

»When we enter into my Father's spacecraft«

Cargoistic hopes and millenarian cosmologies in new religious UFO movements

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Abstract:

Millenarian movements await an imminent, collective and ultimate liberation, usually (but not exclusively) *within* this world. This liberation implies the founding of a *perfect age* or *pure country or kingdom*, and the construction of a *Homo Novus*. In a similar way, the so-called "Cargo-Cults" of Melanesia or New Guinea relate to a dawning state of material, organisational and spiritual well-being, and the expected abundance of supernaturally acquired *supplies* can be turned into *the* central characteristic of the "manifestation of the Millennium" (Trompf).

In many contemporary New Religious Movements, apocalyptic interventions by "space aliens" and UFOs form a central belief. Amidst hopes for a restitution of the lost *paradise*, one can also find expectations of the *cargoist* type: alien "supplies" and supernatural "technologies", together with paranormal spiritual faculties like telepathy and bilocation, can exercise a strong exotic charm. The different expressions of such cargoistic hopes shed light on the underlying cosmological framework, which often incorporates basic patterns of the apocalyptic (pre-millennial or post-millennial) traditions of Christianity.

On the one hand, there are UFO believers who expect an imminent *salvation within this world* by means of an extraterrestrial transfer of technology and spirituality: millions of space ships "will descend", and "Earth is to be transformed, quickly, into a paradise beyond compare ... Heaven on Earth" (The *Ground Crew* Project; cf. *Ashtar Command*, etc.). Only a short rapture or *Big Beam* into the flying saucers will be necessary to secure the earthly humans during the metamorphosis of "Mother Earth". But finally, there will be an overwhelming physical and spiritual abundance on this precious intergalactic "showcase".

On the other hand, the "Away Team" of the UFO group *Heaven's Gate* waited for the imminent departure and "relocation" to an extraterrestrial "Kingdom of the Heavens": "my Father's Kingdom moves or travels in spacecrafts". Here, only the chosen few are able to leave this death-bound earth before it is "recycled". Like in a cosmic computer game, they have to be 'beamed up' or "saved" to the *Next Level*, before the programme of this 'virtual' holographic world is "canceled" or "rebooted". Since the liberating "disconnect!" implies a *salvation from this world*, there is no room for any worldchanging cargoism.

The following essay is a revised English version of my paper presented to the annual convention of the *Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionsgeschichte* (DVRG = the German branch of the I.A.H.R.), which took place at the University of Mainz in October 1997 and focused on the topic "Religion within the Change of Cosmologies"¹. The religious groups covered in the text are (or have been) active in the United States. However, since this paper was originally prepared for a German audience, many references in the footnotes relate to source-material that is available in German. A slightly shorter German version will appear in the forthcoming conference-volume, ed. by Dieter Zeller (*Religion im Wandel der Kosmologien*. Frankfurt/New York 1999). All Internet-sources and -data referred to in the following pages have been collected between May 1997 and summer 1998.

I am planning to continue research on the subject. Therefore, more information might soon be posted through my [homepage](#) at the University of Mainz (e.g. collection of additional material and links, retrieved Internet sources, etc.).

Note: Because of the relatively bulky footnotes, it is highly recommended to use the [version with frames](#). You can also click on the embedded *pictures* to view larger images. -- For technical reasons, however, clickable Internet-links in the footnotes have only been implemented in this *unframed* version.

1) Millennial Cargo from outer space?

The quite sensational suicide of the Californian Heaven's Gate community in March 1997 brought the presence of UFO movements back into public awareness. However, I do not, as the title might suggest, intend to deal exclusively with the cosmology of this particular group. I will be more concerned with comparing it to other forms of apocalyptic hopes for salvation, which also await an imminent extraterrestrial intervention on this planet, and which incorporate the construction of a *Homo Novus*.

Millenarian movements are religious movements that await an imminent, collective and ultimate liberation -- usually *within* this world.² This implies the founding of a *perfect age* (that is: pure, blessed, righteous, free of all suffering and conflict) or of a *perfect country* or *kingdom*³. The so-called "Cargo Cults" of Melanesia and New Guinea relate in a similar way to a dawning state of material, organisational and spiritual well-being, which is meant to offer a substitute or compensation for present insufficiencies. This is "projected into the imminent future" as a collective salvation or liberation: in particular, the expected abundance of supernaturally acquired or generated western consumer goods and commodities (*cargo*; in pidgin *kago*) can be turned into *the* central characteristic of a "manifestation of the Millennium"⁴.

1 A first draft of this English translation was fortunately prepared by the staff of the *Centre for the Study of New Religious Movements* at the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, and here I owe much gratitude to Fr. Ralph Woodhall S.J. and to Dr. Simon Smith. I would also like to express special thanks to Simon Shields and Fred Milligan for proof-reading and constructive criticisms. Special thanks have to go to Valerie Donner from "The Ground Crew [Project]" for her positive feedback and support, and to Bil El Masri: both gave me their permission to use some of the GCP's "old" Internet files (cf. section 3 of my text). I would also like to thank the "Andromeda Group" for a permission to use two web-posted "channelings" (cf. note 76)

2 Cf. G.Trompf (ed), *Cargo Cults and Millenarian Movements*. Berlin/New York 1990, 1f, and the article "Apokalyptik / Messianismus / Chiliasmus", by H.G.Kippenberg in the *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe* II (1990), 9-26 (esp. 11f).

3 "The term millennium has been typologized in modern social scientific scholarship to denote any perfected, blissful and trouble-free order of life in the future" (G.Trompf, *Cargo Cults*, 1).

4 Cf. G.Trompf, *Cargo Cults*, 10f. On the other hand, there are also Cargo-cults *without* such a millenaristic component, i.e. without the expectation of a *total* and ultimate change of life.

"So-called cargoism and millennialism come to overlap as types of collective expectation when the imminent coming of an utterly transformed Cosmic Order is linked with the arrival of a radically different range of material goods. These goods are understood to issue from a 'supernatural' or quite supranormal source -- out of the world of spiritual beings."⁵

Alongside the expectations, which present themselves as bound up with a kind of *supernatural technology*, there are eschatological conceptions strongly influenced by the idea of a *restitution of the original paradise*. As a victory over the present 'inverted world' (ecological crisis, social injustice, spiritual failure), this hope for salvation looks to the restoration of a "natural" and "paradisiacal" harmony. A superabundant "heaven on earth" of the Land of Cockaigne type is at sight, -- and in the ideal case "all suggestions of tiresome work, factory production" (etc.) are "driven out of the 'Heaven-on-Earth'"⁶. A further alternative is found in the idea of the *final rapture*, where a small band of the "righteous" or spiritually advanced are taken up or "evacuated" -- temporarily or permanently -- to a new level of existence; this often draws on the imagery of the sealing of the 144,000 in John's Apocalypse (Rev 7). Many hybrid forms of these ideas appear in the religious cosmologies of UFO movements and UFO believers. One important distinguishing mark can be found in the presence or absence of particular "cargoisms"⁷ connected with the superior technologies of otherworldly and inter-planetary teachers (the latter ones often being identified with mythical culture-heroes or gods of antiquity⁸):

"When millenarism and cargoism are wed, however, at least the images of modern technology and scientific achievement will be retained, so that the prophesied new Order can even be articulated as the very apex of Modernity rather than (exclusively) that of a Great spiritual Return, and at times it can bear a strong ring of Science Fiction (or some 'science mythology') about it."⁹

5 G.Trompf, "The Cargo and the Millennium on both sides of the Pacific", in his *Cargo Cults*, 35-94 (38f). <

6 *Cargo Cults*, 39.

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7 The term "cargoism" as a concept (regardless of its *collective* incorporation) is used here to denote those marketable and industrially produced consumer goods or commodities which receive a *more than mundane significance* and are therefore endowed with an *aura of numinous meaning*, which transcends their factual economic value. For this use of the term, cf. G.Trompf in his "Introduction" (*Cargo Cults*, 10-15)

8 This topic forms a central belief in most UFO movements and it has been widely spread -- especially by the publications of Erich von Däniken. It forms, however, not only a part of the *real* UFO faith but it is also a favorite motif in the 'fictional religion' of contemporary science fiction literature and films. In R.Zelazny's *Lord of Light*. New York 1976 (¹1967), for example, a group of astronauts start to rule and to cultivate an entire planet mainly by adapting the roles of several numina from the Indian pantheon and by using technologically far superior capacities and supernatural powers in their government of the planet's people.

9 G.Trompf in *Cargo Cults*, 39.

Without doubt an important attraction of UFO belief is rooted in its capacity to synthesise elements and system-parts of the esoteric, spiritualistic and theosophical -- or Christian -- traditions and to reconcile them with science, space technology and modern cosmology.¹⁰ Especially the traditional numinous personnel (for example, the so-called "ascended masters" of theosophy or the esoteric representation of Jesus Christ) surfaces quite frequently in the spectrum of UFO movements and UFO publications with a consistent pattern of functions¹¹. However, this personnel is considerably extended by inter-planetary newcomers as in the case of the space fleet commander and universal master "Ashtar (Sheran)"¹² and of other prominent members of the "cosmic brotherhood", the light fleet of the star fraternity or the "Galactic Federation".¹³ The cosmological map is extended by the existence of inter-galactic or multi-dimensional *parallel worlds*¹⁴, and in some cases this is connected with the conception of a spiritual development of souls to a "higher resonating frequency" in other cosmic "spheres" or "realms".¹⁵ The interplanetary light fraternity from these

- 10 See on this aspect John A. Saliba's essay "Religious Dimensions of UFO Phenomena", in James R. Lewis (ed.), *The Gods have landed: new religions from other worlds*. Albany 1995, 15-64. Many aspects of UFO mythologies (e.g. on anthropogenesis and evolution) seem to combine "the religious quest for absolute answers with the objectivity of scientific certainty" and thus tend to appear as secularised or scientised myths (49, 53-55). Cf. already E. Benz, *Neue Religionen*. Stuttgart 1971, Chapter 7 ("Ufologie -- Die Religion von den Planetariern und fliegenden Untertassen"; 113-124): according to Benz, there is a quite common readiness for *ufological reinterpretations* of religion in contemporary Western society and culture, since the belief in space aliens or "planetarians", who supposedly "inspired the great achievements on this planet in the past, and who are the alleged future saviours of mankind", is always propagated and "suggested as a normal and obvious constituent of our modern scientific worldview" (124).
- 11 For example, already in the well-known social-psychological study *When Prophecy Fails* by L. Festinger, H. W. Riecken und S. Schachter (Minneapolis 1956), dedicated to a small UFO movement of the fifties, it can be seen that it is nobody else but the Jesus-figure of the theosophical-esoteric tradition who appears to the medium "Mrs. Keech" under the name "Sananda": he gives instructions concerning the imminent destruction of the world and the deliverance of the 'chosen few' via space ships (36ff). Within the context of UFO faiths today, this Sananda-Jesus is still much quoted and often "channeled" as a spiritual teacher of the world; he appears on many Internet-sites (e.g. "www.spiritweb.org") and publications of UFO believers. A recent German example for the latter would be W. & Th. Gauch-Keller, *Aufruf an die Erdbewohner. Erklärungen zur Umwandlung des Planeten Erde und seiner Menschheit in der Endzeit* (Ostermündingen, 1992), a free brochure to be obtained directly from the authors or from many UFO groups and publishing-houses; cf. here 53-55 on "Lord Sananda".
- 12 Basic sources are E. P. Hill, *Ashtar -- In kommenden Tagen ... Alarmierende Botschaften von Weltraum-Piloten*. Wiesbaden/Göttingen ⁶1990 (Americ. ¹1956), and Tuella, *Projekt: Welt-Evakuierung. Diktirt vom Ashtar-Kommando*. Wiesbaden/Göttingen ³1989, as well as a huge amount of similar publications (K. Veit, W. & Th. Gauch-Keller, and others). A sorted list of present Internet-resources for the so-called *Ashtar Command* can easily be obtained with a search-engine like *Webcrawler* ("www.webcrawler.com"). A collection of relevant publications (and modern 'classics' in German translation) is found at the *Turmalin-Verlag* in Gütersloh (the successor of the Ventla Verlag, Wiesbaden). The newest channeled "instructions" by Ashtar are furthermore published by UFO groups like the "Santiner-Kreis" in Berlin ("Schritte zur Vorbereitung auf die Evakuierung" etc.), sometimes in the magazine *UFO-Nachrichten* (cf. below).
- 13 In the fifties the growing belief in UFOs was mainly triggered by American publications like Donald E. Keyhoe (*Flying Saucers from Outer Space*) and George Adamski & Desmond Leslie (*The Flying Saucers Have Landed*; a German translation appeared 1957 with the title *Fliegende Untertassen sind gelandet*). Carl G. Jung commented on this new faith from a psychological perspective already in 1958 with *Ein moderner Mythos. Von Dingen, die am Himmel gesehen werden*. Zürich & Stuttgart, ²1964.
- 14 Cf. the comprehensive study by E. Benz, *Außerirdische Welten. Von Kopernikus zu den Ufos*. Freiburg 1990 (the original title was *Kosmische Bruderschaft. Die Pluralität der Welten. Zur Ideengeschichte des Ufo-Glaubens*. Freiburg 1978). See also B. Gladigow, "Andere Welten -- andere Religionen?" in F. Stolz (ed), *Religiöse Wahrnehmung der Welt*. Zürich 1988, 245ff (with a differing title in the table of contents); S. Golowin, *Götter der Atom-Zeit. Moderne Sagenbildung um Raumschiffe und Sternenmenschen*. Bern ²1980 (¹1965)
- 15 There is a strong inclination towards and wide reception of UFO beliefs in contemporary New Religious Movements. A really detailed religio-historical study of the various traditions that reappear and merge in these UFO publications of individuals and groups is therefore still a desideratum of modern scholarship. There is an extensive

parallel worlds will help earthly humankind during the imminent immense renewal and purification of the earth (for example, by a temporary evacuation in space ships) and by stretching and refining human consciousness. The frequent UFO sightings are taken as a direct sign or proof that this activity is currently increasing. Sceptical or scientific-immanent explanations of these alleged harbingers of the approaching millennium can be readily explained, for those who faithfully insist on such contact experiences, by conspiracy theories.¹⁶

If, then, the members of Heaven's Gate were seeking to leave this earthly "classroom" for salvation on a higher cosmological "level above human", a sphere located in certain space ships ("My Father's Kingdom moves or travels in spacecrafts"¹⁷), a clear continuity with the conceptual imagery of many other UFO faiths and UFO movements seems to be at hand¹⁸. However, a closer look makes it apparent that the apocalyptic scenario depends on quite distinct cosmological views and expectations.

2) The "Brotherhood of the Sun" or "Sunburst Community"

Garry Trompf, already quoted above and known for his work on Melanesian religion, compared Melanesian cargoism and millenarianism with religious movements on the other side of the Pacific Ocean and concentrated here on the Sunburst community¹⁹ founded in California by Norman Paulsen in 1955. Included in its syncretistic religious and cosmological worldview are Yogananda's Kriya-Yoga, some Christian elements, several esoteric-theosophical traditions and Erich von Däniken motifs, with the idea of imminent contact with UFOs as the centre-piece of hope for salvation.

and very valuable anthology by J.R.Lewis (ed), *The Gods have Landed: New Religions from Other Worlds*. New York 1995 (with detailed references and extensive comments on the literature!). -- Among others, cf. the chapter on "Die UFO-Bewegung" in K.Hutten, *Seher, Grübler, Enthusiasten*. Stuttgart ¹⁴1989, 761-795; M.Rothstein, "The Family, UFOs and God: A Modern Extension of Christian Mythology", *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 12 (1997), 353-362; J.E.Porter, "Spiritualists, Aliens and UFOs: Extraterrestrials as Spirit Guides", *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 11 (1996), 337-353; several reports on the present scene can also be found in the journal *Materialdienst* of the *Evangelische Zentralstelle für Weltanschauungsfragen* in Berlin).

16 A relevant 'enlightenment' and 'education' in this respect is the aspiration of the *UFO-Nachrichten* (formerly Wiesbaden, now Obergünzburg) founded in 1956 by Karl L. and Anny Veit: the journal informs about new UFO sightings or channeled messages from the star fraternity, and interested readers can contact the various meeting places, seminars and groups listed. There is also an Internet-version of the *UFO-Nachrichten* at ["www.freemind.de/un/"](http://www.freemind.de/un/).

17 This is a quote from the online-document "vt100596.html", which can be found under the rubric "Transcripts of Two Recent Videos" on the Internet-homepage of "Heaven's Gate" (the video is of October 5, 1996 and carries the title "[Planet About To Be Recycled -- Your Only Chance To Survive: Leave with Us](#)"). Currently, there are still several "mirror-sites" of this groups's homepage on the Internet (easily accessible through www-search-engines) -- cf. the entries in the [Link-section](#).

18 W.Schmidt, in his "UFO und Astro als mörderischer Mechanismus", *Materialdienst (EZW)* 60 (1997), 185-187, suggests such a basic continuity between the cosmology of "Heaven's Gate" and the apocalyptic scenario of such UFO groups who live in anticipation of the final "cleansing" and impending transformation of earth according to the messages from "Ashtar" and similar members of the star fraternity.

19 This analogy is drawn in the first chapter, "The Cargo and the Millennium on both sides of the Pacific", of his *Cargo Cults and Millenarian Movements* (35-94). The following remarks to this movement in the text depend on his description (esp. 35-57), and the page-references in parentheses refer to this text. Trompf already announced another, more detailed study of the Sunburst community (cf. 78, note 11), but he told me in 1997 that so far he has not been able to conduct additional field-research to complete his inquiry.

The cosmological belief patterns of the *Brotherhood of the Sun* were expressed in spatial and temporal forms (41). There must have been a continent called "Mu" twelve thousand years ago in the middle of the Pacific, apart from Australia and New Guinea²⁰. This is the lost holy motherland on which all the important events in cosmic sacred history were played out. The ancient culture heroes were beings of other worlds who influenced evolutionary process in humankind through genetic manipulation. About a million years earlier the beings from other worlds escaped from an inter-stellar war and reached the earth (41f). These have been regarded as gods in earthly religions to this day. These so-called *builders* founded cities on the continent Mu and created people according to their own image (cf. Gen. 1:26): as red, blue, yellow and white²¹. The continual conflict with the enemies of the "builders" dispersed the human race over the earth. Finally, about twelve thousand years ago an asteroid collided with the earth and destroyed the continents of Atlantis (collision) and Mu (a tidal wave).

The future is seen above all as a return, as a re-actualisation of the 'lost paradise'. The frequent sightings of flying saucers are nothing other than space ships or "Space Mus" of the angelic Builders who now selected Norman Paulsen as primary contact person (43). The divine-mythical culture heroes would return ("The Return of the Ancients") to strike the final blow on their evil foe. Thereby contemporary society in its present form will be destroyed. When this millennium breaks through, its new *Cargo* will not be manifested in abundance of material wealth of the western kind but as a *completely superior technology* with special *materials* hitherto unknown to mankind and with a release of *unknown energies* of the universe²², especially of the sun (43). Then again it will be possible to "follow the simple laws of God and nature" (44).

Here the paradisiacal imagery of the perfect "garden" is amalgamated in immediate association with the dream of a scientific miracle (44). Even the "Space Mu" ships provide under their domes "internal gardens" in which all desirable surroundings can be created. "The Motherland" is "returning again", and by this the Garden of Eden will be restored (44).

A central role was to be played by the Sunburst Ranch to the north of Santa Barbara and its members would be the first to profit from the new 'Cargo': "Young men and women could become space pilots or scientists, or pursue whatever trade they felt drawn to" (55). Paulsen explicitly connected his vision of a "cosmic consciousness" (or "Christ consciousness") with *expectations of the cargoist type* -- in his own words: "The by-product of living a life of harmony with the Spirit is to have physical abundance" (55). Paulsen first understood himself to be a prophet, but towards the end of the sixties he assumed more strongly the role of Christ (52). He then understood himself to be an ancient Lord of Mu and suddenly remembered his former inter-stellar flights. His style of

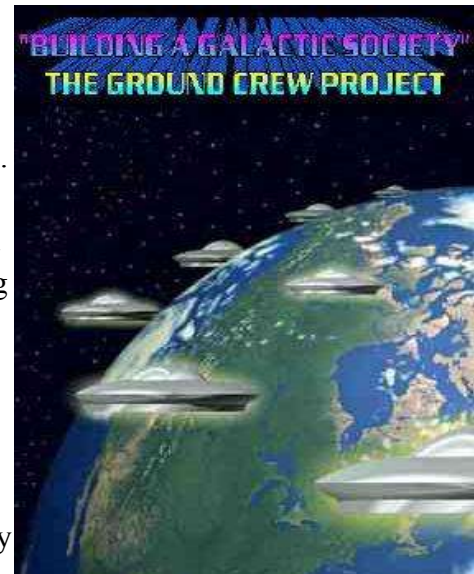
20 The idea of the sunken continent Mu (mostly identified with Lemuria) and its mythic history can be traced back to James Churchward (*The Lost Continent of Mu*, 1931, *The Children of Mu*, 1931, and other publications), who claimed to be able to "read" the old Mu chronicles with his inner eye (cf. Trompf, 44-46, and his detailed bibliographical remarks to the Mu tradition in the references, 80f). The concept of the lost continent Mu was already partly incorporated into the beliefs of the famous group around "Mrs. Keech" (cf. *When Prophecy Fails*, 42).

21 Trompf traces this idea of four distinct races back to certain Hopi-myths to which Paulsen presumably had access (46).

22 This idea of gaining access to unknown or secret energies is a standard topic of UFO faith and is manifested in various publications, as well as in many Internet discussions about "Free Energies" or so-called "Free Energy Devices"

leadership and clashes with the surrounding population led to the effective break-up of the movement in 1982.

A contemporary and still relatively weakly consolidated grouping, especially active in publishing quite similarly designed apocalyptic UFO messages on the Internet, is the so-called "Ground Crew Project" (GCP) of California and Hawaii. I took notice of this group in summer 1997 during an Internet research on UFO faith. On their old homepage they had placed a very detailed description of an apocalyptic scenario involving a mass landing of 15 million UFOs²³. However, in November 1997 -- shortly after this paper was originally presented to the DVRG-conference in Mainz -- the movement split²⁴: into the new "Ground Crew" (GC)²⁵ under the authoritative care of Valerie Donner and the "Planetary Activation Organization" (PAO)²⁶. The latter is closely grouped around Sheldon (recently calling himself Sheldon) Nidle²⁷ and relies now exclusively on



his telepathic messages or channelings which are said to come from the "Galactic Federation". Since the approach of the space ships was announced for the summer of 1997, the "old" GCP stirred up great expectations and the Internet "Updates" were correspondingly very concerned about the delayed parousia. After the split, however, the PAO as well as the new GC adopted a spiritual 'business as usual' approach -- but without giving up generally on the expected intervention of aliens and angels on this earth in the near future.

The apocalyptic scenario designed by this group or these two groups (and even quite similarly by analogous groups) can be summed up briefly as follows:²⁸

- Humanity will be "awakened" and provided with a higher resonating frequency of the physical body ("Light vibration"), and therefore the "higher dimensions" will be visible.

23 The old Internet address was "www.portal.ca/~ground/crew/". The following remarks are based on my personal copy of these Internet data that (after the split of the movement) are now only partly accessible at the two new addresses referred to below, and in many cases they have been completely removed from the files at the moment (cf. **Note 28!**).

24 Both parties on their own new Internet sites originally published different reasons for this split. The first statement by S.Nidle with the title "Every Coin Has Two Sides" (cf. "www.paoweb.com/twosides.htm") was immediately followed by Valerie Donner's retort on Dec. 16, 1997, entitled "Affidavit of Truth". She strongly defended herself against embezzlement reproaches, but the document was then removed from the server, apparently because she did not want to get into an "Internet war" (cf. V.Donner's "[.../updates/vdonner/120897.html](http://www.paoweb.com/updates/vdonner/120897.html)").

25 Located in California; the Internet-address is "www.thegroundcrew.com".

26 Located in Hawaii; the Internet-address is "www.paoweb.com".

27 Located in Hawaii; the Internet-address is "www.paoweb.com".

28 The following details are taken from three 'old' GCP-documents: the file "[landings.htm](#)" written in 1996 by Bil El Masri (now a core-member at PAO), and the documents "A Message to Humanity From The Ground Crew Project" ("[messhum.htm](#)") and the more recent "Urgent Message to Humanity" (August 1997; "[messhum2.htm](#)") which were posted on the GCP homepage until the apocalyptic expectations reached a climax in summer 1997. None of these files have been web-posted again by any one of the groups, but under the latter title a video by S.Nidle is now offered through the PAO (cf. the PAO-file "[lectad1.htm](#)"). -- **Note:** Valerie Donner and Bil El Masri from the former GCP gave me their explicit permission (Oct. 1998) to make these files accessible again; they are now web-posted on [my homepage](#) at the University of Mainz.

- The capability of seeing the extra-terrestrials and their other-worldly "ships of Light" -- and of boarding them -- will be offered universally.
- In the course of a "mass landing", there will be over 15 million of such space ships arriving. Thereby all earthly weapons ("bombs, nukes, ships, and technological weaponry, regardless of its sophistication") will be first neutralised and then "beamed up to the ships".
- Each space ship will be accompanied by "at least one Angel": "Angels will be in charge and Earth is to be a Paradise."²⁹ With their special "training programs" and their "advanced technology" they will be able to raise people to "full consciousness" within sixteen hours.
- World government will be taken over by "The Spiritual Hierarchy" and all communication systems are to be replaced by their "advanced technologies". With this help the whole atmosphere of the earth will be transformed and purified.
- A photon belt will hit the earth ("like a massive tornado of energy") and within a few years (by 2012) the earth will become a "galactic showcase". The consequences will be ecological and sociological equilibrium, progress in five dimensions and immediate awareness of God.
- The earth will then become an incomparable paradise: "'We are bringing this creation to its end. We are now creating a galactic society.' This will happen before the end of this year!"
- Finally, the "dormant" Pineal Gland will be activated and all the bodily DNA of human beings will be altered; an immediate healing process (depicted with biblical allusions³⁰) will be brought into play.
- In the end everybody and everything will attain full consciousness ("The entire solar system will become fully conscious, even the planets"). Human beings will finally achieve a superhuman level, and thus the promise is: "You can make reality whatever you want it to be".

"It is now the Millennium."³¹ The earth will be changed back into its original condition of "Heaven on Earth"³². Unusual geological and climatic phenomena (e.g. the flooding of the River Oder in Poland and Germany in 1997) are recognisable 'signs of the times'. Since the changes are going to be dramatic, the friends from other planets will have to evacuate the human beings, at least

29 Earth is understood as a living being and is emphatically called "Mother Earth": "Planet Earth is a living, conscious being. She began her life in a much higher consciousness than that in which we know her today. In her original state, she was to be Heaven on Earth" (cf. the file "messhum2.html", similarly "messhum.htm"). Analogous conceptions could be found, for example, at "www.gaiamind.org" and "www.gaiamind.com".

30 "The crippled will walk, the blind will see, the deaf will hear, and the distraught, lost and alone will be filled with joy." But the description in the file "landings.htm" goes further than this biblical imagery by adding: "You will quickly become telepathic".

31 This is explicitly stated in "messhum2.htm".

32 There is also a *brief sketch of the mythic history* up to the present condition at the edge of the millennium ("messhum2.htm"): earth was originally created to be "Heaven on Earth". But the "Supreme Creator" asked her to participate in a "divine experiment" entailing that "over 6 billion" [i.e. 6 milliard] "enlightened souls from this and many other galaxies" be placed upon the earth to grow and mature spiritually under the conditions of this "third-dimensional realm". But the experiment failed: the soul-seeds "began to lose touch with their higher consciousness", and eventually *all life on this earth* started to suffer and became "dysfunctional". Now, at the beginning of the millennium, "Mother Earth" is finally "transforming herself back to a state of Heaven on Earth". Cf. (with slight differences) the mythic sketch in "messhum.htm".

temporarily, in their space ships with "holographic" environments. After a spiritual "ascension", complete consciousness will prevail and people will be able to design their own appearance, to be perfectly healthy, to create their own dwelling place and "to live for hundreds or thousands of years"³³: "As they say in the film 'Star Wars': 'the force is with you!'"³⁴ -- In this critical time, the Galactic Federation and the angels will provide "counsellors, supplies, teachers and new technology"³⁵.

The logo³⁶ of the original GCP brought the integration of these various religious and cosmological aspects very clearly into the picture. Under the rainbow there is a UFO, then the dove of peace and two angels with apocalyptic trumpets and, beneath, the earth held in two protective hands. The wreath surrounding the lower part (including planet earth) reminds of the emblem of the United Nations and appears to stretch these out into interstellar space (the "Galactic Society").



In their cosmology, these groups (GCP, GC and PAO) agree with the spectrum of New Age or esoteric movements, and their ufological variants³⁷ (Ashtar-Command, etc.): a completely *new era* is coming to birth. This implies a massive *transformation of cosmic dimensions*. Since everything hangs together, *outer* objective events interlace with the *inner* and spiritual. The other-worldly culture heroes and spiritual masters of antiquity ("Ascended Masters", "Angelic Realms", "Spiritual Hierarchy", etc.) will come again and help to set up the paradise on earth with the help of their spiritual and technological advance. Then the earth will again be what was intended in its creation: a "Heaven on Earth". In spite of the consistent references to other-worldly life forms, the worldview is decidedly *geocentric*: this earth is something special, the jewel among the planets. As if in a "people's pilgrimage to Zion", space ships are hastening here from all regions of the universe in order to share in experiencing the transformation of the earth and its civilisation. The earth then will be a "galactic showcase". A great work of multiplication falls to all earthly "light-workers" and "star seeds"³⁸: humanity must be prepared for the time to come and

33 Quoted from "messhum2.htm". Cf. in "messhum.htm": "You will be able to create anything you want with your mind and the new technology that will be provided for you. [...] You will be able to live for hundreds or thousands of years. You will be completely healed of any thing that is now wrong with you"

34 Quoted from "messhum2.htm". Still, all these "massive changes are being brought about by the grace of God. God is in charge here" (ibd.).

35 Quoted from "messhum.htm". This new technology "will be beyond your wildest imagination" (ibd.). In a web-posted interview ("intrview.htm"), S.Nidle explained in August 1997: "We need ET help to make it through the next level, whether you look at it from a purely scientific level or a purely spiritual level. There is no other way around it. This way is the only way out. That is why people, if they would look at it even logically, would see that. So you just have to get off this skeptical game. You have to get off it and get with the program."

36 On their homepage, the GCP even offered a T-shirt with this logo (picture-file "gclogo.jpg").

37 There is a real abundance of relevant sources on the Internet. The "Spiritweb" (main address: www.spiritweb.org, European mirror-site www3.eu.spiritweb.org), for example, posts many pages and links to UFO faith-topics like "Ashtar" (e.g. .../Spirit/ashtar-command.html or .../Spirit/our-mission-athena.html) and other Space-Masters. In Germany, a similar facility can be found at "www.freemind.de". Again, the use of search-engines like "www.fireball.de" (for sites available in German) or "www.webcrawler.com" (international) is strongly recommended, since they can help with an up-to-date *ordered list of links* for specific search-terms.

38 In contrast to "light-workers" (spiritually highly concerned earthly souls), "star seeds" are souls who in mythical times have been brought to earth from other parts of the universe. Cf. the explanations available on the PAO-

must be gathered (for example, by world-meditation days) until enough "critical mass"³⁹ of spiritual energy is accumulated to harmonise all earthly vibrations towards the peaceful future. The inevitable woes and symptoms of the end time are registered with anxious but joyful anticipation⁴⁰ because a great evolutionary change is imminent just as the space ships finally land.

Then, a *Big Beam* will protect humans from harmful consequences of the earth changes. What the groups say here is not unanimous. Sometimes it appears necessary to be "beamed up" to the space ships for protection, but on the other hand the ships might eventually make a direct landing since the transformation of the earth will not be so dangerous, but will produce immediate full consciousness and various paranormal capacities. In any event, the *Big Beam* will only be a short intermezzo, a brief rapture, since life will continue on "Mother Earth" which is meantime being changed into paradise.

The task of the earthly "Ground Crew" is to cooperate with this process or even to hasten it, to hold themselves ready as a mediation and contact team and to prepare humankind for the revolutionary changes.⁴¹ -- For the Melanesian Cargo Cults, the consumer goods and commodities of western civilisation became objects of religious concern. However, here it is the supposed *superior technology* of the aliens (passing between parallel worlds, velocity beyond the speed of light, teleportation or "beaming", etc.) as well as the *higher or paranormal spiritual faculties* (spiritual awakening, full consciousness; time travel, bilocation, telepathy, etc.) which, together with other gifts and "supplies", exercise an *exotic charm*.⁴²

4) The Heaven's Gate group

The cosmological framework is quite different for this group which has already been active for a long time⁴³. To be sure, the millennium is breaking in but with other portents. Here the *Big Beam* is the only "last chance" to leave the world "before it is recycled"⁴⁴. Certainly the world is to be

homepage ("starseed.htm" and "glossary.htm").

39 Cf. "landings.htm" and other GCP-documents. -- Similar ideas of gathering spiritual energy to change the state of the world can be found not only in esoteric and New Age-traditions, but also in other new religious movements.

"Transcendental Meditation", for example, has always insisted on the purifying results of group-meditations ("1%-Effect", "Maharishi-Effect" or even "Global Maharishi Effect"); cf. www.netlink.de/tm/.

40 "How long?", Valerie Donner is asking in her GCP-poem "Time" ("gc072597.htm"): "Time is no longer what it seems. / >From morning 'til night it changes its meaning. / An hour flies by and so does a day, / But waiting for ships can turn your hair grey. [...] How can we live with such crazy time? / Ships up there hovering and Mother Earth isn't so fine. / Time isn't what it used to be. / Maybe this is a part of setting us free. / The ships are coming - / But when, when, when?? / If you beam me up, Scotty, / I'll be your best friend."

41 Cf. V.Donner in her GCP-poem "Spread the Word" ("gcrw092097.htm"): "Spread the word./ Spread it far and wide. / There is nowhere to run to. / There is nowhere to hide. [...] Inform humanity about the major changes to come. / Warn humanity -- beat the drum. / Tell everyone the end is near. / Our UFO's, angels and God are here. / Don't be timid; don't be shy. / There's too much happening on Earth and in the sky. / Gather together all of the forces of Light. / Let's do our work now and help things turn out right."

42 For the relationship between cargo-hopes and exotic fascination, cf. K.-H.Kohl, "Cargo-Kulte in Melanesien -- Religiöse Heilserwartungen im kolonialen Milieu", in H.Wißmann (Hg), *Zur Erschließung von Zukunft in den Religionen. Zukunftserwartung und Gegenwartbewältigung in der Religionsgeschichte*. Würzburg 1991, 167-183.

43 For the origin, history and sociology of this movement, the publications of Robert W.Balch are of special significance; cf. his contribution to J.Lewis, *The Gods have landed*, 137ff (Lit.).

44 The Heaven's Gate-homepage (cf. "www.heavensgate.com" (now out of order), www.heavensgatetoo.com or other mirror-sites still accessible on the Internet; cf. also attached [link section](#)) shows an edited transcript of a video dated as of Sept. 29, 1996 ("vt092996.htm"; or "vg092996.htm" for a German version) which bears the title "Last chance

transformed, but not into a galactic paradise: it is to be "spaded under", "annihilated", "recycled" or changed for something else⁴⁵. It has reached the climax of its 'depravation'. It has been a holographic "classroom", a kind of "garden" for the cultivation of spiritual transplants from the *Level Above Human*. The harvest has been gathered now, following a repeated bi-millennium rhythm, by Jesus and his Father -- alias Marshall Herff Applewhite (*1931) and his "older member" Lu Trusdale Nettles (1917-1985), alias Do and Ti, or Bo and Peep (the "UFO Two") -- and there is no immediate further use for this earth.

In the "*Statement of an ET Presently Incarnate*",⁴⁶ already composed in 1995, it is explained that in the previous sixteen years two individuals from the "Level Above Human" (LAH)⁴⁷ were "incarnated into (moved into and took over) two human bodies" in order to be used as new "vehicles" (§1)⁴⁸. For a long while, the earth was being used (as were other "fruitful" planets) for the spiritual formation of souls: it is a "garden" for a "harvest of souls", a "transitional training ground" for potential new members of the heavenly kingdom. Every two thousand years the harvest is gathered, when the LAH makes renewed contact with the earth through representatives.⁴⁹ These as well as other human bodies, which are made available for incarnating LAH individuals, will be implanted with a special computer chip (by designated space crews) to prepare them for this function of incorporation. The significance of the earthly garden or "classroom" is that humans make themselves available as a "container" for LAH souls and are raised to maturity "while in the physical presence and tutorship of a Representative(s) sent from that Kingdom"⁵⁰. *This is the only "future" for human beings* since the earth is from time to time "spaded under" and "recycled"⁵¹.

*Consequently the esoteric or New Age vision of an approaching "Heaven on Earth" is explicitly rejected!*⁵² However, such a rejection seems to correspond 'biographically' with statements that Ti

to evacuate earth before it's recycled". -- In the following section I use my personal copy of these data, which I downloaded in April 1997.

45 This idea is reformulated many times in the group's Internet-files.

46 This programmatic document is contained in the *Online-Book*-file "1-4.htm" and in "[95upd96.htm](#)" of the main page. Cf. for the following remarks also the thoughts on "Incarnating and Discarnating" in the file "a48.htm" in the group's *Online-Book* ("[a48.htm](#)" in the appendix).

47 Sometimes also referred to as "Next Level" (NL), "Kingdom of God" or "Kingdom of Heaven". The LAH is "genderless" and "created all this"

48 Applewhite states himself: "In the early 1970's, two individuals (my task partner and myself) from the Evolutionary Level Above Human (the Kingdom of Heaven) incarnated into (moved into and took over) two human bodies that were in their forties. I moved into a male body, and my partner, who is an Older Member in the Level Above Human, took a female body. (We called these bodies "vehicles", for they simply served as physical vehicular tools for us to wear while on a task among humans. They had been tagged and set aside for our use since their birth.)" (cf. "1-4.htm" or [95upd96.htm](#)).

49 One thousand earthly years are supposed to equal one LAH-day (24 LAH-hours).

50 "a48.htm" in the *Online-Book*'s appendix.

51 The group-member Jnnody states in the file "a48.htm": "This is the only 'future' (life) that is available to humans, for periodically, the garden is 'spaded under' in preparation for another 'cycle' of a human civilization. At that time all those who have not been 'set aside' by the Kingdom of God will be part of the recycling or 'spading under'."

52 Such a rejection is stated several times on the web-site. Cf., for example, in the group's *Online-Book* (here: [a35.htm](#)) the following programmatic remark: "Many of the New Agers believe in *spacecrafts*, *ascended masters*, and so on. So, the space aliens lead them to believe that they have discovered some major metaphysical secret. These same space aliens promote the 'cosmic consciousness' -- encouraging New Agers to keep up with their tarot cards, their crystals, and their mantras -- though these games are no more significantly evil than those of any other religious practices. [...] This is a space-alien 'counterfeit' concept and nothing more than an artificial separation from the world. They attempt to find what they are looking for on the surface of this planet, thus creating another Earth-bound

and Do had once been involved with esoteric groups and teachings -- something which they gave up eventually and which was then reconstructed and depicted as a "temptation" by Satan⁵³.

Here the *Luciferian space aliens* come into play who always intervene on earth with intention to sabotage.⁵⁴ For example, they found "religions", they imitate the role of "gods", they lead people astray and manipulate them, they arrange a subversive transfer of genetic technology onto earth, etc. As distinct from the LAH, they are not without sex. To be sure, these space aliens are in some way analogous to the culture heroes of antiquity -- but with negative portents: they are fallen from LAH, they play(ed) the part of gods and lead people into error. They are antagonists to the LAH, to the Kingdom of Heaven which is really elsewhere in the endless reaches of outer space. They belong to Satan, to "Luci's camp"⁵⁵, and divert people into an earthly life which is, thus, inevitably bound to death.

religion, by becoming a part of some Himalayan enclave. Unfortunately, no Himalayan/ascended master would be permitted to set foot in the Next Level, even as a beginner. No Member of the Next Level would consider himself a 'master', but continually seeks to be a better servant to the Next Level through his Older Member. And you can be sure that any religious movement that has you desiring peace on Earth or some approaching *'heaven on Earth'* -- that has you desiring to stay on the Earth or in the human kingdom on any level, even in a monastic situation -- contains a *'misinformation virus'*, that is, a corrupted version of Next Level information. The Next Level wouldn't co-exist in the human kingdom any more than a human would choose to live in the restrictions of the horse world or that of the dog" (my italics). Further, cf. "3-3.htm" and "1-4.htm" in the Online-Book for another harsh refusal of esoteric-theosophical concepts like the "ascended masters" (which can already be found in H.Blavatsky) or of esoteric depictions of Jesus as just "some flowing-robed, peace-and-love manifestation of their artist's conceptions".

53 This is documented in the Online-Book's file [3-3.htm](#), where the "New Age" concept of Jesus as being one of the "Ascended Masters" in the Himalayan Mountains is rejected with reference to the biblical temptation story - located "on a high mountain"(!) -- in Matthew 4:8-9. "In the same way, Ti and Do were similarly tempted by the forces of Lucifer, when in the early stages of their awakening, they were drawn into the study of Theosophy, with its teachings of the Ascended Masters, Blavatsky's materials, and the Mahatma's Letters. On more than one occasion, Ti and Do were offered the trap of positions of leadership and power in Luci's camp, one of which occurred atop what most New Agers consider the highest spiritual mountain in the U.S. [...]. Ti and Do recognized, just as Jesus did, that this was a ploy of Satan and did not come from their Heavenly Father."

54 This can be found in "a35.html" (cf. already in the preceding footnotes the long quotation from "a35.html", with a harsh rejection of any "Heaven on Earth"-utopia). Other sources are "59upd96.htm" // "1-4.htm", "a52.htm", "a38.htm", and "vt100596.htm" // "vg100596.htm".

55 The rather amicable term "Luci's camp" might well be an allusion to the so-called "Luci's Trust" (or "Lucifer Publishing Company", 1922ff) dedicated to the works of Alice A.Bailey.

The kingdom of the LAH is, in contrast, "not of this world": *Only the one who consciously loses his life will gain eternal life.*⁵⁶ If salvation for the "little flock" depends on the correct procedure of beaming up to the space ship of the divine Father, then clearly there is no challenge to do anything to change the world. Now, there is only a final "disconnect"⁵⁷ -- like removing one's computer from the periphery or network. The earthly human bodies, nothing but empty "containers", can finally be scrapped. No tears are wasted over them: they have been enough of a hindrance. Other, perfect bodies⁵⁸ will be provided, much more suited to LAH souls. The pictorial representation of such a *Homo Novus* can be found on the Internet-site under the heading "How a Member of the Kingdom of Heaven might appear"⁵⁹.



No Cargo is expected here to change the world, for the "spirit" is the only precious good which is to be "saved" onto the Next Level. The world, and all that belongs to it is to be given up -- since it is literally a *virtual reality*⁶⁰. Who does not see this cannot be helped. The "Away Team" of the Heaven's Gate group recognises its isolation. They are a committed company, and mostly members of long standing. "Luci's camp" has infected the earthly holographic programme with computer viruses -- the whole world is effectively manipulated by a *Luciferian programming*.⁶¹ All religions seem to have got a *massive computer virus*: their files suffer from irreparable data loss⁶². So there is only one last resource: the LAH who started this world must press the Reset key and restart or "reboot" the experiment anew. But, before this, the intact software data⁶³, that is, every spiritual

56 This central idea is repeatedly stated on the group's Internet-site. Cf., for example, in the two video-transcripts accessible on the main page. The [welcome-page](#) itself contains this message in a nutshell: "The joy is that our Older Member in the Evolutionary Level Above Human (the 'Kingdom of Heaven') has made it clear to us that Hale-Bopp's approach is the 'marker' we've been waiting for -- the time for the arrival of the spacecraft from the Level Above Human to take us home to 'Their World' -- in the literal Heavens. Our 22 years of classroom here on planet Earth is finally coming to conclusion -- 'graduation' from the Human Evolutionary Level. We are happily prepared to leave 'this world' and go with Ti's crew."

57 "The final act of metamorphosis or separation from the human kingdom is the 'disconnect' or separation from the human physical container or body in order to be released from the human environment and enter the 'next' world or physical environment of the Next Level. This will be done under the supervision of Members of the Next Level in a clinical procedure. We will rendezvous in the 'clouds' (a giant mothership) for our briefing and journey to the Kingdom of the Literal Heavens" ("95upd96.htm" // "1-4.htm").

58 The "Evolutionary Kingdom Level Above Human [...] exists in the literal Heavens, with its own unique biological 'containers' or bodies, and modes of travel-spacecrafts or 'UFOs'" (Online-Book: ["6-9.htm"](#)).

59 The bust of this apparently genderless humanoid being ("[member.htm](#)") represents common, even *topic* traits of contemporary alien depictions (e.g. the alleged Roswell-pictures etc.).

60 In the Online-Book ("[465.htm](#)") it is stated that "the world out there is so artificial, and therefore our judgment as humans was artificial, as we move into the transition of becoming babes in our Father's Kingdom, [...] we begin to lose the confidence that we used to have in the artificial. [...] So, you then say, 'It's working. I am dropping the artificial.' In other words, 'I'm not sold out any longer to the wrong side. I'm losing the programming.'"

61 Cf. for the concept of a "Luciferian programming" or "Luciferian program" in this world Applewhite's declaration entitled "Do's Intro: Purpose -- Belief", in the file "dosintro.html" (or in "[03.htm](#)" of the Online-Book).

62 In a section entitled "Religions Are Humans' #1 Killers of Souls" (Online-Book, "[a35.htm](#)") the group member Jwnody reassures that Luciferian space aliens engineered "'misinformation viruses' to contaminate human perception": all religions, therefore, contain only "corrupted files" and "distorted data".

63 The body functions as a "container" for the "spirit". Or, in analogy to a computer, "the body is the hard drive or hardware, and the spirit is the software" (Online-Book, "[a48.htm](#)").

LAH implant must be "saved"⁶⁴ -- like a spiritual data recovery onto the head computer of the heavenly "Father's spacecraft".

- *The reinterpretation of cosmology by means of this massive computer metaphor indeed resembles the scenario in Fassbinder's film "The World on the Wire" (1973).*⁶⁵ We imagine we could live our lives and eventually simulate the world around us in a grand computer. But indeed *we are only the software in a virtual world* which is programmed at will and shaped by some Level Above.⁶⁶ *Salvation, therefore, is breaking out of a cosmological computer game, out of "virtual" holographic reality onto the "higher" reality, a saving (or even: data-saving) step up from one level to the next.*

Anlody, a member of the group, in the *Online Book* of the movement, makes this point very precisely: "Everything else here is subject to crashing once the program of this hologram gets rebooted", and so the "invitation to exit Earth is an invitation to go home"⁶⁷. The cosmological pessimism concerning the development of this world⁶⁸ is -- in a way quite analogous to Indian cosmological speculation along the Yugas⁶⁹ - compensated for by a special divine dispensation.



As in the times of 'bad dharma'⁷⁰, it is a distinctly easy form of religion which can bring salvation now (cf. the Indian *bhakti*-religions). One clings to the "Rep[resentative]" who has 'come down' (cf. the Indian *avatâra*) from the transcendent Level Above and goes up with him to his 'pure land'. As is stated by Stmody, another group member, in the *Online Book*:

- "[...] the situation regarding religions today is like having all computer files (all original Next Level messages) corrupted by a space alien computer virus that only the Next Level Rep can restore to readability. And the only reality is to connect with the Reps from the only real potential future, while they visit in the present, and go out on their coattails, while the

64 Cf. towards the end of the file "a-3.htm": "we [...] will be 'saved' [...] when the Next Level terminates this temporal, impermanent (if not holographic) existence".

65 In this German TV-film ("Welt am Draht") a computer expert named Stiller, responsible for a far-reaching computer simulation of socio-economic realities, suddenly realises that his own world is only a 'virtual reality', only another simulation on the level of a 'higher' computer. Eva, a digital 'representative' from this *really* real level, helps him to get out of the programme: at the time when he is 'virtually' dying by force, Stiller's consciousness (or soul) is 'saved' onto the Higher Level Reality.

66 In the Online-Book ("[465.htm](#)") one finds the remark: "Of course, Satan's side could say, 'Who's to say that as you move over here into the new computer and its program, that that isn't the artificial and the old is the real?'"

67 Towards the end of the file "[a52.htm](#)". For a similar statement, cf. "[6-9.htm](#)": "This Next Kingdom Level created the physical world, as we know it, as a 'holographic classroom' [...]. That hologram is about to be 're-booted' -- canceled and restarted -- for its usefulness and serviceability as a classroom have come to an end."

68 In opposition to the original "software package" from the true Level Above, there "is no 'sustainable future' to be found in this world", since all (other) religions have bought into a "death software package" chaining the human souls to earthly life ("[a48.htm](#)").

69 Cf. for example H.v.Stietencron, "Kalkulierter Religionsverfall: Das Kaliyuga in Indien", in H.Zinser (ed), *Der Untergang von Religionen*. Berlin 1986, 135-150.

70 Cf. the famous definition of an *avatâra* and his compensatory function (strengthening of *dharma* over against the increase of *adharma*) in Bhagavadgîtâ IV,7f. Analogous speculations about times of 'bad' *dharma* have been developed in the history of Buddhism. Cf. P.Hacker, "Zur Entwicklung der Avatârlehre", *WZKS* 4 (1969), 47-70; A.Eschmann, "Der Avatâragedanke im Hinduismus des neunzehnten und zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts", *Numen* 19:2-3 (1972), 229-240; R.Seemann, "Versuch einer Theorie des Avatâra", *Numen* 33 (1986), 91-140.

door is open. It's that simple."⁷¹

Religious reconstructions of history involving *depravation* are often in mutual interaction with evolutionary views on *salvation*: the universal fall from grace in all *other* religious systems is contrasted with a *restitution of truth*; that is to say, a new path to salvation is set up in the midst of universal illness (*Un-heilsgeschichte*). In March 1997 thirty nine members of Heaven's Gate accepted their "invitation to go home" and left their earthly containers or vehicles. They "discarnated"⁷² while the "Heaven's Gate" was standing open for them. They are now, in their opinion, secure while for all other people the great *cosmic Reset* is imminent and the real truth-data will be further "corrupted"⁷³. They left behind them about five megabytes of Internet-data -- like a digital fossil.

The massive computer-metaphoric or computer-cosmology used by this group appears consistent with the fact that they finally used the Internet as a primary medium for religious proclamation, although with little success. They even earned their money by doing web-design, and in this specific professional area they presented themselves under the name "Higher Source"⁷⁴. However, it is not astonishing that some of the UFO- and science fiction-themes surface again among the graphic examples presented on the Internet-pages of *Higher Source* as a suggestion or stimulation to eventual customers⁷⁵.

The most striking example is probably the witty graphic "Planning a Future Move?" designed for a fictitious intergalactic removal organisation named "Q-Haul" (an allusion to a well-known US-American removal service). The picture shows a flying saucer-shaped *starship* leaving planet earth. For effectively improved "moving technology and service" the accompanying text refers to the local "Continuum Rep" of *Q-Haul InterGalactic*, who will work out an "instantaneous relocation plan". -- Thus, the Higher Source-graphic is already a playful pictorial allusion to the Heavensgaters' *final move* under the



71 "a38.htm".

72 On the Heaven's Gate homepage, cf. the three "Exit-Statements" (cf. ["exit.htm"](#) which was not available on all mirror sites!), as well as the reasons given for the final "Disconnect" in the section on "Our Position Against Suicide" (["letter.htm"](#)), and Jnnody's "Incarnating and Discarnating" in the Online-Book (["a48.htm"](#)).

73 Cf. the following statement by Applewhite (["vt100596.htm"](#); cf. ["vg100596.htm"](#) for the German version): "I'm so happy, because my time is short here. If you come with us, your time here can be shortened. When Jesus left 2000 years ago -- or the one who was in Jesus, or when I left 2000 years ago -- only a very short time after that, *Truth was significantly corrupted*. So that no matter who tried to use the name of 'Jesus', or of 'Christ', or His information -- seeing it as true, seeing it as real, referring to what had been said of what it takes to come into my Kingdom -- that *fell apart*, that *deteriorated*, that became unimportant. It's a miracle that His Teachings can still be found in the gospels -- they're still there - you'd be amazed, you should read them again. Likewise this time, after I'm gone, when we leave, *when we enter into my Father's spacecraft* in order to go into service in His Kingdom, the *Truth will deteriorate as fast as we depart*. It will leave this atmosphere within a very short time" (my italics).

74 Originally at "www.highersource.com"; cf. now ["www.thur.de/re ligio/highersource/server/"](#) (or another [mirror-site](#)).

75 The world as "holograph" or "holo-deck", the concept of LAH-souls as "Away-Team", all this carries the spirit of the science fiction-series "Star-Trek" which was enthusiastically watched by the group. So not only the last graphic of the sample-page (["../pro/ graphics.htm"](#)) reminds of the starship Enterprise's holodeck, but the whole Higher Source-site is actually designed and portrayed in an interstellar space-setting.

apocalyptic signs of the comet Hale Bopp.

Although the group itself was strongly opposed to other (New Age or esoteric) versions of UFO faith, it is not surprising that shortly after their final "relocation" the Heavensgaters are said to have contacted an earthly UFO group named "Andromeda" from their new residence in the LAH, and their "successful transference" is then described in the following "channeled" way:⁷⁶

"There is a brief darkness, then a sense of moving out of the body rapidly and going upward. The speed of this is incomprehensible. The distance that the invisible part of self goes is not too far immediately. It is as if we went so far, stopped, looked back and knew that we had done it. [...] after we looked back and saw that we indeed had left, we acknowledged that we were still together as a group and went on to our next place of gathering." -- They go on to reassure the earthly humans that "there are real inter-planetary vehicles", and that earth (galactic name: "C-ton") is in an alarming state of ecological imbalance. Already embodied in their new, different "containers", they are now "moving away" from earth; but they promise to stay in contact -- with further "transmissions" and more "specific information" for earthly beings to "advance enlightenment".

Obviously, the original outlook of the Heavensgaters is here already reconstructed and 'appropriated' in the light of an esoteric "ascension" and earth-"purification" scenario which is shared by most of the UFO believing groups or individuals. The Heaven's Gate group, however, had no further interest in changing the world or in futile attempts to awaken earth-bound souls.

5) The millennium within the conflict of cosmologies -- "Heaven on Earth" or "Level Above Human"?

In the UFO groups discussed in the previous sections, it is already possible to identify *two basic -- if not ideal-typical -- options* of millenarian cosmologies:

- The hope for an imminent restoration of *paradise within this world* ("Heaven on Earth") prevalent among UFO believers, together with its expectation of a supernatural technology (here in the form of exotic, otherworldly Cargo from outer space), can form a bridge between the scientific technological world view and an ecological esoteric religiosity;
- Heaven's Gate demonstrates, to the contrary, a cosmology which explains the present world as 'virtual reality' and prognosticates its complete destruction: *salvation from this world* is to be found only in a radical "disconnect!". Since only a complete removal to the "higher level" -- or a correct beaming up of soul data -- promises salvation, this leaves no place for any kind of world-changing cargoism.

⁷⁶ I found the reference to this group in the web-posted article "[Beam me up](#)" (April 9, 1997) by Florian Rötzer (cf. at "[www.ct.heise.de/deutsch/inhalt/glosse/1162/1.html](#)"). In his comments on the Heaven's Gate suicide he had included an Internet-link to the "Andromeda Group" (now outdated); the working address is currently "[www.andromedagroup.com](#)". I could still retrieve two files ("the39.html" and "hgbin1.html") with the alleged messages from the Hevensgaters ("channeled" by a member of the Andromeda Group as early as March 29, 1997 -- i.e. only three days after the discovery of the Heaven's Gate suicide!). -- **Note:** Thanks to the kind permission of the Andromeda Group a copy of these two files is now accessible on [my homepage](#) at the University of Mainz.

G. Trompf, using a similar bipolar distinction, commented on the relationship between millenarian cosmologies and world-changing activity: "Some millenarisms conceive the coming Perfection to be on the heavenly plane; those that foresee it to be on Earth are more likely to take concerted action to realize it."⁷⁷ Eventually, the Heavensgaters simply prepared themselves for their final departure or rapture, whereas most other UFO believers try to "spread the word", to "activate" more ground personnel, and to improve the spiritual situation ("resonating frequency") of the whole planet, in order to accelerate the coming of the Great Final Transformation in a process of co-creation..

Both variants of UFO millennialism can equally be interpreted as a repristination of the typological basic patterns from the tradition of Christian apocalypticism. On the one hand, there is the *post-millennialist* (or dispensationalist) expression of the final establishment of the heavenly *kingdom on this earth* when Christ, at the end of the thousand year reign (already present but unseen), comes again for the final time and Satan, released for one last time, is ultimately defeated. On the other hand, there is the *pre-millennial* hope of the *rapture* of the 144,000 before the onset of the thousand year reign, that is, at the time of *The Great Tribulation* which comes upon the world and mankind with eschatological necessity and cannot be escaped, but must be endured with faithful trust in imminent and *final salvation from this world*.⁷⁸

Apart from Heaven's Gate, in UFO faith *both* millennial strands sometimes even appear to be merged, with the optimistic *post-millennial* vision to be more dominant. As in the case of the *Ground Crew (Project)* or *Planetary Activation Organization*, many faiths in eschatological space alien intervention fluctuate concerning the length of time for the *Big Beam* or *apocalyptic rapture*. However, in most cases the original 'thousand year reign' is reduced to a few years -- if not days, or even hours. Since the *Paradise* is to be restored *on Earth*, and a joyful, almost hedonistic life in cargoistic abundance is in sight, the Great Tribulation will only be a short intermezzo, and sometimes it can as well be completely neglected.

77 G. Trompf, *Cargo Cults*, 9.

78 In his studies on Protestantism in Central America, Heinrich Schäfer has pointed out that these two variants of Christian millennialism can actually stabilise each other in a quite frightening way since they are producing a "de-facto-legitimisation of political powers and leadership". On the one side, within the framework of their *pentecostal pre-millennialism*, the "reigned people" of the lower strata accept their own inevitable condition as "victims", and the devastating socio-political realities as "necessary signs of the imminent end of the world" during The Great Tribulation. On the other side, and in the light of a *neo-pentecostal post-millennialism*, the "rulers" can reconfirm their power (or: power-in-a-state-of-crisis) anew by identifying every questioning of the current political order with the antagonistic forces of "Evil" (here: Satan released for one last time) and, thus, they can justify the ardent fight against these forces by joining in on the side of the superior "power of God". As a matter of fact, "the two religious systems are functioning like a class-overarching mechanism for the legitimisation of the status quo in society", concludes H. Schäfer, "Dualistische Religion aus gesellschaftlichen Gegensätzen", *Wege zum Menschen* 41 (1989), 52-70 (here: 67f). Cf., by the same author, *Protestantismus in Zentralamerika: Christliches Zeugnis im Spannungsfeld von US-amerikanischem Fundamentalismus, Unterdrückung und Wiederbelebung "indianischer" Kultur*. Frankfurt/M. 1992; and *Befreiung vom Fundamentalismus: Entstehung einer neuen kirchlichen Praxis im Protestantismus Guatemalas*. Münster 1988.

Pictorial representation of the typical *Big Beam*-scenario: human beings are 'beamed up' (or levitated) by small flying saucers which are released from giant cigar-shaped "motherships". The latter ones are approaching earth in a grand symbolic formation of "crosses"

(found on an Internet-site dedicated to the Ashtar-Command; also printed as a cover to W. & T.Gauch-Keller, *Aufruf an die Erdenbewohner*. 1992).



Let me close with a final remark regarding the role of Cyberspace and computer technology in relation to the content and study of these movements.

The Internet seems to be particularly well suited for the presentation of such eschatologies and cosmologies, since its "virtual reality" provides the user with the *illusion of a privileged control over all information in the world*. The apparent ability to travel easily to Hong Kong or Australia (by "surfing") and to visualise the world in the web-browser at home evokes a feeling of genuine bilocation. The "network of networks" (as it is almost hagiographically called) offers the prospect of a gigantic *Akasha Chronicle* which the experienced user can tap into in order to "channel" special messages. Esoteric and New Age groups have understood themselves as a spiritual "network" for quite some time, and in the world-wide web this conception now finds an almost unsurpassable technological capacity for its realisation. And it is being eagerly used.

All this is not without effects for religious studies. Anyone practising religious research amidst the conditions of this rapidly expanding "virtual reality" will eventually become a user, since formerly it was hardly possible to acquire remote authentic material and personal expressions of religion so quickly; never before was it possible to follow the contemporary emergence and sudden disappearance of religious groups as it now happens on the Internet. In contrast to the proverbial "armchair research" or "desk research" (in German "Schreibtischforschung") which was formerly taboo, it seems that a new and long unexpected possibility of doing fruitful "desk-top research" is here, for in this networked *brave new world* of Cyberspace there exists a great store of undisclosed "cargo" for religious researchers.

Link Section Ufo & Religion

Links provided by Andreas Gründschloss Göttingen for the *Marburg Journal of Religion* © 11/1998

Links to UFO groups covered in my article

Internetadressen von Gruppen aus meinem Aufsatz

- Planetary Activation Organization -- <http://www.paoweb.com/>
 - The Ground Crew -- <http://www.thegroundcrew.com/>
- Note:** I got the permission to put some of the "old" files from the former *Ground Crew Project* on my homepage (<http://www.uni-mainz.de/~gruensch/UFO/Welcome.html/>) at the University of Mainz (especially files with the description the apocalyptic "mass landings" and "evacuation" scenario).
- Heaven's Gate - How and When It May Be Entered -- <http://www5.zdnet.com/yil/higher/heavensgate/index.html>
 - Heaven's Gate - How and When It May Be Entered -- <http://www.heavensgatetoo.com/>
 - Heaven's Gate - How and When It May Be Entered -- <http://www.highersource.org/mirror-heavensgate/>
 - Higher Source (mirror-site) -- <http://www.highersource.org/mirror-highersource/>
 - Higher Source - Web Site Design And Programming -- <http://www.religio.de/highersource/server/index.html>
 - Enter: The Andromeda Group -- Discovering Earth's Galactic Heritage – <http://www.andromedagroup.com>
- or direct access to the: contents: http://www.andromedagroup.com/andromeda_group.html

Other UFO-Links -- relating to issues covered in my article

Andere Links -- aus dem unmittelbaren Kontext meines Aufsatzes

- UFO-Nachrichten -- <http://www.freemind.de/un/>
- Aufstieg / Ashtar / etc. -- <http://www.lichtfamilie.com>
- FreeMind - Deutschland -- <http://www.freemind.de>
- FreeMind - Durchsage von Ashtar Sheran -- <http://www.freemind.de/kontakt/ashtar-19-02-97.htm>
- Wer ist Ashtar Sheran? -- <http://privat.schlund.de/PHOENIX/ashtar.htm>
- The Ashtar Command -- <http://www.ashtar.org/>
- GaiaMind (currently out of order) -- <http://www.gaiamind.com/>
- GaiaMind (currently out of order) -- <http://www.gaiamind.org/>
- G E O M A N (currently out of order) -- <http://www.geoman.com/>
- UFO'S & RELIGION -- <http://members.tripod.com/~uforelie/>
- UFO'S & RELIGION / Einstieg über NL (mirror) -- <http://www.aaaa.demon.nl/e/x0.html>
- Spiritweb.org -- Spiritual Consciousness on WWW -- <http://www.spiritweb.org/>
- Spiritweb.org -- Spiritual Consciousness on WWW -- Access from Europe (mirror) –

<http://www3.eu.spiritweb.org/>

- ["Beam me up" -- von F.Rötzer \(Artikel über Heaven's Gate\) --](#)

<http://www.heise.de/tp/deutsch/inhalt/glosse/1162/1.html>

- Enter: [Andromeda / Discovering Earth's Galactic Heritage](#) --

<http://www.andromedagroup.com>

-- or directly: [contents](#) -- http://www.andromedagroup.com/andromeda_group.html

- [World Light Center Home Page](#) -- <http://www.worldlightcenter.com/>
- [Ashtar's Universal Society of Interplanetary People](#) -- <http://www.marsena-ashtar.com/>
- [Inhaltsverzeichnis von "alien.de"](#) -- <http://www.alien.de/alien/i.htm>

