

Reflection 4: A Prophet for Our Times



The film put out in 2005 “Inconvenient Truth” was a bit of a wake up call to us all but the question that might still haunt us if we don’t do something soon will be the one on our children’s lips “Why didn’t they wake up when they had the chance to make a difference”. Are there enough of the rich people waking up to this crisis at our door step? I mean by this, have those who have made themselves rich by digging, drilling, selling and burning fossil fuels accepted this inconvenient truth, indeed have we accepted the truth? Apparently not enough of us! Mahatma Gandhi said “We must become the change we want to see in the world”. The

problem at the moment is that too many people are debating whether it’s a Political, Economic or environmental issue. Well it is and always was a moral and ethical issue and its time to stop debating and act. The media classified “Inconvenient Truth” as the most terrifying film you will ever see and that certainly got my attention. If you have not seen it yet it’s a must. The other punch line came from Upton Sinclair “It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it” Is this the reason why so little has been done compared to what needs to be done? It was Sir Winston Churchill who said “the time for procrastinating is over” when there was a crises in his day. Its time to listened to him and take decisive action again.

In 2006 Al Gore included more research to his 2005 presentation to add more weight to his call for action. My response to that additional information was, how much more info. do we need before accepting that we have already arrived at the crises point. Did we not have enough evidence already to win over the most stubborn sceptics? I would have thought so. Al Gore said “it is profoundly unethical to ignore the signs of Global Warming”. These words above all others stayed with me and moved me to want to write. Now I am looking at kids and thinking; what sort of a world are we going to pass on? I remember at one of our retreats in the early 60s been told that if at the end of our allotted life span we were able to say “we have left this world a better place for us being in it” we would die contented and be assured of Gods embrace. Well the news is, very soon no one and I mean no one will be able to say such reassuring words at any time, because it would never be achievable if the consequences of Global Warming are allowed to just roll on to their inevitable conclusions. (Extreme weather patterns have already been experienced so the consequences are already being felt around the world)

I recall the story in Luke Chapter 16 Vs 19 – 31 of Rich man and Lazarus and I’m sure you know how it goes. When the rich man descended to the fires of hell he asked a favour of God, that he send a messenger to his family to warn them of the frightening consequences of ignoring the prophets. We know the answer he got from God “If they won’t listen to the

profits they will certainly not listen to someone even if he returned from the grave". Now in my opinion Al Gore qualifies as a Prophet on many levels but I'm sure you dotted the eyes and crossed the tees for yourself. As the film suggests there are consequences and they are worse than anything human kind has experienced since life on this planet first began. Another great quote, and I can't remember who to give the credit to, is "To reach port we must sail not tie at anchor, sail not just drift" I see this as a call to action and lord knows we need to sail the time for drifting is over.

The rich people, as I call them, won't do anything because they have a vested interest in procrastinating as long as possible. So my questions are - what about the rest of us, why are we not doing anything or not responding in a way that evidence would demand of us? Why aren't we putting this problem where it belongs on the top of our agenda of things to be attended to? Well one reason might be that we are suffering from the Ostrich effect. "If you don't like what you see or hear bury your head in the sand and that way you can avoid the inconvenient truth all together". However, to do nothing is ethically wrong so we must act both individually and collectively and we really don't have much time.

Another reason why we don't move as quickly as we need to I suspect is, and I'm sure you have heard these words yourself, the well worn phrase "What can I possibly do that's going to make any difference" This answer is the one that may well kill us in the end because it has the ring of truth about it. One person on his own won't make a great big difference but one must not forget the marvellous truth that contradicts this statement and that is what we have come to call "The power of one". I will never forget that film which coined the phrase and told the story of how one person responded to apartheid and made a difference. One can become two and two three and so on. Yes an individual can make a difference and a lot of individual will make a huge difference. So where does this all lead us, you ask. Well the last page comes from the credits at the end of the film. It spells out just what we can do and it's not an exhaustive list by any means. I finish by just presenting some of them and you might get a surprise when you read the last one. Go gently.

(PT – Philippines March 2008)

SOME IDEAS ON WHAT ONE INDIVIDUAL REALLY CAN DO

- Learn as much as you can about climate change and what it is doing to our planet.
- Encourage everyone to see the movie "Inconvenient Truth"
- Buy the Song "I need to wake up" by Melissa Etheridge and play to your friends. It's great.
- Put all your Knowledge into action.
- Speak up in your community.
- You can reduce your carbon emissions to zero. Do it now.
- Insist that Australia freeze carbon emissions.
- Contact your Member of Parliament.
- Vote for leaders who pledge to solve the crises.
- Switch to renewable energy.
- Call your power company to see if they offer green energy.
- If they don't ask why not.

- Call radio shows and write to newspapers.
- Plant trees. Lots of them.
- Buy energy efficient appliances and light bulbs.
- Reduce energy for heating and cooling.
- Weatherize your house, increase insulation and put in skylights.
- Recycles as much as possible.
- Walk or ride a bicycle and where you can use public transport.
- Limit your family to one car and start a car pooling system.
- Require lower emissions from automobiles.
- Reduce dependence on oil.
- Speak out against fossil fuels and the need for more environmentally friendly fuels.
- Turning food into fuel is a big fraud. (Worse than oil - "Word Mission", February 2008 - a must read).
- Use every opportunity to encourage the young join the struggle. They have the most to lose
- Join international efforts to stop Global Warming. Join any organisation that takes Global Warming seriously.
- If you believe in the power of prayer, pray that people will have the strength to change.

“What is at stake is our ability to live on this planet. Our time to rise again to secure our future and the future of the children yet to be born has come” Al Gore - 2006