

Christians For The Mountains
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The Mountain Vision

*"The Earth Belongs to God...
and Everything in it."*
(Psalm 24:1)

A Free Publication of Christians For The Mountains

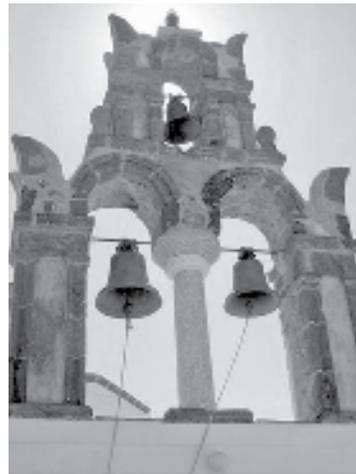
Volume 6 No. 12 Winter 2018-2019

Christian Hope

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men."



These phrases of a well-known Christmas carol reflect the painful heart of the poet whose wife had been burned to death in a fire and whose son had been critically wounded in the American Civil War. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrestled with the imponderable enigma, "why is there so much evil and suffering in the world? Why does God allow it?"

God plants a spark of hope in our lives. With God's empowering grace we act upon that hope through active faith, and deliver its fruits with love. Then we know, convinced, deep in our hearts, that "the wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, good will to all."

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." —Psalm 23:4

THIS ISSUE

To be effective as God-empowered advocates for social and environmental justice, we should strive to be clean inside what we strive to be clean outside. Our issue starts with Fred Krueger laying out a framework for spiritual transformation. This is a lengthy piece, but with meat to put onto your "spiritual bones."

Up next is a book review of Vera Shaw's *Thorns in the Garden Planet*. She posits a theme. "Can we effectively address pollution in our environment if our own hearts are polluted?" By the way, ask us and we will send her book to you, free.

Dean Ohlman gleans valuable lessons on responsibility for creation from the influential conservative, Francis Shaeffer. I then try to find Christmas cheer (or at least hope) in the face of doomsday scenarios.

Janet Keating awakens to understand white privilege. On the following page, she ponders the sacred gift that is water.

The Larry Gibson Biography Project will be our major undertaking in 2019 and until completion. We offer a brief summary of Larry and the biography.

Speaking of Larry Gibson, his life was a major factor in Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis honoring his grave and visiting the area. Being deeply touched, he is acting.

Fr. John Rausch leads "Pilgrimages to the Holy Land of Appalachia." He welcomes new pilgrims. Join.

Vic Hummert and Lee Ballinger each contribute thoughtful essays.

If you have Internet, you can help monitor pipeline construction.

Ben Stout, our scientist friend with a big heart recently died. We honor him.

CFTM continues its service to God, for our community, and for our future.

The Mountain Vision is a free publication made possible by contributions and prayers. Thank you!

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Cleaning Our Own House by Allen Johnson, Editor

The world and all that is in it belong to the LORD; the earth and all who live on it are his.
² *He built it on the deep waters beneath the earth and laid its foundations in the ocean depths.*
³ *Who has the right to go up the LORD'S HILL? Who may enter his holy Temple?*
⁴ *Those who are pure in act and in thought, who do not worship idols or make false promises.*
 Psalm 24:1-6 (GNT)

“The earth and all it contains belongs to God” is the motto and theme scripture of *Christians For The Mountains*. It is derived from the above Psalm 24:1. Since God is creator of the Earth and all that is upon it—the rightful property owner if you please—then we humans should treat God’s property well.

Verse 3 asks a question, how does one honor The Creator? Who can God trust? Verse 4 answers, “Those who are pure in act and in thought.” In other words, those who are trustworthy. God will trust those with undivided loyalty to God and integrity.

In his perceptive book, *Reckoning with Apocalypse: Terminal Politics and Christian Hope*, Dale Aukerman writes about the fullness of the reconciling work in Jesus.

To recognize the urgency of reconciliation only for relations between creatures (but not for the relation to God) is a rejection of that fullness. This latter departure from the Gospel and its “message of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19) has characterized the main range of peace and justice efforts in the churches.

Churches and individual Christians have so often taken up one or more aspects of hope and dropped others, thus adopting for themselves a fractional gospel. They may hope for God’s forgiveness but hardly for God’s transforming grace. They may have hope for a transformation of society but hardly for God’s saving action in individual lives. They may hope for an apocalyptic consummation but not for earthly triumphs of creative love over hate and violence. They may hope for personal healing but not for the healing of society.

Christians For The Mountains, publisher of *The Mountain Vision*, focuses most of its ministry on environmental justice issues focusing on central Appalachia. We work within a wide-tent framework to include Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Eastern Orthodox Christians. There is much common ground to study, discern, and act together toward God’s justice on earth. The handling of individual moral standards are for congregations and denominations to work through.

Yet how we conduct ourselves individually and collectively as Christians does have a bearing on our effectiveness in our work for justice. It does matter about our words and the tone of our speech, our conduct in our public actions, our demeanor toward our adversaries, and our overall kindness, truthfulness, integrity, generosity, and personal discipline in material consumption, sexual responsibility, and handling of finances.

The trouble of the tongue includes this from James 3:9-12 (GNT),

We use it to give thanks to our Lord and Father and also to curse other people, who are created in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ Words of thanksgiving and cursing pour out from the same mouth. My friends, this should not happen! ¹¹ No spring of water pours out sweet water and bitter water from the same opening. ¹² A fig tree, my friends, cannot bear olives; a grapevine cannot bear figs, nor can a salty spring produce sweet water.

Living and acting out of Christian virtues makes our stand for justice more compelling and convincing. Yet more importantly, indeed essential, is to have God’s favor and equipping power upon our efforts. Each individual, through God’s grace, needs to strive to grow in Christ and in personal virtuous thought and conduct. Collectively, we will all be at different stages, and with somewhat different understandings on nuances. We are not in a competition with one another to outdo others in “holiness;” after all, spiritual pride is as deadly as any sin. We should continually build one another up (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Psalm 51 is the pleading prayer of King David after his exposure as an adulterer and murderer. The words of this psalm can speak for anyone who has felt the agonizing pain of egregious sin and struggled to find the way back to God, to forgiveness, to restoration, and to usefulness once again. Yet the Psalm is for all of us, as the Bible demonstrates that each of us is estranged from God and in need of God’s gracious restoration. Repentance is turning away from our self-ways to God’s ways. Just as Christian activists desire national and global repentance that turns toward justice and peace, each of us should desire right living for our own individual lives.

Let us pray for one another and for ourselves Psalm 51:10).

*God, create a pure heart in me,
 and renew a right attitude within me.*

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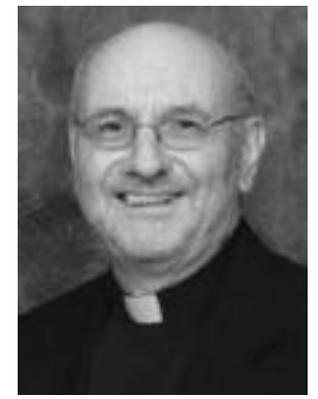
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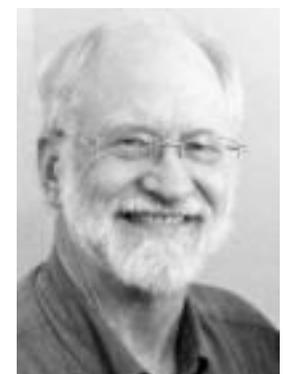
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We Welcome You To Partner with The Larry Gibson Biography Project

This is CFTM's major goal for 2019.

We invite you to please send a generous contribution to Christians For the Mountains (CFTM) as we stand with people and communities devastated by extreme energy extraction such as mountaintop removal and fracking.

Your contribution will go toward completing, publishing, and distributing Larry Gibson's biography. This will continue CFTM's mission well.

In 2006, CFTM produced the *Mountain Mourning Collection* DVD. One of the segments, "Keeper of the Mountains," featured Larry Gibson. A number of viewers have acclaimed it as the most heart-reaching of all the films involving Larry Gibson. Over the following six years, CFTM provided Larry Gibson several thousand copies of the DVDs, free to him, which he took with him to distribute to audiences on his many speaking engagements. In this way, we fulfilled much of our founding mission through him. This biography will be a continuation. Indeed, Larry Gibson asked CFTM for help in seeing through his biography.

The One Foundation has shown keen interest in substantially funding the biography project. CFTM will need to put up a percentage of matching funds. Therefore, all contributions to CFTM through at least the next six months will go toward the biography. This will lean us out almost to the bone. We need enough to keep this twice-yearly *Mountain Vision* paper going, and modest office, travel, and website expenses. **Our volunteer-run, donor-supported 2018 budget is \$9000!!!**

Financial supporters of the biography project will be acknowledged, unless otherwise requested.

Please pray for the success of the Larry Gibson Biography Project

For more details, see pages 12-13 in this issue

Larry Gibson Biography

On several occasions in 2012, the last year of his life, Larry Gibson asked Christians For The Mountains for help in writing his biography. We promised him.

Since then, we have conducted numerous interviews, gathered lots of information, and developed outlines, strategies, and goals.

However, we were unable to land a skilled, experienced biographer with a heart that would resonate with Larry Gibson's.

That is, until this fall. Marybeth Lorbiecki has eagerly agreed to further research and then write Larry's biography. She is a long-time friend to CFTM, trustworthy, a dedicated Christian, and passionate for justice (including environmental justice). Among her numerous published books is her acclaimed biography on the influential conservationist, Aldo Leopold. She is already enthusiastically working on the project.

The heart of the narrative will be Larry Gibson's passionate, courageous, and motivating efforts to stop mountaintop removal. The style will be to motivate readers to emulate and draw from Larry Gibson's character and action that will inspire and equip them to act for justice in their own contexts. Historical background information, anecdotal stories, quotations, interview transcripts, news stories, and cultural context will be tools toward telling this story.

Your prayers, encouragement, ideas, and financial support are most welcomed!



Read Pages 12,13 for further details on the Larry Gibson biography

All contributions will be earmarked for the Larry Gibson Biography Project. CFTM staff will receive no compensation. The One Foundation has expressed the desire to fund this project, but will require a matching percentage from CFTM. Be a partner in this project.

A free copy of Vera Shaw's book, *Thorns in the Garden Planet*, will be sent to you or a friend. See pp 6-7 for a review of this excellent book.

A copy of the *Mountain Mourning Collection* DVD is also free. *Just let us know*

ONLINE DONATIONS ARE WELCOME at www.christiansforthemountains.org/

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The Challenge of Christian Transformation Including the Role of Virtues by Fred Krueger

Be you transformed... (Romans 12:2)

All Christians share a responsibility to be transformed (Romans 12:2). In various ways, every church has a duty to help its members find transformation. In practice, the accomplishment of this biblical mandate tends to be more elusive than it should be. A review of Scriptural passages can help refocus the journey to Christ.



Image and Likeness of God

We initially encounter an implied command to transformation in the first chapter of Genesis. We read that humans are created “in the image and after the likeness of God...” (Genesis 1:26). The first part of this declaration tells us that every person possesses the image of God, which means the potential for godliness. The second part tells us that we are to strive toward the “likeness” of godliness. For the most part we must wait until the New Testament before a full demonstration of the likeness of godliness appears in human flesh.

Throughout the Torah – the first five books of the Hebrew Bible – the rabbis count 613 commands from God that codify the laws for the people of God to direct them onto the pathways of righteousness and justice, and therefore godliness.

The Name of Jesus

In the New Testament, a new mode of spiritual striving emerges. This is characterized by the action embedded in the name “Jesus” (Matt. 1:21-23). This name was described as the holiest under heaven. Why is this? To explain this, we must revisit the Hebrew linguistic system. In Hebrew, every letter has meaning that refers back to the nature or energies of God. Throughout ancient Judaism, God was represented as Yahweh (or when translated from Latin as “Jehovah”). This latter term is a hybrid derived by combining the unpronounceable Hebrew letters JHVH with the Latin vowels in the word Adonai). Whichever way this ancient term translates into English, it derives from the Hebrew letters “yod,” “he,” “vav” and “he,” which symbolically represent the name of God.

