

## CLIMATE CHANGE CHRONICLE 28

### The Culture War

Every evening when I finish working on these chronicles I have a glass of wine and turn on the news, mostly the American news. It gives me a picture of a battle between two cultures: the Perfect World Culture and the emerging Climate Change Culture. Let's take a look.

#### The Perfect World Culture

The Perfect World Culture, for want of a better term, is found in those annoying commercials. Here is the basic ideology.

*You only go around once in this life and if you want to be happy you have to get the best of everything. And if you can't get the best then try and get something a little better than your neighbours. What you buy identifies who you are. You have to be a winner, not a loser. It is un-American (or increasingly un-Canadian) to be a loser.*

And so we are flooded with commercials about the best cars and trucks, insurance for all your needs (except for climate change) the best way to lose weight, the smartest clothes to buy, the best medicine for you that is better than our competitor's medicine, and the best home furnishings. "Wayfair, you've got just what I need—with free shipping that's the game-changer."

As I think of the billions of dollars spent on these commercials I feel like I'm in an uneven David and Goliath battle. I'm the David with my slingshot, hurling chronicles at an armored Goliath and they just keep bouncing off. Often, over the past two years of writing these chronicles I've felt discouraged--until recently.

#### The Climate Change Culture

Recently, more and more, we can see the development of a Climate Change Culture. Its causes are detailed in the news: floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, forest fires, destruction of species, elderly people dying of heat exhaustion from rising temperatures, many people in other parts of the world abandoning their arid lands and seeking places to live that will accept them. These are the manifestations of an Earth in transition—a world needing a new kind of culture.

Another impetus for change has come from the world of science. The [UN study](#) on climate change released in October 2018 has indicated Earth's temperatures are rapidly rising. We must begin to turn things around. If we don't do this by 2030 we will face the disastrous consequences by 2040.

More recently, in April 2019, the Canadian government released [a study](#) showing that Canada is becoming twice as warm as most other countries and the Canadian Arctic is becoming three times warmer than the rest of Canada.

Climate change is already happening all around us and there is no question of whether it will continue to happen. It is just a matter of time. More and more people are asking the question—when will this affect me and my family?

Finally, cultures are developed from the bottom up...not from the top down. We can see this happening in our local Comox Valley community. People are organizing around a number of specific issues: getting rid of plastic bags, dealing with polluting wood stoves, putting solar panels on their roofs, conferences on climate change in schools, concerns about local water sources and the survival of fish, demonstrations of electric cars and bicycles, strong opposition to new pipelines, and on and on.

So we no longer have to predict what might happen in the future. It is already happening and leading to the development of a Climate Change Culture. The seeds are being sewn in our community and in other communities around the world.

In the past cultures were passed down from elders to youth. In the new Climate Change Culture it will spread from the younger generation to the older members of the community. And it will happen this way because young people realize that they will be responsible for living and caring in this new damaged world. They have special skills that will be sorely needed—especially their grasp of communication technologies.

### **The New Dragon Slayers.**

In the fifteenth century, when cartographers began drawing their first maps, they focused on the known world. But there were many unexplored areas they knew nothing about. So, to identify these dangerous areas, they wrote these Latin words on their maps, “Hic Sunt Dracones”...“Here Be Dragons.”

But now come the Dragon Slayers....young people like 16 year-old Greta Thunberg, whose December 2018 speech on climate change to the UN conference inspired young people around the world to walk out of their schools and hold climate change demonstrations.

Like 29 year-old Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. She is a Democratic politician in the House of Representatives who co-authored the Green New Deal.

And, not to leave out a young elder, Jay Inslee, the current Democratic governor of Washington State. He is unique because he is running for President on one issue—climate change. When an interviewer asked him how he could possibly run for

President on just a single issue he said, *“My issue is climate change. It is affecting all aspects of life as we have come to know it. If we can’t deal with it the rest won’t matter.”*

These dragon slayers are my kind of Climate Change Culture creators. Let’s get involved.

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