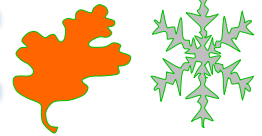




# CREATION CARE



**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**

Northern Ohio District, Church of the Brethren, Stewardship Advocate, Clyde C. Fry, [cceseven@embarqmail.com](mailto:cceseven@embarqmail.com)

Occasional Newsletter #32, Fall/Winter 19/20; Providing relevant articles on biblical, economic, political and social impacts and their consequences on God's Creation and the Church. On the Web: [nohcob.org](http://nohcob.org), click: Resources, click: Creation Care



## MARCHING TO A DIFFERENT DRUMMER; an Editorial, Part Two

*The kind and quality of our caring depends upon the values and beliefs that we hold.*

In the last issue (#31, Summer 2019) I wrote about the secular/social economic theologians, Milton Friedman and Ayn Rand, who gave birth to the modern business philosophy that, for decades, has promoted the primacy of shareholders over all stakeholders, saw altruism and government entitlements as the primary cause of human dependence and decadence, held profit and production as the primary human values, and consumer capitalism as the ideal economic system. They pointed to the rising (until recently) middle-class and the innovative technologies that have often blessed our culture, as evidence to support their assertions. My rebuttal was that their theology was in direct conflict with our Judeo/Christian values of human sanctity, accountability, and interdependence.

Something very new, and yet very old, lies on the horizon. **Business Roundtable** (BRT), a non-profit association and “think tank,” whose members are made up of some of the chief executive officers of major U.S. companies, come together to promote public policy that favors business interests. At their August 19, 2019 meeting they radically updated their policy statement. Jamie Dimon, Chairman and CEO of JPMorgan Chase & Co. and chair of BRT said: **“The American dream is alive, but fraying. Major employers are investing in their workers and communities because they know it is the only way to be successful over a long term. These modernized principles reflect the business community’s unwavering commitment to continue to push for an economy that serves all Americans.”** Alex Gorski, Chair of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Johnson & Johnson and Chair of the BRT Corporate Governance Committee, added: **“This new statement better reflects the way corporations can and should operate today. It affirms the essential role corporations can play in improving our society when CEOs are truly committed to meeting the needs of all stakeholders.”**

What are the new principles? 1) Delivering value to our customers, 2) Investing in our employees, 3) Dealing fairly and ethically with our suppliers, 4) Supporting the communities in which we work, 5) Generating long-term value for shareholders. (BRT web: “Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation” – Signed by 181 CEOs).

This is quite a switch from Friedman’s doctrine that *“the sole purpose of a firm is to make money for its shareholders”* and

that anyone who pursued a goal other than making money is an “unwitting puppets of the intellectual forces that have been undermining the basis of a free society these past decades” and Rand’s “There’s nothing of any importance in life---except how well you do your work. Nothing. Only that. Whatever else you do will come from that. It’s the only measure of human value. All the codes of ethics they’ll try to ram down your throat are just so much paper money put out by swindlers to fleece people.”

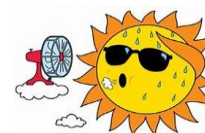
What happened? Dimon’s comment that the “American dream is alive, but **fraying**” may hint at an answer.

First, for a number of years, we continue to witness the unraveling of our public culture. We have a government that has lost its moral compass, tilts at windmills in useless ideological battles, skews Constitutional principles, caters to special interests, promotes falsehoods, lusts for the power that money brings, and sanctifies the idea that the ends justify the means – while our infrastructure and human need go wanting.

Second, for some time now, opinion polls reveal the public’s growing dissatisfaction with corporate America, its institutions, and the distribution of wealth that it overseas. It makes sense, then, to attempt a change of image from being a part of the problem to being a part of the answer. Gorski’s statement, “...the essential role corporations can play in improving our society when CEO’s are truly committed to meeting the needs of all stakeholders” moves corporate policy away from “Shareholder Primacy” to stakeholder primacy – at last, the *common good*.

