

In new book, scholar peels back layers of deception on global warming

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Michael Hart is a former official in Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and now emeritus professor of international affairs at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, where he has taught courses on the laws and institutions of international trade, Canadian foreign policy, and the politics of climate change. He held the Fulbright-Woodrow Wilson Center Visiting Research Chair in Canada-U.S. Relations and was Scholar-in-Residence in the School of International Service, Senior Fellow at American University in Washington, and is the founder and director emeritus of Carleton University's Centre for Trade Policy and Law. In addition, he has taught courses in several other countries. He is the author, editor, or co-editor of more than a dozen books and several hundred articles.

LifeSiteNews interviewed him during a conference on Catholic Perspectives on the Environment, sponsored by the Wojtyla Institute for Teachers, held at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom in Barry's Bay, Ontario, August 4-6, 2016.

1) Professor Hart, your book *Hubris: The Troubling Science, Economics, and Politics of Climate Change*, has recently been published. In it, you challenge a worldwide project that has become something of a sacred cow. Can you tell our readers what motivated you to begin your research into the subject?



I was initially motivated by questions from my students – and my wife – about the policy implications of climate change. The more I looked into it, however, the more I learned the extent to which it fit with one of my research interests: the extent to which modern health, safety, and environmental regulatory activity relies on poor science advanced by activists to push an agenda. I learned that both domestic and international actors had succeeded in using the poorly understood science of climate change to advance an ambitious environmental agenda focused on increasing centralized control over people's daily lives.

2) *How long did the research and writing stages take?*

I started researching the issue 10 years ago, and found myself engaged in a project that was both challenging and critical to understanding a movement determined to use the climate issue to advance a utopian agenda.

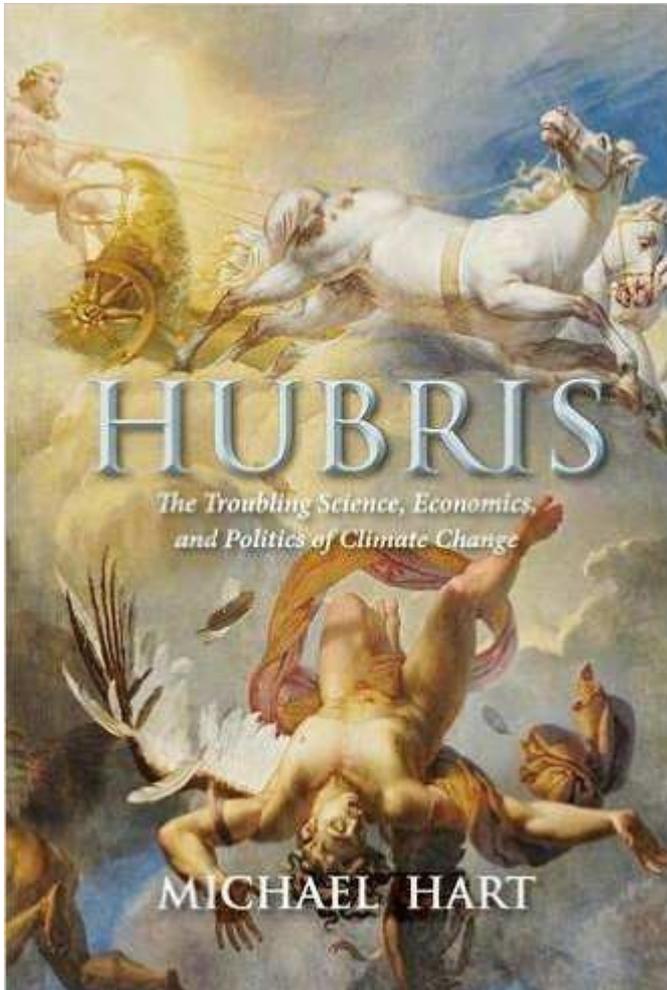
3) *Your critique of the problems involved in climate change theory is wide ranging. Your approach is lucid and fastidiously documented, an eminently reasonable assessment of the scientific data that have been used and misused to support the theory. How is the “science” being misused?*

