

Last fall, Australia became the first country in the world to elect a Global Warming Prime Minister. Australians, who are feeling the heat of global warming with the longest drought in their country's history, threw out global warming denier John Howard, and installed Kevin Rudd. Rudd's first act as PM was to sign the Kyoto Agreement, leaving the US as the only country on this planet not to do so.

In January of 2009, America will have a new president. Arguably, he or she will be an Awakening president. All three leading candidates understand that we face serious environmental issues, starting with global warming, that need to be tackled immediately.

So who will be the greenest president? To be candid, with regards to environmental policy, they're all pretty much the same.

McCain has at many times been the only Republican talking about how we need to take on global warming. (In 2003 Green Team worked on a global warming campaign with non-profit Environmental Defense to try to galvanize people to sign a petition supporting the McCain-Lieberman Climate Stewardship Act—at the time the only act in Congress addressing global warming.) Both Clinton and Obama have similar voting patterns and platforms on environmental issues, including global warming.

The League of Conservation Voters (www.lcv.org), a non-profit that rates politicians on their environmental voting record, while giving Obama and Clinton higher grades, also gives McCain good grades based on his lifetime stand on the environment. (The April 14, 2008 *Newsweek* cover story "Who's the Greenest of Them All" agrees.)

So who will be the most Awake?

The answer dawned on me after a Career Day at my 15-year old daughter's class, where I was asked to participate. While I was addressing these young, bright students on their career options in both the marketing and environmental worlds, it hit me that

this generation is the one that will probably be the most affected by our next president.

My daughter and her class are what marketing folks like to call Millennials. Millennials are between 12 and 24 years of age, extremely diverse, and outspoken. They are also the most Awake of all consumers. The environment is the number one issue they're worried about. *Harris Interactive Youth Pulse 2007* Thanks to us, their parents, they are also affluent, and put their (our) money where their mouths are: a recent poll found that 89% would switch brands if the other brand were associated with a good cause, all else being equal.

Source: AMP/Cone Millennial Cause Study

Thanks to our rapidly changing information and media reach, my daughter's generation has been exposed to all our environmental and social woes ever since she was a child. No other generation has been exposed to global warming from such an early age. Global warming will define who they are, from the products they buy, to the careers they go into, to where they choose to live.

My daughter's generation is actually the Global Warming Generation—whether they like it or not.

And the Global Warming Generation needs someone that will connect to them.

My daughter's class is not old enough to vote for our next president, but our next president will affect her life.

So the real question is, who is going to galvanize the Global Warming Generation into action?

I think the answer is clear. Obama has done something that no other candidate has done, which is to awaken our youth to the political process.

The numbers speak for themselves: according to a recent Gallup and USA Today poll, youth (described as voters under 30) voting in these primaries have doubled (Louisiana and Massachusetts), and in some cases tripled (Georgia, Iowa, Missouri and

Texas) from the last primaries in 2004. And it's not just voting, but actually getting involved in the process. According to a recent CBS/MTV poll, 25% of these youth also were volunteering on the campaigns. *USA Today, May 6, 2008*

While we could argue that all three candidates have generated interest among our youth, it really is Obama who is creating this phenomena. You can see it in the crowds he attracts. Politicians who expressed support for Obama often did so because their children were nagging them. And check out Facebook: Obama has 800,000 "friends," compared to Hillary's 150,000 and McCain's 119,000.

Our youth see in Obama someone that maybe, just maybe, might do something that will make their future a better one.

Obama brings out optimism (yes, hope) and a can-do attitude that together we can make a positive change. That together we can tackle global warming. An engaged youth will demand that Obama take action on global warming, and they will also hold his feet to the fire if he does not deliver.

The Global Warming Generation needs a president it can look up to, and help make the world a better place for their children.

Until then, you can catch my daughter shopping. (*Also see The Widening Gap from the NYT.*)