

The Environment and Using the Earth's Resources

Barry Asmus

October 24, 2010

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Denies: atheism, polytheism, evolution, fatalism, pantheism, and materialism

Man created in the image of God. Therefore every person has worth and eternal value. God called it very good.

Then the fall. Genesis 3. Verse 18 Thorns and thistles. Nature too is fallen.

Ps. 8 Creation. How did God know? Man given stewardship over the earth.

Someday the earth will be restored. Romans 8:20-21, Amos 9:13

Unfortunately, environmentalism taught in schools and heralded by the press strongly suggests that humans are villains and nature is the victim: people are bad, population is bad, consumption is bad, business is bad, pollution is everywhere, trees are being killed; while nature is taught as being good, benign, and should be left alone.

In short, secularism in our schools and society replace the Grandeur of God with the grandeur of nature. Secular prophets preach a secular salvation.

Environmentalism always means bigger government: bigger budgets and higher taxes. Save the earth - - billions are starving - - world's population is growing too fast - - world can produce only so much food - - the people of the Western world consume too much - - we are running out of resources, out of oil, out of water, out of trees. Only government can save us.

Read the story of Noah and the Ark from the Bible (Genesis 6-9). This story illustrates how one good man and his family saved animals from catastrophe, making sure that the offspring of the animals would continue to populate the earth. Do Americans take the responsibility of stewardship? Zoos, nature centers, wildlife refuges, and ranches that specialize in game? Organizations such as the Nature Conservancy, which protects endangered species by creating preserves; the World Center for Birds of Prey in Idaho, which uses captive breeding where necessary to save falcons and other raptors; and the Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Texas, which preserves endangered animals from around the world. What about farmers in Iowa? Do they take care of their land? How about cows and chickens? Why don't we worry about the possible extinction of cows and chickens the way we worry about the possible extinction of elephants and tigers? After all, millions of people use these animals for food every day. The problem, of course, is that animals which become extinct have no owners with a stake in their future. No ownership. No control.

Running out of resources? No Running out of oil? No

Running out of trees? No. Every year more wood is grown in the U.S. than is being cut.

Tragedy of the Commons

Imagine two very thirsty children, each with a straw in a single glass of Coke. How long will it take them to finish the Coke? Not very long. If one slows down, the other will get most of the Coke. This is an illustration of the "tragedy of commons." When you are taking something that you want from a common pool, you are likely to take it as fast as you can. If you don't, someone else probably will. Everybody's responsibility becomes no one's responsibility.

Now suppose that each child has a separate glass, each half-filled with Coke. In this case, the children are not under pressure to drink the Coke so fast. One child might wait awhile before drinking it, perhaps putting it in the refrigerator for later. As long as the child is assured that he or she has a right to that half-glass, he or she won't feel pressured to drink it now. In effect, each child "owns" the Coke in the glass. Each child now has private property and will feel secure that their "property" will be there when they want it.

The page-one Outlook column ("Global Warming Issue Bears Close Watching," Oct. 13) complains that Americans are ignoring the impending crisis of global warming. The evidence, however, clearly shows that there is no global warming crisis and that Americans are right to turn their worries elsewhere.

Predictions of a greenhouse effect by computer models have been dropping fast as the models improve. In 1990 the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change claimed global temperatures would increase more than 3 degrees Celsius by 2100 if we didn't make steep cuts in our use of coal and oil for energy. Today, the same groups says it might warm as little as 1 degree Celsius. The trend suggests that the fear of global warming has been overblown, if not misplaced entirely.

What about the predictions of melting ice caps and flooding in Florida? According to the U.N. experts, "there is no evidence that extreme weather events, or climate variability has increased in a global sense, through the 20th century." The facts simply do not support the idea of more floods, harsh weather or a global warming threat due to burning fossil fuels.

JEFFREY SALMON

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Mr. Murray says "Global warming isn't just a fear; it's a fact..." Hardly. We have been recording temperatures for a little more than a century. Mr. Murray correctly reports that during that time average temperatures have risen about 1 degree Fahrenheit. However, on a planet where climate cycles range over tens of thousands of years, a hundred-year history is barely a blip, and certainly not a trend.

He makes a huge and distinctly unscientific leap when he attributes all global warming to carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. This completely ignores both the natural cycles of the earth's climate as well as the naturally occurring cycles of the sun. Carbon-dioxide emissions produced by human effort account for a meager 3%-5% of all carbon dioxide emissions. That being the case, if we were to stop all production, turn off our cars, shut down our factories, stop mowing our lawns and blowing our leaves, the net effect on global warming would be negligible at best.

CRAIG W. MENNINGA

Highland, Ind.

