

# Is Climate Change Real?

By Rod Fraser

---



*We'd all like a Cleaner World!*

When I met Don for lunch yesterday, he noted the climate change issue was wearing him down. "I've always been a skeptic," Don confessed, "but the unrelenting arguments and media propaganda are having their effect. I'm re-examining my initial skepticism."

"Is climate change real?" he wondered.

I thought about Don's comments on my way home and this morning as well. Then an article on the CBC website mentioned a related environmental issue. It reported a company in Whitby, *Sparta Group*, has developed a process to "convert single-use items like plastic bags and Styrofoam" into diesel fuel and gasoline.

John O'Bireck, the president of *Sparta Group*, says he sees "plastic as a resource, not a scourge.... Five tonnes of plastic can be converted into about 4,000 litres [of fuel]. And that 4,000 litres can drive our whole fleet of ten vehicles back and forth every day running sixteen hours a day."

Since it was only three weeks ago that our government was claiming single-use plastics had to be banned, as a 'scourge against civilization', this latest news was a welcome bit of optimism, a suggestion that innovation, new technologies and adaptation might well see us through any future environmental challenges of the next 100 years.



I tend to be skeptical that global warming is man-made. In past centuries the 'little ice age' was a reality from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 'medieval warming period' of approximately 300 years occurred earlier. The earth has a history of natural cycles of warming and cooling. Why should

this current period of warming be any different?

In the period from the 1930s to the early 1970s, there was a general cooling of global mean temperatures, sufficient to encourage serious people to predict a 'little ice age', or an extended period of global cooling. It didn't happen. A period of warming started in the late 1970s that continues to today.

Well perhaps not quite today. There was a curious hiatus in this warming period that started in 1998 and continued to 2013. During those years, there was no significant change in global mean temperatures.



This short history persuades me to be skeptical about claims of 'man-made' global warming, or indeed of many expert opinions. They may be right. They may be wrong. But you would be wise not to bet the farm on predictions of global mean temperatures 100 years from now.

I'm old enough to recall other predictions of looming disaster, such as: acid rain, the ozone layer, Y2K, the Doomsday clock, and peak oil. Either they never came to pass, or they proved inconsequential.

In short, expert predictions are often wrong. There is a joke among economists where one expert was noted as having predicted nine of the last five

recessions. Quite so.

Man-made global warming may be just another expert prediction that will be eclipsed by an upcoming cooling period in the years to come. Some Russian scientists are predicting just that.



For those who subscribe to the theory of 'man-made' global warming, I have a question. If it is real, what are we to do about it? Innovation, new technologies and adaptation (mentioned earlier in this article) might help, but will it be enough?

The climate alarmists say the world must massively reduce its carbon emissions, and richer, western democracies must do the heavy lifting. Is this realistic?

Lionel Shriver of *Spectator* | USA claimed in a [recent article](#) that "as of 2017, of worldwide carbon emissions, the US accounted for 13.7%, Canada 1.6%, Down under 1.1%, and the entire EU ... only 10%. Ergo, 'the West' is responsible for a mere 26% of emissions." China and India are responsible for a little over 36% and the rest of the world accounts for the rest.

With the underdeveloped countries of the world wanting (and deserving) higher standards of living, I can't think of any reasonable way to persuade

them to cut back on their emissions. And since they constitute 74% of the problem, any effort to cut back on 'worldwide carbon emissions' may be doomed.

That's with a current world population of about 7.7 billion today. According to Lionel Shriver, this is expected to grow approximately 25% over the next thirty years—then rising to 11 billion persons by the year 2100.

This will cause higher carbon emissions, agricultural stress on productive land and political problems. If you believe in the theory of 'man-made' global warming, you are faced with some difficult issues.



The good news is that fertility rates have plummeted in the West and in certain areas of Asia to below replacement levels. Over time, this will significantly reduce populations in those countries. A smaller population reduces carbon emissions.

Will this save the planet? Well, not quite. You should read on.

The future growth in world population will come from continents like Africa, which in 2016 had a population of approximately 1.2 billion persons. While China's population has an average age of 47,

41% of the African population is under 15. If no measures are taken, according to Shriver, the African population is expected to double by 2050 and to reach 4.3 billion by 2100.

Shriver can't be the only observer to have noticed the correlation between population growth and carbon emissions. So you would expect this to be a fertile topic of discussion at international conferences attempting to come to grips with 'climate change'. Apparently not.

Why? Well, in a word, it's 'awkward'. It's all well and good to lecture rich Western countries on demographic trends. But no one wants to scold countries in Africa, to ask them to reduce their population growth. It shows hints of condescending colonialism. Racism even.

Shriver mentions a number of other "global headaches", in her article, including "species extinction, deforestation, desertification, ocean acidification, pollution, fresh water scarcity, oceanic plastic, soil erosion and 'irregular migration'". The "common denominator is people: too many of them and born too fast."

'Global warming' skeptics have a stake in this. We may be leery of signing on to the theory of 'man-made' climate change, but we still have environmental concerns. Some or all of the 'global

headaches' noted above are valid. A world with a population of 11 billion is not one that most of us would like to live in.

A policy of population reduction for the planet as a whole, might well ensure adequate food for our children and grandchildren, and the avoidance of global wars arising from scarcity. It would also reduce global carbon emissions significantly over time.

It's a pity concerns about political correctness might stop us from taking up the one strategy that might make for a better world.

August 31, 2019