



FRONTIER CENTRE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

BACKGROUND

FCPP BACKGROUNDER NO. 81

A Special
Frontier Centre
Edition
October 2009

Some of
History's
Soothsayers
of Doom include
John of Toledo
Nicolaus
Peranzonus
de Monte
Sainte Marie
Melchior
Hoffman
Helisaeus
Roeslin
of Alsace
John Ballou
Newbrough
William Miller
Pierre Turrell
Joanna
Southcott
Count von
Iggelheim
Stifelius of
Lochau
Rabbi Zevi
John Turner
Jacques
Bernoulli
William Bell
Paul Ehrlich
Frederick
Nausea
Tim Flannery
James Hansen
Al Gore
George Monbiot
David Suzuki
Ban Ki-Moon
Rajenda
Pachauri
Maurice Strong
and so many
more...



THE END IS NIGH

Nostradamus

Special Excerpt
From
Ian Plimer's

Heaven and Earth

Nuclear
holocaust,
Chernobyl,
population
bomb, fluoride,
a modern Ice
Age, DDT,
WWIII, soil
loss, planetary
alignments,
mega-famines,
AIDS, H1N1,
peak oil and
the end of oil,
the second
coming,
9/11, 2012,
GM foods,
breast
implants,
acid rain,
methane,
ozone holes,
avian flu,
SARS, mad
cow disease,
acid oceans,
asteroid
impacts,
Al Qaeda
crisis, global
warming,
global cooling,
inflation,
financial
booms
and crashes,
political
assassinations,
insurgencies,
ethnic
cleansing,
wars...

Foreword

In the prelude to the negotiations for concluding a follow-up agreement to the Kyoto accord in Copenhagen in early December, Canadians can expect to be inundated by news stories and studies contending that human-caused carbon emissions are causing catastrophic climate change. Typically these will emanate from global warming pundits that have an ideological or financial stake in the intrusive, regulatory “solutions” being proposed by the United Nations. Their common theme confidently suggests “time is running out,” that the end is nigh, and the world may indeed end if our politicians don’t sign up to the proposed successor UN Climate Change treaty.

The Frontier Centre for Public Policy joins thousands of scientists who question the highly politicized so-called “science” of human-caused global warming and the draconian, completely unnecessary limits on energy use and economic growth that the proposed treaty will lead to.

Much has been written about the politics of the human-caused global warming theory and the Frontier Centre has not been shy to engage this debate even as the topic has become increasingly bogged down in over the top fire and brimstone rhetoric with almost religious overtones.

One of the best rebuttals to this nonsense was recently published by one of Australia’s top scientists in the book *Heaven and Earth*. Professor Ian Plimer has generously given the Frontier Centre permission to reprint a highly entertaining and informative section from his book entitled “The End is Nigh”.

Doomsday scare-mongering is nothing new in the human experience. Our many man-made Global Warming doomsayers join a long list of wise people over time, charlatans included, that have predicted the end of the world.

As history shows, they are most certainly wrong.

Peter Holle,
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October 2009

The End Is Nigh

A growing number of scientists are recognising that climate, environmental and economic modelling of an inherently unpredictable future is futile and illogical.¹ Long-distance predictions have a monumental rate of failure and those predictions made using computer modelling are no different. In fact, the dire predictions by climate groups have damaged science.² Such predictions probably tell us more about the group behaviour of the climate modelling community than about global warming. But then again, predictions of the future are not really new.

We live in a technological world. This technology is underpinned by science. The average punter understands neither the science nor the technology used in everyday life. Carl Sagan argued that science is the candle in the darkness and is opposed to the new Dark Age which is underpinned by irrationality and superstition.³ By corrupting science, we step back into irrationality and superstition. This irrationality of destructive delusions costs communities dearly.⁴ Technology appears to produce political problems, the politicians and the public expect science to provide answers to problems and the answers are expected to be unequivocal. Nevertheless, we are told, the world is going to end, we are all going to die slowly, we are going to be fried in a hot greenhouse world and, what's more, we are going to die poor. And it's all our fault. Folks, it's time for indulgences. Or is it?

