

# Science the New Religion



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**Science has become the new religion.** Those who dare challenge the dictates of 'science' are often declared crackpots, pseudo-scientists or just plain crazy. If you deny or doubt evolution, or anthropogenic global warming (AGW), now called 'climate change', or the effectiveness or safety of certain vaccines, or the universal safety of genetically modified foods, as compared with natural breeding and hybridization practices, you are called nasty names. These might include 'flat-earther', particularly if you deny Darwinian evolution.<sup>1</sup>

It has come to a point now that to be called a 'creationist' is a big negative, like you are a pseudo-scientist, or follower of astrology, or witch doctors, etc. *Such a person is thinking irrationally and cannot be trusted* according to the new paradigm.

Then there are those who are called some sort of 'climate change denier', who must be funded by 'big oil', as though they must have a corrupt vested interest or be just plain crazy. As a physicist I have analyzed the global temperature data, spanning the last 100 years, downloaded from the Met Office Hadley Centre.<sup>2</sup> I have no vested interest here, but I find that a continued warming trend is not supported by the data. **But I remain skeptical.** The main problem I see is the limitation of human time scales and the lack of any really robust model that successfully predicts developing trends.<sup>3</sup>


And there are those who question the safety of (some) vaccines and they are called 'anti-vaxxers'. But this is not really about the idea of vaccines *per se*, but it is about questioning methods some large corporation might use when angling for their products to by-pass extensive testing protocols.<sup>4</sup> As if, in a corrupt world, steeped in sin, there is not any good reason to doubt their motives and methods.<sup>5</sup>

In one case, not related to corruption, but a rush to market, the privatized Commonwealth Serum Laboratories in Australia, in 2009, made a bad batch of a flu vaccine that had serious consequences for young children. So serious was the mistake that ...

"Australia's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jim Bishop, made the unprecedented decision to ban nationally all the seasonal flu vaccines for the under-5s. Fluvax, the predominant vaccine, was triggering febrile fits in one in every 100 children – 10 times the expected rate. The side-effects, in some cases, were severe, and no-one could explain what had caused them."<sup>6</sup>

That means they, in fact, expected febrile convulsions to be triggered by their vaccine in one in every 1000 children. That was the definition for 'safe' at that time for that particular vaccine. Like any drug, vaccines are not without risks and that has been acknowledged.<sup>7</sup> So **it is healthy to question the science, and or the limitations of its application**, especially when small children are involved.

Many times we have been told something was good for us, even good for our health. Take cigarette smoking for example; no negative effects were found in the 1950-60's, and doctors and dentists even recommended them—but now in many countries on every packet the label reads "smoking kills".

I was born in 1952 and as a child in elementary (primary) school saw several children with deformed limbs, which later I learned was due to their mothers taking a drug called "thalidomide". This was a drug given back in the 50s for the treatment of morning sickness during pregnancy, but quite clearly it was not fully tested before being released as one of the enantiomers<sup>8</sup> (either R or S forms of the molecule) resulted  in devastating malformation of the foetus, even resulting in death.<sup>9</sup> Apparently, worldwide, about 10,000 cases were reported of infants with the same condition, called phocomelia, due to thalidomide, where only about 50% survived.

So what's the message here? **Skepticism is sometimes very healthy. It could even save your life.**

**Science without debate is propaganda!**

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