



# CREATION CARE



#41, Summer 2022

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

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Occasional Newsletter with relevant articles on biblical, economic, political & social impacts & their consequences on God's Creation & the Church.

On the Web: [nohcob.org](http://nohcob.org), click: Ministries, click: Creation Care

*In Creation God brought ordered existence out of chaos and called us to be Stewards who will rightly manage and supervise his handiwork and its applications. To be effective, Creation Care must cover more than physical projects like recycling and fossil fuel reduction. We must also expose and understand the philosophical, political, economic, and human values and systems that create and support acts of environmental degradation. Stewardship of all creation begins in the mind and is fueled by the emotions where all physical action is born. The mind and the emotions that lead to action cannot be molded just by facts, ideas and projects; they must also be reimagined by a transformative faith. These newsletters are dedicated to this broader concept.*

## SOIL (DIRT) IS A LIVING THING, BUT IT CAN ALSO DIE!



Soil is a living thing, as a matter-of-fact, many earth-scientists are saying that soil is the largest living system that we know. Sadhguru, an environmentalist from India, reports that a single teaspoon of fertile soil can contain more than 9 billion organisms!

Fertile soil contains organic content in the form of plant litter and animal waste; without it, soil becomes sand! The organic content of soil along with the organisms that live and work in it, team-up with the biological imprints of plants to produce nutritious growths of grains, vegetables, fruits, berries, stems, fungi, and leaves.

Depleted soil reduces crop yields and lowers the **nutrient value** of anything that grows in it. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reports that Americans are deficient in potassium, magnesium, vitamins E, K, A, and C. These deficiencies are caused by poor diet choices, nutrient depressing food processing, chemical pollution, and nutrient deficient crops produced on poor soil. Over the last 100 to 150 years, we have witnessed a world-wide slow decline in soil nutrients caused by unsustainable agricultural practices; *Soil Extinction* is now being used to describe the process. We can kill the soil with over-use, chemical fertilizers and weed killers, and the failure to feed the soil with plant litter and animal waste.

Nutrient-rich food scarcity is a growing problem that is also aggravated by the warming climate and the unpredictable weather patterns it creates, water shortages and its contrast, flooding; tilted distribution, civil disputes, violence, and wars.

Conscious Planet-Save Soil is a global movement to raise public awareness of the soil problem and enlist policy changes and agricultural practices that will ensure a minimum of 3% to 6% organic content in soil across the world. *Regenerative Agriculture*, pushes the use of "cover crops" to both hold the soil from erosion and return plant litter into the soil and the return of animal grazing for feces soil enrichment. Grass and crop-lands also are useful in soil carbon sequestration storing as much as 8.6 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually—an amount equivalent to roughly 1.5 times the U.S.A.'s annual emissions. (Summer 2022 *Sierra* magazine, page 52) 🍎

For many believers the concept of *Soil Stewardship* goes back to the Hebrew Old Testament where the Jubilee Year included a provision for the crop-land and vineyards to lie in rest for rejuvenation; Leviticus 25:11, 12: "You shall not plant your fields or harvest the grain that grows by itself or gather the grapes in your unpruned vineyards; the whole year shall be sacred for you; you shall eat only what the fields produce of themselves." 🍎




## BITS AND PIECES

**NATURAL DISASTERS:** 1970-2000 the world averaged between 90 to 100 natural disasters per year. 2001-2015 the average grew to 400 per year. 2030-5060 climate scientists predict as many as 900 per year. -United Nations.

**SHIRLEY TERMPLE BLACK** (1928-2014), Former child star became the U.S. representative to the United Nations (1989-1992).



In 1972, at the close of the Stockholm meeting on climate change, she made the following statement: "Man, with the wonderful and terrible powers that science has put in his hands, stands in greater need than ever before of an ethic to guide his steps. The environmental warnings we see around us are warnings not only to our engineering skills, but to our spirits." 

**AMERICA'S PETS** produce over 5 million tons of feces a year; more than that of 90 million Americans. Don't let it just lay there; pick it up: It is best to flush dog feces down the toilet, but NOT cat feces; it contains *toxoplasma*, a parasite that can infect marine life. -Summer 2022 *Sierra*



magazine, page 35.

