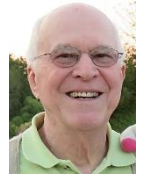


CREATION CARE



#46 - Fall - 2023

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.

RETALIATION AND ITS INEVITABLE USE OF VIOLENCE IS ANTLIFE

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice; to love mercy; and to walk humbly with our God” (Micah 8:8) – “Never take revenge, but instead let God’s anger do it. For the scripture says, ‘I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord.’ (quoted from Deuteronomy 23:34-35) Instead, as the scripture says: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for by doing this you will make him burn with shame.’ (quoted from Proverbs 25:21-22). **Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good.**” (Romans 12:19-21).

Violence can kill people and destroy human and natural settings, but it cannot kill an idea; nor can you reason someone out of something that they were not reasoned into. People and ideas can only be changed by the example of those who believe that all life is sacred, live peaceably, and contribute to the common good. Those who think that they can use violence to stamp-out an ideology are foolish; will fail; and may even become complicit because their misguided actions usually only heighten the wrath of those that they target. ⊕

THE COLORADO RIVER IS NOT BEING RESUPPLIED WITH ENOUGH SNOW MELT AND RAIN



The Colorado river supplies 40 million people with water. How is the water used? --12% supplies homes, lawns, parks, golf courses and swimming pools; 8% is used by industry and business; 79% is used by agriculture.

It is agriculture that deserves the greatest scrutiny because 70% of agricultural use is devoted to just two crops; alfalfa and grass to make hay to feed beef, dairy cattle, sheep, and horses. The story doesn’t stop here because the Colorado River Basin states only produce 15% of our nation’s supply of hay and 17% of that is exported overseas, mainly to China, Japan, and Saudi Arabia.

It takes about 450,000 gallons of water to produce one ton of hay; about the same amount that is needed to supply four average homes with water for one year! It takes about 450 gallons of water to produce one pound of beef which means that each time you eat a “quarter-pounder” sandwich you are also consuming many gallons of water! A gallon of cow’s milk represents 1,000 gallons of water and a single almond nut 3.2 gallons of water!

Common sense dictates that we re-evaluate and adjust our agricultural water use from the Colorado river which will also require some economic and consumer adjustments; none of this will be easy and will take time, but under our current and predicted climate assessments, it will be necessary if we are to avoid economic disasters and major population shifts. (Sources: Richter and Cadwell, Nature, New York Times, Water Footprint Calculator, EPA, Fulton Norton, and Shilling, Ecological Indicators). ⊕

FALL HALLOWEEN DISASTER

Each Fall, after we celebrate Halloween in the United States, it is estimated that we send 1.3 billion pounds of pumpkins into our landfills every year. A much better alternative is to smash and compost our pumpkins to return their nutrients back into the earth, or to let them decay in some corner of our lawns. Who knows, you may even discover that, in the Spring you have a pumpkin-vine taking root, upon which you will grow your own pumpkins to use next Halloween! ⊕



THE MARVELS OF SEA WATER

Seawater covers more than 70% of the earth’s surface. According to the Australian Department of Environment and Energy, a single liter of ocean water contains around a million phytoplankton, half a million zooplankton, a billion bacteria and four billion viruses! According to Oceanus, one drop of seawater contains one million tiny creatures that provide nourishment for aquatic life while also

absorbing some of the carbon in the atmosphere. Perhaps the most important content of seawater is salt. 96.5% of the ocean is water, but 2.5% contains salts which are essential for the existence of its living creatures and for the health and enhancement of human life. ⊕



HELP IN IDENTIFYING BIRDS

Drew Weber is a 2006 graduate of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana. In partnership with *Cornell Lab of Ornithology*, Weber developed the **Merlin Bird ID** app which is now used by millions of people around the world. The app is used on smart phones to identify birds based on their songs or appearance.

Bird-watching is a popular hobby with millions of people. Up until now, birders have depended upon volumes of regional-specific books for identification – a resource that is limited by its bulk and subject; but now use your slim and trim smart-phone to upload more than 1 million audio files with which to quickly narrow your search.

Bird identification is also convenient for those who chance upon a bird in the midst of one's daily activities because, with a few touches on your phone, you can sort-out what you see and have the satisfaction of knowing what it is. ⊕

HOW DO YOU LOOK AT WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD?

The way we try to make sense out of what is going on in the world is called a “**worldview**.” Britannica, defines a worldview as “*the way someone thinks about the world.*” It goes on to say that a worldview (1) *is a set of presuppositions and beliefs that shape how we make sense of the world and everything that is in it;* (2) *it serves as a lens through which the world is interpreted and it influences a person's perspective, values, and actions;* (3) *it explains who human beings really are, what the world is ultimately like, and what people should do to live a satisfying life.*”

A worldview is important for many reasons, two of which are: a) it allows us to **cope** in the midst of troubling times, and, b) it allows us to **apply our values** to the issues that confront us making our example a force for improvement and a public witness.

