

AL GORE, THE UNITED NATIONS, AND THE CULT OF GAIA (1999)

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Executive Summary

U.S. taxpayers are being forced to subsidize a new form of state religion which holds that natural resources have to be protected for the sake of Gaia, a so-called Earth spirit. This religious movement, which has cult-like qualities, is being promoted by leading figures and organizations such as Vice President Albert Gore, broadcaster Ted Turner, and the United Nations.

Gore, who as a member of the U.S. Senate participated in the 1992 U.N.-sponsored Earth Summit, is the most prominent member of what appears to be an environmental cult built around the concept of reverence for the Earth. Gore has written openly about the Earth having sacred qualities and he has praised primitive pagan religions and goddess worship.

Another key player is Ted Turner, who has turned his broadcasting empire into a virtual arm of the United Nations. A noted critic of Christianity and ambassador on behalf of the U.N. Population Fund, he promotes the concept of Gaia in his television programs, such as the "Captain Planet" cartoon show, in which characters get magic powers from an Earth spirit or goddess.

At the United Nations, the U.N. Environmental Program, founded by Maurice Strong, promotes the idea of an "Environmental Sabbath," a variation of the Gaia concept. Strong, now the Executive Coordinator for United Nations Reform under Secretary-General Kofi Annan, has described the global environmental movement in terms suggesting a religious crusade. One of Strong's organizations, the Earth Council, has produced an "Earth Charter" for the world that refers to respect for "Mother Earth" and animal rights.

As Turner's involvement suggests, this Cult of Gaia has a definite anti-Christian orientation. Traditional Christianity is regarded by this movement as anti-environmental because God is viewed as being apart from the Earth itself.

Those promoting the Gaia concept have no qualms about using the full force of government, even the international resources of the United Nations, to impose their beliefs on the rest of us. If they are successful in their drive for "sustainable development" to protect Gaia, they could stifle economic growth and promote a drastic decline in the American standard of living.

Congressional hearings are urgently needed to explore whether forced U.S. taxpayer underwriting of this bizarre religious movement constitutes a violation of the First Amendment prohibition on the establishment of a state church.

Planetary Brain

The nation was shocked when 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult killed themselves. It was the largest mass suicide in U.S. history. But are there other cults active behind-the-scenes of world events? And might they be occupying positions of power at the national and international levels? The answers, upon analysis and reflection, are very disturbing. There appears to be a high-level movement with very strange spiritual beliefs

operating in the upper echelons of the U.S. Government, the United Nations and the global media.

These people believe in Gaia □ an "Earth spirit," goddess or planetary brain □ and they think that human beings can have mystical experiences or a spiritual relationship with this entity. In order to protect Gaia, in their view, the U.S. and other industrial countries have to be prohibited from certain uses of the world's natural resources. This is called "sustainable development."

In general and secular terms, this cult, which combines aspects of the animal rights and radical environmentalist movements, holds that human beings are exploiting the Earth and other living creatures for selfish purposes.

Congressional Concern

But the religious overtones of this movement are too obvious to ignore. Rep. Helen Chenoweth (R-Idaho) has described this phenomenon as "environmental religion" and says that it has "profound constitutional implications" because of the First Amendment prohibition on government establishment of religion. Columnist Alston Chase, a reformed environmentalist, agrees, warning that "It may be only a matter of time before America becomes a complete theocracy □ a place where, in the name of environmentalism, science and religion fuse with civil authority to rule the populace."¹

Dr. Michael S. Coffman, president of Environmental Perspectives, says, "They are instituting a new state religion." But it is a religion at sharp variance with the Judeo-Christian foundations of the American constitutional republic. A document mandated by the U.N.-sponsored Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Biodiversity Assessment, explicitly refers to Christianity as a faith that has set humans "apart from nature," a process in which nature has "lost its sacred qualities." The document states:

Conversion to Christianity has therefore meant an abandonment of an affinity with the natural world for many forest dwellers, peasants, fishers all over the world...The northeastern hilly states of India bordering China and Myanmar supported small scale, largely autonomous shifting cultivator societies [until the] 1950's. These people followed their own religious traditions that included setting part between 10% and 30% of the landscape as sacred groves and ponds.²

On the other hand, this U.N. document asserts that the eastern religious traditions such as Buddhism and Hinduism "did not depart as drastically from the perspective of humans as members of a community of beings including other living and non-living elements." Thus, the U.N. favors non-Christian religions as faithful stewards of the Earth.

