



CREATION CARE



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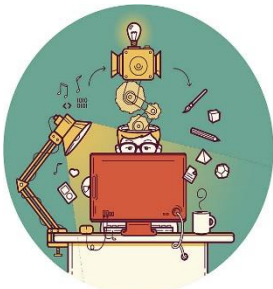
Occasional Newsletter with relevant articles on biblical, economic, political & social impacts & their consequences on God's Creation & the Church.

On the Web: nohcob.org, click: Ministries, click: Creation Care

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

DESIGN LIFE, PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE, AND CONSUMER MAINTENANCE

My grandmother had a refrigerator that was thirty years old and still running. The last three refrigerators in our household lasted only as much as ten years before we had to replace them. How come?



Design-life is a term which defines the process of creating something that will accomplish a specified task over a specified period of time. Although it is theoretical in nature -- an estimate, it is also based on previous experience with a particular product. One of the big questions here is: "How long do you want it to last?" Obviously, the consumer may have one

answer and the producer and seller may have another.

Service-life is a term which measures a product's total life from the time of purchase and use to the point of discard. This can be tricky because the conditions and frequency of use can vary greatly among consumers and so statistical medians are often used to establish service-life.

Economic-life is a term which refers to the point where maintaining a product is more expensive than replacing it. This is tricky because the cost of replacement parts can be inflated far beyond what it costs to manufacture them, thus increasing the incentive to buy a new product.

Maintainability refers to the various resources needed for product operations: fuel, lubricants, power sources, etc. The pertinent question: "Is product-repair consumer friendly, or does it require special tools and technicians for its maintenance and upkeep?" Most products today are not serviceable by ordinary consumers and require technically trained specialists and the parts that only they can easily access. An example of the problem, according to *Vergenotes*, the US Public Interest Research Group, Apple, Google, and Microsoft laptops



and phone brands produce sealed-in designs are next to impossible to repair. To make matters worse, they also lobby against **Right to Repair** legislation now being pushed by the Biden Administration.

A further complication lies in the fact that many people today lack, what was once, the common skills and tools needed for general maintenance and repair because they have been raised in our "throw-away" society, making them dependent on abundant personal incomes and the service industry to keep things going.

Planned-obsolence refers to the production of products that are designed to slow-down, wear-down, wear-out or fail completely in their design designation. Some products are no longer serviceable because certain parts have been altered enough that they no longer fit older models. The lure of "up-to-date" models and "convenience upgrades" push consumers to buy new. The whole point is consumption; get rid of the old and buy new; over, and over, ad-infinitum.



The processes used for product development are necessary, but they can also be abused, as I have tried to point out. The values that producers hold make the difference between economy and waste. Resource sustainability is the key.

Grandma bought one refrigerator that lasted over thirty years; I bought three in a similar period; their purpose hasn't changed, they keep things cold, but their longevity has changed in order to support an economy and employment system that is dependent on the need for regular replacements.

Our planet faces shrinking natural resources and our society is currently driven by powerful wealthy hierarchies and inept governing systems that have led to growing social violence and confusion about the meaning of freedom. At this point, we are turning our earth-garden into a wasteland and our social relations into a bunch of warring tribes. Unless we elevate our values and temper our individualism for the common-good we will continue in the road to hurt and death. ☹



BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS



Each year, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, conveys how close we are to destroying our civilization with the dangerous technologies and fool-hardy policies, of our own making. The “Doomsday Clock” announcement for 2022 shows the hands set at 100 seconds to midnight! The announcement was made before the Russian invasion of Ukraine which has brought us dangerously closer to a nuclear exchange. To get his own way, Putin is holding the world hostage with the threat of nuclear war if he is interfered with. ☹

PASTORS AS STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL

When I was Interim DE, along with Carl Carwood, we held three pastoral workshops across the district on the theme: “*Being a Mind-full Pastor*,” October 22, 23, 24, 2002. I was in charge of the morning sessions from which the following excerpts are taken.



The pastoral ministry is both a calling and a profession that requires a solid commitment to Christ and the Church along with uncompromising devotion to the Lord and to the Lord’s people. Purpose and power for pastoral work arises out of this calling.

The pastor as a professional must be committed to the development of the skills that are used in carrying out pastoral tasks and must maintain high standards of competence in the performance of those tasks, because we are called to excellence (2 Timothy 2:15). Skill development includes inherited talents from our ancestors, inherent talents that are given by God through Spiritual Gifts, learning by experience (observing and doing), formal training in school, college, and seminary, and **life-long learning** through continuing education.

The **focus** of life-long-learning in pastoral work is for: Spiritual Development; Biblical understanding; understanding Christian and Church History; understanding the Anabaptist and Pietist revelations; Developing “People Skills.”

