

CREATION CARE

#37, Summer 2021



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, click: Ministries, click: Creation Care

WHOLISTIC CREATION CARE

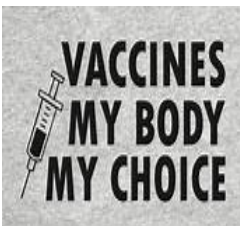
To be effective, Creation Care must cover more than physical projects like recycling and fossil fuel reduction. We must also expose and understand the philosophical, political, and human values and maneuvers that create and support acts of environmental degradation. Creation Care begins in the mind and emotions where all physical action is born. The mind and the emotions that lead to action cannot be molded just by facts and ideas; they must also be transformed by faith. Creation Care newsletters are dedicated to this broader concept. ☩

“ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL; UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL”



The French novelist, Alexandre Dumas, wrote over 100,000 pages of adventures, like “The Count of Monte Cristo” and “The Three Musketeers;” the latter of which is the source of the title quote above. In the 20th Century almost 200 films were based on his works, giving his ideas and assumptions widespread subtle social and spiritual influence.

Our national unity is being tested today in ways reminiscent of the divisions that led to our Civil War (1861-1865). Much of the challenge evolves from the idea of “My right to believe, think, and act as I wish, regardless of factual evidence or its effect on the ‘common good’” and our national unity ... divided we fall!



Of special interest to me is the use of the argument, “My Body, My Choice,” by the so-called “conservative right,” for not receiving a COVID-19 vaccination or wearing a mask to protect against possible infection; ... it is the same argument used by the so-called “progressive left” to justify abortion; My Body, My Choice! It is strange to see the two groups justify their opposing opinions using the same argument!



At this writing we are experiencing a third national surge in COVID infections largely caused by the sweep of the Delta COVID variant. The CDC reports that 99% of new hospitalizations are made up of unvaccinated individuals residing mainly in the South/South-West. In a recent Facebook post, Dr. Brytney Cobia of Grandview Medical Center in Birmingham, AL,

reported that she is treating many young, healthy people, for serious Covid infections. She wrote: “One of the last things they do before they’re intubated* is beg me for the vaccine. I hold their hand and tell them that I’m sorry, but it’s too late.” Dr. Brytney wrote that when a patient dies, she hugs their family members and urges them to get vaccinated. She said they cry and tell her that they thought the pandemic was a “hoax,” or “political,” or targeting some other age group or skin color; alas, victims of the big lies spread by many political, religious, and community leaders! *(Intubation is the process of inserting a tube, called an endotracheal tube, through the mouth and then into the airway. Once it is inserted, a person is unable to talk. This is done so that a patient can be placed on a ventilator to assist with breathing during anesthesia, sedation, or severe illness.)

What are our individual rights and where do they intersect with social responsibility? Do I have the right to refuse protective measures that would prevent me from being a carrier of a disease that could make others sick? What kind of control do we or should we have over our bodies? Do adults, with capacity, hold the ultimate authority over their own bodies and the medical decisions for their minor children or don’t they? These are tough questions, but they are not new questions. In the midst of a small-pox epidemic in Massachusetts in 1901 the state passed laws requiring all its citizens to be vaccinated. Opponents argued that the laws took away their individual rights in violation of the 14th Amendment. For example, Pastor Henning Jacobson, claimed that the vaccination law violated his religious rights.

The United States Supreme court ruled, 7 to 2, that Massachusetts was not in violation of the 14th Amendment and **that the states’ responsibility to protect the general public, in such an emergency situation, superseded individual rights, regardless of what those rights were based on.**

When I was a little boy, I came down with the Chickenpox; at that time the word “pox” frightened people regardless of what kind it was and the law required the county health officer to post a quarantine sign on our front door as a protective measure to warn the public to stay away.



