

Christians For The Mountains
12664 Frost Road
Dunmore, WV 24934

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
HUNTINGTON, WV
PERMIT NO. 370



The Mountain Vision

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

A Free Publication of Christians For The Mountains

Volume 7 No. 14 Summer 2020

Legacy



*The faith which once for all was giv'n
Unto the saints of old,
Has been committed unto us
To guard, defend, and hold.*

*And we know whom we have believed
And are persuaded that He is able
To guard, through the Holy Spirit,
Our deposit to that day.*

The writer of the New Testament book, The Letter To The Hebrews, begins chapter 11 with a definition that faith is actively living in trust that God ultimately will prevail for the good. The writer proceeds to mention the exploits of faith by numerous of Old Testament figures. Some of them lived to see glimpses of the promised goal, others suffered great hardships, tortures, and even death as they persevered. The writer begins with Abel, Enoch, and Noah, proceeds to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Moses of course, and David are listed. They continue as biblical examples for us today.

We who are living today can reflect upon people who have sparked and first nurtured faith in us. Perhaps our parents or a close relative. Maybe a teacher, a preacher, or a kindly neighbor. Later as our faith matured, we became active in a church congregation. Many of us got involved with movements such as for peace, justice, or social causes. Certain authors of books we have read influenced us. In our engagements in life, God has blessed us to meet people who taught and inspired us to personally and collectively enact a living faith.

And then, the time comes when our faith-experiences and knowledge gets passed on to others. Our batons are passed on to the next runners. And those runners carry the torches the next leg of life. God is pleased with faith.



THIS ISSUE

Our actions during demonstrations and rallies can be an opportunity to witness truth and move hearts. Aleksandr Soltzenitsyn, who suffered the Soviet Gulag, said that repentance and self-limitation are necessary steps for a nation. Research on our Larry Gibson biography project continues to uncover gems.

Scientists are warning of serious declines in bird and insect populations. Fracking contributes to local community health problems. Stopping pipelines thwarts fracking and fossil-fueled climate change. Rural appalachia falters on lack of quality broadband and suffers from an ongoing opioid pandemic.

Tributes go to the One Foundation, the expected passage of the Great Outdoors Act, and a model family forestry business. Moral character is an important trait for leadership, as exemplified by our recent departed Fr. John Rausch.

May this issue challenge, strengthen, encourage, and inspire you to love God.

What's Inside:					
		Learning from Larry Gibson	6, 7	Moral Character in Leadership	13
Change [editorial]	2	Serious Population Drops in Birds and Insects	8	Brief History of Christian Ecological Action	14-15
CFTM's Steering Committee and Staff	2	Health Hazards of Fracking	9	Zena Forestry as a Model Business	16-17
Invitation to Partner and Support CFTM Project	3	Poor Rural Broadband Challenges	10	Memorial Tribute to Fr. John Rausch	18
Witnessing in the Court Room	4	The Great Outdoors Act, and Reclaim Act	11	Appalachian Drug Pandemic	19
Soltzenitsyn on Repentance and Self-Limitation	5	The One Foundation	12	Hymns, Poems, and Quotes	20

Change by Allen Johnson, Editor

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;	[Chorus]
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;	Great is Thy faithfulness!
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;	Great is Thy faithfulness!
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.	Morning by morning new mercies I see.
	All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
	Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!
(vs 2) Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,	(vs 3) Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above	Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Join with all nature in manifold witness	Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.	Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Many of you reading this will recognize these as the words to the great church hymn, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." Thomas O. Chisolm (1866-1960) was very sickly as a young man. During that long time, his favorite scripture was Lamentations 3:22-23. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness." In 1923 he wrote the hymn. And by God's mercy, Chisolm lived into very old age.

The Bible book of Lamentations is a dirge over the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian Empire. The writer mourns the once great and beloved city, now demolished with many of the inhabitants taken away in captivity. Yet the city had become arrogant, idolatrous, and oppressive to the vulnerable, even while maintaining a form of religion that reeked of hypocrisy. Yet out of the ashes, God will remember His faithful covenant and restore.

COVID-19 has turned everything upside down, so it seems. Unprepared and in denial of the severity of COVID, the United States continues to suffer increased infections, a rising death toll, business shutdowns, a shaky economy, massive increased national debt, and worsening division in our nation. Minority demographic groups suffer more than others, a fact amplified by the jolted awareness that black citizens and other non-whites are more than fed up at the injustice and disparity toward them. Meanwhile, conspiracy theories such as expressed by QAnon fuel avid followers with fear and distrust. And this being a presidential election year in our sharply politically-divided nation compounds the chaos.

Yet hope springs up! On Sunday evening July 5 a friend notified me that the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) had just been cancelled! The primary investors, Duke Energy and Dominion Energy, announced the ACP had become too burdened by a continual wave of court overturns of their permits, an increased construction cost from \$4 billion to \$8 billion, and a prolonged timeline for completion of at least three years. I was elated, along with tens of thousands of other committed, engaged, active citizens who fought against the ill-conceived ACP. Folks who prize our communities and our future. People who gained skills to monitor water quality and construction regulatory compliance. People who persevered against what experts said were impossible odds to defeat the ACP. People who challenged the well-funded, politically-connected Dominion and Duke companies by appealing to the regulatory and government agencies and courts hoping that our democratic system would prevail. People who prayed that God would call forth and empower citizens to act, prayed that regulatory and court officials would act on truth.

On an earlier Sunday evening, February 9, I was jolted to learn that our dear friend, Fr. John Rausch, had suddenly died early that morning. Just the afternoon before, Marybeth Lorbiecki and I had received an email response from Fr. John to a question. That was Fr. John, always willing to help whether small or large. His legacy will carry forth.

Rev. Clayton Cheyenne Stevens died March 31 two days after suffering a stroke. Larry Gibson recognized Rev. Stevens as his pastor, and called upon him to round up musicians for a Gospel-themed Labor Day festival on Kayford. Steven's father was also a minister during a crucial time in Gibson's childhood. I found Cheyenne (as he was called) to be kind, hospitable, and encouraging. He is missed by many people whose lives he ministered the Christian Gospel to and influenced deeply.

Christians For The Mountains (CFTM)

Steering Committee

Bob Marshall, 2108 Emma Road, Kenna, WV 25248
 Janet Keating, 1719 Spurlock Creek Road, Glenwood, WV 25
 Patricia Hudson, 3507 Kesterwood Dr., Knoxville, TN 37918



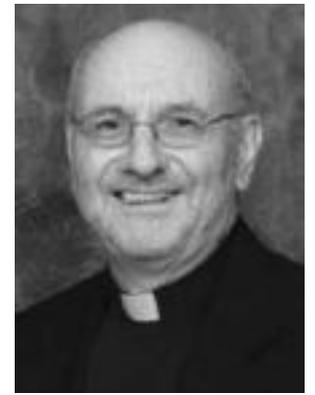
Janet Keating



Patricia Hudson



Dr. Bob Marshall



Fr. John Rausch
1945-2020

Staff

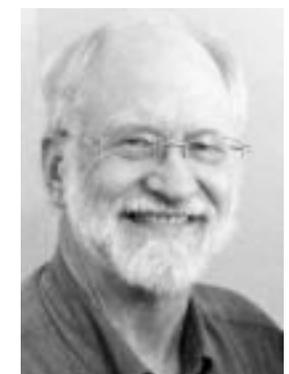
Allen Johnson, Coordinator, 12664 Frost Rd. Dunmore, WV 24934
 Ph. (304) 799-4137 Email allen@christiansforthemountains.org

Robert Sage Phillips Russo

Jessi Nixon Russo



Sage and Jessi Russo



Allen Johnson

www.ChristiansForTheMountains.org
FaceBook friend us at Christians For The Mountains
Phone us at 304-799-4137
Email us at allen@christiansforthemountains.org

We Welcome You To Support The Larry Gibson Biography Project

This is CFTM's major goal for 2020-2021

We invite you to 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 in multiple ways.

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 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 some of our founding mission through him. This biography will be a continuation. **Toward the end of his life, Larry Gibson asked CFTM for help in seeing through the writing of his biography.**

The One Foundation is providing generous funding and guidance for the biography project. CFTM is putting up a percentage of that grant as matching funds. Contributions to CFTM will go toward the biography, along with enough to keep this twice-yearly Mountain Vision paper published, modest office, travel, a much-needed fresh remake of our website, and continuation of our partnering with organizations advocating for justice and renewal in Appalachia. This will lean us out almost to the bone. General CFTM operations are all-volunteer with no paid staff.

Please pray for the success of the Larry Gibson Biography Project, and our regular work. Contributions of any size are always gratefully received.

Pages 6-7, and 13b in this issue directly relate to the Larry Gibson Biography Project.

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 October 2018, when Marybeth Lorbiecki 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 actively engaged with the project.

The heart of the narrative will be Larry Gibson's passionate, courageous, and motivational efforts to resist 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, family upbringing, anecdotal stories, quotations, news stories, and cultural context will be tools toward telling this story.

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



Read Pages 6-7, and 13b for further details on the Larry Gibson Biography Project.

Progress Update on the Bio

Our original intent was to have the biography written and to a publisher by now. It would be quite simple, a bit about Larry's growing up years, then sorting through the voluminous material on his anti-MTR activism years back on Kayford Mountain, WV.

However, research began to uncover troubling yet insightful information on his childhood and early adulthood that is a story in itself. Larry's story is one of hardship, struggle, and redemption that propelled his indomitable courage, persistence, and love of land and people. Melding this complex inspiring person into a readable, motivational book is our work and prayer.

ONLINE DONATIONS ARE WELCOME at www.christiansforthemountains.org/

Invitation to Join Together With Us

Name _____																															
Address _____																															
City _____	State _____	Zip _____																													
Phone _____		Email _____																													
Organization/School(s) _____																															
We welcome any other information you would like to share (such as your faith; experience; skills; special interests; etc....use separate sheet)																															
Mail to: Christians For The Mountains 12664 Frost Road, Dunmore, WV 24934 [Note: This form is not necessary. We welcome pertinent info. Online donation is also available.]																															
CFTM has 501(c)3 nonprofit tax exempt status through a partnership with World Stewardship Institute. P.O. Box 7348, [3840 Finley Ave., Bldg. 33, Ste. 202] Santa Rosa, California 95407. Contact is Fred Krueger. Telephone 707-573-3161.																															
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Individual</th> <th>Family</th> <th>Org</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Senior</td> <td>\$15</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student</td> <td>\$15</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Regular</td> <td>\$25</td> <td>\$35</td> <td>\$50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Associate</td> <td>\$50</td> <td>\$75</td> <td>\$100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Patron</td> <td>\$100</td> <td>\$150</td> <td>\$200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sponsor</td> <td>\$500</td> <td>\$700</td> <td>\$1000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Individual	Family	Org	Senior	\$15			Student	\$15			Regular	\$25	\$35	\$50	Associate	\$50	\$75	\$100	Patron	\$100	\$150	\$200	Sponsor	\$500	\$700	\$1000
	Individual	Family	Org																												
Senior	\$15																														
Student	\$15																														
Regular	\$25	\$35	\$50																												
Associate	\$50	\$75	\$100																												
Patron	\$100	\$150	\$200																												
Sponsor	\$500	\$700	\$1000																												
		\$ _____ Mountain Mourning Collection DVD Write us or Circle "Yes" here for a copy:																													
		Your donations are tax deductible. Thank you for prayer support.																													

Arrested At A Rally For Justice, Here Is What I Said In The Courtroom Allen Johnson



Mr. Richard D. Jones, Magistrate
Raleigh County Magistrate Court
115 West Prince Street
Beckley, West Virginia

May 4, 2009

First, let me thank you for your attention and consideration as I state my case. I do respect the office and purpose of the court system in its responsibility to promote a civil society. I was issued citation \$100-0525205 by Officer T.A. Bowers, who I might commend, acted professionally and responsibly in conducting his duties.

I have been charged with trespass upon the private property of Marfork Coal Company, a subsidiary of Massey Energy, at Pettus, West Virginia, Tuesday February 3 in the year of our Lord 2009. Due to extenuating circumstances surrounding the situation in which I received the citation, I felt I should enter a plea of "not guilty" in order to have a hearing.

I say "a hearing" because up to that time the elected officials and regulatory officials of West Virginia and Massey Energy Corporation had refused to address literally thousands of telephone calls, emails, and letters requesting consideration of Coal River Mountain for development of a wind energy project. Since then a motion was introduced in the West Virginia legislature for a resolution to advocate for this wind project.