A **plan** for life-long-learning should take into account these four factors: 1) The things in which I am strong—perfect them; 2) The things in which I am weak—strengthen them; 3) The things that I am interested in—for the joy and skill of it; 4) The things that I know little or nothing about—ignorance is not bliss, learn something new.



The Shepherd motif versus the Basin and Towel.

The “Good Shepherd” motif fits the ministry of Christ and the Hebrew culture of his time, perfectly, but it does not fit the Anabaptist’s understanding of biblical leadership for our time. Just as the apostles in Acts 6 reorganized one of the tasks of the congregation to fit their situation, we must reorganize to fit the needs of our situation. Key to this refitting is the New Testament concept of the “Priesthood of all Believers” (1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 5:10) which lays the guidance, protection, need fulfillment, and witness of “the flock” upon the entire believer’s community and its gifts. Western organizational styles and paid staff changed pastoral work into “CEO’s” who wield decision making authority and carry-out tasks that are rightly the responsibility of the believing community with the result that church members spend most of their time sitting in the pews, committees, and church suppers, instead of working in the harvest fields, reaping (Matthew 9:37). The **first** pastoral responsibility is to live a Christ-like life so that their attitudes, words, and deeds reflect Christ’s teachings and

values with the result that the “Word becomes Flesh” in the midst of the congregation. Preaching-talk is cheap unless the preacher walks the talk. The **second** responsibility is to be a “Servant of the Word” by helping their congregation understand, live by, and use the scriptures in their work and witness in the world so that the congregation fulfills the “Great Commission.” The “Basin and Towel” represent the humble attitude in which all teaching and service is given. (Romans 12:3).



The Servant-Pastor versus the Imperial-Pastor. When one becomes the pastor of a congregation, the church does not “give you a pulpit,” as if it was your own property; it provides you with a pulpit from which you have the **privilege** of preaching the Gospel, **as you understand it**. There is no such thing as “my pulpit” or “my church.” Pastors are not religious cops, they are basin and towel people; servants, not imperialists! (See 2 Timothy 2:15 and James 3:1).

The Enemy of Faith is not Doubt, but Certainty. Human Ego wants to substitute facts for faith; to know everything “for sure,” using proof-texts, personal “revelations,” and archaeological evidence, to justify their belief as proof of that belief. Like the Tower of Babel builders in Genesis 11, human ego secretly longs to “get up there with God,” to be equals in their secret longing for personal divinity; the end result of such grasping is confusion, disarray, and division.

Certainty does not promote faith but humanism because faith has more to do with **trusting** than it does with **knowing**; “seeing is believing” dominates “believing is seeing.”

Certainty twists our use and understanding of the Scriptures.

The ego-driven use of the Bible makes it a law-book and a club to be used to enforce conformity rather than to enhance a loving community. **Egotism** takes us to the scriptures to **prove something**; **Humility** takes us to the scriptures to **learn something**; faith comes from trust, not proof.

There has never been a universal understanding of what the Bible says; that is the main reason that we have over 30,000 different denominations and church groups across the world today—most of whom believe that they have a better understanding, or are more faithful to the scriptures, than the others! Certainty attempts to narrow and specify beliefs through church creeds and doctrinal statements; all of which are failed attempts to lasso the basics of scriptural revelation; most anabaptists gave up on creeds and simply said that the “New Testament” is our creed, and that what we believe should not be an individual matter, where the ego can twist understanding, but should be decided in a prayerful community where God’s presence is enhanced (Matthew 13:20).



The Bible is a book of guidance where we mine the precious nuggets by which life is lived in harmony with the creator and faith is centered in Jesus, the Christ, not in a calendar of beliefs that are used in power plays that cut people off in ego-heated arguments.



Without Jesus as our center, faith becomes argument and division, (See 1 Timothy 1:20 and Titus 3:9-11), but in Jesus, differences are tolerated without fear, and open-mindedness, not “orthodoxy,” brings the free movement of the holy spirit, allowing 1 Cor. 13, to become a living reality: we do not keep a record of wrongs (v5), that now we only see dimly; our knowledge is only partial (v12), and the most outstanding thing about us, is our love for Jesus and for each other ((v13). ☹

COVID; AND THE BEAT GOES ON

"It was supposed to be a triumphant year, the year we defeated COVID-19. Revolutionary vaccines—developed at breakneck speed from genetic technology decades in the making—were rolling out, ushering in the largest global immunization campaign in history. Lockdowns, isolation, masking, and sparsely attended funerals would give way to open borders, family reunions, and rebounding economies. In 2021 life would return to normal. [but] New strains of the virus and uneven responses to vaccines delayed the world's return to normal." -Bijal P. Trivedi, 1-2022, [National Geographic](#), p 34

The impatience of politics and economics belittled, denied, and ignored the developing scientific understanding of COVID and passed over the grief of over 950,000 of its victims in the United States alone.