To understand how Yahweh transitions linguistically into Jesus, we need to understand the Hebrew letter “shin.” This letter symbolizes that which descends from one level down to another. As this letter was brought into Greek, it became the letter sigma Σ, and when rendered into English it represents the letter S. Look closely at the shape of these letters that derive from “shin.” They depict a sweeping down from above

into manifestation. Thus when the letter ‘shin’ is inserted into the midst of Yahweh (or Jehovah), we literally have “Jehoshua,” or simply, “Jesus.” Thus, it is interpreted as “God is with us” or more colloquially, God has come down to earth. Because we are each born in the image of God, acquiring this likeness is each person’s striving.

Just as Yahweh comes down into earth by the action represented by the letter ‘shin,’ we enter an era in which we are to do “on earth as it is in heaven.” This is in parallel the action that the name Jesus represents, i.e., God manifesting upon earth.

Repentance

We progress further in understanding transformation by examining what Jesus says about the spiritual world. “Repent,” he says, “for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). There is vision here – as well as right behavior. By declaring that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, Jesus implies heaven is “nearer than hands and feet.” It is not far away or in the sky. This means we live in God and the world is filled with the presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit (Isa 6:1-3; Acts 17:28). With the command to repent, historical commentary tells us that repentance is not just an occasional act, but a steady state of continually repenting, or what might be called “letting go and letting God.”

Inaugurating the New Earth

Next, we reach the Sermon on the Mount. Here Christ describes qualities of heaven made manifest upon the earth. He describes these as blessings, which we describe as “Beatitudes.” In this way, he enunciates the ways of heaven as strivings from which each blessing has its own unique rewards.

When Jesus declares these blessed qualities while on the mountainside, he introduces something new. He calls God “Father.” Notice, he does not say “My Father,” but “Our Father.” Jesus is making God accessible and approachable, as a God close at hand. He is also declaring the ways of heaven upon the earth, and thereby is inaugurating the New Earth.

He then teaches us how to pray. He asks us to do on earth “as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). This means a reaching to heaven that its ways be done on earth – and in us – as it is in heaven. Thus our actions are an aspect of our prayer. Again this is another pathway to transformation.

The Light of Christ

He speaks to his disciples, and all of us, saying, “You are the light of the world.” You are alive, and thus possess a beginning spark of light. He tells us, “Let your light shine...” We know from other passages that God is light. Letting one’s light shine is letting the qualities of godliness shine through us.

In discussion about light, we know that there are degrees of illumination or brilliance. He adds that we should shine our light so that others “may see your good works” (Matt 5:16). Light then is connected

to godliness, and therefore to action in harmony with God’s nature. Jesus says, “the light of the body is the eye; if your eye is single, your whole body shall be full of light; but when your eye is evil, the body is full of darkness” (Luke 11:34). See also “believe in the light that you may be the children of light” (John 12:36). Study of this word “believe” shows its original meaning to reveal how one “be living.” This takes us further into its original meaning. Belief then is not merely concept, but action.

Recall too the great “feast” to which all people are called. But “when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not a wedding garment.... Then the King said to the servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness...” (Matt. 22:9-13).

Abundant teaching about light fills the Gospels. These are repeated in the Epistles. “Awake, you that sleep, and Christ shall give you light” (Eph 5:14); and [Christ] “has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9); and “This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another...” (1 John 1:5-7). So there is no mistake about the meaning of light, this is the Greek word *phos*, which means light, bright shining light. It does not mean wisdom, nor anything except the presence and essence of God abundantly shining within a person. The historic commentary preserved from the Early Church unto the present in traditional Christianity describes this as illumination. This is defined as having the life of Jesus Christ so abundant that one perceives it interiorly yet objectively as bright shining light. Then, “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17).

The Virtues

How do the virtues fit into this scheme? How might they help a person find transformation? The virtues, by definition, are aspects of Jesus Christ in human potential. As a person grows in virtue, that person also grows in the ways and attitudes of Christ. Thanksgiving is a beginning virtue. The more a person is thankful, the more that person assumes that aspect of Jesus Christ. For perspective, many discern in thankfulness a lower octave of the action of praise or glorification.

In reflection about Christian behavior, over 200 distinct virtues are identified. Each represents a distinct aspect of Jesus Christ in human potential. As a person grows in these qualities, one also grows in these aspects of Jesus Christ. By embracing them, one at a time, one climbs Jacob’s ladder, which historically has been understood as a journey into the experience of God’s light and transforming presence.

Here are some specific virtues. Humility, piety, justice, order, wisdom, reverence, respect, fortitude, patience

{Continued from page 4 }**The Challenge of Christian Transformation Including the Role of Virtues**

and industry. Courage, perseverance, frugality, prudence, discipline, mercy, courtesy, endurance, tenacity, and responsibility. Honesty, truthfulness, sobriety, discretion, curiosity, vigor, kindness, purity, service. Obedience, temperance, fidelity, forbearance, loyalty, benevolence, generosity, elegance, simplicity, love. Sanctity, honor, kindness, sincerity, agape, gratitude, tolerance, purity, selflessness, politeness, and prayerfulness.

The virtues thus become a path to the embodiment of Jesus Christ. This gives rise to spiritual practice. Saint Paul writes that we are to “exercise ourselves unto godliness” (1 Tim. 4:7).

Prayer

But this is not all. One must also pray. Prayer is also a type of ladder. An apt comment comes from the 19th century writer Mark Twain who remarks, “Don’t expect a ten dollar answer from a five cent prayer.” There is depth of meaning here. Prayers are not equal.

Prayer is important because it connects a person to the presence, energy, and grace of God. Prayer is both art and science, discipline and practice. It is also a journey that, through repetition, awakens one to the presence of God.

The Apostle Paul writes, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6, NKJV). He adds, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NKJV). “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

With regular prayer, teaching experiences increasingly emerge. St. Paul continues, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). Prayer then is a means of transformation.

The Evangelist Mark sets a requirement for right prayer. “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses” (Mark 11:25). Thus we forgive everyone and everything for whatever we think has been offensive.

The Apostle James adds a note of caution, “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures” (James 4:3, NKJV).

Spiritual Growth

We have toured through some qualities that lead to transformation. It begins in our vision of God present and includes our creation in the image and toward the likeness of God. We know that Christ is the likeness of God and we have been called to imitate his ways and life. “Come follow me,” he calls. We are to shine our light unto the world. From this, we seek the qualities of Jesus Christ in our own lives, which we call virtues. And we pray. How often? The more frequent, the more one embraces the presence of God so that it sticks.

**The Discipline and Freedom of Fasting**

If we would go further and climb the high mountain of God, we should fast. For example, when the disciples could not cast out a demon and inquired of Jesus why they could not, he replied, “this kind can come out only by prayer and fasting” (Mark 9:29). The implication is fasting is key to that spiritual capability. Similarly, we see in Jesus’ promise, “They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover” (Mark 16:18). Fasting is crucial for that capability. Why? The rationale is not explicit in Scripture, but turning to medical science, it tells us that fasting allows for interior housecleaning. One’s immune system becomes stronger. This is why in monasteries, cancer and heart disease are unknown among long time monks.

Autolysis

By digging deeper into the physiology of fasting, more benefits come into focus. For example, when the body goes without food, a series of physiological changes occur. The autolytic (or self-healing) mechanisms of the body repair and regenerate bodily functions. Deep down at the cellular level fasting fosters a series of repair functions so that a rejuvenation and mini-healing occurs. For instance during a thirty-six hour fast, the body uses its energies to attack disease formations, tumors, or any unnatural growth in its system. A cleansing takes place. Body wastes and toxins are eliminated.

The fast – meaning no food, only water – removes disease in its formative stage. Research at the UC San Francisco School of Medicine finds many benefits. These include a sharply reduced risk of cancer (because the autolytic process attacks tumors in their formative stage). The autolysis also causes a slowing of the aging process. An interesting conclusion from research into fasting shows more ability to provide beneficial qualities, especially to older bodies, than drugs or medication. Other benefits include revitalization of digestive organs, clearer skin, improved hearing and taste, reduction of allergies, drug detoxification, and heightened disease resistance. Generally what is happening physically reflects what is taking place psychically.

Among psychological benefits, the mind develops clarity and the will is strengthened – perhaps because it is exercised through the denial of the desire to eat. Something else happens. True fasting (i.e., water only) causes a cautionary attitude to arise so that one is careful not to break the fast. Fasting thus becomes a cornerstone for a life of restraint

and thoughtfulness. This is because fasting from all food stretches out and addresses the tendency toward consumerism and materialism. Fasting thus witnesses to the conflict between the indulgences cherished by the modern mentality and the ascetic life of the Christian. This indicates that transformation cannot be attained without some old style fasting.

At the same time fasting results in increased sensitivity to others – perhaps because feelings become more sensitive and acute. This causes those who fast to feel the plight of the poor. This is how fasting and charity are connected, because without fasting we scarcely cultivate the sensitivities of heart that foster compassion for those who have little.

On a longer fast – more than a day, the body begins to produce the hormone serotonin to insulate itself from the pangs of hunger. The initial day of fasting may at first be difficult, but the second day can be quite enjoyable because serotonin creates a feeling of euphoria. The person who fasts will feel alert, active and often even excited to continue fasting. Studies show that most people report heightened mental clarity, a more positive mental outlook, and emotional serenity when fasting.

Medical studies on the spiritual side of fasting are elusive because science is not effective in examining this realm of life. Nevertheless, when the physical body is regularly cleansed by fasting, psychic and spiritual impressions become stronger and more frequent. One’s energy becomes more refined. The world may even appear transparent. Prayer at this time has a higher and more uplifted quality. One’s whole being experiences the etheric and spiritual worlds drawn closer. Sleep is deeper and more fulfilling.

Even though these aspects of fasting are not contained in Scripture, research on the effects of fasting shows the benefits of this biblical practice and how this is essential for going deeper into the realms of transformation.

Growing in Christ

In this tour of Christian transformation, the features listed here are only a beginning. The process is not a stiff rule. There is substantially more. One could add various types of prayer, the role of a teacher or elder, the Eucharist and the sacraments, and variations of praise, worship and blessings. The key is to put Christ first and embrace what he teaches. As we do these things, we will advance toward Christ, blessing and not cursing, forgiving all people, and seeking first the Kingdom of God, and then all else is added unto us.



Fred Krueger is the Coordinator of World Stewardship Institute (WSI) in Santa Rosa, California. www.ecostewards.org Krueger also heads up the National Religious Coalition on Creation

Care as well as other projects.

Krueger has been an influential pioneer in Christian environmental stewardship since the 1970’s.

Thorns In The Garden Planet, by Vera Shaw Reviewed by Allen Johnson

The hidden environment of the human spirit is seldom mentioned in our concern for our more obvious environmental problems. We would do well to carefully reconsider this omission. Pollution of self-centeredness and self-interest in each person's inner environment needs to be recognized if we are to get to the roots of the environmental pollution of the planet.

Much of Christ's teaching concerns the pollution of this inner environment and the glad news of the renewal He offers. We need to consider how much the inner environment of the spirit and the external environment of the planet are interrelated.

Thorns In e Garden Planet, pp. xiii, xiv

A Personal Note

I met Vera Shaw sometime somewhere in the 1990's at a small national conference. I was immediately struck by the spiritual radiance emanating from of this elderly woman. She spoke with the calm assurance of one who knew God and had an important message to convey. Shortly afterwards, I read her book, *Thorns In The Garden Planet: Meditations On The Creator's Care* (Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville, 1993).

Over the following two decades I often reflect on Shaw's themes, most poignantly for me, that that the status of our inner heart precedes the quality of our outward action. If individually and collectively we who are environmental justice activists have sin-polluted hearts, how can our efforts bring forth a clean environment?

If individually and collectively we who are environmental justice activists have sin-polluted hearts, how can our efforts bring forth a clean environment?

Vera Shaw's Background

Vera Shaw (1917-2004) was born in Hamilton, Ontario, to devoted Christian parents. At her baptism at age fourteen, the minister at her baptism gave her as her life verse *II Cor. 2:14: Thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.* Vera celebrated and fulfilled that scripture throughout her life. Shaw graduated from **McMaster College** with a Science degree and began work as a chemist. Vera married **Jim Shaw** in 1943, having known him from ninth grade through college. Jim Shaw was a biochemist. In 1945 the family moved to the Boston area where Jim became a member of the Harvard School School of Dental Medicine.

