. Other environmental groups like Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and The Sierra Club are taking action. We can't expect results overnight as the Senate doesn't work that fast, but this is a start. If you recall from history books, women's suffrage passed in 1920 after many years of demonstrations and rallies.

If you wish to learn more about the climate change issue, I suggest you read Bill McKibben's new book, "Eaarth – Making Life on a Tough New Planet". He spells earth differently because this is a different earth than the one to which life has adapted.