In 1964, the second Poliomyelitis (Polio) vaccine became the center of a national campaign to rid the country of the dread disease. (It should be noted that both Polio vaccines were first tested on people who were not aware of the nature of the vaccine they were receiving, a practice that is now forbidden.) I lived in Alabama at the time and public support for the vaccine program was so strong that within a few months the state

accomplished its vaccination goals. Quite a contrast to Alabama's first response to the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

Those days stand in stark contrast to the special interests and political debauchery of our present time. The *Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH)* analyzed 812,000 anti-vaccine posts shared on Facebook and Twitter between February 1 and March 16, 2021 and found that 65% of the anti-vaccine posts came from only 12 people; they became known as the “*Dis-information Dozen!*” On Facebook alone those 12 people were responsible for 73% of the anti-vaccine content! **This is a good example of how social media can easily mislead a naive public.** A loud mouth and a big lie can have deadly personal, political and social effects!



The U.S. Constitution enumerates a number of individual rights; they are: *to have and to hold property; trial by jury; freedom of religion; prohibition of state residency discrimination; the right to vote.* Our economic

system, Capitalism (see “*Marching to the Beat of a Different Drummer,*” page 2, #31, Summer 2019 Issue), has translated the idea of the “*pursuit of happiness*” into the *pursuit of economic well-being*; with the result that anything that disrupts the economy receives an impatient, bitter political and social response. A recent Harvard study found that 23% of Americans were unwilling to sacrifice any “rights,” even during times of major crisis. In our growing narcissist culture, we often confront the moral dilemma of choosing between saving lives or saving our comforts and our businesses -- and then seek the rationalizations that seem to justify relaxing or abolishing impositions like viral protection protocols in order to get things back to “*normal.*” Journalist, author, and filmmaker, Sebastian Junger, said: “*Modern society gives you the illusion that you’re fully autonomous without owing anything back to the group. But the thing you have a right to is freedom from oppression by a more powerful ruling class. You do not have freedom from obligation.*”

There is a growing public mistrust of our government and many of its institutions by autocrats and other like-minded groups who will



use any means to become a ruling class by using the defects in our system to keep their minority power*.

The January 6th Insurrection, and the current push to diminish voting rights are examples of their efforts to take or keep control of political power. A line from one of Ronald Reagan's (40th President, 1981-1989) speeches has often been misused to justify anti-government sentiment. The quotation that they cite is: “*Government is not a solution to our problem; government is the problem;*” but this statement is edited and taken out of context. We were in an economic recession in the early 80's and referring to that recession Reagan said: “*In this present crisis government is*

not a solution to our problem; government is the problem.” Reagan ended up establishing one of the larger executive-branch bureaucracies in history. *Minority Power through system deficits: (1) Of the elected offices, only the President is not subject to election by majority popular vote. Technically, we do not vote for a president, we vote for State Electors who will then vote for the person who received a majority vote in their state. These electors gather as the Electoral College to certify their votes which are then forwarded to the Senate for their ratification. Five U.S. Presidents were “elected” who did not receive a majority of the national popular vote: John Quincy Adams (lost by 44,804 votes), Rutherford B. Hayes (lost by 264,292 votes), Benjamin Harrison (lost by 95,713 votes), George W. Bush (lost by 543,816 votes), and Donald J. Trump (lost by 2.9 million votes). (2) Gerrymandering, the partisan drawing of voting districts by the party in power in ways that isolate opposition voters into minority pockets in the district, thus insuring majority voting by their party for their candidates in that district. (3) Voter suppression: Creating voter qualifications and requirements other than **the single constitutional mandate of citizenship** by such things as limiting voting locations, days, hours, and ballot access and disposition.

Christian citizenship requires respect for proper authority (*Romans 13:1-7*) and to seek correction for all wrongs, in our system, through the vote, the rule of law, and, when necessary, public protest. **There are many times when the interests of the whole society restrains both individual rights and minority opinion.** It does this in three basic ways: (1) through a majority vote; (2) through laws protecting public rights; and (3) through *Eminent Domain*, the ability of a government to take property away from its owner, after reasonable reimbursement, for the larger public good.

