CARBON IS THE WORLD’S BEST FRIEND

DR DAVID BELLAMY & JACK BARRETT: If we took all of the carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, the temperature might fall by about 0.3% but we wouldn’t be here to worry because there would be no green plants to feed us.

Carbon produced by dying stars is one of the major elements in the interstellar void, the temperature of which is zero, degrees absolute, which is so cold that chemical reactions slow to a standstill. Around 5 billion years ago some got caught up in the formation of this the lonely planet, warmed by its place in the solar system to a temperature that has to date nurtured an ever more complex panoply of living things.

History has it that an apple fell on Isaac Newton’s head allowing him to realise why, “what goes up must come down” and go on to formulate the basic laws of physics. Revisiting those laws in the infrared glow of the global warming debate forces the realisation that when it comes to radiant heat, “what comes down must go up” for if it didn’t the Earth would overheat.

Some 50 years after the end of the little ice age, in a time we now call the pre-industrial age, the world appeared to be well content with an atmosphere containing 285 ppmv of CO2 and the average amount of water vapour.

Since 1992 we have had a special Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warning the world that we are heading for real trouble if the concentration of carbon dioxide, one of the 5 so called greenhouse gases in the atmosphere doubles its pre-industrial value.

Here are ten, let us call them Newton’s Apples that sow real seeds of doubt about the application of the science behind the IPCC’s conclusions.

(1) Measurements prove that the pre-industrial damp blanket trapped 94.7% of all the infrared radiation as it escaped into space leaving a mere 5.3% to warm the great interstellar sink directly. All this thanks to the fact that the spectral escape window was partially blocked by what we now call the greenhouse gases that kept the Earth warm.

(2) If we took no notice of the IPCC’s health warnings and burned all the known reserves of natural gas, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would rise to 454 ppmv.

(3) Now throw caution to the wind and burn all the oil reserves we know about and the CO2 concentration would go up to 489 ppmv. Still nowhere near the dreaded doubling figure of those “halcyon” pre industrial days.

(4) So lets pull out all the stops and burn at least one third of coal reserves in all its forms. With an awful lot of mining we would make the now much-feared figure of 570 ppmv. A point, at which IPCC’s super computer models warn that the sky might soon come falling down.

Some 600 million tonnes of extra potential plant fertilizer and about 1 billion tonnes of extra irrigation water hanging about up there, continuing to help balance the biosphere while increasing the atmospheric pressure by a mere 0.3 millibars.
The atmospheric blanket now traps 95.6% of the infrared radiation (a mere increase of 0.9% over those pre-industrial days) and the potential absorption by the combination of water vapour and CO2 is almost complete thanks to the logarithmic relationship between concentration and radiance/absorption.

(5) Simple arithmetic also proves that at this moment of time in the IPCC’s countdown to catastrophe the annual increase of CO2 pouring into the atmosphere is a mere 3% of the natural turn over of this very important gas in the atmosphere. Thus leaving little doubt that there is massive buffering capacity in the system.

(6) Simple mathematics proves that all the much “feared” doubling of the concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere actually accomplishes is a slight narrowing of the infrared ‘window’ through which radiation escapes to space.

(7) Checking the spectra also shows there is a window in that infrared escape route that can never be closed because there are no natural gases with the right spectral bands. If there were the temperature might then go up by around 5 degrees Celsius.

(8) Measurements also show that the infrared absorption spectra of all the greenhouse gases overlap to a certain extent, in consequence their cumulative effect can never be realized. A cumulative effect that is already nearing saturation when no further heat will be trapped, thanks to the fact that the relationship between the concentration of any of the green house gases and radiance/absorption is logarithmic.

(9) Despite all this incontrovertible evidence that the increase of the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is a benign and almost spent force, the global warmers beg to differ. Their conclusions drawn from a plethora of complex computer models leads them to warn the World that an increase in trapped radiation of only 0.9% might trigger a catastrophic course of events. A chain reaction that could be responsible for a runaway enhancement of global warming that could pose a threat too much more than our way of life. To give their argument teeth they appear to put all their eggs into the basket of what they call radiative forcing, building into their models only positive feedbacks related to water vapour that trap more heat.