**MASS SHOOTINGS** "No one thinks they'll get away with a mass shooting; mass shootings end one of three ways: with the shooter taking their own life, law enforcement taking it for them, or the perpetrator spending the rest of their life in prison. A suicidal shooter may in fact be drawn to a location if they know someone on site is trained to kill them." This raises the question about whether placing armed teachers or guards in a school is really a safeguard or a risk-factor! -James Drensey and Jillian Peterson, "How to Stop a Mass Shooting," 6-20-27, 2022, *TIME*, page 42.

**MONEY MATTERS** "Boys who grew up in the bottom 10% of incomes, are 20 times more likely to be in jail by their early 30s than boys from the top 10%." -Green America, Summer 2022 issue, page 19



**CLOTHING** The clothing industry creates 10% of global emissions, more than air travel and maritime shipping combined. **THOSE WHO MAKE** the world's clothing, mostly women in the global South, often earn less than \$200 a month. An **AMERICAN WOMAN**, on average, owns seven pairs of jeans.

Some 1.25 billion are sold worldwide a year. -Monitor Weekly, 5-9-2022, page 23ff.

**WILD ANIMALS ARE MOVING INTO THE CITIES.** Why are they coming and what is the effect of their presence? As cities and suburban developments grow, natural habitat for wild-life shrinks—pressing animals toward cohabitation with humans. Critters like bears, coyotes, and racoons, etc., move into the cities



where they find suitable shelter and easy pickings for food like garbage and pets. For example, there are areas in Chicago that are now frequented by coyotes who have adapted so well to city life that some have even learned to follow the traffic lights before crossing busy streets! Humans are discovering that “*dumb animals*” are not dumb at all. Wildlife specialists say that these “urban critters” show a remarkable ability to adapt, and in the process become smarter than their wild cousins. A down side is, that because they no longer must endure the strain of the wild-hunt for food and mainly devour human food scraps, they tend to put on excess fat. -See *National Geographic*, 07-2022 issue, page 77-94)



**SINKING LAND AND RISING SEAS** continue to take their toll on islands and sea-coasts. “*Java is the world's most populous island with 150 million inhabitants...Parts of its northern coast are dropping three inches or more a year, causing buildings to tilt and roads to crack.*” *National Geographic*, 07-2022 issue, page 103.

**GLOBAL WARMING** is happening four times faster in the Arctic than anywhere on the planet. -Alastair Fortherrgill

**WHEN THERE IS MORE DIVERSITY IN DECISION-MAKING**, companies tend to be environmentally better, and they tend to be more innovative. -Julie Gorte, Senior Vice President for Sustainable Investing, Impax.

**THE SALTON SEA IS A NEW SOURCE OF LITHIUM FOR BATTERIES.** Once a robust resort area, water contamination and drought turned it into ghost towns, but the California Energy Commission estimates that there is enough lithium there to meet all of our national needs and as much as 40% of the world's lithium needs. If this turns out to be true, it is a game-changer!



Lithium is needed for all types of electric vehicle batteries. There are three companies at the location that are developing chemical processes to extract the lithium using a process that will not damage the environment. -Katie Brigham, CNBC.

**90% OF THE U.S. BABY FORMULA MARKET IS DOMINATED BY JUST FOUR FIRMS.** These firms have “cornered the market” with the result that any glitch in the system can endanger the supply and cause dangerous consumer hardships. The COVID shut-downs revealed how market domination and geographic distances can curtail production and distribution. ☹️



## THE TIMES, THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'; A STEWARD'S RESPONSE

Living things change; that's one of the ways that you can tell that they are alive! There are times, however, when the change is epic; we live in such a time today. Time-tested social and religious structures that held us together for several generations are breaking-down before our very eyes, resulting in disruption, division, and hostility. No social or religious structure is completely good and when its weaknesses multiply or do not respond to remedies, it collapses; another form of the “*wages of sin is death.*” But for those who see God as the center of the universe, this present chaos is the labor-pains of a new birth, so keep the faith!

