

# Climate Still Crying for Political Attention

*If the ways of God are inscrutable the path of man has become incomprehensible. Modern man, despite the wonderful body of knowledge and information that he has accumulated and the means to apply it, appears to be muddling ahead as if he were blind or drugged staggering from one crisis to another.—Aurelio Peccei and Alexander King, 1977*

By Frank G. Splitt

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The *Daily Herald's* August 28, 2020, Opinion page was topped by a compelling editorial titled "Climate crying for attention," and subtitled "As political campaigns begin, hurricanes and wildfires remind us of continuing crisis."<sup>1</sup> The epigraph calls attention to a sad truth about human behavior that continues on to this day. It is why the climate is still crying for political attention. No doubt, it is why the *Daily Herald* editors wrote the following

To be sure, candidates' positions on social issues demand our attention, and those who would curry our votes must demonstrate the ability to handle the simmering crises facing health care and the economy. But we also must not let them forget the long-term devastation that awaits if we let our attention to climate change fall by the wayside.

Views on climate change, as we've said before, are not the sole prerequisite voters should demand of candidates in the upcoming elections, but they are the first. Unfortunately, they did not find that place in either the Democratic or Republican national conventions.

Perhaps as the campaigns progress, the combination of a catastrophic hurricane and raging wildfires will help get the environment back into the spotlight of our political conversations.

My perspective on climate and the environment began to evolve back in the late 1980s. It was then that my wife Judy and I became involved with the *Foundation for Global Community* (previously known as the *Beyond War Foundation*). It was this involvement that led to the writing and initial publication by the National Engineering Consortium of the monograph *Creating Our Common Future*.<sup>3</sup> Subtitled *Reflections on the Four Es: Environment, Education, Energy, and Economics*, the monograph carried an environmental message and the need for a call to action. For example:

As we approach the new millennium, there is a growing awareness that our world has changed dramatically. Through science, technology, engineering, and our expanding numbers, we humans have created a new reality. Central to this new reality is the fact that we are fast approaching the carrying capacity for meaningful life on this fragile planet Earth.

The monograph also saw widespread promulgation, distribution, and use in addressing climate change, see Appendix 1. Here are its closing paragraphs:

Educational institutions at all levels can play a crucial role by refurbishing and expanding their learning-tool kits, as well as by placing strong emphasis on global education, individual responsibility, and the value of conservation... using only what is needed, and then reusing and recycling after that. All students should be made aware of the dynamic interrelationships and the balance required among the environment, our energy needs, and our economy. Educators can also collaborate with both parents and the business community to improve the teaching and learning processes.

***We need to become a learning people . . . learning together what we need to learn and then learning it. As a matter of fact, we need to become a learning global community.***

On a personal basis, each of us might look deep within to learn what we can contribute to this critical effort to ensure meaningful survival for the human species. All of us can contribute to a new and real beginning, to the creation of our common future, by setting an example as leaders in balancing the *Four Es* within our business and educational organizations, and by making our voices heard—loudly and clearly within our families and communities. The choice is ours.... I hope that our children and those of generations yet to come will not have found us lacking.

A related letter to the editor of *The Bent*, the *Tau Beta Pi* engineering honor society publication, can be found in the Appendix 2. In the letter I concluded by saying: “The stakes are high; there is much to be gained. And, **WHAT** do we have to lose?”

That was some 27 years ago. The climate is still crying for political attention.

With regard to the upcoming election, American voters will surely need information about their presidential candidate’s views on climate. For this information, see, for example, Cheung,<sup>3</sup> Bruggers,<sup>4</sup> Feldman,<sup>5</sup> and McKibblen.<sup>6</sup>

*There is only one thing in the lives of men, nations, and countries that is without price. That thing is honour.*— **Józef Beck**, Polish foreign minister, 1939

As stated in a recent *Daily Herald* Guest view:<sup>7</sup> “Come November, hope for a viable future of America's democracy will rely on a well-informed electorate that can help place experienced as well as competent and trustworthy men and women at all levels of government no matter their political affiliations. Moderates from both political parties will then have to work to find common ground to reunite America.”

Finally, it is my fervent hope that American voters will not only pay heed to the *Daily Herald's* editorial opinion piece, but also exercise sound judgement and elect honorable leaders who respect science. American voters must guard against being distracted from the continuing climate and other crises—scared away by politically-motivated lies and divisive rhetoric aimed at stoking fears for their safety.

## NOTES

1. Editorial board, “Climate crying for attention,” *The Daily Herald*, August 28, 2020, <https://www.dailyherald.com/discuss/20200828/editorial-climate-change-is-still-crying-for-political-attention>
2. Splitt, Frank G., *Creating Our Common Future*, *The Bent*, Fall 1992, <http://www.futurevectors.com/Odyssey/Splitt%20-%20Common%20Future.pdf>
3. Cheung, Helier, “What does Trump actually believe on climate change?” *BBC News*, January 23, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-51213003>
4. Bruggers, James, “Joe Biden on Climate Change: Where the Candidate Stands,” *Inside Climate News*, January 6, 2020, <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/24062019/joe-biden-climate-change-global-warming-election-2020-candidate-profile>
5. Feldman, Stacy, and Lavelley, Marianne, “Donald Trump's Record on Climate Change,” *Inside Climate News*, <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/19122019/trump-climate-policy-record-rollback-fossil-energy-history-candidate-profile>
6. McKibblen, Bill, “What Joe Biden’s Climate Plan Really Signals,” *The New Yorker*, July 22, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/annals-of-a-warming-planet/what-joe-bidens-climate-plan-really-signals>
7. Splitt, Frank G., “A Divided America Cannot Stand,” *The Daily Herald*, Guest view, August, 24, 2020, <https://www.dailyherald.com/amp-article/20200824/discuss/200829798/>