Talk, however, is cheap; we must wait to see if this is just PR or a real change of heart in corporate culture. ☹

Those who cut back on alcohol can notice improved sleep quality, greater focus, fewer illnesses and better mental and emotional health. U.S. News & World Report



## DECADE LIKELY TO BE THE HOTTEST EVER ON EARTH

According to the *World Meteorological Organization (WMO)*, each successive decade has been warmer than the last ever since the 1980’s. We have experienced exceptional global heat, retreating ice, and record sea levels, all mainly driven by gases from human activities. Concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (greenhouse gas) is the main cause. In 2018 we hit a record level of 407.8 parts per million. It appears that, when 2019 is completed, we will hit another record high. The changing climate has the attention of the political fringes right now and will soon, out of necessity, dominate our nation’s politics. ☹

2020

It is the best of times and the worst of times  
 filled with blessings and burdens impacting in dizzying succession.  
 Once flourishing constants slowly crumble in quiet desperation,  
 as evil is honored and good subverted, leaving gaping voids.  
 Faith confronts dark folly in a struggle for allegiance  
 as energy and intellect waver, grasping for hope and direction.  
 But God reigns with focused interest to eventually clear the confusion  
 as triumph awaits those with faithful persistence.  
 The future lies before us, uncertain, yet open, for brave encounter.  
 Encouraged with the memory of past victories and eternal promises,  
 full of life, we march forward, heart within and God overhead.  
 Come what may, by God's Grace and tamed human ego,  
 we will usher in the respect, peace, and justice that God ordained.

Clyde C. Fry, 12-2-2019



### ADDING NEW JOBS; BUT WHAT KIND?

According to the *Coalition for a Prosperous America (CPA)* sixty-three percent of the production and non-supervisory jobs created in the U.S. over the past 30 years have been in low-wage and low-hour positions. 15 million non-management jobs are in the leisure and hospitality industries, paying an average of \$360 a week, and 13.5 million are in retail jobs paying roughly \$506 weekly. We now have 105 million production and non-supervisory jobs in the U.S. of which 85 percent are in the private sector. More than half of them pay less than the average weekly U.S. wage of \$793.

From 1970 to 2019, U.S. manufacturing employment declined from 22.6 percent of the workforce to only 8.2 percent. 100 million Americans are watching their employment prospects gradually deteriorate in spite of the new job rate. Add to all of this a workforce in which 65.1 percent do not have a college or trade-school degree, the growth of artificial intelligence, and the constant increase in the numbers of robots<sup>1</sup> in the work-place (See issue #25, Winter 2018, page 1 for article), and the picture becomes even gloomier. Can we be proud of this?

What is being done and what can be done?

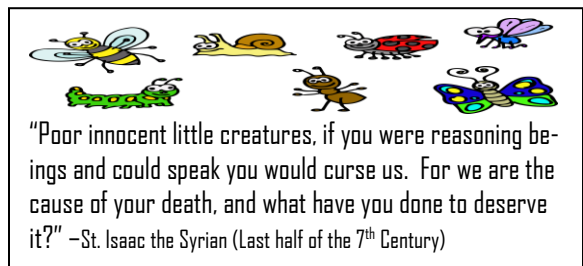
Minimum wage laws (MWL) are a tactic built on the idea that we should guarantee a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. MWL's were first passed in New Zealand in 1894, Austria in 1896, United Kingdom in 1918, in Massachusetts (U.S.A.) in 1912, and in all of the U.S.A. in 1938. In our nation the minimum wage has been raised only 22 times. There are also serious loop-holes in it, so it does not apply to all jobs.

STEM education is an approach to teaching and learning that integrates the content and skills of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to prepare students to enter the current job market to earn a living and fulfill the needs of consumer capitalism. It is feared, however, that this emphasis has created a kind of economic servitude and reinforced a cultural narcissism that has created social upheaval and violence. The humanizing/socializing qualities provided by a liberal arts education, in which students gain general knowledge in such fields as history, language, art, music, literature, and the development of intellectual ability, no longer exists in many school curriculums. *Liberal Arts* education is known as "*the humanities*" for good reason; their study tends to humanize us.

Guaranteed Minimum Income is a system of social welfare that is meant to provide sufficient income to pay for basic living needs to those who meet eligibility requirements.