In such a time, many people long and plead to “*get back to normal;*” for those who lived a comfortable life before, that sounds fine, but for those whose life was loss and struggle, that is unthinkable and change is welcome, even fought-for!

The greatest danger from living in a period of epic change is **despair**, because people will either cling to the dying and the dead carcasses of the past, give up trying altogether, or, in futility and anger, seek to *burn it all down*. Some polling reports that almost 40% of Americans are ready to just burn it down or overthrow it with violence!



Living in the “*no longer and the not yet*” is frightening because we fear the pain of what might be torn from us and the insecurity of the new things that might be thrust upon us.

The **secret to living** in such a time begins by restoring our belief that the Creator of the universe has created an *orderly way of life* that transcends all human institutions and struggle; always pushing human endeavor away from the chaos of disobedience and self-indulgence, toward the peace and self-discipline of God's universal order.

A phenomenon of interest, about many conservative believers today, is what is being labeled: “*Cultural Christians*” (CCs). Jacob Lupfer (Religious News Service) writes: “*the term ‘evangelical’ now more meaningfully describes a voting block than a theological movement.*” CCs are those whose faith and energy is invested



primarily in the hot-button cultural issues of our time, such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and immigration, rather than on the nature and livability of belief as discovered in scripture and expressed in doctrine. An example of this phenomena, that made me chuckle, is the Indiana pig farmer, who joined others in urging his pastor to “*preach the whole Bible,*” which is one of the current code-phrases that wants the Old Testament teaching against same-sex unions, such as Leviticus 18:22, brought forward from the pulpit. The thing that made me chuckle is Leviticus 11:7, “*Do not eat pigs. They must be considered unclean (etc.),*” also a part of the “*whole Bible!*” There goes breakfast bacon, Easter ham; and his pig farm! After all, faithfulness to the commands centering around keeping kosher is also a primary O.T. teaching that is alive and well even today among faithful Jewish believers. The bottom line? Think about all the implications of what you ask for and the beliefs that you zero-in on!

Fr. Gabriel Rochelle, retired Orthodox priest, in a brief article, “*Goodbye to Christian Culture and all that,*” (6-16-2022), writes:

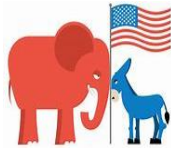
“*...the churches have undercut their own relevance...the left has done this by hitching its wagon to the [current social*

fashions] as if the political and sexual agendas of our time were divinely inspired. The **right** has made the same mistake, the difference being that their agenda goes 180 degrees in the opposite direction. What's lost in both of these is a focus on the centrality of the faith [Jesus]...Because of hitching up with political perspectives and programs, Christianity is as divided and polarized as the rest of our country."



I want to be careful, here, to point-out that the label, "**political**" has often been used by religious people as an excuse not to confront the evils of our time that are dished-up by unsavory politicians and their followers. Ivan Rusyn, president of the Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary in Kyiv, said that the churches "**are not political institutions and the church cannot be a political power. But the church cannot be far from what is going on.**" -Plough, Summer 2022 issue, page 15.

There is a difference between being political and being partisan. In the first we deal with ideas; their logic, ethics, and morality; in the latter we deal with organized self-interests and their use of power and presentation (fake-news, etc.). When Christians are silent in the presence of political evil and partisan bias, they become co-conspirators in that evil; such a silence is not golden, it is cowardly.



The call of the followers of Jesus is to cluster together into little believer-groups that, by the manner of their living, become the visible body of Christ in the world; their task: to fulfill The Great Commission.

Historically, in an attempt to answer this call, we formed little outposts, set in neighborhoods, through-out the nation. The purpose of these congregations was to serve the immediate community around them.

With the onslaught of the automobile, interstate highways, and urban sprawl; neighborhoods became allotments and "*residential areas.*" The sense of community changed; congregations moved from "*community churches*" into "*commuter churches*" with competing programs and staff, where most, or even all of its members, lived some distance from each-other and from the church building. The automobile solved the problems of geographic distance, but it also created social distance as community churches no longer gathered neighbors together in common worship, fellowship, and work.

