

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

The Mountain Vision

The Quarterly Publication of *Christians For The Mountains*

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SERVICE TO GOD'S CREATION

God owns the earth and all it contains, the world and all who live in it (Psalm 24:1). That scripture in its various translations is a description of a property right. Just as an artist owns her painting, a composer his composition, and an inventor his new mousetrap, so the Creator has ultimate jurisdiction over the Earth and its contents.

Christians For The Mountains (CFTM) used this scripture at its founding in 2005. For one thing, there are those who think of Appalachia as theirs to plunder irrespective of the wreckage left in its wake. Yet to defile or destroy "God's property" is an egregious sin that God will judge (Revelation 11:18). God has a right to His creation that trumps any property owner's entitlement claims. Those who do have court-house recorded deeds have the responsibility to see that its use is compatible with God's healing, restoring, justice-oriented purposes in creation. There is a principle that asserts that those who exploit the land are apt to exploit people. To paraphrase James 3:9-12), sweet water cannot come from a polluted spring.

The most important action we can do to nurture and defend creation is to strengthen our own spiritual character. God's anointing over our maturing character will then through us produce good fruits of justice, restoration, and positive change.

There are a number of lists of Christian virtues, including the "fruits of The Spirit" found in Galatians 5, as well as the countering virtues in contrast to the seven deadly sins. Underpinning all of them are the three cardinal virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love.

This is the second issue of our quarterly newspaper, *The Mountain Vision*. We are sending it complimentary without obligation. Some of you might notice

that since the first issue came out in December, this issue is more than a tad late. And so you would be right. We had projected this spring edition for April. But then, the dog ate our homework. First, the editor, Allen Johnson, suffered a severe left hand injury this past spring that curtailed typing. Second, that same editor over-extended himself and over-estimated his capacity to meet the timeframe objective. *Mea Culpa*. So the editor now commits himself to start the next edition right away. There is no shortage of material to use. And we welcome you to contribute your suggestions.

Tributes to the late Larry Gibson were prominent in our first edition of *The Mountain Vision*. While we move along we carry Larry's vision and passion, as John Murdock writes (p. 6). Sage Russo writes the second article in his series on the Gospel heart of our work (p. 7). CFTM Steering Committee member Fr. John Rausch gives an overview of the long-standing Christian justice advocacy organization he directs, the Catholic Committee of Appalachia (p. 13). Bill McKibben challenged the gathering of religious leaders at a prayer breakfast in Washington this past May. We filmed his talk which eventually will be linked on our website, but read for now excerpts of his remarks (p. 14). Water conservation must be a priority in our nation (pp. 10, 11). CFTM continues direct involvement in health research and advocacy in central Appalachia (pp. 4, 8, 9).

We hope and pray that you are inspired by this issue. Thank you for your time, attention, and efforts toward the harmonious, just, and livable creation community that God wants for all of us. *Te Deum laudamus*.

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A Precautionary Tale by Allen Johnson, Editor

Two months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks upon the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon, Vice President Dick Cheney said, "If there's a 1% chance that Pakistani scientists are helping Al Qaeda build or develop a nuclear weapon, we have to treat it as a certainty in terms of our response..." The Vice President argued for the necessity of a strong U.S. response in the face of a "low-probability, high-impact event."

Cheney's quote inspired the title for Ron Suskind's book on the war on terrorism, *The One Percent Doctrine*, published in 2006. A flurry of talk followed on the "1 % Doctrine's" applicability to Climate Change. After all, climatologists at the time were concluding a 95% probability that the trajectory of rising global greenhouse emissions would result in massive global calamities. In other words, a **high probability, high impact event**. Stating as rationale the precaution of weapons of mass destruction, the United States launched destructive, costly wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

But my point here is that during his full 8-year term, Vice President Cheney consistently ignored climatologists' science-based evidence of impending perilous climate change. Indeed, the Vice President promoted energy policies that exacerbated the risk of even more severe climate change.

I bring Cheney up as an example of his selective use of the Precautionary Principle. But first, allow me a definition.

