

Global Warming— or Hot Air?

by Glen Moyer

I consider myself a man of reasonable intelligence. I circle 19 when asked how many years of school I've completed. I can actually place an order at Starbucks. I'm pretty certain Elvis is dead and I can check voice messages on my cell phone. (No, I can't take pictures or send text messages.)

But when it came to global warming I was more disoriented than the Dixie Chicks at a NASCAR race. Pretty much everyone agrees the earth is heating up, so the question isn't "if" the earth is warming. The question is "why" is it warming? (Although, if that is true, why do my heating bills keep going up?)

Global Warming or Hot Air?

I decided to get to the bottom of this controversy with my own special investigation. I found the *British Petroleum Environment and Society* page and learned that my "carbon footprint" is 18 tonnes (a tonne is a metric ton which equals 2,204.62 pounds). That means I release 18 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO²) into the atmosphere each year. That's enough to fill an Olympic swimming pool three and a half times. That is an incredible amount of CO², but less than the American average of about 22 tonnes per year. That's because I recycle, turn the heat down, shut lights off and shower just once a month (joke).

Carbon dioxide is important because it is one of the "greenhouse gases" that capture and retain the heat from sunshine. Too much CO² in the atmosphere will cause the earth to warm up—global warming. Worldwide, eight billion tons of human-produced CO² are being released into the atmosphere



AN
INCONVENIENT
TRUTH
THE PLANETARY EMERGENCY OF GLOBAL WARMING AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT
AL GORE



Al Gore giving his global warming talk in Mountain View, CA on April 7, 2006.

PHOTO BY BRETT WILSON

each year (and rising). I don't know about you, but that sounds like pouring a shaker of pepper over a perfectly good egg.

From there I decided to read the highly touted summary of the *Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change* released in February 2007. Good idea if you are a scientist. Bad idea if you are an average person. The "summary" is 18 pages long and is written in a language that looks to be a blend of English, mathematics and ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics.

After that, I realized that watching Al Gore's hugely popular documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth" would be more in line with my abilities. Everyone should see this excellent film. Gore presents a lot of great information that cannot be quickly dismissed. Yet, only a day after Gore's film won an Oscar, Rush Limbaugh said, "I think the Academy Awards made global warming look like the joke that it is."

Scientists Against the Kyoto Accord

If it were only talking heads like Limbaugh protesting global warming, it wouldn't be so doggone complicated. But more than 15,000 scientists signed a petition against the Kyoto Accord, an international treaty whereby countries agree to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases they emit if their neighbors do likewise.

The cover letter to the petition was signed by Dr. Frederick Seitz, president emeritus of Rockefeller University and past president of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.



I started to think that the earth must be warming up from all the hot air that the different sides are blowing at one another. I was a month into my investigation and I had as many questions as answers.

In the letter he states: "The treaty is, in our opinion, based upon flawed ideas. Research data on climate change does not show that human use of hydrocarbons is harmful. To the contrary, there is good evidence that increased atmospheric carbon dioxide is environmentally helpful."