Advocacy and Confrontation: Unions use *Collective Bargaining* and *Strikes* to implore and pressure employers to provide adequate wages and benefits to their employees. The once strong union movement fell out of favor for a variety of reasons so that today it represents only a fraction of the workers it once did.

Universal Income is a plan designed to deal with the deficit created by modern technology and artificial intelligence that is rapidly reducing the number of jobs available to human workers. Many experts in the field, anticipate that most technological work will be done by some form of android in the near future leaving most humans without any gainful employment. Numbers of nations are now experimenting with providing all of their citizens with a guaranteed basic income paid for by assessments from the profits made by android production. Profit margins from android production are expected to more than double because androids are programmed and need only minor administration which means that the current high cost of CEO'S will shrink. Androids don't get sick, have accidents, need rest, or make costly errors – in other words they are much more efficient, cheaper to maintain, and control than humans. It is even believed that one day they will reproduce and repair themselves! I was skeptical until I thought about how we moved from typewriters to computers and watched robots working in a huge Amazon warehouse. <sup>1</sup> 60% of workers, worldwide, say they trust a robot manager more than a human one (World



Economic Forum) ⊕

437 grains of wheat per ounce.  
 16 ounces of wheat in one pound of flour.  
 One pound of flour makes one average loaf of bread.



"Give us, this day, our daily bread." ⊕

**IN CHRIST OUR TRUE NATURE,  
“CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD,”  
COMES OUT;  
AND THEN WE DO  
“WHAT COMES NATURALLY.”**

My mother taught me that not only did God create the world, He is present in it too. The distance between heaven’s realities and earth’s possibilities was bridged by the Grace of Christ in the Holy Spirit. We are reminded of God’s presence in every heart-beat and every sunset. Through the New Covenant, Eden was restored to us and our labor to keep and tend it was transformed from punishment to purpose. We do not labor under the guilt of sin but under the love of God’s Grace! For mother, prayer, worship, and the encounters of life were all tied to the ever-present handiwork and the master handyman – God – the creator; the author of salvation; the giver of abundant life; who, in Jesus is the way; the truth; the life!

For me, Creation Care was never a foreign or “new” idea; certainly nothing to argue about. Creation Care is simply a way of living that requires a simple lifestyle. It has always meant that we should take no more than we really need. Greed and waste are the enemy that leads to death and destruction, while a thankful heart gives life!

From the very beginning of time our relationship to the earth has been defined in terms of giving and receiving, privilege and responsibility (*Genesis 1:26-30, 2:15*). God, the creator, is the owner (*Psalms 24:1*) and we are sharecroppers (*Leviticus 27:30-33*). Living “under God” we have two fundamental responsibilities – to fulfill the “Creation Commission” (*Genesis 2:15*) and the “Great Commission” (*Matthew 28:19,20*).

Are you transformed in Christ? Then, do what comes naturally; love and care for each other and for God’s creation. ☩



**THE WATER WHEEL** was developed by Habitat for Humanity in India to improve the efficiency of water transport and storage, across the difficult terrains in Maharashtra. The water wheel is a cylindrical plastic drum, made of safe, food-grade high-density polyethylene, with a capacity of 45 liters (about 12 gallons)—three to five times more than what can be transported carrying water by hand. Low cost, it includes a plastic/metal handle to ease its rolling movement, which allows almost any family member to use it.

Since 2015, Habitat has provided water wheels to 1,795 families in some of the major districts of Maharashtra. The concept has become so widely accepted that nowadays, even the men in the villages have started taking the responsibility to fetch water – something which was usually thought of as “women’s work.” ☩

**E-Buses** (Electric Buses) are growing in popularity everywhere. In Chicago, for example, the city’s transit agency estimates that its two e-buses save the city nearly \$110,000 a year, part of which \$24,000 is in fuel savings and \$30,000 annually in maintenance costs, compared to diesel buses, to say nothing of the health benefits from not inhaling diesel exhaust.



Limitations imposed by battery costs and length of charge is rapidly improving as battery technology improves allowing many e-buses to run all day without recharging. The average battery costs dropped about 85% since 2010. Battery leasing programs have also become popular in managing costs.

