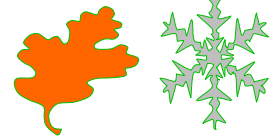




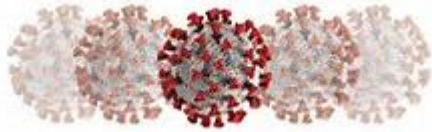
# CREATION CARE



**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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## THOUGHTS ABOUT NATURE'S WAY AND GOD'S WILL; COVID-19

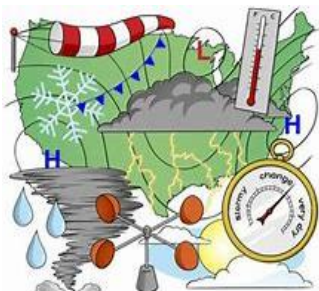
*"The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord."* -Romans 6:23. **Through-out history the un-explainable was often attributed to God.** When it came as a blessing, it was called a miracle; when it came as a curse it was called God's punishment, discipline, or a test of faith. Human disability, disaster, disease, and death were often accounted for with the claim that it is "God's will," your "appointed" time, or punishment for "Sin."

*"<sup>4</sup>Praise [God], highest heavens, and the waters above the sky. <sup>5</sup>Let them all praise the name of the Lord! He commanded, and they were created; <sup>6</sup>by his command they are fixed in their places forever, and they cannot disobey. <sup>7</sup>lightning and hail, snow and clouds, strong winds that obey his command."* -Psalm 148. Even in our legal code a natural event such as lightning, a hurricane, earthquake, or some other natural catastrophe, beyond human causation or control, is called an "Act of God," thus limiting financial and personal culpability; but it lays the "blame" on God!

When there are events that we can't explain or understand we often seek solace in the belief that their meaning lies above the reach of our current understanding and that somehow, through these events everything, even tragic things, work for our ultimate good. *"All things work together for good for them who love the Lord; whom he has called according to his purpose."* -Romans 8:28.

As time marched on, **humanity began to see that these tragic things did not just suddenly happen**, as though they came with a wave of God's hand, instead, they were the result of a natural process that developed over time; both short and long spans of time.

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the science of meteorology began to take shape. Cold and warm fronts, winds aloft, ocean currents, flat lands and mountains all contributed to the formation of weather patterns, both foul and fair. Through global satellites we



are now able to watch and follow the weather; even to plan and prepare for what it brings.

**The laws of nature take their course.** With that knowledge, we are called to live in harmony with nature. If we live in "tornado alley" we must build strong and deep; if we build where floods are common, we must build high and dry. You can't change natural law; you can only try to live in harmony with it; if you don't you may pay a steep price. Global warming is one evidence of that.



Scientific disciplines like Microbiology and Epidemiology study disease and the processes by which bacteria and viruses develop and spread. They use what they find to search for prevention, treatments, and cures. The

knowledge they share enables each one of us to live more responsibly, adopt healthy living and eating habits and take advantage of medical care.

Perhaps we have drawn some wrong conclusions in our study of ancient people and their texts; perhaps **we are not "conceived in sin," but born as self-centered and ignorant empty vessels in desperate need of Holy filling!** To grow in human maturity demands that we must accept the Fatherhood of God and the Saviorhood of Christ so that we can understand the difference between right and wrong. We must learn to find harmony in the spiritual and natural realms in which we live and upon which our health and destiny depend in order to move away from the destructive slavery of self-centered egotism into a God-centered freedom so that we can fulfill our destiny as God's stewards and witnesses.

**There are two contrasting ways to look at the nature of God's presence and his relationship to his creation.**

Those who look at God as the **creator/founder** of the universe, believe that what God did in creation was totally good (*Genesis 1:31*); so good in fact that the universe runs like "clock-work." Its natural laws need no amendments or improvements; for God is the perfect creator of a meshing universe and has



no need to interfere with its workings. When humans live in proper relationship to the natural world, nature is self-correcting and self-sustaining. Jesus Christ came, not to change or correct nature, but to change the human understanding of how to fulfill their part in nature. Sin, and its deadly effects, happen when humans fail to abide by the natural laws that govern and preserve nature. Human sinfulness brings its own judgment without any need of a direct verdict or intervention from God. (Romans 6:23a).

