

CREATION CARE



The World and all that is in it belong to the Lord, the Earth and all who live on it are His! –Ps 24:1

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SPACED OUT – A NEW EARTH?

Stephen Hawking (1942-2018), renowned astrophysicist worried that **our inhumanity and political corruption, along with our inattention and misperception of the realities of the earth's finite resources and the changing climate** will doom us all to a terrible destruction within 100 years. He believed that we must find a way to colonize another planet if humanity is to be saved from extinction and recently worked with the BBC on a revival of the popular future gazing series "Tomorrow's World" which ran for 38 years, by adding a new chapter entitled, "Expedition New Earth."

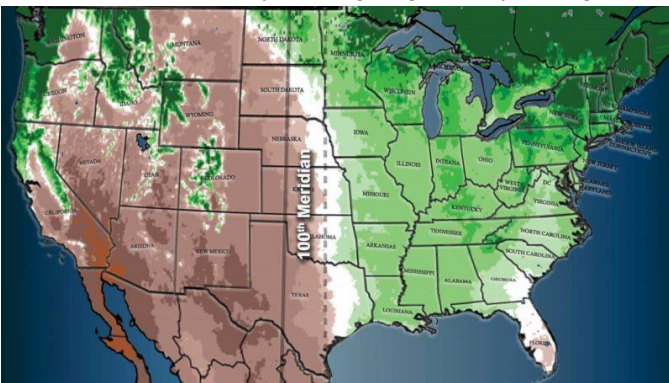
Hawking was skeptical that we would be able to make planetary colonies self-sustaining but saw new hope as our ability to see into deep space broadens and the advancement of technologies that enable us to send and retrieve space vehicles expands.

Before his death, this spring, Hawking and his former student Christophe Galfard planned to travel the world, seeking to discover ways in which humans can begin to prepare for life in outer space.

"I am making a new earth and new heavens. The events of the past will be completely forgotten. Be glad and rejoice forever in what I create." (Isaiah 65:17-18a) Hawking's idea of relocation is not what most of the Christian faithful have in mind when he talks about searching for a "new earth." There are many religious followers who believe that the end of the earth will usher in the second coming of Christ and to talk about migrating to a new "earth" is silly and unbiblical. ☉

DRY WEATHER IS MOVING EAST

In the late 1800's geologist/explorer John Wesley Powell visibly mapped a clear boundary, running longitudinally, through North



America at the 100th meridian (solid line on map), between the dry west (brown area) and the humid east (green area). Scientists from Columbia University's *Earth Institute* have found that this "dry

line" has moved 140 miles east to about the 98th meridian (dashed line) since 1980 because of our warming climate. All of the climate indicators support the idea that the drift east will continue and will require changes in land use.

Warmer weather means greater water evaporation from the soil which has significant implications for farming. Crops like moisture loving corn will need irrigation, placing even greater stress on shrinking western water supplies. Farmers will be forced to change to crops that need less water, like wheat, or some other more suitable crop. The report emphasizes that large expanses of cropland may fail altogether and become grazing lands or desert.

One thing is certain; the times – they are a' changen! ☉



SOLAR ROADWAYS AND SOLAR SHINGLES

Smart green technologies are taking-off almost everywhere and are making a significant difference. Green homes and communities are being built and developed around the world.

In the USA, both private and public money is being used to develop **Solar Roadways** (SR) (solarroadways.com). In Idaho (2011) they installed a test solar road section through a large parking lot. Its textured, shatterproof glass has a heating element to dry wet and snow-covered roads and LED lights for road markings and warnings. It is believed that the cost of solar roadways, over time, will be cheaper than concrete and asphalt roads (high traffic asphalt roadways only last from five to seven years before they must be resurfaced). SR estimates that if all the paved roads in the USA were covered with flat-textured road tiles, roads could produce three times the electricity the entire country uses now!

France opened a solar road in late 2016. In December 2017 China opened a solar road to test its durability and energy producing strengths.

According to *"This Old House"* **Solar Shingles**, called *building integrated photovoltaics*, are made of a variety of materials and can even be installed over an old shingled roof. One shingle

can produce 50 to 200 watts (enough to power a window fan) but on a sunny day a roof with hundreds of square feet of shingles can power a whole house. Battery backups can power it overnight.