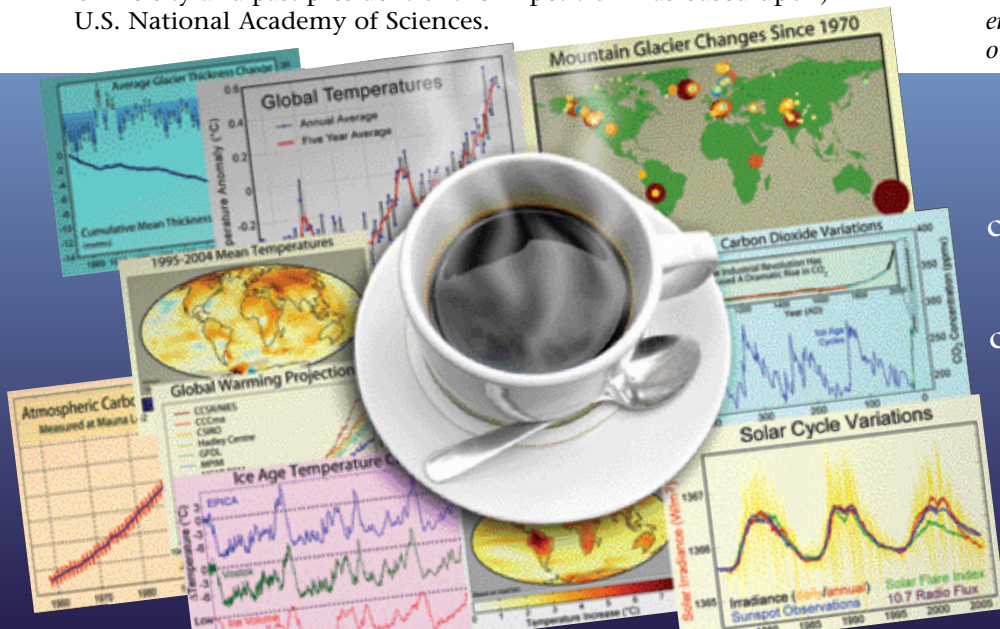
I mentioned this discrediting global warming information to some of my scientist friends, and they quickly pulled out a pile of information that showed how Seitz (and the document that the above petition was based upon)

is less than credible and based upon unpublished documentation which is now outdated.

My investigation also led me to Gary Calder, a former editor of *New Scientist*. He says that clouds (in conjunction with solar rays) are the reason behind climate change. I then found others saying that global warming is too complex to be attributed to just one factor, whether greenhouse gases or clouds. Still others, like Nancy who wrote a letter to the editor of my local newspaper, say global warming is not caused by any physical emissions, but rather by the spiritual omission of God in our country.

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away from the great moral issues of our time," citing abortion, same-sex marriage and abstinence as the real issues. They are calling for Cizik to resign or be fired from the NAE.

This is the same tactic the religious leaders of Jesus' day used against him. After hearing Jesus say some things that disturbed them, "the Pharisees plotted a way to trap him into saying something damaging." They then launched attack after attack at Jesus with traps and trick questions that he fended off. Jesus "stumped them, literalists that they were. Unwilling to risk losing face again in one of these public verbal exchanges, they quit asking questions for good." They rejected the truth and actually started to plot how they would kill Jesus. (See Matthew 22:15; 46, *The Message*.)

I'm not saying which global warming perspective Christians need to side with—I'm saying we need to stop taking sides that cut off dialogue and create enemies. We need to get over being threatened and threatening. As Christians, we of all people should know by now that when we blindly reject both the message and the messenger that the masses will rightly reject us.

Enlarging Our Perspectives

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She said, "the stench of moral decay and ungodliness has come up to God's nostrils and has kindled his wrath, which is coming upon this earth...." Thus, God's wrath is causing global warming.

Religion Weighs In

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month into my investigation and I had as many questions as answers.

Can we ever find our way through this maze of information to the truth? Not if we follow some of the religious leaders of today. For example, when the late Jerry Falwell said, "there's no need for the church of Jesus Christ to be wasting its time gullibly falling for all of this global warming hocus-pocus. We need to give our total focus to the business of reaching this world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ...."

In a recent letter to the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Focus on the Family President James Dobson and two dozen co-signers came against NAE vice-president Rich Cizik because of his "creation care" agenda. They said, "Cizik and others are using the global warming controversy to shift the emphasis

a lesson I learned from my mom and dad when I was five years old is what guided me through the controversy.



My parents taught me that I should always leave a place cleaner than I found it.

Regardless of your position on the global warming controversy, every Christian should be involved in "creation care." Here are some things our family has done to be better stewards of God's creation.

We Think Differently:

We stopped thinking that we are separate from creation. The earth wasn't created for humans, it was created for God's glory, and we were created from the earth. So taking care of creation is taking care of us.