Upfront costs for e-buses remains a problem. First, an e-bus costs about \$750,000 compared with \$550,000 for diesel. In this case the cost will go down as demand for buses goes up. Second, the up-front cost of installing charging stations is a major consideration for start-ups. Third, high demand pricing from local electric utilities can take a major slice out of potential savings since utilities must upgrade their delivery systems to meet transit facility needs. When transit agencies and utility companies plan together, in advance, for moving to an e-bus system mutually beneficial terms are being reached.

Amazon is moving to all electric trucks. By 2021 it plans to have 10,000 e-trucks on the road and their entire fleet of about 100,000 vehicles by 2030. The trucks will be manufactured by Rivian, a Michigan-based startup in which Amazon is a major investor. This is a big deal for promoting electric vehicle popularity and advancing charging technology. Rivian will debut its all-electric pickup in 2020. ☩



**THE GREAT LAKES** play a central role in the Midwest by providing an abundant freshwater resource for water supplies, industry, shipping, fishing, and recreation, as well as a rich and diverse ecosystem. But they are

under stress from pollution, nutrient and sediment inputs from agricultural systems, and invasive species. Lake surface temperatures are increasing; lake ice cover is decreasing; summer evaporation rates are rising; storm impacts and frequency put coastal communities at increasing risk.

According to the *Fourth National Climate Assessment*, several coastal communities have expressed willingness to integrate climate action into their planning efforts, but access to useful climate information and limited human, political, and financial resources constrain municipal action. ☩



**THE UNLEAKABLE LEAKS AGAIN**

TC Energy’s *Keystone* pipeline leaked an estimated 383,000 gallons of oil near Edinburg, in Walsh County, in northeastern North Dakota on October 31, 2019. The pipeline carries tar sands oil from Canada through seven states. The line was shut down for repairs, according to Karl Rockeman, North Dakota’s water quality division director.

**Remember the Water Protectors of Standing Rock?**

(See the article, CC, issue #22, Spring of 2017, page 2). The Keystone pipeline protests in 2017 brought worldwide attention to pipeline dangers in ecologically sensitive areas and to the attacks on peaceful protestors by paid security guards and local law enforcement. The construction show-down and negative publicity set in action efforts to reign-in the right to protest. According to *Jake Johnson*, staff writer for *Common Dreams* (8-20-19) at a conference in



Washington, D.C., in June, of this year, Derrick Morgan, senior vice president for federal and regulatory affairs at the *American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufactures (AFPM)* "touted 'model legislation' that states across the nation have passed, in recent months" that criminalize pipeline protests. AFPM represents a number of major fossil fuel giants, including Chevron, Koch Industries, and ExxonMobil. Morgan went on to say, "We're up to nine states that have passed laws that are substantially close to the model policy that you have in your packet." It is reported that Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed a bill that would punish anti-pipeline demonstrators with up to 10 years in prison. Special interest groups draft hundreds of "model policies" that they circulate to legislators throughout the nation with the hope that their sympathizers will sponsor them and that they will be enacted into law. Dozens are enacted into law, so the strategy works very well for them, but not so well for the public interest. Often, the right to protest is all that citizens have left to use to confront profit-driven injustice.

In Ohio, anti-protest bill SB 33 has been introduced through the influence of the *American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)*, a national conservative non-profit that drafts legislation that members may customize and introduce for debate in their own state. Ⓢ



### NOT ON MY LAND

Local property owners in Texas, ranging from ranchers to a Catholic diocese are resisting federal efforts to claim their land to build "Trump's Wall." The resistance in South Texas, where most of the land is privately owned, illustrates the challenges in building a border wall, even if funding becomes available. About 200 miles southeast, in the Rio Grande Valley, refusals have led the government to sue 46 landowners for the right to survey their property in preparation for acquiring part of it. It is likely that the lawsuits by both the government and resisters will drag on in the courts for years; by then the "wall mania" may have disappeared.

Reasons for resistance to the wall range widely and include theological, ecological, commercial, social, and private property rights. Ⓢ

**CLIMATECHANGE UNBELIEVERS ARE BEING CONVERTED BY THE HUNDREDS** as young people, across the globe, continue their activist activities and climate realities continue to press us on almost all fronts.