The Precautionary Principle states that when there are indications of a threat of serious harm to human health or the environment, then precaution should be taken. The more serious the consequences of the threat, or the more certainty that the threat is imminent, the more exercise of caution, containment, or avoidance should be exerted.

We use the Precautionary Principle every day. Parents lock up hazardous household chemicals, medicines, and guns away from their young tots. We look both ways before we cross the street. People buy insurance policies to prevent a major financial disaster. We place smoke alarms in our homes. We wear seatbelts. Locks and keys are bought and used. Folks exercise, watch what and how much they eat and get medical checkups, knowing the high risk for negative consequences if they ignore good health habits. We know the pithy sayings about precaution. *Look before you leap. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.*

In numerous passages we see Jesus warning his followers to take precaution against spiritual mishap or danger. *When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times (Matthew 16:2,3).* In a well-known passage, Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount by alerting that those who hear and act upon his teachings will hold up during times of trouble, while those who disregard his teachings will fail (Matthew 7:24-27).

The prophet Ezekiel (33:1-6) says that a watchman who sees a danger coming must sound the alarm, for if he is silent then he bears the guilt of the disaster that befalls. If the watchman's alarm is heeded, the people will be saved. If the people disregard the watchman's alarm, they bear the guilt of disaster.

Let's now look at applying the Precautionary Principle to a current issue. 24 peer-reviewed health studies point to air and water pollution from *Mountaintop Removal* as contributing to increased rates of cancer, breathing disorders, heart disease, and birth defects. For those suffering from these maladies, the **impact is high**. And based on a lot of research, the **probability appears to be high**. The introduced ACHE Act bill appeals to the Precautionary Principle to place a moratorium on new Mountaintop Removal permits with a concurrent federal health study.

The Precautionary Principle is easy to understand. We exercise it in our daily lives. So let's exercise it on policy matters.

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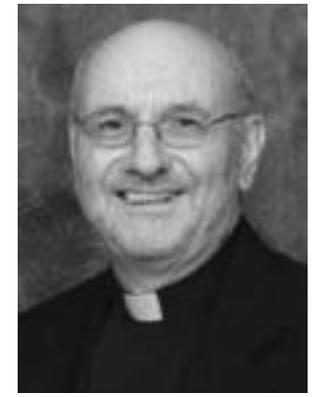
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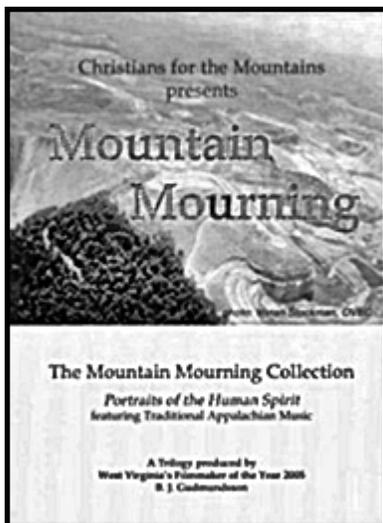
Robert Sage Russo, Laura Dagley, Allen Johnson (Kayford, 9-2-2012)

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CFTM has 501(c)3 nonprofit tax exempt status through a partnership with World Stewardship Institute. 887 Sebastopol Rd Ste A, Santa Rosa, California 95407-6828. Contact Person is Fred Krueger. Telephone 707-573-3161.		Mountain Mourning DVD \$10 (Special member rate. Includes postage and handling) Note: Associate, Patron, and Sponsor levels will receive a free copy. Patron and Sponsor levels will receive an extra 40% discount on multiple orders.		
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Mountain Mourning Collection DVD



Film is a very powerful medium in which to share with others the devastating impacts that Mountaintop Removal Mining has on the people, culture, and mountains of Appalachia. BJ Gudmundsson of **Patchwork Films** produced our **Mountain Morning Collection** for *Christians for the Mountains* several years ago, yet these films continue to teach and inspire. This collection of films is applauded by Appalachian mountain people since it uses their own voices and music to tell their stories in the context of mountaintop removal.