The global climate is one of the most complex, chaotic, non-linear natural systems we know. It is in a constant state of flux due to such factors as changes in the output of the sun, changes in Earth's orbit around the sun, and oscillations in ocean heat uptake. The alarm movement has taken one such factor – growth in the minor atmospheric greenhouse gas carbon dioxide – to claim that human activity is changing the atmosphere to an alarming degree, leading inexorably to a much warmer climate. While increased atmospheric carbon dioxide – from .03 to .04 percent of the atmosphere – should lead to some warming, the extent of that warming within the context of a complex system that is in a constant state of flux due to numerous forcings and feedbacks is highly exaggerated. As UK science journalist Matt Ridley points out, “Environmental researchers are increasingly looking for evidence that fits their ideology rather than seeking the truth.” The best evidence indicates that the mild warming at the end of the 20th century was well within historical and geologic experience. Over the first decade and a half of the 21st century, there has been no net warming. The alarmist movement relies extensively on flawed computer models to make its case.

4) *Equally important is your in-depth analysis of the sociological pressures, and one might say, the psychological pressures and manipulation brought to bear upon scientists. In the chapter titled “Science and its Pathologies,” we read about how this is done on numerous levels in the academic and scientific communities. Why is a theory that is supported by so little empirical data being promoted as fact?*

More than one motivation drives the abuse of science. Among scientists, the primary reasons are money, career advancement, and prestige. In order to pursue their research programs, scientists need money from governments and foundations. They have learned that satisfying the agenda of both helps funds to flow. As a result, they have learned to adapt their research to the desired outcomes. Related to money and careers is the need to publish in so-called prestige journals on the basis of peer review of their work. As I explain in my book, over the years, much of peer review has degenerated into pal review that maintains the dominant perspective. Views that challenge that perspective are ruthlessly weeded out. Additionally, a significant amount of published research fails

numerous tests of reliability due to sloppy methods, misuse and abuse of statistics, ignored negative findings, and other failings in scientific integrity. Climate change science has been particularly prone to these failings. Nobel Prize winners such as Robert Jastrow and Freeman Dyson have become increasingly critical of the course of modern science. Many indicate that the insights that led to their Nobel Prize would never have passed current peer review.



5) In addition, there are very disturbing propaganda techniques being used to promote the theory to the general public. Who is behind this?

The leaders driving the climate change movement come from a variety of persuasions. The environmental movement found in the alarm about global warming – now climate change – a potent new way in which to raise funds and increase awareness of its broader concerns about the state of the environment. UN officials learned that concern about climate change could be harnessed to bolster support for UN social and economic programs and to advance the UN’s goal of world governance by experts. Left-wing politicians discovered in climate change renewed ways to press their agenda of social and economic justice through coercive government programs. As John Sununu, the former governor of New Hampshire, sees it, “The alarmists have learned well from the past. They saw what motivates policy makers is not necessarily just hard science, but a well-orchestrated symphony of effort ... announce a disaster; cherry pick some results; back it up with computer modeling; proclaim a consensus; stifle the opposition; take over the process and control the funding; and roll the policy makers.” In their more candid moments, movement leaders agree, as

did Timothy Wirth, former U.S. Senator and chief climate envoy during the Clinton administration: “We’ve got to ride the global warming issue. Even if the theory of global warming is wrong, we will be doing the right thing.”

6) Obviously, throughout history climate has always been in a state of change. Is the current obsession with it symptomatic of something deeper in contemporary human consciousness?

Alarm over a changing climate leading to malign results is in many ways the product of the hunger for stability and direction in a post-Christian world. Humans have a deep, innate need for a transcendent authority. Having rejected the precepts of Christianity, people in the advanced economies of the West are turning to other forms of authority. Putting aside those who cynically exploit the issue for their own gain – from scientists and politicians to UN leaders and green businesses – most activists are deeply committed to a secular, statist, anti-human, earth-centric set of beliefs which drives their claims of a planet in imminent danger from human activity. To them, a planet with fewer people is the ultimate goal, achievable only through centralized direction and control. As philosopher of science Jeffrey Foss points out, “Environmental science conceives and expresses humankind’s relationship to nature in a manner that is – as a matter of observable fact – religious.” It “prophesies an environmental apocalypse. It tells us that the reason we confront apocalypse is our own environmental sinfulness. Our sin is one of impurity. We have fouled a pure, ‘pristine’ nature with our dirty household and industrial wastes. The apocalypse will take the form of an environmental backlash, a payback for our sins. ... environmental scientists tell people what they must do to be blameless before nature.”

7) Is it a case of over-focus on one aspect of life on this planet to the detriment of other aspects? Or is it purely a device being used for political purposes?