There is a pretty dismal history of experts making predictions about the end of the planet and other such frightening catastrophes. Most predictions, including those of the climate zealots, have religious overtones. Pessimistic predictions attract interest and there is always a crowd ready to listen to dire apocalyptic predictions.⁵

The New Testament tells us (Matthew 16:28) that the world will end before the death of the last Apostle.⁶ The world didn't end. In 992 AD, the scholar Bernard of Thuringen confidently announced that, from his calculations, the world had only 32 years left. The world did end for Bernard, who died before the 32 years elapsed. The Last Judgement was to take place 1000 years after the birth of Christ. As the world

1. Pilkey, O.H. and Pilkey-Jarvis, L. 2007 *Useless arithmetic: why environmental scientists can't predict the future*. Columbia University Press.
2. Pearce, F. 2008: Poor forecasting undermines climate debate. *New Scientist*, 1st May 2008, 8-9.
3. Sagan, C. 1996: *The Demon-haunted World*. Headline Book Publishing.
4. Booker, C. and North, R. 2007: *Scared to death: From BSE to global warming. Why scares are costing us the Earth*. Continuum.
5. A good example is the poem Said Hanraban, by John O'Brien (1878-1952) from *Around the Boree Log and Other Verses* (1921).
6. A good summary of end of world ideas, some of which are used herein, is James Randi's 1980 book *The Mask of Nasradamus. A biography of the world's most famous prophet*. James Scribner's Sons, New York.

“...like the predictions we hear from the climate zealots who make predictions so far in advance that they will not be around to be stoned by angry mobs...”

was to end, it was not necessary to exert energy and effort planting crops in what were subsistence cul-tures. Many didn't plant crops. In 1000 AD the world ended for many because there was famine. The astrologer John of Toledo circulated pamphlets in 1179 AD showing that the world would end at 4:15 pm (GMT) on 23 September (Julian calendar) when the planets were in Libra. This was taken so seriously that in Constantinople the Byzantine Emperor walled up his windows and the Archbishop of Canterbury called for a day of atonement. Walling up windows worked. The world did not end.

The early 16th Century was a great time for end-of-world predictions. Despite numerous failed predictions, the population was only too willing to believe the next prediction. The best prediction of the lot was by astrologers who suggested that a biblical-type deluge would end the world in 1523. Some 20,000 Londoners left for higher ground as they preferred to perish outdoors rather than in the comfort of their own homes. Others, like the Prior of St. Bartholomew's stocked up on food and water. The world didn't end and the astrologers claimed that their calculation was a mere 100 years wrong and the world was going to end anyway in 1623. It did for all those that were alive in 1523.

This prediction sounds very much like the predictions we hear from the climate zealots who make predictions so far in advance that they will not be around to be stoned by angry mobs when their predictions fail. Despite the failure of the 1523 end of the world, astrologers were at it again in 1524 when the planets would be aligned in Pisces. Of course, the end was to be a global flood. This planetary conjunction was Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn along with the Sun. Neptune, unknown then, was also in Pisces but Uranus, Pluto (unknown then) and the Moon were not. Who could fail to believe an astrologer called Nicolaus Peranzonus de Monte Sainte Marie, one of the main promoters of the end of the world? Others, like Georg Tannstetter of the University of Vienna, argued that the world would not end. The cacophony of hysteria was so great that Tannstetter was not heard. The same applies today. The global flood was predicted for 20 February 1524, there was frantic boat building activity and many scaled-down replicas of Noah's Ark were built. Many in port towns retreated to boats.

In Germany, Count von Iggleheim built a three-storey ark. He retreated into the ark on the designated deluge day and an angry crowd gathered outside because a rich man was to go through the eye of a needle and they were to perish. On the deemed deluge day, it rained lightly, the crowd behaved as a crowd and hundreds were killed in a stampede. It certainly was the end of the world for the Count, who was stoned to death by the crowd. Records show that 1524 was a drought year in Europe!

The delightfully-named Frederick Nausea, Bishop of Vienna, predicted in 1532 that the end was nigh because he had seen all sorts of strange things such as bloody crosses in the sky with a comet, black bread had fallen from the sky, there were three suns, and a burning castle had been seen in the sky. The world did not end.

The mathematician and biblical scholar Stifelius of Lochau (Germany) calculated that the world would end at 8 am on 3 October 1533. This created great fear in the people of Lochau. The world did not end. Fortunately, the citizens of Lochau came to their senses and gave Stifelius a well-deserved flogging, stripped him of his ecclesiastical title and ran him out of town. In Strasbourg (France), the Anabaptist Melchior Hoffman announced that the world would be immolated in 1533. Only 144,000 were to live. The rich forgave their debts and gave away their earthly goods in order to be among the chosen few. The year 1533 was one with very few house fires, principally because there was great caution about the dangers of fire and the resultant fiery end. The world did not end in 1533. However, recalculations showed that it was now to end in 1534. Over 100 credulous punters were baptised in Amsterdam as a precaution. The world also did not end in 1534.

