



"Hastiness and superficiality are the psychic disease of the twentieth century"

—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

29-Jul-05

## Bad Weather Is Not Climate Change

Most of the United States suffered severe—indeed, paralyzing—heat this past week, relieved by a cold front that slogged its way across the nation at a snail's pace. Charlotte, known for its sauna-like summer weather, endured consecutive highs of 100° on Tuesday and Wednesday, which, although they were not record highs, were debilitating to just about everyone. The water in the kids' pool in the backyard was as hot as bathwater, and rubber-soled shoes felt as if they were melting after just a few minutes exposure to the asphalt. We think that is bad—temperatures reached as high as 124° in parts of Arizona!

The U.S. is not alone in its weather woes. The United Kingdom's *Telegraph* newspaper reported:

At least 200 people were feared dead last night after two days of freak monsoon rains flooded India's Maharashtra state, leaving up to 100,000 stranded in Bombay, the country's financial capital.

Aerial photos of the city showed thousands of cars left abandoned along dual carriageways which were turned into rivers after 37

inches of rain—the average for the entire month of July—fell on the city in a single day on Tuesday.

. . . the rain [was] forecast to continue for another 48 hours. . . .  
(Peter Foster, "37 inches of rain in one day," July 28, 2005)

The *Telegraph* also reported on a rarity in the island nation: "At least 12 people have been injured, three seriously, after a mini-tornado struck part of south Birmingham. The tornado felled large trees, overturned cars and left parts of the Moseley and Kings Heath areas of the city strewn with glass, masonry and furniture" ("At least 12 hurt as tornado hits Birmingham," July 28, 2005). Though tornadoes can occur anywhere the conditions are favorable, one expects to hear about them mowing down parts of rural Oklahoma or Kansas, not the UK's second-largest city.

Other parts of [the world](#) are experiencing crazy weather as well. In Europe, this summer's severe weather has killed dozens of people. Heavy flooding has occurred from Germany to Romania, yet wildfires are being ignited by hot, dry weather from Sweden to Portugal. In addition, this year's hurricane season is off to a record start in that there have already been seven named storms (Arlene, Bret, Cindy, Dennis, Emily, Franklin, and Gert)—and the peak of the season is still another month away.

Nevertheless, despite these weather extremes, there is no logical reason to believe that the world is experiencing radical climate change, as some environmental activists and politicians would like us to suppose. Such an assumption ignores the basic difference between *weather* and *climate*. Any reputable dictionary will explain that *weather* is "the state of the atmosphere at a given time," while *climate* is "the average course or condition of the weather at a place usually over a period of years." In other words, the primary difference between weather and climate is *duration*: Weather is short-term and climate is long-term. Thus, no spate of particularly bad weather is conclusive evidence of climate change.

Perhaps seeing this in analogy will help us to understand. Let us imagine that qualified doctors at several prestigious hospitals in various places around the globe report that they had delivered babies with twelve fingers. If we were like the radical environmentalists, we would immediately call a press

conference to inform the world that the human species is on the brink of worldwide, detrimental, evolutionary change, and that if all the nations of the world did not band together now and voluntarily engage in expensive programs to forestall these terrible mutations, future generations will suffer. In addition, individual citizens should "think globally and act locally," and report all sightings of twelve-fingered people to authorities for prosecution under the new anti-mutation legislation being proposed by sympathetic lawmakers.

Ridiculous, right? Yes, but very much in tune with how radical environmentalists have acted over the past few decades concerning climate change. Indeed, extra-fingered babies are born all over the world, though it is not common. This condition is called polydactylism, and it occurs once in about every 500 births. However, though it occurs, it is not logical to assume that it presages radical, imminent, evolutionary development—good or bad—for the human race. It is merely a birth defect.

This is where the environmentalists and the scientists who support them have gone astray. They have made an illogical assumption from climate models that rare extremes of weather indicate future, catastrophic climate change. It is a non-sequitur (Latin for "it does not follow"). Terrible heat waves in summer do not mean global warming, nor do bitterly cold winters portend the next ice age.

Climate is far too complex for such simplistic reasoning. Trends over decades or centuries are far more reliable, and honest scientists will admit that the current warming trend is gradual (rising only tenths of a degree) and expected (we are coming off the Little Ice Age that lasted from approximately 1350 to 1850). They will also acknowledge, perhaps more grudgingly, that human activity through the use of fossil fuels cannot make a significant impact on climate, and that solar and volcanic activities are far more likely to be the causes of large swings in temperature and precipitation.

Remember, [God](#) may have called us as weak and foolish, but He does not want us to remain so. He warns us to "test all things" ([I Thessalonians 5:21](#)), not just to accept them as given. Further, he exhorts us to "shun . . . vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness" ([II Timothy 2:16](#)) and to "avoid foolish disputes, . . . for they are unprofitable and useless" ([Titus 3:](#)

[9](#)). In other words, we should not become caught up in the world's futile, godless debates because they will only lead us from the truth.

Besides, the Bible itself tells us that the hand of God, not some climatic disaster, will bring this present, evil world to a crashing halt.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[Creation Stewardship](#)**

by Martin G. Collins

To worship nature is idolatry, but to care for the environment is obedience to God. We as Christians should strive to be the most conscientious environmentalists or creationists in the world because the earth and its fullness are the Lord's (Psalm 24:1-2). Our responsibilities in the Kingdom of God could well depend on our current environmental stewardship. Calvin De Witt has identified seven (godly) provisions of creation, including (1) energy exchange from the sun (2) soil and land building (3) cycling, recycling and eco- systems (4) water purification (5) fruitfulness and abundant life (6) global circulation of water and air, and (7) human ability to learn from creation. Even though man has sullied and degraded every one of those provisions, God will have the final word. As God's offspring, we must get in sync with His stewardship principles.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[A Cool Appraisal of Global Warming](#)**

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

We have all heard the dire warnings of environmentalists regarding global warming. But are they true? Richard Ritenbaugh shows that this political movement lacks the scientific facts to support its contentions.

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