This DVD consists of three films of about 20 minutes each, along with a couple of shorter clips.

Mountain Mourning is our title film. Traditional music, local voices, and a biblical framework tell the nuts and bolts of Mountaintop Removal.

In **Look What They've Done**, Maria Gunnoe weaves a thread around our hearts as she surveys the aftermath of Mountaintop Removal near her backyard. Her family's gospel music spills forth as the foundation for her courage and strength.

Keeper of the Mountains is an emotionally-charged film. We recommend seeing this film last. Larry Gibson, whose ancestral home is being destroyed by Mountaintop Removal, brings out the pathos and tragedy of this practice. Larry Gibson takes a band of friends through what he calls "Hell's Gate, and in one breathtaking moment, they come across "the end of the world.

This resource is a very valuable tool for education and advocacy as well as a portrait of what is taking place in God's Appalachian Mountains. Several thousand copies have been distributed and shown in homes, churches, environmental meetings, and on television. For more information on the DVD or to order a copy please visit www.patchworkfilms.com or through our website www.christiansforthemountains.org/ Also see membership options.

Partnering with *Christians For The Mountains*

CFTM invites you to be a member partner in the service of this ministry. This year is our first official membership drive. Become a first-rounder!

Since its founding in 2005, an "informal membership" has been open and welcoming to anyone who aligns with the principles and goals of CFTM, without any membership fee. However, with so many opportunities open to us, our Steering Committee believes that developing a clear and unambiguous membership will enable us to better disseminate information, invite action, and incorporate the skills and abilities of our supporters.

CFTM has no ambition or sense of calling to be a mega-organization. CFTM partners with existing religious groups and environmental justice organizations to bolster their own good efforts. Indeed, at a minimum, CFTM "tithes" its income and provides staff time to projects driven by other organizations. Our "gifting" will continue and expand. CFTM is now well-positioned to increasingly influence constructive religious dialogue and action, public opinion, and public policy. Developing a core body of members will increase our organizational capacity toward this.

To join, please send us information such as on the above coupon, or sign up online. If you are joining us, we know that you care very much about justice, protection, and restoration for God's creation. We invite any additional information you feel comfortable sharing that will help us to help you as a productive member, such as your employment, skills, religious affiliation and roles, environmental and social justice roles, personal involvements, volunteerism, special interests, and how you might think CFTM and you can help each other out. Please understand that we do not share personal information.

You will receive a quarterly newsletter, occasional emails (that you can opt out of), and an occasional special deal if it falls our way. Most important, we will work together for biblical justice and "peace in the valley."

CFTM has 501(c)3 nonprofit tax status through a partnership with World Stewardship Institute. 887 Sebastopol Road Suite A, Santa Rosa, California 95407-6828. Financial reports are available upon request.

Christian Students Perform Valuable Health Research on Mountaintop Removal



Student Researchers prepare the route. (R) Peter Illyn

Critical to the Church's mission is encouraging, equipping, anointing, and sending forth our Christian youth in service to humanity. Jesus is quite clear as he states that those who help the hungry, thirsty, the alien, the homeless, the sick, the prisoner, that is, those who are needy, are doing that service to and for Him. (Matthew 25:31-46). Simply sitting in comfortable church pews as the sum total of one's religion is not good for any of us, but it is especially spiritually deadening for those emerging into adulthood. Just as our physical muscles grow when exercised and nourished, and atrophy when sedentary, so our spiritual faith is only strong when it is exercised.

Over the last three years, *Restoring Eden* has brought over 200 Christian college students on their spring breaks to do on-the-ground community health research in communities being affected by mountaintop removal coal mining (MTR) in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Virginia. Results from the first two studies have been analyzed and published in peer-reviewed journals, showing community health in Appalachia is significantly impacted by MTR. The Appalachian Community Health Survey Project (ACHSP) is an alternative spring break service project hosted by Restoring Eden for college students to serve in Appalachia.