I think it is both. For some, such as movement leaders, UN officials, and many politicians, the issue is being cynically exploited to advance their agenda of greater control over human lives. For others, particularly rank and file environmental activists, climate change serves to reinforce and validate their broader concerns to the exclusion of many other dimensions of human life.

8) Those of us who are older recall the “urban legend” (or global myth), one might say, created by books such as *Future Shock* and *The Population Bomb*, which swept the world in the late 1960s and 70s, fostering a sense of panic regarding the future of mankind. At the very least, they spread an atmosphere of alarmism, forcing people to look for radical solutions to the human condition. They were based on questionable science and yet were promoted as authentic. Is our current favorite cause the same kind of passing phenomenon, or is something more serious happening?

I believe it is a similar phenomenon, but one that has captured the imagination and concerns of more people and has more support among elites. In my view, it is potentially more troubling and damaging than these earlier alarms.

9) You state that “official science,” the alliance of governments and bogus science, is a form of immorality pretending to be virtue. You conclude the book with a warning: The apparently idealistic combat against climate change, you assert, may well prove to be the mechanism for ushering in a Utopia. You maintain that utopian dreams may appear in the beginning to be about freedom and quality of life and yet will degenerate into what you and other thinkers have called

“totalitarian democracy” — which means the destruction of authentic liberal democracy. Is this inevitable?

I am optimistic. I do not think its long-term success is inevitable, but it will take a determined effort by people of faith and conscience to point to its darker motives and its sinister exploitation of populist fears. We know from history that such movements have a predictable life cycle: They emerge with much enthusiasm among intellectual elites, they gain a broad following by focusing on alarmist predictions before becoming part of the political mainstream, and then decline into a minor movement among fringe intellectuals as a new alarm movement takes its place. The problem is that such movements can do a lot of damage and remain embedded within the intellectual community with the ability to rise, phoenix-like, as a new alarm. Former adherents of the eugenics movement and its successor, population control, for example, are now an integral part of the climate change alarm movement.

10) Numerous thinkers, as diverse as the atheist Aldous Huxley and the Catholic philosopher Josef Pieper, have warned that this kind of totalitarianism is the most dangerous of all, because it can always argue that it is not what, in fact, it is. Are we there yet? Or is the process still reversible?

I remain cautiously optimistic. Popular support for climate change action peaked a few years ago. In Europe, which has gone furthest in implementing climate change policies, politicians are beginning to look for ways to moderate earlier initiatives. In North America, rhetoric has far outstripped actions while the Obama administration has relied on stealth to implement its climate change agenda. At the same time, climate change has added to the momentum of the broader secularization of society and the pursuit of anti-human policies and programs. We are, sadly, farther down that road than we have ever been before.

11) In his lead-up commentary to the 2015 Paris Conference, and in his encyclical Laudato Si', it would appear that Pope Francis has accepted the theory to some degree. At the same time, he emphatically maintains the primacy of the value of all human life, none excepted. Interpretations of his approach vary. In your opinion, is he unwittingly being used by advocates of the globalist agenda? Or is he deliberately bringing the voice of the Church into the forum, ensuring that it can still play a crucial role in the defense of life?

I think Pope Francis may have been motivated by the Church's concern for human life and other moral issues, but in commenting favorably on the climate change movement, he has opened himself up to charges of being naïve and unwise. I prefer the insight of Australia's George Cardinal Pell: "Theologians do not have too much to contribute on AGW except, perhaps, to note the ubiquity of the 'religious gene' and point out regressions into pseudo-religion or rudimentary semi-religious enthusiasms."

12) In summation, do you believe that climate change is not the real issue?

No, the real issue is the hunger for power to change economic and political systems in order to achieve a wide-ranging agenda. In the words of former UNFCCC Secretary Christiana Figueres, the goal of "the whole climate change process is the complete transformation of the economic structure of the world."

13) Any final words for our readers?

Again, it will take a determined effort by people of faith and conscience to convince our political leaders that they have been gulled by a political movement exploiting fear of climate change to push a utopian, humanist agenda that most people would find abhorrent. As it now stands, politicians are throwing money that they do not have at a problem that does not exist in order to finance solutions that make no difference. The time has come to call a halt to this nonsense and focus on real issues that pose real dangers. In a world beset by war, terrorism, and continuing third-world poverty, there are far more important things on which political leaders need to focus.