In our nation, individualism and privacy became cherished perceptions of who we are and what we value. Socially, most of us no longer know the neighbors around us or feel an intimate sense of neighborhood. Politically, we became "*red and blue states*" with "*red and blue*" appointments to the Supreme Court and judicial benches, etc., all bearing the prejudices of their "*red and blue*" patrons; communication became rhetoric. As a result, we have become a nation of competing tribes, suspicious of each other and intent on the promotion and dominance of our own particular agendas with the result that we have lost confidence in our basic institutions and the governing system has stagnated. The distribution of wealth (unbonded wealth has the power to influence and buy politicians and voters) and its influence is so lopsided that the tenets and accomplishments of the democratic system are being lost from public view and autocratic "*efficiency*" is gaining favor.

The greatest need in our nation today is to build a common idealism and a sense of community; and that, my friends, is what the followers

of Jesus are good at! We know "*the way, the truth, and the life*" and because of Jesus, and our anabaptist understanding of the "*no-force-in-religion*" methods of living and witnessing, we are ideally suited to wade through the hostilities and despair of this era, by re-establishing congregations who build community among the people around our meeting houses and homes. The technique to be used is, not just to find their needs and fill them, but also to find their talents and enlist them. We are called, not just to bring people to salvation, but also to give people the dignity and satisfaction of a meaningful life's-work.

If the church is to meet the challenges of our social situation today, then Pastors and other church leaders need some new skills including the techniques involved in community research and organizing. The key to community outreach is personal contact; most congregations are "*come*" oriented; come to church or come to our program, etc. We must put the GO into Gospel and move out into the neighborhoods adjacent to the church building. To reach people we need to be interested in people, their lives, skills, problems, hopes, and dreams. It is no longer effective to try to "*sell them Jesus*" in the old witness/confrontation style so common at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Words have never been as cheap as they are these days; today, more than ever, we must "*be the love of Jesus*" on the outside to the outsider if we are ever to get them inside. ☹

### THE CHURCH HAS LOST ITS ONCE FAVORED POSITION IN OUR SOCIETY

Recent polls by Pew, Barna, and, this one, by Gallup, all show changes in the social judgments of how clergy and church leaders stand in the public eye today.

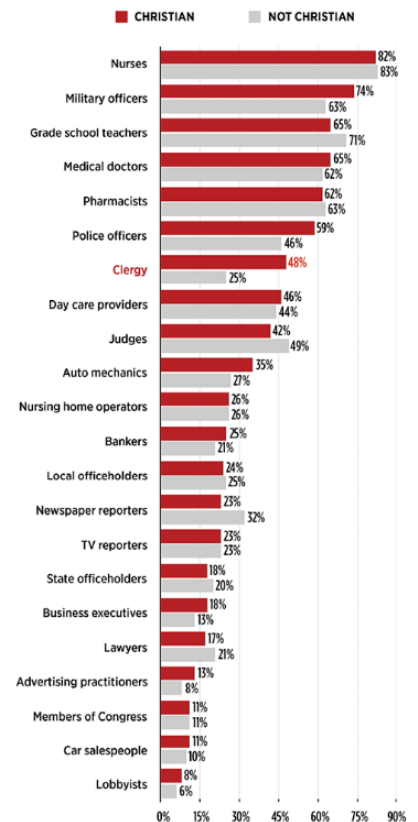
The reasons for the decline in respect for religious leaders includes partisan political involvement, sexual misconduct, fiduciary irresponsibility, and the blunders, both theological and organizational, of poorly trained and undertrained pastors.

The society at large suffers from the lack of unifying moral and ethical principles of conduct, and declining trust in political, social, and religious institutions.

We must be concerned, but it is important to realize that any failure, regardless of its size, is a call to repentance, and a call to repentance leads to re-commitment, and re-commitment leads to renewal!

