

# Here Comes the Sun?

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Is a widespread consensus about "global warming" now melting away?

Wonderful, wonderful Copenhagen..." goes the popular refrain Danny Kaye first sang in his film, *Hans Christian Andersen*.

Yet, last December, the mood in the Danish capital was anything **but** wonderful. Instead, ominous storm clouds of disagreement, frustration and chaos enveloped the much-anticipated United Nations-sponsored Climate Change Conference.

Meeting in freezing temperatures as the snow lay round about, the assembled delegates toiled, argued and disagreed into the night. The conference was widely billed as "*twelve days to save the world*" from the presumed dangers of human-induced climate change—also called **anthropogenic global warming** (AGW). But this much-vaunted follow-up to the 1997 Kyoto conference ended in acrimony and disappointment. It comprehensively *failed* to secure the binding legal agreement on carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions for which so many had hoped.

Instead, leaders from the United States, Brazil, South Africa, India and China hammered out a face-saving accord, to which most other nations gave grudging acceptance. The accord acknowledged the importance of limiting temperature rises to 2° Celsius, but set no targets or deadlines. Countries agreed to voluntarily declare their goals for cutting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2020, and pledged financial support to developing nations over the coming years.

## Settled Science—Or Not?

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For years, mainstream media and many government agencies have carried on as though the danger of anthropogenic global warming was, as some have called it, "settled science." In recent months, however, more sceptical voices have been heard. So, what is the average global citizen supposed to believe? Are we all doomed? Will we fry, boil and burn ourselves in a thickening CO<sub>2</sub> blanket of our own making? Are we approaching a CO<sub>2</sub>-induced end of civilization as we know it? Or can mankind safely go on with its current patterns of resource use, unafraid of damaging our planet?

Partisans on both sides of the issue are quick to push their favoured evidence while minimising contrary data. Those who doubt AGW point to recent temperature data they say indicates a cooling period, and dispute earlier figures suggesting a warming trend—even calling into question the honesty of the prior data collection. Yet, even while they are busy revising their own interpretations of the data, some of the most vocal AGW partisans continue to demonise sceptics as stupid or malicious people whose contrariness will lead to planetary suicide.

What are the facts? Even as atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels have continued to rise, many reports suggest that global temperatures have *ceased to rise as expected*. Britain's Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research had earlier forecast a 0.2°C temperature increase from 1999–2008, but now says the temperature trend was at a "standstill"—a trend of 0.0°C change—during those years. This is **not** what scientists' carefully crafted computer models had predicted. Some scientists are concluding that factors other than CO<sub>2</sub>—or perhaps *in addition to CO<sub>2</sub>*—must be driving the climate. The science of global warming had, until recently, tied temperature increases firmly to the measured increase in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. Do recent data disprove that link, or simply mean that old models must be refined?

This all raises a key question: *how "settled" is the science of climate change?* More and more observers seem to be concluding: "It's not as settled as we thought!" All credible scientists agree that there are natural variations in our planet's climate over cycles of thousands of years. Yet there are many differing ways to measure those variations.

Only in the last 300 or so years have there been enough people, engaged in enough polluting activity, to have any significant effect on the global environment. All prior warming and cooling cycles took place with negligible human influence. Yet what "pollutant" do AGW proponents identify as the chief cause of global warming? Carbon dioxide—the natural product of human breathing!

On what basis, then, have scientists determined that recent temperature increases were caused by human activity—and that they will lead to environmental catastrophe?

In 1988, the UN established its Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which has sought to quantify the environmental effect of human activity. For more than 20 years, scientists affiliated with the IPCC have toiled in relative obscurity, measuring and reporting on climate change data. This multinational group has held its data and its computer modelling schemes tightly. This has led global warming sceptics to accuse the agency of attempting to block off healthy debate about its conclusions, and of allowing public policy goals to take precedence over good science.

Not unlike other UN agencies that have over the years found themselves criticised for putting agenda before fact, the IPCC has recently had its turn for sceptical public scrutiny. In November 2009, when internal e-mails were leaked to the public from the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia, many dubbed the release "Climategate" amid widespread charges of arrogance, careless science and even outright dishonesty in how some IPCC scientists have approached the global warming issue.

Yet even before the leaked e-mails, some media outlets that had previously parroted the IPCC conclusions almost reflexively were beginning to question the IPCC-driven consensus. An October 9, 2009 BBC online article asked the question, "What Happened to Global Warming?" Noting recent evidence of *global cooling*, and the role of the oceans as "heat stores," the article discussed scientific theory suggesting that *solar influences* could play a greater part than previously thought. If true, this is a most *inconvenient contradiction* of Al Gore's iconic

hockey stick graph that showed world temperatures soaring ever higher due to human activity as they mirror the increase in levels of industrial CO<sub>2</sub>. In real life, that once-vaunted scenario is simply not happening as predicted!