It is also good news that wind and solar equipment costs continue to decline as they become more popular; a trend that will continue. ☺

EYESTRAIN

According to the American Optometric Association (AOA) the average American worker spends seven hours staring at a computer screen. According to Dr. Ansari, "Staring at a computer screen for extended periods of time can result in visual issues, including eye strain and even retinal damage." The National Eye Institute (NEI) showed that nearsightedness has increased more than 66% in the past 30 years, likely due to more time looking short distances indoors and staring at screens.



Dr. Ansari recommends using the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes take a 20-second break from the screen -- then take a second break to stare at something 20 feet away. Ansari says that this reduces eye strain and also increases blinking, which can soothe dry and irritated eyes. ☺



MAKING PLASTIC OUT OF THIN AIR?

Newlight Technologies, Costa Mesa, CA, has discovered a way to extract the carbon emissions in the air around us to make plastic. The technology, known as "MOF,"

is not new. What is new is that Newlight's process is cost effective. (Pictured: a handful of the raw product.)

The Dell company is using Newlight's air carbon bags to wrap its computers in for shipment. KI company uses air carbon to make chairs.

Because the evidence of air pollution from the use of fossil fuels is overwhelming, the drive to eliminate carbon loaded fossil fuels with sustainable energy sources has been moving more or less on track, but could this new MOF technology, that can remove carbon from the air, be used as a delaying tactic in the fight to convert from fossil fuels to sustainable energy sources since we might now be able to control the amount of carbon in the air? ☺

EXTRACTING WATER FROM DRY AIR

(About 1/3 of the world's population live in arid regions and the remainder live with declining potable water supplies.)

Drinkable (potable) water is a fundamental necessity for both life and health. It is also a rapidly declining resource to the point that some larger population areas are running out of potable water. Regions in South Africa and cities like Tokyo, London, Cairo, Sao Palo, Beijing, Bangalore, Mexico City, Miami, and five cities in the fresh vegetable basket of the USA, California's Central Valley, are all short on drinking water.

Changing rain patterns, contamination from chemicals, salt water flooding into fresh water supplies, the lack of adequate storage, and leaking distribution systems all figure in the complex shortage problem.

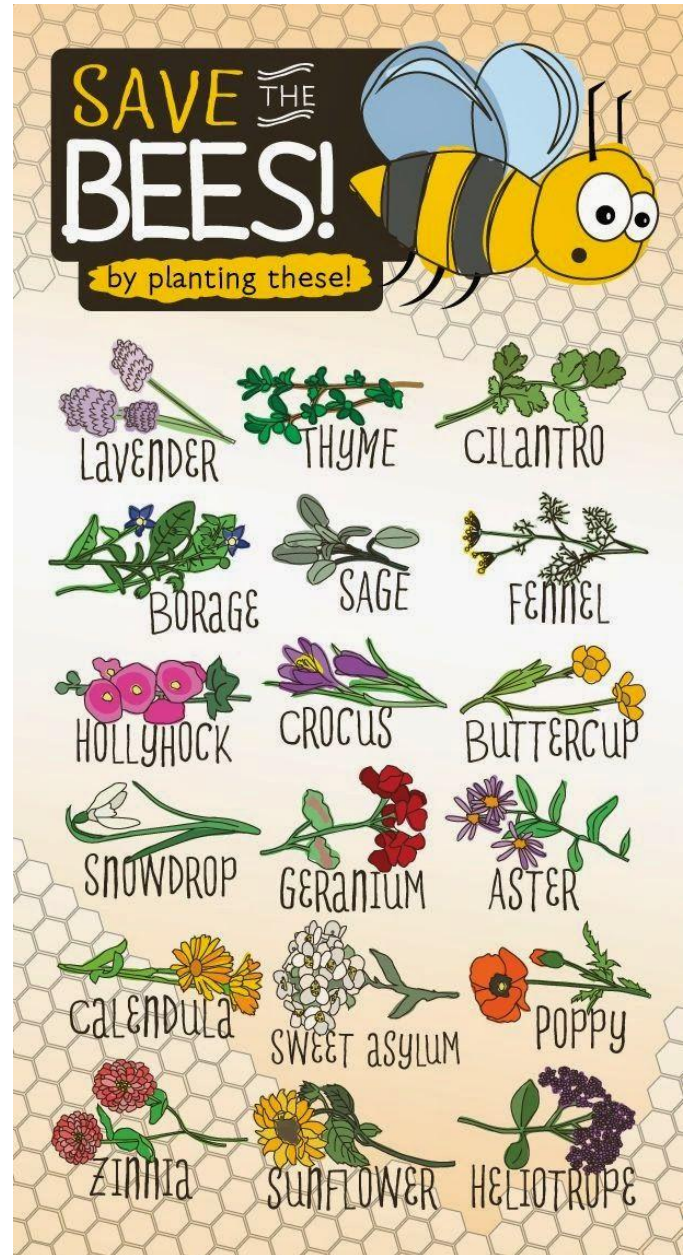
There are many machines that can extract water from the air in dry places, but all of them depend upon outside energy sources that are often not available or cost effective. There are solar