In fact, the key difference between Christianity and these Eastern religions is the role played by Jesus Christ. Christianity holds that there is a gulf between God and man that is breached by Christ. Christianity teaches that man is distant from and radically different than God, and that atonement or mediation is achieved through Christ, who rose from the dead.

By contrast, the philosophy of Gaia holds that nature is God, and that by experiencing or even worshipping nature, humans can attain oneness with God. Some followers of Gaia believe that humans, after death, are reincarnated into non-human forms.

Secret Agenda

This decidedly unscientific, even bizarre, view of the environment appears to be driving U.S. and U.N. environmental policies, including locking up or restricting development on

huge areas of U.S. lands, and making it more expensive to produce or use our natural resources. Science, technology and industrial development are regarded as anathema to the followers of the Gaia philosophy.

Under President Clinton and Vice President Gore, who is recognized as the driving force behind the administration's environmental agenda, the American people have witnessed rather extraordinary actions designed to stop economic development. First, Clinton complied with U.N. demands to cancel a mining project outside Yellowstone Park. The mining complex, which would have produced gold and copper, was planned to operate for 12 years and would have employed approximately 175 individuals on a year-round basis.

Clinton then designated 1.7 million acres of land in southwest Utah as a national monument, placing it off limits to development. This area reportedly contains billions of barrels of oil, minerals and tens of billions of tons of low sulfur clean-burning coal. It could have produced thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in revenue for the state and federal governments.

American "energy independence," once a realistic policy option, looks increasingly like a pipe dream. U.S. Department of Energy figures show U.S. dependence on foreign oil rising from 50 to 80 percent by the year 2010. This makes the U.S. vulnerable to the actions of foreign countries, some of them openly hostile, laying the groundwork for another Persian Gulf-type war.

International trade has been another factor driving up U.S. dependence on foreign oil. It is also a source of the pollution that the environmentalists claim to be concerned about.

In this context, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has been established to assist in the expansion of international trade while James Gustave Speth, administrator of the U.N. Development Program, has endorsed the concept of a World Environmental Organization (WEO) under U.N. auspices to regulate such trade. Speth sees the WTO as a stepping stone to his WEO. Thus, "free trade," conducted under the management of the WTO, will lay the groundwork for the WEO to regulate it for environmental purposes. This is the U.N. plan as Speth sees it. Top U.N. official Maurice Strong reportedly agrees with this scenario.

Climate Change Treaty

With international trade and energy use rising, another U.N. initiative, a global climate change treaty, takes on more urgency. A major U.N. campaign is underway to impose further restrictions on the use of fossil fuels in some industrial countries to fight the "global warming" that is said to result. The U.N. is sponsoring a December meeting in Kyoto, Japan, where a new treaty is expected to be hammered out.

Here, too, a preoccupation with Gaia seems to be driving some of the concern. Dr. Stephen H. Schneider, a climatologist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research, cites the Gaia theory several times in his own book on global warming, asking "...is there a Goddess of the Earth?" He adds, "This is not a fanciful question, but one that has spurred a major debate over what has been called the Gaia hypothesis."

Schneider, whose book included endorsements from then-Senator Al Gore and then-Senator Tim Wirth (now Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs), didn't come to any firm conclusions. However, he argued that even if the planet is a self-regulating organism, as the Gaia concept suggests, this force alone will not be sufficient to immediately negate the impact of humans on the environment and that human activity will, therefore, have to be restrained in some way.³

In other words, the industrial and economic activities of human beings will still have to be controlled for the benefit of Gaia. By whom? The United Nations, working in tandem with federal agencies and commissions.

However, a key problem with the proposed climate change treaty is the decision which has already been made by the Clinton administration to allow so-called developing countries such as Communist China to escape limits on the discharge of the so-called "greenhouse gasses" which are blamed for global warming. Will the U.S. Senate approve such a treaty?

Spiritual Awareness

Membership in what can be termed the Cult of Gaia should be understood in a loose sense because there is no evidence that Gore, Strong and others belong to a formal organization. Moreover, this movement is not a cult in the sense that there is one strong central human figure or leader. But a cult can also suggest the experience of a form of "awakening" which drives a person to have a fanatical devotion to a cause.

William D. Dinges, associate professor of religion and religious education at The Catholic University of America, points out that, in the case of the Heaven's Gate group, it was "composed of people who assume they have some knowledge of something not available to others." They thought they had inside information about the nature of life on Earth and the end of the world.