Those who look at God as the **creator/sustainer** believe that man's failure to recognize the eternal presence of God and his failure to fulfill his role as God's stewards and witnesses, results in humanities' "*gumming-up the works,*" requiring God's intrusion into history to uphold the rules and to correct error. Man is so "*full of himself*" that he thinks that he is free to do what he pleases; nature is not seen as a sacred trust, but as a commodity to be used to sustain and satisfy his endless appetite and an enemy to be overcome. He values other people only based upon their ability to satisfy his personal needs. "Me and mine" are his guiding principle. Jesus Christ came to expose that sinfulness and to call humanity back to the relationships and to the stewardship for which they were created. *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 "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God." -Micah 6:8. "As I have loved you, so you must love one another." -John 13:34b.*

### Historically, what happens when faith and crisis collide?



Biblical accounts provide countless contrasts between miraculous rescues and crushing punishments, all of which are attributed to God's interventions. The ark, the parting of the Red Sea, the escape from Egypt, the desert feedings and wanderings, barring Moses from entering the promised land, and the conquest and settlement of Canaan, only begin the list.

In secular history, however, the evidence is unsettling. The great plagues which killed millions of believers through-out world history; the flu pandemic of 1918-1920 that killed millions, etc.; the slaughter of over six million of "God's People," the Jews, by the Nazis during the second world war; In those times of crisis, millions of the faithful, had prayed for God's intervention and protection without receiving it; leaving survivors to wonder why God didn't intervene and relieve the suffering.

Now we have Covid-19; where it will take us is unknown. What we have seen so far is unsettling; the covid-19 deaths of clergy and laity who kept their churches open, mourners who attended funerals, helpless older people in care facilities, meat packing employees, and health-care workers—only begin the list of victims.

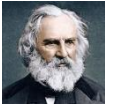
Bishop, Gerald Glenn, pastor of *New Deliverance Evangelistic Church* in Virginia proclaimed: "*I firmly believe that God is larger than this dreaded virus*" and added that he

was not afraid to die. Well, God is larger, but the good Bishop died of Covid-19 a few weeks later. Pastor Timothy Cole of Christ Church in Georgetown, offered Holy Communion and shook hands with nearly 550 people on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Days later, he was admitted to intensive care, with the virus, and his congregation, now exposed, was put on close health watch.

**The Covid-19 dilemma takes us back to the two realms; spiritual and natural.** Ecclesiastes 3:20 reminds us that we were made from dust and to dust we will return. In this life we are all subject to the negative effects of natural law whether it be from storms, sickness, or accidents. In the great testing of Jesus in Matthew 4, Jesus rejected the temptation to break God's natural law of gravity by jumping off of the pinnacle of the temple to prove his divinity through God's protection. (4:5-7) **Today some believers want to defy the natural laws of contagion, pronouncing that God will protect them from Covid-19.** They must think that God provides them with "dust" insurance; even with great faith we are still dust.

We cannot escape from the limitations of time, space, & flesh. In these things, we face both misery & mystery; nor can we escape from the realities of Covid-19.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote the poem "A Psalm of Life." It opens with these words:



Tell me not, in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an empty dream!  
For the soul is dead that slumbers,  
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.

### My body is tied to nature, but my soul is tied to God.

I must never forget this. I will try to live in harmony with God's Natural Law in all things, including the Covid-19 crisis; I will wear a mask, wash my hands thoroughly, practice social distancing and disinfect surfaces. Using those tools is the natural thing to do. I will also ask God for protection and survival, because it is the spiritual thing to do.

Our spiritual tools include **belief**. What you think and what you know is of vital importance, but what you believe opens the windows of our minds to the grand possibilities of God's power. Paul Rader (1879-1938) was a pastor, evangelist, and hymn writer in Chicago. He wrote: "*Only believe, only believe; All things are possible, only believe.*" Very often, what we believe enhances what we are able to accept and what we are able to do.



A second spiritual tool is **prayer**. Prayer is conversation with God. Conversation is hearing and listening; two parties intimately engaged. C. Austin Miles (1897-1968), pharmacist, turned Gospel song writer, in the chorus to his famous hymn,

"In the Garden," penned: "*And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own, And the joy we share as we tarry there, None other has ever known.*" Prayer that is focused on some

catastrophe to entreat God to change the circumstances or prevent its effects, is valid, but it is only the tip of the iceberg. James Montgomery (1771-1854), poet, journalist, and abolitionist, wrote: "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, The Christian's native air; His watch-word at the gates of death: He enters heaven with prayer."

