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See also: Autobiography; Berry, Wendell; Dillard, Annie; Emerson, Ralph Waldo; Lopez, Berry; Muir, John; Thoreau, Henry David; Williams, Terry Tempest.

Men of the Trees (East Africa)

One of the pioneering movements in social forestry was Men of the Trees, now known as the International Tree Foundation, founded by Richard St. Barbe Baker (1889–1982) among the Kikuyu in Kenya in 1922, when he was Assistant Conservator of Forests for the British Colonial Office. Members of Men of the Trees committed to planting ten trees every year and to protecting trees everywhere. The organization was a response to widespread forest destruction and soil loss leading to desertification. St. Barbe, as he was known to his friends, was a deeply spiritual man with a profound respect for traditional cultures and peoples and a long-standing membership in the Bahá'í Faith. After a further forestry assignment in Nigeria, he began to travel the world writing and lecturing about forest conservation and turning Men of the Trees into a global organization based in England. A journal was published starting in 1929, as well as a Tree Lover's Calendar. Invited to Palestine by the High Commissioner in 1929, he brought representatives of the major religions together to commit to a plan of reforestation of desert areas, and helped to make the traditional *Tu Bi'Shvat* (Feast of Trees) a national tree-planting day. The first life member of Men of the Trees was Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. St. Barbe reached many prominent people with his message, and influenced such world leaders as Nehru and Franklin D. Roosevelt, leading the latter to establish the Civilian Conservation Corps. He worked to save the redwoods of California starting in 1930, and launched a desert reclamation program in Africa that became the Sahara Reclamation Program and the Green Front. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales became patron of the International Tree Foundation in 1979.

In 1946, at St. Barbe's instigation, the First World Forestry Charter Gathering was held in London. The aim was to provide an opportunity for the exchange of ideas on forest conservation between diplomatic representatives from many countries. Such gatherings continued through the 1950s and 1960s, and inspired a number of efforts at global environmental cooperation. They were revived in

1989, the hundredth anniversary of St. Barbe Baker's birth, at the initiative of the Bahá'í International Community Offices of the Environment and Public Information. The 1994 Gathering held at St. James's Palace in London in July, was addressed by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum, leading dignitary in the Bahá'í Faith.

All of the work of St. Barbe Baker, including Men of the Trees, was inspired by his global and holistic perspective on forests and forestry. He viewed the planet as a living organism long before the Gaia theory, and saw the complex interactions within the forest as a mirror of the organization of all life. He saw forests as a vital organ within the whole self-regulating life-sustaining ecosphere. Removing too many trees disrupted the ecosystem, and planting trees could begin a cycle of regenerative recovery. His view of forests was simultaneously scientific, aesthetic and spiritual. His extensive writings shared the wonder, beauty and sacredness of nature while teaching ecological principles and respect. By integrating science and religion, he saw the potential for a mature planetary civilization based on ecological and spiritual principles.

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Further Reading

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See also: Bahá'í Faith; Druids and Druidry; Green Man.

Men's Movement

In the wake of late twentieth-century feminist challenges to prevalent understandings and practices of gender in modern Western societies, a number of men within these societies undertook to fashion, individually and collectively, responses to feminism's wide-ranging critiques. Beginning in the 1970s, "movements" of these men arose, some in conscious alliance with contemporary feminist goals and methods (e.g., "profeminist men"), others in more or less hostile reaction against them (e.g., "men's rights" groups). Some of these "men's movements" linked their gender concerns with a spiritual or religious focus and a stated interest in relations with the natural world.

Of these latter groups, the most widely publicized exemplar was the "mythopoetic men's movement," which attained its greatest popularity in the decade or so surrounding the 1990 publication of its formative text, the poet Robert Bly's *Iron John: A Book about Men*, an