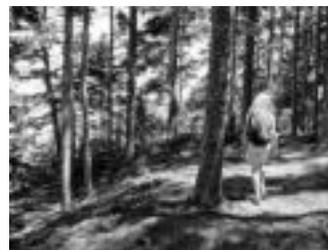
For ve decades the Shaws were active with Intersivity Christian Fellowship and the Harvard Radcli e Christian Fellowship. Vera loved all of God's creation and believed that environmental

responsibility is included in the core of Christian life and faith. One part of God's creation that was particularly special to her was **Sutton Island, Maine** where she and her family spent parts of 51 summers. She especially liked to remind everyone that each human individual is created in God's image and that Adam was charged to keep (preserve) God's creation.

Three Gardens

Reflecting on her quiet walks on Sutton Island, Vera Shaw writes, "I would spend unrushed time meditating on the Creator's care for all His creation as seen in **the unique gardens of the Bible: e Garden of Eden, or Beginnings; the Garden of Gethsemane, or Cleansing; and the Garden of the Resurrection, or the New Creation.**" (13)

"In Eden the ancient origin of sin polluted the garden's perfection and destroyed its harmony. In Gethsemane, we recognize the cost of cleansing and renewing the environment. And finally, in the garden



of the Resurrection, we celebrate the joyous redemption provided by the Creator Himself." (13)

Shaw discerned that each garden involved a facet of human responsibility to God,

neighbor, and oneself. In each garden, God poses questions to humankind. God endows humankind with amazing talents and abilities, but expects accountability for these gifts.

The Garden of Eden signifies a world of harmonious relationship. Adam's sin, and our corresponding individual and collective sin, breaks relationship.

is fractured relationship with God, neighbor, and the environment is on a catastrophic trajectory unless humanity repents and humbly turns to God for restoration. Shaw quotes James Fisher and Roger Tory Peterson in their 1964 book, *The World of Birds*. Reflecting on Milton's *Paradise Lost*, they write, "Man has become the most dangerous, the most lethal animal upon the face of the earth. Poisonous, he can through his endless proliferation of toxic chemicals, change his venom, a thing no snake can do. But he might not be immune to his own venom... We believe that now man has the power to destroy nature and himself almost totally." (27)

As I (this reviewer) reflect on Fisher and Peterson's passage, I ask myself, "Can humankind find within its own self-deification that will and capability to reverse this suicidal impulse and save ourselves?" I cannot provide a positive answer. New "venoms" of climate change and ocean acidification have arisen since 1964. Nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons of mass destruction continue to loom overhead. Teeming masses of desperate people seeking basic food and safety are pressing against border walls. Relationships between people and with the planetary ecosystems are fracturing.

Humankind cannot save itself. Is there something outside ourselves that can save us? Vera Shaw, and I, answer, "Yes! God exists, is personal, relational, and purposeful to save."

Renewal And The New Creation

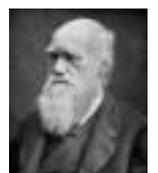
Shaw constantly reiterates her theme of the inner environment of every person in relationship to the outer environment of our communities and natural ecosystems. She quotes William Temple, former Archbishop of Canterbury, on the reluctance of Christians to discuss sin. "They scarcely know what we mean by the word sin ... the essence of man's sin is his self-centeredness." (38) The Gospel message is that Jesus Son of God renounced all self-centeredness, accepted upon Himself the cumulative blows of humankind's self-centeredness, forgave us, was raised from death into eternal life, and has sent us The Holy Spirit to purify our inner environment and to empower us to live our lives in self-giving to others and creation.

In the light of the purity, holiness, and self-giving love of Jesus, we compare our own darkness and sin. And yet Jesus invites us to come to Him for forgiveness, for cleansing from sin and its stains, for healing of our hurts and weaknesses, and for new hope, purpose, mission, fulfillment, and deep inner joy and peace.

For those who accept Christ's invitation to accept His cleansing and commit to following Him, a newness of life bursts forth.

For those who accept Christ's invitation to accept His cleansing and commit to following Him, a newness of life bursts forth. Such change can be visible to others. For example, **Shaw writes, "Few people recognize that in later life Charles Darwin actually supported Christian missions and wrote enthusiastically about the e ects of the Gospel on native peoples."** Darwin noted in his early travels on the *Beagle* that missionaries had turned Tahitian natives away from most human sacrifice, idolatry, and licentiousness, and had earnest prayers to God. Darwin had written off the natives of Tierra del Fuego as "savages beyond the help of missionaries." Yet forty years later he confessed that he had been wrong about his assessment, for the missionaries indeed had been successful. From then on, Darwin sent financial support to the Mission. (157-58).

...in later life Charles Darwin actually supported Christian missions...



Shaw writes, "The newness of life that Darwin observed in the Fuegian people has been described in various terms by those who know the Cleansing Christ: a new creation, born of the Spirit, and God's Garden." (159). **(Continued on page 7)**

Thorns In The Garden Planet (Cont.)

God has given humankind the duty to protect the planet and the quality of life thereon (Genesis 2:15). The measure of whether humankind performs this responsibility well or fails is directly related to humanity's spiritual quality. **Shaw quotes William Temple, "There is only one sin, and it is characteristic of the whole world. It is the self-will which prefers 'my way' to God's, which puts 'me' in the center where God is in place."**

Shaw summarizes the degradation of creation as self-idolatry. "When self takes first place, the inner environment shrivels and dies for lack of spiritual food and living water." I think of Jesus's Parable of the Sower, in which the weeds of life's worries, pleasures, and riches choke out and stunt the life-giving Word. (Luke 8:14). The parched, barren, illusory environment of the inner person.

Shaw concludes her book with a call for personal spiritual renewal as a precursor to environmental advocacy and renewal. Shaw asks, "What does the cleansing of man's inner environment mean to his responsibility for the physical environment of the Garden Planet?" Shaw offers guidance for stewards of God's creation.

- ☒☒☒ simple, caring, uncomplicated lifestyle
- ☒☒☒ an unselfish desire to share joy and purpose in life with whoever asks for help
- ☒☒☒ strength of mind to make and keep planet-preserving choices
- ☒☒☒ thoughtful "thorn control" projects
- ☒☒☒ an ecology of life that encompasses both the inner and outer environments
- ☒☒☒ the amazing ability to turn polluted dumping grounds into gardens
- ☒☒☒ quiet walks to enjoy the beauty of creation and the blessings of the Creator

Shaw concludes her book with a clarion call of Hope in the Gospel.

Christians need a realistic understanding of the Gospel. We must embrace the good news that God will not allow what is evil and destructive to finally overcome the world He has created. The Eternal Ecologist desires to rid His world completely of all that pollutes, and He calls us to share that desire with Him.

So What Kind Of Person Talks To Flowers? Life Lessons From George Washington Carver

"All my life I have risen regularly at four o'clock and have gone into the woods and talked with God. There He gives me my orders for the day. Alone there with things I love most I gather specimens and study the great lessons Nature is so eager to teach us all. When people are still asleep I hear God best and learn my plan."

George Washington Carver (1864? – 1943) reveals the method to his scientific discoveries in a biography published in 1939, *The Man Who Talks With The Flowers*, by Glenn Clark (Macalester Park Publishing, Shakopee, MN). Carver continues.

I never grope for methods. The method is revealed the moment I am inspired to create something new. I live in the woods. I gather specimens and listen to what God has to say to me. After my morning's talk with God I go into my laboratory and begin to carry out His wishes for the day."

God's wishes were for the South included renewing agriculture soils depleted of nitrogen fertility. Carver recognized that developing commercial uses for the nitrogen-fixing leguminous peanut could save southern agriculture. During his lifetime, Carver developed over 300 uses for the peanut, including milk, printer's ink, face powder, butter, shampoo, creosote, vinegar, dyes, coffees, soaps, salads, wood stains.

Carver called his laboratory at Tuskegee Institute "God's Little Workshop." No books were brought in. "Here I talk to the peanut and the sweet potato and they talk back to me." The key to Carver's ability to receive the secrets of plants was his love for them, his unselfish humility, and his expectancy, awe, and wonder in the presence of God's creation.

Clark tells of a story a friend accompanying Carver on an early morning walk, thinking they would cover several miles in a few hours. Instead, they scarcely covered one hundred yards. "At every little flower he met, Carver had to kneel down. He examined it, caressed it, studied it, talked with it."

Carver was multi-gifted. He was known for his beautiful singing voice, his piano playing, and his paintings. He held clinics where people with various ailments came to him for his healing hands and the ointments that he developed through his research. His Bible studies were highly attended. His speaking engagements mesmerized audiences. When he gave testimony to a congressional committee on agriculture, he was begged to speak longer. His personality was humorous, gentle, and confident of God.

Carver was born in on a slave plantation in Missouri as the Civil War raged. His mother and the infant Carver were kidnapped by southern raiders. The infant was rescued through a ransom, and then raised by Moses Carver. Although sickly as a young boy, his invariable honesty gave rise to being named after the first president of the United States. Hungry for education, GW Carver supported his education as a cook, dishwasher, laundryman, and housekeeper. He gained acceptance at a university but was immediately dismissed upon arrival because of his race. Soon afterward he gained admittance to Simpson College in Iowa, later to Iowa State, and eventually became a professor at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama at the urging of Booker T. Washington. Throughout his early challenges and hardships, GW Carver held a positive, forgiving, hopeful attitude.

A fresh flower always perched from Carver's coat jacket. He was fond of quoting from Tennyson's poem.

*Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;—
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.*

George Washington Carver came as close as anyone to understanding who God and man is.

In 1994 I assisted Fred Krueger as he in turn was helping John S. Ferrell with photos and documentation on his forthcoming book, *Fruits of Creation: A Look at Global Sustainability as Seen through the Eyes of George Washington Carver*.

This book was co-published by Macalaster Park Publishing Company (Shakopee, Minnesota) and our own Green Cross in 1995.

I became enthralled by GW Carver as I helped on Ferrell's book project. I was amazed at his intuitive ability to develop products from plants and earths; his vision for refurbishing worked-out soils; his artistic talents; his compassionate treatment of the lame and ill; and most of all, his deep spiritual connectedness to God, and his deep love for God's creation.

I encourage readers to learn from Carver through these books and others. ----Allen Johnson

Loving the Lover of Creation by Dean Ohlman

I remember keenly the era that gave birth to the modern environmental movement. I remember those memories are often poignant and painful—memories of protest songs and protest marches; of “liberation” from the establishment and its values; of a bloody, frustrating, no-win war in Vietnam; of naked Woodstock revelers; of unkempt, barefoot hippies storming the fences of nuclear power plants, and of radical college professors excoriating Christianity for bringing civilization to the eve of doomsday.

It was an agonizing time of soul-searching for the church, and one of the important commentators of the time was Francis Schaefer. Thousands of Christians pored over his books to discover the reason for unreason and to understand why Western civilization had come to such a state. At the end of the process, we all asked with Schaefer, “How should we then live?” Much of what this philosopher/theologian said about the demise of Christianity in the West was quickly understood and accepted as the basis upon which a revitalized Church could once again make its message heard in a “post-Christian” world.

Curiously, however, one of Schaefer’s books was overlooked or, perhaps more correctly, ignored as an aberration of an otherwise astute thinker: it was titled *Pollution and the Death of Man: A Christian View of Ecology*. The book title and the cover itself—a photograph of a skull on a pile of dirt—likely added to its lack of popularity: Were not the rants of Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden enough? Did we really need another negative message to add to our burden of bad news? We had ministries to run and families to raise; how could we be expected to be enthusiastic about another message of impending disaster?

Those who took the time to read *Pollution and the Death of Man* (published in 1970) discovered, however, that its message was not just another commentary on the decline of Christianity, but it was a challenge to the church to apply biblical principles to the world’s environmental crises.

For the most part during that period, evangelical Christianity, tied as it was—and still is—to the economics of progress and prosperity, decided that “since the earth is going to burn,” Christians might just as well ignore the earth’s physical condition and concentrate instead on saving souls and ushering them to Glory “on downy beds of ease.” Anyway, Jesus was going to return in a few years and everything would be fixed.

Well, Jesus did not return in the eighties or nineties or the beginning of the 21st century. And, in part because of the Church’s failure to apply the scriptural principle of stewardship to our use of the earth’s resources, the world’s environmental problems have compounded. We have had to relearn this important lesson: Jesus never intended the promise of his future return to be an excuse for ignoring our present responsibilities.