Those involved in the Cult of Gaia have a similar mentality. They believe in a form of spiritual planetary consciousness. In their minds, it is no less spiritual than the "born-again" experience of some Christians. However, some Christians believe that what followers of Gaia are experiencing is actually a "demonic" spirit.⁴

On the liberal-left side of the political spectrum, devotion or even worship of Gaia is becoming more popular. In their book, *Spiritual Politics*, Corrine McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson write:

*God Imminent, the Divinity within all life, is today becoming more widely recognized in the new spiritual, ecological, and feminist movements that are working to empower the individual, support human rights, and honor the sacredness of the Earth as Gaia, the ancient Mother Goddess.*⁵

In the book, which is endorsed by Noel Brown of the U.N. Environmental Program, McLaughlin and Davidson write about the Meditation Room in U.N. headquarters, describing it as "the focus for the energies of a unified planet and humanity, and for right relations among all kingdoms of life." Critics describe this room as a "pagan temple." However, it is not known for sure if Gaia worship takes place there.

The ties between feminism and ecology have been noted by Russell Chandler, former religion writer for The Los Angeles Times, who explains:

*Nature-based religion, particularly that of the Goddess of Wicca (or "witchcraft") is strong within the New Age strand often referred to as "eco-feminism."*⁶

An example of this trend is Miriam Starhawk, who calls herself "a goddess-worshipping pagan witch"⁷ and has written several popular books which are "credited with influencing thousands of persons to discover their inner power and spirituality and join the Craft [i.e. witchcraft]."⁸ Starhawk has written:

In the United States, the Goddess has been a central image inspiring action both toward women's issues and toward protecting and restoring the Earth...People have hungered for a spirituality that can express their understanding of this Earth as sacred. And, moved by that understanding, spiritual people have hungered to act to prevent the destruction of the Earth.

Thus, in the United States, the Pagan resurgence has strong ties to feminism as well as to the ecology and peace movements, and some ties also with the broad spectrum of human growth and potential movements termed "New Age."⁹

A book published by the respected "Facts on File" organization describes the history of these beliefs:

In Greek mythology, the Mother Earth Goddess, Gaia, or the "Deep-Breasted One," is the oldest of deities. Born from the dark abyss of Chaos, she married her son, Uranus (Ouranos), Father Heaven, and produced the first creatures, the Titans and Cyclops. At the height of her cult, she was served by the pythoness priestess at the Oracle at Delphi. Gradually, she was absorbed by the deities Rhea, probably of Cretan origin, whose name derives from a term for Earth, and Cybele, goddess of caverns.¹⁰

In addition to Greek mythology, Russell Chandler points out that the Gaia concept is grounded in Eastern religions, in which everything is held to be the product of the Great Goddess, "the one whose body is all manifestation."¹¹

Pseudo-Science

As noted by climatologist Stephen Schneider, a so-called scientific theory about Gaia has been offered. Dr. James Lovelock, a British biologist who worked as a consultant to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, articulated a vision of the Earth as an organism regulating itself to produce and sustain life. In a 1970 book, he wrote that, "The climate and the chemical properties of the Earth now and throughout its history seem always to have been optimal for life." Gaia came to represent the entire "biosphere" □ all living and nonliving things on the Earth.

Lovelock believed that humans were a key part of this organism. However, he also believed that humans were abusing the planet environmentally, jeopardizing the organism as a whole, "as though the human race is a cancer."¹² However, one observer notes:

Lovelock says that Gaia, through human technology, has awakened and is aware of herself, and has seen herself through the eyes of space cameras. He suggests that that collective intelligence of humans constitutes a Gaian brain and nervous system that can anticipate environmental changes. The result may be that in the future, nationalism will disappear in the face of the need "to belong to the commonwealth of all creatures which constitute Gaia."¹³

British physicist Peter Russell proposes the emergence of a "new level of evolution, the Gaiafield." Russell, who studied meditation and eastern philosophy in India, authored the book *The Global Brain Awakens*, in which he uses Eastern religious terminology in describing how the universe could evolve "through matter, life consciousness, Gaias, and galaxies to a final reunion in Brahman." In Eastern thought, Brahman is the one reality.

Eventually, Russell says, humanity might evolve "beyond recognition, or perhaps new life-forms would have arisen, taking over humanity's role."¹⁴ The book includes a front

cover endorsement from Ted Turner, who calls it a "much-needed, optimistic perspective on humanity's future."

"GaiaMind" is the name of a project associated with the Light Party, based in California, which maintains that through "global meditation and prayer," people can "align with and expand the powerful initiating energies of The Aquarian Age..." Their literature says:

Imagine people all over the world sharing a moment of meditation and prayer, a moment of unified global consciousness when people from the world's many diverse spiritual traditions simultaneously focus attention on our interconnected relationship with Gaia □ the living Earth.