Failure is an opportunity, when we seize the moment, consult the scriptures, and by faith, reenvision the way God is opening new doors through which we may move on. ☹

### LEVEL OF TRUST BY PROFESSION



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**I AM NOT  
LOST!  
GOOD  
INTENTIONS  
CAN HURT.  
LEAVE WILDLIFE  
IN THE WILD!**



**THE SILENT PANDEMIC**

The CDC is currently reporting (7-11-22) an average of more than 100,000 new cases of COVID each day. Dr. Ashish Jha told NBC news that the real per-day count is probably more like 400/500,000 because the new, reduced, reporting system only counts hospitalizations and not confirmed infections. COVID infections, in the U.S., have risen every day since April 2022. (Cèire Kealty, Villanova University.) The politicization of COVID and the vaccine has silenced most public officials and is reinforced by a mountain of disinformation that has led to the mistrust of medical science, suppressed reason, skewed the meaning of personal freedom, and promoted violent anger. To complicate matters even more a 2021 study shows that 57% of the people who contracted COVID-19 were still experiencing symptoms six months or more after testing positive—including loss of smell, taste, cardiovascular issues, neurological problems, brain fog, muscle pain, and fatigue, many without realizing the connection.



The unchecked spread of COVID has allowed the development of a steady stream of variants that quickly spread through-out the world. In response, vaccine producers plan to roll-out new bivalent vaccines this fall that will address the omicron and, perhaps, some of the BA variants, but new variants are beginning to show-up in India that even the up-dated vaccines may not cover. A further complication is that the congress has stalled releasing new money for vaccines which means that there will likely be limited supplies available this fall. The prediction for the fall/winter season is grim.

Only 49.5%, or 108.6 Americans have received their first, of two, boosters raising concerns that people won't bother to be boosted in the fall when the up-dated booster versions arrive. ☹️



**THE CREATION IS LIKE A SPACIOUS AND SPLENDED HOUSE,  
PROVIDED AND FILLED WITH THE MOST  
EXQUISITE AND MOST ABUNDANT FURNISHINGS.  
EVERYTHING IN IT TELLS US OF GOD.**

*John Calvin (1509-1564), Institutes 1:14*

**GOD WRITES THE GOSPEL,  
NOT IN THE BIBLE ALONE, BUT ALSO ON  
TREES, AND IN THE FLOWERS AND CLOUDS  
AND STARS.**

Martin Luther (1483-1546) ☹️



**WIND IS THE THIRD-LARGEST SOURCE FOR  
GENERATING POWER IN THE U.S.A.**



Natural gas and coal-fired generators are the first and second largest source for generating electricity, but wind-generation is third and gaining ground fast.

The cost of wind-power is declining and the technology is improving, which means that we will see wind occupy a growing share of the generating market in the next few decades.

On March 29, 2022, the US Energy Information Administration found that wind turbines, across the US produced 2,017 gigawatt hours of electricity, behind only natural gas for electricity output.

The warming climate seems to be producing more windy days in many regions of the nation, making wind-power even more attractive.

Wind-power has a long history; it is as old as the hills and as new as tomorrow. It dates back 3,700 years B.C. to Babylonia when plans were drawn-up to use windmills to pump water.



The Dutch started building windmills in 1200 A.D. to grind grain and pump water.



Farmers, in the Midwest, began using windmills to pump water and generate twelve-volt electricity in the mid-1800's.

In 1941 the largest turbine powered by a local utility was during WWII on a hilltop in Vermont.

In 1978 President Carter signed the *Public Utility Act* which required utility companies to buy a percentage of their energy from renewable sources, including wind.



In 1981 the first utility-scale wind farms were built in California. In 2012 the U.S. Department of Energy put in place its *National Offshore Wind Strategy*.

In 2016 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that Wind Turbine Service Technicians is the fastest growing job of the decade.

In 2016 the first wind farm was built off the coast of Rhode Island.



In 2019 the onshore windmill capacity surpasses 100 gigawatts; enough to power 28 million homes.

*Vineyard Wind One*, the first commercial offshore wind project in the U.S., was approved in 2021; it is expected to generate enough electricity to power more than 400,000 homes and businesses. ☹️