A careful and extensive study has examined this mountain range and concluded that a more beneficial and longer-reaching economic impact on this region would be to develop commercial wind power rather than the current plan to surface mine that mountain. For if the mountain is lowered several hundred feet it would no longer have the wind capacity to generate commercial power. This is the only significant mountain range in the region with the height and therefore capability for wind power generation. Current plans by Massey Energy, along with the concurrence of regulatory agencies, appear to destine the mountain for destruction. Time is crucial.

A rally was held February 3 by supporters of the Wind Project to deliver a letter to the head of Marfork Coal Company. We politely asked permission to deliver the letter and were refused entrance by a company security official, who countered that we

should go through "the normal channels." However, "the normal channels" had been futile with no response.

When "the normal channels" of addressing issues have broken down, such as was the situation of discriminatory segregation in Mississippi, Alabama, and elsewhere in the South even less than 50 years ago, it is morally justifiable to nonviolently disobey the law in order to appeal to the conscience of the nation. Henry David Thoreau understood and disobeyed the law of the state. Mohandas Gandhi understood and disobeyed the law. Martin Luther King, jr. (who is recognized with a national holiday) understood and disobeyed the law. Jesus understood and disobeyed the code and was executed.

I am a co-founder of an organization, "Christians For The Mountains." We hold to the scripture in Psalm 24:1, that "The earth belongs to the Lord, and everything in it." God as creator of the earth is its proper owner, and desires that the earth be well-cared for. Those of us who have a courthouse title to land indeed do have the privilege to gain sustenance from that property, but also a corresponding covenantal responsibility to nurture, protect, and even enhance that land. Literally all religions basically agree that the earth is to be cared for, not exploited, for to ruin or degrade land for profit or ease is sin.

I was invited to the February 3 rally to lead a prayer and short biblical reflection. The message I spoke was drawn from the gospels (Matthew 21:12-13); Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19: 45-48; John 2:13-17) in which Jesus cleanses the Temple of profiteering, exploitative moneychangers. He literally upturned their tables of money and drove out the sacrificial animals that were the wares, because the purpose of the Temple was being defiled in a way totally counter to that which God intended. So it is with the destructive form of coal extraction some of us call Mountaintop Removal, for it is a debasing of the intention God has for these mountains. Rather than these mountains sustaining life, they are being forever decapitated for cheap energy and short-term corporate profit.

Massey Energy and its subsidiary, Marfork Coal Company, are before God guilty of trespassing, because they are usurping and defiling God's creative purpose for the lands they hold title. Lands that in truth are God's property. They should tremble before God.

Just before closing, I should be truthful to plainly state that I am not contrite for my action on February 3, nor will any punitive action that a court might visit upon me have a deterrent effect. For my actions are in obedience to God foremost. I cannot betray my conscience.

I am 60 years old, married for 37 years, father of four sons who are responsible adults, and hold an administrative professional position. I am privileged to have the respect of my community. I say this not to ask for favor able judgment but rather to establish

that I have a solid reputation that I lay out on the line for this cause in solidarity with others who also are acting in conscience and hope.

In closing, I pray for our state, nation, and world, that we find our way to the just, sustainable economy that God will unfold for us when greed, indifference, and self-centeredness are repented. I fervently believe God has created this world in such a way that it does not have to be destroyed in order to have a quality-of-life economy.

I invite you, personally, to join with us in this endeavor to protect and heal the land and its inhabitants.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I await your deliberation and adjudication as you seek to uphold the values of our land and people.

Respectfully,
Allen Johnson
Rt. 1 Box 119-B
Dunmore, West Virginia 24934

The Court Decision and The Aftermath

There were several of us in the courtroom that day to present our cases before Magistrate Richard Jones. Each of us were adjudicated guilty of trespass and fined \$25 plus court costs to a total of \$184.53, payable within twenty days.

As I was leaving the courtroom, Magistrate Jones approached me and politely asked if I might give him a copy of the speech I had read. He seemed touched and appreciative of my stand. I gave him my speech.

With the check I sent to pay the fine, I also sent an accompanying letter. I commended the magistrate, the arresting officer, and the prosecutor for their dignified and professional manner. I sense that their decision to adjudicate me and my colleagues was to uphold the letter of the law.

In my letter, I stated my belief that there is a higher law than that of the state. God "owns" the earth, and our human responsibility as stewards is to protect and nurture God's "property."

While I acknowledged that the state does not always recognize religious claims over against its laws, I obediently would act and speak to my understanding of God's requirement for justice and against the demonic assault of Mammon against God's creation, in this case, destruction of mountains for short-term profit. And indeed, Massey Energy was flagrantly violating environmental regulations and lawyering imposed fines down to pennies on the dollar.

Jesus calls us to "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1). Turn-around in mind, attitude, and action. This is the only hope for our society.

The proposed Wind Farm for Coal River Mountain was prepared by Downstream Strategies, L.L.C. See http://www.downstreamstrategies.com/documents/reports_publication/Wind_vs_mountaintop_removal_coal_Coal_River_Mtn_Dec2008.pdf

REPENTANCE AND SELF-LIMITATION Exerpts from Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Editor's Note: I thank our friend, Dean Ohlman, for compiling quotes from a book of essays by Alexander Solzhenitsyn and some of his fellow dissidents in the early 70's: *From Under the Rubble*; printed in the U.S. by Regnery Gateway in Washington DC, 1981. The following is from Solzhenitsyn's essay "Repentance and Self-Limitation in the Life of Nations."

Repentance

"It is hard to understand the arrogant insensitivity of the modern trend in the social sciences: why are the standards and demands so necessarily and readily applied to individuals, families, small groups, and personal relations, rejected out of hand and utterly prohibited when we go on to deal with thousands and millions of people in association?..."

"Whatever feelings predominate in the members of a given society at a given moment in time, they will serve to color the whole of that society and determine its moral character. And if there is nothing good there to pervade that society, it will destroy itself or be brutalized by the triumph of evil instincts no matter where the pointer of the great economic laws may turn. And it is open to every one of us, whether learned or not, to choose -- and profitably choose -- not to evade the examination of social phenomena with reference to the categories of individual spiritual life and ethics."

[He goes on to suggest that there must be both personal and national repentance of grievous sin before the world's societies can be set right.]

"The gift of repentance, which perhaps more than anything else distinguishes man from the animal world, is particularly difficult for modern man to recover.... The habit of repentance is lost to our whole callous and chaotic age...."

"The end of the world, so often foretold by the prophets only to be postponed, has ceased to be the particular property of mystics and confronts us as sober reality, scientifically, technically, and psychologically warranted. It is no longer just the danger of a nuclear world war -- we have grown used to that and can take it in our stride. But the calculations of the ecologists show us that we are caught in a trap: either we change our ways and abandon our greedy pursuit of progress, or else in the 21st century, whatever the pace of man's development, we will perish as a result of a total exhaustion, barrenness, and pollution of the planet. Add to this the white-hot tensions between nations and races and we can say without suspicion of overstatement that without repentance, it is in any case doubtful if we can survive. It is by now only

too obvious how dearly mankind has paid for the fact that we have all throughout the ages preferred to censure, denounce, and hate others, instead of censuring, denouncing, and hating ourselves..."

"What way out remains to us? Not the embittered strife of parties or nations, not the struggle to win some elusive victory -- for all the ferocious causes already in being -- but simply repentance and the search for our own errors and sins. We must stop blaming everyone else -- our neighbors and more distant peoples, our geographical, economic, or ideological rivals, always claiming that we alone are in the right. Repentance is the first bit of firm ground underfoot, the only one from which we can go forward not to fresh hatreds but to concord. Repentance is the only starting point for spiritual growth...."

"At the very beginning of our repentance we have been warned: the path ahead will bristle with such insults and slanders. If you are the first to repent, earlier and more fully than others, you must expect predators in the guise of penitents to flock around and peck your liver. Nonetheless, there is no way out, except that of repentance...."

"Repentance is always difficult. And not only because we must cross the threshold of self-love, but also because our own sins are not so easily visible to us...."

"Repentance is only a clearing of the ground, the establishment of a clean basis in preparation for further moral actions -- what in the life of the individual is called 'reform.' And if in private life what has been done must be put right by deeds, not words, this is all the more true in the life of a nation. Its repentance must be expressed not so much in articles, books, and broadcasts as in national actions."

Self-limitation

"After repentance, and once we renounce the use of force, self-limitation comes into its own as the most natural principle to live by. Repentance creates the atmosphere for self-limitation...."

"We are always very ready to limit others -- this is what all politicians are engaged in -- but nowadays the man who suggests that a state or a party, without coercion and simply in answer to a moral call, should limit itself invites ridicule. We are always anxiously on the lookout for ways of curbing the inordinate greed of the other man, but no one is heard renouncing his own inordinate greed. History knows of several occasions on which the greed of a minority was curbed with much bloodshed, but who is to curb the inflamed greed of the majority, and how?? That is something it can only do for itself."

"The idea of self-limitation in society is not a new one. We find it a century ago in such thoroughgoing Christians as the Russian Old Believers. In the journal "Istina" (no. 1, 1807)... we read:

Save through self-restriction, there is no other true freedom for mankind."

"After the Western ideal of unlimited freedom, after the Marxist concept of freedom as acceptance of the yoke of necessity -- here is the true Christian definition of freedom: Freedom is self-restriction! Restriction of the self for the sake of others!"

"The concept of unlimited freedom is closely connected in its origin with the concept of 'infinite progress,' which we now recognize as false. Progress in this sense is impossible on our earth with its limited surface area and resources. We shall in any case inevitably have to stop jostling each other and show self-restraint: with the population rapidly soaring, mother earth herself will shortly force us to do so. It would be spiritually so much more valuable, and psychologically so much easier, to adopt the principle of self-limitation -- and to achieve it through prudent self-restriction."



Aleksandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008) was a Russian novelist whose outspoken criticism of the Soviet Union and Communism landed him an eight-year labor camp sentence followed by internal exile. His writings, including the

influential *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and *The Gulag Archipelago* so angered Soviet authorities that his citizenship was stripped. Solzhenitsyn moved to the United States for several years before returning to live out his final years in his native land.

Solzhenitsyn raised global awareness of the Gulag labor camp system that frequently was used to intimidate, re-educate, and certainly punish dissidents to Soviet policy. In 1970 he received the Nobel Prize for Literature. After several years living in the U.S., his famous 1978 speech at Harvard was a powerful rebuke of Western societies that cowardly brush off internal moral decadence in their nations as well as the plight of world suffering.

His Templeton Prize Address in 1983 was titled, "Men Have Forgotten God." Solzhenitsyn warned of the disaster to Western societies that ignore or erase God from public life.

Take Me Down Country Roads by Marybeth Lorbiecki

Allen Johnson and I have traveled some interesting country and urban roads during this Larry Gibson project, both physically and metaphorically.

Larry's story began, as so many do in southern West Virginia, in the small coal camp hollers and mines. So rickety, he could watch the snow fall between the slats in the walls. Or rats can crawl into cribs and bite babies, as they did Larry. Each time his family got established in a coal shack for a few months, some disaster would strike, such as his father partially buried in the mines twice under collapsing slate, or he'd fail to show up to work because he was afraid and drinking. Inevitably, the Gibson's would lose their home and have to move. Larry and his siblings had to switch schools. Over and over and over. But summers, they always had Kayford Mountain to roam and enjoy with their extended family.

Larry Gibson school picture

(L to R) Larry, his brothers Billy and Gary, his dad, his sister, Becky, and then their cousin Brendie and her mom, Aunt Vondie, their dad's sister.

To track down the many places the family lived in West Virginia, I have been delightfully directed by Larry's only sister, **Becky Lou Steinbrenner--known as "Lou" as child**. Many others have assisted, like their **Uncle Hoot and Aunt Zelda**, but Becky has been my

carbide lamp in the darkness. And in the story of determination of this family to survive and improve their lot in life.

Like so many Appalachian families, the Gibson's had to flee to a northern urban area for jobs. "As they pulled away from the woods he had roamed as a boy," a reporter noted after interviewing Larry, "Gibson curled up in the floorboard of his father's '55 Ford, watched the mountains whiz past and felt a sorrow deeper than he had ever known. It was then he knew belonged in West Virginia."¹

For the Ohio years, Larry's son, Cameron, stepped up to guide me. The glow of his love for his father, undimmed by his acknowledgment of his failings, led the way through his time period. Larry lived in the streets after leaving home, then became a janitor at the new Youngstown GM plant and unofficial United Auto Workers union organizer. His life erupted turbulently with his coworkers during the big 1972 GM strike, dubbed "The Industrial Woodstock."

