

THE ASCENDANCY OF THE “ANTI-TRADITION”

THE APPEAL OF THE URI and its New Age, globalist, utopian allies is based on some inescapable truths. Killing in the name of God is an abomination. Badly managed economic growth has harmed the natural environment. As globalization spreads, so does poverty. Many people and institutions have placed love of money and power above love of God and neighbor. The established religions are gravely tainted by hypocrisy, bigotry, and violence among their adherents and their leaders. People seek connection to God—and if this is not offered in the churches, they will justifiably go elsewhere.

These elements of truth in the URI’s critique of the present world order may draw a wider audience for the more radical aspects of the agenda of the URI and its allies. This would fit the usual pattern of temptation; a mixture of lies and truth is likely to ensnare more people than a message that has no prima facie appeal or plausibility. So it has been from the beginning. It was not a rotten, worm-eaten fruit that the serpent offered to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Instead, “when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.” (Gen. 3:6)

For many people, the activities and beliefs of the United Religions Initiative and their globalist, New Age allies are too bizarre to take seriously. Many secular and religious opinion makers and activists, people who instinctively reject the notion of building a utopian New World Order, take for granted that these visionary groups will remain a playground for cranks with too much time and money on their hands.

Such a view is excessively optimistic. With war, terrorism, and economic instability, we are in dangerous times; social and military disasters with global effects can occur anywhere with no warning. Traditional societies and traditional beliefs have been undermined everywhere over the last two centuries. The Enlightenment and other corrosive modern philosophies, the Industrial Revolution, the wars and ideologies of the 20th Century, and globalization (from the colonialism of the 19th century to the “free trade” imperialism of the 21st century) have done their work, cutting people adrift from the faith, family, and community that might once have sustained them and kept them sane during a crisis. As a result, the whole world is vulnerable to being destabilized via cataclysm. After one upheaval—or a series of them, in quick succession—the world’s people, and their leaders, may turn to solutions that they would never have accepted before the crisis.

As the French metaphysician René Guénon said in 1945, “The world has even now reached a point where the security of ‘ordinary life,’ on which the whole outward organization of the modern world has rested up till now, runs serious risks of being troubled by unanticipated ‘interferences.’”¹

There is no lack of groups ready and willing to exploit such “interferences,” should they arise. URI supporter Dee Hock warned in 2002:

1. René Guénon, *The Reign of Quantity & The Signs of The Times*, orig. ed. 1945, reissued by Sophia Perennis et Universalis, 1995, p132.

I think we’re on the knife’s edge where we’re going to undergo cataclysmic institutional failure. . . . I think if we do experience massive institutional failure, the first thing that will emerge, before we see the new forms, is almost total centralization of power and control, which will result in a widespread loss of liberty and freedom. That will last for a while, but it ultimately will not work, much like the Soviet Union. And when *that* collapses, then we’re in for a second period of social carnage that will be unbelievable. [The interviewer asked: “So you’re talking about a double cataclysm?”] Yes. And out of that, right from the ashes, may emerge the new forms of organization.¹

The world’s foundations tremble—and some of our religious and political leaders appear to be ready to give the old structure a push in order to foster their own anti-traditional agendas. Bishop Swing, Mikhail Gorbachev, Tony Blair, and President Bush’s National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice seem to share a view of how rapid social change happens: via a dramatic event that shapes a new consensus of what is possible and desirable. Groups and agencies that act as “the catalyst and an accelerator of this process”² (in Gorbachev’s words) can build this new consensus, creating a New World Order from the rubble of the old regime. Ervin Laszlo, a prominent New Age author and activist, says that changing the world is “no longer utopian for the world is highly unstable and hence changeable, moreover the momentum for change is growing. The task before us is to reinforce the momentum and inform it so that it will head in a positive direction.”³

In the view of Bishop Swing—who identifies himself as a Republican⁴—chaos is an essential part of creation; it was so at the beginning, and remains so as we approach “a new creation,” a “new order.” In 2004, he wrote:

In the first words of the Bible we read where the Spirit brooded over the chaos. . . . Chaos is the necessary ingredient that prompts the Creator’s Spirit to be inventive. High praise for chaos. If Creation is an ongoing phenomenon and if chaos is a necessary ingredient beckoning to the Spirit, then we must be living on the edge of the Spirit’s Pentecostal blast. Our world has more than enough of chaos. Surely the Spirit cannot be far behind. A new creation must be just ahead.⁵

He added, “In Eden the Spirit showed us delights and limitations. In Gethsemane the Spirit showed us restoration and the vast inclusive nature of the worldwide family of gardeners. Perhaps in the chaos of our own deaths and frightening uncertainties, the Spirit will bring us to a new order, for which at present we have no language or metaphors.”⁶ He got this right, at least: the New World Order, if it comes, will beggar description.