And now that the nations which had government-controlled economies are jumping onto the free-market economics bandwagon, the potential for disparity between the rich and poor is increasing dramatically. In the light of these facts, can believers in good conscience before God, refuse to speak boldly regarding the social and environmental consequences of a global free-market unchecked by the Christian principles of justice, compassion and stewardship?

Listen to Schaefer’s admonitions and observations:

On the basis of the fact that there is going to be total redemption in the future, not only of man but of all creation, the Christian who believes the Bible should be the man who—with God’s help and in the power of the Holy Spirit—is treating nature now in the direction of the way nature will be then. It will not now be perfect, but it must be substantial, or we have missed our calling. God’s calling to the Christian now, and to the Christian community, in the area of nature -- just as it is in the area of personal Christian living in true spirituality -- is that we should exhibit a substantial healing here and now between man and nature and nature and itself as far as Christians can bring it to pass.

Man was given dominion over creation. This is true. But since the Fall, man has exercised that dominion wrongly. He is a rebel who has set himself at the center of the universe. By creation man has dominion; but as a fallen creature he has used that dominion wrongly. Because he is fallen, he exploits created things as though they were nothing in themselves, and as though he has an autonomous right to them.

So man has dominion over nature, but he uses it wrongly. The Christian is called upon to exhibit this dominion, but exhibit it rightly: treating the thing as having value in itself, exercising dominion without being destructive. The church should always have taught and done this, but she has generally failed to do so, and we need to confess our failure.

If I treat with integrity the things which God has made, and treat them this way lovingly because they are His, things as myself I love the Lover, I love what the Lover has made. Perhaps this is the reason why so many Christians feel a unreality in their Christian lives. I you don’t love what the Lover has made. . . and really love because he made it, do I really love the Lover at all?

Dean Ohlman is a native of Michigan. He retired as a writer for *Wonder of Creation* series for RBC Ministries, and co-produced *Day of Discovery* television.

Pollution And The Death Of Man

by Francis A. Schaefer (Tyndale House Publishers, 1970)
Excerpts from Chapter 5, “Christian View of Ecology”

Christians, of all people, should not be the destroyers. We should treat nature with an overwhelming respect. We may cut down a tree to build a house or to make a fire to keep the family warm. But we should not cut down the tree just to cut down the tree. We may, if necessary, bark the cork tree in order to have the use of the bark. But what we should not do is to bark the tree simply for the sake of doing so, and let it dry and stand there a dead skeleton in the wind. To do so is not to treat the tree with integrity.

We have the right to rid our houses of ants; but what we have no right to do is to forget to honor the ant as God made it, out in the place where God made the ant to be. When we meet the ant on the sidewalk, we step over him. He is a creature, like ourselves; not made in the image of God, it is true, but equal with man as far as creation is concerned. The ant and the man are both creatures. . . .

One does not deface things simply to deface them. One would not willingly with no reason deface the rock. After all, the rock has a God-given right to be a rock as He made it. If you must move the rock in order to build the foundation of a house, then, by all means, move it. But on a walk in the woods do not strip the moss from it for no reason and leave it to lie by the side and die. Even the moss has a right to live. It is equal with man as a creature of God.

Hunting game is another example of the same principle. Killing of animals for food is one thing, but on the other hand they do not exist simply as things to be slaughtered. This is true of everything, too. Many men shoot and leave their victims to rot and stink. But what about the fish? Has it no rights -- not to be romanticized as though it were a man -- but real rights? On the one hand it is wrong to treat the fish as though it were a human baby; on the other hand, neither is it merely a chip of wood.

When we consider the tree, which is “below” the fish, we may chop it down, so long as we remember it is a tree, with its own value as a tree. It is not a zero. Some of our housing developments demonstrate the practical application of this. Bulldozers have gone in to flatten everything and clear the trees before the houses are begun. The end result is ugliness. It would have cost another thousand dollars to bulldoze around the trees, so they are simply bulldozed down without question. And then we wonder, looking at the result, how people can live there. It is less human in its barrenness, and even economically it is poorer as the top soil washes away. So when man breaks God’s truth, in reality he suffers.

Francis A. Schaefer (1912-1984) exerted an extraordinary influence in conservative evangelical circles through his copious writings and hosting visitors to his community, l’Abri, in the Swiss Alps.

Christmas Hope for a Fearful Future by Allen Johnson

Deborah, my wife, loves to sing and listen to Christmas carols. From the time our Thanksgiving meal is eaten until Spring flowers begin to peep up, our house resounds with Christmas music. Although I tease her, I'm glad she plays hope-filled, jubilant Christmas music. I tend toward seeing the proverbial glass emptying; she sees it full to brimming.

Our custom is that we sing a song then pray before our meals. Tonight we sang the carol, "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem." I've sung and heard it zillions of times, and (confession here) typically do not concentrate on the song's meaning. But this time a phrase struck me

Yet in the dark street shineth
the everlasting Light;
our hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

Most of my neighbors, and likely yours, too, enjoy Christmas as a season of warm fellowship with families and friends, a hectic yet happy time of gift buying, sending greeting cards, feasting at parties, participating in special church services, and holiday cheer. "Merry Christmas" is a standard greeting. Any humbugging Grinch is pitied.

The first Christmas was not so tidy and nice. The heavy stigma of a bastard child (as supposed by the community) was conceived to an unwedded woman. After a long arduous journey, there was no room for the heavily-pregnant mother. Child was likely born on the dirt floor of an animal shelter, then placed in a hay manger. Under threat of being murdered by a narcissistic tyrant, the family fled to another country to live as refugees; meanwhile other babies were slaughtered. The common people of the society were impoverished under the heavy yoke of an oppressive, violent Roman government. For most, hope was thin. The times were desperate.

Change Course Now or Else

So it is as the world approaches 2019. The laughable cartoon figure of the old man carrying a sign warning "The World is Ending," is not laughable anymore. Humanity is hell-bent toward, to say it bluntly, ... hell on earth of our own making.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issues a grave ultimatum. The earth's climate is rapidly changing. Mounting problems associated with global warming are already locked in and will worsen, irrespective of what humanity does. What humanity can do, indeed urgently must do, is decarbonize

rapidly and fully. Otherwise living on earth will be hellish.

One month after the IPCC report, the White House reluctantly released its mandated National Climate Assessment, more of the same portent and urgency. The United States President and his advisors have dismissed the report, opting instead to revive coal and increase oil and gas production and export. Nero fiddled while Rome burned. U.S. government leaders fiddle while the earth burns up. Big difference.

From my backyard I watch the construction of a massive gas pipeline that would lock-in fossil fuels for several decades. The U.S. is in a frenzied decade-long gas and oil boom. For investors, becoming rich and then more rich is a potent temptation, never in mind future consequences of a ruined planet. The planetary poor also want a better livelihood, so countries like India copy the industrialized Western model of coal-fired power plants.

There are other impending global cataclysms. Ocean health is essential to meaningful planetary life, yet these vast bodies of water are becoming warmer, more acidic, more depleted of fish, coral, and other life, and seriously polluted. Deforestation, species extinction, desertification, depletion of aquifers and soils, are just some of the environmental implosions. All indications point to an accelerating refugee crisis.

The world's nations are bristling with armaments with tensions high. Many nations are governed by corrupt leaders, some are failed states. Looming over all this is the specter of nuclear weaponry that could annihilate planetary life. Let's be real. Can humanity save itself?

Only God Can Save, but We Must Repent

"Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you which will bring great joy to all the people." Angel announcing birth of Jesus to fearful shepherds.

The core of the Christian Gospel is God saving humanity from its own destructive path. Estranged from God, much of humanity tries vainly to forge a better path than the order God has created. God-estranged humanity cannot save itself. Humanity (and the world it is destroying) needs rescued by a rescuer.

Christmas proclaims the marvelous Incarnation—God who has created billions of galaxies, set in motion exquisitely fine-tuned physical laws, and breathed life into existence upon a minute speck of

the universe called Earth, and created a living being in God's image—that God has become human, and took on our joys, our pain, and our death. In the person, Jesus, experienced the full brunt of human violence in the torturous death on a cross even while offering forgiveness, and subsequently was vindicated through resurrection from death to life. Out of love, God created the universe, the Earth, and us. God chooses to save us from our destructive ways, but we must be willing to accept this salvation God's way.

The wayward and compounding course of humanity will reap its own destruction, some of which I listed a few paragraphs before. This is judgment. The Bible has numerous scriptures that point out that sinful human conduct eventually reaps its own dire consequences. Christian "hope," therefore, is to cling to the path God has set forth for life. The term, "repentance" means to turn away from our own self-willed path, to God's ordered way. This holds true for the individual, and true collectively for society. The Church in its many expressions is (or should be!) the collective social order following God's ordering. God's presence through the Holy Spirit is grace offered to us to help us in this difficult transition from self-deification to adherence to God.

Hope when the Future Looks Grim?

We must face our individual and collective sin, its destructive consequences, then humbly open our lives for forgiveness from God and others, and begin living in God's ordered way. We must encourage and help others toward this path.

We cannot use a lesser evil to stamp out a greater evil. Jesus taught us how to pray, including, "rescue us from evil." This requires discernment and courage, as many false prophets trumpet this or that way to a better life. Adhering to the lived-out teachings of Jesus as testified in the biblical four Gospels is essential. This way will require courage, persistence, and the possibility of suffering. Ultimately, it will require involvement of all parts of our lives.

Numerous scriptures point to disaster. God tells the prophet Isaiah that his society will not heed warnings of impending disaster, leading to "cities lie wasted without inhabitants, houses empty, and the land utterly desolate" (Isaiah 6:11). Jesus prophesies wars, famine, and natural disasters (Matthew 24:7).

Yet the story of Jonah illustrates one of several Bible examples of God holding back judgment when a society repents from its sinful ways. This is the Christian task in the world today, to live faithfully in God's creation order, eschewing violence, helping the poor, and calling out oppressive, exploitive, idolatrous, and/or corrupt political, economic, ideological, and religious powers, while upholding society through our serving involvement (see Jeremiah 29:4-9), and inviting others to join.

Christmas is celebrating God's loving promise to save. Christmas is celebrating our embrace of God's order. And in God's covenant, Christmas is indeed joy, peace, and hope.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born in us today.

Dear White-Skinned Folks: Acknowledge Privilege, Actively Engage in Anti-Racist Action by Janet Keating

When I was a very little girl, small enough to fit in stores when I shop. My voting rights aren't questioned. Nor do I live with the constant threat of harassment or violence against me because of the color of my skin. I'm not targeted by police or driving while white. I can walk through most any neighborhood wearing a hoodie and not be shot for holding a candy bar or cell phone.

Grownups hadn't talked to me about white privilege back then, and racism wasn't discussed in my home, though occasionally I saw or heard news about civil rights protests across the country. I remember hearing about sit-ins at Huntington's restaurant, appropriately called, "White Pantry" and wondering why some people, because of the color of their skin, weren't allowed to eat in certain downtown restaurants. It puzzled me, though it probably shouldn't have. After all, I grew up in a lily-white, working-class neighborhood. Back then, I hadn't put two and two together. Yet, as a child, I knew that the unfair treatment of African Americans by white people was wrong.

As a little white girl, I somehow knew that life in a white working-class family was way easier and different from the lives of people with dark skin. I knew by virtue of my white skin, I had white privilege before I ever heard or understood what the phrase meant.

Undoubtedly, growing up in an all-white neighborhood playing only with other white-skinned kids, attending an all-white elementary school and an all-white church, I was exposed to both overt and covert racism (and I didn't know what either meant at the time). I was shaped by white culture.

As a young adult, my eyes began to open to the cruelty and injustices suffered by people of color. Not only had my country begun with the slaughtering, displacing and marginalizing of God-only-knows how many Native Americans, but also its founders ripped people from their homelands and then enslaved them. Those actions created some God-awful karma. We, as a nation, and white-skinned people in particular, (even though we weren't born when all this was taking place), owe a huge debt.

Only after I began working for OVEC in the early 90s did I begin to develop a better understanding of my own unacknowledged racism and white privilege and white supremacy. I had to face, that within reason, most all doors were generally open to me (access), and that I could pursue my dreams unfettered (power) with access to sufficient resources unlike people of color. I didn't do anything to earn access or power in my life. Access and power were conferred on me by people in power in institutions in our country (government, education, religion, etc.) by virtue of my white skin. Racism is a systemic issue, not just a personal issue.