*ProCon.org* released the results of a poll in Sep. 2019 that found that 86% of teenagers and 79% of adults believe that human activity is the main cause of climate change. Other polls have found that now only 14% of Americans deny climate change exists. On the political divide, among those who think climate change is mostly caused by humans, 84% are Democrats while only 26% are Republicans.

Most urgent is the fact that the scientific community has found that their estimates of how quickly the climate is changing are too conservative; both heating and sea-level rise are above all expectations! Ⓢ

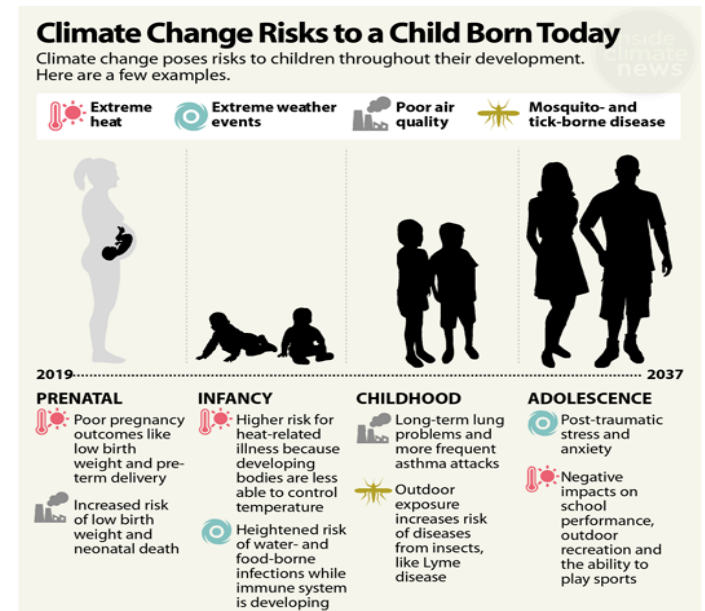


**PATRIOTIC MILLIONAIRES**

On November 7, 2019, in

both chambers of Congress, the group, Patriotic Millionaires introduced the *Millionaires Surtax*, a new tax proposal to

tackle extreme wealth in America. The plan, championed by co-sponsors Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) in the Senate and Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) in the House, would add 10 percentage points to the top tax rates on both income and capital gains paid by those making over \$2 million annually. In response, members of the *Patriotic Millionaires* issued the following statement: "The Millionaires Surtax is a simple to implement, easy to enforce, laser-targeted plan to tax the extremely wealthy. This surtax exclusively applies to individuals making over \$2 million per year, which is just the very top of the one percent in this country. Americans want to tax the rich, and this surtax explains precisely who and how they will be taxed. This is an easy plan to tax the rich and an even easier sell to the American public, so let's get it done." - Morris Pearl, former managing director at Blackrock, Inc. and Chair of the Patriotic Millionaires. Ⓢ



SOURCE: Lancet

PAUL HORN / InsideClimate News



### SCREENS WILL NOT REPLACE THE PRINTED PAGE

The main advantage of screen reading is flexibility. In one place, on one compact device, you have access to an endless stream of information, more visual resources (pictures, charts, etc.), and a growing option of audio presentations.

Among the disadvantages is an increase in eyestrain (the effects of which are still being uncovered) because of long exposure to *blue light*, an increase in distractions (pop-ups, etc.), difficulty in identifying and establishing the reliability of sources, misinformation spreads in seconds taking on a life of its own, and perhaps, more important than anything else in a society that hopes to remain free, the privacy of your person, your searches and imputes are easily exposed and tracked. Digital also trends to break subjects down into "bite-sized" pieces that can lead to shallow understanding of complex ideas and flawed solutions that create social division and violence.

In contrast, print has built-in safeguards through long established editing and publishing practices where there are high standards for authorship and citing sources. Print is easier on the eyes, is not subject to the limitations of device damage, circuitry breakdown, or battery/outlet power needs, and has no built-in distractions nor can it be altered with a simple key-stroke. Ⓢ