

Global Warming: Religion, not Science



Following on from our June 3, 2007, edition of REAL NEWSpaper, focusing Global Warming as a religion, John Brignell agrees that global warming has become the new religious dogma of the 21st century. High priest Al Gore asks to accept a "scientific truth", in which not doubt is allowed; faith is all important. Resistance is beginning to lead to social exclusion, like the medieval heretics.

It was Michael Crichton who first prominently identified environmentalism as a religion. That was in a speech in 2003, but the world has moved on apace since then and adherents of the creed now have a firm grip on the world at large.

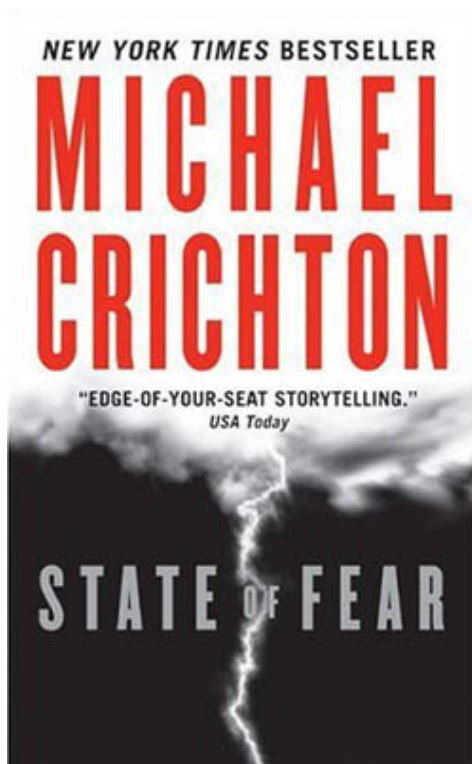
Global Warming has become the core belief in a new eco-theology. The term is used as shorthand for anthropogenic (or manmade) global warming. It is closely related to other modern belief systems, such as political correctness, chemophobia and various other forms of scaremongering, but it represents the vanguard in the assault on scientific man.

The activists now prefer to call it "climate change". This gives them two advantages: It allows them to seize as "evidence" the inevitable occurrences of unusually cold weather as well as warm

ones. The climate is always changing, so they must be right.

Only the relatively elderly can remember the cynical haste with which the scaremongers dropped the "coming ice age" and embraced exactly the opposite prediction, but aimed at the same culprit - industry. This was in Britain, which was the cradle of the new belief and was a response to the derision resulting from the searing summer of 1976. The father of the new religion was Sir Crispin Tickell, and because he had the ear of Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, who was engaged in a battle with the coal miners and the oil sheiks, it was introduced into international politics with the authority of the only major political leader holding a qualification in science. The introduction was timely yet ironic since, in the wake of the world's political upheavals, a powerful new grouping of left-wing interests was coalescing around environmental issues. The result was a new form of godless religion. The global warming cult has the characteristics of religion and not science for the following reasons.

Faith and scepticism



Faith is a belief held without evidence. The scientific method, a loose collection of procedures of great variety, is based on precisely the opposite concept, as famously declared by Thomas Henry Huxley: "The improver of natural knowledge absolutely refuses to acknowledge authority, as such. For him, scepticism is the highest of duties; blind faith the one unpardonable sin."

Huxley was one of a long tradition of British sceptical philosophers. From the Bacons, through the

likes of Locke, Hume and Russell, to the magnificent climax of Popper's statement of the principle of falsifiability, the scientific method was painfully established, only to be abandoned in a few short decades. It is one of the great ironies of modern history that the nation that was the cradle of the scientific method came to lead the process of its abandonment. The great difference, then, is that religion demands belief, while science requires disbelief. There is a great variety of faiths. Atheism is just as much a faith as theism. There is no evidence either way. There is no fundamental clash between faith and science - they do not intersect. The difficulties arise, however, when one pretends to be the other.

The Royal Society, as a major part of the flowering of the tradition, was founded on the basis of scepticism. Its motto "On the word of no one" was a stout affirmation. Now suddenly, following their successful coup, the Greens have changed this motto of centuries to one that manages to be both banal and sinister - "Respect the facts." When people start talking about "the facts" it is time to start looking for the fictions. Real science does not talk about facts; it talks about observations, which might turn out to be inaccurate or even irrelevant.

The global warmers like to use the name of science, but they do not like its methods. They promote slogans such a "The science is settled" when real scientists know that science is never settled. They were not, however, always so wise. In 1900, for example, the great Lord Kelvin famously stated, "There is nothing new to be discovered in physics now. All that remains is more and more precise measurement." Within a few years classical physics was shattered by Einstein and his contemporaries. Since then, in science, the debate is never closed.