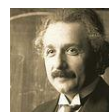
water extracting machines but they are limited by how much sunlight is available.

Welcome MOF (*metal-organic framework*). MOF's are made up of linked molecules that create a super porous material with lots of surface area. Depending on what you make the MOF with, it can attract water from air with a humidity as low as 10%. 2.2 pounds of MOF can draw out 3 quarts of uncontaminated water in 12 hours.

Researchers are working to scale up the system to make it more efficient. ☺



"Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better."



Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was a German-born theoretical physicist who developed the theory of relativity, one of the two pillars of modern physics. His work is also known for its influence on the philosophy of science. He is best known to the general public for his mass-energy equivalence formula $E = mc^2$, which has been dubbed "the world's most famous equation". He received the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics "for his services to theoretical physics, and especially for his discovery of the law of the photoelectric effect", a pivotal step in the development of quantum theory. -Wikipedia

“It is hard to live as an Easter People when we live in a Good Friday world.” -Kathy Khang

It is an abuse of our faith to use its optimism and assurance of eternal victory as a cover-up for not confronting the realities of our sinful world! We cannot coexist with evil -- we are obligated to call it out! *“He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.”* (Martin Luther King, Jr, 1929-1968).

We are a nation with a number of religious populations, whose followers can also offer us guidance from their sacred texts, and I am open to their insights. In this editorial I speak as a follower of Christ and my study of the Judeo/Christian scriptures.

For most of my life I have been devoted to the study and practice of the scriptures. In Psalm 119 we read: **105 Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path. 106 I will keep my solemn promise to obey your just instructions”.**



Scriptural truth provides us with the moral core by which we and our society should live. In Jesus, the Christ, the scriptures find both fulfillment and the guidance we need for their proper application. We are an Easter People only when we are willing to take up the Cross and confront the evildoers in this world with scriptural truths. **To care for our creation is not just a matter of caring for the heavens and the earth, it is also the care of God's spiritual and moral creation!**

Our nation has stood at dangerous crossroads before, but today is special because so many of our leaders and people no longer keep to a moral code to guide and direct them. As a result, they live by their will; not God's will, and often sell-out the power of their office and/or the power of their civic responsibility to the highest bidder or the most skilled propagandist. Many of our Christian values have been destroyed by our devotion to materialism, militarism, and the fear of physical or economic harm.

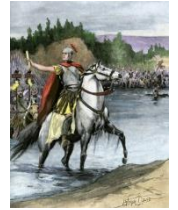
Many Christians have sold-out their biblical values in the name of political and social philosophies that they and their tribes want so badly that lying, gross exaggeration, manic egotism (see Romans 12:3), and insidious attacks on the character and opinions of others are overlooked and even justified in the pursuit of some mythological panacea promising a “higher political good.” Evil attitudes (see Proverbs 4:23), words (see James 3:8-10) and deeds (see Jeremiah 5:26-31) cannot give birth to goodness. So-called “alternative facts” and “fake news” have become the propaganda constructs that bury truth and reality and exaggerate the importance of individual opinion over common sense, data-based evidence, and other established practices that have stood the test of time and kept our society stable and sane over the years.