Now, this time travel journey has led back me to West Virginia, where Larry, broken by so many aspects of his life, is looking to rebuild it on Kayford Mountain among his people. "This mountain has a way of getting under your skin, and it has a way of drawing one back to it. What do I love about her? When I'm on my mountain, it seems that all's right with my life."²

But then it's not. He explains later:

"It was a fine day: pretty sky, no clouds. All of a sudden I heard thunder in the distance. Couldn't see no clouds, but we heard thunder. That was in spring of '86.

By the fall of '86, it was upon us – we could see the dynamite explosions and we were breathing in their dust.

Then by the spring of '87, we could taste it in our mouths. It was foreign. We didn't know what it was, or if it was legal to blow up a mountain. I mean, who does that? I just didn't believe it, I couldn't fathom it. But I was hearing it, and I was seeing it in the distance, and then finally I could throw a rock and hit it.

I was like most people in this country who don't know about mountaintop removal mining, but I saw things I never dreamed I would see as an adult. I'd be sitting in my cabin, and the dishes would start shaking. Then, suddenly everything would start shaking! Things would break. My world as I knew it was coming to an end. You don't even realize what you've got until you lose it."³

And he was determined NOT to lose it, to save as much of it as he could.

I'm uncovering how he begins to put back the pieces of his own life by pulling back his family to the mountain to protect it from mountaintop removal coal mining. This was no easy task—he had to find

Larry Gibson at a family cemetery on Kayford Mnt.

the original Stanley deed for mountain and go through many censuses to build family trees of the heirs. As Sandy McCauley reported in **Hillbilly** in 1993 about the progeny of Jack Stanley, "The year between his birth and death, his extended family grew to nearly 5,000. More than 1,200 direct descendants have been identified." To track them down build their trust to form a protective land trust, contributing their deeds, Larry and his nearby relatives started organizing reunion events, starting in 1990, throughout the spring to fall season—Easter, Memorial Day Weekend, 4th of July, Labor Day, and October Leave Changing. Always a Christian prayer service, music, and food would be involved. Slowly, they were able to form the Stanley Heirs Foundation and Park. As Larry said it,

"Heirship land is land that is left behind after someone dies before making a will. I had to find a way to bring the family members together with one goal in mind, that was saving the land. It took from 1986 to 1992 just to gain the peoples' trust, plus a lot of meetings and hard work. After the Foundation was formed, I then had to find a way to get the families to work together without fighting with each other. I think this was the hardest job of all."⁴

And so it goes, as this story continues to unfold.

(Endnotes)

- 1 "Native opposes mountaintop removal" by Nicole Kennedy, **Charleston Herald-Dispatch**, "faces of the Tristate" series, received as a press clipping to the WV CAG office on January 28, 1998.
- 2 Larry's writing notebook, 12/9/01
- 3 Earthjustice film
- 4 Larry's writing notebook, 4/27/02

Marybeth Lorbiecki, M.A., is researching and writing the biography on Larry Gibson.

She is the Director of the Interfaith Ocean Ethics Campaign (IOEC), a joint program of the National Religious Coalition on Creation Care (NRCCC) and the Franciscan Action Network.

An experienced and acclaimed author of numerous books, her website is marybethlorbiecki.com

EARLY MORNING LIGHT by Owen Owens

Every day comes bright and new from the hand of our Creator. There are times, however, when one feels hopeless. A minister friend once teased me when I told him how discouraged I felt about the church. "Cheer up," he shared, "things could be worse!" So I cheered up and sure enough, things got worse! Facing a bleak future, we need more than superficial encouragement. I think of the sacrifice of those who have tried to stop mountaintop removal and revitalize Appalachia's economies. Light seems to glimmer at the end of the tunnel, and then all gets even darker.

When there seems to be no hope, what do we do and do? When I visit someone near death after treatment has failed, I feel helpless. Then I remember Emmanuel, God with us, and that strengthens me to be with that person, listen, and pray with him or her. Light dawns even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, because Someone who cares is with us. Larry Gibson has words of powerful hope. So let's stop, listen, hear what he has to say, and follow in his footsteps.

mountaintop removal was doing to his land. We all listened intently to Larry. He may only have had a grade school education, but he was truly educated—he knew what he was talking about. By the time he finished his message, we knew coal mining was destroying beautiful mountains and the people who lived there, and that we had to do something to help. For generations Appalachia has been a sacrifice zone, supplying fuel that keeps vast cities going and big profits for a few companies. Ruined land, however, can be restored. Poisoned water can be cleaned up. Clean, organic food can be grown. Loving, consecrated teachers can revitalize schools. Native forests can be replanted, protected, restored, and creatures we are driving to extinction will come back. Industries of the future with well-paying jobs can be created. It is time to invest in the future we want to live into. It is time to pay back some of the debts we owe to a land and its people. If we have money, we can give. If we are educated, we can write and teach. If we have power, we can use it to make life better. If we are religious, we can pray and do good.

Listen to Larry. His words now come directly from our Maker and Redeemer. "Change how you live. Stop selling out. Become what you were made to be, a life-giver. I didn't come here to entertain you," Larry ends his message. "We need you to help us. Decide right now. Give what you can. I live in the light. You can too!"

Larry Gibson, Keeper of The Mountains

When religious folks speak of conversion, we're talking about changing the direction our life is going, from death-dealing to life-giving. When Larry returned to West Virginia, he began to make big changes in the way he lived. Coal mining was mechanized, providing fewer and fewer jobs, and the big machines left devastation behind them. Communities were not safe to live in. Many suffered from cancer and lung disease, as the toxic residue of the dynamite used to blow up the mountains poisoned the air and water.

Rev. Owen Owens is the driving force behind the Larry Gibson biography project. At the 2012 National Prayer Breakfast at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, Larry asked him to help with a biography. Owen promised Larry, and continues to offer wise counsel and gentle encouragement.

Rev. Owens has been active in congregational life, missions, and environmental conservation throughout his life. Co-chair of the National Religious Coalition on Creation Care; co-founder of the Valley Forge Chapter of Trout Unlimited; past Chair of the Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches of Christ. From 1968 to 2000 he served the American Baptist Home Mission Societies in evangelism, church renewal, and ecology and racial justice.

Larry training a new generation of advocates

"What can I do to save this land I love?" Larry wondered. So he sought to understand what was happening in West Virginia, talking to leaders who had given their lives seeking justice. On his family's ancestral mountain he opened the Creator's book of nature, and found his voice. When the coal company offered him big money if he sold out, Larry refused. "Who am I if I sell my birthright?" he would say.

Rev. Owen has written several books including *Living Waters: How to Save Your Local Streams*, *Spiritual Help in Hard Times: The Bible's Hope for Life on Earth*.

Right to the edge of his land came the explosions. Even graves of ancestors were blasted away. So Larry spoke out, soon traveling all over the country. It made no difference to him if you labored as a miner, were a mother trying to educate her children, or had a Ph.D. I heard him when he spoke to students and faculty at Cabrini College in Philadelphia. With good humor and moving illustrations, Larry told what

Rev. Owen Owens and his beloved wife Irene

The Entrance Rock to Stanley Heirs Park on Kayford that Larry worked hard to establish

Birds should accompany our lives by Frances Lamberts

An Insect Apocalypse

National Geographic August 6, 2019

From time to time, Frances Lamberts sends me a letter with a copy of an accompanying article she has written for local newspapers near Jonesborough, Tennessee. With her permission, the Mountain Vision has reprinted some of these articles on ecology, nature, and related spiritual attunement.

Frances Lamberts was born in Germany near the Belgium border over eight decades ago. Her childhood was idyllic with family self-sufficiency in their several gardens, and forested hills to explore. She also experienced the oppressive atmosphere and danger of WWII. In 1962 she visited Washington, DC, to spend some time in an English-speaking country. Her time since then has extended over five decades.

Since 1979 she has lived in Jonesborough, Tennessee where she taught at East Tennessee University. Upon retirement, Frances has devoted her time to writing and volunteering to the establishment of the Ardinna Woods Arboretum and Butterfly Garden. Frances maintains an extensive array of native plants and accompanying wildlife on her one-acre property. Protecting the Monarch Butterfly is a passion.

In her accompanying article, Frances Lamberts writes about the drastic decline in bird numbers. This article first appeared in a Tennessee newspaper, The Erwin Record, December 4, 2019, which we publish with permission.

--Allen Johnson

Frances Lamberts writes,

In an obituary for the recently deceased operatic soprano Jessye Norman, Andre Heller related this episode. A few years ago, one of her "heartrending" gospel song performances, his nine-year old son asked her in utter wonderment: "Aunt Jessye, how many songbirds live inside you?"

How many birds are still living around us, or missing, was the subject of a talk in Unicoi by ETSU ornithology professor Fred Alsop. He related the sobering findings of long-term studies on bird diversity and abundance in the US, by Cornell University and eight other American and Canadian institutions. The researchers' one-sentence summary of these, in the journal Science, states that a "Cumulative loss of nearly three billion birds since 1970, across most North American biomes, signals a pervasive and ongoing avifaunal crisis."

Whether found in weather-radar data from migration corridors or standardized, ground-based bird monitoring, the decline in numbers is staggering. Although the greatest, with 40 percent loss in grassland regions, it affects all the characteristic plant-and-animal communities found in different geographic regions, such as the shorelands and deserts, and all major forest areas.

Toxic pesticides, primarily from industrial farming, free ranging cats killing several billion birds annually, and habitat destruction through land development are among the main causes, exacerbated through climate change. Even formerly widespread and common species – sparrows and juncos, warblers, swallows, starlings and others, are in steep decline.

President T. Roosevelt once spoke of the concrete services which birds provide in the landscape, such as pollination, seed dispersal and insect pest control, but also praised their contribution to human life through their song. In Ranch Life, one

A global analysis of 452 species in 2014 estimated that insect abundance had declined 4 percent over 40 years. In the U.S. the numbers of iconic Monarch butterflies has fallen 80 to 90 percent in the last 20 years. A study published last month reported that 81 species of butterflies in Ohio declined by an average of 33 percent in the last 20 years. Systematic measurements of butterfly populations are the best indicator of how the world's 5.5 million insect species are doing.

Not only do bees, butterflies, and other insects pollinate one-third of all food crops, declining insect numbers can also have catastrophic ecological repercussions. Renowned Harvard entomologist E.O. Wilson has said that without insects the rest of life, including humanity, "would mostly disappear from the land. And within a few months."

America's agricultural landscape is now 48 times more toxic to honeybees, and likely other insects, than it was 25 years ago, almost entirely due to widespread use of so-called neonicotinoid pesticides, according to a new study published today in the journal PLOS One.

This enormous rise in toxicity matches the sharp declines in bees, butterflies, and other pollinators as well as birds, says co-author Kendra Klein, senior staff scientist at Friends of the Earth US.

"This is the second Silent Spring. Neonics are like a new DDT, except they are a thousand times more toxic to bees than DDT was," Klein says in an interview.

As insects have declined, the numbers of insect-eating birds have plummeted in recent decades.

Neonic insecticides are systemic insecticides, which means plants absorb them and incorporate the toxin into all of their tissues: stems, leaves, pollen, nectar, sap. It also means neonics are in the plant 24/7, from seed to harvest, including dead leaves.

Excerpted from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/08/insect-apocalypse-under-way-toxic-pesticides-agriculture/#close>

For example, he describes "the thickets and groves ... loud with bird music from before dawn till long after sunrise. The thrashers have sung all the night and the bell-like, silvery songs of the shy woodland thrushes chime in while meadow-lark, robin, bluebird, and song sparrow [and many rarer singers] like the grosbeak, join in swelling the chorus. Blackbirds of several kinds are plenty ... and the little owls, too, call to each other throughout the livelong night."

Unfortunately, as the Audubon Society states, current rollbacks of regulatory protections, under the endangered-species and migratory-bird-treaty laws will likely put "every bird in this country at greater risk." The Administration should inform itself of the decline and high threats to the avian fauna, and uphold these laws.

Like Heller's son, Americans young and old desire the birds to continue to live among us, in plentiful numbers.

PSR Studies Show that “Fracking” is Hazardous to Health Fracking is Extreme Energy

Extreme energy comprises those extraction methods that are especially environmentally destructive. Advances in technology typically enable these recent unconventional extraction methods.

