

Minister's Message – December 2009

Collapse of Civilisation

In light of the extraordinary events in federal politics at present, events precipitated by the question of man's ability to change the climate by regulating carbon dioxide emissions, consider again what I wrote four years ago. This debate will be with us for some time yet and the Lord will continue to work out his purposes through it.

These words caught my eye on the front page of the SMH (24/9/05). This must be about another weird religious sect I thought as I started to read. Some self-proclaimed prophet has come up with another 'end of the world' scenario. The press will have fun with this fellow I thought. Imagine my surprise to find they were reporting on a scientific book – a book by the director of a museum. 'Global warming is pushing mankind to the edge and survival depends upon urgent action'. What stimulated this prophetic outburst? A hurricane had virtually destroyed the city of New Orleans – a city renowned for voodoo and pagan practices. Global warming is being blamed for this hurricane and many other severe weather phenomena today. Yet just 30 years ago when cyclone Tracy flattened Darwin global warming did not get a mention.

Tim Flannery hopes that by blaming global warming for this disaster Australia will sign the Kyoto protocol on greenhouse gas emissions. If we just signed this and reduced these emissions then the collapse of civilisation could be averted. Now there is good news! I wonder if he sees the paradox here for the evolutionist. Who would ever have thought that an evolutionist, one who believes in the relentless advancement of the human species, would ever have contemplated man bringing about his own demise? It is always good to have someone or something to blame when things go wrong, for then we feel in control of things. If we can't explain why something is happening we feel vulnerable. The humanistic evolutionist must avoid any recognition of a supreme God. Scientists and politicians especially like to think that they are in control of things in this world.

Weather has always been a challenge to man. He has been seeking to subdue the 'forces of nature' for time immemorial. Yet even the might of the US army could not stop the powerful waves breaking the levee bank around New Orleans. Global warming they say is to blame. If we stop greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere we will not have these terrible disasters. This is the argument being thrust upon us today.

The question is not whether global temperatures are increasing or not – the scientific evidence is not conclusive. The truth does not really matter for many people for it is the concept that they like. The concept allows them to believe that man can now control the climate. Man is not much good at stopping wars, but at last he can control the weather! Now our very civilisation can be prolonged if you will just be responsible and cut down your carbon dioxide output!

What does the God who created this planet, and sustains, it have to say on this matter? He tells us that this world as we know it will come to an end. Yes indeed, Dr Flannery has got it right – civilisation will come to an end. There will be widespread earthquakes and famine as signs that the end is near (Matthew 24:7). In the Revelation given to John we read of lightning, thunder, earthquakes and great hail (Revelation 4:5, 11:19). In the end fire will burn up the earth (1Peter 3:10).

As wise as it may be to cut down on our output of greenhouse gases, we cannot avert this end. Only a fool would contend with his maker. Our days on this earth are numbered, not because of global warming but because of sin and the judgment of God. But this does not have to be a doomsday message. The really good news is that we can be saved. Those who believe in Jesus Christ are *receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken* (Hebrews 12:28). *Heaven and earth will pass away* said Jesus *but my words will by no means pass away* (Matthew 12:28). In Jesus Christ we have life, life everlasting.

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