The American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), in his poem, *A PSALM OF LIFE*, wrote (in the last 5 stanzas):

*In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!*

*Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act--act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!*

*Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints in the sands of time;*



*Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.*

*Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait*



A worldview uses a **lens** through which it seeks to understand and respond to the social order. The kind of lens one chooses is very important to the way you construct the philosophy of life with which to find personal satisfaction and be equipped to successfully encounter the personal and social events that we face in our day-to-day lives.

C. S. Lewis said: “*I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it, I see everything else.*” This insight is crucial, but, today the claim of “*Christianity*” has been abused and misused in our society to the point that living a Christ-like life has withered and political/social views have been exalted; for example, many church-people have been so immersed in various aspects of the American “*culture wars*” that, rather than proclaiming the “*Good News*” of the Gospel, they become advocates for social/political positions; likewise, “*Evangelical Christian*” has become a political affiliation more than it is a theological position. The result has been a decline in Christian morality in order to justify political aspirations. This hypocrisy is so glaring, that droves of people, including many young people, have turned away from organized religion with the result that attendance in most American congregations is in decline. The antidote, of course, is to center one's faith on Jesus; his teachings and his life. A justifiable “*Social Gospel*” will certainly emerge from one's encounter with Jesus, but it will be an evangelistic fruit, not a nationalistic passion.

As a follower of Jesus, the Christ, I try to apply his life and teachings to build the foundation out of which my world-view grows. Jesus' principles, ethics, and morals provide the sign-posts that we need as we journey through life's tangles.

Christ makes our fundamental situation clear; the **freedom of choice** that God gave us in Eden is a mixed blessing, because, although we make many good choices, we make many bad choices that gets us into a lot of trouble; as a result, we Homo-sapiens, while we are a wonder of creativity, we are also a horror of destruction; **we need to be born again; regenerated; revived!** (John 3:1-21). God's love

provides the pathway through which His **intention** for us in creation is restored and our **attention** in life is refocused. (John, chapter nine, Philipians 4:4-8).

Born again, **we are meant to live in community** with each other in social and religious groupings. In the 1967 film adaptation of "How to Succeed in Business," Tony Award winning actor Robert Morse sings a rousing little song about the "*Brotherhood of Man*."

There is a brotherhood of man,
A benevolent brotherhood of man,
A noble tie that binds
All human hearts and minds
Into one brotherhood of man.

Your life long membership is free,
Keep a-giving each brother all you can.
Oh, aren't you proud to be in that fraternity,
The great big brotherhood of man?



Strong social community is the foundation of good governance and a good life. Human isolation has always led to irrelevance, at best, and human conflict at worst. When you are all locked-up in your own thoughts and deeds, you lose track of social and historical reality and become entwined in delusional fears, conspiracy theories, and counterfeit ideologies, all of which mislead you and ferment violence. Self-centeredness dehumanizes by making you feel that you are either less than you are or more than you are; **less** makes you wither and devalues human life (killers, for example, can murder without compassion); **more** makes you a bully and you use and abuse people and have no regrets in doing so. The interaction of people in community allows their similarities to be celebrated, their differences to be negotiated, and their voices to be heard.

Religious community with a trinitarian view of divine existence (Creator, Redeemer, Vital Presence) provides a foundation that undergirds the sanctity of all life and the harmony that moral and ethical living provides. In Philipians 3:20, in the Moffatt translation, Paul talks about the

Church: "But, we are a colony of Heaven, and we wait for the Savior who comes from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ." Historically, a colony is a close-knit body of people who live in a new territory; though detached from the mother country by space and time, it is still intimately connected to the mother country. In other words, the Church in the World is a little community of believers who live their lives in a manner reminiscent of the glories of heavenly harmony and joy; it is a hopeful demonstration of the Good News in a hopeless world that so often focuses on bad news.

Gretchen Huizinga, in an article entitled Jesus and Artificial Intelligence (11-23, Sojourners, Page 15) writes: "*ethics and regulatory laws are necessary for the governance of civil society, but they have never proved historically or biblically sufficient to vanquish the reality of evil and the effects of human sin that worm their way into our lives and our technologies. Only Jesus has done that.*" No worldview can be sufficient without understanding that the human bent to destruction must be countered with the human instinct to propagate; tearing-down and replacing has its place, but building-up and nourishing must always be on the front burner. ☩

WHY DOES COLD WEATHER GIVE YOU A COLD?