Flunking the Test

Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis has been debated by elements of the scientific community. A major Gaia conference was sponsored by the American Geophysical Union and attended by prominent researchers in 1988. However, it has not been accepted because it implies the existence of a mind, brain or even spiritual force which is nourishing and sustaining life. Lovelock himself has said that the existence of life proves the existence of this mind. "For this to have happened by chance is as unlikely as to survive unscathed a drive blindfold through rush-hour traffic," he says.¹⁵

However, the notion that man can scientifically understand and somehow safeguard Gaia through environmentally sustainable policies suffered a major setback when the two-year experiment known as the Biosphere 2 Project in Arizona was exposed as a total failure. The failure was apparent by 1993 but the details about what had happened were only disclosed publicly in 1996.

"It was a bold test of the Gaia hypothesis," noted New York Times reporter William J. Broad. The idea was to create a self-regulating system like the Earth. (Earth is supposed to be Biosphere 1). The \$200 million project was an eight-story, glass-and-steel terrarium designed by man. "The would-be Eden became a nightmare, its atmosphere gone sour, its sea acidic, its crops failing, and many of its species dying off. Among the survivors are crazy ants, millions of them," Broad reported.¹⁶

The Other Gaia

Though Lovelock's pseudo-scientific Gaia hypothesis has gotten most of the attention, the truth is that another controversial figure was developing a similar concept about the same time. Tim Zell, leader of the pagan Church of All Worlds, formulated a theology of "deep ecology" that was called Theagenesis. It had to do with "the interconnection of all living things to each other and to Mother Earth, a sentient being in her own right." Zell, who now goes by the name Oberon Zell, describes the "Mother Goddess" as "a living, sentient being with a soul-essence that can be perceived by humans." This idea reportedly came to him when he had a "profound vision" in which "he saw Earth as a single biological organism that has evolved from a single original cell, making all life forms on the planet a 'single vast creature.'" He views natural disasters and plagues as the means by which the planet heals itself.

It is Zell who is credited by at least one expert as the original developer of the Gaia hypothesis. He first called Gaia by the name Terrebia. "Zell's Gaea has been largely ignored by the media in favor of Lovelock's Gaia," states writer Rosemary Ellen Guiley.¹⁷ Why? One possible explanation is that the Gaia concept could never have been sold to the public if it were known that its originator had obvious non-Christian or anti-Christian roots. Cloaking it in scientific terminology gives the notion a certain amount of credibility and makes it acceptable to some.

Interestingly, however, Guiley reports that, after hearing about Lovelock's hypothesis, Zell "corresponded briefly with the scientist and shared some of his 'Theagenesis' material with him. Zell also changed Terrebia to Gaea."

The official "mission" of the Church of All Worlds, the largest of the pagan movements in the U.S., involves mobilizing the force of Gaia or Gaea. The mission is "to evolve a network of information, mythology and experience that provides a context and stimulus for reawakening Gaea, and reuniting her children through tribal community dedicated to responsible stewardship and evolving consciousness."¹⁸ The church has what are called "nests" or "proto-nests" of members in the U.S. and other countries.

Its magazine, *Green Egg*, publishes articles such as "Altars & Ecology," in which readers are advised how to "worship the Earth as the Mother God, Gaia, and profess Her sacred nature..." One altar to Gaia, described in the article, included a recycling bin.¹⁹ Another article, "Sacred Rodents," insists that some of the dirtiest creatures known to man, rats, which are notorious disease-carriers, somehow have sacred qualities. The article states, "In light of their long and fascinating history, unknown even to most Pagans, mice and rats certainly deserve more respect and recognition for the magical and sacred creatures they are."²⁰

Despite its bizarre roots, the Gaia concept is being promoted in various academic disciplines as a way to justify massive changes in the American economic system and the American way of life. Anchor/Doubleday book publishers has released "The Gaia Future Series," whose books include *The Gaia Atlas of Green Economics*. The book, which includes a foreword written by Robert Heilbroner, a former Vice President of the American Economic Association, recommends international monetary reform, such as a global tax or world currency, and says that the United Nations "is potentially the lynchpin [sic] in the new world order that must evolve."

Targeting the Children

The concept is also being promoted in some schools. Education analyst Eric Buehrer, president of Gateways to Better Education, says:

The Gaia theory is another New Age idea that springs up every so often in science curriculum. This is the idea that the Earth is a spiritual entity, that all life on the planet is part of that entity □ like cells in a global brain. For instance, I came across an outdoor activity in which children were taught that trees had spirits we could talk to. At the top of the student worksheet the activity was titled "We are one with nature."²¹

Clearly, the Gaia concept is unscientific and religious in nature. But although adherents of the Gaia philosophy exhibit some of the characteristics of those who join cults, there are certain striking differences.