The world might (or might not) have warmed by a fraction of a degree. This might (or might not) be all (or in part) due to the activities of mankind. It all depends on the quality of observations and the validity of various hypotheses. Science is at ease with this situation. It accepts various theories, such as gravitation or evolution, as the least bad available and of the most practical use, but it does not believe. Religion is different.

Sin and absolution

It is in the nature of religion to be authoritarian and proscriptive. Essential to this is the concept of sin - a transgression in thought or deed of theological principles.

Original sin in the older religions derived from one of the founts of life on earth - sex. The new religion goes even further back to the very basis of all life - carbon. Perhaps the fundamental human fear is fear of life itself. The amazing propensity of carbon to form compounds of unlimited complexity made the existence of life possible, while its dioxide is the primary foodstuff, the very start of the food chain. Every item of nutriment you consume started out as atmospheric carbon dioxide. It is therefore the ideal candidate for original sin, since no one can escape dependence on it. This manna that gave us life is now regularly branded in media headlines as "pollution" and "toxic": surely one of the most perverse dysphemisms in the history of language.

The corrective to sin in religion is absolution, and the power of most religions comes from their claim to have the monopoly on absolution. So it is with the new godless religion. Furthermore, it is

in the nature of religion to create false markets. In the time of Chaucer the Pardoner sold papal indulgences, which freed the prosperous from the consequences of sin. Likewise, the new pardoners sell carbon offsets. As in so much of both ancient and modern society these activities divert effort from wealth creation and so act as a drag on the economy. They also grant to the rich a comfort that is not available to the poor - a sure road to success.

Proselytes and evangelists, Demagogues and hypocrites



Most religions seek to grow by means of proselytism. Science does not seek or need converts. It teaches those that are willing to learn, but it does not impose itself on those who are indifferent. Religions (at least those that are successful) have a different imperative. A growing cohort of believers reinforces the beliefs of existing adherents and participating in the quest for converts helps assuage the inevitable doubts they might harbour. Successful religions are structured to encompass this expansionary mechanism. Those who can recruit others to the cause are therefore held in high regard.

Demagoguery is also, therefore, a feature of religion. Some people have the capacity to hold the masses in their thrall. It is a mysterious art, as their skills of oratory do not often stand up to any sort of critical examination. They are idols of the moment, who often turn out to have feet of clay, as so frequently seems to happen with charismatic TV preachers.

One of the most notorious demagogues of the godless religion is Al Gore. He is certainly no great orator, but he makes up for it with chutzpah. His disregard for truth is exemplified by his characteristic and ubiquitous pose in front of a satellite photograph of hurricane Katrina. Even some of the most vehement climate "scientists" refrain from connecting that particular isolated and monstrously tragic event with global warming. Likewise his Old Testament style prophecies of further disasters, such as floods due to a rise in sea level, greatly exceed the more modest claims of

the "professionals". As in the overthrow of the cities of the plain and other biblical prophecies, Gore promises a rain of fire and brimstone on us, unless we change our ways.

Gore also displays all the characteristics of the classical religious hypocrite. He disregards his own proscriptions with abandonment and ostentation. By his own measure (carbon footprint) his sins are great; at least twenty times those of the average American. It is all right though, because he purchases absolution (carbon offsets) through his own company. As he is a private individual it is not known whether he profits directly, but at a minimum he does not pay out of his taxable income and, worst of all, he demonstrates that the rich are immune from any of the actual privations that attachment to the new religion visits upon its poorer adherents. This is also not unknown in traditional religions and has been a source of material for satirists throughout the centuries.

Infidels and apostates

Religions vary in their treatment of unbelievers, which ranges from disregard to slaughter. The new religion relies at present on verbal assault and character assassination, though there are those who would go further. They call the infidels "deniers" - a cheap and quite despicable verbal reference to the Holocaust. There is a sustained campaign to deny the deniers any sort of public platform for their views.

Apostates are universally even more reviled than infidels. They have turned their backs on the true faith, whichever that might happen to be. Partial apostates, or heretics, are even more loathed and through the ages have been subjected to the most appalling punishments and deaths. In the case of the "sceptical environmentalist", Bjorn Lomborg, he is of the faith. In fact he is a serial believer; accepting, for example, that eating celery causes two percent of all cancers and, of course, that global warming is manmade, but he rejects the sacrificing of humanity to the belief. This is unacceptable! What are a few million deaths from dirty water, mosquito bites and other hazards so long as people can be made to conform? So far he has only been assaulted with insults and custard pies. Patrick Moore, a founder of Greenpeace, broke with the movement over its growing anti-human, anti-scientific tendencies and drift into extremism. The last straw for him was the campaign against chlorine, not only an essential component of human life but also the basis of one of the most dramatically life-saving hygienic interventions. He has, consequently, been subjected to a prolonged campaign of vilification, described as an eco-Judas, turncoat and traitor. Every minor commentator or blogger who manifests disbelief can expect to be the target of abuse from self-appointed protectors of the creed.