(10) Newton’s Law of cooling perhaps drops the largest apple on the head of both the IPCC and the Kyoto Protocol arguments of a melt down scenario. In the simplest of terms it proves that if the non-radiative properties of water, (evaporation, albedo, mass transfer etc.,) were not already at work at the earth/ atmosphere interface the Earth’s surface would be some 13°C warmer. So again there is a lot of negative feedback in the system.

The global warmers can hypothesise as much as they like about the cause and effect of trapping the last few percent of the available infrared radiance by the greenhouse gasses but without admitting that there is another source of heat at play in the system their scare mongering is no more than hot air.

Perhaps they should now turn their giant computers over to finding out from whence does the extra infrared radiation, that could tip the balance towards catastrophe come.

Take heart Earth’s climate has remained within the limits tolerated by life, for several billion years. During this time the planet has experienced unimaginable volcanic events which liberated huge amounts of CO2, we have collided with extraterrestrial objects which triggered either increase or decrease of temperature and even the energy flow from the sun has altered over such a span of geological time.
And yet here we are! Life remains. The global temperature is well within life’s limits - indeed the present-day is cooler than much of previous geological time. There is one circumstantial conclusion and one only. Earth’s climate, self-regulates with or without us.

Take heart all those super climate modellers there is still a lot of work for your giant computers to get stuck into. Take a few gigabytes out of Newton’s Apples and get cracking solving the real problems that face over 6.4 billion human beings as they move into an uncertain energy hungry future.

Please remember that the main reasons for soil erosion, salination, floods, droughts, famines, the collapse of coral reefs and the extinction of species are habitat destruction, overgrazing and over-fishing not a 0.9% rise in trapped radiance.

Using your computers you can help orchestrate the processes by which a mixture of science based civil, social and ecological engineering can ameliorate the effects of the worst or seize the opportunities of the best of natural climate change. That was the conclusion of G8 2005 at the Gleneagles Golf Course, itself a hot spot of local biodiversity where an eagle from George Bush was shown to be worth a lot more than a dead birdie from the IPCC.

Carbon dioxide is not the dreaded greenhouse gas that the global warmers crack it up to be. It is in fact the most important airborne fertiliser in the world and without it there would be no green plants at all. In fact a doubling of the levels of this gas in the atmosphere would bring about a marked rise in plant production, good news for everyone especially those malnourished millions who can’t afford chemical fertilisers or the spray booms to spread them.

Plants are very clever things for their response to an increase in carbon dioxide in the air, is to use it wisely producing more roots than shoots to tap more mineral resources from the soil. Good news, with the added bargain of burying lots more organic humus in the soil. Just what soils need especially when they are over exploited and beginning to erode?

Hooray for global warming! How can we say that? Well a lot of very qualified people have been saying just that for a long time. Sadly it is not in the interest of the Kyoto Protocoler’s to agree for the truth would prove just how ill conceived is their scheme to’ save the world’. From what one must ask?

The real truth of the matter is that the main greenhouse gas in our atmosphere is water vapour. Any one who steps out of their air conditioned car will know that on a dry clear night the temperature drops rapidly, if there is water vapour (clouds) about, the wet atmospheric blanket does its best to keep the planet warm. If we took all of the water vapour out of the atmosphere the temperature of our atmospheric greenhouse would plummet by about 33 degrees Celsius. If we took all of the carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, the temperature might fall by about 0.3% but we wouldn’t be here to worry because there would be no green plants to feed us.

Please talk to your plants and as you do rest assured that they in effect say thank you by recycling your waste carbon dioxide to make sugar and oxygen. As they did when the dying star of the silver screen gave her all back to the plants that put the perfume into Chanel Number 5