Calculations by the astrologer Pierre Turrell in Dijon (France) showed that the world would end in 1537, 1544, 1801 or 1814. Such calculations are the computer models of today. Turrell was smarter than the average astrologer and predicted the end of the world would occur well after his expected lifetime. This is exactly what the climate alarmists are doing. Another astrologer, Cyprian Leowitz, calculated that the world would end in 1584. He must have had great confidence in his calculations because he issued astronomical tables showing celestial events until the year 1614 in case the world did not end. It didn't. The year 1588 was another end-of-the-world year according to Johann Muller. Muller, a self-professed sage who used the name Regiomontanus, was also smart enough to predict the end of the world well after his expected lifetime.

In the 17th Century, 1648 was an end-of-the-world year according to Rabbi Sabbati Zevi of Smyrna (now Izmir, Turkey). In a fit of humility, Zevi claimed he was the Messiah and persuaded the citizens of Smyrna to give up work and prepare for their return to Jerusalem. Zevi was arrested for sedition by the Sultan and, while in prison in Constantinople, was converted to Islam. The end of the world did not happen in 1648. In 1578, Helisaeus Roeslin of Alsace calculated the world would end during a solar eclipse on 12 August 1654. This was a pretty safe bet as the physician Roeslin would have expected to be pushing up daisies in 1654. However, the eclipse occurred on 11 August 1654. Notwithstanding, people stayed indoors and the churches were filled on 12 August. It was business as usual in the 18th Century with Cardinal Nicholas de Cusa declaring that the

Astrologer Pierre Turrell showed that the world would end in 1537, 1544, 1801 or 1814. Such calculations are the computer models of today.

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end of the world would be in 1704. Although he was a Cardinal, his prediction was not supported by the Vatican, the end did not come. The Swiss Bernoulli family produced eight outstanding mathematicians in three generations.

Jacques Bernoulli is well known for discovering the mathematical series now called Bernoulli Numbers and less well known for his prediction that the world would end for a cometary impact on 19 May 1719. Who could dispute such calculations if they were done by a Bernoulli? Both Bernoulli Numbers and the world survived.

The English had their own William Whiston, who predicted that the world would end on 13 October 1736. It didn't. Emmanuel Swedenborg, known for his scholarly concordance, claimed that he frequently consulted with the angels who revealed to him that 1757 would be the end. It was not. The English sect leader Joanna Southcott claimed that the world would end in 1774 and that she was pregnant with the New Messiah. The world didn't end and Joanna did not deliver a bundle of joy.

England has sporadic earthquakes. The 8 February 1761 earthquake was followed 28 days later on 8 March by another earthquake. William Bell persuaded Londoners that the next earthquake would be 28 days later on 5 April. This, rather like climate predictions, was a linear projection based on two points. Many left towns, mainly by boat. On 6 April Londoners came to their senses and threw Bell into Bedlam, the institution for the mentally disturbed.

John Turner, prophet and follower of Joanna Southcott, predicted that D-Day was 14 October 1820. It was not. The dates of 3 April 1843, 7 July 1843, March 21 1844 and 22 October 1844 were predicted by William Miller as end-of-the-world dates. Surely just one date was enough? The end was to be preceded by a midnight cry in 1831, and a spectacular meteor shower in 1833 only strengthened Miller's prophecies. On each appointed date, Millerites would gather on hilltops awaiting the end. Up until Miller's death in 1849, the credulous still believed that Miller could predict the end of the world. Egyptologists got into the act and, from measurements of the Great Pyramid at Giza, some claimed that the world would end in 1881. Remeasuring gave a more accurate date of 1936 and even more detailed remeasuring gave the date at 1953. Richard Head, an example of nominative determinism, published a book in 1684 called *The Life and Death of Mother Shipton*. A reprint in 1862, replete with forged rhymes attributed to Mother Shipton, predicted the end in 1881. It was then claimed that the end was to be in 1891. Anyone for 1981 or 1991?

The 20th Century was no different. Despite the horrors of two world wars, John Ballou Newbrough predicted that 1947 was the year.