Sacrifice and ritual



It is part of human nature that we do not like to admit making a mistake, even to ourselves. So if, for example, we buy a magic device that by some mysterious means improves the fuel efficiency of our car, we drive a little more conservatively in order to prove that we have not been had. Religions exploit this weakness as a means creating and reinforcing commitment. If someone can be induced or coerced into making a sacrifice they then have a stake in the cause.

Windmills, for example, are the symbols of power, not physical power (of which they are derisively short) but political and religious power. They are like the great domes of temples, the statues of Saddam or the big "M" arch of MacDonal'd's. Windmills are ugly: they destroy the visual (and aural) landscape, but that is their purpose. They are part of the sacrifice. It would not be so bad if they were simply useless, but it is worse than that. Conventional generating systems of equivalent power have to operate for 80% of the time, while the wind is blowing too soft or too hard, and then be switched to warm standby when it is just right, an expensive and wasteful process. Windmills are there to remind us of our commitment, willing or not, to the cause, both in excessive taxation and loss of visual and aural amenity.

As in other forms of mental conditioning, continued reinforcement is a necessary part of the process and that is where ritual comes in. Ritual comprises tiny sacrifices infinitely repeated. Going round the house switching off standby lights performs the same function as the repetitive chanting of mantras. The fact that it is pointless is the whole point.

One of the most valuable ideas of modern engineering, lost in the noise, has been lost in the noise. In most applications a change of, say, one part in ten thousand is too small to be measured and therefore not worthy of concern. If standby in domestic devices ever were a problem, it is now a rapidly diminishing one. In the old days of thermionic devices (valves or tubes) it was necessary to keep cathodes heated to avoid a prolonged warming up period, but transistors and LCDs do not have cathodes and are therefore instantly available. Present standby powers are about five watts. In the temperate zone that is transferred from your central heating bill for half the year, though it is barely enough to keep your big toe warm. In fact, it would be relatively easy to make the standby power microwatts, just enough to power an optical sensor and decoder, though until now nobody thought such a pointless exercise necessary.

Prophecy and divination

In the real world attempts at prophecy always come to a bad end. Only in religious texts and the currently popular fantasy fiction do prophecies come true. H G Wells, in "The shape of things to come", successfully predicted the mechanised War, as did Winston Churchill, but little else, and the film that Wells closely supervised now provides rather comic entertainment (but wonderful music). Even those of us closely involved in electronics did not foresee that a development of the ancient art of writing on stone, lithography, would result in millions of transistors being available on one chip, changing the world forever, including granting new and sinister means of control to those in authority.

Likewise, divination was greatly regarded in all cultures, ancient and modern. Stars were observed, chickens and other animals slaughtered, so that their steaming entrails could be examined to predict the future, cards were shuffled and crystal balls peered into. Comparatively recently the leader of the most powerful nation on earth relied on the advice of astrologers. Now divination has returned with, for example, the examination of the entrails of ancient trees. Though the methods used are invalid (they wrongly assume linearity) and have been comprehensively shown to be irreproducible and misleading, the results have been paraded before the world in defence of draconian sacrificial policies.

The main form of modern divination, however, is computer models. Forty odd years ago an instruction passed round the Faculty of Engineering of the University of London that no PhDs were to be awarded on the basis of computer models unsupported by measurement. As T S Eliot asked in "Choruses from The Rock": "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

Now, huge and generously funded university and government departments do nothing but develop computer models, involving assumptions about physical interactions that are still not understood by science. Their dubious (to say the least) results are used by the new international priesthood to frighten the people into conformity.

Puritans and killjoys



No one has bettered Mencken's definition of Puritanism - the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy. It is an unfortunate characteristic of many varieties of religion that this characteristic is to the fore and Global Warming is far from being an exception. Nothing the proponents offer involves an improvement or even maintenance of human contentment, quite the opposite in fact. You might think that any philosophy of life would involve swings and roundabouts, good and bad, but think again. Virtually everything you enjoy is now sinful - holidays, driving your car, having a comfortable temperature in your home, being free from the stink of rotting garbage, and on and on.