Extreme energy includes mountaintop removal, tar sands oil, deep water drilling and arctic ocean drilling, and hydraulic shale fracturing (“fracking”). Biofuels such as wood chips for power plants and corn ethanol for gasoline mixture can also be categorized as extreme energy. A common denominator is that extreme energy extraction emerged as the availability of traditional fossil fuel resources are diminishing.

Unconventional Hydraulic Fracturing [Fracking] utilizes chemical-laden pressurized water to crack open deep subterranean gas or oil-laden shale or other rock. It releases natural gas or oil that is harvested and transported to markets.

Fracking has changed the United States from a net importer of oil and gas to a major exporter. Nonetheless, the industry at the extraction end is prone to economic bust and boom cycles, and loan defaults. Because of the nation's fossil fuel energy addiction, and the allure of high profits, fracking has had much political favor. However, fracked communities are fighting back as they face associated health problems, groundwater and air contamination, the nuisance of clogged roads, constant noise, and the invasion of insensitive out-of-area workers.

Physicians For Social Responsibility (PSR), which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985 on awareness of the danger that atomic warfare would pose, has compiled extensive research on the risks that communities beset with fracking in PSR strongly advocates a ban on fracking. Currently, New York, Maryland, and Vermont totally ban fracking.

Methane leaks occur at multiple points during fracking operations: both intentionally during the initial drilling of a well and as gas extraction begins, and accidentally during extraction, processing, transportation, and from faulty wells. Recent studies of the entire fracked gas life cycle, from hydraulic fracturing operations through delivery to end users, have found surprisingly—and dangerously, for climate change—high methane leak rates (PSR).

Air quality is also affected by the high level of incidental toxins including the potent carcinogen Benzene, as well as Toluene, Xylenes, and smog-inducing Nitrogen Oxides. Vast fleets of trucks associated with extraction emit diesel exhaust pollution.

Groundwater contamination is another serious environmental and health consequence of fracking. Vertical drilling can go deep for two or more miles before extending horizontally for a mile or more like spokes on a wagon wheel. Penetrating aquifers happens, contaminating well water for human and livestock consumption. Eventually, cement-encased drill bores can fail as earth gradually moves, a potential for ground water leakages in the future. Furthermore, fracking fluid waste water disposal, sometimes injected into underground wells, continues to poison certain community water sources.

Fracking has been directly linked to numerous earthquakes including Oklahoma and West Virginia.

Socioeconomic changes in local communities are significant. Noise pollution, traffic congestion, communities divided pro or con on fracking, and waves of incoming non-local workers with housing and services needs are overwhelming. Finally, the boom and bust economies of fracking creates economic instability for local communities. Banning fracking is the best way forward.

Fracking and The Pipeline Connection

Fracked gas is stuck at wellheads unless plant development in targeted markets is at. it can be transported to markets. Industry However, the National Gas Act typically allows prefers pipelines over truck and rail. The 15% profit for new pipeline infrastructure unconventional “fracking” boom has generated irrespective of final use, something ratepayers a massive wave of pipeline projects. Locking in place expensive pipeline infrastructure for decades diverts investment that should go into renewable energy.

Christians For the Mountains is very active in coalitions to thwart new pipeline construction. For example, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline first conceived in 2013 with estimated time of service in 2018 was cancelled July 5, 2020. The proposed 600-mile project from West Virginia to eastern Virginia and North Carolina had risen from \$4 billion to \$8 billion. The rising cost along with permits that our coalition challenged and were being revisited contributed to the cancellation.

Mountainous areas of Appalachia have some of the most vulnerable slopes for slippage. Furthermore, the need for further gas power

We believe these pipelines are detrimental for numerous reasons. The source, fracking, is hazardous to communities, the pipelines are environmentally risky, and natural gas contributes to climate change. Christians For the Mountains Coordinator Allen Johnson is also Chair of the Allegheny Blue Ridge Alliance 501-c-3, a coalition of about 50 organizations fighting the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. See <https://www.abralliance.org/> Citizen volunteers continue to provide important work monitoring pipelines through water testing, photographing construction violations including landslides and water pollution, aerial surveillance, and sophisticated accessible mapping. <http://www.abra-csi.org/>

Lack of Broadband Continues to Short-Change Rural Communities

I was so excited! I had just learned about a new technology that some were calling "The Super Information Highway." Being a board member of our rural library system, I foresaw the potential of this "highway of knowledge" accentuating the limited resources of our libraries. And my being an "information junkie," my mind salivated.

That call was about 1990. In 1993-94 I got experience with the new Internet as an intern in Philadelphia with the newly-forming Evangelical Environmental Network.

Back home in rural West Virginia I began in earnest to build a local coalition to attract an Internet provider to set up shop in my sparsely-populated county. We overcame numerous roadblocks, such as, "Why in the world do we need this thing called Internet?"

Eventually, but happily for our rural community, a company setup dial-up Internet. Dialup worked well for email, written pieces, and an occasional graphic. Years later, as most of the nation, especially urban areas, got faster Internet speed, videos became omnipresent on posts and advertisements. Dialup simply cannot handle video. Customers would spend long minutes just to wade through simple posts that had an unwanted video ad.

Sadly, some rural people still have dialup! Or DSL "speeds" that crawl scarcely faster than dialup while paying exorbitant prices much higher than urban DUHDV WKDW RuHU PDVVLVHO\ IDVWHU VSHHG LWR YLGHR streaming taking much of website content, those of us with slow Internet sit impatiently watching EXuHULQJ FLUFOHV

Some rural communities have excellent broadband. Other rural communities, lousy. Why? Monopolies.

Unlike urban areas with multiple Internet providers, rural people are often captive to just one provider that can charge high price for slow DSL service. While VWXGLHV VKRZ WKDW VKRUW WHUP LOYHVPHOW LQ UXUDO\ FHU ZLOO HYHQWXDOO\ SD\ Ru DQG EHSUR\ WDEOH LOYHVWRUV W\SLFDOO\ ZDQW VKRUW WHUP SUR\ W 7R NHHS WKHLU PRQRSROLVWLF SUR\ WDELOLW\ VXFK FRPSDQLHV H[HUW WNHU of considerable political muscle. Urban people satiated LQ IDVW DuRUGDEOH ,QWHQHW VHHP XQFRQFHUQHG ZKLOH sparsely-populated rural people cannot muster help. e time is now for an Information Interstate on the scale of the Interstate Highway System or the Rural Electrification Act. Given the dependence of the contemporary economy and national defense on the structure on the Internet and the recent internet-based activities of our nearest peers it is absolutely a matter of national security.

In the 1930's, electricity companies felt that farmers in western states like Kansas and Nebraska were XQSUR\ WDEOH WR VWULQJ ZLUVH DORO\ PLOHV RLSROHV\ %XW the nation needed wheat. So Congress enacted the 5XUDO (OHFWUL\ FDWLRQ \$FW power to isolated rural areas.

Today, rural communities will continue to miss out on economic potential, lose our talented young people, and stagnate, unless broadband parity comes about quickly for all.

---Allen Johnson, Editor

Dr. Scott Womack is a retired Army officer who for the past several years has taught at James Monroe High School in Monroe County WV. He started the ROTC program there and now teaches English, French and Journalism. Scott also has encouraged kids to reach out beyond their normal boundaries. He took his ROTC students to Normandy for the D-Day Memorial celebrations, has taken his Model UN kids to Georgia Tech and Harvard for conferences and helped his journalism students start an on-line student newspaper.

This article by Dr. Womack was printed in the Monroe Watchman newspaper (Monroe County, WV).

The Time Is Now by Dr. Scott E. Womack

Although our ongoing struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic does not compare with the scale of previous national traumas it has nonetheless exposed some weaknesses in our physical infrastructure and public policy. I'd like to touch on one that was evident to me when I started teaching in Monroe County in 2011: access to reliable and reasonably fast internet at home. From 2004-2010 my family lived in Senegal and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and our personal home internet and cell service were better there than what I can find at my home only three miles from the county seat in 2020. If this is true for me, with considerable personal resources available to address the problem, imagine what it is like for too many of our students who lack them. With all due respect to the power of the "invisible hand of the market" to deliver goods and services and the occasional state and federal government effort to improve "broadband" in some corners of our state, I suggest that the time is now for every level of government to collaborate to deliver this vital resource via an "Information Interstate" akin to the national highway system but for internet access.

At the Federal level:

The time is now for an Information Interstate on the scale of the Interstate Highway System or the Rural Electrification Act. Given the dependence of the contemporary economy and national defense on the structure on the Internet and the recent internet-based activities of our nearest peers it is absolutely a matter of national security.

At the State level:

The time is now to stop talking about broadband access and deliver it.

The time is now to develop a student funding formula that recognizes the unique burdens rural districts face, in particular with regards to home internet access.

The time is now to recognize that the standard of a "...thorough and efficient system of free schools" contained in the WV Constitution must include internet access at home for students in the event we must resume online instruction.

At the local level (Monroe County Schools are already working on many of these to their credit):

The time is now to perform a census of which students have access to what kind of data (landline, cell, TV signal, etc.) at home.

The time is now to determine what forms of internet service are feasible for our county.

The time is now to develop means for providing student internet access at home absent any action from the State or Federal governments, e.g., vouchers, hotspots, mobile WiFi, etc.

The time is now to get faculty trained in the art of teaching (not merely delivering instruction) online.

The time is now to agree on a consistent platform for online instruction and to train students and faculty to use it.

The time is now to find funding sources for all of the above.

At your level, dear Reader:

The time is now to contact your representatives at the Federal, State, and County levels of government and demand an Information Interstate program and adequate home internet to ensure the "...thorough and efficient system of free schools" guaranteed by the WV State Constitution.

The time is now to vote for candidates who can see past their parties and work for the greater good.

None of this will be easy, and if we never see another pandemic some of it may not even be necessary, but

it's better to go through the process of planning for contingencies than to be caught unprepared.

Confederate General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson put it this way, "I am obliged to sweat them tonight that I might save their blood tomorrow." With school adjourning next week and the worst effects of the

pandemic receding the time is now for some mental sweat. For those of you concerned about government

overreach I would say that everything a government does is not a threat to liberty and, in fact, some of things it does contribute to it.

The Interstate Highway System (Republican) and Rural Electrification Act (Democrat) both had the salubrious effects of increasing the ability of citizens to claim their rights of "...life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." An Information Interstate will provide a similar public good for the good of us all, and the time is now.

The Great Outdoors Act

role in protecting all areas of the outdoors States and in all 50 states. e LWCF is America's for many decades. Full and permanent most important conservation and recreation funding for LWCF is long overdue, but funding source, bar none. e fund is used to implementing it now will help to protect conserve huge landscapes that soak up oodwaters, America's beautiful landscapes for recharge aquifers, and provide clean drinking water generations to come (ibid.) to millions of Americans. It pays for tennis courts, ball elds, playgrounds, and swimming pools in

Dissenters of this act are along the underserved communities just as it was intended; ideological lines of the Committee For part of the original goal was to make sure that A Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT) Americans, whether rich or poor, would be stronger, that sees the bill as another federal land healthier, tter, and have access to outdoor spaces grab. Spokesman Bonner Conner writes and outdoor sports that built body and mind. It has in a June 13 CFACT column: "For a been a crucial tool for maintaining working lands, government drowning in de cits, the from timber to ranching, and for the support of sensible thing to do would be to sell o as wildlife refuges that provide habitat for an estimated much of the Bureau of Land Management's one-third of our most threatened plants, wildlife, millions of acres as buyers are willing to purchase. at would encourage private ownership of birds, and sh. Economists estimate that for every dollar invested from the LWCF, communities see a return of \$4, which is why the fund is considered the linchpin of what is now an \$887 billion annual recreational economy in the U.S., a powerhouse that accounts for 7.6 million jobs and is the only such economic engine that is based almost entirely on having and keeping the kind of healthy and sustainable natural environment—clean water and air, public lands, open space, plenty of wildlife, and strong sheries—that has made the U.S. the envy of the world. (Herring)

On June 17th, the U.S. Senate passed the Great American Outdoors Act with a vote of 73 yeas and 25 nays. is news made headlines across an America that was reeling from protests, amid the profound uncertainty of a pandemic, at a time of polarized politics at a scale and fury not seen since the Civil War. As Senator Martin Heinrich of New Mexico said, "I've done conservation work for 25 years, and most of it has been relatively incremental. is is the rst time I've worked on something that is truly on a scale that Teddy Roosevelt himself would be proud of." (Hal Herring, Field & Stream, June 4, 2020)

e legislation would allocate nearly \$10 billion over the next ve years to address deferred maintenance on public lands and provide full and permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). (Ronnie ompson, e Hill , June 11, 2020)

e legislation's support of the Land and Water Conservation Fund will complement deferred maintenance repairs by boosting conservation e orts at the national, state and local levels. LWCF is a popular program funded by o shore oil and gas royalties—not taxpayer dollars—and has played a key

In contrast to CFACT's position, auctioning o public land is not palatable for most Americans. Nor would a sell put much of a dent in the national de cit. Nor would the public necessarily have access to use the lands. Rather, Americans enthusiastically support our public lands, their value for scenery, wildlife, wholesome outdoor recreation, and the ongoing economic boost as well.

e Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 following a favorable Senate vote of 92-1. Funding was provided through royalties on oil and gas production on federal property. Taxpayers paid nothing. e LWCF has, over its 52-year history, contributed more than \$16 billion to conservation and recreation projects in 98 percent of all counties in the United

e full \$900 million annual LWCF promise has been shortchanged almost every year since 1965. Furthermore, sly politicians have diverted \$22 billion LWCF funds to non-related projects. is chicanery stops with the passage and implementation of e Great Outdoors Act that guarantees an annual \$900 million along with an additional \$1.9 billion per year for the next ve years to begin remedying the major backlog of repairs and maintenance on our public lands and parks.