The lives of many of these students have been profoundly impacted. Laura Dagley participated in the first research project based in West Virginia in 2011. This led to her becoming a part-time worker for *Christians For The Mountains* as she continued to pursue her nursing degree at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. Dagley's gentle, compassionate personality coupled with her intense sense of justice has produced "good fruits" in influencing and encouraging people to advocate for God's cause of justice. In numerous instances, student groups have returned to their campuses to distribute literature, give presentations, perform class assignments, and write letters to their legislators in advocacy for Appalachian health. Most

importantly, many have experienced more vision and vibrancy in their own Christian walks. Wherever their lives' journeys take them, their Appalachian experience will accompany them as advocates and servants more sensitive, equipped, and envisioned to the betterment of their local communities.

For the past three years, Dr. Michael Hendryx and a team of community health and cancer epidemiology researchers at West Virginia University (WVU) have designed an IRB-approved, self-assessment health inventory to measure the effects of living in close proximity to MTR sites. Restoring Eden has recruited and organized nearly 200 students from over 20 different colleges to come to Appalachia on their spring breaks to conduct these door-to-door health inventories with residents living in identified impact and control communities. In addition to detailed personal health questions and household health histories, the surveys have included heavy metal hair sample testing, spirometer readings to measure lung health, and blood oxygen level measurements.

Christians For The Mountains (CFTM) has been a leading regional coordinating partner for all three of these studies. CFTM has provided substantial funding, staff resources, its networking capacity,



Students received extensive training to conduct the research

and its logistical capabilities to the project. Thanks also go to direct grant support from the One Foundation, and CFTM project support from Civil Society Institute. Project logistics were also supported by members of citizen advocacy organizations located in the states that were researched. Other research going on besides that involving our students includes air quality sampling by Dr. Michael McCawley of WVU, and collection and analysis of soil, air, and water by the United States Geological Survey. Numerous peer-reviewed studies have also utilized data from the Centers For Disease Control.

Two peer-reviewed studies published by Dr. Hendryx in the *Journal of Community Health* (August 2011) and the *Journal of Rural Health* (March 2013) using the data collected by Restoring Eden, show that individuals living in communities impacted by MTR have worse self-rated health status, illness symptoms across multiple organ systems, lifetime and current asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and hypertension rates than those living in communities of Appalachia without MTR. The most striking finding from the studies indicated that serious disease and cancer was twice as likely to be found in impacted communities. Additionally, Christian college students, many from the most conservative Christian schools in their area, witnessed and understood the externalized environmental and human health impacts of MTR. They encountered first-hand that the data being collected reveals an alarming relationship between community health and MTR, illustrating the idea of 'externalized health costs' in ethical decision making, especially around issues of dirty versus clean energy.

The studies published with the data collected from the ACHSP have been used by activists, both local and nationwide, to empower voices of justice to the residents of rural Appalachia. Nationally, they have joined a growing body of research in an appeal to Congress with the Appalachian Community Health Emergency Act (H.R. 526), which calls for a moratorium on MTR until the Secretary of Health and Human Services "publishes a determination that such mining does not present any health risk to individuals in the surrounding communities." The results of the health surveys have also created a stir among the coal industry. Being concerned that the scientific data gathered by Restoring Eden and WVU will limit the number of MTR permits issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Environmental Protection, three coal companies (Alpha Natural Resources, Arch Coal, and Patriot Coal) have backed a \$15 million campaign, the Appalachian Research Initiative for Environmental Science (ARIES) to discredit the research with their own industry-funded studies.

Future research is on the drawing board, to build and expand upon our developing capacity to capably perform this important work. Leads for funding will be greatly appreciated! Contact us if you would like to be directly involved.

Robert "Sage" Russo of CFTM was invaluable with his knowledge of the Virginia area in setting up the mapping and routing for the student researchers this past March. Russo says, "It's not okay for the land to be used as a sacrifice zone and it's not okay for people to be used as sacrifice for the nation's energy. We've got to care for them as whole people."