7. Ehrlich, P. 1968: The population bomb. Ballantine

The US and other governments were going to be crushed and Europe again would have massive depopulation from war. It didn't. There have been numerous late 20th Century predictions of population and environmental catastrophes⁷ in the style of Thomas Malthus (1766-1834), all of which have been spectacularly wrong because they omitted to consider advances in science and technology. In 1980s, we had a few choices of dates for the end of the world. When Saturn and Jupiter were almost in conjunction in the sign of Libra on 31 December 1980, the world was to end. It didn't. The planets were aligned on 10 March 1982. A 1974 book, *The Jupiter Effect*, predicted that there would be earthquakes on that day. The problem is that there are earthquakes every day, whether the planets are aligned or not. Earthquakes in 1980 were touted as the premature result of "the Jupiter effect". In fact, anything that occurred on planet Earth at that time was due to "the Jupiter effect". Just as today any extraordinary weather phenomenon is promoted as evidence of global warming.

At some unspecified time in the 1980s, Jeane Dixon predicted that a comet would destroy the Earth. It didn't. Since one day for God represents 1,000 years for man and God creatively toiled for six days, then man should toil for 6,000 years and then take a rest. A long rest. A permanent rest. By this calculation the world didn't end in 1996 although, while in an embrace with Bacchus, I might have missed the end. Quatrain 10-72 of Nostradamus tells us that July 1999 was the time. It wasn't. Millennium cults had a field day in 1999 and 2000. The world didn't end. Computers did not fail with the Y2K bug. Aeroplanes did not fall out of the sky. The world just kept on doing what the world does.

In the late 20th and early 21st Centuries, the world was going to end with a nuclear holocaust, Chernobyl, fluoride, a new ice age, DDT, soil loss, planetary alignments, mega-famines, AIDS, peak oil and the end of oil, the second coming, 9/11, GM foods, breast implants, acid rain, ozone holes, Y2K bug, avian flu, SARS, mad cow disease, acid oceans, asteroid impacts, Cuban crisis, global warming, inflation, financial booms, financial crashes, political assassinations, wars and goodness knows what else. At my age, I have experienced all of these end-of-the world scenarios, I have experienced three climate changes and have seen better health, greater longevity, greater wealth, better education, better transport and less famine. All of them brought to the planet by science, technology and capitalism. More people die in winter than in summer, there is more depopulation in global cooling events than in global warming events, and yet we are the first generation on planet Earth to fear warmth.

For millennia, people have been predicting the end of the world. These predictions have been based on religion, science and mathematics. They are normally blessed with moral overtones. If just one of these predictions were correct, then we would not be here.

“Millennium cults had a field day in 1999 and in 2000. The world didn't end.”

It is useless to attempt to reason a man out of a thing he never reasoned into.

- Jonathan Swift

Apocalyptic predictions have a 100% failure rate. It is really very hard indeed to be 100% incorrect.

Those making apocalyptic predictions have no interest in improving life on Earth, they just demonstrate a complete denial of reality. We fragile humans probably need to fear the unknown as a fundamental biological survival mechanism making us alert to dangers.

Climate zealots warn us of a future catastrophe and that we must pay penance and change our ways. They use a narrow body of science and some mathematics and the message is given with religious vigour. There is no reasoned argument presented, hence reason cannot be used to evaluate contrary data and change conclusions. One is reminded of the words of Jonathan Swift (1667-1745): "It is useless to attempt to reason a man out of a thing he never reasoned into."

Politicians and the public are frightened witless. There is also a universal fear that the hypothesis that human activity causes global warming will be debated and that this hypothesis will be shown to have poor foundations. Attempts to restrict free speech and calls for censorship of alternative views are made by climate zealots. Such actions have characterised salvationist cults down through the ages.

I suggest that we give the climate zealots the same treatment given to previous prophets of doom such as Count von Iggleheim, Stifelius, Rabbi Zevi and William Bell. The next time someone comes to your front door and tells you that the world is going to end, soot the dog onto them. History is on your side.

There is no use for an honest scientist who says "I don't know". Yet uncertainty is the crux of science whereas certainty underpins religious beliefs. The politicians and the public prefer to hear scientists give confident black-and-white answers and make confident predictions. Uncertainty and predictions that all is well are far less likely to attract attention than those that say we're doomed.

It is hereby declared that the end of the world is cancelled. History is on my side.

