Chapter 15

Discussion Questions.

1. Though most climate change scientists agree that the warming of the earth is due to manmade activities such as industrial pollution and burning of fossil fuels, some conservatives continue to state that global warming is a farce and attempt to harm business and shrink economic development. Who should we believe and why?
2. Former President George W. Bush and current President Barack Obama have very different views and opinions about climate change, hence greatly shifting federal policy from administration to administration. Should federal responses to such enormous issues be allowable from one political party being in power to the next? If not, how should consistency be held during changes in political power?
3. Radical environmentalists feel that there is a lack of urgency when addressing such issues as global climate change and that radical change must come quickly to have an impact that is truly needed. Periodically, radical environmentalists such as a tree sitter will be belittled by the media as “crazy and attention seeking.” Should radical environmentalists be labeled crazy or should they be honored for doing something that most people generally agree with but would never take the time to do?
4. Most social problems such as poverty, prejudice/discrimination, joblessness, a bias media, substandard health care, war, and most of the other social problems discussed in the textbook can be addressed and possibly solved over time if people come together and make hard choices and compromise. Unlike the social problems mentioned, if climate change and global warming are so far out of control and non-stoppable as some scientists believe (some believe we can slow the warming process by making changes but warming will continue due to the harm that has already been done), isn’t environmental degradation the most significant social problem human beings face as there might not be anything we can do to stop the long-term effects regardless of what we do now (in other words, it’s out of our hands)?
5. What is the most effective way to get the public to understand the importance of certain environmental issues? What role can the media play?