A third tool is the **scripture**. I have devoted much of my life to the study of the scriptures because they are the source-document of our faith and contain both the witness to and the revelation of God's will and the human path to abundant living (John 10:10). "For everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement the Scriptures give us." -Romans 15:4. British evangelist, Leonard Ravenhill (1907-1994) said: "Prayer doesn't change things. Prayer changes people, and they change things." In other words, Prayer is also the Power to Im-power!

**Anointing for healing.** <sup>5:13</sup>Is there any one of you who is in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? He should sing praises. <sup>14</sup>Is any one of you who is sick? He should call the church elders, who will pray for him and pour oil on him in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup>This prayer, made in faith, will save the sick man and the Lord will restore him to



Anointing of the sick.

health, and the sins he has committed will be forgiven." -James. In one sense this is an act which seeks to override natural law. It also connects illness to the devastating effects of sin. The connection between oil, an ancient medicine with spiritual properties, and a prayer of faith, is deeply interesting. The mystery that exists between the natural and the spiritual reminds us once again that now we see in a mirror dimly. (1 Cor. 13:12).

A fifth tool is living in **community** where **worship** and the **Lord's supper** are dynamic routines. Here natural law and spiritual law really collide with Covid-19 and the need for social distancing, to make transition of the virus person to person, more difficult. Separation creates a real gap. Spiritual law calls for social intimacy; we are the body of Christ, the family of God, and the fellowship of believers. We are brothers and sisters who gather together in worship, study, and fellowship. Distancing is unnatural in our fellowship.



**It has always been difficult to be a true church,** in a social structure that promotes and values personal and family independence and self-

sufficiency. Such a society creates extra burdens and busyness related to fleshly pursuits that rob us of the essential time and energy we need to nurture and care for each other. It values and requires consumption of "things and thrills" that clutter and preoccupy us with trivia. It is difficult for us to be in the world, but not of it. (John 15:18, 19).

In this Covid-19 crisis the contrast between the "essential workers" (health-care, etc.) that risk their lives in the care and service of others, with the hoarders that create shortages of strategic products and materials in a rush to take care of "me and mine," is interesting. It reveals the

choices that must be made between faith and fear, ego-centric and Christocentric values.

I end this essay with a word of warning and a reminder. **Beware** of the pseudo-politicians and the special interests that try to take our minds away from the central task of protecting each other from viral spread and finding a cure, with conspiracy theories, blame seeking, and discrediting peer-evaluated scientific opinions and conclusions. They are only trying to cover blatant political maneuvering and incompetence. At this writing they are pushing us to choose between the need for economic recovery and the protection of human life.



Last, **always keep foremost in your mind that in Christ we endure and overcome.** <sup>10:22b</sup>He who endures to the end shall be saved." -Matthew. <sup>1:12</sup>Happy is the man who remains faithful under trials; for when he succeeds in enduring the trial, he will be given life, the prize which God has promised to those who love him. <sup>13</sup>When anyone is tempted by such testing, he must not say, "This temptation comes from God." for God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one." -James. ☩

Let us turn our eyes to the Father and Creator of the universe, and consider...the total absence of any friction that marks the ordering of His whole Creation.

-Clement of Rome

## "Killer" Giant Hornet



There has been some hype about the sighting of an Asian giant hornet nest that was found and destroyed last September in Canada and two dead

hornets that were found in in the state of Washington in December. The hornet (*Vespa mandatorina*) has a 1.97" body length and a 3" wingspan. It presents a real threat to our already endangered honeybee population because it can destroy an entire hive, by decapitating the bees, in just a few hours. Because of its size and the amount of toxin it holds, its sting is very painful and potentially dangerous. Like most toxic insects, the human danger grows, for most people, when there are multiple stings.

May Berenbaum, entomologist at the University of Illinois, said that if we want to worry about a dangerous



insect, we should not choose this hornet. The most common and deadly insect out there are mosquitoes." Mosquito-borne diseases include Zika virus, West Nile virus, Chikungunya virus, dengue and malaria. We can protect ourselves with clothing and sprays. We can control breeding conditions by eliminating stagnant water sites. ☩



## REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AND THE GREAT LAW OF PEACE

2010-D, Native American Seal & the Sacagawea Dollar



In issue 33, page 2, I wrote about “Christians as Stewards of Representative Government.” I appreciate the comments I have received about the article; that it was helpful reading in a presidential election year. One inquirer asked if Native Americans had any influence in the formation of our representative government? The answer is **yes**, even though white racism painted Indians as pagan, ignorant, warring savages. Most historians believe that such talk was spread to justify the taking of Indian treaty lands and pushing them on to reservations. Even to this day, the cover-up of the creative contributions Indians made in forming our representative government and our culture still exists among most Americans. The false “*Hollywood*” images prevail.