Our Christian faith stresses the need for individual transformation through salvation that expresses itself in right social relations through uncompromising love (*which is the sign of discipleship, John 13:35*) and justice (*Micha 6:8*), the product of which is personal and social peace. The central issue is not self-adulation or protection, but service and self-sacrifice on behalf of others. (*Matthew 16:24 – 26, John 15:13*).



Largely because of COVID, US life expectancy fell by a year and a half in 2020, the largest one-year decline since the second world war; the decrease for both Black Americans and Hispanic Americans was even worse: three years. Unvaccinated people put themselves and others at risk of catching the virus which keeps the COVID variant machine producing new versions of itself that, sooner or later, will not respond to the current vaccines and plunge us back into a new uncontrolled pandemic. The Delta variant has come close! (See “*Covid Keepers,*” page 4, issue, #36, Spring 2021) ☹

THIS AND THAT

Evidence of Global Warming: Long term trend; Storms more frequent and more extreme; hotter, longer and world-wide. Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands were the latest victims of unprecedented storms (Week of July 11).

Western Wildfires; at this writing 85 fires have torched 1.5 million acres, changed weather patterns because of their heat and smoke, and sent particulate matter and smoke all the way to the east coast.

Pacific Gas and Electric, a major California utility announced that they will bury 10,000 miles worth of power lines underground, (at an estimated cost of \$3 million per mile) in areas that are considered

high-risk for wildfires. One of their faulty transmission lines was believed to have ignited the 2018 Camp Fire which killed 85 people. (See, "Forest Fires," Issue #36 Spring 2019, page 1)

Pennycress plant seeds contain oil that can be extracted to make jet fuel! The Western Illinois University in Macomb is breeding Pennycress with the hope that it can become a commercially viable crop. It has the potential to become an important farm income source and a renewable source for jet fuel.



West Virginia, the epicenter of coal country will now allow solar arrays on abandoned mine lands marking a change in attitude toward renewable energy sources.

Net Neutrality, is the principle that internet providers must treat all internet communications equally, and not discriminate or charge differently based on user, content, website, platform, application, type of equipment, source address, destination address, or method of communication. The New York attorney general found that American broadband companies funded a campaign that filed 8.5 million fake comments with the Federal Communications Commission over its proposal to repeal net neutrality regulations. They used real names without consent. Dirty pool!

A sampling of Evangelicals was interviewed in February by Pew Research Center which found that 45% do not plan to take the COVID vaccine; some even linked the vaccinations with the "mark of the beast," a symbol of submission to the Antichrist. (Revelation 13:18)



Cities, around the world, are establishing the position of Chief Heat Officer because of the heat-waves that are causing sickness and deaths. This year record heat caused metal expansion that endangered structures like bridges and railroad tracks, and grounded airplanes. NASA reported that 2020 was the hottest year on record, was the lead cause of weather-related deaths in the U.S. and interrupted manufacturing and some business operations. 2021 is on its way to set a new record.

"Your health is directly related to lifestyle: nutrition, physical activity, a healthy weight, and restorative sleep." -Jacob Mirsky, M.D., Massachusetts General Hospital.

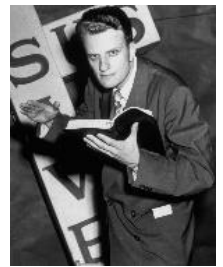
Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, Texas' largest and oldest electric power company, filed for bankruptcy protection on March first, citing a \$2.1 billion bill it received from the state's grid operator after a crippling historic winter storm in mid-February 2021.

Reducing the workweek from 40 to 35 hours, with the same pay, in an Iceland experiment from 2015 to 2019 found that there was no productivity loss and better employee morale.

500 influential evangelicals published an open letter **condemning "radicalized Christian nationalism" and the "rise of violent acts by radicalized extremists using the name of Christ."** Signers included the granddaughter of the late Rev. Billy Graham, Jerushah Dunford. -June 2021, Sojourners. -Picture from the January 6, 2021 Insurrection in WDC.