What we need is a good dose of *The Sermon on the Mount* with an emphasis on Matthew 5:27-30, 33-48, 6:19-21, 24-34, 7:1-12! If you want to follow Jesus, then your mouth, emotions, politics, and vote must be measured by scriptural standards like those. O yes, don't forget Matthew 25:31-46.

Chris Hedges, graduate of *Harvard Divinity School*, former foreign correspondent for *The New York Times*, and the author of many books, wrote a scorching essay entitled *“The Coming*

Collapse” which ends with this paragraph: *“As a foreign correspondent I covered collapsed societies, including the former Yugoslavia. It is impossible for any doomed population to grasp how fragile the decayed financial, social and political system is, on the eve of implosion. The harbingers of {our} collapse are visible: crumbling infrastructure; chronic underemployment and unemployment, the indiscriminate use of lethal force by police; political paralysis and stagnation; an economy built on the scaffolding of debt, nihilistic mass shootings in schools, universities, workplaces, malls, concert venues and movie theaters; opioid overdoses that kill some 64,000 people a year; an epidemic of suicides; unstable military expansion; gambling as a desperate tool of economic development and government revenue; the capture of power by a tiny corrupt clique; censorship, the physical diminishing of public institutions; the incessant bombardment by electronic hallucinations to divert us from the depressing sight that has become America and keep us trapped in impending illusions. We suffer the usual pathologies of impending death. I would be happy to be wrong. But I have seen this before. I know the warning signs. All I can say is get ready.”*

This is dark stuff – is it also prophetic? Can we learn anything from history? In 49^{BC} Julius Caesar came to the river (Rubicon) which marked the national boundary between northeastern Italy and Gaul. He knew that the Roman Parliament forbade its generals to wander outside of their assigned province, but he crossed the river anyway and this act of egotistical disobedience began the Roman civil war in which the parliament eventually surrendered its power and Caesar became its absolute “divine” dictator. The phrase: *“to cross the Rubicon”* has come to mean that **there is a point in which one can go too far – thus losing any chance of ever going back.**



Have we gone too far? Is Hedges right? If so, his advice to *“get ready”* should make every Christian and each congregation consider what living in a society in free-fall will require of our faithfulness and our mission. Remember, a society in *free-fall* always turns away from civil rule to be ruled by military policing to enforce order because disorder becomes the central social concern and civil rights are sacrificed to civil obedience. As for me, I see a cross coming. ☩

NOTHING IN ALL THE WORLD IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN SINCERE IGNORANCE AND CONSCIENTIOUS STUPIDITY. -Martin Luther King Jr (1929-1968)

SPRAY AND TREAT OR RETREAT?

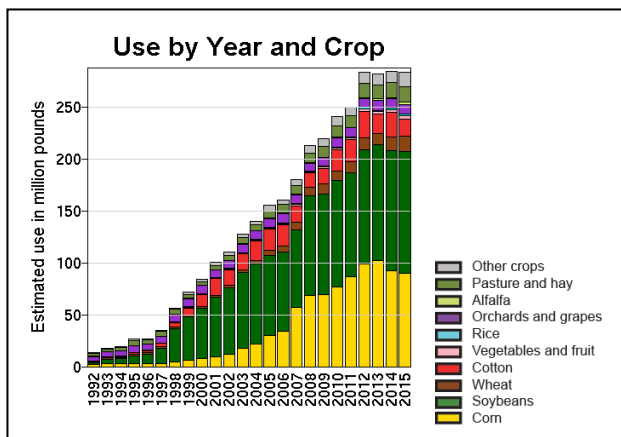
Glyphosate is the world's most widely used herbicide and its use in the USA has exploded from 1.4 million pounds sprayed in 1974 to 276 million pounds by 2014. In California alone in 2015, more than 11 million pounds of *glyphosate* were used on crops. Its most popular retail product is *“Roundup.”*



