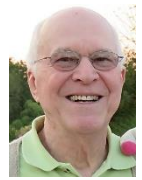




# CREATION CARE



#39, Winter 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 live in the midst of 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.*

## HIS MAJESTY THE BABY, OR CHRIST THE KING?



I just read an advertisement inviting me to buy a home in a community where "I am free to live my life my way!" Did you catch the oxymoron – "community" and "my way?" We are so enamored with our concepts of individual rights and freedom that we have become a nation of short-tempered competing individuals and

tribes that have fractured our society and broken our sense of community with the result that many "adults" are infantile in the undisciplined way that they live and declare and "protect" their "rights."

In 1914, Sigmund Freud, wrote a paper on Narcissism in which he hypothesized that humans are driven by an inborn need for self-preservation and procreation. He illustrated his point with what he called the "King Baby Syndrome." I came across his work in college and have followed various interpretations of the idea ever since.

It was my practice, as a pastor, to plan and lead one or two workshops each year for leadership development and congregational enrichment. In 1993 I led a workshop on the nature of discipleship in which I included a section on, what I called, the physical foundation upon which sin emerges and flourishes. The following are excerpts from that workshop.

1. Each of us enter this world as a little baby.
  - a) An infant is an egocentric being; aware only of its own immediate needs and limited in the expression of those needs.
  - b) Because the fulfillment of its needs is critical to its survival and because it is incapable of verbal communication; it must rely on cries and shrieks to summon help; it is oblivious to the world around it and has no concept of or concern for the source of that help or the stress and inconvenience that the care-giver must expend; the issue is "my need, my survival."
  - c) The routine of "need-and-fulfillment" establishes itself in the child's subconscious mind, a state of being that must be greatly modified as the child develops toward maturity in adulthood.
  - d) A baby must learn that they have entered a world of other beings; they are not the center of the universe; they live in a world in which give-and-take is used to balance personal need with the needs of others, even, at times, at the expense of one's own need fulfillment! This is why parenting and schooling begins with the task of *humanizing* each individual so that they can *socialize* harmoniously.

2. A little child struggles between two impulses.
  - a) Childishness is the negative aspect of the ego and is displayed by selfishness and self-centeredness; it is need-centered; an empty cup that must be filled. The first task of Christian parenting is to expose the child to the existence and presence of God so that the Holy Spirit can fill that cup (I Corinthians 2:14-16, natural vs spiritual man). I Corinthians 13:11, "When I was a child, my speech, feelings, and thinking were all those of a child' now that I am a man (God conscious), I have no more use for childish ways." It is essential to the nature of manhood to know his origins and be cognizant of his surroundings.
  - b) Childlikeness is the positive aspect of the ego; it is trusting, curious, and outgoing; I Peter 2:2, "Be like newborn babies, always thirsty for the pure spiritual milk, so that by drinking it you may grow up and be saved." Matthew 18:4, "The greatest in the Kingdom of heaven is the one who humbles himself and becomes like this child."
  - c) Children are meant to mature, for life as an adult requires it; there can be no "His Majesty the Adult" without rejection, frustration, pain, and unrest for all involved; it can only lead to self-abasement, tribalism, and social chaos.
3. The recognition of God's presence and authority frees us from the limits of our physical senses and the pressure of our immediate circumstances to embrace all of God's creation; we partake of both the local and the universal. Colossians 1:28, "So we preach Christ to all people. We warn and teach everyone, with all possible wisdom, in order to bring each one into God's presence as a mature individual in union with Christ."
  - a) Our inborn egocentric nature is reformed by the Holy Spirit, the scriptures, and our ability to reason, communicate, and negotiate.
  - b) The isms, fears, and prejudices that the culture seeks to impose on us are blunted by the central rule of our faith: to love God, self, and others with all our hearts, minds, and souls (Mark 12:28-31, I John 4:18, I Peter 4:8).
  - c) We become Christocentric because Jesus becomes our way, our truth, and our life; Christ becomes our King! (John 14:6). ☸



## BITS AND PIECES

**6,219 acres of land were burned** in a rare winter wildfire in Colorado, between Boulder and Denver.

**72% of Americans** don't trust Facebook to responsibly handle their personal data.

**Habitat for Humanity** constructed its first 3D printed home in 12 hours! Typical construction takes about four weeks. In addition, 3D printing and the use of concrete allowed a substantial savings in high lumber costs.

**Wildlife Overpass** in Banff National Park in Alberta. The structures allow its abundant wildlife to safely pass over highways.



**SAF is a 100% sustainable aviation fuel.** A United Airlines Boeing 737 Max 8 flew from Chicago to Washington DC using 500 gallons of SAF; its carbon footprint was 80% smaller than a typical flight. Air travel generates a billion metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually, according to the Department of Energy.

**“Determining the value of a company** should include a metric of the worth it provides to society, not just its financial profit.” -book: Bushido Capitalism.



**“Profits and purpose** are fully linked together. We cannot be about just maximizing our profit next quarter. We need to be part of our societies.” -Dan Schulman, President and CEO of PAYPAL

**Accidents** focus on the idea of human error, that someone did something wrong. When we

look at the data, accidents happen under dangerous conditions. That’s what we should be focused on. -Jessie Singer, author of the upcoming book “There Are No Accidents”

**The Giant Iceberg**, known as A-68a, broke away from Antarctica in 2017 and was the size of 61 million Olympic-sized swimming pools of fresh water. It was 2,200 square miles in size; the sixth-largest on record. It finished melting in 2021 and it is estimated that it released 152 billion tons of fresh water into the sea. -British Antarctic Survey

**Twenty extreme weather** events took place in the U.S. in 2021 that cost \$145 billion in damages; Hurricane Ida alone, left a trail of destruction from Louisiana to New York at a cost of \$75 billion; across the world climate change disasters cost over \$100 billion. -Popular Science and NOAA



**Why do some of our tax dollars continue to be paid, as federal subsidies, to robust companies?** Members of AXPC (American Exploration and Production Council) have received federal subsidies with a value of at least \$92 billion since 1998. Studies have shown that when oil prices are higher, the subsidies pad company profits and when they are lower, they can push marginal drilling projects into profitability, thereby increasing production. -Greenpeace, John Noël and Stockholm Environment Institute. ☹️

**Greenwashing** is the term used for those who, for public relations reasons, make environmental promises that they do not intend to keep.

## THE GREAT RESIGNATION

### WHY ARE WE FACING A WORKER SHORTAGE?

The COVID pandemic became politicized and threw our society into a tizzy and forced us to rethink and readjust our life patterns. Recent polls show that most Americans now believe that COVID will never leave us and that we will never “get back to the old normal.” There is

also the realization that the “old normal” wasn’t good enough anyway. Last October a Harris Poll showed that HALF of the U.S. workforce were unhappy with their work and wanted to switch careers!

There have been various attempts to explain why we have a worker shortage, why so many have not returned to their old jobs (“quits”), and why so many jobs have no applicants. Four common explanations are: the fear of contracting COVID if you return to the workplace (it is reported that 1 in 3 teachers leave because of the fear of contagion), loss of your job because your workplace has been forced out of business, early retirements, extended unemployment insurance coverage, and federal stimulus money that has enabled some people to stay away from work, at least for the time-being.



The passage of time has allowed us to study the issue with some interesting results. First, it comes as no surprise that a disproportionate number of “quits” have happened in dead-end, low-wage jobs. Some employers have been forced to offer higher wages, pay new-hire bonuses, and even offer

some fringe benefits (something that many employers had eliminated or reduced over the last few decades).

A large number of people decided to try to find a new path, look for a job with higher wages, go back to school to upgrade their skills, become GIG workers, and open their own businesses.

New business start-ups in 2020 broke a record, reaching 4.4 million and in 2021 the census bureau reported a new record of 5.4 million new start-ups, but it is estimated that only one-third of these start-ups will hire other people since many are individual or “mom and pop” enterprises.

Awareness of the fragility of life came into focus with COVID deaths of over 900,000! This made some people rethink their values with the result that many decided to change their life-style, leave the “rat-race,” reduce their consumption, and concentrate on family and friends. Some gave up second incomes and moved out of their mac-mansions to smaller living spaces in an attempt to find new freedom. ☹️

**Good advice for those campaigning for individual rights:**  
**Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.**  
 I Corinthians 8:9. NIV

## ALL THINGS ARE INTER-RELATED

What is the greatest discovery of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Many people would answer with a list of things: computers, transistors, smart phones, etc. As good and transforming as many of these things are, they are not the greatest discovery.



Charles Darwin and his theories of evolution believed that all living things are related and evolved from a common ancestor. I think that the Christian view is: All things are inter-related and evolved from a common source; God, the Creator! Psalm 8:1a cries-out: “O Lord, our Lord your greatness is seen in all the world!” The amazing diversity in that world is joined together in God’s great creative plan – all things are inter-related! There is no “waste-land” or unnecessary plant, critter, or creature; all belong to the whole and have a role to play in the whole; when one thing is harmed the cycle of life is harmed. Everything is there because it is a needed piece in, what, to humanity, is the great puzzle of life. We must be careful about what we discard.

## God's Will and Nature's Way

12-16-2021, Clyde C. Fry

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,  
tying God's will and nature's way together  
in dangerous, yet purposeful collisions.  
Made from dust, yet with spiritual thrust,  
we live, each day, tied to earth,  
yet destined for heaven.  
Energized through tasks and responsibilities,  
we wind our way through time:  
anxious, yet assured;  
used up, yet preserved;  
until by faith and by God's grace  
our destiny, is secured.

Traditional Christianity has crowned man as the "ruler, manager, care-taker, or steward" over all creation. There is a myriad of scriptural texts that back up those concepts; for example, Psalm 8:6, "You have appointed him (man) ruler over everything you made; you placed him over all creation." Man didn't do so well in the garden, how well has he done outside the garden? The main causes of climate change and global warming are human! For example, Indonesia will move from their overcrowded, socially troubled, polluted, and sinking capitol to a province on Borneo Island known for its rainforests and wildlife; they managed to ruin one place and now will they ruin another? Man is the greatest predator on earth! Humans are in the process of filling our upper atmosphere with so much space junk that satellites and the space station are in danger of collisions with flying debris. We are also in the process of seeking another planet upon which to settle because some fear that the environmental destruction we have caused and the resources we have used-up on our earth-home has come to the point of no return. Elliott Harris, UN Chief Economist recently said: "Unless we manage the natural world around us better, we are destroying the very foundation of our life on this planet."



The Garden of Eden was the place where we were meant to live in harmony with God and Nature. There, the apple was misused in the same way that we misuse many natural wonders today; for our willful pleasure. Like Adam and Eve, we break our relationship with God by using our wills against his will and, too often, by using our religion to sooth the fears that arise out of our lack of trust in God and to cover-over the sins that embellish our greed.



"I am scared about the state of nature but also hopeful – nature is resilient and, if it is not tampered with, can bounce back." -Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka, National Geographic.  
The good news is that, in many cases, when we leave nature alone it tends to rejuvenate itself. Certain rain-forests, that were ravaged and then abandoned when they were no longer profitable for human extraction, are returning to their former selves. Have we misunderstood our role? Are we called not to manage nature, but to live in harmony with it? 🍎

## STEWARDS OF A TREASURED DEMOCRACY

History must be seen in context; we are easily misled when we look backward through the lenses of our time in an attempt to understand and judge the actions of our ancestors. Their social, political,

religious, and economic circumstances were usually different than ours. It is true, that from the beginning of God's creation, there was a universal morality built into it that should be self-revealing, through common sense, as we live together in this world, but humanity always knows better than it does. (See Romans 7:14-25). Moral failure does not excuse inhumanity, but it does help to explain it.

The settlement of mostly white Europeans in North America was a blemished process to say the least. The doctrine of "discovery" (Christopher Columbus-day, etc.) is absurd since native peoples had lived and thrived here in effective social constructs for centuries. Their communal societies had, for the most part, a superior relationship to the land and its resources than we do even today. Our representative form of government owes more to the "Great Law of Peace" of the Iroquois Confederacy than to any other single source (-see issue 34, Summer 2020 newsletter, page 4) and yet we systematically pushed those indigent people off their land into unwanted corners of the nation on to "reservations."

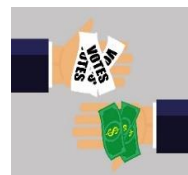
From the very beginning of the forming of our nation we established a very imperfect union. For example, in 1787 only white land-owning men were given the right to vote; black people were property and had no rights at all; universal women's suffrage did not take place until 1920, and even today there are those who seek to withhold the vote from the fringe-people in our society through trickery!



But, in spite of all of its failures, the American system has been the most successful liberal democracy in the modern world, continually attracting and incorporating immigrants to its shores by providing a booming economy for the largest number of people in history.

The word democracy literally means "rule by the people" and "liberal democracy" is characterized by a written constitution that establishes a check-and-balance system of power between its parts, guarantees the rights of all its citizens through the rule of law, provides for the regular election of the people's representatives from distinct political parties, and works for the common good through diverse contributions of insight, compromise, and highbred decision-making. As long as those representatives are reasonable, truthful, and seek the common good in presenting their views and convictions in the milieu of the legislative process, the democratic system will function, but when partisanship and conflicting ideologies are championed above mutual cooperation and when truth-telling becomes optional, democracy will stagnate, enrage, and fail.

Our American economic system, Consumer Capitalism, is characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, investments made by private decisions, and by prices, production, and distribution of goods that are determined by competition in a free market, but a major weakness of Consumer Capitalism is its dependence on consumption which has led, among other things, to products with short design-life so that they must be replaced more often. An economy which over-dependes upon consumption is especially telling at a time when natural resources are strained and the continued use of certain products damages ecological systems and adds to global warming.



Capitalist corruption occurs when commercial and industrial interests leverage their way to control market share and by politicians who come to favor commercial/industrial interests above the interests of the general public, with the result that

wealth is eventually controlled by a small minority of the citizenry. According to the Berggruen Institute 15 of the nation's top billionaires alone are worth more than \$1.8 trillion (which is the cost of the current watered-down version of the Biden "Built Back Better" infrastructure plan!). Lavish political contributions by wealth holders has the effect of "buying votes" that favor the contributors; those who have the gold rule! When the "servants of the people" favor the flow of money that comes from the special interest groups over the common good, it results in a general decline in social morality, creates anger, promotes violence, and nourishes mis-trust of the democratic structures that are meant to serve and protect the people. Hence, liberal democracy today is in greater jeopardy of being violently overthrown than at any time since the Civil War. The January 6, 2021 insurrection and its attempted cover-up is stark evidence of our peril.

"The democratic emergency is already here. We face a serious risk that American democracy as we know it will come to an end in 2024, but urgent action is not happening." -Richard L. Hasen, professor of law and political science, University of California, Irvine, January/February 2022 issue of *The Atlantic*, page 26.

Long ago, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679, an adherent of the theology of Tertullian, and a political philosopher), put forth the doctrine of *absolute submission to royal authority in order to avoid the social disorder arising from uncontrolled competition and clashes of individual interests*. It was the highly held belief that human nature is inherently evil (Psalm 51:5), violent, whimsical, and in need of a strong leader who, by the power of force would restrain their destructive impulses and keep them in check. It was also believed that monarchs were "ordained by God" to hold their power and should not be questioned. This is the Romans 13:1-17 heresy that excuses bad leadership even when they do not live by godly principles and fail to do their duty to protect and advance the common good.



The idea that people need to be herded by a determined, strong leader has grown in the U.S. Hans Morgenthau (1904-1980, Political Scientist and American Foreign Policy contributor), took a pessimistic view of human nature, arguing that humans are dominated by self-interest and act out of fear or aggression; he argued, therefore, that a strong fearless leader is essential. A worried John Adams (1736-1826, our 2nd president) said, "Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide." Adams also believed that our democracy could not survive without the ideals of the Jesus faith.

Social scientists have long argued that, in spite of political convictions to the contrary, America will never fall to outside powers, but from strife within itself; yet we spend trillions for military preparedness aimed at protecting us from foreign enemies whom we calculate are bent on attacking us! Today we sludge our way through murky discussions about what is true and who is telling the truth. It has always been easy to lie in print media, but today our unregulated, say, claim, and promote anything you want to, electronic media has made lying an art form, a money-raiser, and political force of gigantic proportions! Our danger is compounded because, for many, reasoning and truth-telling have been replaced by sordid ideologies and runaway egos bent on believing whatever comforts, adds to their coffers, or suits them; the truth really doesn't seem to matter to them.

Robber-barons, grid-locked government, and social disruption is the order of our present time with the result that many are willing to accept

an autocratic, even fascist leader to "take over" in the name of security; often to protect the "haves" from the "have-nots."

The great misunderstanding about liberty is that there can be no genuine liberty outside of community and that liberty requires responsibility, restraint, and self-sacrifice; without those ingredients there is no liberty! Unrestrained individualism is a threat to liberty.

The lack of economic and political balance in a society will always lead to trouble. Domination prevents negotiation; domination stifles creativity; domination short-changes mutual respect.

Where does religion stand in all this? Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1931-2021) pointed out that "People will use their religion to justify virtually anything." Unfortunately, certain kinds of religion are a large part of the problem. In the early sixties, when I served a church in the deep south, most of the congregations there justified segregation, the bogus laws supporting it, and the violence used to protect it, with loads of "prayer and bible talk," but little "Jesus-discipleship" walk. If we shed ourselves of the cultural trappings of "religion" and look to the life and teachings of Jesus, we will find the way to get ourselves out of the mess that we are in and strengthen our democracy.



But, recent Barna research found that 56% of American Christians feel that their spiritual life is entirely private. That's astounding! The faith of Jesus is practiced and deepened in community; that's where the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) becomes flesh. No wonder church attendance is declining and congregations are closing! How can our nation recover without a vibrant and courageous application of the life and teachings of Jesus to the people and issues of our time? We must move from religiosity to proclamation through cross-bearing.

If we are going to follow Jesus, we must begin by rejecting individual and social violence. Thus far in 2022, gun deaths have claimed more than 3,800 souls including 104 teenagers and 9 police officers. -Gun Violence Archive. Sadly, multiple gun-deaths are a daily occurrence in our nation. People with guns kill people!

Gun violence is only part of the violence story; random acts of social violence are on the rise. For example, the FAA reports that over 3,000 passenger disruptions have occurred on airlines since 1-1-21; the Justice department is currently bringing legal action against 34 of the offenders and intends to increase its prosecutions.

Racial and gender prejudice are major issues; uneven economic opportunities and tax laws favoring the wealthy continue to prevail; our health care is among the most expensive in the world; our two political parties are, at present, inept; an armed public has made violence epidemic.

It is easy to despair in the midst of bad news and lower our tolerance for it, but remember what Yuval Noah Harari, of Hebrew University said, "Despair is as dangerous as denial;" nor can we forget that it was necessary for God to send John the Baptist to warn and call the people to repentance so that they would be ready to receive a new world through Jesus. When we are discouraged, we must simply do our little bit of good where we are. "It's those little bits of good, put together, that overwhelm the world."

-Archbishop Desmond Tutu