The majority of viral specialists now believe that COVID will stay with us like the flu-viruses and will require regular vaccinations to control it. Like the flu, mutations will continue to appear and require vaccine adjustments. The BA.2 is the current mutation which is currently spreading rapidly around the world and in the USA; it is more contagious than any mutation thus far and is expected to create another surge in our nation in late Spring.

A new study, published in *Nature Medicine*, reported that people who had COVID were 63% more likely to have a heart attack, 69% more likely to have arrhythmia, and 72% more likely to suffer from heart failure in the year following their infection than those who had not been infected. The *American Heart Association* president, Donald M. Lloyd-Joes recently told the *Washington Post* that they expect a "tidal wave of cardiovascular events in the coming years from direct and indirect causes of COVID."

The CDC (3-21-22) reported that 79.5 million people have been infected with COVID-19. Researchers from the VA Saint Louis Health Care System found that people who recovered from COVID were 40% more likely to develop a new case of diabetes compared to a control group.

If these studies are accurate, COVID survivors may live with complications for the rest of their lives. Only time will tell. ☹️

SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR A COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE TO COVID



Most pulpits went on with "business as usual" and neglected to provide a theological foundation for a compassionate response to the COVID pandemic. Some even postulate that God will protect you from the virus if you have enough faith laying a bogus burden upon the earnest faithful who die from or lose loved ones to the virus. What a shame!

The Church, in my opinion, has failed to speak a clear voice to the social turmoil created in our society by the various pundits of anti-science and anti-social order. In an attempt to fill the vacuum caused by this silence, the *National Council of Churches* (an organization often beleaguered) prepared a fact sheet called "A Christian Approach to Vaccine Hesitancy" in December 2021 (www.nationalcouncilofchurches.us). The scriptural references listed: Mark 12:31, Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 2:10, James 1:13-18; my favorite, Philippians 2:4 NRSV, "Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others;" What a contrast to the "my rights" and "self-protection" people! I found the section on [Biblical Misinformation](#) of particular interest. ☹️

BITS AND PIECES

"You can't save a place you don't love. You can't love a place you don't know. And you can't know a place you haven't learned." -Paraphrase from a statement by Baba Dioum, Senegalese environmentalist.

"If you are like roughly 90% of Americans, the congregational district where you live is already in the bag, safely tied up for the Ds or the Rs." -Lee Drutman, "A Better Way to Vote," [TIME](#), 3-14,22-2022, p 31. Gerrymandering is where the Politicians choose the Voters! One of the current scandals in Ohio is that the *Redistricting Commission* has not been able to lay politics aside and draw a map that meets constitutional standards.



Idling cars, standing in line, at our Southern border result in 457 metric tons of CO2 emissions daily. -[TIME](#), 3-14,22-2022, p 34.

Societal change does not wait for parliamentary debate. It happens through lived practice. Adventurous souls step out, deviating from the norm. Others follow. -Dalton Reimer, [Anabaptist World](#), 3-4-22, p 14.

Efforts to censor books are really demonstrating to us why reading is fundamental. Reading changes who you are as a person. -Emily Knox, library science scholar and author of "Book Banning in 21st Century America. A child who reads widely will become an adult who thinks broadly.

Pollen season in general will start up to 40 days earlier in the spring and last up to 19 days longer today than in the past because of warming temperatures. -The Conversation

Last fall [2021] Public Agenda found that 8 in 10 Americans thought partisan hostility was a "serious problem." -[Christian Science Monitor](#), 2-28-22, p 29. ☹️

INFLATION AND CLIMATE COSTS

In 2021 the U.S. experienced 20 weather and climate disasters that each caused \$1 billion in damage. That cost is not just covered by government hand-outs (paid for with taxes), it is also paid for in rising costs for business and rising prices for consumers. "Across the world, climate-linked disasters have killed people, crops, disrupted energy supplies, and snarled transportation—and in turn driven up prices." -Justin Worland, [TIME](#), 2-28,3-7-22, P 27. The part that climate change plays in rising inflation is largely overlooked by the popular press. ☹️

FIGHT TRUTH DECAY

Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored. -Aldous Huxley

Repetition does not transform a lie into a truth. -F.D.R.

You can only fight lies with truth. -Richard Savukynas

When violence bursts onto the peaceful human condition, its face flush with self-assurance, it proclaims on its banner, "I am Violence! Make way, I will crush you!" But violence ages swiftly. A few years pass and it is no longer sure of itself. To prop itself up, to appear decent, it will without fail call forth its ally—lies. For violence has nothing to cover itself with but lies, and lies can only persist through violence. -Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Russian dissident writer ☹️

FRACKING



Fracking, is a controversial, but highly successful technology used to reach trapped supplies of oil and gas in old wells by forcing chemically laced liquids through the solid matter that prevents full access to those supplies. It is controversial because of a number of ecological problems, one of which has to do with the safe disposal of the 5 to 16 million gallons of chemically-laced liquids used per well during the process.