Unlike people of color, I don't have to think about my day-to-day actions. For example: I'm not followed

Let's face it, there are way more of us ordinary folk than there are white, billionaire politicians and industrialists. If the majority of the people of our nation were not distracted by the notion of "us versus them," if ordinary folks ever wake up to our greater commonalities, odds are we would be an unstoppable force for good for the sake of all people. All people will benefit when we support and lift up those who have been the most marginalized by our rigged system. To build a truly democratic nation, we, as whites, need to go beyond just examining our individual white privilege and racism. We must act. We must educate ourselves about the truth of how our nation became prosperous through the blood, sweat, tears, and lives of our fellow humans and stop believing the white-washed version of history that textbook writers and others have peddled as truth. We need to talk with our family and friends about how white skin instantly confers privilege and with that privilege comes the responsibility to be a part of the solution to dismantle racism. Not only can we work on our own "stuff," but also we can work within clubs and groups to help change unjust institutions.

Here is something that I am not saying. I am not saying that every white person has equal access, power and resources to pursue his/her life dreams. In fact, a sense of powerlessness is what often leads to scapegoating, blaming and racism. But my point is this: regardless of your socioeconomic status, your gender, your sexual orientation or religion, all other things being equal, if your skin is white, then the institutions in this country confer advantage to you (just like they do for me).

In preparation for writing this piece, I watched a YouTube: [Tim Wise, "The Pathology of White Privilege."](#) Everyone, especially white people, should take time to watch this. Tim Wise is a white man who has a deep understanding of his own white privilege.

Undoubtedly, the same talk could be given by a black man speaking from his own life experiences to this all white audience, but isn't it appropriate that we, as white folks should be educating ourselves and others about white privilege and racism?

I had heard about racism being a construct meant to keep people divided, but didn't quite understand much about that this until I watched this video.

Wise spells it out pretty clearly and bluntly. Roughly perpetuating the concept of race, the elites (those at the pinnacle of the socio-economic scale), maintain their political and economic status. However, our differences are not about race, but are actually about class and economic status. And undoubtedly, those at the top of the heap, those who believe in white supremacy, will do anything necessary to stay on top.

My thoughts return to a book I read many years ago—*Games People Play*, by Eric Berne. One of the most common "games" is "Let's You and Him Fight." Those who have much to gain by keeping people divided love and encourage this game because it works. The political elites spout things like, "they're rapists," "immigration is destroying your jobs," "they are voting illegally," or "they're welfare cheats," when in fact statements like that are meant to create distrust and divisions. At the same time, those with political and economic power are busy passing policies to benefit their bank accounts and investments, destroying our social safety-net, or dismantling democracy whilst we fight among ourselves.

Social and environmental justice organizations, as well as individuals, should make space for cross-race collaborations and support. Don't wait for an incident to begin. Take immediate action when needed, such as confronting the self-serving "Westboro Baptist Church." It was gratifying to be a part of organizations that joined forces to counter the hate when they demonstrated in Charleston a few years back.

Other ways to decrease racism and increase solidarity is to support victims of unjust treatment by police or others. Don't be silent. We need to stay politically engaged to pressure elected leaders into passing legislation that prevents racial discrimination and propping. And we should celebrate and acknowledge the many contributions to as well as sacrifices people of color have made for our nation.

And one last thought. We, as Appalachians, have rich cultural heritage—our music, art, dance and food; in West Virginia, the Vandavia Gathering is all about celebrating these gifts that we contribute to our nation's rich cultural diversity. Some things from our region are so unique, like ramps and Molly moochers (morels), that even New York restaurants serve them. We are pleased when they recognize, appreciate and acknowledge these things came from our region and don't appropriate it as their own! So keep in mind that appreciation and acknowledgement of different cultures is right and good, but appropriation and taking someone else's cultural heritage as your own... not so good.

Janet Keating is a native of Huntington, West Virginia. She is enjoying her grandchildren, birdwatching, and recent retirement as executive director of OVEC. Janet is a co-founder of Christians For The Mountains, which she continues to serve.

Water: A Sacred Gift by Janet Keating

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Genesis 1:1-2

it into wine (a symbol of the blood of the new covenant), Jesus said, "If you are thirsty come to me and drink! Have faith in me, and you will have life-giving water flowing from deep inside you, just as the Scriptures say." (John 7:37-39, CEV).

We drink water to nourish our bodies. We drink the wine of communion to nourish our spirits, and we are baptized with water as a symbol of transformation and redemption. Just as Christ transformed water into wine, through the cross he transformed his lifeblood into cleansing, redemptive, living water.

<http://bibleresources.americanbible.org/resource/jesus-and-water>

I remember, as a young girl, the absolute awe that I felt seeing the ocean for the first time one summer at Virginia Beach. The immensity of the ocean, the early and frequent mention of water and its manyconstancy of the waves, the vast sea beyond my sight other references underscores just how significant to me stunned, not unlike my feelings when looking at the darkened star-strewn night sky.

Water, in all its forms, must surely be a gift from God. And we, as good stewards of the earth, have a responsibility to protect it to sustain all life—human, plant and animal. Beyond "speaking" for the water, many Christian social principles line up, as a matter of justice, the importance of providing access to water for "the least of these."

In the western world, we are mostly accustomed to having access to clean drinking water at the turn of a tap. Yet according to the World Health Organization and UNICEF more than two billion people lack immediate access to clean, safe water and two million people die each year due to diseases carried through contaminated water. The quest for clean water consumes the time, energy and resources of millions of the world's poorest people, primarily children and women. Water is becoming big business in the developing world, as entrepreneurs seek ways to privatize already limited water supplies.

As we humans place greater demands on water resources, and as life-giving water increasingly privatized becoming a commodity, water will become less accessible, especially to people in developing countries or to those who live in poverty. Clearly Jesus understood how important water was to human life when he declared in Matthew 10:40-42 (v):

"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

A simple act of offering a cup of cold water to someone becomes an act of service.

Action For Appalachia's Water

In early November, Robin Blakeman (OVEC) and I (representing Creation Justice Ministries, Washington DC), hosted a Sunday afternoon forum focused on the theological importance of water to faith-based communities, as well as looming challenges to clean water in the Huntington Tri-State area. The aim of this presentation was to encourage local faith community members to take a more active role in trying to ensure that our region's residents have full access to clean tap water for the foreseeable future.

As a person of faith, if you feel called to become more involved on water issues facing West Virginia, please know that plans are afoot to organize another forum in Charleston in early January (date to be decided) to mark the 5 year since the 2014 water crisis. That's when, crude MCHM, a coal-cleaning chemical, spilled into the Elk River above WV American Water's only water intake, turning off the tap water for 300,000 people in West Virginia. Check out OVEC's calendar page for January for additional details as plans develop.

Additionally, Creation Justice Ministries and Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC), are planning a retreat focusing on water justice issues in West Virginia for the fall of 2019. To learn more about the forum or retreat, please contact Robin at robin@ohvec.org or 304-522-0246

Editor's Note: When Janet Keating submitted this article, she enclosed in her email the following, which in part says, "Isn't it interesting how Life gets you where you need to be, even when you think you may be rudderless! I'm living proof of God's grace--imperfect in many ways (the human side, of course), yet I'm still of service a er all these years. In the early years, when I wasn't yet awake, the Spirit nudged me in the directions that I needed to go, to help me land where I am today. So interesting to me, that without my conscious knowledge and with total free will, I've been shaped and molded to a higher and better use."

The "deep." Water. How mindboggling that with all our current scientific knowledge, expertise and technology that we still haven't settled on any single cause of why water exists on the earth! Hypotheses include possible extraterrestrial sources, internal sources and development from materials on earth when massive forces may have collided. Personally, I love the unsolved Mystery.

Water or words related to water are found more than 700 times in the Bible. Twenty-four references are found in the first two chapters of Genesis. The early and frequent mention of water and its manyconstancy of the waves, the vast sea beyond my sight other references underscores just how significant to me stunned, not unlike my feelings when looking at the darkened star-strewn night sky. Earth. Water appears as one of the essential elements of Creation—heaven, earth, water, air, light and the power of God. From these forces, God spoke life into existence: out of the void and darkness, from formlessness to form, from chaos to order, came life.

Chaos and order. Death and rebirth. These themes from the Old Testament are also primary in the Gospels. Jesus began his ministry by stepping into the Jordan River to be baptized (Matthew 3:13-17), despite the protests of John the Baptist. When he came up from the water, the heavens opened and the spirit of God descended upon him "like a dove." One might well read this event as a mark of God's entrance into the human experience. Jesus, through his experience in the water, is both diving into the chaos of humanity and demonstrating the cleansing of the soul through God. And we, as good stewards of the earth, have a responsibility to protect it to sustain all life—human, plant and animal. Beyond "speaking" for the water, many Christian social principles line up, as a matter of justice, the importance of providing access to water for "the least of these."

We also see his divinity as he shows that he too can control water. Jesus quieted a chaotic storm (Mark 4:35-41), walked on water (Matthew 14:22-33), and turned water into wine (John 2:1-11) Taking the water (a reminder of God's first covenant with the creation) and turning

Larry Gibson, Keeper of the Mountains

about mountaintop removal back then, let alone supporters to harass him. His dog was shot, his house cared. Larry did know, he cared, and he gured he shot at and vandalized, his truck crowded o the road. would ght it by “learning how while doing.” Larry “I’ve come to realize I might be killed ghting for the was truly a pioneer, one of the earliest to expose ammountains,” Larry would sometimes soberly re ect. combat mountaintop removal as an egregious assault for too o en prophets of truth and change are killed on land and communities. He gained the consent or exiled (Lk. 13:34). of family members to establish a land trust on 57 acres of shared inherited land on Kayford, which On a hot August Saturday, a few of us became an preserved island surrounded by massive worked doggedly with e Mountains Foundation, hosted thousands of Larry clearing brush at visitors to Kayford as one of the only places to view the site of the long-gone mountaintop removal, and embarked on numerous Kayford Church so that speaking tours where he invariably received standing three crosses remaining ovations. at the top of the hill could be seen from the road. Larry spoke

“Larry Gibson changed my life!” ese words, spoken or unspoken, express the hearts of those of us close to “Larry.” His courage, integrity, stubborn perseverance, and passionate love for land and people captured our hearts and spurred us to like-wise advocacy.

Larry’s passion was to “keep” the mountains from the land-and-soul destroying coal mining method of mountaintop removal (MTR). His trademark attire was his blaze yellow sweatshirt and cap emblazoned large letters, “Keeper of the Mountains,” at countless protests, rallies, lectures, even coat-and-tie a air. His pickup truck was festooned with bumper stickers. His outspoken views evoked numerous assaults a



acts of vandalism from coal industry backers. Undaunted, Larry Gibson always chose the path of integrity over a life of security and ease. His answering machine’s message said, “We are the keepers of the mountains. Love them or leave them just don’t destroy them. If you dare to be one, too, call ...”

“God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong (1 Corinthians 1:27b). From the halls of the nation’s most prestigious universities, through innumerable rallies, protests, and arrests, to the many hundreds of tours he hosted on Kayford, Larry spoke truth to power with uncompromising integrity, unflinching determination, and heroic courage. Jesus told his disciples to take up their cross and follow him (Mt. 16:24; Lk. 9:23). Larry Gibson took up a cross of suffering and persecution for his outspoken, audacious stand against mountaintop removal (MTR). His pickup truck was covered in anti-MTR bumper stickers, a target for rowdy coal

Larry spoke wistfully, and pointed, “A long time ago, when the church building was down there, people would walk up the hill a er church to these crosses. ere were benches here to sit on. e people would pray.”

For Larry, those people who lived on the mountain with their sweat, blood, tears, and hard lives were not to be forgotten. We looked over the site and thought of the long-ago prayers prayed, the songs sung, the funerals and weddings, the eyes li ed up in hope. Now decades later, our prayers were mingling with theirs of long ago.

Fifteen days later, on Kayford Mountain, Larry Gibson died. His humble grave, hewn into the rocky hillside, is next to his cabin on Kayford. Hallowed ground.

e Psalmist declares, Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord? And who shall stand in God’s holy place? ose with clean hands and pure hearts, who do not give in to lies or speak deceit (Psalm 24).

