The Sin of Environmentalism

Less you think I am some anti-environment architect, please note that I have practiced natural resource and energy stewardship & responsibility my whole 35 year career. I actively specify recycled products and promote the even more beneficial practice of "reuse". I have taught Junior College level classes on environmental sensitivity; and I have produced daylighting and passive solar commercial & residential projects for over 30 years. With great respect of our earth, I consider myself to be an "organic intuitive architect", who thinks we should build "of" the earth and not "on" the earth. <u>My environmental beliefs are not due to some arrogant idea that I am "saving the planet"</u>; the planet will take care of itself just fine. It has survived a lot worse than what mere mortal man can dish out. No, for me, it is simply about responsible stewardship for what I (and everyone else) have been entrusted with by its Creator. But sadly, I must admit that every time I hear the word "green", I just want to throw up!

As I said, I believe every person and certainly we architects should practice good conservative environmental stewardship, but what a bunch of worthless hype is this so-called "green movement". It is basically nothing more than advertising gimmicks to suck people in, and I see the design profession buying it hook, line & sinker! For me coming out of the 70's passive solar movement, this "green" nonsense is nothing more than corporate hype. It is simply sickening that I don't see any questioning of this stupid fad; for instance, calling a metal stud "green" because it can be melted down, many years from now if by chance it is pulled out of a pile of demolition debris, is absurd. Aside from basic resource stewardship and some good passive examples dealing with energy & water, there is nothing real about all this "green" save the planet nonsense, but I wish to put forward that <u>there is something much more sinful going on here</u>.

Our profession has historically been one to be sensitive to the people, to the users of our built environments. We have hundreds of articles on how people "feel" in a space, or how people "exist" within our cities. We get all "puffed up" by our arrogant interaction with governments discussing and impacting how people should live and work. But rather than some long-range green concept of control with no merit, that just may happen hundreds of years from now, how about we focus on how these governments are killing millions of people today?

So what's your point, you say?

The whole global warming premise has been built on a computer model; it is not backed up by measured facts. It is a testament to the adage: "garbage in – garbage out". There is no scientific consensus on the issue, though those promoting the cause want you to think so. The IPCC famous "hockey stick" chart, that Al Gore also likes to present, promotes the false premise that with the pollution of carbon fuels in the Industrial Age, global warming, previously running pretty much flat, is on a ballistic climb pushing toward the catastrophic end of the

planet. The only problem for these pundits is, through ice borings etc. current science now shows even higher warming previously in what is being called the "Medieval Warm Period", after which there was a mini ice age. The facts are that we have been in a cooling period; there has been no global warming for the last 10 years or so. Governments are pouring billions of dollars at reversing global warming, controlling "carbon footprints" and other climate threat nonsense. Nov. 2007, John Coleman founder of the Weather Channel, called global warming the biggest scam in history. Polar bear populations have increased 5 fold, ice caps have historically always increased and decreased, and global temperature fluctuations have been shown to be tied to solar activity, not to mankind's messy activities. Certain political groups want you to think that you're evil and that your very existence will doom the planet; this carbon garbage is not about saving the planet, it is about having "control" over you, and architects are falling for it.

All four major global temperature tracking outlets (Hadley, NASA's GISS, UAH, RSS) released data around July 2007 that show over that past year, global temperatures have greatly dropped. What global warming? Yet in 2009, the House of Representatives has already passed the "cap & trade" bill co-sponsored by House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Henry Waxman and have now sent it on to the Senate. Supported by both sides of the aisle, if this awful legislation becomes law, it will force the prices of ALL manufactured goods and the goods that require transportation (by any means using energy) to go up. This will force massive indirect taxes on you to address the ridiculous idea of "carbon footprints" and climate threat a hundred years out.

So what's your point, you say?

A leading African social worker, Fiona Kobusingye, is quoted as saying that Africans are battling AIDS, malaria, lung infections, intestinal diseases, war, malnutrition and other problems that kill millions each year, "and yet day after day, Africans are told the biggest threat we face is global warming." Fiona goes on to say, "Al Gore uses more electricity in a week than 28 million Ugandans together use in a year. And those anti-electricity policies are keeping us impoverished." I would also add, that our mis-directing of billions of dollars toward these non-existent environmental worries are killing those millions every year.

What right do we have to tell other developing countries, based on a complete hoax, that they cannot develop? It is sinful; people are dying every day! We have the Rwandan Genocide, the War in Darfur, civil war in Chad, and the Second Congo War, just to name a few of the needs TODAY on just one continent! Yet, we see the absolutely wasteful use of billions of dollars for a non-existent problem that politics say may happen hundreds of years from now! This is sinful. How can we possibily go to bed thinking we are doing something "green" when innocent children in Africa are losing limbs in tribal wars and seeing "red". I just want to throw up!

Oh, I hear you saying about how hard things are these days, tough economic times; yes, some of us have seen these low times 4 or 5 times now, but will these times cause you to look selfishly inward or responsibly outward? Will apathy deaden your social responsibility we architects hold onto so strongly? Our national debt has been growing for a long time, but the latest round of reckless federal borrowing is pushing us closer to disaster. It took 233 years to pile up the first $12 trillion in debt – if we continue on our current course it will only take us 10 years to borrow the second $12 trillion! This would cause American taxpayers to spend almost $500 million in interest payments <u>every day</u>; is this the best use of our money, paying for debt?

So, what's the point you say?

I don't suppose my architect peers will receive this article very well; it is indeed exciting to think that our buildings and profession will indeed save the planet. My argument transcends architecture and really puts forward questions for all people to contemplate. My argument is more about asking the question, what is more important? What is our real responsibility to the world? The United States of America has been a leader for goodness and helpfulness in the world for 200 years. What happens if we fail to one day even have strength to stand up again? With the <u>daily</u> needs of millions of our "fellow space travelers" on planet earth, can the world afford to waste these incredible amounts of money on non-existent problems? Of course, this nonsensical climate change tidal wave has spread worldwide and you may ask, "what can I as an individual do?" I guess I would simply say, we eat an elephant one bite at a time. Start by getting off the "climate change train" and speak a different language of social responsibility. All I know is that one day, I believe, each of us will be asked to account for how we treated "the least of these". What am I going to say about my own actions?

Sincerely,

Haven Mankin
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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma