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Global Salvation Inc.: Sir Michael Barber's education for the apocalypse and the church of *Deliverology*[®]

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on insights from philosophy and theology, we explore the relationship between religion, data and global education policy through an analysis of the career of Sir Michael Barber, widely regarded as an authority on the reform of public services and an influential policy entrepreneur. The analysis provides a novel perspective which illuminates how secularised salvation narratives and apocalyptic symbolism have become more prominent in his work as he rose to become a global actor. The story is entwined with the turn towards New Public Management (NPM) in education, the rise of international large-scale assessments (ILSAs), and the transition from speculative faith to salvation through the 'science of delivery'. We follow Barber's role in formalising the faith as a secular political theology, and promoting it globally through Delivery Units and the management doctrine of *Deliverology*[®]. The analysis closes by reflecting on the practical implications of the movement, which is now woven into the institutional ideologies and reform strategies of major international organisations, agencies and corporations as part of a wider shift towards New Global Management (NGM) in global education governance.

KEYWORDS

New Global Management; *Deliverology*; Michael Barber; Delivery Units; apocalyptic turn

Introduction

Targets and data are important, but they need to be set within a context and surrounded by a compelling narrative. This helps to ensure the best possible prediction, and to ensure that those involved are motivated by a moral purpose. (Sir Michael Barber 2017, 16)

This article traces the career path, publications and personal reflections of Sir Michael Barber, who is widely recognised as one of the most influential actors in global education policy, and an authority on the reform of public services. During his time leading the UK Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU) in the early 2000s, Barber coined the term *Deliverology*[®] to describe the Unit's approach to reform, positioning it as an 'emerging science'. The approach was oriented towards enhancing and optimising the effectiveness of government, influenced by principles from managerialism and developed to support a system of New Public Management (NPM).

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Since then, the principles of *Deliverology*[®] have been woven into the institutional ideologies and reform strategies of leading international organisations, aid agencies and corporations, and Barber has held leadership posts in two of the most influential agencies in global governance, namely McKinsey and Pearson. Barber is of analytical interest due to his depth of experience and his influential role leading a revolutionary era of public reform, one that is entwined with the rise of international large-scale assessments (ILSAs) and contemporary processes of global governance and education policy.

Whereas Barber has been widely portrayed as a ‘policy entrepreneur’ promoting a science-led approach to education reform, we draw on perspectives and analytical tools from theology and philosophy to illuminate (i) how NPM functions as a secular political theology, (ii) the salvific role of science-led delivery, standardised data and ILSAs, and (iii) how Barber has variously operated as a secular political theologian, freelance preacher, and finally as an intellectual prophet. Previously, we have explored how ILSAs are used to construct knowledge to support policy transfer (2016), how data is deployed within strategic narratives that aim to support organisational legitimacy and forge world order (Auld and Morris 2021) and how international organisations adapt principles from science to legitimate and extend the coverage of ILSAs (Auld et al. 2022). By following the case of Sir Michael Barber, we illuminate existential roots deeper than the debate being held on the surface.

Thematically we build on Kim’s (2020) interest in academic mobility and biographies, and Tröhler and Maricic’s (2021) attention to the relationship between data, trust and faith, extending their historical inquiry into *the unheeded religious roots of modern education policy* by showing its persistent presence and affective power in the present. As they point out, conceptions of science are so interwoven with a socio-political epistemology that has religious roots in the hope of salvation, that it can only be illuminated by research that adopts a different epistemological perspective, and corresponding method. We take inspiration from Rasmussen (2012), who demonstrates how economists and social scientists act as political theologians. He argues that theology ‘has the potential to perceive what tends to remain invisible for much of “mainstream” academic culture, so to better see and analyse background convictions, narratives, commitments, practices, and social realities that are taken for granted’ (201). That is, when scientists make statements about how society functions, or how to live and organise society, it is not only to do with socio-economic, historical, or cultural issues, but also with something ‘deeper’.

Our analysis is based on an extensive review of academic research, consultancy reports, speeches, journalism, interviews and personal reflections that are publicly available and have been published by or about Sir Michael Barber. A full list of the sources that informed the analysis is provided as Appendix 1, available via Supplementary Sources. A curriculum vitae¹ published online allowed us to identify key phases of Barber’s career based on his own criteria of significance. Barber has also published three autobiographical manifestos (1997; 2008; 2016), which provided a resource for triangulating our analysis with regard to Barber’s accounts of his experiences, intentions, and outlook at different stages of his career. The analysis of these materials was informed by two complementary perspectives, which were selected to illuminate and interpret the recurring religious symbolism and patterns of reasoning that we observed.

First, Norman Cohn’s (1993; 2001) historical studies of ancient apocalyptic imaginings, revolutionary millenarianism, and modern ideologies. Cohn provides (i) biographical insights on the lives of new messiahs and generalisations about them as a social type,

and (ii) analytically, an understanding of how stories and symbols of the apocalypse have been reimagined across historical periods. Greater analytical depth is achieved by drawing on Eric Voegelin's approach to hermeneutics, which focuses on modes of experience and symbolisation. Specifically, his (iii) analysis of a familiar and influential category of Enlightenment revolutionaries and ideological system builders whom he termed 'New Christs' (Turgot, Marx, Condorcet, Saint Simon, Comte) provides a fitting framework for interpreting Barber's spiritual journey, dogmatic system building, and messianic self-depiction. Voegelin's existentially grounded framework enriches Cohn's biographical approach, and insights from both are interwoven with Barber's autobiographical reflections at relevant points to inform the analysis.

The article illuminates how apocalyptic symbolism has grown more pronounced throughout Barber's career, his positioning as a new messiah, and the concomitant transition from speculative faith to salvation through the quasi-science (of delivery) which was formalised in the management doctrine of *Deliverology*[®]. As we illustrate, his story is entwined with the rise of ILSAs (in particular, the OECD's PISA). The phases of Barber's career used to structure the article are: (i) *faith in God to secular idealism*; (ii) *revolutionary imagination and speculative system*; (iii) *faith in system and global vision*; (iv) *formalising system and faith in self*; (v) *messianic turn and The Good News*; (vi) *codification of truth and spread of gospel*.

The book of barber

The picture in each case is much the same. These men all started as freelance preachers devoted to the apostolic way of life but ended by going much further. [They] developed messianic pretensions ... What they shared was familiarity with the world of apocalyptic and millenarian prophecy, and interest – obsession – with eschatological fantasies long before it occurs to them in the midst of social upheaval to claim, with some show of plausibility, a special role in bringing history to its consummation. (Cohn 1993, 46, 284-285)

The following sections follow the life of Sir Michael Barber, entwining his life, experiences, and teachings with the lives of the new messiahs of medieval Europe.

(i) Missionary zeal: faith in god to secular idealism

In her studies of religious identity and culture, Edwards (2018) stresses the importance of early socialisation into a religious worldview and claims that one does not 'lose' one's identity or 'imprint' even if no longer formally adhering to the faith. That imprint is acknowledged by Barber:

My parents were very clear that you were on the planet to make a difference. It was absolutely assumed that you were getting a good education and you were going to improve humanity. I'm very driven by that possibility and that opportunity. I really appreciate, benefit from, and try to live by the values and attitudes I learned from them. (Barber, in Stanford-Blair and Dickman 2005, 16)

Barber (2008) notes that his family have been Quaker for many generations, describing himself as 'strongly adhering to Quaker values' (5). He attended Bootham School in York, England. The school website² affirms its Quaker foundations whereby students are encouraged to 'share a way of life rather than a set of beliefs' and seek 'to experience

God directly, within ourselves and in our relationships with the world around us'. It emphasises that 'faith requires action in the world', promoting a call to charity and missionary work. Although no longer practicing, Barber (2008) acknowledges that the values imparted during his time at Bootham School are something that 'I draw on deeply and often in my working life' (4).

Despite his fall from faith, these values would be reimagined within his secular politics, with Barber (2008) stating that, 'leaving school in 1973, I caught the end of the 1970s radicalism and took the view that, with a combination of long hair and left-wing politics I could change the world' (5). He completed a BA in History at Queens College (Oxford), a PGCE at Westminster College (Oxford), and an MA in Educational Management and Administration at the University of London. His early professional roles were as a Secondary Teacher. First, in England, at Watford Grammar School from 1979. And then, in 1983, 'as a young idealist', he took a position at Seke No.1 High School in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, 'when it seemed a great hope for African development' (Barber quoted in Wilby 2011). Elsewhere, Barber (2008) reflects, 'naively, I believed I was making a contribution to building a model African democracy on the ashes of colonialism and apartheid' (16).

When his early faith in liberal democracy and western-led development failed to deliver on its promises, Barber (2008) attributed its failure to local implementation, blaming contextual issues and a corrupt regime.

(ii) Egophanic Revolt: Revolutionary imagination & speculative system (1985-1997)

... the next century might see the realisation of the kind of humane and democratic world order which for previous generations has been no more than a utopian dream. It is possible, but at this moment it has to be admitted that that prospect seems as distant as it ever did. (The Learning Game, Barber 1997, 30)

Barber returned to the UK in 1985, accepting a job as 'education policy wonk' in the Education Department of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and rising to become Head of the Education and Equal Opportunities Department (Barber 2008). He reflects that he was becoming a genuine political activist from 1985 onwards, stating that he saw 'active politics as a way of changing the world' (Barber 2008, 6). After reading, *The Changing Idea of a Teachers Union* (Kerchner and Mitchell 1988), he adopted the view that rather than asking governments to pay teachers more, they could turn accountability arguments on their head, whereby 'we'll show you how much we are improving the system, then you'll realise how much it is worth investing in us and in public education' (20).

Becoming disillusioned with the resistance to his views within the NUT, Barber joined Keele University as Professor of Education in 1993 where he became active in journalism. He contributed a weekly column for the Education Magazine (1993-1996) and a monthly column for the Times Educational Supplement (1995-2001), in which he 'poured out articles for newspapers promoting accountability' (Barber 2008, 21). His early research was preoccupied with a concern for schools in urban areas, captured in his 1995 Greenwich Lecture, *The Dark Side of the Moon: imagining an end to failure in urban education*. Barber had entered the related fields of school effectiveness and school improvement research, which had been gaining traction in the across the UK, US, Australia, Canada and Holland by the mid-1990s (White and Barber 1997) and which aligned with the nascent form of governance described as NPM.

In 1995, Barber joined the Institute of Education (now in UCL) as Professor of Education and Dean of New Initiatives. Here, he continued publishing guidelines and manifestos for education reform. These were captured in titles such as: *Creating a framework for success in urban areas* (1995), and, *How to do the impossible: a guide for politicians with passion for education* (1997). In *The Making of the 1944 Education Act*, Barber (1994) expressed admiration for journalist and schoolteacher T. C. Worsley, remarking that ‘Education reform to him was a matter of national salvation’ (11). This sentiment is evident in Barber’s (1997) breakthrough book, *The Learning Game: Arguments for an Education Revolution*. The book reveals an early fascination with eschatological fantasies, adopting a revolutionary mantra:

Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it. (Karl Marx 1888; quoted in Barber 1997)

The mantra evokes the relevance of Voegelin’s (1968) inquiry, in which he identifies a common sequence of experiences expressed by the Enlightenment revolutionaries and ideological system builders, characterised as the ‘egophanic revolt’: (i) the thinker is dissatisfied with the current situation (particularly, the intractability of social ills); (ii) a belief that the world is intrinsically poorly organised (presence of evil); (iii) rejecting the human condition, the belief that salvation from the evil of this world is possible; (iv) the order of being will therefore have to be changed through a revolutionary process; (v) change in the order of being lies in the realm of human action. Finally, (vi) it is the task of the thinker to seek out the prescription, involving the construction of a system (formula) for self and world salvation. The revolt, Voegelin argues, enables the explosive release of the *libido dominandi* (will to power) to act on the world in the form of their revolutionary ideologies.

That experiential sequence is vividly expressed in *The Learning Game*, which reveals a strong sense of dissatisfaction and distress. Barber (1997) opens by reflecting that ‘the new world order, heralded by George Bush with such optimism as recently as 1990, turns out to be a dangerous place’ (16). The presence of evil, in the form of poverty and starvation, rising tides of conflict and cruelty, and unfettered materialism and environmental destruction, would present the next generation with ‘a set of challenges more profound than any in human history’ (17). Although these scourges were previously assumed to be ‘acts of God’ and ‘beyond the power of human solution’ (17), people now understood that ‘mankind had the power to shape its destiny, or destroy it’ (17). To prepare for this ‘awesome destiny,’ it was necessary to examine the upbringing and education provided for society’s young.

Barber describes these considerations as ‘the justification for a radical programme of education reform,’ before scaling his ambition to speculate that ‘perhaps it ought also to be the justification for a much wider agenda of social reform including the role of the family, the Church and other social institutions of the late twentieth-century society’ (17). Rather than imitate Pacific Rim cultures, which had thriving economies and performed well on ILSA’s, Barber suggests that ‘finding our own path to education success demands that we reconstruct our entire approach to learning,’ and ‘redesign the entire process of learning’ (248). Having established the foundations for the revolution, he arrogates the task of identifying a formula, or system, for salvation.

Barber identifies a key source of inspiration as *Re-engineering the Corporation* (Champy and Hammer 1995), which defines re-engineering as: ‘tossing aside old systems and starting over’ (249), and which Barber notes is ‘precisely the argument I have been making about education reform’ (249):

In envisioning ... an education system that might meet these goals, I have drawn on a wide range of research and analysis in education and related fields ... I have, in short, attempted to use my imagination ... (5)

Barber has expressed dissatisfaction with the situation, citing perennial ills within the current world order and believing it intrinsically poorly organised. The challenges of our age are portrayed as greater than any in history. Mankind, however, has the power to shape destinies rather than rely on faith in God. Barber views radical education reform as central to national salvation, but speculates that the revolution should encompass all institutions of late-twentieth century society. It remains for him to identify a formula for salvation, with inspiration for his revolution drawn from a business management manifesto from the USA. After two decades of neoliberal reforms, and a discourse of derision regarding tradition, theory and values in education research, business management and the gospel of efficiency provide the main source of inspiration for the revolutionary imagination.

(iii) National Salvation: Faith in system and global vision (1997-2005)

As [Blair] got up to go ... he just touched my shoulder as a friendly gesture to say goodbye. I doubt this was thought through from his point of view, but to me, in front of that audience, the gesture was of incalculable benefit. (Barber 2008, 69)

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair famously remodelled New Labour for a 'post-ideological world,' rising to power on a platform that advocated a 'third way' in which 'what matters is what works'. Despite post-ideological positioning, the 'third way' was a form of NPM, arguably retaining neoliberal ideals at its core, while Tröhler and Maricic (2021) point out that reliance on data associated with neoliberalism is underpinned by something deeper. Nelson (2001) unpacks the ways in which the Christian narrative of salvation has been secularised in market economics and the gospels of efficiency and effectiveness. The result is a form of theological individualism, whereby if citizens have faith in economists and the markets, behave rationally to maximise efficiency and effectiveness, society will progress on a path that will diminish scarcity and in turn eradicate wider social ills (i.e. evil), gradually leading to a heaven on earth.

The new secular political theology required a new class of pragmatic specialists to interpret statistical data, while traditions and theories not expressed in the data represented barriers to improving efficiency and effectiveness and were cast as immoral. Barber was well suited to the orthodoxy, identifying himself as an 'activist academic' (2013)³, 'willing to be an activist on behalf of any party that was doing the kinds of things I thought they should be doing.' This has the imprint of his Quaker upbringing, a non-dogmatic tradition, but one which emphasises action on the world. Barber had been writing Blair's education speeches leading up to the general election and was appointed as Head of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit, a position he held from 1997 to 2001. He claimed the policy revolution his team unleashed was followed by the 'first big jump in results' in 1999, and an international comparison that showed that 'England's performance in reading had improved significantly relative to other countries' (35)

The following year, Barber (2000) scaled up his ambition when he presented *The Evidence of Things not Seen: Reconceptualising Public Education* at an OECD conference. His presentation led with the revealing quote:

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the
evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews Chapter 11: 1 (in Barber 2000)

Voegelin (1952) stresses the fragility of Christianity's style of truth, which rests on the tenuous bond of faith, he elaborates: 'ontologically, the substance of things hoped for is nowhere to be found but in faith itself; and, epistemologically, there is no proof for things unseen but again this very faith' (122). The more widely the gospel was spread, the greater were those who did not have the spiritual stamina to sustain such a heroic feat of faith. Barber's faith in both divine providence and western liberal democracy as a model for world salvation had been shaken, nurturing his revolutionary imagination. Despite personal faith in his system, the accumulation of more data would provide 'something seen' (i.e. 'proof' of 'what works') as spiritual nourishment.

At several key points throughout the speech Barber turns to the theme of 'faith' and opens mystically, 'as the twenty-first century begins and we peer into the future through mists of complexity and uncertainty, the task is to justify the continued existence of public education systems' (1). He proclaims that the nation state and industrial society is ending, and 'the new economy and globalisation, both products of the technological revolution in which we are engulfed, define the new era' (Barber 2000, 1). The era of old slow-moving, steady respectable bureaucracies 'is over.' Drawing a line in history, he asserts that 'there is plenty of evidence about what worked in the past but very little evidence of what will work in the future' (2).

Barber defines the role of data in his revolutionary system, inspired by re-engineering the corporation. He observes that in the twentieth century education had focused on standardising inputs, whereby outputs became the 'variable'. In the new system, to ensure 'high standards for all,' it follows that 'output must become the constant, and consequently the inputs become the variables' (4). The education workforce (now, variables), 'especially the teaching profession,' will have to change, encompassing 'everything from attitudes to pedagogy and will be nothing short of revolutionary' (2). For teachers, 'if they remain wedded to old ways, the revolution will, of course, present a threat' (11). But those who embrace his vision, 'it will become a huge opportunity' (11).

The audience is reminded that teachers need to have faith that students can achieve high standards, which he argues is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Despite the growing evidence base, 'it does not provide answers to all the questions' (17). Noting a decade of controversial and intense reform in England, Barber acknowledges these processes have provided insights but not *proof* of how systems might rise to the challenges of the twenty-first century. He closes by stressing the need for 'faith'. Having established the apocalyptic conditions 'in which we are engulfed', Barber scales his vision to argue that 'every country ... will need to give greater attention to how we ensure the performance of pupils, schools and the system as a whole' (9), highlighting emerging approaches in England and the US, which:

... alongside major international projects such as PISA, will provide us with the basis to develop the sophisticated measurement systems and performance indicators for 'education with character' that we will need in the decade ahead. (9)

A year later, after Labour's landslide election in June 2001, Barber was appointed Head of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU). He reflects that, '[Blair] didn't put it this way, but I felt at that moment that the 'instruction to deliver' he believed the electorate had given him was now being transferred to me' (43). Barber's one request was to have 'An office in No. 10 and answering directly to Blair' (43), bypassing traditional bureaucracy. He recalls a meeting involving ministers from four key departments, which was 'opened by Blair himself, who stressed how much importance he attached to the Delivery Unit and its agenda' (68). Barber reflects that 'the value of the occasion was all in its symbolism,' recognising that 'symbolism so often underpins influence' (69), and reflecting that 'the Delivery Unit had been anointed by the PM in the presence of its key stakeholders'.

Barber and his team began honing the approach to reform that became known as Deliverology®. Though the term 'deliverology' was coined by a Treasury Official as a term of gentle abuse, Barber (2016) notes that the PDMU team chose to adopt it as their 'rallying cry' and to wear it as a 'badge of honour' (xix). Barber (2016) notes that 'the implication of the -ology suffix was that something akin to a science was emerging' (xix), duly affirming, 'this is what I believe' (xix). Recognising that symbolism so often underpins influence, the -ology suffix and allied insistence on method would send the message that the PDMU's verdicts ought to be afforded the same authority as the physical sciences.

If the *instruction to deliver* did not come from God directly, Barber at least understood that his emerging science had been symbolically blessed by the Prime Minister as the medium for expediting national salvation. It was as if the national congregation had risen in prayer:

And lead us not into temptation ... but **deliver** us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen. (Matthew 6:13)

Anointed by Blair, and with growing faith in Deliverology® as a vehicle for national salvation, Barber (2004)⁴ returned to the OECD to present positive news on the impact of the PMDU in raising education standards in England and expressed hope that it might be a global model. The OECD's PISA had been introduced as 'a new yardstick for education,' a symbolic representation of the imaginary of the 'global knowledge economy', setting standardised outcomes as the constant and recasting education systems, societies and workforces around the world as variables. A new orthodoxy was crystallizing:

Everything can be measured, and what gets measured gets managed. McKinsey & Company motto (Wetfeet 2009)

(iv) Apocalyptic Visions: Formalising system and faith in self (2005–2009)

When appointed as Pearson's Chief of Education in 2011, a newspaper ran the headline 'Mad Professor goes global.'⁵ But Barber had been 'going global' since the early 2000s. In September 2005, he became Head of Global Education Practice at McKinsey & Company, presenting a major opportunity to extend his influence through a global management

consultancy. The first of the influential ‘McKinsey Reports’ (Barber and Mourshed 2007; Mourshed et al. 2010), released two years after his appointment, relied almost exclusively on identifying ‘best practices’ from the OECD’s PISA. The OECD’s Head of the Indicators and Analysis Division Andreas Schleicher provided the foreword.

In the same year, Barber founded the US Education Delivery Institute in Washington, and in 2009 he began working directly with DfID, joining the UK/Pakistan Task Force on Education Reform as Co-chair. Among other activities, he advised EU Ministers on leadership and whole system reform and was a Visiting Professor at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, having previously been an advisor for the Russian government (2000–2006). By 2009, his reliance on the tenuous bond of faith had been overcome. This was reflected in a series of publications and speeches delivered that year.

The speeches mark a strong belief in the universal relevance of ‘system effectiveness’ and the explicit adaptation of apocalyptic symbolism. Cohn (1993) argues that, despite the element of conscious contrivance characterising the apocalyptic genre, it is nonetheless clear that the authors regarded them in some sense to be genuine. The symbolic language was traditionally derived from varied materials, including ancient myth and biblical prophecy, elaborated and reinterpreted, and ‘the result would be something which was at once a revolutionary movement and an outburst of quasi-religious salvationism’ (281).

(a) *Impossible and Necessary: The Intergalactic Audit Commission*

Cohn (2001) notes that the Greek term *apokalypsis* means ‘unveiling’ or ‘uncovering’, observing that ‘the one feature common to all the apocalypses is that they purport to unveil to human beings secrets hitherto known only in heaven,’ and though ‘sometimes the secret knowledge is about the heavenly world ... chiefly it is about the destiny of our world’ (163). The Biblical episode in Jubilees takes the form of an apocalypse, in which a secret revelation is transmitted to Moses by angels on Mount Sinai, bestowing on him the Ten Commandments. Whereas God spoke to biblical prophets directly, since their time God had become more remote and invariably communicated through an intermediary, primarily an angel. The apocalypticist was transported to a distant region of earth or the heavens, in dreams or ecstatic visions. Following in this apocalyptic tradition, Barber reveals that he has received an *instruction to deliver* from a distant intergalactic authority, transmitting knowledge communicated to him by intermediary aliens.

Barber’s (2009a) lecture *Impossible and Necessary: Are you ready for this?* was presented to a conference of UK headteachers⁶, setting out his ‘fundamental beliefs about the importance of reforming education in the twenty-first century,’ and ‘search[ing] beneath the surface of what passes for debate about education policy [to] find the underlying purpose’ (5). His goal was to show that ‘universal, successful education is achievable if we have the will to pursue it’ (5).

Barber identifies England as ‘the regulatory specialists’ (7). Over and above national regulatory bodies, he asks the audience to imagine that there is an Intergalactic Audit Commission (IAC), ‘whose job is to examine how well the leading species on each planet fulfils its stewardship responsibilities’ (7). The IAC’s inspection cycle is roughly once every 250 years and Earth’s latest inspection is ‘almost complete.’ He reveals that ‘as one randomly chosen for the interview programme,’ he will be able ‘to share ... an

outline of their findings' (7). The IAC report is delivered in two sections, co-mingling hope and doom. In the first section, the 250-year period is described as one of 'spectacular achievement,' 'judged even by galactic standards' (9-10). In the second section, however, Barber reveals that the IAC are 'highly critical,' asking the audience, 'Are you ready for this?'

The IAC then highlights over-population, the wickedness of disparities in wealth, casualties of war, and the creation of weapons that could destroy the planet. The relationship between human beings and the planet has gone awry, with climate change, mass extinction, and statements about the 'conquest of Everest' representing symptoms. The IAC warn Barber to heed the rhythm of growth and decay (Ecclesiastes 3:1), stating: 'Across all of history, civilisations have come and gone, destroyed by overpopulation, conflict, environmental degradation and hubris ... why do you seem to think, this time on a planetary scale, that this can't or won't happen to you now? Why?' (12).

The IAC present two recommendations. First, an 'improvement team,' described as 'a collection of 'turnaround specialists' from across the galaxy,' (12) will be sent in to rectify the problems. Barber states that though he is uncertain of what the turnaround specialists will be called on the Moon, 'the Sun [newspaper] will most certainly call it a "hit squad"'.⁷ Elsewhere, the British media had referred to Barber's team of turnaround specialists as a 'hit squad' during the controversial closure of a London school, revealing his self-interpretation as the agent of salvation.⁸ Barber expects that 'this "hit squad" will make good progress' but is concerned about 'what will happen when its members return to their own planets and leave us alone again?' (12).

A formula for lasting self-salvation is provided in the IAC's second recommendation: 'Educate every child and young person on the planet better, much better, than you've ever done before because they are your sustainable future' (13). The IAC clarify what they mean by 'well-educated' and summarise their definition in an equation (the authoritative symbol of science): Well-Educated = E (K + T + L)⁹ (13). The symbolic formula represents the concept of 'system effectiveness'. A global imperative is issued:

Your schools, right across the world, need to prepare every young person to rise to challenges described here and exploit the emerging opportunities – to thrive in vast, diverse cities, share the planet with other living things, preserve the wildernesses, generate economic growth without waste, resolve conflicts peacefully and deploy wisdom and judgement at moments of crisis. It is not 'all relative'; these are matters of right and wrong on which the quality of life, and perhaps life on earth itself, ultimately depend. (16)

He then reflects on the vision:

You may say: 'This sounds impossible.' I will agree and add, 'and necessary'. The IAC will agree too and calmly point out that in 1750 travelling from Liverpool to Manchester on a train, never mind landing on the Moon, seemed impossible too. (16)

Like Moses descending from Mount Sinai, Barber transmits the prophetic vision bestowed to him by a higher power, including: an apocalyptic vision which co-mingles hope and doom and requires no less than the transfiguration of humankind; a universal formula for self-salvation bestowed by a higher power (in this case, aliens, a symbolic representation of himself), outlining a new ethic to be advanced through education; and, the wilful suspension of doubt to sustain a vision that is both impossible and yet necessary to actualise. From this cataclysm, the world is to emerge totally transformed and

redeemed. Barber does not mean us to believe he was visited by aliens, but to literalise the vision is to miss the point. As Cohn (2001) notes: 'apocalyptic is a learned genre and the smell of midnight oil pervades it' (165). A parallel prophecy was presented later that year, in which Barber elaborates on his self-interpretation.

(a) Education and the Causes of War: 'I swear ... we will walk in fields of gold'

For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. (Book of Matthew 16.27)

In a speech delivered at a Degree Ceremony in Moscow (2009b) titled *Brief Remarks on Education and the Causes of War*, Barber recounts a recent epiphany, drawing again on apocalyptic imagery and a vision of transcendental order. As scholars note, such transcendental visions and the idea of salvation from this world often relate to very real experiences of a collapse in order (Eisenstadt 1982; Nietzsche 1994), reminiscent of those Barber has expressed throughout his career. As Voegelin (1974) observes, the tension between expectations of transcendent order and the miserable experience of mundane disorder dissociates into the phantasy of two realities following one another in time, pending the spread of the thinker's formula for salvation.

Barber opens the speech by conceding that 'the world has always been complicated and, paradoxically, the more we unravel its mysteries, the more complicated it becomes' (1). He reaffirms his belief that education provides individuals with 'liberation and fulfilment,' and societies with 'the foundations of social and economic progress' (1), but is dissatisfied with his situation, finding the world poorly organised:

... increasingly I find myself faced with troubling questions: as the people of the world have become more educated, as has surely happened over the last 150 years, why is it that there are still so many unliberated and unfulfilled individuals? Why is it that socially and economically the world has not made more progress and, indeed, is more unequal than it has ever been? And why is it that we see interminable, violent conflicts in every corner of the planet ... ? (1)

... perhaps we should dismiss this as simply symptomatic of the human condition ... In any case, does history not show us, that violent conflict over religion, ideology, land and resources has always characterised human existence. (1)

Lamenting the failure of reality to correspond with his expectations of divine providence, Barber moves in revolt:

Well maybe- but then what is education for? ... Personally, I believe we *can* do better. I refuse to accept that violent conflict is inevitable ... I intend to live as if humanity will thrive in the future and as if education has much to contribute to achieving this outcome ... (2)

Salvation from the evil of this world is possible. Barber draws inspiration from prominent figures from his Quaker upbringing, stating that it 'was for each human being to read the bible and reach his or her own relationship with God' (3), duly relating his own epiphany:

Recently, in Washington, outside the Quaker Meeting House (the name Quakers give to their 'Church') I saw a poster which read very simply: *How does your life help to remove the causes of*

war? This is a very profound question ... one has to help to remove its causes. It requires action. It requires participation. It requires, too, that one reflects on what the causes of war actually are and does something about them. (4)

The order of being must be transfigured, removing perennial ills. Clarification of the experiential drive follows:

This question, therefore, prompts me to ask myself what I am doing in my life to remove intolerance, greed, ignorance, pride, prejudice, fear and revenge ... You must forgive me for this introspective musing ... I have set out my incomplete thoughts this afternoon because I want to give *meaning* to the word *education* ... (4 italics in original)

The emergence of the new truth would create meaning in a transfigured history. Barber symbolically peers into the future, co-mingling hope and doom:

Sometimes ... I peer 'through the glass darkly,' ... at the decades ahead and there are times *I fear for our future* ... For all the economic growth of the second half of the twentieth century, we find ourselves with more poor people now than there were people in total on the planet fifty years ago ... As we speak there are wars on almost every continent ... So I cannot say I do not fear for the future. I do. But I can say there is hope too ... (5 italics added)

Sometimes I peer through that glass darkly and *I see a future filled with hope*. I see remarkable young people wherever I go- including in this room today. I believe in the power of education to change lives, to unlock potential, and create futures of humanity which are rich and rewarding, for everyone, beyond our current imaginings. I see that education could contribute to removing every single one of the causes of war I have listed. (5 italics added)

The vision of a perfect transcendent order is then immanentized as an achievable goal *in* history, dependent on the spread of a new ethic through education:

... for this we need deeper education which develops thoughts as well as knowledge, character as well as intellect, dialogue as well as reflection, humility as well as leadership and, above all, which has a basis in the ethics on which our futures depend. We need this education *for everyone* ... to *tackle the complex, difficult reality of human existence* ... Pursuit of this kind of education is what inspires my commitment to my work and helps me answer that profound question. *It is my mission* ... (5 italics added)

The traditions, beliefs and cultures informing educational theory and practice globally over the last few hundred years are then grouped together and consigned to a prior age:

One reason why the massive expansion of public education in the last 150 years has not made the world more peaceful or more equal is that much of it was not the education of the kind I have described ... Too often it did not light those sparks of knowledge, which, in Havel's words, 'might light the road ahead for all humanity.' (5)

The new era of system effectiveness is thus situated at the forefront of a civilizational advance, its onset coinciding with Barber's involvement in the movement:

... it is only very recently, in the last 20 years or so at most, that the idea of high standards of education for everyone has become accepted ... In the last 10 years we've begun to understand the characteristics of great education systems ... Only through education – through well-educated citizens demanding the best from themselves and their leaders – can we help to remove the causes of war.

The speech reaches its apocalyptic climax:

... you can ask yourselves 'How does my life help to remove the causes of war?' if that question informed our education systems and drove the actions of the ever-growing numbers of people around the world then ... we would have every hope of fulfilment. Then, at the very least, in the words of the famous song, '*I swear in the days still left, we will walk in fields of gold.*' (6 italic added)¹⁰

That is to say, *verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom* (Matthew 16: 27).

Retracing our steps, Barber expresses dissatisfaction with the failure of efforts to marshal progress and remove perennial ills despite the expansion of education, finding the world poorly organised. This is followed by a revolt against the human condition and an epiphany that is acted out in the tension between the two poles of mundane disorder and transcendent order. From this, Barber articulates the details of a formula to escape the tension, giving education meaning and his life a clear mission; a movement beyond faith and a new ethic that will light the road ahead for all humanity – no less than the transfiguration of humankind. Finally, with the promise that the terrestrial paradise will appear here on Earth in our lifetime, the two poles dissociate so the transcendent (perfect) order follows contemporary disorder in time, removing the causes of war and other perennial ills.

As a sermon, it is wonderfully crafted. The result is something that is at once a revolutionary movement and an outburst of quasi-scientific salvationism. Barber is an intellectual prophet and cleric *par excellence*.

(a) Global salvation: messianic turn and the Good News (2010-2015)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Book of Matthew, 24.14)

By 2010, faith in things unseen has been replaced by faith in Barber's improvement formula, variously portrayed with colleagues at McKinsey & Company as a 'new leader's playbook' (Mourshed et al. 2010), and an instructional 'field guide' (Barber, Kihn, and Moffit 2011), with the promise: 'If your system faithfully implements each of these components, it will achieve visible and measurable results in student outcomes' (xiii). Between 2011 and 2016, Barber joined Pearson, where he 'helped put efficacy and the science of improving learning outcomes at the heart of everything Pearson does.'¹¹

Since its launch in 2000, the OECD's PISA Programme had grown in prominence, becoming entwined with the perceived need to enhance education quality as well as the effectiveness of education systems. In 2011, the UK Minister for Education, Michael Gove, explained to the World Education Forum, that 'the challenge facing us in 2011 is to follow the path which the evidence, so patiently acquired by Andreas Schleicher and Sir Michael Barber, tells us can liberate our children.'¹² The integration of principles from Deliverology® into international development also gained legitimacy when Barber was employed as a consultant for the UK's DfID in Pakistan. Barber (2016) reveals how he and a colleague undertook an 'exercise in recognising reality' (108), finding out how to bypass the bureaucracy. In January 2013, Barber reflects, 'the Chief Minister of Punjab, who admittedly has as powerful an interest as any in this work, called it a 'roaring success story'' (26).

Barber's testimony *The Good News from Pakistan* (Barber 2013) has served as a Delivery Unit success story and source of legitimacy since that time, with Barber called upon to inaugurate Delivery Units globally. Variations on the Delivery Unit have been replicated by governments in over fifty countries around the world, and in locations as diverse as Canada, Ghana and Bahrain. In his latest book, *How to Run a Government*, Barber (2016) reflects on his dialogues with presidents, prime ministers and education ministers, who 'know what they want to do, but worry how to get it done in practice,' clarifying:

Often this evidence base is summarised as the need to set up a delivery unit at the heart of government or the heart of an education ministry. In almost every case, these delivery units have their conceptual origin in the Delivery Unit which I set up for Prime Minister Tony Blair in the UK. (20)

In biblical usage, 'good news' is interchangeable with 'gospel', and the four gospels of the disciples report the 'good news' that Jesus is the Messiah and came to show people a new way of living. The report's subtitle makes the connection explicit, stating: *How a revolutionary new approach to education reform in Punjab shows the way forward for Pakistan and development aid everywhere*. The Good News from Pakistan is positioned as 'a story of the Punjab education reform called the Punjab Schools Reform Roadmap,' posing that 'potentially it is a story of redemption for Pakistan' (11). The redemption story was intentionally published ahead of Pakistan's elections as it 'sets an agenda which any party or government could adopt and pursue after an election' (11). Barber expresses the belief that, 'potentially, it is a story about how aid programs can be so successful that they won't be needed any more' (11). That is, if the gospel is preached to the whole world as a testimony to all nations, then (perhaps) the end will come.

(vi) Global Salvation Inc.: codification of truth & spread of Gospel (2015-¹³)

The effectiveness of government is not just a technical issue but a moral one. (Delivery Associates 2018)¹⁴

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals established basic minimum standards of education quality, nurturing claims that access to standardised assessments should be considered a basic human right and ushering in a new agenda for education characterised as *Assessment for All* (Auld, Rappleye, and Morris 2019). Standardising education outputs in this way extended the managerialist vision of a comprehensible and orderly world amenable to expert control, supporting revolutionary processes of social and political reform and privatisation, here characterised as New Global Management (NGM).

Barber has matured into the symbolic role of prophet: 'the intellectual who knows the formula for salvation from this world and can predict how this world will take its course in the future' (Voegelin 1968, 73). Herein the epiphany is systematically codified into a standardised canon, an authentic formulation of the truth that makes recourse to earlier literature unnecessary, before descending to become the dogma of a mass movement, whereby the storyline is institutionalised and performed by followers not necessarily beholden to the founder's beliefs. It becomes a method. Voegelin (1952) identifies the 'systematic formulation of the new doctrine in scriptural terms' as one of two persistent technical devices in such revolutionary movements, serving the double purpose of 'a

guide to the right reading of Scripture and of an authentic formulation of truth that would make recourse to earlier literature unnecessary' (138-139). In conjunction with this, a second technical device unfolds by placing a taboo on potential sources of critique (for example, theology, philosophy, history, culture).

Cohn (1993) observes that several of the messiahs developed big followings, which they organised into 'churches' devoted to the worship of themselves. The formation of Delivery Associates and decision to trademark *Deliverology*[®] marks Barber's maturation as a *religious* founder. In its formative years, *Deliverology*[®] emerged as a sect within the managerialist movement that had nurtured the fields of school effectiveness and school improvement research, supplemented with insights from US business management and in support of NPM. The Sect was held together primarily by his personality and networks and was therefore prone to dissolution. When a prophecy is codified as a religious worldview it can then be institutionalised. To consolidate the creed and scale its influence, a Church claims universality and extends citizenship to members while exercising monopoly and trying to eradicate alternatives. It is organised as a hierarchical bureaucratic institution, very closely allied with state and secular powers, and allows for diversity by creating different groups within the church. New members are gained through reproduction and socialisation of children (or bureaucrats and technicians), and it employs full-time professional clergy.

Barber occupies the symbolic role of Chairman and Founder at Delivery Associates, identified on the website as 'the world's leading authority on *Deliverology*[®], having created the first Government Delivery Unit in the UK,' and having 'worked on public service delivery in over 50 countries.' The Delivery Associates are a committed team of around fifty paracletes working on the ground in almost 30 different countries across the world:

... the creators and only authors of *Deliverology*[®]. Our publications are written by members of the Delivery Associates team who collectively have 443 years of experience working in public sector reform and a genuine belief in the importance of delivery to benefit the lives of citizens. We use this experience and our insights of success stories in the hope that this model will continue to be replicated by leaders across the globe.

By embedding targets and data in a compelling narrative that defines a moral imperative (Barber 2017), revolutionary reformers enjoy a sense of purpose and wider legitimacy while any resistance to the agenda is cast as morally irresponsible (e.g. see Barber 2009a, 2016). While *Associates* inevitably bring their own worldviews and motivations, and may not be true believers, Cohn (1993) claims the 'prospect of carrying out a divinely ordained mission of stupendous, unique importance' had a deep impact on those around the *prophetae*, cultivating a group 'filled with conviction in its own infallibility,' and 'recogn[sing] no claims save that of its own supposed mission' (366). At the same time, and while many of the new messiahs were sincere and lived simple lives, Cohn observes that any resistance to the mission was often overcome by armed bands and that many of their followers lived by plunder.

In *How to Run a Government*, Barber (2016) includes the section *Excuses, Excuses*, which lists common objections to a consultant's proposals, and scripts responses, with the aim summarised in Rule 40 as: 'take all excuses off the table' (204). Concerns regarding the possibility of unintended consequences are to be countered by stating that this possibility

is less risky than the 'inevitable consequences of doing nothing.' This evokes Barber's (1997) early arguments that, 'If academics, who have the privilege of freedom of thought and not being held to account for their views, do not think boldly about the future, who will?' (5). Now, the only form of thinking allowed is to follow *The Associates* creed of efficiency, or to 'do nothing'. Moral questions are silenced, and the revolution is justified by the demands of the historical future built into the speculative management system.

Noting the desire to control our fates, Barber closes his latest testimony by pointing out that 'for those with power, hubris is always a risk' (289). Drawing inspiration from the Malaysian technocrat Idris Jala, whom Barber describes as the 'quintessential government entrepreneur,' he duly concludes:

You might adopt in full the science of delivery and still fall short. Even so, we should do our best to apply what we do know, confident that doing so will, in most places, most of the time, make a big difference to the outcomes governments deliver for citizens. This will strengthen both markets and government. If with due humility the knowledge of how to run a government becomes widely shared, then surely the world will become a better place (289)

This closing disclaimer is significant, particularly given that Barber (2017) emphasises the necessity of making changes 'irreversible' and 'institutionalised'. *Deliverology*[®] is a process of whole-system reform, re-engineering societal institutions and the workforce. As Cohn (2001) notes, the goal of such revolutionary movements is the elimination of misbelievers through conversion. If the promised gains in learning outcomes are not delivered, and if social ills persist regardless, reality is kept at bay through the assertion that the science of delivery is constantly improving and its truths are gradually being revealed. And while the state of perfection may be unattainable, and the end may never come, the continued movement towards a more efficient world order is achieved with each society that is converted. A further array of deflective strategies is used to buttress the speculative management system when expected gains do not arise, meaning that *Associates* can always find ways to explain failure to improve without compromising the core faith (Auld and Morris 2016; Mohamed and Morris 2021).

Conclusion

The change would only come after the revolution had occurred ... [and] the idea could not break on the rock of reality until the damage had been done. In the meantime, a tremendous amount of disturbance and destruction could be engineered, animated by the pathos of eschatological heroism and inspired by the vision of a terrestrial paradise. (Voegelin 1975, 242)

By applying insights from theology and philosophy to follow the career of Sir Michael Barber, we have illuminated the religious undercurrent to his revolutionary movement, and how apocalyptic symbolism and messianic pretensions have grown more pronounced as he scaled to become a global actor. The transition from speculative faith to quasi-science as salvation was formalised as a sect in the management dogma of *Deliverology*[®] before being codified in a standardised canon, with Barber serving the symbolic role as intellectual prophet and leader of the revolutionary movement. The analysis is restricted to Barber's own self-interpretation in literary texts and does not claim privileged insight. Barber is of interest because of his depth of experience, reflection and perception,

and the role he has been granted in leading a disruptive new age of public reform. In that role he has served as key architect in supporting managerialist worldviews and promoting a 'new paradigm' in comparative education (Auld and Morris 2014) that relies on comparative data from ILSAs (in particular, the OECD's PISA) and closed epistemological systems that yield dubious knowledge claims but provide a basis for political action.

We have portrayed NPM as a secular political theology that emerged in the societies of North America and Western Europe towards the end of the twentieth century, rearticulating the fabric of the representative institutions to promote the gospel of efficiency and effectiveness, with Sir Michael Barber as an influential political theologian within this transformation. Barber operated using the spiritual and intellectual tools available at the time, assembling, and adding to existing movements and elevating them to the level of a dogmatic religion. Barber's rise to become a global actor was contingent on a wider community sympathetic to his ideas and new assessment technologies that nurtured his universalist dreams and will to power. Variations of science-based delivery and rival managerialist sects are embedded in the institutional ideologies of international organisations, agencies and global corporations and operationalised through ILSAs. In this respect, managerialist systems have entered the mainstream imagination as a legitimate-and perhaps only- form of order, if not yet a global faith. While Barber is perhaps the secular political theologian the UK deserves, the presentation of Delivery Units as a revolutionary new model that shows the way forward for development aid everywhere is problematic.

