

## Confessions of a "Holocaust Denier"

By Gary P. Posner

I was moved to (crocodile) tears when I read of British-born Bishop Richard Williamson's apology to the Holy See, Pope Benedict XVI, for having denied, in a January 21 Swedish television interview, the systematic genocidal gassing of the Jews by the Nazis. Perhaps the ghosts of my ancestors had talked some sense into this man of God. But I doubt it. His perfunctory apology, in which he expressed regret for his "imprudent" remarks, seemed a mere formality.

Yet, I awakened the next morning with a calling to confess my own sins to those to whom so many of my humble earthly labors are devoted, namely, the Skeptical See. If I don't move all of you to tears, perhaps I might at least move some of you an inch.

I could begin by confessing my doubts about the very existence of God. But even though the overwhelming majority of the world's inhabitants feel otherwise, and a significant minority would not only deny me the right to *express* those doubts but would smite me dead on sight for even *thinking* them, I am confident that the Skeptical See is largely in agreement with my point of view here.

I could confess my doubts about UFOs, which preoccupied the "religious belief" circuits of my brain until my late 20s. During my formative years, Richard Hall was the assistant director of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) and editor of *The UFO Evidence*, which was my "bible" as an impressionable youth. But even though, when I met him at a 1999 MUFON convention, Hall accused me of "dishonesty" and of being "full of shit" for having evolved a skeptical stance toward his beloved extra-terrestrial hypothesis, which is embraced by about a third of Americans, I am confident that the Skeptical See is largely in agreement with my point of view on this topic as well.

So, here goes. I'll just flat-out confess it: I have doubts about the existence of a man-made global warming (MMGW) crisis. But before you, the Skeptical See, hang me at Nuremberg not so much for *expressing* my doubts as for even *thinking* them, allow me to purge my soul just a bit.

In a February 2007 op-ed piece read 'round the world, columnist Ellen Goodman (and she is far from alone on this) portrayed ongoing global warming as

"impossible to deny," man's culpability as "about as certain as scientists ever get," and deniers of this MMGW crisis as "on a par with Holocaust deniers." As I observed in my letter to the *St. Petersburg Times* this past July 12, "Thanks to Goodman, Al Gore, the United Nations, et al., orthodoxy now demands that everything from Hurricane Katrina to hemorrhoidal itching be attributed to man-made global warming."

A companion letter to mine was written by a local resident, self-described as "an environmental professional," who noted that "tens of thousands of atmospheric and environmental scientists reject the notion that global warming is primarily caused by humans." When I commented similarly to Jim Peterson, president of the Tampa Bay Post Carbon Council, during his presentation at our last TBS meeting, he quibbled over the numbers but at least acknowledged that there is a controversy. Many members of the Skeptical See do not even cede that point.

Our letters were prompted by a July 5 *Times* article regarding NOAA researcher Stanley Goldenberg's study in the journal *Science* questioning the claimed connection between global warming and the frequency and strength of hurricanes. The *Times* even dared defy the wrath of Goodman and Gore (and more) by mentioning that Goldenberg (who I suspect also lost many family members in the Holocaust) is a MMGW skeptic!

To my mind, the comparison to Holocaust denial would perhaps be conscionable if there were thousands of otherwise respectable historians positing that Hitler's concentration-camp showers and ovens were strictly for keeping the Jews' hygiene and bread up to Kosher standards. But are there even a hundred, or a handful, such historians in the world?

Yet there are thousands of otherwise respectable scientists whose professional knowledge has compelled them, even in the face of the most vile criticism and at the risk of their very careers, to dissent from the doctrine that mankind is responsible for having created a global warming crisis. Some have demanded that their names be removed from the U.N.'s MMGW pronouncements, which appear to them (and to me) to be tainted by politics. Many have pointed to temperature measurements from NASA satellites and the multinational Argo deep-ocean buoys, which are deemed more reliable than urbanly skewed ground measurements, as indicating that the earth's latest warming trend may have actually plateaued a decade ago.

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### “Confessions of a ‘Holocaust Denier’” (from page 3)

I possess no professional expertise in these matters. I am merely a consumer of information and a proponent of applying skepticism toward claims that strike me as worthy of critical inquiry. I do have a friend involved in graduate research in the Atmospheric Science Department at Colorado State University with the likes of legendary hurricane expert William Gray and Colorado's former state climatologist Roger Pielke, and from what he tells me, it would seem that Ellen Goodman would have nothing civil to say about any of them.

Ironically, oceanographer Roger Revelle, the man responsible for Al Gore's having become a MMGW activist, grew to have his own serious doubts by the time of his death about 15 years ago. John Coleman, creator of the Weather Channel, in his January 28 article titled “The Amazing Story Behind the Global Warming Scam,” recounts how Gore studied under Revelle at Harvard and that, in his 2002 book *Earth in the Balance*, Gore describes Revelle as a mentor to him and a “wonderful, visionary professor [who was] one of the first people in the academic community to sound the alarm on global warming.” But Coleman goes on to explain the origins of Revelle's hypothesis and the fact that, later in his life, in cautionary letters to Congress as well as in a published article, he expressed his evolving opinion that the impact of CO<sub>2</sub> on global warming was not at all certain.

Coleman also reminds us that carbon dioxide comprises a mere 0.04% of our atmospheric gasses. Experts also note that water vapor, of which there is almost 100 times more in the atmosphere than CO<sub>2</sub>, is the most potent greenhouse gas. Though many MMGW alarmists contend that CO<sub>2</sub>'s role is primary, and that the matter has been settled, many other scientists contend that water vapor accounts for more than 90% of the entire greenhouse effect, with CO<sub>2</sub> contributing less than 5%.