We realized that classic evangelism is not all there is to the gospel. Jesus spent most of his time teaching people how to live on earth, not how to get to heaven after they die. Besides, who will listen to our evangelistic presentation when we're literally doing no earthly good?

We try to distinguish God's truth from human agendas. *At times our faith can become so entangled in social/political agendas that we forget it is the Spirit who leads us into all truth, not talk show hosts, news programs, political parties or even churches.*



For more information about "creation care" see the Jan/Feb 2006 issue of *Plain Truth* at www.ptm.org.

We Act Differently:



- **House Temperature.** We turn the thermostat down in winter (put on a sweater) and up in summer (use night air to cool house). We also

turn the heat down when no one's home and when we're sleeping, and we use window blinds to keep summer heat out.



- **Lights.** We replaced our incandescent light bulbs with compact florescent bulbs (CFLs). They last much longer and use a fraction of the energy. We turn lights off when leaving a room and use more natural light.

- **Reduce and Reuse.** The three arrows in the recycle triangle stand for reduce, reuse and recycle. We think of creative ways to reduce and

reuse, like making bags for grocery shopping and packing lunches. My wife often buys cool second-hand clothes that we wear till they get holes. I save energy by not shopping.



- **Recycle.** We recycle tons of stuff—from newspapers and cans to cell phones and milk jugs. Note: rinse out old milk jugs and cans or

your garage will smell like the neighborhood recycling center!



- **Water.** We run only full loads of dishes or clothes. We wash clothes in cold or warm water. We also turned down the temperature and insulated

our hot water heater and installed low-flow showerheads.



- **Automobile.** I admit that I can't seem to drive 65 mph on Montana's wide open roads; however, I do keep our cars tuned up and check the tire pressure often. My wife rides her bicycle to work year-round, and we donate our older cars to the poor instead of trading them in.



- **Faith and Fun.** We are environmental, but we try to not be wacko. Faith keeps us from fearing the future, and fun keeps us from turning into prunes.



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Every generation since the industrial revolution has failed miserably at this.... Someone must turn things around. We must turn things around.

pursue it? In the process, I built several new relationships with folks from all perspectives.

This is what Paul did in Athens. "...every day he went out on the streets and talked with anyone who happened along. He got to know some of the Epicurean and Stoic intellectuals pretty well through these conversations. ...These people got together and asked him to make a public presentation over at the Areopagus...." (See Acts 17:16-34, *The Message*.)

With all due respect to ideas about this issue advanced by Jim Dobson and the late Jerry Falwell,

I'm afraid they are following the example of the rigid religious leaders, not Paul. In trying to protect their agenda and doctrine such notions reject all opposing view points and those who hold them. Consequently, we may be in danger of missing a portion of God's truth that would have benefited us. Remember Galileo?

For what it's worth, my investigation found that the data which supports the assumption that humans are contributing significantly to global warming was much more extensive and credible than that which rejects it. I'm not panicking, but not all the global warming press is just hot air. We really do have a serious situ-

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ation on our hands with the potential for major global implications if we don't act—soon.

However, by the time I formed my opinion about global warming it didn't really matter which "side" I came down on, because it turns out that a lesson I learned from my mom and dad when I was five years old is what guided me through the controversy. My parents taught me that *I should always leave a place cleaner than I found it*.

This remarkably simple principle of leaving things better than we find them is a mandate to all people. Regardless of your view on global warming, it should come as no surprise that God expects us to leave the earth for our children in better condition than we received it from our parents.

"God spoke: 'Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of the Earth'" (Genesis 1:26, *The Message*).

From the opening chapter of Genesis and woven into the whole of Scripture, human beings, acting as God's stewards, are to provide care for creation, remembering that it does not belong to us.

Every generation since the industrial revolution has failed miserably at this, and we're now paying the price. Someone must turn things around. We must turn things around.

Yes, that might make us bedfellows with some folks that we're not used to siding with, but that sure beats taking religious, dogmatic stands that make it look as though we don't believe God created this awesome planet or that he assigned us to be stewards of it. To be Christian is to be an environmentalist. □

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