Yet IPCC scientists see no conflict between evidence of global cooling and further refinements of their global warming theories! When Leibniz Institute of Marine Sciences researcher Mojib Latif, one of the world's top climate modellers, acknowledged that we may be in a period of cooling worldwide temperatures that could last another 10–20 years, he also insisted that once the cooling trend is over, our planet will **again** experience drastic warming caused by human activity—which he warns will bring catastrophic results *unless we act now*.

## Change Ahead for Climate Change?

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Can a non-scientist ever hope to make sense of the contradictions? When even a growing number of scientists outside the narrow ranks of IPCC members are expressing doubts about global warming orthodoxies, it is no wonder the ordinary citizen may be confused. Many still remember the 1970s, when scientists as passionate as today's looked at the data and insisted a "new Ice Age" would soon be upon us.

It is easy to wonder whether the "orthodoxy" of climate change science may be approaching a far-reaching paradigm shift. Certainly there are unanswered questions on both sides of the debate. Why are temperature trends out of harmony with rising CO<sub>2</sub>? Are other overlooked factors having a more powerful impact than CO<sub>2</sub>? Is carbon dioxide really the villain of the piece—the pre-eminent driver of global warming? Can climate change models be made more accurate? Could the AGW paradigm, based around CO<sub>2</sub>-caused temperature rises, actually *be overturned* by something else? If so, what might that "something else" be?

Increasing numbers of scientists suggest that computerized climate forecasting models need to take greater account of such factors as the magnetic interaction of the sun, shifts in ocean currents and their temperature cycles, and the feedback mechanisms relating to what is by far the most plentiful and important greenhouse gas in our atmosphere—water vapour, as found in clouds. These factors work to counteract the effect of rises in CO<sub>2</sub>. All these interactions are exceedingly complex and need to be understood more completely.

Officially, the impact of the sun has been discounted as a causative factor of *current* climate change. An overwhelmingly powerful, politically correct, environmental and (supposed) scientific consensus is not even looking in that direction. They *want* to believe *mankind* is responsible! That is what makes sense to them. But on closer inspection it looks increasingly likely that this view just does not fit all the facts.

Even the respected Economist newsmagazine, in its *World in 2010* publication, predicted that the sun would surprise scientists (p. 153); it all has to do with the rather inadequately understood activities of sunspots. From 1645–1715, long before the industrial era, for example, there was a 70-year period of very low sunspot activity, now called the Maunder Minimum after sunspot specialist Edward Maunder. That period coincided with a time of

exceptionally cold winters in the Northern Hemisphere. Graphs comparing sunspot activity with the earth's temperature appear to be closely related—much more so than when plotting CO2 with temperature. Coincidentally, recent sunspot activity has also been at a minimum, indicative of solar cooling. As the *Economist* presciently warned: "What happens if global warming meets solar cooling? Expect a hot debate."

## High Stakes for Humanity

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Why is this hot debate so important? Well, consider that according to the International Energy Agency, the cost of the human race halving its emissions of CO2 by 2050 would be some \$45 trillion, equivalent to two-thirds of the world's entire annual economic output in recent years. And who will pay for this massive effort to save the world and its complex web of life from being burned as a result of its own CO2 emissions? You and me, and everyone else. All of us will suffer, with the poorest countries potentially suffering the most.

If CO2 is not the problem behind current climate change, a world gone mad over AGW would be spending an inconceivably vast amount of money that might favourably impact all kinds of other issues, but with no discernable impact at all on the climate. Some would label that a most colossal folly!

But all this leads us to something more profound and even more discounted in the mix of factors affecting changes in the climate and weather. There is another key reason to believe the future will develop in a markedly different way than portrayed by the media.

Long-time readers of *Tomorrow's World* will appreciate the *biblical perspective* behind all we publish. Ours is a radically different paradigm and worldview that does not reject good science, but that keeps God in the centre of the picture. This perspective also has a far-reaching *impact on how we understand the weather*, quite independent of the machinations and vagaries of climate science.

The Bible declares that it is *God* who created the heavens and earth. The universe, with all its astral bodies and the laws that maintain and constrain their activities, was put in place by God Himself ([Isaiah 40:25–26](#); [42:5](#)). God created the earth and ultimately the vast interconnected web of life that it supports (Genesis 1).

