

## **Beware the Church of Climate Alarm**

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As the Czech President, Vaclav Klaus, an economist, anti-totalitarian and climate change sceptic, prepares to take up the rotating presidency of the European Union next year, climate alarmists are doing their best to traduce him.

The New York Times opened a profile of Klaus, 67, this week with a quote from a 1980s communist secret agent's report, claiming he behaves like a "rejected genius", and asserts there is "palpable fear" he will "embarrass" the EU.

But the real fear driving climate alarmists wild is that a more rational approach to the fundamentalist religion of global warming may be in the ascendancy - whether in the parliamentary offices of the world's largest trading bloc or in the living rooms of Blacktown.

As the global financial crisis takes hold, perhaps people are starting to wonder whether the so-called precautionary principle, which would have us accept enormous new taxes in the guise of an emissions trading scheme and curtail economic growth, is justified, based on what we actually know about climate.

One of Australia's leading enviro-sceptics, the geologist and University of Adelaide professor Ian Plimer, 62, says he has noticed audiences becoming more receptive to his message that climate change has always occurred and there is nothing we can do to stop it.

In a speech at the American Club in Sydney on Monday night for Quadrant magazine, titled Human-Induced Climate Change - A Lot Of Hot Air, Plimer debunked climate-change myths.

"Climates always change," he said. Our climate has changed in cycles over millions of years, as the orbit of the planet wobbles and our distance from the sun changes, for instance, or as the sun itself produces variable amounts of radiation. "All of this affects climate. It is impossible to stop climate change. Climates have always changed and they always will."

His two-hour presentation included more than 50 charts and graphs, as well as almost 40 pages of references. It is the basis of his new book, Heaven And Earth: The Missing Science Of Global Warming, to be published early next year.

Plimer said one of the charts, which plots atmospheric carbon dioxide and temperature over 500 million years, with seemingly little correlation, demonstrates one of the "lessons from history" to which geologists are privy: "There is no relationship between CO<sub>2</sub> and temperature."

Another slide charts the alternating periods of cooling and warming on Earth, with the Pleistocene Ice Age starting 110,000 years ago and giving way, 14,700 years ago, to the Bolling warm period for 800 years. This in turn gave way to the Older Dryas cooling for 300 years, then the Allerod warming for 700 years, and so on, until the cooling of the Little Ice Age from 1300 to 1850. Since 1850, we have lived through the "Modern Warming", one of the most stable climate periods in history.

Plimer said some astronomers predict we are headed for a new cooling period.

Plimer said there is a division between those scientists who sit in front of super computers and push piles of data into the mathematical models that drive the theory of climate change, and those who take measurements in the field.

We are not sceptical enough about the data. For instance, Plimer cited differences between results from temperature measuring stations in urban and rural areas. Those in urbanised Chicago, Berkeley, New York, and so on, show temperature rises over the past 150 years, whereas those in the rural US, in Houlton, Albany and Harrisburg (though not Death Valley, California) show equally consistent cooling. "What we're measuring is urbanisation," Plimer said.

To understand the chaotic nature of climate change, we need to consider all the inputs - cosmic radiation, sun, clouds and so on, he said.

There was much more but essentially Plimer's message is that the idea humans cause climate change has become a fundamentalist religion which is corrupting science. It is embedded with a fear of nature and embraced principally by city people who have lost touch with nature.

He likens the debate to the famous 1990s battle he had in the Federal Court, where he accused an elder of The Hills Bible Church in Baulkham Hills of breaching Australia's Trade Practices Act by claiming to have found scientific evidence of Noah's Ark in Turkey.

Plimer says creationists and climate alarmists are quite similar in that "we're dealing with dogma and people who, when challenged, become quite vicious and irrational".

Human-caused climate change is being "promoted with religious zeal ? there are fundamentalist organisations which will do anything to silence critics. They have their holy books, their prophet [is] Al Gore. And they are promoting a story which is frightening us witless [using] guilt [and urging] penance."

It is difficult for non-scientists to engage in the debate over what causes climate change and whether or not it can be stopped by new taxes and slower growth, because dissenting voices are shouted down by true believers in the scientific

community who claim they alone have the authority to speak.

Quadrant is under fire for publishing articles by sceptics but, as its editor, Keith Windschuttle, said on Monday night, "People who are really confident [of their facts] relish debate."

In any case, ordinary people already have suspicions. The zealotry and one-sidedness of the debate alarmed an 81-year-old Seven Hills pensioner, Denys Clarke, so much that last month, at his own expense, he hired the ballroom at the Blacktown Workers Club for two public forums, titled The Truth About Climate Change. He invited a climate sceptic, the James Cook University professor Bob Carter, a geologist, to speak. More than 300 people attended, some from as far away as Nowra.

Carter, like Plimer and Klaus, has come in for his fair share of vilification. But as Clarke proves, you can't stop people thinking. Yet.