As with the flagellants of old, for some people a feeling of self-righteousness not only transcends all discomforts, but derives from them. The rest of us have to be coerced into conformity.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that there are people who get their kicks out of pushing other people around. The existence of little pleasures of life, such as savouring a fine wine or cigar (and even more so the proletarian equivalents) is intolerable to them. They will exploit any means - the distortion of science, the suborning of weak politicians, the repetition of mendacious propaganda - to achieve the elimination of the hated practices. The eleventh commandment for the killjoys is "Thou shalt not have fun", and global warming provides a delightful playground for them.

Censorship and angles

Freedom of speech and publication is at the very heart of science. Even the most foolish of hypotheses is allowed to be offered for examination. In much of religion the opposite is true; challenging the established dogma is heresy, for which the punishment has ranged from ostracism to horrific torture and death. One of the greatest ironies produced by the successful policy of entryism by the eco-theologians is that it is none other than the Royal Society that has been orchestrating the attempt to censor any deviation from establishment beliefs. Authoritarian politicians, such as Congressman Brad Miller, would give such suppression the force of law.

It is a curious repetition of history that those who advance the hypothesis that the sun is the controlling element in changes of climate are vilified, just as Galileo was, for supporting the Copernican heliocentric description of the solar system. Yet the sun is clearly the driver for climate - if it stopped shining, the earth's temperature would drop to near absolute zero. In the establishment dogma the sun is barely mentioned, while the puny efforts of mankind are gratuitously magnified out of proportion. In a scientific approach to climate, a full understanding of the behaviour of that solitary driver would be the first prerequisite, but this is waived in the interests of piety; so leading solar researchers have been deprived of funding.

One of the most exploited ways of angling the news is by "ratchet reporting". News of unusual warm weather, for example, is given copious coverage, while cold weather is studiously ignored. Thus the spring of 2007 was disastrously cold in parts of North America, with ice-bound ships and snowed-off baseball, but this was kept secret from the British, whose wonderful summery April was presented as though it were bad news (and that in the land of rheumatism and bronchitis!). The fact that Britain had no spring at all in 2006 was conveniently forgotten, except as a basis of comparison to establish that 2007 was substantially warmer.

That the media know that they are peddling untruths is demonstrated by the tricks they get up to. If they were confident of the truth of their case there would be no need to fake the coverage. They have been frequently caught out faking their numbers and graphs, but only a few internet surfers know about it. If you think you have a good case, you can afford to present both sides, but they don't. The great majority of the population have no idea that there is an alternative view. That is not science, it is religion.

Control and taxation

Religion has always played an important part in the imposition of authority. For many centuries it took the form of the "Divine Right of Kings" or the "Mandate of Heaven". Once you get the people to believe, you can get away with almost any imposition. The alliance between the shaman and the legislator has long been the very foundation of authoritarianism. Even when the dogma is a godless one, such as Marxism, it is imposed with religious fervour, for that is the way to induce conformity.

People now accept laws that restrict their liberty and standard of living, which would once have provoked riots, because they are cloaked in a quasi-religious formula of environmentalism. So-called environmental burdens, for example, now greatly outweigh the incremental effect of the poll tax that met with such violent opposition in England, yet are now meekly accepted, as is the parasitic presence of various forms of snooper, who even invade people's dustbins.

Contradictions and irrationality



Traditional religions not only tolerated contradiction and irrationality, they embrace them as part of the mystique. Words and phrases are repeated ad nauseam and in strange contexts, until they lose all meaning and become self-preserving mantras.

Contradictions and irrationality also abound in the modern theocratic world. The EU, for example, gratuitously destroys a tiny industry making traditional barometers, on the grounds of an irrational fear of mercury, then imposes the use of fluorescent light bulbs that distribute that same dreaded substance in huge quantities across the continent, all on the basis of the threat of global warming.

People who have never heard of Wien or Planck confidently assert that it is "obvious" that man-made CO₂ will cause runaway warming of the planet, when it is not at all obvious to many who are familiar with the works of those gentlemen. It is obvious in the sense that it is obvious that believers will have everlasting life or that a senseless act of self-immolation will earn the eternal attentions of 72 virgins in Paradise. The capacity to believe six impossible things before breakfast has been restored from fantasy to accepted normality.

Wealth and power

Some organisms develop the ingredients to survive and multiply, so it is with business and religions. It is characteristic of businesses that they dispose of the entrepreneurs who create them and are taken over by a different breed of corporate manager: so it is with religions. The brutally suppressed troglodytes who were the early Christians of Rome were a different breed from the cardinals, bishops and abbots who bestrode mediaeval Europe and lived the opulent life. There were also, of course, the humble and saintly mendicant friars. The equivalents of all these varieties

exist within the new movement.