THE RECLAIM ACT: Passage Will Boost Economically-Distressed Coal-based Communities

The RECLAIM Act if passed and enacted will release \$1 billion from the remaining, unappropriated balance in the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund to states to be spent on reclamation projects in communities impacted by abandoned mine lands (AML) and the recent decrease in coal mining production. e RECLAIM Act will also requires States to carry out reclamation projects that will create favorable conditions for economic development.

Bills in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have bipartisan co-sponsors from coal producing states. Natural Resources Committee chairs from both chambers are in support. e Reclaim Act still estimated to be more than \$10 billion. needs citizen push.

Coal companies have been paying a tax on coal production for over 40 years for the purpose of reclaiming abandoned mines that frequently pollute streams and degrade landscapes. About \$2.5 billion sits in the federal treasury unused for the purpose of reclaiming abandoned mines that frequently pollute streams and degrade landscapes. About \$2.5 billion sits in the federal treasury unused for the purpose of reclaiming abandoned mines that frequently pollute streams and degrade landscapes.

Abandoned mine lands (AML) pose a health and safety threat to the citizens of in nearby communities. is includes mine res, acid mine drainage polluting streams, dangerous abandoned mine sha s and other openings, ooded mine pools, coal refuse mountains, and exposed high walls as just a few examples of legacy mining practices. oughout Appalachia, an estimated 5.5 million people live within 1 mile of an abandoned mine land. Unfortunately these abandoned mine-scares lands pose not just a health and safety threat, but hinder economic development opportunities in the region. e existing backlog of AML needs are e Reclaim Act would give opportunities for unemployed miners to utilize skills in restoring thousands of dangerous mine portals, unstable slopes, and water pollution abatement. Communities would have input for using funds for local needs such as renewable energy, agriculture projects, reforestation, tourism, and developing a diverse economy. Encourage your senators to support S-1232 and your congressional delegate to support H.R. 1256.

pools, coal refuse mountains, and exposed high walls as just a few examples of legacy mining practices. oughout Appalachia, an estimated 5.5 million people live within 1 mile of an abandoned mine land. Unfortunately these abandoned mine-scares lands pose not just a health and safety threat, but hinder economic development opportunities in the region.

e existing backlog of AML needs are

e Reclaim Act would give opportunities for unemployed miners to utilize skills in restoring thousands of dangerous mine portals, unstable slopes, and water pollution abatement. Communities would have input for using funds for local needs such as renewable energy, agriculture projects, reforestation, tourism, and developing a diverse economy.

Encourage your senators to support S-1232 and your congressional delegate to support H.R. 1256.

The One Foundation: Together We Are All ONE

The One Foundation first partnered with Christians For e Mountains (CFTM) by generously providing funding toward the expenses for the Appalachian Community Health Survey Project (ACHSP) in Kentucky.

ACHSP, a partnership of Restoring Eden and CFTM, under the professional auspices of Michael Hendryx, a WV University professor of Community Health, recruited and trained college students to volunteer during their spring breaks to conduct health histories of families living in close to mountaintop removal. Areas without mountaintop removal were also surveyed for statistical control.

Since colleges schedule their spring breaks at different times in during March, we were able to have three different groups of about two dozen students each week. In 2011 we conducted studies in southern West Virginia. 2012 in eastern Kentucky. In 2013 in southwestern Virginia. In 2014 in another area of southern West Virginia. Valuable health data was collected and published in respectable community health journals after peer review. Legislation has been introduced in Congress for a moratorium on mountaintop removal coupled with national studies.

Student Volunteers Getting Ready to Survey

Importantly, many students, typically from small conservative Christian colleges, had hands-on transformational experiences as the "lights went on" in their minds and hearts about how environmental pollution can be devastating to human health.

In 2012 the One Foundation provided a grant to help ACHSP meet expenses for our community studies in Kentucky. In 2013 the One Foundation provided funding for ACHSP to purchase spirometers and pulse oximeters for gauging respiration in willing subjects. The One Foundation also provided generous and much needed funding for 2014, after which Dr. Hendryx felt sufficient data had been gathered and analyzed to correlate mountaintop removal with serious community health problems.

Several years passed. Hearing about our vision to research, write, and publish a biography of Larry Gibson (who asked for this shortly before he died), the One Foundation invited CFTM to submit a grant proposal that was then accepted. This generous funding, along with appreciated guidance and encouragement, has enabled the biography project to launch. Private donations are also appreciated.

Our partnership with the One Foundation is opening other doors for us to work toward community-led, sustainable, vibrant futures for Appalachian people.

—Allen Johnson, Editor

Guiding Principles

Together, we are all ONE.

We are not defined by what we have been given, but by our intentions and ability to direct or manage our attention.

We all share similar essential basic needs. We cannot find personal or communal peace without fair and just access for all to resources provided by abundant nature.

In order to give, to serve appropriately, we begin with attention to the ground, to understand the root causes of disharmony, hardship and realities facing our communities.

Whom We Serve

To appreciate the fruits, we must tend to the roots.

We work to nurture a grassroots transformation toward a more diverse, more sustainable, and more inclusive economy across the coal fields of Central Appalachia and beyond.

Strategy

Our core strategy is to partner with individuals and organizations to build and lead initiatives that regenerate community, the planet, and self. This approach is much like that of a farmer, who cultivates the ground and tends to the roots so that there can be healthy growth. We foster a strong entrepreneurial environment to ensure change is both systemic and transformational.

Our supportive methods include collective voice and policy development, leadership development, building skills and offering technical assistance, increasing access for low-income community members, leveraging innovative capital, and engaging other funders. This means energizing communities to connect their priorities to local entrepreneurial solutions and accomplishing cumulative, long-term sustainable outcomes.

We are here to serve and unify our communities, to tend the causes of poverty and scarcity, to partner with leaders who care and seek the light as to the roots of suffering and separation and tirelessly bring merciful solutions, in goodness and without prejudice, in line with the true teachings of all religions and enlightened belief systems.

—Marz Attar

Partners

The One Foundation supports numerous projects and organizations through financial and guidance.

A major recent development is the establishment of the Center For Community Resilience at West Virginia University. Projects include the Food Justice Lab to challenge food system inequalities, Food System Development Lab to promote food system change, Health Equity Lab to promote equitable community health initiatives; Community Mapping Lab to democratize access to knowledge and support community decision-making. <https://resilientcommunities.wvu.edu/> Most (but not all) partners are in West Virginia. Many are youth-oriented and/or involved with food growing. Importantly, the partners are community-centered, bottoms-up grassroots.

The One Foundation does not accept unsolicited grant proposals. Instead, the foundation seeks out sparks of light, often volunteer-led, in communities that the foundation might be able to give a boost. Partners then provide services.

<https://all-onefoundation.org/>

The One Foundation Team

Marz Attar founded the One Foundation after selling his profitable Cellular One franchise in West Virginia. His vision is to help create a world where compassion, altruism and love of one's neighbor can flourish and thrive so that humanity's paradigm can start to shift away from greed and conquest to peace and harmony.

Barbara Wycko has over 30 years of experience promoting community economic development in both the U.S. and overseas.

Kent Spellmar has diverse experience as a private sector entrepreneur and as a social entrepreneur.

Katie Loudin joined the team in 2020. Her vast experience lends strength to her networking skills.

Is Moral Character Important in Assessing Top Leaders? Allen Johnson

God, give the king your good judgment and the king's son your goodness. Help him judge your people fairly and decide what is right for the poor. Let there be peace on the mountains and goodness on the hills for the people. Help him be fair to the poor and save the needy and punish those who hurt them.

He will help the poor when they cry out and will save the needy when no one else will help.

He will be kind to the weak and poor, and he will save their lives.

He will save them from cruel people who try to hurt them, because their lives are precious to him. (Psalm 72:1-4; 12-14)

part in witchcraft, hating people, causing trouble, being jealous, angry or selfish, causing people to argue and divide into separate groups, being filled with envy, getting drunk, having wild parties, and doing other things like this. I warn you now as I warned you before: the people who do these things will not have a part in God's kingdom.

But the fruit that the Spirit produces in a person's life is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these kinds of things. (Galatians 5:19-23, ERV)

So how do our leaders stack up against these traits? It is not to say one will be perfect, but tendencies can be noted. Jesus taught how to judge a person through the example of judging a tree by the quality of fruit it bears. A good person's heart brings forth good things, while an evil person's heart brings forth evil. (Matthew 12:33)

Leaders are in every field of human endeavor. Most of us are raised by our parents, relatives, or foster parents whose moral character immensely influences our own moral formation. The character of our school teachers, religious leaders, and workplace bosses further shape our lives.

As being an election year, this essay will focus on the character of political leaders, although much will apply to leaders in other areas. My thesis is this: Is moral character an important criterion for selecting our local, state, and national leadership, or relatively negligible in comparison to skills such as administration, communication, performance along with ideology and charisma? Does a politician's personal character spillover into his or her decisions in public life? For example, if a public official is unfaithful in marriage, is that a portent that the official might be prone to dishonorable behavior in public duties?

In 1998 President Clinton was impeached for under oath and obstruction of justice as he avoided responsibility for adultery. At June, the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S., the Southern Baptist Convention, passed a strong resolution for moral behavior in public officials: "We affirm that moral character matters to God and should matter to all citizens, especially God's people, when choosing public leaders; and ... we implore our government leaders to live by the highest standards of morality both in their private actions and in their public duties, and thereby serve as models of moral excellence and character." <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/773/resolution-on-moral-character-of-public-officials>

Do staunchly conservative Southern Baptists still hold to their resolution? Polls indicate that the moral behavior of public officials is of late less of a concern with conservative Christians. <https://www.prii.org/research/prii-brookings-oct-19-poll-politics-election-clinton-double-digit-lead-trump/>

Paul specifies good and bad character traits in his Letter to the Galatians.

The wrong things the sinful self does are clear: committing sexual sin, being morally bad, doing all kinds of shameful things, worshipping false gods, taking

The Second Letter to Timothy sharply warns about the danger of being around people of bad character.

People will love only themselves and money. They will be proud and boast about themselves. They will abuse others with insults. They will not obey their parents. They will be ungrateful and against all that is pleasing to God. They will have no love for others and will refuse to forgive anyone. They will talk about others to hurt them and will have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. People will turn against their friends. They will do foolish things without thinking and will be so proud of themselves. Instead of loving God, they will love pleasure. They will go on pretending to be devoted to God, but they will refuse to let that "devotion" change the way they live. Stay away from these people. (1 Timothy 3:2-5, ERV)

The Seven Deadly Sins and Seven Virtues are Church's summary of moral character.

