

## Right vs Left

By Doug Skeates

Life consists of the many times one must make decisions, a daily basis. Seldom does either one way or the other really fit the intended purpose. Neither is likely to be absolutely correct mainly consisting of the greater good or lesser evil. One must make choice either within the family or on a national scale. The choice made is whether the individual thinks 'either/or' (absolute) or 'both/and' (inclusive).

An example involves decisions pertaining to actions taken to solve the problem of drastic climate change where those on the left in society demand change and those on the right feel the problem is not severe enough to warrant the cost of changing the status quo.

There can be no question about rising temperature globally, photographic evidence being in receding glaciers and reduced levels of arctic ice as well as rising ocean levels. The most irrefutable statistic is the massive population increase. The number of people on the planet has risen from a few million to seven and a half billion in a matter of a few centuries, each individual relying on the world's ability to provide the food & water essential for survivals.

Mankind is facing increased floods and droughts, landslides and greater severity of impacts of hurricanes and tornadoes which scientists attribute to greenhouse gases .

Much of the debate dividing the right from the left stems from determining whether these result from natural or man-made causes. The planet must provide adequate food and water to meet the needs of people as well as providing them with accommodation and employment. Like in most animal populations, protection of territory results in ever-increasing violence. On a per capita basis this has resulted in a 'me first' attitude, a significant factor in decision-making. Such thinking shows up particularly when national leaders debate matters requiring global decisions.

Implementation of such decisions on the home front however can only be accomplished by individuals and structures within each country working together locally. What are the most effective means of achieving the goals agreed to by national leaders, short-term prosperity or long-term development?

Ours is a what-if society, addicted to insurance. In many aspects of life, decisions must be made depending on assessment of what the future can be expected to hold. An ad for filters for car engines is appropriate, pay now or risk a more costly expenditure later. On the climate change scene, those on the left feel that taking action now will benefit the world that future generations will face.

If society determines to take the climate-change action, people have two alternatives, drastically reduce activities which contribute to carbon emissions (mitigation) and those reducing the carbon 'blanket' already existing. Nature has been doing the latter for centuries and mankind can improve the process by increasing forest cover manyfold (adaptation). Changing the world's ecology is bound to be much less costly. An article in the August issue of Macleans magazine features a small Ontario municipality near Guelph, Eden Mills. The town claims that it is the first truly carbon-free community in the world. Steps have been taken to convert fossil-fuel fired buildings to solar power at the same time as tree planting projects which have enhanced storage of atmospheric carbon in the form of wood, a combination of both.

Various media news items have highlighted actions taken in over 50 countries toward achieving agreed-upon limitations reducing mankind's global climate footprint. Tree planting is a dominant approach with pledges (and actions) for establishing increased photosynthetic cover through addition of large areas of new forest. A second major action is the use of wind turbines and solar panels replacing burning of fossil fuels. Intriguing reports have been the use of electricity for vehicles, trains and even aircraft.

The alternative choice is to save money by refusal to take action, saving significant financial costs for short-term financial gain. Addressing action against what is perceived to be a dangerous future, other residents have chosen a win/win course with free future

energy being assured once infrastructure is in place.

Decisions made now by those of the right and the left will undoubtedly influence the world for future generations.