

The Religion of Climate Change and the New Doomsday Scenario

When I came to faith as a 16-year-old, drug-using, hippie rock drummer, I was told that Jesus was returning very soon. The end of the world was near. Very near. Today, there is a new religious narrative, especially among young people, with a new “end of the world” scenario. But this one is depressing and grim, with nothing redemptive about it.

I’m talking about the new religion of manmade global warming.

It has its unique gods (like Mother Earth).

It deifies the created world (with seminarians confessing to plants in a chapel service).

It has its high priests and religious leaders (the climate change gurus and radical environmentalists).

It has its patron saints (like Sweden’s Greta Thunberg).

And it has its own doomsday scenario: The end of the world is near. Very near.

To be clear, I do not have the credentials to comment on scientific questions related to global warming.

But I do have the credentials to comment on the effect that environmental activists are having on our culture, especially the younger generation.

An Australian website offers counsel to help people (especially young people) deal with stress and anxiety related to climate change. It notes that, “There are lots of reasons why young people might feel stressed about climate change.”

These reasons include: 1) They feel like planning for the future is hopeless; 2) They are angry that the people around them aren't doing anything to help; 3) They are frustrated that there's nothing they can do now to change things; 4) They are worried about whether it's responsible to have children and 5) They feel like everything is out of their control.

A May 2 headline on Science News for Students states, "Climate change poses mental health risks to children and teens."

And a Sept. 19 article on warned that, "Ignoring young people's climate change fears is a recipe for anxiety."

In fact, as far back as 2016, the American Psychological Association (APA) claimed that, "Climate change is threatening mental health. A federal report that tapped psychologists' expertise outlines the ways climate change affects us all."

But herein lies the rub. It is not "climate change" that is "threatening mental health." It is the apocalyptic way it is being reported that is threatening mental health.

After all, when I was told in 1971 that Jesus was coming back soon, it was an exciting prospect. The end of the age is fast approaching and we will be with the Lord forever! This world is falling apart, but God will come to redeem us!

But there is no such hope in today's gloom and doom climate change reporting. Instead, it produces fear and provokes frustration, especially for young people: "Our world is being destroyed, and you're not doing anything about it! Don't you care?"

To quote Greta Thunberg directly, "You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. . . . We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth – how dare you!"

But there's a reason for her fears.

An October 2018 headline proclaimed: "We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe, warns UN."

Six months later, in March 2019, the UN website echoed these sentiments: "Only 11 Years Left to Prevent Irreversible Damage from Climate Change, Speakers Warn during General Assembly High-Level Meeting. Ambition, Urgency Needed to Address Global Emergency, Secretary-General Says."

No wonder teenaged Greta and her generation are up in arms. No wonder they are so stressed. No wonder they are angry. "It is your policies and your greed and your selfishness that have stolen our future!"

As reported on Sept. 26, "Around climate-change protests, tears linger. Youthful activists cite all-too depressing science and develop angst. They grieve for a future they worry they'll never have.

"Many young climate activists say they feel hopeless and overwhelmed. . . . 'It's really hard to grow up on a planet full of ifs,' said Zero Hour co-founder Jamie Margolin, a 17-year-old from Seattle, who is finding it hard to buckle down and apply to colleges. 'There's always been a sense that everything beautiful in this world is temporary for my generation.'"

How very, very sad—but not because it's all true.

Instead, as John Nolte pointed out, "For more than 50 years Climate Alarmists in the scientific community and environmental movement have not gotten even one prediction correct, but they do have a perfect record of getting 41 predictions wrong.

"In other words, on at least 41 occasions, these so-called experts have predicted some terrible environmental catastrophe

was imminent ... and it never happened.”

Consequently, he asks, “Why would we completely restructure our economy and sacrifice our personal freedom for ‘experts’ who are 0-41, who have never once gotten it right?”

So, young people are being stressed about something that may never happen. They are growing up waiting for the shoe to drop, not being able to enjoy life because of fear for tomorrow.

The innocence of youth is being robbed from them, and everyone is to blame. Yet an article on the Teaching Tolerance website urges that, “Teachers’ Silence on Climate Change Violates Students’ Rights.”

I would urge instead that there needs to be a lot of soul searching and circumspection, from our children’s educators to the popular media. Are you sure the information you are sharing is accurate? Are you positive the fears you are instilling are warranted? Are you certain that you are not playing with the emotions of impressionable young people?

From my perspective (and leaning into my areas of expertise), I would rather say this: It’s true that this world will not endure forever. One day, Jesus will return and make a new heaven and earth. So, live your life here with passion, in expectation of His return, making every moment count. That way, whether you live to be 100 or if He comes back in 10 years, your life will be full and blessed.

I challenge a climate change religionist to come up with a better message than that. {eoa}