Perhaps the most striking visual in Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* is the graph portraying a remarkable rise in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, followed in lockstep by a corresponding rise in temperature. But it seems that Gore may have presented those lines in *reverse order*. Though temp and CO<sub>2</sub> were tightly correlated, Antarctic ice core samples appear to indicate that the rise in temperature *preceded* the rise in CO<sub>2</sub>, presumably due to the oceans, as they warm, being less able to hold onto CO<sub>2</sub>.

So what else, if not man, might account for what

Gore calls earth's “fever” — which, again, may have actually “broken” a decade ago? Certainly not the sun! That would be too simple an explanation, and leave little for liberal and conservative politicians, and developed and developing nations, to fight about. But many scientists are becoming concerned not about global *warming*, but *cooling*, due to the failure of the cyclical sunspot cycle to return to normal numbers!

At issue is not the sun's brightness and surface temperature, which remain fairly constant, but its spasmodic explosions known as solar flares, which propel aggregations of charged particles across the solar system. When a particularly large flare reaches our planet, the polar auroras shimmer and orbiting satellites shudder. But it appears that even the garden-variety streams of charged particles (the “solar wind”) have an indirect warming effect on the earth by deflecting cosmic rays that would otherwise penetrate the atmosphere and contribute to cloud formation. The less solar flares, the more cosmic rays penetrate and interact with atmospheric nuclei, the more seeds of cloud formation are thus created, and more clouds reflect more sunlight, resulting in cooler temperatures. This is why, with current sunspot activity at an unexpectedly low level and failing (so far) to increase as per the normal cycle, an increasing number of scientists are pointing out that the scales may now be tipping in favor of global cooling.

But they may be as crazy as I am! After all, we all (including Ellen Goodman) know that the Himalayan glaciers are melting and could even be gone in 30 years. The following item from the November 2006 *Environment & Climate News* could be nuts as well:

Glaciers are growing in the Himalayan Mountains, confounding global warming alarmists who have recently claimed the glaciers were shrinking and that global warming was to blame.

A new study of the Karakoram, Hindu Kush, and Western Himalaya mountain ranges by researchers at England's Newcastle University shows consistent recent growth among the region's glaciers.

Researchers found cooler summers are failing to melt winter snows, which are themselves becoming more frequent, resulting in advancing ice sheets.

The study was published in the September 2006 issue of the American Meteorological Society's *Journal of Climate*.

And we have all heard that the Arctic and Antarctic ice is melting at an alarming rate. But what about studies indicating that the Antarctic ice has been *growing*? For example, from a September 12, 2008, Reuters item:

“The Antarctic wintertime ice extent increased . . . at a rate of 0.6 percent per decade” from 1979-2006, said Donald Cavalieri, a senior research scientist at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center.

. . . The average year-round ice extent has risen too.

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The shirts are \$10 each (plus \$4 total per order if shipping is required). Make check payable to “Tampa Bay Skeptics.”

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## Stanton Friedman Lectures at Science Museum

*The following item is taken from  
the January 10 issue of Jim Moseley's  
Saucer Smear newsletter:*

A Florida State University physics professor named Paul Cottle wrote an angry letter to his local newspaper in advance of Stanton Friedman's booking for a UFO lecture at the Mary Brogan Museum of Art and Science in Tallahassee. He bemoaned "the threat of pseudoscience undermining scientific literacy in our state," called Friedman a "well-known charlatan," and questioned his credentials as a nuclear physicist. He accused the Museum of undermining efforts to "improve the scientific environment in Tallahassee."

The executive director of the museum quite rightly sent in a swift reply, defending Friedman's scientific credentials (an M.S. from the University of Chicago followed by 14 years as a practicing physicist). Said she, "UFOs and dinosaurs attract people of all ages to (we hope) seek truth, learn more, and perhaps be entertained while being inspired."

In any case, Friedman apparently lectured twice in a row at the Museum, as planned, to a packed house each time. Hopefully he skipped the increasingly archaic "Cosmic Watergate" stuff. Egads!

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### "Confessions . . ." (from page 5)

Some climate skeptics point to the differing trends at the poles as a sign that worries about climate change are exaggerated. However, experts say they can explain the development.

And what is their explanation?  
Global warming: "Another theory

was that warmer air absorbs more moisture and means more snow and rainfall. . . . That could mean more fresh water at the sea surface around Antarctica."

Again, I claim no expert knowledge of such things. MMGW may indeed be a crisis, and the cause of both warming and cooling, of both melting and freezing, and may both precede and follow rises in atmospheric CO2. Hell, it *may even be* the cause of hemorrhoidal itching for all I know! But should I, and the many thousands of skeptical scientists who *are* experts, be placed in the company of Holocaust deniers for daring to deny that the case for a MMGW crisis is closed?

The following may not be a perfect analogy, but I can still remember biologist Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* when I was a child. I didn't read the book, but I saw the CBS News documentary about it. Thanks to her efforts, a juggernaut of scientific and popular support was marshaled to impose a worldwide ban on the pesticide DDT. The book, which gave birth to the environmentalist movement, was widely considered one of the most influential of its time, and *Time* magazine named Carson one of its "100 People of the Century." Some species benefited from the DDT ban, but *Homo sapiens* was not among them, as millions have subsequently succumbed to malaria from mosquitoes that have survived inferior insecticides.

So, that is my confession. I am skeptical of those who proclaim that a MMGW crisis is threatening civilization and that questioning of this premise is tantamount to "Holocaust denial." I continue to seek the truth, and acknowledge that my current opinions, shared by thousands of knowledgeable scientists, could be wrong. It seems to me that such a principled position is the hallmark of scientific skepticism. But, then again, maybe I'm just nuts.