In contrast to the Heaven's Gate cult, for example, there is no evidence that the Cult of Gaia believes in mass suicide. Instead, they believe there are too many other people in the world. Vice President Gore, Undersecretary of State Timothy Wirth, Ted Turner and Maurice Strong are all vigorous proponents of U.N. population control programs. Indeed, Turner and his wife, Jane Fonda, have served as Goodwill Ambassadors for the U.N. Population Fund.

Asked for comment on the Heaven's Gate suicides, Turner commented, "It's a good way to get rid of a few nuts. There's too many people anyway. We've got too many nuts running around anyway, right?" Turner was widely criticized for this comment, even though his sentiments probably reflected the views of many of his associates.

Gore's Connections

Though presented to the public as a Southern Baptist, Vice President Albert Gore wrote a book entitled *Earth in the Balance*, in which he writes sympathetically about Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis. One chapter is entitled, "Environmentalism of the Spirit." Sounding like a preacher, Gore says the Gaia concept is able to "evoke a spiritual response in many of those who hear it." In this context, he adds that "...the simple fact of the living world and our place on it evokes awe, wonder, a sense of mystery □ a spiritual response □ when one reflects on its deeper meaning."

The Vice President talks about "seeing God in the world" and ourselves, asking, "Why does it feel faintly heretical to a Christian to suppose that God is in us as human beings?" Perhaps this is because Christians are taught that Jesus Christ mediates between God and man.

Although the Christian Bible refers to man being made in the image of God, Gore says that by "experiencing nature in its fullest" we can use our senses and our "spiritual imagination" to glimpse "an infinite image of God" in the world.²² Gore seems to be talking about much more than seeing beauty in nature.

Gore also displays an appreciation for Native American religions, quoting from a speech supposedly delivered by Indian Chief Seattle in which the Earth is called "our Mother."

Moreover, he goes even further back in history, writing sympathetically about cultures that worshipped an Earth goddess and attacking Christianity for eliminating those influences:

The spiritual sense of our place in nature predates Native American cultures; increasingly it can be traced to the origins of human civilization. A growing number of anthropologists and archaeomythologists, such as Marija Gimbutas and Riane Eisler, argued that the prevailing ideology of belief in prehistoric Europe and much of the world was based on the worship of a single Earth goddess, who was assumed to be the font of all life and who radiated harmony among all living things. Much of the evidence for the existence of this primitive religion comes from the many thousands of artifacts uncovered in ceremonial sites. These sites are so widespread that they seem to confirm the notion that a goddess religion was ubiquitous throughout much of the world until the antecedents of today's religions □ most of which still have a distinctly masculine orientation □ swept out of India and the Near East, almost obliterating belief in the goddess. The last vestige of organized goddess worship was eliminated by Christianity as late as the fifteenth century in Lithuania.²³

Both Gore and Timothy Wirth were directly involved with a group called the "Joint Appeal by Religion and Science for the Environment." They met with various religious leaders and scientists in Washington in May of 1992 to formulate a religious plan of action to save the environment. One of them, The Very Reverend James Park Morton, serves as Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, an Episcopal Center which houses an organization called the Gaia Institute. He essentially declared that the purpose of the Christian Church is to worship the creation, not the Creator:

The challenge before the religious community in America is to make every congregation □ every church, synagogue and mosque □ truly "green" □ a center of environmental study and action. That is their religious duty.

Other participants in the Washington event included climatologist Stephen Schneider and U.N. official Maurice Strong.

The Earth Summit

Gore was a participant in and Strong was the secretary-general of the 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, otherwise known as the "Earth Summit," which produced an international document, Agenda 21, calling for "sustainable development." The conference also resulted in creation of a U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development and, in the U.S., a President's Commission on Sustainable Development.

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), established in 1972, commissioned a major collection of articles entitled Ethics & Agenda 21, treating the issue of respect for the environment as a moral and religious concern. One article, "A Theological/Ethical Response to Agenda 21," was written by Sallie McFague, who has lectured on "A Christian Ecological View of Human Beings." Her article called for rejecting the Western model of the Earth in favor of the "ancient organic model" which "can serve to incite the needed change in perspective." She explained:

*The organic model, which is found in cultures and religions in Native American traditions, Goddess religions, and even in Christianity's incarnationism, portrays Earth as a body.*²⁴

The "organic model" is obviously the Gaia concept. McFague's notion of the incarnation of Christ being ecological is truly unique and sounds like a New Age formulation of Christianity that Vice President Gore might embrace.