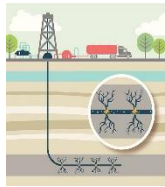


In the fall 2021 issue, #38, of this newsletter, page 1, I wrote an article about the use of fracking brine on Ohio roads as a snow and ice-melter. Although it is economical, more effective than salt, and easy to spread, it also contains low-level radioactive materials. Ohio is one of the few states that allows the use of the brine on its roads.

New legislation has been introduced in the Ohio House which would forbid the use of radioactive wastewater from oil and gas wells to be used as de-icing spray in winter. ☹️

FRACKING VERSUS INFLATED OIL PRICES

Oil shortages and high gas prices are back in the news because of the pandemic and, now, Russian aggression against Ukraine and our cut-off of Russian oil in retaliation (even though our imports of their crude are said to total only about 3%). It never takes much to boost prices at the pump. A common justification for higher gas prices is that nasty old business complaint “government regulations,” but when you examine the issue a little, you discover that FRACKING comes into the picture. Justin Worland, of TIME, writes, in the current issue (3-28/4-4-22, p 12):



“Typically, a steep rise in oil prices would push investors to dump cash into more drilling. But many are still haunted by the hydraulic fracturing—or fracking-boom, which triggered so much production that supply vastly outstripped demand, and tanked prices. Between June 2014 and January 2016, the U.S. benchmark price of a barrel of oil fell from more than \$100 to around \$30.”

Right now, cash for producing more oil is in short supply because of skittish investors, not government regulations, or Russian war. ☹️

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS



Products made of paper, glass, and wood were used in the construction, packaging, food, bottling, and medical industries before the invention of plastics. As the population grew, their use put strains on the raw materials needed in their production and the means by which they were discarded after use.

As an incentive for recycling, a deposit was often included in the initial cost of glass bottled goods which the customer could retrieve when they returned the bottles to the place of purchase. This recycling reduced the number of replacements the bottlers needed to buy, saving them tons of money. As a kid, my parents allowed me to return our glass bottles, and keep the deposit; that was neat.

It was common for municipalities to provide curbside monthly pickups of paper, glass, and metal items for recycling, as a public service, and to supplement their incomes.

The arrival of single-use plastics created a packaging revolution that changed our social habits and ecological values by creating convenience and safety, but led to a throw-away culture that crams landfills and pollutes land and water, not just with



their physical presence, but also with their chemical makeup. Plastic is made from petrochemicals, chemicals derived from fossil fuels; and fossil fuel-use is the major cause of global temperature rise.

The medical profession provides a good look at the convenience and safety of single-use plastics. Medical supplies, packs of procedural instruments, pans, pouches, vessels, cups, and so-forth, are all made of or enclosed in sterile plastic packs. Not long ago I had surgery on my arm; the nurse pulled-out a little plastic package; everything needed for the procedure seemed to be right there, including the scalpel; all for one-time use. The old days of sterilizer units for medical instruments and their storage in cabinets are gone and so is the worry of common contaminants filtering into that storage.

That may be the good news, but the bad news lies in the overwhelming costs of the single-use plastics to the environment.



According to earthday.org, more than 480 billion plastic bottles were sold worldwide in 2016, up from about 300 billion only a decade ago; one trillion single-use plastic bags are used annually across the globe, that’s nearly 2 million every minute; more than half a billion plastic straws are used every day around the world, that’s over 141 million metric tons; takeout orders account for around 269,000 US tons of plastic waste that has entered the oceans; the amount of bubble wrap that is produced annually is enough to wrap around the Equator ten times; the world uses 500 billion plastic cups every year and 16 billion disposable coffee cups are used each year, these are coated with plastic to laminate the inside and use plastic lids; the world produces more than 14 million US tons of polystyrene (plastic foam) each year, Americans alone throw away around 25 billion Styrofoam cups every year, and around the world, people litter more than 4.5 trillion cigarette butts every year.

What happens to all the discarded plastic? About 79% is accumulated in landfills and the natural environment, 12% is incinerated, and only **9% is recycled**. Only about 1% of all plastic has ever been recycled more than once. ☹️

IN CONTRAST TO ALL OF THE KINDS OF OTHER ENERGY SPILLS, WHEN THERE’S A HUGE SPILL OF SOLAR ENERGY, IT’S CALLED A NICE DAY. ☹️



Even if you are old, you must plant. Just as you found trees planted by others, you must plant them for your children. -Midrash Tanchuma, Kodashim 8, 4th or 5th centuries. ☹️