(see bottom of next page for more photos)

Sacrificial Progress? by John Murdock

"Development requires bounteous and low-cost energy, which involves sacrificing the pre-industrial farming society with its perceived peaceful and sustainable life." So reads the introduction to the chapter simply entitled "Coal."

I still enjoy the anachronism known as a *library*, partly because of the unexpected. I never would have clicked on *Economic Geology: Principles and Practice* at Amazon.com, but there it was, strangely calling to me from the "New Books" table with its sad cover shot of a large open pit mine. It didn't hold my attention long with its textbook style prose and lifeless schematics of mineral extraction operations—valley fill coal mining can look so sleek and clean in black and white as to become boring—but that one blunt, unpoetic sentence quoted above stuck with me.

The sacrifice of a "peaceful and sustainable life" does indeed seem to be the price "development" requires, and it is presented, to paraphrase *The Godfather*, as an offer we can't refuse. Walter L. Pohl, author of this somewhat less riveting read, almost seems to catch himself mid-gulp. Maybe, this is not such a good deal after all, and so he includes the word "perceived," giving us license to nod and silently succor ourselves with the thought that the *good old days* probably weren't so good after all. "It's for the best," we tell ourselves.

Yet, as an intriguing *American Experience* documentary on PBS has reminded me, at least one don of the industrial family came to inwardly loath his choice. Henry Ford is in rare company when it comes to changing the world. His assembly line revolutionized manufacturing and the nature of *work* itself, not necessarily for the better. *Shop Class as Soulcraft* author Matthew Crawford reminds us, "When Henry Ford introduced the assembly line in 1913, workers simply walked out." Though there is now a certain nostalgia for the loss of *good jobs* from the auto industry; amazingly, according to Crawford, at its onset it took 963 hires to fill 100 spots on the line. Used to the community of the workshop and the mental

dexterity needed to do the varied work, eight of nine would decide that even Ford's relatively high wages were just not worth the trade-off.

In his classic *The Conservative Mind*, Russell Kirk lamentingly called Henry Ford "the Midas of velocity" and with good reason—everything he touched ran faster, perhaps faster than the healthy speed of life. His was also the golden touch, and with his vast fortune, Ford set out to recreate what his assembly lines and cars had destroyed. His Greenfield Village would become the home to dozens of historic buildings including the Wright Brothers' cycle shop (the sort of place that the 863 preferred). It served as a nostalgic storehouse of a then vanishing era and a telephone free respite for Mr. Ford himself. On an even grander scale than this 240 acre retreat was Fordlandia, the farm boy turned auto magnate's attempt to build a Connecticut sized agricultural utopia based on American small town values in the jungles of Brazil.

Meanwhile, hired thugs intimidated and sometimes beat the cog-like workers at the Ford Motor Company's Rouge Factory, a massive temple of steel and automation just a few miles from Greenfield Village. Employees were barred from even talking to one other. Pleasant conversations were also rarities between Henry and his only child Edsel, who was not tough enough for his father's liking. Sacrifices must be made.

Returning to *Economic Geology* and flipping on to the next chapter—scintillatingly entitled "Petroleum and natural gas deposits"—I note the opening quote, taken from *The Economist*:

The Stone Age did not end because the world ran out of stones, and the oil age will end long before the world runs out of oil. The problem of oil is not its shortage but its concentration.

The thesis of the chapter is that there are lots of hydrocarbons underground, the trick is finding them in economically extractable concentrations.

That may well have been what *The Economist* had in mind too, but the logic does not match the facts behind the first quoted sentence. There was never a real problem with rock availability. Even flint, valuable to pre-historic man as the raw material for spear tips and tools, is still relatively abundant at the Earth's surface. No, the Stone Age passed into pre-history because people found better ways of doing things, like metalworking, and they voluntarily left their rocks behind.