Like Gore, Maurice Strong shares enthusiasm for the Gaia hypothesis. "Strong has integrated the [Gaia] idea into the political institutions of the world through the UNEP and its affiliated governmental and non-governmental organizations," writes Henry Lamb, a long-time observer of Strong.²⁵ Strong has reportedly said the only thing that might save Earth is a "worldwide spiritual awakening."²⁶

Lamb labels Strong a "mystic" and notes that he and his wife opened a community in Colorado called Baca Grande, a "mecca for mystics," which they hoped would one day become the "Vatican City of the New World Order." One group wanted to build a 46-story, pink granite pyramid on the site in compliance with instructions from an "intergalactic leader named Commander Kuthumi who was channeling from the planet Arturus."²⁷ Channeling refers to an outside force or entity using a person's body to communicate, a practice denounced by Christians as demonic.

Personally, Strong is reported to be an adherent of the Baha'i World Faith which proclaims the unity of all religions.²⁸ At the opening of the Earth Summit, Strong declared:

*..The change in behavior and direction called for here must be rooted in our deepest spiritual, moral and ethical values. We must reinstate in our lives the ethic of love and respect for the Earth which must be accompanied by a revitalization of the values central to all of our principal religious and philosophical traditions...*²⁹

Reflecting Strong's influence, the UNEP established a project to create an "Environmental Sabbath" and get religions involved in a crusade to "save" the environment. One of its work products was the aforementioned Ethics & Agenda 21 document. Formally titled the "North American Environmental Sabbath Planning Committee," this group was composed of the following individuals:

1. Dr. Noel J. Brown, Director, U.N. Environmental Program.
2. Dr. John J. Kirk (Sabbath Coordinator), Director and Professor of Environmental Studies, Montclair State College, Branchville, New Jersey.
3. Pierre Quiblier, Outreach and Liaison Coordinator, U.N. Environmental Program.

4. Donald B. Clark, Executive Secretary, Cornucopia Network of New Jersey, Inc., Nutley, New Jersey.
5. Donald Conroy, S.T.L., PhD., President, North American Coalition on Religion and Ecology, Washington, D.C.
6. Sister Dorothy Farley, O.P. Richmond Hill, New York.
7. Mrs. Joy Finlay (Canadian Coordinator), Sherwood Park, Alta., Canada.
8. Sister Eileen Fitz Maurice, C.N.D., New York, New York.
9. Sister Gloria Garcia, C.S.J., Jamaica, New York.
10. Richard Jordan, Global Futures Network, New York, New York.
11. Dr. Peter Laurence, Executive Director, The Temple of Understanding, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, New York.
12. Margo LaZaro, Peace Awareness Council, New York, New York.
13. Norma U. Levitt, World Union for Progressive Judaism, New York, New York.
14. Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker, Department of Religion, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania,
15. Dr. Ellen Vopicka, Federation of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Dobbs Ferry, New York.

Targeting children, the UNEP distributed "An Environmental Sabbath □ Earth Rest Day Guide" which carried the cover headline "Our Children Their Earth." In a section of the publication recommending games and activities to "save the Earth," junior and high school students were told to:

Gather 'round a beautiful tree. Look, listen and meditate upon it as long as you can. When your attention starts to wander from the tree, raise your hand. You may be surprised to discover how restless your mind is. Discuss with the group why you think this is. Then try again to experience the tree, for only by contemplating with a quiet mind can we fully experience and reverence nature [emphasis added].

Strong is currently directing the U.N. "reform" effort and helping to implement an "Earth Charter," in coordination with former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. The document calls for the protection of "Mother Earth" and urges respect for "each life form," language interpreted to mean recognition of animal rights. Besides his work for the U.N., which earned him the title "Father Earth," Strong served as a member of the board and became president of the Better World Society in 1988. This is an organization started by Ted Turner.

Turner's Record

An outspoken critic of Christianity, Turner has ruled out going to heaven, saying, "Who wants to go to a place that's perfect?" He said it would be "boring."³⁰

He has been quoted as saying that Christianity is a religion "for losers," that he didn't need anyone to die for him, and that the Ten Commandments are "obsolete." In place of the Ten Commandments, Turner unveiled his own ten voluntary initiatives. The first involved loving and respecting the planet Earth and all living things. Two involved support for the United Nations. He told a U.N. radio program in 1986, "Down with nationalism. Up with internationalism."

