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Submitted by climaterealist on Sat, 02/06/2012 - 17:01

The visiting author ? and Spectator columnist ? threatens the religion of man-made global warming

The Spectator - Australian Edition

Tim Blair 28 April 2012

During Mark Steyn's recent local tour, the Australian's Janet Albrechtsen joined him on stage in Sydney to discuss, among other things, why current conservative pundits seem to be winning the battle against their ideological rivals. Confidence, Janet confidently suggested. The secure tone of these conservatives has the dual effect of winning audiences and infuriating leftists. It's a confidence borne of some considerable effort; Steyn and others may have the tone nailed down, but it's backed up by near-obsessive gathering of facts. And it is having a measurable effect, which is more than anyone can say for atmospheric CO2. Perhaps made soft by decades of cultural primacy, established leftists seem ill-equipped to deal with opponents whose skills were sharpened during the rise of the Internet, a forum for argument that sometimes resembles a three-ambulance night at the Ultimate Fighting Championship. When these abilities are brought to the slower-moving worlds of party politics and traditional media, little wonder that the old-school left ends up being loaded into the meat wagon. Or the geothermal nationalised health-care vegan buggy, in the case of global warming hysterics, who more than any other group during the past ten years have suffered at the hands of the ascendant right. James Delingpole, currently in Australia to promote his book *Killing the Earth to Save It*, routinely lands more than his share of blows. You want confidence? His massively-read blog at the UK Daily Telegraph opens with cheery lines about 'a writer, journalist and broadcaster who is right about everything'. Delingpole, who is not crippled by shyness, builds from there.

Truth be told, most anti-global warming books are as boring as books that push the warming cause, because both tend to argue weird data and are written either by scientists or by people who write like scientists. Or, in a third, very large category, by people who should be studied by science (how does Bill McKibben even work?). *Killing the Earth* ? published elsewhere under the grabbier title *Watermelons* ? is blessedly graph-free, as arts graduate Delingpole correctly realises that global warming is overwhelmingly a political issue. And also a rich target for jokes.

'The debate was never about 'the science' in the first place,' he writes, which explains why non-scientists like Al Gore and scientists working outside of their specialist area like Tim Flannery came to be so prominent. Understanding that politics drives 'the science' of global warming rather than the other way around is key to grasping why, in Delingpole's words, this subject grew from 'a minor cult followed by a few tousled eccentrics' in the 1970s to 'the world's most powerful religion' today.

Yet, thank God, it's a religion now under serious threat. Sceptics wrestled global warming down from its undeserved place as a scientific totem several years ago and dumped it back in the political pit where it always belonged. That's when the beating began.

Delingpole and his kind have been remarkably successful. Someone not unfamiliar with wrestling and beating, The Spectator Australia's own Mark Latham, this month wrote that in his area of south-west Sydney, 'it is difficult to find anyone who believes in global warming, let alone the legitimacy of collective action against the problem' intelligent people, high-achievers in life, are just as likely to dismiss the evidence of global warming as anyone else?.

Latham attributes this distressing ? for him ? development to a newly-apparent anti-enlightenment hostility to expertise. 'Science?', he says, 'has lost its place in the pecking order of respect.'

The former Labor leader doesn't see that science as it applies to global warming is as greasily political as any ALP move to install, say, a certain Queensland LNP representative as Speaker of the House. Science didn't lose its place in the pecking order. Science either threw it away or allowed it to be stolen, depending on how you view Climategate, the 2009 exposure of emails between the world's most influential climate activists.

Christopher Hitchens once described his unexpected exhilaration following September 11: "Here was the most frightful enemy – theocratic barbarism – in plain view." Climategate similarly thrilled Delingpole, for it presented horrible proof of science's corrosion. Here was doctored data, smear campaigns and hidden declines in plain view. Delingpole's chapter on this – his ongoing Climategate work gained him a global profile – is tellingly personal. It might well have been titled *The Getting of Confidence*.

It certainly wouldn't be called *The Getting of Money*, for Delingpole, like most warming sceptics, still waits for his first gigantic cheque from Big Oil. If you're in the climate caper for cash, you wouldn't be on the sceptical side. But there are other riches.

Delingpole throughout *Killing the Earth* credits myriad bloggers and online commenters for helping bring down an enormous, destructive lie. To the continuing disbelief of their opposition, this is accomplished without masses of money. The ABC's Media Watch host Jonathan Holmes recently tried to smear an Australian climate sceptic group by revealing that they'd received a mere \$100,000 from a private US donor. Meanwhile, warmists from the United Nations down spend billions. Blogger Pointman posted this piece in March:

Every one of the skeptics was a lone volunteer guerilla fighter, who needed absolutely no logistical support of any kind to continue the fight indefinitely. The alarmists never understood this, preferring to think that there simply had to be some massive hidden organisation orchestrating the resistance. While they wasted time and effort attacking targets that only existed in their head, each of the guerillas chewed on them mercilessly in their own particular way.

Delingpole's particular way is among the least merciful, and long may it remain so. For all of his confidence, however, *Killing the Earth* ends on an oddly downbeat note. This might be simply due to Delingpole living in England, which inexplicably is world headquarters for global warming panic. Why wouldn't the English positively welcome warming? After all, it might save them the trouble of going to Spain or Florida every year. Some time in Australia might set him right. "A week into my Australian tour and I already I love the country and its people so much I could happily stay here forever," Delingpole posted a few days ago. Stick around, mate. If you love Australia now, wait until you see it after the next election.

Tim Blair is a columnist and leader writer for Sydney's Daily Telegraph.

James Delingpole's book Killing the Earth to Save It: How Environmentalists are Ruining the Planet, Destroying the Economy and Stealing Your Jobs (Connor Court) is available at all decent book stores.

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