Billy Graham's understanding changed when he took his revivals away from their American cradle, to nations overseas. In a 1979 interview with Sojourners, Graham (who had formerly supported President Nixon's Vietnam policies) said: *"I believe that the Christian especially has a responsibility to work for peace in our world."* He went on to admit: *"There have been times in the past when I have, I suppose, confused the Kingdom of God with the American way of life."* In a 1981 interview the ACL reported that Graham said: *"It would disturb me if there was a wedding between the religious fundamentalists and the political right. The hard right has no interest in religion except to manipulate it."* Quite a journey for someone who began his career as a southern segregationist and ran segregated revivals in his early years!



1,167 % increase in pay for CEOs from 1987 to 2019, compared with 14% for the average worker. -Economic Policy Institute.

Remote Work? Social media giant Twitter announced that it would support employees, who are able and willing to work from home, to do so "forever."

American preachers who discuss so-called "political topics" from the pulpit; the study, published in the journal *Religion and Politics*, came up with the following results: Economics-33%, Crime-19%, War-28%, Patriotism-20%, Welfare-28%, Civil Rights-21%, LGBT Issues 25%, Abortion-22%.



Gasoline Lawn Mowers – Just one hour of using a typical gasoline lawn mower is equal to greenhouse gas emissions of driving 300 miles in an energy efficient automobile. -Sierra Magazine, January/February 2021 Issue, page 15.

24 million People are displaced each year by ecological disasters around the world. -Time, April 26/My 3, 2021 issue, page 74.

Civic Education "has fallen by the wayside" according to Chief Justice John Roberts of the U.S. Supreme Court. On another occasion he said, *"When social media can instantly spread rumor and false information on a grand scale, the public's need to understand our government, and the protections it provides, is ever more vital."* Our system has institutions that act as a filter to deal with the thorny diverse diversities and extremisms that threaten the unity and security of our nation, **if we will trust them and allow them to work.**



"Post Truth" is the political subordination of reality. The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced ideologue. It's the person for whom true and false and right and wrong don't exist." -Lee McIntyre in his book, "Post-Truth."

"Power doesn't corrupt as much as it reveals. What starts with blood usually ends in it." -Masterpiece Mysteries

"Only the disciplined ones in life are free. If you are undisciplined, you are a slave to your moods and your passions." -Eliud Kipchoge, Olympic marathon world record holder, 2018.

Peer review makes the discipline of science so reliable. Every conclusion and hypothesis that a scientist puts forward is subject to the most rigorous test possible – to let the most knowledgeable people in a field cast a skeptical eye and decide what the best science is.

Inserting animal gene made potato and rice crops 50 % bigger. Researchers from the US and China worked together to use a gene called FTO, which is linked to obesity in humans, to produce crops that were three times bigger and produce three times the yield! -The Daily Mail 📌

**CRITICAL RACE “THEORY” (CRT)
IS THE LATEST POLITICAL HULLABALOO!**

Many Federal and State politicians are artists at drawing attention away from essential national problems like ending the COVID crisis, solving the continued stalemate in a do-nothing Senate, protection of voting rights, funding vital infrastructure needs, bringing to justice those who plotted, encouraged and participated in the January 6th Insurrection crimes, and the discipling of major politicians for their immoral and outrageous lies that weaken public trust and confidence in our government and its institutions.

The “tempest in a teapot” crises have rapidly moved from “free speech” to “cancel culture,” and now to “critical race theory” (CRT) with accompanying attacks on education and teachers.

CRT first appeared in American Law schools in the late 1970’s. In contrast to the idea that racism is simply a matter of individual prejudices, CRT looks at the history of racism and how individual prejudices succeeded in influencing laws, business practices, and social systems. It traces the development of things like the legalization of poll-taxes, slavery, segregation, and the spread of racist stereotypes. **It is not a theory at all, it is a method of research and study.** Jonathan Zimmerman, an education historian, asks: *“Is [racism] something that’s been progressively overcome...or is it something that’s been a constant force in society, making society itself irredeemably racist?”*

As a pastor, I have **often** heard people say: *“I’m not prejudiced, but...”* and then they go ahead and express their prejudice! It is hard for anyone to deal with differences, especially these days in which we suffer from a lack of source credibility and with information and emotional overload.