Maurice Strong became president of Turner's Better World Society during a time when Turner had shed his image as a conservative and was emerging as someone devoted to U.S.-Soviet cooperation, disarmament and various causes embraced by the U.N. His Better World Society produced and distributed a number of films on international themes which aired on Turner's cable channels. One, "A Step Away From War," was so biased that even

the liberal Washington Post labeled it as "baldly propagandistic." The one-sided nature of the films prompted one pro-defense group to ask for equal time.

The Better World Society had also presented a "Population Stabilization Medal" to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, which helped underwrite Communist China's population control program of forced abortions, involuntary sterilization and infanticide.

Other members of the group's board included Dr. Julia J. Henderson, former secretary-general of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and Georgi Arbatov, a Soviet Communist Party official.

On communism itself, Turner was quoted in Fortune magazine in 1986 as saying, "Communism is fine with me. It's part of the fabric of life on this planet." His wife, Jane Fonda, was labeled a traitor for making common cause during the Vietnam War with the Communist enemy killing Americans. But the controversy continued even during the Persian Gulf War, when Turner's CNN was widely criticized for serving as a propaganda vehicle for Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. Personally, Turner has been close to Cuban Communist dictator Fidel Castro and it is no surprise that Turner's CNN was the first American news organization to recently be allowed to open a news bureau in Havana.

Humanist of the Year

Another turning point in his career came in 1990 when he received the "Humanist of the Year Award," given by the American Humanist Association, a so-called non-governmental organization with official U.N. status. Humanism is a controversial philosophy which seeks to eradicate God-centered ideas from human affairs. Over the years, there have been two versions of a so-called "Humanist Manifesto," the second deploring "the division of humankind on nationalistic grounds" and urging the "development of a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government." By the 1990s, Turner confirmed that he had approved a network policy to highlight U.N. conferences and U.N. themes with special programs. These included One Child □ One Voice, warning of environmental disasters; a series called People Count, on population issues; and Our Planetary Police, touting U.N. peacekeeping operations.

Captain Planet

Despite his reference to the Heaven's Gate members as "nuts," Turner's promotion of the Gaia philosophy is equally bizarre. Turner claims personal credit for originating the concept of the Captain Planet and the Planeteers cartoon program, which features a character "Gaia," described as "The spirit of the planet Earth who appears to the Planeteers either in human form or as a holographic image." The form or image is of a woman dressed in long robes, like a Goddess. The voice of the character was provided by actress Whoopi Goldberg.

According to a description of the show, "Gaia, the spirit of Earth, awakens from a 100-year nap to discover the devastating effects people have had on our planet's environment in the 20th century. Fearing for the future, she calls upon five special young people from around the world...to lead the battle against further destruction of the Earth. She gives these Planeteers magic rings that enable each of them to control one element of nature..."

Dr. Devra Lee Davis of the National Research Council commented: "Using cartoons to captivate children about the environment is a terrific idea which will enhance global awareness of this world."

The Planeteers are children from different countries, including Russia, with special powers who summon Captain Planet, a "hero for the Earth," and together battle various "eco-villains." One ad for the show proclaimed Captain Planet as "a role model for millions of kids" and "a hero to almost 250 stations" which carry the program. A "Captain Planet" superhero even makes personal appearances around the country.

In fact, according to Turner Broadcasting publicity materials, the show has reached millions of children with environmental messages on such subjects as "overpopulation," strip mining, the greenhouse effect, "inappropriate development," and "military conversion." One program told children to "urge your parents and friends to support laws like the U.S. Endangered Species Act that support our natural treasures." Several of the villains on the show are businessmen.³¹

Subversion

One of those involved in creating the program was Barbara Y.E. Pyle, who served as environmental editor at Turner's CNN and became Vice President of Environmental Policy for Turner's TBS. Pyle, who was named a "United Nations Global Laureate," once described her mission in the media by saying, "I do have an axe to grind...I want to be the little subversive person in television."³² Another Turner program, Voice of the Planet, also featured Gaia as a character. In this program, actress Faye Dunaway provided the voice of Gaia, speaking through a computer. The main setting of the program was a Tibetan Buddhist monastery. One piece of promotional material for the program featured "thoughts from Gaia," such as:

You think Hiroshima was bad. I'm sometimes afraid it wasn't bad enough. Overpopulation? No real problem. The more corpses, the more bacteria. The more bacteria, the more blooming begonias. I love begonias. Most of the technology that you think distinguishes you, I find quite trivial. Though, I must confess a soft spot for spaceships. The Black Plague was my way of housecleaning. I love the live-action adventures of volcanoes and Earthquakes.

Promotional material for the program said:

Voice of the Planet also is an environmental project, seeking to raise the consciousness of the inhabitants of this incredible planet. The Earth has always loved and nurtured life, only to witness war, turmoil, overpopulation and abuse. Gaia, with the wisdom of all the ages, is saying that the time has come to change our ways.

How might we be forced to "change our ways?" Philip Shabecoff, the former chief environmental correspondent for the New York Times, has written a book, A New Name for Peace, in which he calls on people in the "rich industrial countries" like the U.S. to start leading a "more reasonable life" to free resources for use by others. "Were we able to do that, we could be on the way to achieving Pax Gaia, the Peace of the Earth," he writes.³³

Commenting on the Shabecoff book, the New York Times Book Review said it:

Advances the notion dangled before us, then seemingly ignored, by Al Gore, who said that environmentalism must soon become "the central organizing principle of civilization." Mr. Gore should read this book.

Perhaps he has by now.



Footnotes



- 1.** Alston Chase, "Prophets for the temple of green," *The Washington Times*, January 26, 1996, A 16.
- 2.** Global Biodiversity Assessment, Chapter 8.1 Introduction: Concepts of the Economic Value of Biodiversity, 68,69.
- 3.** Stephen H. Schneider, *Global Warming. Are We Entering the Greenhouse Century?* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1989), 76.
- 4.** see Samantha Smith, *Goddess Earth* (Lafayette, Louisiana: Huntington House Publishers, 1994), 31.
- 5.** Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson, *Spiritual Politics. Changing the World From the Inside Out* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994), 162.
- 6.** Russell Chandler, *Understanding the New Age* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1991), 114.
- 7.** *Ibid.*, Smith, 80.
- 8.** Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft* (New York: Facts on File, 1989), 326.
- 9.** As quoted in the forward to *Rainbow Nation Without Borders. Toward an Ecotopian Millennium* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Bear & Company Publishing, 1991), xvii.
- 10.** *Ibid.*, Guiley, 131.
- 11.** *Ibid.*, Chandler, 114.
- 12.** Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *Harper's Encyclopedia of Mystical & Paranormal Experience* (Edison, New Jersey: Castle Books, 1991), 449.
- 13.** *Ibid.*
- 14.** Peter Russell, *The Global Brain Awakens. Our Next Evolutionary Leap* (Palo Alto, California: Global Brain Inc., 1995), 321.
- 15.** "No Longer Willful, Gaia Becomes Respectable," *Research News*, April 22, 1988, 393.
- 16.** William J. Broad, "Paradise Lost: Biosphere Retooled as Atmospheric Nightmare," *The New York Times*, November 19, 1996, B5.
- 17.** *Ibid.*, Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, 64.
- 18.** *From Green Egg*, the official Journal of the Church of All Worlds, Vol. 29, No. 119, May/June 1997.
- 19.** Francesca Dubie, "Altars & Ecology," *Green Egg*, May/June 1996, 7.
- 20.** Melissa Pinol, "Sacred Rodents," *Green Egg*, Vol. 29, No. 118, 1997, 37.
- 21.** Interview with Eric Buehrer conducted by Dr. D. James Kennedy, reprinted in *AFA Journal*, April 1997, 18.
- 22.** Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance. Ecology and the Human Spirit* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992), 265.
- 23.** *Ibid.*, 260.
- 24.** Sallie McFague, "A Theological/Ethical Response to Agenda 21," *Ethics & Agenda 21*, United Nations Environmental Program, 1994), 109-112.
- 25.** Henry Lamb, "Meet Maurice Strong," *eco-logic*, (November/December 1995), 5.
- 26.** *Ibid.*
- 27.** *Ibid.*
- 28.** see Michael S. Coffman, *Saviors of the Earth?* (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 1994), 197.
- 29.** Quoted on back cover of *Ethics & Agenda 21. Moral Implications of a Global Consensus*, United Nations Environment Programme, 1994.
- 30.** Cliff Kincaid, "Turner Claims He'd Prefer Hell," *Focus on the Media* column, *Human Events*, November 11, 1994, 16.
- 31.** "Force-Feeding Greens to Children," *MediaNomics*, Free Enterprise & Media Institute, January 1994, 1.
- 32.** As quoted in *Notable Quotables*, from *MediaWatch*, Media Research Center, June

25, 1990.

33. Philip Shabecoff, *A New Name for Peace. Internationalism, Environmentalism, Sustainable Development and Democracy* (Hanover: University Press of New England)