The well-known Beatitudes taught by Jesus are revealing on character. They are blessed who recognize their spiritual need; who mourn; who are humble; who diligently try to do what is right; who are merciful to others; who are pure in thought; who actively work for peace; who willingly accept defamation as a consequence for doing what is right. (from Matthew 5:3-10)

The Danger of Political Idolatry

"I conclude before my God that worldly power is not needed in the Kingdom of Christ." [St. Ignace Marpeck, Strasbourg, January 1532](#)

I keep a poster of Marpeck's quote on my office wall to remind me that Jesus is Lord and my allegiance and hope is in His Kingdom. We Christ-followers should work and witness to influence better government policy and practice, but we must not coerce or manipulate government to replace the Kingdom of God. I often remind myself of temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness preparatory to him launching his ministry. The Devil offers Jesus the political power over all the kingdoms of the world. The Devil says this power is his to give to anyone who will worship him. Jesus responds that worship and service are solely due to God. (Matthew 4:5-8)

Tragically, Christendom has too often swallowed that same temptation Jesus repudiated. For example, most German Christians celebrated Adolph Hitler's ascension to power. Influential church leaders made statements such as "If the German who truly believed in Jesus could find the Spirit of the kingdom of God anywhere, he could find it in Adolph Hitler's movement... And, speaking of Hitler, "[God has granted us] an hour of grace... through Adolph Hitler." (Mary Solberg, ed., Church Undoing, Fortress, 2015)

The antidote for falling into political idolatry all the while being constructive citizens is to develop and practice biblical character virtues and encourage our society in that direction. Honesty, kindness, humility, generosity, forgiveness, and active engagement with community issues are most welcome.

A Brief History of the Rise of Christian Ecological Action by Frederick W. Kruger

From Old Testament times through to the present, people of faith have been taught that the Earth belongs to God and that we are challenged to live harmlessly and sustainably upon the earth. This ancient vision sees the world as good, as fallen because of ancient disobedience, and as redeemed through Jesus Christ and his crucifixion and resurrection. This Scripturally informed vision has guided and directed human interaction with God's creation down through the centuries.

Beginning in the 15th and 16th centuries Western Europe experienced a rise in scientific awareness and technology. An expanding awareness emerged of the cosmos, geography, medicine and much more stretched understanding of the human place in the world. This shook established assumptions. New perceptions rippled into a wave of innovative perspectives on rationalism, progress, economic growth and commercialism. This dynamic rattled ancient religious assumptions and revised attitudes about theology, rights of kings, land ownership, and human purpose on earth. Clashes erupted between traditional views about God, government and moral rational ways of understanding the world while an increasingly material vision shaped social attitudes. A consequence was what historians now call the Enlightenment era in which society no longer saw God as blessing all creation nor the earth as sacred.

Into the Modern Era

Four centuries later, society awoke to the environmental problem. By the 1960s air pollution was a serious issue. Smog in Los Angeles was sometimes so thick that visibility was barely one block. Pesticides such as DDT became persistent in the food chain. Rivers in industrial areas became chemical sewers. Cleveland's Cuyahoga River actually caught on fire a dozen times. The evidence was clear that technological progress was not an unmitigated blessing. People were waking up to the challenge of a clean and healthy environment.

Three key events triggered new religious reflection. First, an article by UCLA historian Lynn White claimed that the Judeo-Christian tradition was

responsible for ecological problems. White argued, the Earth Day celebrations in 1969 and proposed that the biblical command to take dominion over the earth had set the national attention. These events brought widespread world onto a self-destructive journey. This awareness of our deepening environmental predicament, he claimed, gave society a vision that caused destruction of the earth. This, America, but also for religion, that technology he said, was the critical law responsible and unregulated could be destructive to the health and for ecological destruction. Central to this quality of life for humans and the planet. Ecologists assessment was that Christian belief caused and scholars began to articulate religious reasons for environmental pollution. This led to a greater respect for the environment.

White's claim ignited a debate about the role of religion in America's destructive behavior towards the environment. This charge this second decade of ecological concern, at least the galvanized reaction on the relationship between history and attitudes toward nature. This stimulated a new examination on how society had come to its ecological predicament. Religious voices emphasized that Genesis called for stewardship, not domination. Others showed that environmental attitudes are conditioned by many varied and complex cultural and historical factors. No single cause was to blame. Reaction showed that prior to this time, a host of voices was already defining a religious ethic of creation. The writings of John Muir, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Gerard Manly Hopkins, among many others in the 19th century were describing how respect for nature was inherent in our religious traditions.

The early 20th century saw even more voices on this theme, including Liberty Hyde Bailey, Rudolph Otto, Henry Beston, George Washington Carver, William Lowdermilk, and Rev. Albert Schweitzer. The 1960s saw a quickening in writings about religious values and the environment. At least the following can be cited in that pioneering era: Fr Teilhard de Chardin, Rev. John Cobb, Conrad Bonifazi, Buckminster Fuller, Thomas Merton, Nancy Newhall, and Steward Udall and many others.

Second, during the 1960s, the world began to witness a series of progressively more detailed photos of the earth from space. This culminated when Apollo astronauts give the world the first views of earth from the moon. These early photos showed that we all live on one small planet floating in the vastness of space.

Nothing prepared society for the photographs which the astronauts sent back to earth. Historians now credit these photos with inspiring global consciousness and a previously unknown sense of the humanity on one earth, all learning how to share the planet and care about its proper functioning.

For people of faith these images stirred reflection on the cosmos and our place in the immensity of the created order. Many found these images awe-inspiring and a reminder of how important it is to cooperate and share.

During the 1970s a larger wave of articles on Christianity and the environment began to appear. In the following writers should be listed among the pioneers of this movement: Rene Dubos, Fr Albert Fritsch SJ, Philip Sherrard, E. F. Schumacher, H. Paul Santmyre, Ron Sider, Wesley Granberg Michaelson, Rev. Vincent Rossi, Calvin DeWitt, Sr. Mary Evelyn Jegen, Thomas Berry, and Pope John Paul II. Ecologists and scientists were articulating a foundation for how Christianity possessed an ecological dimension. During this time the first Christian organization emerged concerned about a religious ethic of the environment. The Eleventh Commandment Fellowship built a network around a biblical ethic. It declared, "The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; you shall not destroy the earth nor despoil the life thereon." Several dozen chapters emerged across the U.S. to promote this ethic.

This was followed in 1979 when a youth camp in Northern Michigan became the Au Sable Institute and began to develop environmental educational programs with a Christian framework. Dr. Calvin DeWitt served as the first executive director for this program which has endured through the ensuing decades.

Organizing Christian Responsibility

By the 1980s the flood gates were open. A stream of articles now linked Christian theology to ecological themes. Despite this intellectual ferment, churches scarcely took notice. It took a lonely voice from the Missouri Ozarks to light a spark and set fire to this growing body of tinder. In 1983 during the first gathering of the North American Bioregional Conference, chairman David Haenke noticed the almost total absence of religious leaders from participation in ecological issues. He penned a letter calling for Christian leaders to step up and take action. This letter went to Thomas Berry, who called himself a theologian-geologist at the Riverdale Center in New York, and to Fred Krueger who headed the Eleventh Commandment Fellowship in San Francisco. Krueger, a former intelligence analyst for the National Security Agency and campaign manager for the Republican National Committee, teamed with Haenke to address this issue. They called their emerging effort the North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology (NACCE) and began to assemble a team.

A Brief History (continued from page 14)

Two years later right as the Chernobyl nuclear disaster was taking place, they held their first planning meeting. In the backwoods town of Syria, Virginia, forty Christian leaders concerned about the environment gathered on the first weekend of May, 1986. They decided to host a grand conference that would showcase Christian ecological concern and call churches to embrace earth healing activity.

A broad spectrum of Christian thought-leaders participated. Fr Albert Fritsch SJ, who then headed Appalachia - Science in the Public Interest, became the group's first chairman of an emerging board. Dr. Maria Jaoudi, a Byzantine Catholic from New Jersey, served as president. Dr. Calvin DeWitt, professor of biology at the University of Wisconsin Madison, from the Christian Reformed Church, became Attorney Jim Olsen, an Episcopalian from Traverse City, Michigan, became legal counsel; Fr Don Conroy from a Catholic family counseling center served as conference moderator; and Fred Krueger became its executive director.

Other individuals shaped its steering committee. These included Art Meyer, representing the Mennonite Central Committee, from Fresno, Ohio; Colonel Jim Berry, a former WWII B-17 pilot and squadron commander who once led the re bombing of Dresden, from Raleigh, NC; Elbert van Dondersgoed, representing the Christian Farmers Association of Ontario, Canada; Robert Rodale, from Rodale press, Emmaus, Pennsylvania; Dieter Hessel, theologian from the Presbyterian Church USA, Louisville, Kentucky; and Chris Cowap, from the National Council of Churches, Washington, DC., among others. This planning conference set an August, 1987 date, for the first North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology (NACCE).

This group faced the challenge of mobilizing Christian churches despite working from outside its normal church communication channels and without funds. New strategies were required that could mobilize volunteers in service to ecology as a bona fide Christian ministry.

Between 1987 and 1990, Richard Cartwright Austin authored a four-book series on environmental theology that was published by John Knox Press and Creekside Press. Baptized into Wilderness explores the spirituality of John Muir. Beauty of the Lord draws from the American theologian Jonathan Edwards to propose an understanding of beauty that is relational rather than aesthetic, and that strengthens our experiences of God with experiences of nature. Hope for the Land explores Biblical texts that affirm human responsibility to liberate land from oppression. Reclaiming America proposes land reform, civil rights for natural life and new approaches to agriculture.

Meanwhile in Europe HRH Prince Philip, President of the World Wildlife Fund, was issuing a bold invitation. He asked leaders of the world's five major religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism – to gather and describe how their faiths might help save the natural world. In a forum for the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC). A 1988 conference brought together Eastern Orthodox jurisdictions at the Antiochian Village in Legonier, PA, to define their ecological responsibility.

Development of Strategies and Programs

Back in the U.S., NACCE planners designed a unique strategy to publicize their upcoming conference. They formulated a plan to recruit volunteer field representatives to promote their upcoming conference-jamboree. A monthly newsletter was established. Magazine articles were commissioned. Top national figures were invited as speakers and literature highlighted all of the proposed features of the upcoming continental conference.

What an event this became! In August 700 participants arrived from 44 states to launch ecology as a Christian issue. A standing room only press conference opened the program before local and national news media. Plans were announced to

spread the message of ecology across the churches of America. Over 110 speakers provided presentations. Seven art shows displayed images of Christianity in film festival programs continually over four days; nature walks took place; school teachers demonstrated childrens' education program on the environment; a document on many facets of environmental action was produced. A staff of 130 volunteers managed all activities. The event was too large for any one person to embrace. A daily newspaper with 17 reporters and a production staff was necessary to report on each day's activities. This was coordinated by Editor-in-chief Jacqueline Froelich from Arkansas NPR. Folk dancing and Appalachian gospel music served as evening entertainment – plus crowded discussions, dialogues and debates galore. Even Dr. Noel Brown, director of the United Nations Environmental Programme sent a cable congratulating Christians for their entry into ecological concern.

From this seminal event, a network of religion conferences took place and a quarterly magazine emerged to promote the call of Christian ecological concern. Several denominational offices established formal departments of environmental justice. Programs were organized to assist specific Christian

Other Christian and Jewish organizations began to appear and provide further impetus to Christian ecological awareness. In 1988 the North America Conference on Religion and Ecology emerged to address other faiths in their ecological concern.

In Geneva, Switzerland, the Worldwide Fund for Nature initiated the New Road magazine which discussed the emergence of religious concern for the environment and documented its impacts globally.

In 1989 the Day of prayer for the Environment was established by Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios for the Orthodox churches. Two months later, the Catholic bishops issued a national pastoral of the environment, "Renewing the Earth." Christian ecological events were now taking place across the country and in a diversity of traditions.

In August 1991 the NACCE teamed with the Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet Academy of Sciences and hosted a three week conference on the historic pre-communist Russian attitudes toward the land. This conference was in the midst of its orientation in Moscow just as the coup took place which overthrew communism. In this way participants became eyewitnesses to history.

By 1993 the Christian Society of the Green Cross emerged from the NACCE. This would seek action programs that would demonstrate ecological activities in churches. At the same year the Christian Environmental Association emerged and focused upon evangelical churches and young people.

So did the National Religious Partnership on the Environment which funded ecological activities in the Catholic Church, the National Council of Churches and its members, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), and the Evangelical Environmental Network.

The Christian Ecological Movement was now on its feet and promoting eco-action, more properly termed care for God's creation, as a bona fide Christian ministry. Ever since care for the earth has been growing, not only in the U.S., but around the world, striving to do "on earth as it is in heaven," and addressing issues of forestry, animal protection, oceans, farming and every other aspect of human life.

Fred Krueger coordinates the National Religious Coalition on Creation Care as one of several endeavors he is involved with. He has written numerous books. He lives in Santa Rosa, California.