Dealing with diverse ideas is especially difficult when our friends, associates and media input are made up of only one racial group or one political point of view; it’s akin to walking through a crowd with blinders on.

I have served congregations in the west, south, and northeast and am convinced that people don’t like to talk about race for three reasons: they don’t feel responsible for what happened in other generations; they have hidden, unresolved, prejudices in their own minds that they don’t want to confess; they want to cover-up or ignore painful racial history.

The desire to re-write history, or to read the historical records that only the “winners” write, is a great temptation, especially when the actual perpetrators and the silent onlookers are unrepentant! Critical Race “Theory” is the latest victim. 📌

**FOOD INSECURITY,
AMERICA’S SILENT EPIDEMIC**

The August 2021 issue of National Geographic, states: *“When COVID-19 hit, many in the United States already on the verge of food insecurity were plunged into even deeper crisis. According to the hunger-relief organization Feeding America*, 45 million people may have lacked sufficient access to food in 2020.”* (Page 98). The article goes on to say that 1 in 4 Native American people, 1 in 5 Black, 1 in 6 Latino/Hispanic and 1 in 12 White people are food insecure. **(Feeding America is a national non-profit group of over 200 food banks that feed more than 46 million people.)* See Matthew 25:31-40, James 2:14-17.

OFFSHORE WIND TURBINES ARE GETTING BIGGER



General Electric is building big and bigger turbines. The one in the diagram is the Haliade-X and is located in Rotterdam port in the Netherlands. Offshore turbines are important because they can deliver power to densely populated coastal areas where there is no room to build onshore wind or solar facilities. The Haliade-X

can generate enough energy to power as many as 16,000 European households in a 750-megawatt windfarm. The 107-meter-long blades produce more electricity; the bigger the blades, the more power they can produce. 📌

COLONIAL PIPELINE IN AND OUT OF THE NEWS



On May 7, 2021, the Colonial Pipeline made big news when it was shut down by a cyberattack. The pipeline transports about 45% of the gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, and home heating oil to the East Coast from refineries located on the Gulf Coast. The time it took to get it up and running again revealed our energy vulnerability, created

panic, and did things like close gasoline stations and raise prices. Colonial was really “in the news” for many days.

Colonial, however, was not in the news last August when two teenagers riding ATVs in a nature preserve outside of Huntersville, NC, a suburb north of Charlotte, noticed gasoline gurgling out of the ground. They reported the leak to the local fire department. The company has a different story of the discovery claiming that they shut the pipeline down when they noticed a pressure drop at another point in the line. The information in the following paragraph raises questions about the company’s shut-down story.

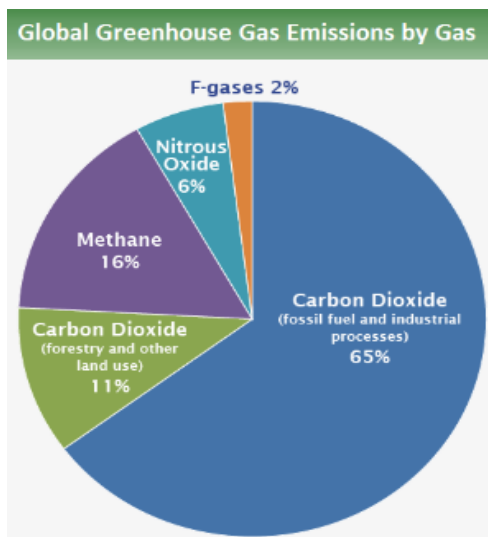
At first the company claimed that only 63,000 gallons of fluid had been spilled. But as the summer turned into fall the number of spilled gallons climbed to 273,000 and then to 311,000 gallons. Finally, the company raised the loss to 1.2 million gallons and rising! It was the biggest spill since 1997. The pipeline was built in 1963.