Other UFO-links on the Internet (selection) -- Check for relevant sites

Sonstige UFO-Links im Internet (Auswahl) -- Versuchen Sie es hier

- [Das UFO-WWW](#) -- <http://www.ufo.at>
- [Welcome to the World of Sovereign Light](#) -- www.sanatkumara.com
- [Arton New Age Booklist](#) -- <http://www3.islandnet.com/~arton/nagebook.html/>
- [I AM America Home Page](#) -- <http://www.iamamerica.com/>
- [UFO'S & RELIGION / Enter here for a Variety of Links](#) --
<http://members.tripod.com/~uforelie/x0.html>
- [A.A.S. Forschungsgesellschaft für Archäologie, Astronautik und SETI-HomePage](#) --
<http://www.aas-fg.org/>
- [A.A.S.: Erich von Daeniken](#) -- <http://www.aas-fg.org/evd>
- [AAS RA - Archaeology, Astronautics and SETI Research Association-HomePage](#) --
<http://www.aas-ra.org/>
- [Ufologie / Deutsche Homepage mit UFO-Links](#) -- <http://www.aas-ra.org/ufo/index.html>
- [Kopp-Verlag](#) -- <http://www.ufos.de>
- [New Age Web Works](#) -- <http://www.newageinfo.com/>
- [UFO Resources](#) -- <http://www.newageinfo.com/res/ufo.htm>
- [UFO's / And Other Related Material](#) -- <http://www.westnet.com/~teack/ufo.html>
- [Yahoo! - Search directly for a list of various entries on "UFO"](#) --
<http://search.yahoo.com/bin/search?p=UFO>
 - [Yahoo! - Society and Culture / Religion ... New Age](#) --
http://www.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Religion_and_Spirituality/Faiths_and_Practices/New_Age/
 - [Yahoo ! Society and Culture / Religion and Spirituality](#) --
http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Religion_and_Spirituality/
 - [Yahoo! - Science/Alternative/Paranormal Phenomena/Extraterrestrial Life](#) --
http://dir.yahoo.com/science/alternative/paranormal_phenomena/extraterrestrial_life/
 - [Yahoo! \(D\) - Grenzwissenschaften / Ausserirdisches / UFOs](#) --
http://de.dir.yahoo.com/naturwissenschaft_und_technik/grenzwissenschaften/paranormale_phaenomene/ausserirdisches/ufos/

- CSETI - The Center for the Study of Extraterrestrial Intelligence (a) -- <http://www.cseti.com/>
- CSETI - The Center for the Study of Extraterrestrial Intelligence (b) -- <http://www.cseti.org/>
- UFOs, Aliens, SETI -- <http://www.k2nesoft.com/esoteric/ufo.html>
- www.spiritweb.org (homepage)
- [www.spiritweb.org](http://www3.eu.spiritweb.org) (mirror in Europe) -- <http://www3.eu.spiritweb.org>
 - Ca scading Light Through Portals - Lord Sananda and Commander Ashtar -- <http://www.spiritweb.org/Spirit/sananda-ashtar-whalley-01-11-1996.html>
 - Ashtar (Landing Update) -- <http://www.spiritweb.org/Spirit/sananda-ashtar-whalley-01-11-1996.html>
 - Masters, Extraterrestrials and Archangels -- <http://www.spiritweb.org/Spirit/masters-ets-angels.html>
 - Channelings and Higher Realms -- <http://www.spiritweb.org/Spirit/channelings.html>
- Freie Zone e.V. Home Page (Unabhängige Scientologen) -- <http://www.freezone.org/>
 - Bernd von Wittenburg: Schach der Erde (Inhaltsverzeichnis) -- http://freezone.org/sde/sde_inh.htm
 - Schach der Erde - Kapitel II: Inhalt -- <http://freezone.org/sde/sde02toc.htm>
 - Chronologie: Einflussnahme auf die Menschheitsentwicklung - VI -- <http://freezone.org/sde/sde0206.htm>
- Ken's UFO Page -- <http://www.harbornet.com/ufos/ufopage.html>
- FreeMind - Durchsage von Ashtar Sheran -- <http://www.freemind.de/kontakt/ashtar-19-02-97.htm>
- Link Station XOIO #1: Aliens, Abduction, Implants, Contact – <http://www.ergonomica.com/amoona/UFO-ET-links.html>
- ETADO - The Extraterrestrial Anti-Defamation Organization - World Wide Response – <http://www.ergonomica.com/amoona/ETADO.html>
- Link Station X010: Spirit, Mind, GAIA: Global Consciousness Evolution, Millennium – <http://www.ergonomica.com/amoona/Ufolinx4.htm#Millenium>
- Adamski Foundation Home Page -- <http://www.gafintl-adamski.com/GAFpg1.htm>
- Mediale Durchsagen * Prophezeiungen * Esoterik * Prophecies * Prophéties * Profecías -- <http://members.aol.com/geistwesen/zukunft/index.html>
- Lichtpunkt [Channelings zur Lichtarbeit] -- <http://www.bengrove.u-net.com/lichtpunkt.htm>
- The Contact Project - Home Page -- <http://sunsite.unc.edu/lunar/alien.html>
- Welcome to the Communion Homepage -- <http://www.strieber.com/>
- Ashtar Sheran (currently out of order) -- <http://home.t-online.de/home/0814124755-0001/ashtar.htm>
- Startseite UFO-Treff (currently out of order) -- <http://home.t-online.de/home/0814124755-0001/homepage.htm>

Special Focus: "Heaven's Gate" (Articles, News, Cover Stories)

- Heaven's Gate : Cult Suicide in San Diego --
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ISBN=0061012726/weissbachtalkradA/7385-9842357-728912>
- "Beam me up" -- von F.Rötzer --
<http://www.ct.heise.de/tp/deutsch/inhalt/glosse/1162/1.html>
- "Heaven's Gate" -- von Georg Otto Schmid (www.ref.ch) (1997) --
<http://www.ref.ch/zh/infoksr/HeavensGate.html>
- Higher Source / Heaven's Gate (Religio) --
<http://www.thur.de/religio/highersource/start.html>
- **Washington Post** -- Cult Suicide Special Report -- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/cult/cult.htm>
 - WashingtonPost.com: The Life and Death of a Cult (frames) --
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/cult/cult_frame_set.htm
 - Overview -- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/cult/overview.htm>
 - 1972-76: The Birth of a Cult -- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/cult/birth.htm>
 - 1976-92: In Seclusion -- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/cult/seclusion.htm>
 - 1992-96: Back in the Spotlight -- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/cult/spotlight.htm>
 - 1996-97: The Hale-Bopp Link -- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/cult/comet.htm>
 - 1997: The Suicide -- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/cult/suicide.htm>
- **TIME 4/7/97** -- Cover Story: "Heaven's Gate" (Contents) --
<http://pathfinder.com/time/magazine/1997/dom/970407/>
 - E.Gleick: "The Marker we've been ... waiting for" --
http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/magazine/1997/dom/970407/the_marker_we.html
 - J.Wambaugh: "Meanwhile, back at the Ranch" --
http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/magazine/1997/dom/970407/meanwhile_bac.html
 - H.Chua-Eoan: "Imprisoned by his own Passions" --
http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/magazine/1997/dom/970407/imprisoned_by.html
 - "With Bo and Peep, a Chore every 12 Beeps --
http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/magazine/1997/dom/970407/with_bo_and_p.html
 - R.Corliss: "A Star Trek into the X-Files" --
http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/magazine/1997/dom/970407/a_star_trek_i.html
 - R.Lacayo: "The Lure of the Cult" --
http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/magazine/1997/dom/970407/the_lure_of_t.html
 - J.Quittner: "Life and Death on the Web" --

http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/magazine/1997/dom/970407/life_and_deat.html

Additional Information:

- Re: Time Cover Story - Part 1 --
<http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/reports/cult/heavensgate/heavensgate1.html>
- Re: Time Cover Story - Part 2 --
<http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/reports/cult/heavensgate/heavensgate1.html>
- Re: Time Cover Story - Part 3 --
<http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/reports/cult/heavensgate/heavensgate1.html>
- Re: Time Cover Story - Part 4 --
<http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/reports/cult/heavensgate/heavensgate1.html>

- **CNN -- Day-by-Day News Report on the Suicide**
 - Index of /US/9703/ -- <http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/>
 - CNN - 39 men die in mass suicide near San Diego - Mar. 26, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/26/mass.suicide.too/>
 - CNN - Bodies found in California mansion after mass suicide - Mar. 26, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/26/mass.suicide/>
 - CNN - Mass suicide involved sedatives, vodka and careful planning - Mar. 27, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/27/suicide/>
 - CNN - Associate of group member says deaths linked to UFO, Hale-Bopp - Mar. 27, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/27/suicide.interview/>
 - CNN - Mass suicides in recent years - March 27, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/27/suicide.list/>
 - CNN - Coroners search for answers to mass suicide - March 27, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/27/suicide.update.am/>
 - CNN - Group designed Web sites, worked as contract programmers - Mar. 27, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/27/suicide.web/>
 - CNN - 'The end of the age is upon us' - March 28, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/28/suicide.soundpage/>
 - CNN - 'The end of the age is upon us' - March 28, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/28/suicide.soundpage/>
 - CNN - Web sites swamped amid rush for clues to suicides - March 28, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/28/suicide.internet/>
 - CNN - Some members of suicide cult castrated - Mar. 28, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/28/mass.suicide.pm/>
 - CNN - First autopsies completed in cult suicide - Mar. 28, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/28/mass.suicide/>
 - CNN - Former cultist: talk of leaving Earth became more frequent - Mar. 28, 1997 --
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/28/cult.members/>
 - CNN - Applewhite: From young overachiever to cult leader - Mar. 28, 1997 --

<http://www.cnn.com/US/9703/28/applewhite/>

• **Index of /US/9704/** -- <http://www.cnn.com/US/9704/>

(...) with further entries in this month

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First published in Marburg Journal of Religion