Larry had a limited education, worked as a custodian at an Ohio automobile factory, and retired to the obscure and abandoned place of his birth on Kayford Mountain, West Virginia. Larry stood 5’2”. During his childhood, he experienced deep poverty, neglect, shaming, and being taunted as mentally retarded [as it was then called]. When Larry was eleven, the Kayford mine economy slumped, so his family moved to northern Ohio. ere he quit on education, ran with gangs, fought, had numerous vehicle accidents, and also married, started a family, and worked.

“What is going on? is is terrible!” Larry cried out upon his return, his shocked heart weeping over his native lands blasted and decapitated for coal. Massey Energy’s polluting coal preparation plant next to Marsh Fork Elementary School. Arrests of this type were a common occurrence for Larry.

Larry Gibson surveys mountains shaved for their coal near his property. Adapted from the book Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt, by Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco (Nation Books, 2012)

Compelling Reasons Why The Larry Gibson Biography Project Is So Important

1. Larry Gibson asked that his biography be written.
2. His life story is inspiring. He grew up poor, uneducated, short-in-stature, shamed and taunted. Yet Larry became an admired and effective leader in the struggle to protect mountain homelands.
3. Larry's personal integrity, courage, and passion for justice are charisms to be passed on to future generations. This biography will focus on shining his character traits into readers' hearts.
4. Larry's family members are enthusiastic, as are also his friends.
5. Larry's message, told in his indomitable and engaging style, will educate readers about battleground issues between exploiters of lands and communities versus those who value and protect their homelands. He had the soul-force to deeply impact hearts.
6. Larry Gibson often said to his listeners when discussing mountaintop removal, "If I don't make you mad, I'm not doing my job." Yet Larry was incredibly warm and humorous among friends and strangers. His biography will move readers off the fence of neutrality, apathy, and fear and into action. His motto about mountains was, "Love them or leave them, just don't destroy them."

How it is Started

Larry asked Owen Owens in April 2012 to help arrange for his biography to be written. Owens was co-chairing an Earth Day Prayer Breakfast at the National Cathedral. Wendell Berry as the featured honoree for the coat-and-tie event has drawn a huge turnout. I had brought Larry to the breakfast. As Larry walked into the crowded breakfast room wearing his blaze yellow "Keeper of the Mountains" T-Shirt, all eyes turned to him. Several jumped up from their tables to urge him to sit with them. Owen Owens recognized the impact Larry had on people and pledged to see through his biography.

Over the next several months, Larry asked several people if they would write his biography or help him. Larry talked with me at length about his desire for the biography on the last full weekend before he died. I promised to do my best to help.

Could it be that Larry had a premonition of the impending death? He had divulged to a few people that he was being treated for a serious heart condition. After his passing, could his biography inspire readers to be "keepers of the mountains?"

Urged on by Owen Owens, I collected interviews from people who knew Larry. A few times, we seemed to have a writer lined up only to fall through.

His Compelling Character Traits

Larry Gibson exerted an extraordinarily powerful force upon people wherever he went. To say he was unforgettable is a colossal understatement. Money, safety, or acclaim could not compromise or corrupt him. His clarity of important values was concise, challenging, and compelling. He nakedly expressed his feelings, attitude, joy, and anger. His life only bolstered his courage. To his friends he was warm, humorous, and serving. To those who destroyed mountains, he was fierce.

Larry's unrelenting push to end mountaintop removal and his effectiveness in rallying many to support this cause is enough reason to write his story. Yet there is much more to the story. Like the biblical prophets, Larry's unrelenting truth-telling cut people deep into their hearts to courageously act for justice.

How did Larry Gibson overcome his many childhood barriers to become such an influential and charismatic leader for justice? Family members are enthusiastic about the biography and are providing background information that will unlock some of these secrets. Close friends and colleagues during Larry's advocacy years are telling stories and offering insights.

How He Mesmerized His Listeners

My mind flashes back to that last Sunday morning September 2, 2012. Larry was talking to some students from Antioch College who had come up that festival weekend and camped out. Over the years, Larry had given thousands of such talks. How were we to know this would be his last?

Larry talked maybe 90 minutes, the students' eyes, ears, minds, and hearts fully absorbed. I had heard

many occasions, but once again I was absorbed in the talk.

Larry told stories from the wellspring of his very being. At times he shouted and cajoled. And then he would mist up, eyes watering with tears, pause, look down and away, swipe his hand across his cheek, jut his chin forward, and launch again the stories of the mountains. The people who had lived a hard, rugged life there. The nature he had enjoyed as a boy. The boom to bust of conventional coal mining and the resultant demise of the once thriving Kayford community.

invasion of bulldozers and explosives to tear down the mountains.

Larry would also joke around with the students, laugh, carry on. He had a prescient sense of his audience, how to change pace. Then Larry would fix his piercing eyes upon his listeners.

"What in your life is so precious that no amount of money can buy it? What in your life is not for sale?" Of course, Kayford Mountain, and any other mountain for that matter, should not be for sale at any price. "Our mothers give us birth, the land gives us life."

As I watched those young people who will face tremendous challenges on this beleaguered planet over the next 60 or 70 years of their lives, I hoped that Larry's talk would "change their lives."

The Biography will include a love story. Larry and Carol pictured here.

Introducing Marybeth Lorbiecki As Our Biographer

We are pleased to introduce Marybeth Lorbiecki as our writer for Larry Gibson's biography. Marybeth is a talented, accomplished author whose published books include the award-winning biography, *A Fierce Green Fire: Also Leopold's Life and Legacy*. Additional works include *Francis: John Paul II's Call for Ecological Action* and numerous illustrated children's books. <https://www.marybethlorbiecki.com/>

Marybeth lives in Hudson, Wisconsin, and is married with grown children. She has spent several months living in eastern Kentucky (Floyd County). I know Marybeth as a fervent advocate for environmental and social justice, diligent organized worker, creative thinker, and as a warm, outgoing, perceptive woman. Her personality resonates with that of Larry Gibson. Among her other pursuits is that she is founder of Interfaith Oceans. <https://www.interfaithoceans.org/>

A Notes On the Approach

The heart of the narrative will be Larry Gibson's passionate, courageous, and motivational efforts to stop mountaintop removal (MTR). The style of this biography is to motivate readers to emulate and draw from characteristics of Gibson that will inspire and equip them to act for justice in their own contexts. Historical background information, anecdotal stories, quotations, interview transcripts, news stories, and cultural context will be tools toward telling this story. This biography will be for non-academic, popular readership. Photographs and maps will be utilized. Book length will be contingent upon getting out the focal message without belaboring. (perhaps in the 200 to 250 page range, including photographs). A website or accompanying DVD might be added to include audio and video clips, additional material, footnotes, and a guide for study and reflection.

You Load Sixteen Tons and What Do You Get? Citizens Needed to Monitor Pipeline Work

Have Internet? You Can Help, Too

by Lee Ballinger

I know what it's like to depend upon coal to feed a family. Many years ago I worked at a steel mill in Ohio. My job was at the coke plant where West Virginia coal was turned into coking coal for the blast furnace. The top of the coke ovens was an area the size of a football field where monstrous machines funneled coal into the ovens. It was my job to put the heavy oven lids back on nice and tight. It was literally as hot as hell up there. It felt like walking barefoot on hot coals. The air we breathed was truly foul but to us it was the sweet smell of something like success. We called it the smell of money because it paid the bills.

Yet as soon as I got a chance to escape the coke ovens, I took it. I got a job bid on a crew at the blast furnace. But I couldn't escape the coal. Like the devil or a bad check, coal will find you. It followed me to the blast furnace.

Big railroad cars full of coking coal arrived at the blast furnace every two or three hours. In the winter it would get as cold as twenty below zero and the coal would freeze solid into one huge mass. The company said under no circumstances were we to climb into the open-top railroad cars to break up the coal. But the company also made it clear we better hurry up and get that coal loaded. So in we went, carrying big torches to heat the coal and pry bars to break it up. We prayed we wouldn't loosen all at once with the possibility that we might go down the chute. Many times on a cold winter night I had to look in on my sleeping babies to motivate myself to leave for work on midnight shift.

There was a small group of environmentalists in town who kept raising hell about the pollution from the steel mills. I understood their point. After all, I was more directly affected by pollution than they were. But they didn't even give lip service to our need to feed our families. So I dismissed them out of hand. In fact, I hated them and feared the changes they might be able to bring about. Jobs or the environment? An easy choice to make. Jobs are more important.

Eventually I was permanently downsized from the mill. The loss of my job caused severe dislocation for my family. It also caused dislocation in my mind, creating an opening, a new space. Facts and events that had once gone in one ear and out the other began to find a place in my thinking. Global warming. Poisoned rivers and oceans. Black lung disease. Hurricane Katrina. Oil spills. Coal-fired power plants spewing acid and deadly metals into our air.

@ Stephanie McMillan, by permission

Slowly and not always surely, I began to realize that the environmentalists I had once rejected as extremists were correct when they said that fossil fuels are destroying the earth. Coal and oil aren't just causing some problems we can learn to live with in pursuit of economic survival. They are going to make it impossible for humans to live on this planet.

Jobs or the environment? Posing the question that way eliminates any chance of coming up with answers and it ignores the people who live at ground zero of the debate. I know first-hand what goes through the minds of coal miners as they sit at the kitchen table facing a pile of bills. "Yes, I know what some people say about what we do. They may even be right. But just give me one more month on this job so I can pay the rent and the electric and the credit card bill. Then maybe one more month, a year that and another a year that until the youngest finishes school."

Jobs or the environment? Soon it will be too late and we will have neither. Unless we come together under the banner of both.

Lee Ballinger now lives in California. He sent this in to CFTM unsolicited, saying "thank you for all that you do." He is appreciative of the influence of his best friend whose views of Christianity's role in the world are expansive, inclusive, liberating.

The technical capability to exploit shale gas in Appalachia is leading to a frenzy of new pipeline construction. West Virginia currently has five pipelines under construction. Yet there are far too few government inspectors to properly enforce environmental regulations. A typical West Virginia inspector will cover up to a dozen counties with a caseload of up to 500 permitted projects including housing developments, shopping centers, and the like.

The Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) would traverse some very ecologically-vulnerable terrain including pristine trout streams, erosion-sensitive soils, very steep mountainous terrain, and beautiful vistas.

Therefore, concerned citizens have developed an innovative tool, the Compliance Surveillance Initiative (CSI), to monitor construction and post-construction. A combination of professionals and trained citizen monitors use sophisticated yet user-friendly tools. Some citizens take samples of stream water to check for construction-related sediments. Others do visual monitoring using ground-based or drone photography. The "Pipeline Air Force" is an airplane equipped with special cameras to photograph construction activity weekly.

How You Can Help

We need volunteers to carefully review a portion of the thousands of high resolution photos our airplane fover takes each week (weather dependent). If you have an Internet connection, wherever you live you can help. Online training is provided. You will learn to distinguish between what is considered acceptable construction and violations, and how to report. Professional support is friendly and appreciative.

To check this out, go to <http://pipelineupdate.org/csi/> and look at the Aerial Photo Review Guidebook, the Guidance for Citizen Observers, and spend some time looking at the Pipeline CSI Mapping System. Please email or contact me and I will be most happy to talk.

Email: allen@christiansforthemountains.org Tel. 304-799-4137

Construction near my home had no water bars and no perimeter control measures to prevent erosion. [Drone photo by Allen Johnson]

Robert (Sage) Russell (see page 2), wrote me an idea for a Christian Sustainability Fair.

"I've been sitting with this idea for a couple of weeks. I think the Mother Earth News Fairs are a wonderful thing. I was wondering if there can be even more traction in the church if there was something like a Christian Sustainability Fair (a different name perhaps). Bringing together folks like CFTM, Restoring Eden, Matthew Sleeth/Blessed Earth and others along with Joel Salatin, Noah Sanders (who wrote Born Again Dirt), various Solar, Green Energy, Permaculture companies, sustainable agriculture missions etc. There is such a big movement of off-grid living Christians, but this could help add momentum and movement building in a practical way towards more Christians and Congregations to get behind very practical aspects of green living and help reduce dependence on fossil fuels and carbon dioxide emissions. Every movement when going strong has a festival of some kind that helps keep it going and brings new people in, while sharpening, equipping and energizing old and new involved."