The Bible, however, testifies against Swing’s ode to creative chaos. Through the prophet Isaiah, the LORD said, “For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a chaos, he formed it to be inhabited!): ‘I am the LORD, and there is no other. I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ‘Seek me in chaos.’ I the LORD speak the truth, I declare what is right.” (Is. 45:18–19).⁷

1. Dee Hock, “Transformation By Design,” interview by Melissa Hoffman, *What Is Enlightenment?* magazine, Fall/Winter 2002, p139.

2. Green Cross International, “The Hague Speech by Mikhail Gorbachev,” the Hague, 24 May 1993, “Extracts,” <http://www.greencrossinternational.net/GreenCrossFamily/gorby/hague.html>, printed 05/13/03 (cited below as Gorbachev, Hague speech, 05/24/93).

3. Ervin Laszlo, *You Can Change the World: Action Handbook for the 21st Century*, Positive News Publishing, Ltd., 2002, p6.

4. Bob Williams, “Swing marks 25th year as Bay Area bishop (Daybook),” *Episcopal News Service* interview of Bishop Swing, August 9, 2004, http://ecusa.anglican.org/3577_48087_ENG_HTML.htm, printed 08/10/04.

5. Bishop William Swing, “The Holy Spirit and Two Creations, or Maybe Three,” *Pacific Church News*, Summer 2004, p5.

6. *Ibid.*, p6.

7. The parenthetical parts of these verses are as given in the Revised Standard Version translation.

One part of the New World Order would be a New Religious Order. Bishop Swing stated in 1998 that “The United Religions Initiative will be inevitable when the world has run out of options. When it is clear that the missing ingredient in authentic diplomacy is religion. . . . The only reason there would ever be a United Religions is that the stark world demands it. The time of that demand is getting close.”¹ Swing did not say what event would evoke the “demand,” why he suspected that “the time of that demand is getting close,” who will make the “demand,” or how it will be enforced. In the fall of 2001, Bishop Swing said the same to the International Diplomacy Council: “We will change world history, because the world is going to get impatient with religion;” the world will want religion “to get your act together and make peace in the world.”² (The occasion for the speech was that the International Diplomacy Council, a group with close ties to the US State Department, had given Swing an award for promoting international understanding; President George W. Bush had sent Swing a letter praising him and the work of the URI.)³

In its 2003 Annual Report, the URI boasted of its growing international influence: “URI’s successful grassroots engagement and its role as a catalyst for positive change is having an impact around the world and is engaging experts in Organizational Development, Conflict Transformation and International Relations—from the United Nations, NGOs and the international interfaith movement.”⁴ Like other proponents of the New World Order, the URI sees itself as a “catalyst for positive change.”

Another part of the New World Order would be a New Economy, with the social order reconstructed to solve the ecological crisis. In 1993, Mikhail Gorbachev said, “the process of change is proceeding very slowly and from the standpoint of the global ecological situation it is proceeding too slowly. The Green Cross International must become the catalyst and an accelerator of this process.”⁵ The former ruler of the Soviet Union proposed a strategy of social change by pressure on the status quo from above and from below:

any change in society is the result of the interaction of changes from above and from below. Changes from above are effected by leaders, by parliaments, by those who make decisions and approve laws and rules, who develop and define priorities and adopt budgets. The second category of changes are those implemented by ordinary citizens, social movements in the various parties, philosophers, by all those who accept and develop new ideas, by those who protest and those who defend their dreams, their visions. These changes are not always visible, but through interaction of human beings, through personal contacts and direct influence they transform the spiritual climate. The two lines of change are interrelated. They reinforce each other. The ideas coming from the bottom up must be accepted by the authorities above, but the decisions taken above cannot succeed without support from below. If from this standpoint you look at the ecological situation it becomes apparent that many things must happen along both of those lines of change and particularly in terms of their interaction. Helping to bring about this interaction is what the Green Cross International is going to do.⁶

As Gorbachev has proposed, many have acted. One of Gorbachev’s allies, Maurice Strong’s Earth Council, has proposed “a number of international campaigns and innovative catalytic programs,”

1. Bishop William Swing, “Unthinkable to Thinkable to Do-able to Inevitable,” address to the World Congress of Faiths, July 22 1998, reprinted in *A Swing with a Crosier*, Episcopal Diocese of California, 1999, p150.

