

Serious errors in global warming critique
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Editor:

Marten Lettinga makes serious errors in his critique of my presentation in the Cariboo Regional District Boardroom. They suggest he either didn't listen or didn't want to listen or both. Having it two ways is apparently his expectations as reflected in his end comments.

He ends his letter by making the disclaimer that the opinions expressed are his and not those of his employer. If they are not the views of your employer why exploit their credibility by using their title in the address under your name. It would be intellectually more honest simply to sign as yourself. Must be nice to have it both ways, all the benefits but none of the liability.

To describe my presentation as "a biased contrarian view" suggests the writer didn't listen to what I stated very clearly at the outset and repeated at the end. I said I was going to make a biased presentation because I believe most people have heard to date is a bias. I said if they put what I said together with they already heard they could draw their own conclusions. I even joked about saying "Morning" instead of "Good morning" I then suggested people make up their own mind. Many are tired about being told what to think. It appeared to me the purpose of the group of 'environmentalists' at the Cariboo Regional District (CRD) was to bully them into doing what they want.

1. I have countless complaints from parents about children crying unable to sleep, worrying about the threats of impending doom. Indeed, in my talk I gave a couple of specific examples. I didn't say the children shouldn't learn.

What I said was they should learn but at an age appropriate for their years without all the threats of impending doom that usually accompany such lessons. I suggested Piaget's stages of development would, from my experience, provide a good guide about the stages.

The idea of giving them hope is a straw man argument. First you tell them about the non-existent problems of global warming and climate change and gild this by suggesting there are solutions. You can stop climate change and so it is a hopeful message. Actually this is seriously misleading because you can't stop global warming or climate change. Read the letter that over 100 very qualified scientist wrote to the UN Secretary General recently stating categorically that "It is not possible to stop climate change, a natural phenomenon that has affected humanity through the ages.

Geological, archaeological, oral and written histories all attest to the dramatic challenges posed to past societies from unanticipated changes in temperature, precipitation, winds and other climatic variables." It is like the old joke about the Canadian who sold a whistle that scared tigers away. When asked if it worked he replied, "Have you seen any tigers around here?"

2. The graph I presented showing warming since 1680 was not my graph but one used in the 1995 IPCC report. It does not show that most of the warming took place in the last 50 years. This may be what the writer wants to believe, but it wasn't there. The warming since 1680 was significant, albeit with cooling periods in between such as that associated with the Dalton Minimum.

3. The writer says the presentation claimed there was "much confusion over the causes of the existence of global warming." It did. It also demonstrated very clearly how much confusion there is over the causes not only of global warming but also of climate change.

It did not say there was confusion over the occurrence of global warming. Indeed, it said there was global warming since 1680 in the longest most recent period of temperature. Ironically, Lettinga acknowledges this in his point (2) above.

Overall the writer apparently didn't listen to what was said and only picks out inaccurate portions that he thinks bolster his uneducated view.

He says the CRD should have invited other climatologists. I understand they had heard one side of the debate and wanted me to present the other side. I did that with no illusions about what I

was doing. I also commend the CRD for their willingness to hear both sides. Now they can draw their own conclusions.

They were doing what any responsible group entrusted by the public to make sound balanced decisions should do. As the scientists said in their letter, “Attempts to prevent global climate change from occurring are ultimately futile, and constitute a tragic misallocation of resources that would be better spent on humanity’s real and pressing problems.”

The argument that I am involved with the Friends of Science is an insidious suggestive smear. What is the point of saying “possible links to the Alberta oil industry.”? (my emphasis) Yes, I was involved with Friends of Science and darned proud to be. Indeed, I helped them form the group. About seven years ago I met with a group of professional people including engineers, geologists, hydrologists etc at Calgary Airport who were frustrated by the bad science being presented about climate and climate change. They wanted to form a group to focus strictly on the science and to set up a web site to provide analysis, commentary and a forum for all the science. I advised them to keep any funding at arms length. They did this by setting up a blind trust at the University of Calgary.

They continue to deal with science issues only on their web page. With a brief hiatus I have continued as a scientific advisor to the group. I have never received any money from them, although I wouldn’t see that as a problem. I say this because the David Suzuki Foundation receives funding from oil companies. I figure if it is good enough for David it should be good enough for me. Oops sorry, that depends on your bias.

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