Interested in his great idea? Contact me at allen@christiansforthemountains.org

Scientist Water Defender Ben Stout Dies

Ben Stout, who passed away August 3, 2018 at age 60, set a high mark for scientists to follow. Dr. Stout was a popular, respected professor of Biology at Wheeling Jesuit College.

Fellow educator Mary Cassidy explained that Stout “connected science with the real world and gave a sense of how important it is to have scientific information when trying to help a community. You need facts and scientific information in order to make crucial changes where health and welfare are involved.”

Stout took students to central and southern West Virginia for water testing projects. He demonstrated “that science is not some abstract endeavor,” she said.

In his social justice work, “the science was never sacri ced,” said Cassidy. “He kept strictly to accepted protocols. He embraced complex systems and tried to gure them out.”

Janet Keating, retired executive director of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, lauded Stout’s “remarkable” work on issues related to water quality and mountaintop removal. “His legacy is pretty immeasurable. I truly believe that the work he conducted on water lines in Mingo County saved lives ... You can’t measure the work of someone like Ben, in my mind.

Cassidy said Stout was able to nd grants and money to conduct environmental studies for low-income communities that lacked resources. “Ben was able to communicate with them and let them understand we are all in this together,” she said.

Keating recalled, “He had so much respect for the people in the communities. He had really good relationships with people. He believed a lot in community collaborative research. He deeply believed in that.” In Stout’s view, “people who live with issues are the real experts. What his research did was con rm the fact there are pollutants in the water that are harmful.

“Another remarkable thing about Ben was he worked not only with his head, but with his heart,” Keating said. “ is demeanor he had was so kind and caring and compassionate. He let the facts speak for themselves.”

Credit: Portions of this tribute are from the article, “Wheeling Jesuit University Professor Stout Recalled as an Environmental Hero,” by Linda Comins, <http://www.theintelligencer.net/news/community/2018/08/wheeling-jesuit-university-professor-ben-stout-recalled-as-an-environmental-hero/> August 7, 2018.

Children’s Climate Lawsuit is about Civil Rights

Juliana v. United States

Carbon Fee Dividend Bill HR 7173 Introduced in Congress.

How It Works

1. Carbon Fee: is policy puts a fee on fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas. It starts low, and grows over time. is will drive down carbon pollution because energy companies, leading industries, and American consumers will move toward cleaner, cheaper options.
 2. Carbon Dividend: e money collected from the carbon fee is allocated in equal shares every month to the American people to spend as they see t. e government does not keep any of the money from the carbon fee.
 3. Border Carbon Adjustment: To protect U.S. manufacturers and jobs, imported goods will pay a border carbon adjustment, and goods exported from the United States will receive a refund under this policy.
 4. Regulatory Adjustment: is policy prevents additional regulations on covered CO2 emissions, as long as emission targets are being met. If emission targets are not met a er 10 years, then EPA regulatory authority over these emissions would be restored. Regulations based on other pollutants will not be a ected, nor will regulations such as auto mileage standards, water quality and more.
- is policy is supported by economists and scientists as simple, comprehensive, and e ective. It will improve health and save lives by reducing pollution that Americans breathe. Additionally, the carbon dividend puts money directly into people’s pockets every month to spend as they see t, helping low and middle income Americans. is policy will create 2.1 million additional jobs over the next 10 years, thanks to growth in the clean energy economy.

Republicans and Democrats are both on board, cosponsoring this bill together. A co-chair of the Climate Solutions Caucus, Rep. Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), is the lead sponsor of this bill, joined by Reps. Francis Rooney (R-Fla.), John Delaney (D-Md.), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.) and Charlie Crist (D-Fla.). e majority of Americans support Congress taking action on climate change, including more than half of Republican millennial voters. Solving climate change is too urgent to get caught up in partisan politics.

e “Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act” would put a \$15-per-metric-ton fee on carbon, rising by \$10 per year, with net revenue given back to households as a rebate.

Net revenues collected would be entirely returned to the U.S. taxpayers. Administrative fees would be capped at 2 percent. Advocates argue the dividends would o set any increased energy costs for most people. In addition, the higher initial costs of fuel, electricity, many consumer goods and transported items would be an incentive for most citizens to live a more energy-e cient lifestyle. The bill isn’t likely to pass in this Congress, but the Cow Power Act would reduce US carbon emissions by a third in only a decade and 90 percent by 2050 all compared with 2015 levels. is bill involves a market-based way to ratchet down greenhouse gasses while economically benefiting most Americans.

Citizens’ Climate Lobby has pushed for this type of bill for years. For more information, go to <https://energyinnovationact.org/>

7KH WULDO KDG EHHQ VFKHGXOHG WR
 EHJLQ LQ IHGHUDO GLVWULFW FRXUW LQ
 (XJHQH 2UHJRQ RQ 2FWREHU
 EXW VHYHUDO LQWHUY Unfortunatly, brothers and sisters, we are the product of a
 FRXUWV DW WKH EKHK spiritualized, individualistic education. We were taught: Try to save
 DGPLQLVWUDWLRQ DU your soul and don’t worry about the rest. We told the suffering: Be
)RU IXUWKHU LQIRUPD your patient, heaven will follow, hang on. No, that’s not right, that’s not
 VXSSRUW 2XU &KLOGU salvation! The salvation that Christ brings is salvation from every
 KWWSV ZZZ RXUFKLO bondage that oppresses human beings.

---Oscar Romero, in his violence of Love sourced from The Plough

An American Guilt Trip by Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis

remains is extracted by frack ing carried out by out-of-state and even international companies.

But it is helpful to remember a couple of things. First, when a mountain is obliterated—and it literally resembles a war scene in Syria—only three percent of the content mined is actually coal; and we know now that this is not the most efficient energy. Second, our global economy thrives on the principle that one region can be sacrificed for the benefit of another. But can we really any longer accept that with a clear conscience? Indeed, as a local poignantly remarked, the earth can heal itself of natural disasters, but it can never remedy man-made devastation.

As the song goes: “Here is a mighty judgment coming, but I may be wrong.” So I wanted to sense whether it is more difficult to deny climate change or else to avoid the lifestyle change it mandates. The desecration and destruction of the earth for its resources have far too long been protected by corrupt politicians and and corporations, who leave miners compelled to choose between money and health, family

Dustin White guides Rev. John Chryssavgis to see Twilight Surface Mine

John Steinbeck once wrote: “Here is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation . . . Here is a failure that topples all our success.”

In an effort to witness first-hand the financial, social and personal impact of “black diamonds”—the benefits of which we all enjoy, but the cost of which we all irreproachably disregard—I decided to meander through the unparalleled beauty of the Appalachianese regions and mountains have stories and names, many going back multiple generations and embracing numerous cultures. Paradoxically, the mining companies promote patriotic names—like Freedom Mine, Independence Coal and Revolution Energy—abruptly declaring bankruptcy in order to avoid responsibilities to employees. The industry establishes mines adjacent to elementary schools, where the land is subsequently contaminated, yet posts signs outside the same schools that read: “The Coal Industry: Partners in Education.” Politicians there adopted the phrase “act of God” for fatal floods resulting from coal ash and mass mining disasters (as recent as 2011) caused by clearing, blasting, dragging, dumping and “reclaiming” the mountains. Ted Nugent sings and Sean Hannity speaks at local festivals.

There is good reason why West Virginia has been labeled “almost heaven.” Today, it is eerily close to hell. Mountaintop clearing is out of sight to most Americans and hardly visible from the highways spanning the state, but it has pillaged entire counties and pillaged entire communities. And yet I saw churches mesh mining with misinterpretation of scripture; “Every valley shall be lifted and every mountain lowered” (Isaiah 40.4) to justify mountaintop removal. I passed a church board that read: “Fear not tomorrow; God is there.”

Ironically, more coal is mined in America today than at any other time, though with fewer miners than ever before. However, mining has shifted from underground locations to surface locations and from individual survival to corporate greed. The shift has wreaked havoc on surrounding communities and families, obliterating any potential for alternative economy. Today, mining companies are gradually replaced by scavenger companies reaping the last drop of profit from the region or petrochemical refineries transferring industry from the cancer corridor of the south to the wasteland of the Midwest. Whatever else

For more on what is happening in West Virginia, read *Coal Country* by Shirley Stewart Burns and *Undoing Appalachia* by Tom Butler. Movie buffs might look at “Matewan” and the documentary “Blood on the Mountain.” And some political trivia by way of conclusion: the current senator, who was former governor, is personally affiliated with the coal industry. The current governor is a coal baron. Both of them, not presumably, without the slightest guilt.

the next time you turn on the heat, try to remember the people of West Virginia. And reflect on the choices you make as an Orthodox Christian. We all owe it to the “maker of heaven and earth” as well as to the creation that we have received and been called to protect.

Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis is an author and theologian serving as Archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and theological advisor to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Chryssavgis is a clergyman of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Born in Australia, he graduated from Athens University and Oxford University. His publications focus on medieval theology, as well as on the history of the Eastern Church. His interests embrace the areas of spirituality and ecology. He has published over thirty books and numerous articles in several languages. He lives in Maine.

Readers may access this and many other essays on pressing issues at <https://publicorthodoxy.org/tag/john-chryssavgis/>

Larry Gibson's grave on Kayford Mountain.

Visitors See Mountaintop Removal in 2018 ---Allen Johnson

If a picture is worth a thousand words, as a saying goes, then might a personal experience be worth a thousand pictures? John Chryssavgis had read about mountaintop removal, he had seen pictures and watched films, but he wanted an experience.

While a one-day tour can only offer but a taste, our tour on October 5 was a strong taste. Having a skilled guide informed, and a able guide can make or break a tour. Truly, Dustin White led perhaps the best tour I have ever been on. White is a native of West Virginia, son of a coal miner, and works for OVEC. White lined up a wide array of places to visit during a long day with many miles to traverse.

John Chryssavgis, Roberta Powers, Dustin White and I [Allen Johnson] met for breakfast in Charleston, West Virginia, then headed out for Stanley Heirs Park on Kayford Mountain. This is holy, consecrated land, preserved through Larry Gibson's leadership from being blown to bits for coal. We walked up to what Gibson called "Hell's Gate," an overlook over a portion of Kayford Mountain that had been desecrated by mountaintop removal. The supposedly reclaimed landscape is calm now, eerily barren and sterile. Our group then went up to Gibson's humble home, a small cabin dear to him. A few feet to the left of his cabin, cut into the rocky hillside, is Gibson's grave. We prayed in holy stillness.

Larry Gibson's beloved home on Kayford Mt.

Our next stop was the office of Coal River Mountain Watch, a competent grassroots organization in the heart of mountaintop removal land. From Kayford Mountain, we had a choice. Going down the backside of the mountain would take maybe 15 minutes—that is, if the road was passable, which it sometimes is not, and woe to the traveler if that be the case. The other alternative, the one we took, was to retrace our tracks back to I-64, go to Beckley, then Rt. 3 through the Coal River Valley to the Coal River Mountain headquarters in Naomi, W.V. We took the safe route, with sparkling conversation making the 90-minute drive seem to zip by.

We found Debbie Jarrell, Co-Director of Coal River Mountain Watch, in the backyard with two volunteers harvesting industrial hemp, a licensed experimental project her organization is working on as a potential viable economic replacement for coal. The

sign was warm, the work arduous, the hospitality and friendliness as always sincere and accommodating. We ate our packed lunch.

Our next stop was the memorial at Upper Big Branch Mine to remember the 29 miners killed in an explosion in 2010. Another stop was at the memorial for the miners in Whitesville.

Memorial to the 29 miners killed in an explosion at this Upper Big Branch Mine site.

On then to Twilight and Lindytown, valley ghost towns bought out by coal companies, having been made unlivable by massive mountaintop removal mining looming on the mountains above. Dustin White knowledgeably talked and walked us through bulldozed lots overgrown in brush, some building foundations and untended overbeds still visible. Our thoughts imagined past families living out their dreams and struggles. Now only fading memories are left.

Dustin White guided us slowly up a steep, bumpy, rock-strewn, 4-wheel drive road path to the top of Cook Mountain. Several generations of his family lived out their lives. He recounted boyhood memories that future generations will never experience, for the coal operations have taken over even his family home place. Traditional Appalachian families hold family and home place dear to their hearts. Dustin White's inner pain was palpable.

