

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF CREATION

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In the beginning God floated the idea of creating Heaven and Earth. He was immediately served with an injunction by Greenpeace to prevent any creative activity whatsoever as He had not undertaken an environmental impact study and had no permit to work.

At the hearing, God was cross-examined and asked why He wanted to undertake this massive project, especially as it appeared that it was extremely unlikely that any social benefit would derive from His venture. The Wilderness Society reminded God that His Bible stated that "the earth was void and empty and darkness was upon the face of the deep" hence the area where He wanted to creatively meddle could be classified as a pristine wilderness. God successfully argued that unless Earth could be seen, then it could not be classified a wilderness area. Upon further questioning, God revealed that by Him saying "Let there be light" the wilderness area could be seen for assessment of its environmental value.

This created pandemonium in the court house. How could God create light without burning something that would pollute the Universe? Had He considered the smoke, thermal and optical pollution that His creation of light would produce? What would be mined to produce all this energy? Would the mining be underground or open pit? What was God to do with the tailings and the waste? Was God aware of the dangers of greenhouse gases and nuclear energy? In order to seek compromise, God argued that He would create a pollution-free, thermonuclear powerhouse. However, at the mention of the word nuclear, the masses at the court hearing broke into histrionics. God faced aggressive questioning from the assembled environmental movements. Would His giant thermonuclear power generator really work? Could the safety of thermonuclear fusion be guaranteed? What about Chernobyl? In order to allow His creative proposal to proceed, God suggested that instead of thermonuclear energy, He would use solar energy. A warm inner glow entered the hearts of those in the courthouse, the assembled detractors agreed that solar power would be far better environmentally than thermonuclear power and some of the more sensitive souls were so touched by God's environmental concern that they actually wanted to shake His hand.

The remaining hard core continued to question God on his alternative energy proposal. Wouldn't precious energy be wasted if light was emitted from the Sun all the time? God had a brilliant idea and, in order to conserve energy, God suggested that He divide light and darkness and He would call the light Day and the darkness Night. The assembled environmental masses seemed to think that this was an inspired energy-saving proposal and grudgingly acquiesced to this creative step.

However, the next creative step aired had God in a spot of bother. When God was asked how the Earth would be covered, He answered "Let there be a firmament made amidst the waters; and let it divide the waters from the waters". Greenpeace, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Earth and miscellaneous other environmental movements voiced strong objections. If God created a firmament, would not the mining industry pillage the firmament for minerals? God tried logic and argued that a firmament was necessary in order to produce the 210 tonnes per capita per annum of water, food and minerals which would be consumed by people at the end of the second millennium AD. The gag was applied, the court adjourned and God was refused permission to continue argument on the firmament. After the adjournment, God was given permission to make a short statement. He stated that homelands and sacred sites could not be annexed unless there was a firmament. After much discussion in court about the necessary provision of homelands for the tangible expression of inherited guilt, God was given permission to create a firmament and questioning shifted to His creation of waters.

Neither Greenpeace nor Save the Aquatic Fauna wanted God to create the oceans because this would tempt the petroleum industry into offshore drilling. Furthermore, if there were oceans, then there could be marine pollution. It suddenly dawned on God that logic was His worst defence and He started to invent arguments which would seem plausible. Rather than discuss the necessity of oceans for climate, resources and survival, God insisted that His creative venture must have oceans. Without oceans, God argued, there would be no habitat for dolphins and whales. The court room erupted into cheers, people struggled to pat God on the back, environmental leaders announced that the god of nature would be called Gaia, God signed numerous autographs and a warm ambience settled over the tear-stained masses. However, because so few at the hearing had trust in God, He was instructed to apply for the necessary permits from the appropriate local government, shipping, agricultural and water commissions before undertaking this creative step.

When God tried to explain that the barren firmament should be environmentally enhanced with vegetation, there was vigorous objection on the basis that the flora might be exploited commercially for profit. God was now aware that it was pointless to argue that flora would be the key to survival and so He stated that He would only create species native to planet Earth. He strengthened his argument by suggesting that if the firmament was covered by abundant vegetation, all could be vegetarian. God's popularity was increasing and the environmental leaders now privately felt that God was good, however they were committed to objecting in public to every creative step God wanted to make. It was eventually agreed, subject to Noxious Weed Board and Forestry Commission permission, that if God vegetated the planet with only native species then He would be issued with a permit to say "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed and the fruit tree yielding fruit"

In order to win over various New Age movements, astrologers, UFO watchers, tarot card readers and the Lunar Cycle Birth Movement, God announced to the court that He wanted to state "And let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth". The various New Age movements were asked to voice their objections however, because their answers required the construction of sentences and the use of words of more than two syllables, they could only look bleary-eyed at God, monotonously chanted "God is Cool" and fondled His long flowing robes.

Some disquiet was expressed about God's plan to have only native flora without soft, cuddly environmentally sensitive fauna. A passionate discussion ensued with some suggesting that if there were animals on the firmament then they would be hunted, killed and eaten whereas others wanted soft cuddly objects to allow them to have publicity about the plight of these animals. The question of methane emissions from animals was raised. It was unanimously agreed, that in the absence of evidence, that methane emissions were bad, however a compromise was struck. If God could create sheep and cattle which emitted no methane, then wild animals could democratically decide whether they chose to, or chose not to emit methane. The gathered masses felt good. On the condition that God adhered to the various statutes of the Native Flora and Fauna Protection Act, various National Parks Acts, the Fisheries Acts and observed the RSPCA regulations, God was given permission to say "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and the fowl that may fly above the earth".

The proposal to create man met insurmountable ethical and political difficulties. The vivisectionists were concerned about the morals of rib transplant on a sleeping patient without the required documentation, the Womens' Electoral Lobby would not agree that man was to be created before woman, animal liberationists were incensed that man was to have dominance over animals, the gay lobby did not want woman created from man, the right-to-lifers argued that rib tissue had inalienable rights and ASIO insisted that those created must first have security clearances. God now had the measure of his opponents and announced to the court that He would only create indigenous people. Opposition evaporated, there were excited suggestions about having a special year dedicated to indigenous people and, after no thought, it was decided that if these matters were aired at a subsequent public hearing, then God may be given permission afterwards to say "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth".

Despite the onerous conditions laid down by the court, God was willing to adhere to all these conditions and, at the end of the hearing, He was asked when He hoped to commence His creative project. Great consternation arose when God stated that He wanted to complete the project in six days. The unions would not agree, too many people would have to work too fast to an exacting deadline. This was unprecedented compared with all previous attempts at productive creativity which had been prevented by prolonged industrial action. God was advised that the EIS and necessary permits have an application period of 90 days followed by a public viewing period of 60 days in each capital city. Upon receipt of all of the information, the granting bodies required a minimum of 180 days to review the applications prior to the public hearing. If there were no appeals arising from the public hearing, the process would take at least 36 months from the time of application before God was permitted to commence His creative venture.

God became positively catatonic. To His horror, God suddenly realised that He had only focussed on creation of the heavens and Earth and had forgotten to create the rarest commodity on Earth – common sense. The economic benefits of the regulatory processes were such that it was just not possible for God to create Earth in the proposed six-day period. God fulminated in disgust "To Hell with My Project!" and Earth, as we know it, was then created.