Money is the basis of the new religion. It poured in from various foundations (the so-called ketchup money) and naïve donors. The activists found that they had to maintain and innovate their product (anxiety) to keep the income rising, so they had to keep increasing the imaginary threats both in intensity and number. With money came power. In Britain, the political parties are all effectively bankrupt, so the temptation to hang onto the coattails of a movement with so much momentum was irresistible. Even the Conservative Party submitted to a coup that was totally alien to everything it had ever believed in.

The other route to power was the Trotskyite method of entryism. Once one adherent to the cause obtained a position of authority he could recruit others of a like mind. One by one the bastions of the media, and even science itself, fell to the intruders. A new breed of environmental editors achieved a monopoly of reporting in those areas that coincided with their beliefs. With powerful media organisations behind them they then also had the protection of the law to intimidate their adversaries. Opposition to the movement was largely confined to the internet and a few determined individuals in remote institutions, such as the emasculated rump of the British House of Lords.

With power comes patronage. At its best this has produced great architecture and art. At its worst it produces vast acres of ugly, worse than useless windmills and rigidly controlled research. What passed as scientific research a quarter of a century ago now barely exists. To get funding, your project has to conform to one of the mantra descriptions, such as "sustainable development". Doubters are afraid to speak out. Their institutions are dependent on millions in grants at the disposal of green officials to obtain "appropriate" results relevant to global warming and related scares. When your institution is involved in a fight for survival, you do not rock the boat.

The lavishness of the tax-funded, aviation-fuelled, international junkets enjoyed by the global warming priesthood, contrasted with the frugal gatherings of their relatively impotent scientific opponents, is the very stuff of mediaeval satire. Just as Rabelais had to go into hiding from the anger of the priesthood of his time, so critics of the new religion are largely confined to the interstices of the internet. As ever, wealth and power determine the ability to propagate one's views. It might be some small compensation for members of the resistance, cowering in the electronic maquis, that history remembers the name of Rabelais, while his persecutors are forgotten.

Confession and salvation



One of the last bastions of science to fall was the British Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Science and Manufacture. It has a Chief Executive who was formerly one of the most powerful green civil servants. It now offers its fellows the opportunity to make public confession of their sins in the form of their "carbon footprint". They even have a programme of "Carbon Control" directed at seven to fourteen year olds, urging them to take control of their carbon emissions. Young children now have nightmares about the burning planet, just as some of us once had nightmares about burning in hell unless we believed, and then lay awake at night wondering whether we believed or not, or what "believe" actually means. The ruthless exploitation of the receptivity of the young, and their relentless indoctrination, is one of the less pleasant characteristics of much of religion. As the Jesuits say "Give me a child until he is seven and I will give you the man."

Hell-fire is the stick and salvation is the carrot. Perhaps the best you can say about the new religion is that the object of salvation is "the planet" and not just oneself. It is also the worst you can say; for it is essentially inhuman; which is what inflames heretics like Lomborg. Science, of course is also inhuman. Science though, unlike religion, does not seek to dictate policy. It can provide information for policy-makers, such as "If you do this, millions of Africans are likely to die" but it does not say "You must, or must not, do this." Religion, depending upon its particular variety, will say "They must be saved" or, while not so indelicate as to put it into words, "Let them die." One of the most offensive manifestations of the new religion occurred when hundreds of the priesthood went on one of their lavish junkets in Africa, where all around them was suffering and death.

Envoi

The human spirit is sick. It soared during the enlightenment of the eighteenth century. It flowered during the nineteenth. It beat off the tyrants of the twentieth century. Now, at an alarming rate, it is surrendering its freedoms to a concocted religion based on fraudulent science. Of course, it is not only science that has suffered in the overwhelming cultural downturn. The great artistic tradition has given way to displays of dead animals and soiled beds. In much of what passes for literature

and drama, the expletives remain while the loftier aspirations of humanity are deleted. Entertainment is debased by displays of banality, cruelty and vacuous, groundless celebrity. It was science, however, that gave us lives of a length, comfort and healthiness that were unthought-of, even within human memory; a gift that is cold-bloodedly, but covertly, being denied to millions in poorer parts of the world. Extremists of the new religion regard humanity as an inconvenience or a pestilence that can be disposed of (not including themselves, of course).

Above all, science represented the triumph of humanity over the primitive superstitions that haunted our ancestors, a creation of pure reason, a monument to that evolutionary (or, if you prefer, God-given) miracle of the human brain. It is too valuable just to be tossed away like a used tissue. But who will speak for science when the barbarian is already inside the gate?

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