Characterising Delivery Units as the church of *Deliverology*[®] is not a provocative analogy. Rather, the Units are representative institutions of a vision of order, established by a 'turnaround hit squad' from across the globe, training a local clergy, and with a mission that stresses the moral purpose of effectiveness while introducing a new *ground of being* (i.e. statistical data). Set apart from traditional bureaucracy, but closely allied to state powers, value is derived from efficiency and set against a global standard, providing orientation towards a future vision of societal and world order. The goal is to win *hearts and minds*, re-engineering social institutions and in turn eliminating non-believers through conversion. For political leaders with weak legitimacy, the church of *Deliverology*[®] promises results fast. It is an electrifying and uplifting story, propagated through global communication networks and material power. Why should system leaders and global organisations not be enticed by its promise, particularly when it is translated into apocalyptic narrative of deeper moral significance? Taking the authoritative faith of *Deliverology*[®] into influential and exclusive global micro-spaces, Barber is an intellectual prophet and new messiah *par excellence*.

Standardised outcomes and statistical data are the existential bedrock of the faith, translating a senseless, disorderly world and its inhabitants into variables that can be manipulated and controlled. 'Data' is used to denote something that is a valued source from which we derive meaning, interpreted using the approved style of truth. Infused into governing institutions, universities, and schools, it becomes the authoritative *ground of being* from which qualified experts make judgments on how society functions, how to live and how it should be organised. And in the clash between system and reality, reality must give way. The world must be re-engineered, or transformed, to become what it really is. Voegelin (1952) reflects on what 'system builders' achieved through such fallacious constructions. On this point, he argues, there can be no doubt; they received

certainty about the meaning of history and about their own place in it, which otherwise they would not have had. This evokes Lessl's (2002) distinction between 'scientism' and 'gnostic scientism'. While the former believes in 'its supreme methodological potency' and 'unique capacity to transform the conditions of human existence,' the latter 'has a deeper power to transform the self into a *knowing agent*' who transcends nature (133-134 italics added). From this, we might characterise Barber's disposition as *gnostic managerialism*, whereby first and foremost the knowledge saves the knowing agent.

Having enchanted prophetae and their followers for thousands of years, the apocalypse appears to remain an active and motivating presence in the realm of global education governance. Historically, the story has appealed to disoriented masses and those experiencing a collapse of order (Cohn 2001), and undeniably we are experiencing the collapse of order across multiple scales. Barber is sensitive to the crises of the period and is an arch storyteller. The deterioration of science into standardised method, however, and attempts to organise the world into an efficient management system, is perhaps a symptom of mass disorientation rather than a model for a new global order and senseless education revolutions. Crucially, normative critiques, which inter alia may question the association between PISA scores and the quest for a 'more peaceful and equal world', and the litany of empirical evidence detailing 'bad news stories', are unlikely to dissuade those possessed by a divine mission. Who can say when the idea will break on the rock of reality. In the meantime, we can expect some abstract gains in educational outcomes and a great deal of disturbance to unfold. In this respect, the apocalyptic promise looks set to continue its long history of disappointment.

Building on Tröhler and Maricic's (2021) historical inquiry into the religious roots of modern education policy, our analysis illuminates the symbolic role of data and science within contemporary secular political theologies and the persistently seductive power of salvation narratives. Adopting a theoretical perspective which is attentive to the persistent presence of religious impulses and questions of meaning may allow researchers to explore how science and socio-economic issues, or politics, history, and culture are often undergirded by something deeper. As Barber's testimony illustrates, ancient imaginings and questions of meaning are still with us, and these phantasms and metaphysical longings have practical implications when made the basis for political action.

Notes

1. Retrieved from <https://www.hse.ru/data/2009/11/20/1227763095/Michael-Barber-CV.pdf>
2. Bootham School website: <https://www.boothamschool.com/>
3. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/voices/events/barber/>
4. The speech was also delivered to a World Bank meeting in Moscow.
5. Wilby (2011) in The Guardian online, retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/jun/14/michael-barber-education-guru>
6. A variation was delivered in a Mass Lecture for teachers in Singapore: *Teachers for Tomorrow: An Enduring Mission and Evolving Role*, Singapore Teachers Mass Lecture, (August 2009). For blogger reaction, see <http://lohky.blogspot.com/2009/08/teachers-mass-lecture-teachers-for.html>
7. This is likely a reference to the British tabloid newspaper, The Sun. Elsewhere Barber acknowledges that the British press had labelled his team a 'hit squad'.
8. Barber references his controversial role in the closure of Hackney Downs in several interviews, e.g. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/voices/events/barber/>

Contrasting accounts of the closure of Hackney Downs can be found in Barber's article in

- the Time Educational Supplement, 'The School that had to die', (17 November 1995), and a TES editorial response that bemoans Barber's 'almost messianic tone' (1st Dec 1995), *The murder of Hackney Downs*, available at <https://www.tes.com/news/murder-hackney-downs>.
9. K stands for knowledge, T is Thinking or Thought, and L is Leadership. Finally, E stands for Ethics, and it is positioned outside that brackets because it is possible to have 'K + T + L and therefore have power, but use it for evil' (15)
 10. As Cohn has observed, the symbolic language is generally derived from varied materials. Here the apocalyptic promise is adapted from the British artist Sting's 1993 song *Fields of Gold*. Rather than a vision of terrestrial paradise, Sting reveals that when he was young his house in England was surrounded by barley fields, and that the wind moved through the barley 'like waves on an ocean of gold'. He reflects: 'There's something inherently sexy about the sight, something primal, as if the wind were making love to the barley. Lovers have made promises there, I'm sure, their bonds strengthened by the comforting cycle of the seasons'. <https://www.smoothradio.com/features/the-story-of/fields-of-gold-sting-lyrics-meaning-facts-video/>
 11. Retrieved from <https://www.pearson.com/news-and-research/announcements/2016/11/sir-michael-barber-to-leave-pearson.html>
 12. Retrieved from <https://community.oecd.org/docs/DOC-20237>
 13. More recently, Barber has worked in the UK as Head of the Office for Students and is currently an advisor to the Government on skills policy development.
 14. Retrieved from https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/59ca37d5fcfb3000197aab3/5aa1526b45d91c0001b762b4_Inc%20London%20-%20DINO%20Brochure%20Amends%20-%20WEB.pdf

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