The Cook Family Cemetery is special to Dustin White, evident as he told the stories of his forbearers who carved out their lives in these rugged mountains. Gravestones, jutting angularly from many decades of freeze and thaw, and shaded by ancient trees, seemed be fitting in symbolizing the challenges of these earliest pioneers in the region. Sacred, consecrated, holy ground.

Desecrated, plundered, raped land a few minutes away stunned our eyes and pained our souls. Before us lay the massive Twilight Surface Mine mutilating the landscape to the horizon. Words and photographs of ugliness cannot compare to the visceral experience.

The Jarrell Family Cemetery was starkly visible as a high lonely island in the midst of this mountaintop removal mine. Traditional Appalachian families have liked to bury their dead on high ground, perhaps because views from high ground are typically beautiful and inspiring.

Jarrell Family Cemetery is in the wooded area at the top of this knoll.

Law forbids coal companies to damage cemeteries. However, company restrictions make it difficult for families to access cemeteries that are surrounded by mountaintop removal. Trees are growing up in the Jarrell Cemetery, since caretaking is impossible.

I flew my drone into the vast barren mine site. The contrast between the lush green Appalachian forest and the mine moonscape was a stark as contrast can be. With the afternoon sun waning, we headed back to Charleston.

Our gracious guests expressed their gratitude for the tour, a day they will never forget, an experience forever etched into mind and spirit. Me, too. --AJ

A Pilgrimage to Important Places by Fr. John S. Rausch

In 2010 two stock brokers from Wall Street were referred to me because they wanted to understand the promulgation of Laudato Si' the encyclical of Pope Francis on the environment, numerous groups have better rural Appalachian health care. e A ordable come to emphasize care of creation.

Care Act was scheduled for full implementation in four years and they needed the knowledge to advise their clients. For three days we drove around the mountains talking with frontline health care providers, visiting free clinics and getting feedback from locals. I took a group of high school students and their chaperons to see the e ects of MTR. At a cross roads in Perry County we could see reclamation of MTR on both sides of the road. One side had been reclaimed 20 years ago, and the other side just 3 year before.

Driving narrow roads, the visitors experienced the difficulty of keeping doctors' appointments scheduled miles away, especially with an unreliable car. e By the side of the vans we discussed what the demand heard about medical providers with lax ethical standards indierently writing prescriptions that worked against each other or led to addiction. e Next, I took the group to my friends Russ and Renee also realized some doctors wrote such short quantities for prescriptions that patients were forced to return monthly, thus billing Medicaid for unnecessary multiple visits. e entire system seemed geared to making money and keeping the people sick. eir who have lived o the grid for over 30 years. eir solar panels collect the energy that gets stored in batteries. eir manicured garden shouts in vibrant colors while the cat and dog roam freely around the yard. e outhouse is even decorated with works of art!

At the conclusion of our travels David, one of the men, said to me, "We thought you'd introduce us to county health o cials or hospital administrators, maybe even a university researcher, but you took us into the home of a Medicaid recipient, and we met with a drug counselor and heard the stories of a nurse practitioner driving a mobile clinic to isolated communities. e trip really changed me and impacted me profoundly." e discussion about simple living was probably most on the high schoolers, but the half dozen chaperons were ready to sell their homes in Lexington and embrace a simpler life.

Initially, to the stock brokers the tour simply represented research. I, however, always intended to explore the moral and spiritual implications of Appalachian health care as we visited communities. David indeed had an epiphany. Some months a erward he wrote saying he le Wall Street and was now seeking a more helping profession. Indeed, beauty and simplicity o er essential lters for viewing Appalachia. Beauty touches the spirit, but simplicity deepens its appreciation. During one pilgrimage, Rabbi Roger Gottlieb was so moved by seeing MTR that he went by himself and stood on a ledge overlooking the destruction. He donned his prayer shawl and recited the kaddish for the earth and the dying dead beneath him.

Participants on pilgrimage occasionally say the phrase "holy land" takes them to a di erent vantage point for viewing Appalachia. e experience rises above sightseeing, because it calls forth re ection and theological thought. It asks where do I t into this picture, in terms of the oppression of the people and the destruction of the land. rough conversations with local folks in the context of their communities, the Appalachian pilgrimage takes participants to new places—important destinations within themselves.

I've been leading tours of Appalachia since 1994 when I began working with Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center in Berea, Kentucky. AMERC o ered seminary students of all denominations a een-day experience exploring various ministries in Appalachia which earned them academic credit a er writing a critical re ection paper. Occasionally, the program drew a few high maintenance people with their own ideas. One Sunday a fellow insisted on wearing bib overalls to a community church, only to return later saying he really stood out. All the other men wore sport shirts and slacks.

When AMERC changed its approach and dropped its immersion program, I continued the tours, because numerous people were considering ministry in Appalachia or they wanted to understand mountain issues. I struck on the name Pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Appalachia to highlight the beauty of the mountains, the people's connectedness to the land and the spiritual re ections during the experience.

Over the years, pilgrimages adopted a theme, such as ministry in Appalachia, sustainable agriculture, health care, and mountaintop removal (MTR.) Of late with

Following are a Few Photos of a Pilgrimage

Fr. John Rausch serves Appalachian communities as a Glenmary priest of almost 40 years. He serves on CFTM's Steering Committee.

Fr. John was Pax Christi Teacher of Peace in 2007.

Fr. John Rausch warmly invites people to his talks, retreats, and pilgrimages. He may be contacted through this publication or through Glenmary Home Missioners at www.glenmary.org/rausch

What If Earth's Oxygen Runs Out?by Vic Hummert May 21, 2018

Seven billion conscious beings on Earth are simply unaware of the "Great Plankton Die-o " that has been occurring silently since limitless burning of fossil fuels in our Industrial Revolution.

Svante August Arrhenius (1859-1927) was one of the founders of physical chemistry who warned humankind of coming dangers over one hundred years ago.

A university teacher in Lafayette, Louisiana talks of his son serving on a nuclear submarine in the U.S. Navy cruising somewhere secretly in the ocean covering 70 percent of Earth. The professor knows from his years of study more than half of our planet's oxygen supply comes from the critical natural process of photosynthesis by means of tiny ocean creatures called phytoplankton. The entire ocean food chain depends upon phytoplankton which are actually "rainforest" surrounding ¾ of the only celestial body not named after a Greek or Roman god.

The Lafayette professor tells a harrowing story of life on a submarine such as the \$2 billion Ohio class vessel. There are two crews of 150 members. In correspondence with his professor father, the young sailor told of tense moments when crew members become agitated or incoherent.

Submarine commanders are the second most powerful individuals in the world following nine leaders of nations with nuclear weapons. Commanders detect erratic interactions and know instinctively oxygen is running low on submarines when crew members behave in an unacceptable or dangerous manner. The commander knows it is time to order an influx of more oxygen for the crew members or suffer severe consequences.

Each vessel has a device to ingest the limitless supply of water, split away two parts of hydrogen and one precious oxygen to crew members who simply cannot survive without it.

350 parts per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide is considered a tolerable level for survival on Earth. For the first time in 800,000 years, the Mauna Loa observatory in Hawaii detected 400ppm in 2018. Global warming is a scientific fact upon which 95% of climate researchers agree.

"Global Warming Zaps Oxygen by Robert Hunziker (Counterpunch) introduces "A team of scientists with GO2NE (Global Ocean Oxygen Network) created by the UN Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission conducted a sweeping all-encompassing study of the state of ocean oxygen. In the past 50 years, the amount of water in the open ocean with zero oxygen has gone up more than fourfold. In coastal water bodies, including estuaries and seas, low-oxygen sites have increased more than 10-fold since 1950. Scientists expect oxygen to continue dropping even outside these zones as Earth warms."

The Gulf of Mexico "dead zone" is now the size of New Jersey. The US Defense Department is constantly on guard for submarines on the Atlantic coast or in the Gulf of Mexico. Oil magnates know there are 27,000 orphaned (and leaking wells?) in the Gulf around the time of Louisiana's Deepwater Horizon tragedy (April 2010).

Who measures our loss of oxygen now? We need a submarine commander to supply oxygen that is slowly vanishing from our lungs. Disorientation follows oxygen loss.

Some Notes on Oceans

As Vic Hummert points out in his blogpost, expanding zones of oxygen depletion is an increasing problem in certain ocean bodies. Low oxygen levels stress or extirpate native living organisms.

A typical cause of deoxygenation is massive influxes of organic materials. Excess fertilizer runoff is a major culprit.

Scientists aboard the RV Melville have been exploring the connection between phytoplankton abundance and increasing ocean acidification due to greenhouse gas absorption sourced from fossil fuel combustion.

Floating near the surface of the water and absorbing the sun's rays, phytoplankton produce approximately 60 percent of Earth's oxygen. More acidic waters make it difficult for phytoplankton to absorb nutrients. Weakened phytoplankton might produce less oxygen and you get not only a compromised ocean but also a weaker atmosphere as well.

Shelled organisms of all sizes ranging from microscopic zooplankton to clams and crabs are more stressed uptaking calcium as waters become more acidic. Coral reefs are also stressed by increasing ocean acidification. That factor, along with warming waters, sedimentation, pollution, careless tourism, and poison and dynamite fishing, leads researchers to the unhappy conclusion that 90% of coral reefs will be gone within fifty years.

When one gazes upon the massive expanse of ocean and the immensity of the atmosphere, the question can arise, "How can we humans possibly destroy these?" Alas, tragedy is unfolding!

Vic Hummert writes Haiku poetry to express his heart-cry of love for God's creation.
Vic Hummert and his wife, Roselyn, make their home in Lafayette, Louisiana, in the hub of that state's polluting oil industry. Vic was a Maryknoll missionary for thirty years serving in China and later Latin America.
Since 1990 Vic has been an environmental and peace activist, educator, prison chaplain, and haiku poet.
Vic blogs at vichummert.org with powerful, probing articles. His haiku books are available.

Drinking in daily
God's Holy Spirit is our
Highest ambition

How can we not feel
Our entire planet is now
Trying to wake us?

Energy is gift
Flowing forth in limitless
Acts of charity

Watch always for needs
Of others nearby that you
Might aid quietly

Our richest moments
Arrive early each day in
Silence before God

Earth will not allow
Human destruction without
Ultimate revenge

Prophets must suffer
Simply for always speaking
In defense of Truth

Are we listening
To many clear messages Earth
Sends us constantly?



Interfaith Oceans urges religious voices to actively commit to a common goal of protecting ocean systems and species, people and cultures, by working together through faith and science.

Take a pledge to take caring steps within your reach and encourage others to do the same.

<https://www.interfaithoceans.org>

For lo! the days are hastening on,
 By prophets seen of old,
 When with the ever-circling years
 Shall come the time foretold,
 When the new heaven and earth shall own
 The Prince of Peace, their King,
 And the whole world send back the song
 Which now the angels sing.

----"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"
 4th stanza of the carol

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies
 never come to an end; they are new every morning; great
 is your faithfulness."

---Lamentations 3:22-23.

It is really so simple! The main thing
 is to love your neighbor as yourself.

Once you do that, you will discover
 at once how everything shall fall
 into place.

---Fyodor Dostoyevsky
 The Dream of a
 Rediculous Man

Village girls draw water from a handdug well
 At-Tuwani, Palestine

Knowing God without knowing our
 own wretchedness makes for pride.

Knowing our own wretchedness
 without knowing God makes for
 despair.

Knowing Jesus Christ strikes the
 balance because he shows us both
 God and our own wretchedness.

----The Pensees

Blaise Pascal
 (1623-1662)
 Mathematician,
 physicist, theologian

I was walking through the wretchedly impoverished
 slum of Cite Soleil in Port au Prince, Haiti.
 Through an open door of a shack, I could see this
 sleeping baby. I thought of the birth of Jesus. ---Editor

Upcoming for Mountain Vision

CFTM is scheduling its thirteenth edition for summer. Please let us
 know if your friends would like a sample copy.

We invite you to send your own personal stories of your conversions
 to "Kingdom of God" life with emphasis on
 environmental justice.

Mountain Vision is an outreach ministry of Christians
 For The Mountain. Copies are sent free of charge to
 advocates for God's "will to be done, on earth as it is
 in heaven" (Mt. 6:10).

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as
 the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be
 troubled, neither let them be afraid."

----Jesus speaking (John 14:27)