The broken segment of the pipeline had an unexplained 5-foot crack; the same segment had also been repaired in 2004. ☹

CARBON DIOXIDE IS THE DRIVING FORCE IN CLIMATE CHANGE

In 1865 an American female scientist, Eunice Foote, documented how the greenhouse gas effects of carbon dioxide has the extraordinary power to absorb heat. Carbon dioxide is an odorless, tasteless, transparent gas that forms when we burn fuels, including coal, oil, gasoline, and wood. It is called a “greenhouse gas” because, in a greenhouse, heat is trapped within the confines of its walls just like heat is trapped within the confines of Earth’s atmosphere. The more CO₂ that is trapped the warmer Earth’s atmosphere will become.

In 1861, the Irish scientist, John Tyndall also documented, with several hundred experiments, the heat absorption of CO₂ and was astounded how strongly it held heat.



In 1896 the Swedish scientist and Nobel laureate, Svante Arrhenius, calculated that “the temperature in the Arctic regions would rise 8 or 9 degrees Celsius if CO₂ increased to 2.5 or 3 times its level at that time.” His calculation proved to be too modest.

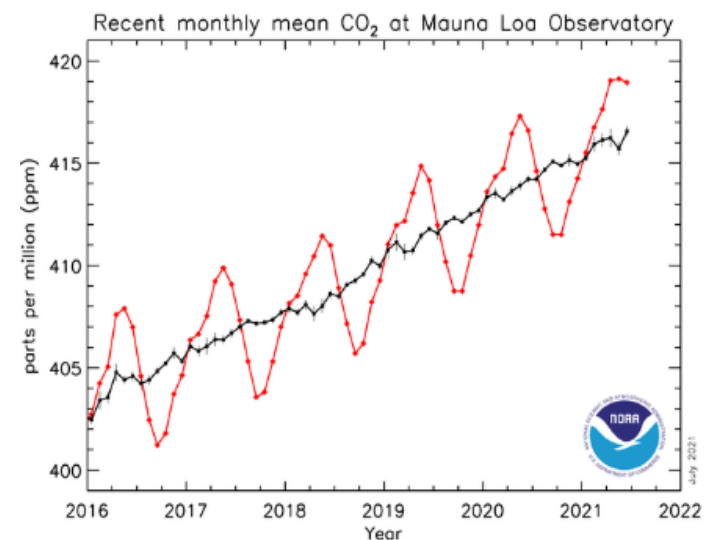
By 1901, Nils Ekholm, a Swedish meteorologist, wrote: “The present burning of pit-coal is so great that if it continues ... it must

undoubtedly cause a very obvious rise in the mean temperature of the earth.”

In 1937, English engineer, Guy Callendar wrote: “By fuel combustion, man has added about 150,000 million tons of CO₂ to the air during the past half century [and] world temperatures have actually increased...”

In 1965 a number of scientists warned President Lyndon Johnson about how the growing climate risk would melt ice caps, raise sea levels, acidify ocean waters, and create severe storms and heat waves; all of which have now come to pass.

In July 1977, Exxon senior scientist, James F. Black, revealed the connection between the use of fossil fuels and climate warming with, what has turned out to be, astounding accuracy. One year later Black warned that carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere would increase average global temperatures by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius and as much as 10 degrees Celsius at the two poles. **He predicted that rainfall might get heavier in some regions and turn to desert in others.** He pointed out that “some countries would benefit but others would have their agricultural output reduced or destroyed.”



In their 1982, *Corporate Primer* on carbon dioxide and climate change, it was noted that Exxon recognized, despite the many lingering unknowns, that heading off global warming “**would require major reductions in fossil fuel combustion.**”

A change in management at Exxon, however, put the companies excellent CO₂ research into storage and, regardless of the ecological consequences, “increasing fossil fuel sales” became its bottom line. (See #23 Summer 2017 Issue, page 3)

As you can see, we have known about the heat trapping nature of greenhouse gasses for over 150 years! Those in the present generation who want to deny the science behind global warming are ridiculous and those who are naive enough to follow their lead will pay the price; unfortunately, so will the rest of us! To be accurate,

I should not say “will pay,” I should point out that we are all **now** beginning to pay the price! ☹