2. Dennis Delman, “Bishop Swing Given International Diplomacy Council Award,” *Pacific Church News*, Winter 2002, p46.

3. International Diplomacy Council (IDC), letter from President Bush, November 6, 2002, <http://www.diplomacy.org/idc1140101.html>, printed 02/17/03.

4. United Religions Initiative, 2003: *Compassionate Actions for a Better World*, annual report; http://www.uri.org/resources/URI_Anuual_Report_2003.pdf, viewed 09/24/04.

5. Gorbachev, Hague speech, 05/24/93.

6. Ibid.

including the Earth Charter, to foster “sustainable development at the global level.”¹ And in 1998, Barbara Marx Hubbard described the world as “a system awaiting such catalytic action” as could be undertaken by the URI and similar movements “to grow and nurture a new world.”²

The third leg of the New World Order would be a new political and security regime. Since 9/11, US and British political leaders have seen an opportunity to build such a new order.

At a Labor Party conference immediately after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack, Tony Blair saw hope for global political and economic change: “This is a moment to seize. . . . The kaleidoscope has been shaken, the pieces are in flux, soon they will settle again. Before they do let us reorder this world around us and use modern science to provide prosperity for all. Science can’t make that choice for us, only the moral power of a world acting as a community can.”³

Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Adviser to President George W. Bush, likewise saw 9/11 as a catalytic event, one which “made possible” social change based on a “new consensus.” In her April 2004 testimony to the Congressional committee investigating the September 11, 2001 attack on America, Rice said,

Now we have an opportunity and an obligation to move forward together. Bold and comprehensive changes are sometimes only possible in the wake of catastrophic events. Events which create a new consensus that allows us to transcend old ways of thinking and acting. And just as World War II led to a fundamental reorganization of our national defense structure and the creation of the National Security Council, so has Sept. 11 made possible sweeping changes in the ways we protect our homeland. President Bush is leading the country during this time of crisis and change. He has unified and streamlined our efforts to secure the American homeland by creating the Department of Homeland Security, established a new center to integrate and analyze threat information, terrorist threat information, directed the transformation of the F.B.I. into an agency dedicated to fighting terror, broken down the bureaucratic walls and legal barriers that prevent the sharing of vital information between our domestic law enforcement and foreign intelligence agencies, and working with Congress given [sic] officials new tools, such as the Patriot Act,⁴ to find and stop terrorists.⁵

Rice said after 9/11 what the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) had said in September 2000: “the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor.”⁶ (The PNAC, like Gorbachev and Earth Council, seems to have an affinity for catalysts.)

1. Earth Council, “The Earth Council and Costa Rica,” December 2003, http://www.ecouncil.ac.cr/earth_council_and_costa_rica_website.pdf, pp1–2, printed 05/26/04.

2. Barbara Marx Hubbard, *Conscious Evolution: Awakening the Power of Our Social Potential*, New World Library, Novato, California, 1998, p194.

3. Michael White, “Let us reorder this world,” *The Guardian*, October 3, 2001, <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/labour2001/story/0,1414,562269,00.html>, printed 08/03/04.

4. For assessments of the threat to liberty and the US Constitution posed by the provisions of the Patriot Act, see Nat Hentoff, *The War on the Bill of Rights and the Gathering Resistance*, Seven Stories Press, 2003, and James Bovard, *Terrorism and Tyranny: Trampling Freedom, Justice, and Peace to Rid the World of Evil*, Palgrave/Macmillan, 2003.

5. *New York Times*, “Testimony of Condoleezza Rice Before 9/11 Commission,” published April 8, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/08/politics/08RICE-TEXT.html?pagewanted=5&ei=5070&en=bca4334a5c2d5b51&ex=1082952000>, page 5 of 36.

