

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

A scientific prediction ignored

On Tuesday, we discussed the Wall Chart of World History, which captures in linear form about 5,000 years of recorded history on 12 feet of heavy paper stock.

Human beings have done some magnificent things and some atrocities — lots of them, in fact — but civilization has survived.

In the last century, for example, Europe and European Russia lost by battle, massacre, and starvation about 70 million people between August 1914 and the end of the Stalinist regime. But Europe did survive.

It's far from certain, however, that civilization as we know it will survive climate change.

Last year, a United Nations panel conceded that it's already too late to avert the worst effects of climate change.

"Every year of delay beyond 2020 brings a need for faster cuts, which become increasingly expensive, unlikely, and impractical," the U.N. report states.

The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is now higher than any time in the last 800,000 years. The last time concentrations were this high, the oceans were 30 to 60 feet higher than they are today. That would put cities from New York

to London to Shanghai completely underwater.

The reason that warming doesn't seem so bad, as we live everyday life, is climate lag. The oceans, which cover 71 percent of the earth's surface, warm much more slowly than land, just as a pan of water on a hot stove takes several minutes to boil.

Five years ago, Microsoft co-founder and billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates warned that a virus originating in China could devastate the world. His prediction was accurate and, unfortunately, ignored.

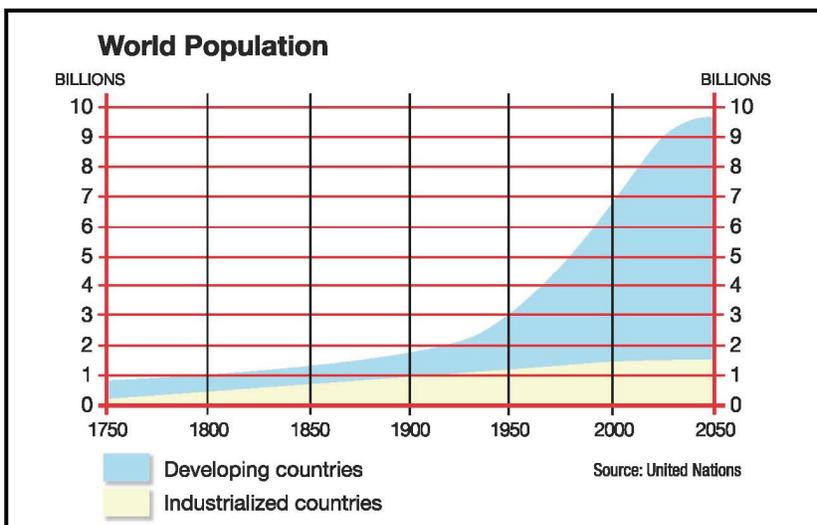
And yet an overwhelming worldwide scientific consensus on climate change is still scoffed at by ideologues who control the levers of power in Washington.

The chart below says it all. The planet is 4.5 billion years old. Civilization is about 5,000 years old. In terms of that span, it was only very recently — about 1800 — that world population reached 1 billion people.

Just 200 years later, we've reached nearly 8 billion people, each of whom has a much greater impact on the earth's ecosystems than those coming before us. We must address this issue now. It's vitally important we elect a president and Congress in November who will do that.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton



Skyrocketing world population and the rise of resource consumption in developing countries are putting a tremendous strain on the carrying capacity of the earth. Climate change is the most dangerous result.