“**Love all of God’s Creation**, the whole of it and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light! Love the animals, love the plants, love everything.” -Fyodor Dostoyevski, from the novel, “The Brothers Karamazov,” 1880. ☹

SURPRISE, SURPRISE! THE CDC JUST SAID PUT YOUR MASK BACK ON! The Delta COVID Variant has taken over, presenting new challenges, because it is many times more contagious than COVID-19 and fully vaccinated people can both spread it and catch it. This is really is no surprise when you consider the number of unvaccinated people in the world, the inclination of the virus to revise itself to sharpen its ability to attack, and the fact that vaccinations may be highly effective, but they are not foolproof. Wear your mask. ☹

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO RESPECT?

The political commentator, Andrew Sullivan, said, “*It is my profound worry ... that we don’t see each other as individuals. We see each other as [staid promoters] of a race or an identity or as something threatening to us, as opposed to another human being [with an opinion different than ours].*” The result is brutal character assignation, untethered anger, unreasonable accusations, and even the will and justification to lie, commit violence, murder, and violate the rule of law with actions like insurrection. Differences in opinion and judgment have always existed and, in fact, are necessary to promote reliable human progress. But today, too many, especially those in positions of power, do not simply see people with differences as the loyal opposition, they see them as enemies who must be defeated regardless of the methods they choose to use or the overall cost to the common good. Their self-righteous goal is to force their opinions on others without being tempered by conscience or allowance for descent.



Martin Luther King, Jr., in one of his sermons, said: “*We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.*”



Forgiveness unlocks the doors to reason and cooperation, but to do so, it requires a realistic understanding of who we really are in the sight of God and man; a sinner, except for the grace of God through repentance and discipleship with Jesus, the Christ! This understanding unlocks our trapped minds with the key of humility; and it is humility that allows us to open our opinions for examination in light of the opinions of others. The result is that

we become players who contribute the little pieces of our insights with the little pieces of the insights of others to finally solve the complicated puzzles that help promote human progress through collaboration, whose gift is social unity.

Sullivan believes that the bedrock principles of the so-called liberal democracies include an abiding respect for the inherent dignity and absolute worth of every human being. Such a belief runs counter to the autocrats and fascists who divide people into categories and cast them by strata into various social classes. They see the masses as incompetent sheep that need to be used and led.

In liberal democracies freedom of religion is a basic tenet. For some Christians this is a problem because they see Jesus as “*the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the father except by Him*” (John 14:6). In their view a nation must be wholly Christian to be faithful to scripture and act as a safety-net for its citizens lest they land outside of the influence of belief in Jesus and are “*doomed.*” These believers do not support an open democracy but seek a Theocracy. They cannot live in peace with our diverse system and are committed to the establishment of a Christian Theocracy. They are always ill-at-ease with our present form of government.



There are other sheep (John 10:16), we don’t know who they are, but they respond to “*the good shepherd*” (John 10:11). Jesus also pointed out “*for whoever is not against you is for you*” (Luke 9:50). Just as it is for us, the key, to these “others” is how they respond to the Divine Presence. In Christian doctrine God has been experienced as Creator, Son, and Holy Spirit; but there is only one God, and wherever truth is found, God is there, regardless of how humanity experiences him and defines their experience of him. Our finite minds and religious systems cannot fully comprehend the infinite (or we would be god’s ourselves); *now we see in a mirror dimly* (1 Cor. 13:12); but we can respect all of God’s creation and creatures in their marvelous diversity, including human diversity. We can tolerate and invest that diversity because we are all the children of the Creator; it is his plan for us to do so, and we can only prosper when we do so! As we move on, let us seek and save the lost and be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16).



Respect comes, in part, from knowing our “little place” in the scheme of things. A lifespan does not even appear as a dot on the historical line of millenniums. And yet, God made us “*just a little lower than the angels*” (Psalm 8:4-6, Hebrews 2:6-8). Yes, we have our bit to play and it can have a great blessing or curse on our fellow humans and our society. God grant us the humility, love, and wisdom to do our part and make a difference for good. ☹