6. The Project for a New American Century, *Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy, Forces, and Resources For a New Century*, September 2000, ch. V, p51; on-line at <http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>, printed 05/11/04. Paul Wolfowitz was one of the participants in this project. In his novel *That Hideous Strength*, C.S. Lewis described—from the point of view of two planners for the N.I.C.E., a Satanic cult that sought to take total power in the realm, how a “catalyzing event” could occur: “‘Emergency regulations,’ said Feverstone. ‘You’ll never get the powers we want at Edgestow until the Government declares that a state of emergency exists there.’ ‘Exactly,’ said Filostrato. ‘It is folly to talk of peaceful revolutions. Not that the canaglia would always resist—often they have to be prodded into it—but until there is the disturbance, the firing, the barricades—no one gets the power to act effectively.’” (Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, p130.)

We are accustomed to think that religious, business, and political leaders protect the social order in which they prospered, and uphold the values with which they were raised. Instead, some of the most influential people on Earth are themselves acting as change agents. As a result, previously inconceivable events—such as the creation of a powerful United Religions that would shape all the religions of the world—are now possible.

Multiple, complex agendas are at work here. The URI, like the rest of the interfaith movement, is an amalgam of liberals who are committed to peace, and of cultists and occultists who see this same movement as a vehicle to undermine traditional religions. The secular “powers that be,” of the neo-conservative, capitalistic American Right and of the “Third Way” European Left, each seek to remake the world order in their own way. The Communists, who still wish to refashion the world, remain in the background waiting for their second chance. All of these political contenders appear to understand that traditional religious belief and mores stand in the way of their project of creating a New Humanity in a New World. Despite the fundamental differences among the contending secular forces, each will, for their own self-regarding motives, support anything that discredits and marginalizes traditional religions. That may be the explanation for the bizarre convergence of support for organizations such as the URI and the State of the World Forum. What, other than a common target, could align George H. W. Bush with Mikhail Gorbachev, George W. Bush with Gray Davis and George Soros, and the Dalai Lama with the kept churchmen of the Peoples’ Republic of China? (This convergence of interest need not be conscious; it may be that all are being “drawn to the loadstone rock”¹ by spiritual forces that they do not perceive or understand.)

In his 1910 criticism of the Sillon, a radical French Catholic social action movement of the early 20th Century, Pope St. Pius X uttered a warning that could apply with equal or greater force to today’s movements for religious globalism such as the United Religions Initiative:

this organization which formerly afforded such promising expectations, this limpid and impetuous stream, has been harnessed in its course by the modern enemies of the Church, and is now no more than a miserable affluent of the great movement of apostasy being organized in every country for the establishment of a One-World Church which shall have neither dogmas, nor hierarchy, neither discipline for the mind, nor curb for the passions, and which, under the pretext of freedom and human dignity, would bring back to the world (if such a Church could overcome) the reign of legalized cunning and force, and the oppression of the weak, and of all those who toil and suffer.²

By undermining traditional Christianity and sovereign nation-states, the reformers in the URI and globalist movements are weakening critical barriers against an unprincipled global regime of force and spiritual deception.

1. Charles Dickens, “Book the Second,” ch. 24, in *A Tale of Two Cities*.

2. Pope St. Pius X, *Notre Charge Apostolique (Our Apostolic Mandate)*, encyclical of August 25, 1910, section 40, http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc_view.cfm?recnum=5456, printed 05/27/04. The translation is at a mainstream Catholic web site, Catholic Culture—not a schismatic or sedevacantist site. The original French text is this: “Hélas, lui qui donnait autrefois de si belles espérances, ce fleuve limpide et impétueux a été capté dans sa marche par les ennemis modernes de l’Église et ne forme plus dorénavant qu’un misérable affluent du grand mouvement d’apostasie organisé, dans tous les pays, pour l’établissement d’une Église universelle qui n’aura ni dogmes, ni monarchie, ni règle pour l’esprit, ni frein pour les passions et qui, sous prétexte de liberté et de dignité humaine, ramènerait dans le monde, si elle pouvait triompher, le règne légal de la ruse et de la force, et l’oppression des faibles, de ceux qui souffrent et qui travaillent.” (Pie X, Pape, Lettre Encyclique De N.S.P. Le Pape Pie X Sur “Le Sillon,” <http://membres.lycos.fr/lesbonstextes/stpxnotrechargeapostolique.htm>, printed 05/27/04.