Zena Forestry: An Ecological Model for Sustainable Forest Products by Sarah Deumling

The Zena Forests 1300 acres of mixed conifer and hardwood forest running along the crest of the Eola Hills that bisect Oregon's wide and fertile Willamette Valley just west of Salem. I live here with my son Ben and his family in the house we built in 1987 when we moved from Germany back to Oregon. My German husband, Dieter, had worked for eight years on one of the largest family owned forests in Germany. Those were the days of acid rain in Europe and there was serious concern about the future health of European forests. We convinced the owner, who was a friend, to invest in the best forests in the Western Hemisphere, in Oregon where I had grown up on a family farm in the 1950s and 60s.

With our four children we went to work restoring a hodge-podge of mostly contiguous forest parcels that had been unsuccessfully farmed at some point or another. We took the best trees (best trees taken) when the owner needed some additional money. Before white settlement in the 1800s, the Native Americans had burned the landscape regularly when the rains came in the fall, to keep it open for hunting and to encourage many of the plants and berries, which were an important source of food. This practice had favored the oak over the more fire prone Douglas Fir.

The advent of white settlement converted riparian and upland forest to farms, homes, towns and eventually to suburban sprawl. Douglas Fir plantings became monoculture forests for the lucrative high quality construction lumber they provide. In spite of strong efforts by our state Department of forestry and our local land grant university to convince us otherwise, our money-tree, Douglas Fir does not thrive on every acre of Western Oregon. Some sites are too wet (better for Ash and Alder) and some too dry (better for Oak and Pine). Especially in the last 10 - 15 years of longer, hotter, drier summers, we have seen ever-increasing mortality of fir in the lower elevations and on the harder sites with poorer soil and southwest exposures. More recently our Oregon Maples and Western Red Cedar are beginning to die.

A Challenging Decision To Carry On

Dieter managed the forest for the Germans and I managed household, children, garden and sheep and goats. When Dieter died of cancer in 1996, the owners asked if I would like to take over the management of the forest. The first thing the 12 and 14-year-old boys who were still at home asked when hearing of their father's death was, "We don't have to move, do we?" This place had become our home and our haven so I took the offer seriously. I accepted on the condition that the owners teach me what I needed to know to do this job. The head forester and a logger came from Germany for 3 intensive months of my education, almost entirely on-the-ground practicing the skills I would need. I felt happy carrying on Dieter's work. A big part of who I am through is through decades of advocacy for the health of forest ecosystems as a priority ahead of short-term financial gain.

Near-to-Nature Forestry follows the natural processes of nature...to create a healthy resilient ecosystem.

The Practice Of Near-To-Nature Forestry

The type of forestry we practice is called "Naturgemaesse Waldwirtschaft" or Near-to-Nature Forestry. To the extent possible we follow or mimic the natural processes of nature - the complexity of growth, competition, death, regeneration, hydrology, natural disturbances (fire, wind, flood, drought, etc.) while recognizing that the forest is not only trees but all the plants, critters and organisms both above and below ground working together to create a healthy, resilient ecosystem. This is complicated, dynamic, messy, even chaotic and full of wonder.

It is also very different from conventional industrial forestry practiced in the Pacific Northwest. We are outliers, sometimes seen as threatening the comfortable, lucrative status quo of 40-year-old clear-cuts of fir plantations, piling and burning of debris after harvest and aerial chemical spraying of the site both before and after planting more Douglas Fir.

We have chosen to encourage all the native tree species while for many years also experimenting with species whose native ranges are to the south of us. The results have been encouraging and, after decades of skepticism, many other folks are now joining these conversations and gradually realizing the advantages of complex, multi-species forests in light of the uncertainties of climate change and other factors.

We use machetes instead of chemicals to release seedlings from competing vegetation, carefully leaving all the native plants of the forest floor. It goes without saying that the few rare and endangered plants we have are specially protected.

We do harvest, thinning by "single tree selection" to maintain permanent forest canopy. A crawler tractor with a winch and line is used to pull the logs from where they fall to "skid trails" 150' apart and from there to the truck road where the (conifer) logs

are "decked" until they are picked up and taken to an on-site mill. The hardwood logs are taken to our own on-site mill. The skid trails are permanent, the only place in the forest where and motorized equipment is allowed and one of the most important aspects of our forest management. We consider the soil our capital, the very basis of all the parts of a healthy forest ecosystem. No amount of talking can convince me that running huge harvesting machines over the soil and up to every tree (as is common practice here) does not compact the soil and negatively impact the health of the forest.

When marking trees to cut I use a variety of criteria, the most important of which is taking a competitor of the best, most vigorous tree in any group, thereby giving the winner space to continue to grow and flourish. I also consider which species do best on which sites according to soil, aspect, moisture, ground cover, etc. Some large old trees are always left for habitat trees and as seed sources for future generations of forest. Any given site in a forest has a "carrying capacity", a finite amount of life it can support. With this in mind when marking trees (playing God in the forest), I hold in my mind not what I am taking but what I am leaving behind and how it will thrive with more light, water and nutrients.

Marketing Row-Away Timber Species

For many decades in the Pacific Northwest, hardwoods have not been valued, largely because our dominant and native Douglas Fir is such a fantastic revenue generator as the world's premium construction lumber. Soon after I took over the forest management I found my logger about to cut down an unmarked oak which was "in the way" of the marked fir he was about to fall. I said, "No, we value those too". His confident response was, "Oh, we just throw these down the canyon". Hardwoods were considered "nuisance trees" which were, at best, sent to a chip mill but more often just left to rot. The Germans recognized their value and set us on the path we are on today.

There was no market infrastructure in Oregon for oak or maple. Flooring, furniture and cabinet grade lumber were imported from other states and countries. In 2007 when my son Ben had finished college and some work experience we started work on our own small hardwood sawmill business, Zena Forest Products, so we could capture some value from those trees that otherwise had no market. The Zena Forest was originally between 30 and 40% hardwood with the rest conifer but is now closer to 50% hardwoods. It turns out that Douglas Fir does not thrive on every square foot of Western Oregon as our state forestry advisers had told us for decades. Forestland owners were/are required to replant after harvest and only conifers qualified. With the advancement of climate change the fir is beginning to die in many lowland valley areas where oak, pine and madrone will thrive. At our mill, we saw not only oak and maple logs from

Zena Forest (continued)

Dangers To Trees by Allen Johnson

our forest but also buy logs from the local area. Since the Willamette Valley has less than 5% of the original oak remaining, it is a scarce resource and an important threatened habitat for many plant and animal species. What remains is still being converted to vineyards, hazelnuts and houses but the idea of oak restoration is also becoming widespread. We hope to encourage the latter by paying a 30% premium to folks who decide to keep and manage their oak instead of converting it to other uses.

At the sawmill we cut mostly oak but also maple, ash, and occasionally other less common local hardwoods. Cutting open a log for the fellows is like a child opening a Christmas present. One never knows what will appear inside and sometimes it is a wonderful surprise of color and figure and grain. Most of the wood goes into flooring but the highest quality boards go for cabinets and furniture. Some green oak goes to boat builders. We also build heating registers to match all our doors as well as stairs, railings, etc. We sell locally within the Willamette Valley to many individual families as well as to builders and architects. Our reputation is for good service and quality products but we are still working on the financial part and hoping to give our employees better benefits.

between three and five full time employees at the mill, most of whom come to us via our (Sale) Mennonite) church community and several longtime contractors in the forest.

I have always hoped this forest could be a model...that in the long term a truly healthy forest ecosystem will also be the most economically valuable.

---Sarah Deumling

I have always hoped this forest could be a model of the fact that ecology and economy are one and the same. In the long term a truly healthy forest is my lifetime. The industrial model of forestry there still is much more profitable than we probably ever will be, but at what cost to our air, our water, our soil and our biodiversity.

My three living children and their spouses make up our Board of Directors. We meet regularly, for fun of course, but also for business. Recognizing the constant precariousness of our financial situation, at the most recent board meeting I suggested that if the forest becomes too big a burden, they should work out something with our local tribe that the forestland be returned to them from whom it was taken by white settlers in the 19th century. I was actually glad when no one jumped at this idea. For a long time I have felt that when God puts an opportunity or a challenge in our path we should embrace it and give it our best. As long as I am physically and mentally capable I will continue to do my best to take care of this beautiful piece of God's creation and in so doing hope to encourage others to do similarly.

Our Vision For On A Family-Run Business

Since 2008 Ben has been running the sawmill and wood products business and I have continued to manage the forest. Much of my time is spent planting trees, releasing little trees from competing vegetation with a machete; marking trees to cut; and overseeing both logging and restoration work in the forest. All my extra time is for a big garden and orchard and two and four year old grandsons—Ben's boys with whom I share the house we built in 1987. A few years ago my older son, Reuben, remodeled the house to create a small "Granny Apartment" for me, leaving the rest for Ben and his family. I feel infinitely blessed. I am 73 now and not getting as much done in a day as I once did so Ben is beginning to take over some of the forest work - though he has no spare time. We have

Ben, Sarah Deumling of Zena Forests
Zena Forest Products website www.zenaforest.com
A longer unabridged version of Sarah's article will be at www.christiansforthemountains.org

Forests and trees in the world face multiple dangers. Responsible ecologically-sensitive harvesting of trees for useful wood products is NOT one of these dangers, as the Deumling family business shows. Below are mentioned dangers. And since forests are key to vibrant biomes in many locales, nurturing and protecting these forests is critically important.

The ravaging of tropical forests to clear land for cattle pasture and palm oil plantations may be the most egregious assault on forest ecosystems on the planet. The Amazon rainforest is often spoken as the "lungs of the planet," sequestering atmospheric CO2 while releasing oxygen through photosynthesis. Tropical rainforests harbor myriad species, and as the trees fall in vast swaths, so do species go extinct.

The Boreal forests of the far north are also under siege. These vast northern forests are especially sensitive and vulnerable to warming. Climate in the north is warming in extreme. Because of the nature of their soils (peat and permafrost are prevalent), the incidence and extent of melt will increase. The combination of permafrost melt that releases methane and increased wildfires that spew out CO2 is an example of a climate feedback loop.

Increased climate-related warming increases insect depredations on forests. For example, since 2000, bark beetles have destroyed the forest acreage equivalent of the state of Utah in western states. Swaths of these dead forests are easily visible from commercial passenger planes. Dead, dried-up forests such as these are highly prone to forest fires.

Mono-cultured commercial forest plantations of one tree species become ecological wastelands without diversity of plants and animals.

Invasive tree pests and diseases have wreaked havoc on numerous native species. The American Chestnut Tree was unanimously recognized as the most valuable tree in time I have felt that when God mountainous eastern forests, contributing beautiful rot-resistant wood, delicious nuts, magnificent beauty, and in our path we should embrace homes for numerous animal species. A blight from Asia (whose chestnut trees have resistance) literally wiped out as I am physically and mentally all mature American Chestnut trees. The American Elm has suffered a similar plight. Other trees under siege from foreign diseases or pests include the Dogwood, Eastern Hemlock, and Ash. Several years ago in my own neighborhood, I witnessed the almost total loss of leaves from oak and other trees from the Gypsy Moth caterpillar. Some trees succumbed. Along this line, some other non-native trees such as Tree-Of-Heaven crowd out desirable native trees.

Evidence is accumulating that some agricultural herbicides sprayed near forests are causing damage and death to trees. In recent years, farmers have been spraying an increasing amount of volatile herbicides - namely dicamba and 2,4-D that are causing widespread damage to trees, native plants and natural areas across the Midwest and South. Dicamba poison, once it's in the air, drips into orchards, state parks, cemeteries, towns, often miles from where it is sprayed on agriculture fields. It defoliates trees. The use of Dicamba often coupled with 2, 4-D, is extensively used in Midwestern states.

In Memory of Fr. John Rausch

CFTM's Tribute to Fr. John for Glenmary

Fr. John Sebastian Rausch died the morning of Sunday, Feb. 9. He was 75. John was a native of Philadelphia and served as a Glenmary missionary for 53 years. With a degree in economics from the University of Notre Dame, John's activism and writing on behalf of the Appalachian region were well known among the faith-based environmentalist movement and beyond.

Over the years, he served in positions with the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA), Appalachian Ministries Resource Center (AMERC), Christians for the Mountains, and various diocesan bodies, most recently the Laudato Si' Commission of the Diocese of Lexington.

John served as Director of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia from 2005 to 2013.

In the course of his ministry in Appalachia, John regularly led a tour that he named the "Pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Appalachia" and co-led an annual retreat on Cherokee Spirituality. He was also an award-winning columnist, writing about Catholic social teaching and other topics.

John was named a "Teacher of Peace" in 2007 by Pax Christi USA, and in 2016 he received CCA's Bishop Sullivan Peace and Justice Award.