Our nostrils are filled with thousands of cells, some of which are known as *extracellular vesicles (EVs)*. The task of EVs is to attract foreign invaders away from the normal cells in the nose. The EVs are our first line of defense against illness, because they act as decoys—the intruder sticks to the EVs and are expelled in the form of nasal discharge, known as *snot*; but Scientists believe, that in cold weather, the EVs are killed-off, leaving us unprotected from the virus or bacteria that we inhale; as a result, they attach themselves to normal cells—spread from there into the rest of our body, and we become sick. Even small changes in temperature (as little as 9 degrees) can kill-off 42 percent of the EVs in our nostrils.



What can be done to protect ourselves in cold weather? Benjamin Bleier, *Harvard Medical School*, recommends wearing a **face-mask** because it prevents us from inhaling the viruses and bacteria in the first place, and because it is "*like wearing a sweater on your nose*" which protects the EVs from being killed by the cold air when we breathe it in.



Many people resist wearing a face-mask for various, often good reasons, but during the Covid pandemic, when face-masks were mandatory, colds, upper-respiratory, and flu infection-rates were the lowest on record. Recent studies have shown that face-mask materials trap viruses and bacteria in their fibers, thus preventing their invasion into the nostrils. Wearing a face-mask, outside of our homes, in crowded-enclosed spaces is a prudent choice. ☩

FAKE-NEWS ABOUT THE AMISH

Anti-vaccination groups have been circulating the false claim that the Amish are against vaccines and that a new study has shown that their children had zero cases of cancer, diabetes, autism, and few deaths from Covid-19—thus proving that vaccines are not necessary.

The *Associated Press (AP)* says that there is no truth to the rumor and that, although Amish vaccination rates are lower than the general population, only 14 percent of Amish people do not vaccinate their children. There were also significant death-rates among the Amish because of Covid-19. ☩

CHILDREN ARE SWALLOWING BUTTON BATTERIES



In the past decade more than 70,000 children went to hospital *Emergency Rooms (ERs)* because they swallowed a button battery – that’s an ER battery related visit every 1.25 hours! More than 84 percent of the patients were under five years old.

Dr. Rade Vukmir, *American College of Emergency Physicians*, said that Lithium button batteries “are one of the most dangerous objects for a child to swallow and is a true medical emergency.”

According to Dr. Kris Jatana, *Nationwide Children’s Hospital* and a professor at *The Ohio State University*, when the battery gets stuck in a child’s throat, the saliva triggers an electric current that can cause a chemical burn that can severely damage the esophagus. This damage can happen in as little as two hours after ingestion and can lead to “perforation, vocal-cord paralysis or airway erosion.” The higher the battery voltage, the larger the diameter, the greater the potential for getting stuck in the throat and for the extent of the damage.

Children who might have swallowed a battery should immediately be taken to the emergency room. Experts say “If there’s a jar of honey in the house, parents should give their child (only children older than one) two teaspoons of honey every 10 minutes on their way to the hospital to coat the throat and reduce the risk of serious injury. No other food or drink should be given.” The *Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia* warns against trying to induce vomiting, giving any medications, drinking milk or water, or trying the Heimlich maneuver.”



Whenever you purchase a product that is powered by button batteries, be sure that the battery compartment is designed in such a way that it is secure and difficult to access. ☹

FIR TREES AND CHRISTMAS



Fraser fir trees (pictured on the left) are the most popular fir tree used as Christmas trees because they retrain their needles for seven or more weeks after being cut. Strangely, they are an endangered species because they are rarely found in the wild anymore. They are only found in the Appalachian Mountains at altitudes of 4,500 feet or higher. They are raised, commercially, on tree farms, for the Christmas tree market.

Balsam firs (pictured in the center) are also popular as Christmas trees. Tall Balsam trees have often been used at the U.S. Capital as the National Christmas Tree. Balsam branches (boughs) are commonly used to make wreaths. Balsam trees grow about 12 inches per year taking 9 or 10 years to reach Christmas tree height.

Douglas fir trees (pictured on the right) are known for their strength and can reach a height of 300 feet or more in the wild; their lumber is commonly used in construction. For Christmas tree use, they are grown on tree-farms and pruned to shape. ☹

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A YELLOW CARDINAL?



The Yellow Cardinal is a rare sight that can create a lot of excitement. There is even a Facebook page dedicated to them (*theyellowcardinal*). The yellow feathers are the result of a rare genetic mutation that is not passed down so a yellow species is not likely to ever develop on its own.

Other than their yellow color they are ordinary Cardinals and fit into the Cardinal community without trouble.

There is, what is called a “Yellow Cardinal” found in South America. It has some of the features of our Cardinals, but, upon closer examination, they really belong to the Tanager family. ☹