Cooler Heads Discuss Global Warming

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You don't tell your readers that a practical large-scale amelioration to global warming is Nuclear Energy, which sends no emissions into the atmosphere, no earth-warming gases. Solar and wind power, fusion and cold fusion, and conservation may help, but they are so far from large-scale practicality that it is irresponsible to count on them.

Despite the public fears raised by the media, one should note that over the past 40 years no one has been harmed by the operation of the 400 nuclear power plants around the world built to U.S. standards (Chernobyl was not). Don't keep telling people about the insoluble global warming problem without at least letting them know that many energy experts believe nuclear power could supply more than half the world's coming energy needs, indefinitely, with no significant environmental effects.

BERTRAM WOLFE

Monte Sereno, Calif.

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Historical data suggest that from 800 A.D. to 1200 A.D. the earth's climate was much warmer than it is today. This is when the Vikings settled Iceland and Greenland. They traveled in open sailboats with no cabins. They were tough dudes, but not that tough—it was warmer then. This is also when Greenland got its name. About 1200 A.D. the climate started to cool. The period between 1450 A.D. and 1850 A.D. is known by geologists as the "little ice age," a time of high precipitation and a much cooler climate, which caused many mountain glaciers to form throughout the world. The Greenland settlements were abandoned by the Vikings and hard times occurred in Iceland and much of Europe.

The "little ice age" is believed to have been caused by a reduction in sunspots. There were no recorded sunspots during the Maunder Minimum in sunspot activity between 1645 A.D. and 1715 A.D. Since the Maunder Minimum the sunspots have increased and the earth's climate has warmed.

JAMES K. SNOOK

Geologist

Alan Murray was off his usually astute form in his column on global warming. His analysis was flawed and banal.

Reducing carbon dioxide emissions to 1990 levels would only slow increases, not reverse them. Anti-industrial Luddites and power-hungry international statisticians and their dupes can't afford to admit that we would have to brutally impoverish ourselves and our children in order to bring emissions down to levels they would accept, without the extensive development of nuclear energy, the only realistic non-carbon dioxide producing alternative to fossil fuel.

The bad news for Al Gore & Co. is that there is no global warming. The one degree increase in this century mentioned by Mr. Murray occurred before the carbon-dioxide increase began about mid-century. Since then, global temperature measurements have not significantly changed, and have even cooled slightly in the past two decades. This is terrible news for the gang that wanted so desperately to control our health care and now so desperately wants to control our energy use.

DON VANDERVELDE

Gig Harbor, Wash.

Now that Alan Murray has declared "Global Warming isn't just a fear; it's a fact . . ." one would think that there remain no logical arguments to counter the global-warming fear mongers.

With all of the highly sophisticated electronic equipment developed in the past 25 years, it certainly has become more possible for scientists to measure temperatures world-wide. But how can they possibly know what the average temperatures were in the last century? Guess work? Computer models? How do they know what the temperatures were worldwide in the 1700's, 1800's and the early part of this century?

Using scientific gibberish and junk science, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Gore are generating or encouraging fear-mongering of this so-called problem and the usual media savants are willing to jump aboard to lead the juggernaut, meekly accepting the doctrines. PAUL M. GALANT

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According to Engel Friis-Christensen and Knud Lassen, two Danish solar-terrestrial physicists, we are currently experiencing a temporary warm blip, most probably caused by an unusually active sun. They found that the sun's activity better explains changes in the earth's temperature than the favored theory which focuses on man-made greenhouse gases.

If the Danes are right, then our obsession with man-made global warming may be leading us down a dangerous path. The costs of attempting to control the climate are likely to be large: Simply keeping emissions of carbon dioxide down to the levels generated in 1990 would induce a slowdown in the global economy that may be of the order of 1% gross productivity per year.

JULIAN MORRIS

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Warmer Atmosphere Grows Bigger Ice Caps

Your Oct. 23 editorial "By Faith Alone" is right on target. Weather is a "complex adaptive system," as that phrase is scientifically understood. Nothing, including global warming, operates independently. The polar ice caps are actually getting larger because of, you guessed it, global warming. This is causing the atmosphere over the poles to become more humid as the edges of the ice caps melt, which is resulting in heavier snow fall, which, because of the pressure, are forming additional ice at the caps. Thus the caps are getting bigger.

The political environmentalists do not consider the effects of actions like this over their natural cycle because they are interested only in branding new, specific near-term actions as either "good" or "bad" to suit their political agendas. Nature has a way of taking care of herself but this process does not fit neatly into the political time frames of those acting in their own selfish interests.

Perhaps you can educate your readers that science will once again find its voice as politicians debate this important issue.