Fr. John signs declaration by assembled religious leaders against mountaintop removal. Several in the group had never before experienced mountaintop removal, and experience that galvanized their future work.

This gathering was featured in the 8-part full length Renewal Im of 2008 as "A Crime Against Creation."

RM Media is currently producing a documentary about the extraordinary life and ministry of Father John Rausch and the impact he had in Appalachia and beyond.

A virtual Mass & Memorial service will be held on August 8, 2020 that will be streamed live on Facebook and YouTube.

February 12, 2020

Dear Brothers and Friends of Glenmary Home Missioners, On behalf of the Steering Committee of Christians For e Mountains, of which Fr. John Rausch was a long time member, we offer our prayers along with this memorial contribution to Glenmary Home Missioners.

Of course you already know about Fr. John's passion for social justice, his talent to communicate God's truth, his theological and pastoral skills, and his heart of love. We simply say "Amen" to what his associates and friends deeply feel.

As coordinator and co-founder of Christians For e Mountains, I got to know Fr. John through the writings he sent me, some of which we published in our Mountain Vision paper. Not infrequently we would receive contributions to our ministry in honor of Fr. John. He was always just a telephone call or email away from his wise counsel. In fact, just his past Saturday, only hours before he died, Fr. John sent a detailed email to us giving helpful suggestions in response to our asking for his counsel.

In 2007 Fr. John invited me to help out on a tour of mountaintop removal for religious leaders. This time, a 1m crew followed us and filmed one of eight segments of the Renewal Project released in 2008. Our segment featured Fr. John as narrator and three of us as evangelical Christians. I was to learn the 1m was shown widely, perhaps still is. Importantly, good fruits were borne from the tour. Matthew Sleeth founded Blessed Earth. Peter Illyn was so shocked by mountaintop removal that he rallied his Restoring Eden ministry to bring college-age students on their spring breaks into West Virginia, Kentucky, and SW Virginia to conduct family health histories of people living in close proximity to mountaintop removal. Our organization helped, and together under the auspices of Dr. Michael Hendryx, then of West Virginia University, several peer-reviewed articles were published showing high correlation of serious higher rates of cancer, pulmonary disease, cardiac disease, and asthma in the populations.

Fr. John took an idea hatched during one of our telephone conversations to conduct a Via Crucis (Stations of the Cross) in eastern Kentucky near a mountaintop removal operation. As all of his events I participated with under Fr. John's leadership, the event inspired all of us to deeper faith-stirred action.

Another time, Fr. John accepted our invitation to help conduct a tour of mountaintop removal in West Virginia for Protestant social conservatives. This successful outing resulted in favorable press and articles in publications often skeptical of environmental issues.

Fr. John would tell me he was writing his autobiography. Perhaps the fragments will be published. Most importantly, he has written his life onto many of us who by God's grace have had the privilege to know Fr. John. His blessing for us, no doubt, would be to serve God, our fellow humans, and creation with passion, dedication, sacrifice if called for, and joy. Yes, joy, for Fr. John waded into troubled deep issues and matters with joy, self-deprecating humor, courage, and confidence in the truth of the Gospel as good news.

With grateful appreciation for the life of Fr. John, and confidence in God's loving eternal embrace of our brother,

Allen Johnson, Coordinator
Bob Marshall, Treasurer
Janet Keating, Member
Patricia Hudson, Member

The Pandemic of Drug Addiction in Appalachia ---Allen Johnson

Early on, in the 1990's when the wrecking-ball plague slammed central Appalachia communities, the perjorative moniker "Hillbilly Heroin" got tagged onto opioid painkiller drug OxyContin. In 2001, the Guardian (British) newspaper could report that in the Mingo County, WV towns of Justice and Gilbert, four out of ten young adults were hooked. Hooked on what in effect is a synthetic heroin that when snorted or injected into a vein gives rise to let overdoses, car wrecks, suicides, loss of employment, family breakdown, deadened conscience, crime, and implosion of rural communities.

Sister Beth Davies, who runs an addiction treatment center in St. Charles, Virginia, described to me exactly how OxyContin came into Appalachia. Purdue Pharma was a small drug manufacturer owned by the Sackler family. They came up with OxyContin as a time-release opioid pain medication for advanced cancer patients. Washington County, Maine, and Davies' own Lee County tucked in the far western tail of Virginia had high numbers of people on Medicaid and also painful occupational injuries due to logging and coal work. Greedy company representatives introduced OxyContin to physicians as a non-addictive routine pain medication. Before long, treated patients were becoming addicted and experimenting. The young people were obtaining pills to feed their new addictions. Like an uncontrollable wild fire, the plague rapidly burned throughout Appalachia.

Barry Meier, a journalist with the New York Times researched and wrote *Pain Killer: A Wonder Drug's Trail of Addiction and Death* (Rodale, 2003). The book is a page-turner. The reader learns in intimate detail the story of Lindsay, a high school top-honor student and cheerleader from a leading family whose addiction leads her to stealing, failing grades, and a devastated family. The book details the heroic work of Dr. Art Van Zee and other community members who confront the evasive criminality of Purdue Pharma, inept and corrupt pharmacies and doctors, and doing nothing regulatory agencies.

After 25 Years, the Drug Scourge Continues

Slog forward two decades and the situation remains bleak over vast swaths of Appalachia. Employers complain of difficulty finding drug-free applicants for jobs. Courts cannot find enough foster homes for children of drug-dysfunctional parents. The that before the crisis was rare has become rampant.

I've just finished reading *Death in Mud Lick: A Coal Country Fight Against the Drug Companies* (Scribner, 2020) the author, Eric Eyre until recently a reporter for the Charleston Gazette-Mail newspaper, won a Pulitzer Prize for his investigation of the opioid crisis in West Virginia. In his new book, Eyre details the matrix of drug distributors, corrupt doctors, and shady pharmacies who fueled opioid addictions for huge profits. The overdose deaths piled up.

In 1971-72 I taught sciences at the high school in Crum, WV. Outside my classroom window I could see Kentucky just across the Tug River. Upstream ten miles is Kermit, WV, population 209. I still see Kermit in my mind as I ponder the fact that just two years 2007-2008, Jim Wooley's family-run Sav-Rite pharmacy sold nearly 9 million hydrocodone pills along with tens of thousands of oxycodone pills. That is eleven thousand painkillers per year for every resident of Kermit. People from multiple states were lined up for blocks at the drive-in window to get pills for their addictions. Hotdogs and sodas were sold to those waiting in line. Numerous other pharmacies throughout the region also sold vast quantities. The drug distributors representing several companies each sold vast quantities, defended their actions, while state and federal drug enforcement agencies chose to stay clueless. The overdose deaths piled up.

A matrix of drug distributors, corrupt doctors, and shady pharmacies fueled opioid addictions for huge profits.

Who is to blame? Fingers are always pointed to others. Addicts, being on the consumer end, are the easiest target. Yet too often doctors treated patients with powerful opioids unnecessarily, for too long, without monitoring, giving rise to addictions. And many treated addicts learned that they could sell extra pills for exorbitant prices on the street. Some doctors set up pain clinics that in effect were pill mills, with complicit pharmacies in cahoots. Distributors hid behind trade secrecy so as not to reveal the obscene amounts of pills they were selling to pharmacies. In West Virginia, the state pharmacy board simply ignored looking into the numbers. The federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) ignored the OxyContin outbreak during the early years and has been erratic at best since then.

In recent years, some crackdown on powerful opioids has moved addicts to available cheap heroin illegally smuggled into the U.S. and sold on the street. Sometimes it is laced with fentanyl that is especially deadly. Drug abuse leads to broken-down neighborhoods, poverty, crime, and despair, which tends to feed the cycle of drug use for the quick relief of alleviating hopelessness.

Childhood Trauma Risks Addiction

Gabor Matte, MD, wrote *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction* (North Atlantic Books, 2008), out of his work with drug addicts in Vancouver, BC. Matte shows how a brain's chemistry and receptor cells are altered through drug use to form addiction. He posits that a young child growing up in a high-stress environment wires the brain to be more predisposed to adult addiction. A child can experience long bouts of high stress through poverty, family discord, frequent moving, withholding of parental love, and physical and

emotional brutality.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are an identified set of ten ongoing traumas that predispose a child to have health and social difficulties as an adult. ACE is a diagnostic criteria that may include death or disappearance of a close family member, domestic violence, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional neglect, household substance abuse, mental illness, family member in jail. ACEs grew out of a large-scale American public health research study, the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE study). Children who experience four or more of the ten are at high risk for adult dysfunction such as crime, marriage failure, alcohol and drug addiction, and unemployment.

Let's All of Us Step Up to Engage Addictions

How can society help those trapped in harmful addictions such as drugs, alcohol, pornography, compulsive gambling, reckless spending? Treatment programs are expensive and often take many months or years to be effective. Alcoholics Anonymous and its counterpart, Narcotics Anonymous can be effective with its peer-based accountability. The Christian-based organization, Celebrate Recovery, facilitates local peer-accountability programs that involve Christian discipleship, worship, and committed prayer to address any addictive behavior. Teen Challenge operates inpatient bases for addicts to recover over a typical year of residency.

Stemming the illegal smuggling of drugs into the United States should continue. However, slowing down consumer demand is the important key. Drug distributors, pharmacies, doctors, regulatory agencies, law enforcement, mental health agencies, and social services providers must all be vigilant and responsible. Public institutions such as schools can help. Private citizens and community organizations can strengthen neighborhoods and reach out to vulnerable populations such as children in at-risk families. Recovering addicts whose past has led them into poverty and family dissolution can be offered employment opportunities. Churches must step up to provide intensive support, discipleship, and fellowship for recovering addicts.

The drug pandemic will not go away on its own. It cannot be ignored away, walled away, policed away, treated away, or wished away. At the roots, it is a spiritual societal malaise that we all can shoulder up in prayer, personal involvement, and Christ-like love.

“Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime.

Hymn During COVID

God be with you till we meet again;
By His counsels guide, uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again;
Neath His wings protecting hide you;
Daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again;
When life's perils thick confound you;
Put His arms unfailing round you;
God be with you till we meet again

(written 1880 by Jeremiah Rankin)

Let all that draws breath
Now give deepest Thanksgiving
to the Source of Breath

—Vic Hummert reflects on Psalm 150:6

Breath of Life for All: Haiku Poetry in Defense of Nature

I have a dream that one day ... little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. (M.L. King, jr.)

The Real Problem

I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that with thirty years of good science, we could address those problems.

But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy.... And to deal with those we need a spiritual and cultural transformation. And we scientists don't know how to do that.

(James Gustave Speth, b. 1942)

“Never before has the Church needed so badly the presence and pain that is the prophet in our midst, whose only criteria is faithfulness to the Spirit.”

Sister Beth Davies, CND
(see page 19)

John Lewis

(1940-2020)

Sermon to the Flowers of the Field

—Daniel Salomon

Attention owners of the field,
I want to talk with each and every one of you,
I want to preach you a sermon and give you my blessing.
Jesus once said that Solomon in all his glory could not compare to the lilies of the field.
If what Jess said was true,
and if an environmental economist were to do a cost-benefit analysis of you, using Jesus as a measure,
then you quarter of an acre of flowers,
Are wealthier than all the assets Bill Gates has in the stock market.
You, a stand of only a few hundred flowers,
Would be wealthier than the trillions of dollars which make up the GNP of America, the wealthiest country in the world.
Because you are made by the Creator of the universe,
You are filled with his love and mercy,
Your missions in life, to praise His name and bring joy to his heart.
Walking among you, is greater than walking among royalty.
So, I want to tell you, owners of the field.
God loves you.
God puts a special blessing on your being.
May you praise Him as long as you live?
You are instruments of his peace.
You sowed seeds of light,
Where there was darkness
For all mortals who gaze upon you
You planted seeds of joy where there was sadness.
I love you owners of the field.
God, I praise you o God for filling the world with such beauty, For making the seeming chaos of an ecosystem as manicured as a flower garden.
God put a special blessing on each and every one of these owners of the field.
A-men.

Long-time friend Daniel Salomon wrote “Sermon For The Flowers Of the Field” for the Scarab a poetry anthology of Salisbury State University while a student in 2000. Daniel Salomon lives in Portland, Oregon, is active in his local Catholic Church, and has been a prolific writer since his high school days.
https://www.amazon.com/Daniel-A.-Salomon/e/B0045SY54K/ref=ntt_dp_epwbk_0

Upcoming for Mountain Vision

CFTM is planning its fourteenth edition for spring 2020 as our schedule permits. 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).