Religion, environmentalism and romanticism

Any system that allows the questioning of beliefs is an enlightened system. The truth can only be determined by having, without fear, vibrant critical and analytical discussion, by embracing rather than fearing uncertainty and by not suppressing evidence that may be contrary to one's treasured beliefs. Some 150 years ago, John Stuart Mill stated:

Complete liberty of contradicting and disproving our opinion is the very condition which justifies us in assuming its truth for purposes of action; and on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of being right.

This does not happen with the populist global warming movement. In schools today we teach scientific "facts" the same way as theological "facts" were taught centuries ago. Global warming has become the secular religion of today. In contrast, those in the knowledge business pursue facts and objective truths, they are rooted in reality and, on the basis of new validated information, constantly change their conclusions.

Dogma, suppression of alternative ideas and reliance on authority are characteristics of fundamentalist religions. Of great concern is that there are data errors in the system designed to provide accurate temperature data. It is this data that is the cornerstone of the climate models. However, it appears that data and the scientific process are not required in the new secular religion.

Human-induced global warming is an unproven scientific hypothesis yet it has become an article of scientific dogma. The peer review process in climatology research is controlled by the secular equivalent of the Collegium Romanum, the IPCC. They in turn are answerable to the Inquisition, the global warming fundamentalists, who in today's world cannot yet resort to instruments of torture.

Despite our comfortable materialistic lives in the Western world, there are many who ask: Is that all? They want a meaning to life and yearn for a spiritual life. Some follow the traditional religions, others embrace paranormal beliefs, superstitions and irrationality and many follow a variety of spiritual paths. Established religion in Western societies has taken a giant backward step, there is a huge spiritual gap and many people want something to believe in. In fact, many will believe almost anything just to fill the yawning spiritual vacuum.

A new religion has been invented to fulfil this need: extreme environmentalism.

It is accurate temperature data that is the cornerstone of the climate models. However, it appears that data and the scientific process are not required in the new secular religion.

The rise in environmentalism parallels in time and place the decline of Christianity and socialism...

It is an urban atheistic religion disconnected from the environment. The rise in environmentalism parallels in time and place the decline of Christianity and socialism and incorporates many of the characteristics of Christianity and socialism. Just as the Roman Empire discovered, when the masses have embraced a new religion, the state must follow. Environmentalism is an urban religion disconnected from Nature, or rural life, or the realities of food and mineral production. This environmental religion is terrified of doubt, scepticism and uncertainty yet claims to be underpinned by science. It is a fundamentalist religion with a fear of Nature. It has its own high priests such as Al Gore and its holy writ, such as the IPCC reports and the Kyoto Protocol. Instant theological gratification occurs with the various future scenarios in the IPCC summaries. Like many religious followers, few have ever thoughtfully read and understood the holy books.

Like many fundamentalist religions, it attracts believers by announcing apocalyptic calamities unless we change our ways. Fear is bankable.

Excerpt from the book

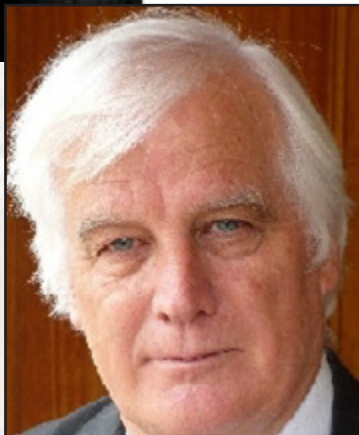
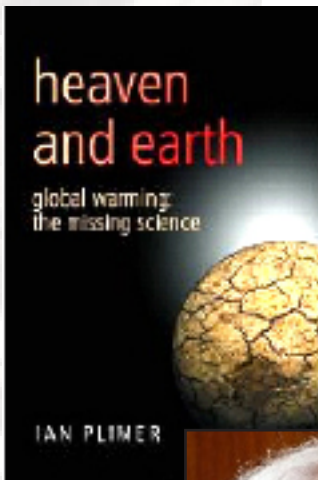
Heaven and Earth

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Published by

Taylor Trade Publishing

An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland USA 20706
www.rlptrade.com



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The Frontier Centre for Public Policy is an independent, non-profit organization that undertakes research and education in support of economic growth and social outcomes that will enhance the quality of life in our communities. Through a variety of publications and public forums, the Centre explores policy innovations required to make the eastern prairies region a winner in the open economy. It also provides new insights into solving important issues facing our cities, towns and provinces. These include improving the performance of public expenditures in important areas like local government, education, health and social policy.

The author of this study has worked independently and the opinions expressed are therefore his own, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Board of the Frontier Centre for Public Policy.

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