

Thursday, November 29, 2007

"2020 News - Twinning with Galixos"

- global warming and climate change - a flash science fiction short story by Rob Hopcott

The theme music of the Earth Wide Breaking Newsflash TV channel faded away. The President of Earth was tight lipped. The news he had to deliver was not what billions across the world were hoping to hear. He forced his craggy face into a smile and began.

5 "I have to announce today that negotiations over twinning Earth with Galixos 2867#3, a small planet in the Andromeda nebula, have broken down."

"Galixos 3, as I'm sure you are all aware, is a blue planet much like Earth. It has dry land spread over a number of continents surrounded by salty seas. Even the air is breathable by humans, although it is thinner and rather like the air found on Earth in elevated places like the Andes in Peru."

10 "Evolution too, on Galixos 3 has followed a similar pattern to Earth. Over billions of years, life evolved from simple bacteria through to sea based life forms who eventually adapted to breath air and live on dry land."

The President of Earth remembered to smile, willing the billions watching to feel at ease and believe he was in control.

15 "They look a bit different to us, of course," he beamed reassuringly. "They look like four metre long millipedes with three heads and eyes that are similar to our insects."

"However, they are very advanced and friendly and it was the United Council of Galixos 3 that first made contact with Earth, then suggested twinning with Earth in 2018 and subsequently provided an Ambassador to Earth for Observation and Friendship Purposes."

20 "Unfortunately, I am very sorry to have to report that the Ambassador has now concluded his study and, after listening to representations from Earth who argued strongly in favour, he has rejected our twinning for what he described as cultural and practical reasons."

25 "Apparently on Galixos 3, cooperative evolution has been greater than here on Earth where evolution has followed a combative pattern of the 'survival of the fittest', first identified, as you will know from your school studies, by Darwin."

"On Galixos 3, intelligent life evolution was dominated by the imperative that each life form be treated as if they were as one family. For them, of course, mating is a threesome process with a male and a female coming together with a third of their species who grows their young internally until birth."

30 "For them, concepts such as war and starvation, still prevalent in many places on Earth, are incomprehensible abstractions, not only alien but also extremely repellent to the entire Galixos 3 world population."

"Deistic beliefs still held by large numbers of humans on Earth are regarded by life forms on Galixos 3 as akin to mental illness having no basis in science and having an arbitrary and often harmful consequence on the lives of the adherents."

5 "For many of you, I know this is bad news. The technologies Galixos 3 offered are much more advanced than our own and would have solved many world problems from cancer to overcrowding."

"Unfortunately, when the Galixos 3 Ambassador transported away from Earth at 9am this morning, we lost all chance of continuing negotiations. We simply do not have the technology to contact them."

10 "However, we are a planet that has made great progress over the centuries and, ultimately, I firmly believe it is better for us to continue to achieve growth worldwide by our own efforts. We may be disappointed at our lost opportunity but we must soldier on. Thank you for listening. Goodbye."

15 The TV channel theme music faded up again and the green light showed the President of Earth that he was no longer on air.

Wearily the President of Earth mopped his brow with a tissue, as the news production assistant removed his earpiece.

20 He felt sad that he'd not dared to reveal the final reason why Galixos 3 had refused the twinning. The public would have demanded immediate action. There would have been riots and worldwide economic instability.

According to measurements by the Ambassador from Galixos 3, global warming on Earth was about to accelerate far more rapidly than Earth scientists had predicted, causing a sudden and cataclysmic release of methane, hitherto stored for millions of years in the permafrost of the North Pole.

25 The Ambassador's calculation was that Earth had no more than ten years to reverse this process of climate change. He had also assessed the likelihood of global warming being halted as extremely low, due to "warlike, anti-scientific, anti-cooperative, deistic cultural beliefs widespread in democratic and non-democratic populations on Earth".

The Ambassadors conclusion then was inevitable.

30 Twinning was pointless with a species facing extinction.

The End

<http://www.onlineflashfiction.com/2007/11/2020-news-twinning-with-galixos-28673.html> (April 2009)