

ABOUT THE GLOBAL WARMING PREDICAMENT

At the heart of Al Gore's presentation on global warming and of AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH are some truly shocking images: photographs from Mt. Kilimanjaro and the Himalayan mountains revealing that the planet's biggest glaciers are melting with dramatic, life-altering speed. It's also happening closer to home: Gore demonstrates that in the United States the awe-inspiring Glacier National Park now has alarmingly few glaciers left at all.

The impact of the imagery is undeniable. Seen in such stark relief, the ongoing loss of these magical places is both heartbreaking and galvanizing. If we previously thought nature moved too slowly for us to see its changes or that the earth was too vast and its forces too powerful for humankind to make a serious dent in its health – we now know we were wrong. Gore makes clear that sweeping changes now engulf us, and the earth is being further altered minute by minute.

Gore goes on to present even more incontrovertible evidence. The ten hottest ten years on record have occurred in the last 14 years. The oceans in particular are rapidly rising in temperature, spawning more and more severe tropical storms and hurricanes, such as the disastrous Hurricane Katrina and the other deadly storms of this past season. Changing rainfall patterns are increasing the severity of floods and droughts and warmer temperature are responsible for outbreaks of disease worldwide. Meanwhile, temperature-related habitat loss is leading to the extinction of some of the world's most majestic wild animals. These include the spectacular Polar Bears who, for the first time in history, Gore reports, are drowning in the desperate search for shelf ice on which to hunt.

Yet amidst all the scientifically verified studies, Gore laments that all too many Americans and American leaders, still do not believe in global warming. He gives a particularly eye-opening statistic: while a recent survey (Science Magazine, Dec. 2004) of all peer-reviewed scientific studies on climate change showed that 928 peer-reviewed papers supported global warming and zero denied it, in a similar sampling of stories from the mass media, 53% suggest global warming is unproven. In other words, the message people are getting doesn't match the facts.

Gore believes our biggest problem is one of misconception – and the biggest misconception is that, if our planet is in massive trouble, nothing can be done about it. Not willing to go down without a strong, savvy, passionate fight, Gore points out that Americans have taken on all kinds of seemingly overwhelming problems – from abolishing slavery to landing a man on the moon to reversing the hole in the ozone layer – and believes that global warming should fall into that grand tradition of tackling the seemingly impossible with zeal.

He challenges the notion that business and the environment must always be at war with one another. Ultimately, he envisions a "Century of Renewal" ahead of us in such areas as

energy conservation, carbon capture technology, transportation, alternative energy sources and engineering for efficiency that will change the tide of destruction and restore the planet's health.

But that will only happen if the American people come together and get behind the issue, making a difference in their own lives, and putting pressure on politicians to do much more. It's something Al Gore believes is already happening. He sees a mass movement starting to build strength among citizens from all states and political parties – and both Gore and the filmmakers hope that AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH will be a catalytic experience, giving that movement inspiration and momentum.

Sums up Scott Burns: “There isn't time for Al Gore to go to every city on earth and bend everyone's ear. The power of this movie is that it can spread the word at a moment in history where time is absolutely critical.”