God created mankind in His image and likeness for a great, transcendent purpose ([Genesis 1:26–28](#); [2 Peter 1:3–4](#)). Importantly, God formed the earth as a suitable habitat for the working out of His purpose and also *promised* to sustain it, *so that purpose could be completed* ([Jeremiah 31:35–36](#); [33:20–21](#), [25–26](#); [Genesis 1:14–18](#); [8:21–22](#); [9:9–17](#)). The surprising reality (because we have forgotten or been misinformed) is that *God* is in charge of the sun and all the other forces that impinge on the earth's climate.

*It is God who controls the weather* ([Isaiah 41:17–20](#))! For the righteous, His blessings will include good weather ([Leviticus 26:3–5](#); [Deuteronomy 28:12](#); [Isaiah 43:19–21](#); [44:2–4](#)). For the unrighteous, God will use various means, including the weather, to bring about repentance and to bring the people back to Him ([Leviticus 26:19–20](#); [Deuteronomy 28:22–24](#)). One of the great

depictions of Christ's millennial rule over the earth involves the most profound changes in topography and climate in which the desert will "blossom as a rose" and "the wilderness regions will flow with water" (Isaiah 35:1–2, 6). All this implies far-reaching changes to the weather.

God's most fundamental command to human beings is to "tend and keep" the earth (Genesis 2:15); to look after it, to care for it and not to abuse it. But humanity has gone astray from God's purpose in a multitude of ways. And so we pollute and overly exploit and abuse our planet with its abundant, yet finite, resources. We live in immoral and destructive ways, fracturing human relationships, warring and fighting each other and trampling all over the way of life God wants us to lead.

Whether or not human activity is causing increased global warming, there is simply no excuse for all the pollution, and the reckless and uncontrolled destruction of forests and natural habitats that gravely threatens the rich biodiversity of life on our planet. And the question has to be asked: given the realities of finite resources and the limitations of human government, can a world population soon to exceed 7 billion people ever expect to sustain for everyone the conspicuous consumer culture that hundreds of millions in Western nations now take for granted? Is inequity inevitable? Or must the West be brought down in order to raise the standard of living around the globe?

Indeed, will there ever be enough energy, enough water, enough food and enough of everything else to satisfy the insatiable demand for these resources? Or will competition for scarce resources inevitably lead to growing conflicts between and within nations (Matthew 24:7)?

Whatever one's conclusion about human-induced global warming, we cannot deny that, as a whole, our society has ignored and even cast aside the pattern of life God set for us. We have increasingly rejected God's law, preferring instead to honour the laws of science as the sole solution to our problems. God calls that rejection **sin** (1 John 3:4). And He calls upon us all to repent: to change from our sinful ways and embrace the right ways as defined by His word—the Bible. Instead of being fixated on the doubtful "prophecies" of inadequate computer models, we may need to pay more attention to the **sure** prophecies God has revealed in Scripture.

## "Theogenic" Climate Change

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Only a very few, who understand Bible prophecy, recognize the most vital factor in our planet's unpredictable weather and climate changes. God Himself, in order to chastise and humble human beings to see the error of their ways, *sometimes uses the weather*. No, it is not that every adverse weather event or shift in tectonic plates is God's punishment on sinners. But there is no doubt that God *can and does* use the weather to achieve His righteous ends. And when He does, *can even our best computer-based climate models recognise it?* Not at all! This lies completely outside their scope. Yet, in reality, *sin and what God elects to do about it is a vital* key to understanding the weather and its impact on humanity.

Your Bible reveals that human society will soon reach a time of all-consuming crisis, in which God must intervene to rescue the situation—to prevent mankind from destroying itself. Though human beings will continue to fail in their efforts to solve our fundamental problems without God, Scripture reveals the wonderful news that Jesus Christ will return to the earth to establish the world-ruling Kingdom of God (Matthew 24:3–13; 21–24, 29–31)! The events leading up to that time will involve the most massive and far-reaching weather changes that can possibly be imagined, which will humble rebellious humanity and prepare for the establishment of a new age of peace and prosperity, under the loving rule of Jesus Christ, where all will learn to live God's way (Revelation 6; 8). The Apostle John describes one dramatic step of God's intervention: "Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were *scorched with great heat*, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory" (Revelation 16:8–9).

Human beings' puny influence on their environment will be seen as nothing compared to God's massive intervention. Whatever the scope of *anthropogenic* global warming, it is this influence—one might call it *theogenic* global warming—that will shake humanity to an almost unimaginable degree. Yet we need not fear—God promises that faithful Christians who turn to Him will be protected from these mind-boggling events (Revelation 7). You may not be able to turn down the world's temperature by your own effort, but you can turn toward God and change your life for the better—in this life and for all eternity!