The Iroquois confederacy in the northeastern part of our nation was occupied by five groups: the Mohawks, Onondaga, Cayuga, Oneida, and Seneca. These five tribes had been engaged in various costly inter-tribal conflicts through the years that greatly weakened their societies. Hiawatha (1525-1595), chief of the Onondaga tribe, wanted peace and believed that he had a way to achieve it. He visited each of the five tribes and shared his vision. A council meeting, in which all the chiefs met together, listened as Hiawatha presented what became known as the “**Great Law of Peace.**” The result was that the five tribes drew-up a constitution which made them a League of Nations known as the **Iroquois Confederacy**. It provided that each tribe would maintain its own leadership, but whenever common problems emerged, the chiefs would meet in a grand council for mediation; decisions were made by consensus. This new governing principle ended all of the fighting. Although the exact dates are disputed, all of this took place long before Europeans arrived on the continent. The Iroquois Confederacy was one of the earliest, if not the earliest, form of representative government, in world history!

Benjamin Franklin, along with a number of other colonial leaders made regular contact with the Iroquois because they were attracted to the way they governed themselves; something these Europeans, with their kings and kingdoms, had not experienced before. Franklin presented his “Albany Plan of Union,” to the Continental Congress in 1754. The plan was influenced by what he had learned from the Iroquois. In 1776 the members of the Iroquois Great Council were invited to spend several weeks observing the Continental Congress at work, and, on at least one occasion, were asked to formally address the congress.

In 1988, the U.S. Senate paid tribute to the Iroquois Confederacy, with a resolution that said, “The confederation

of the original 13 colonies into one republic was influenced by the political system developed by the Iroquois Confederacy, as were many of the democratic principles which were incorporated into the constitution itself.” (Resolution 331, Select Committee on Indian Affairs, 1988). The wampum belt wrapped around a bundle of 5 arrows, representing the five tribes, on the back of the Sacagawea Dollar coin, is the Great Seal of the Confederacy. In the Great Seal of the United States, the 13 arrows held in the eagle’s left claw, represent our original 13 colonies. The bundled arrows came from the Iroquois statement about the power of unity: “*Many arrows cannot be broken as easily as one.*” The olive branch, in the eagle’s right claw has 13 leaves with 13 olives representing the desire of the original colonies for peace. ☸



### Excerpts from the Iroquois Constitution,

written long before Europeans settled on the Continent.

“The thickness of your skin shall be seven spans—which is to say that you shall be filled with peace and goodwill and your mind filled with a yearning for the welfare of the people of the Confederacy.”

“With endless patience you shall carry out your duty, and your firmness shall be tempered with tenderness for your people. Neither anger nor fury shall lodge in your mind, and all your words and actions shall be marked with calm deliberation.”

“In all your deliberations in the Council, in your efforts at lawmaking, in all your official acts, self-interest shall be cast into oblivion. Cast not away the warnings of any others, if they should chide you for any error or wrong you may do, but return to the way of the Great Law, which is just and right.”

“Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the present but also the coming generations...”

### TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE?

Remember the *Water Protectors of Standing Rock?* (See the articles, CC, issue #22, Spring of 2017, page 2, Issue #32, Fall/Winter 2019, page 3). The Keystone pipeline protests in 2017 brought world-wide attention to pipeline dangers in ecologically sensitive areas and to the attacks on peaceful protestors by paid security guards and local law enforcement.

Now, nearly three years after the pipeline began carrying oil, U.S. District Judge, James Boiasberg (3-25-2020) ordered the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a full environmental review of the Dakota Access pipeline. He wrote that the easement approval for the pipeline continues to be highly controversial and that the federal government had not done an adequate job of studying the risks of a major spill and whether the pipeline’s leak detection system was adequate. Political and business pressure pushed the project through, ignoring the Indian ownership rights of the 1851 federal treaty, the obvious threats to water safety of the pipeline crossing near the junction of Cannonball River and Lake Oahe, and the desecration of sacred Native American burial grounds in the way of the pipeline path. ☸