Everyone is exposed to *glyphosate*. Its residues are found, nationwide, in fresh and processed foods, in drinking water, and even in mother's milk. Mounting piles of research suggests that our constant exposure to it is leading to health issues, ranging from non-Hodgkin lymphoma and kidney damage to disruption of gut bacteria and improper hormone functioning. **In March 2015 the *International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)***

warned that there continues to be mounting evidence indicating that *glyphosate* is “probably carcinogenic to humans.” In response many countries have banned its use. Our *Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)* however issued a rebuttal in September 2016 that said its scientists “did not agree with IARC.” In its November 2017 issue, *In These Times* reports that the *Office of Inspector General*, an independent federal oversight body, is currently investigating whether a former deputy director in the EPA’s *Office of Pesticide Programs*, Jess Rowland, colluded with Monsanto to “kill” a *Department of Health and Human Services* investigation into *glyphosate* prompted by the release of the IARC report. It is alleged that Dan Jenkins, a Monsanto regulatory affairs manager emailed his colleagues that Roland, had told him, “If I can kill this, I should get a medal.”

The EPA has registered *glyphosate* for use on more than 100 crops. (see chart below)



Spray and Treat or Retreat? The difference in the way we Americans react to scientific research of this kind is found in the values we hold in the operation of our economy. Values are shaped by ethics, morals, and religion which are often at war with our craving for personal gain. The European Union (EU), for example, has banned 1,100 dangerous or highly questionable chemicals; the USA has banned only ten. How come? Are we smarter or dumber than they are? Intelligence is not the issue -- values are.

Last summer (issue 23 of this newsletter) I wrote about the **Friedman Effect**: Milton Friedman (1927-2006), leader of the School of Economics at the University of Chicago and winner of the 1976 Nobel Prize in Economics, said that the **sole purpose of a firm is to make money for its shareholders**. Friedman wrote that any business executives who pursued a goal other than making money were “unwitting puppets of the intellectual forces that have been undermining the basis of a free society these past decades.” Friedman’s influence sped across the economic world like a wild-fire. “Maximizing Profits” became the mantra of the corporate world and *profits before people* became one of the practical outcomes of that teaching. A kind of *Social Darwinism* (the survival of the fittest) took control. The ideals of the *free-market* economy were quietly undermined by corporate take-overs of smaller companies as giants sought to absorb their competitors and control their market shares. Many corporate giants are larger in funds, influence, and management than some national governments!

As a follower of Jesus, the Christ, I believe that to put profits before people is a sin. I have no problem with profits; I do have a problem with excess profits. Take a look at CEO’s salaries!

In order to survive infancy, we begin our lives as little ego-centric beings who in time, by moral and religious edification, become social-centric and Christo-centric in order to establish a society that advances the common good. I stand against Milton Friedman’s economic philosophy. The practice of *capitalism* without the disciplines of our Judo-Christian concern for the common good is one of the main factors that is leading our nation away from its foundation in “We the people...” and the care of the creation, toward catastrophe. Martin Luther King, Jr went further than that. He wrote: “Capitalism does not permit an even flow of economic resources. With this system, a small privileged few are rich beyond conscience, and almost all others are doomed to be poor at some level. That’s the way the system works. And since we know that the system will not change the rules, we are going to have to change the system.” ☩

PRESERVING FUEL-ECONOMY STANDARDS



In the July 2018 issue of *Consumer Reports (CR)*, an article about fuel-economy points out that a business-friendly *Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)* along with the *National Highway Administration (NHA)*, has succumb to the lobbying pressure of the automakers to roll back fuel efficiency standards. A recent CR study showed that, when fully phased in by 2025, “the standards will save drivers \$3,200 per car and \$4,800 per truck over the life of the vehicle.” CR also reported that in a 2017 national study 87% of Americans believe that automakers should keep improving fuel economy, and 73% say that the government should set even higher standards. It’s too bad that the people’s voice is muted.

When you factor in the high purchase price of the new “smart cars,” along with high maintenance costs to repair or replace all their gadgets and then factor in sluggish wage increases and underemployment, you realize that consumers already have enough to worry about without increasing their gas costs.

--Want to take action? Go to CR.org/epa0718. ☩

2017 – SECOND HOTTEST YEAR ON RECORD

The *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NASA)* confirmed that 2017 was the second hottest year on record and the first if we don’t count the transient warming influence of the climate-cycle El Niño. The cold winter in Ohio makes that announcement see unbelievable, but notice the dark blue coming down from Canada in NASA’s climate map below. That was cold.