For much of human history, something has passed muster as a *better way* because it was faster, stronger, cheaper, or easier to use (a mindset quite consistent with Henry Ford's basic vision, if on a smaller scale). The challenge for humanity today is whether we can properly perceive the contrarian possibility that slower, simpler, durable and saner might now be the *better way*. Will we take a step away from the cult of development, progress, power, and profit back towards the peaceful and sustainable ways of life we've been sacrificing for far too long now?

The ancient wisdom book of Proverbs advises, "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint," and it further asserts that "a good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children." The modern way of *Economic Geology* in contrast wears out people and places in the quest for short term riches and leaves a pit of troubles for future generations. Maybe my library should consider adding an "Old Books" table.



John Murdock works as a natural resources attorney in Washington, D.C., and has written on environmental matters for numerous outlets including *The New Atlantis*, *First Things*, and *Creation Care*.



A pharmacist, Kristina Kistler volunteered her time in training and quality control



Jen & Alex from Civil Society Inst. with Allen

*** NOTE: See previous page for story***



Friendly smiles to accompany "knocks on doors"

Remembering a Hero Who Ascended the Mountain of the Lord

by John Murdock

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews famously lists giants of the faith, and the author then challenges his readers to “run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” At barely five feet tall and with a formal education that did not exceed the fifth grade, Larry Gibson was an unlikely giant of a man. Yet, because of his mountain still stands and he has left a legacy of perseverance for the ages.

Christians for the Mountains, often quotes Larry's piercing question, “What in your life is so precious that it's not for sale?” One can almost see Larry asking himself that question in 1986 and answering, “Home.” From then on, this most unlikely activist poured his considerable energy and dogged determination into stopping the practice of mountaintop removal mining—and saving the place where his family had lived since the 1780s, his beloved Kayford Mountain. Along the way his “on the grid” cabin up on the mountain has been burglarized and scarred by bullet holes, his dogs have been tortured and killed, and multi-ton boulders propelled by some of the 3,000,000 pounds of explosives used every working day in Appalachia have landed on his property. Still, Larry did not budge and he took his message around the world, drawing recognition that he never expected or sought (including being featured as a “CNN Hero”).

I met Larry through my volunteer work in the Christian “creation care” movement—wearing his trademark orange escent yellow “Love Them or Leave Them, Just Don't Destroy Them” t-shirt he is hard to miss—and in late August I travelled to Kayford for the first time. I went to help prepare for a Labor Day gospel music festival that Larry's group, Keeper of the Mountains, was holding to educate others about mountaintop removal mining and uplift those already involved in this struggle.

Surrounded on three sides by the virtual moonscape that is a mountaintop removal site, Larry has succeeded in protecting a small 50 acre island of green, answering his own question by repeatedly turning down financially lucrative offers. The trees still grow and the flowers still bloom on Kayford, but one can walk a few hundred yards to what Larry called the “gates of Hell” and look down at the remnants of other mountains to which a young Larry would have looked up. In the distance, he would point out the next ridges set to fall.

Three white crosses stand at one of the highest points on the spared land, marking a special place where members of the old Kayford Church would come to pray. The sanctuary and a schoolhouse, along with the dozens of families who used to live on the mountain and all them, are now gone. Larry did not want this heritage to be lost, though, and so he, Allen, and I used that August day to clear brush from

around the crosses to ensure all three would be seen as visitors approached the concert site. We worked hard, but we also connected with each other and the history of the place as we sat and rested at the foot of the cross. To close the day, Allen and I prayed for Larry, and this tenacious wolverine of a man—who had been frustrated at times by the small number of Christians who get out of the pews to stand with him for justice—seemed to beat back tears.

Two weeks later, Larry Gibson died of a heart attack at the age of 66. It was a shock to many including me, but the location was no surprise. Larry passed on while caring for his mountain. His body now lies there; in the family cemetery, up high, just on the other side of a small valley from the crosses that stand visible to all. Soon after, several hundred of Larry's family and friends, including his wife and children, a 98 year old former congressman, and the poet laureate of West Virginia gathered in the state capital to remember the biggest little man we ever knew. Larry's best friend told of his faith in the redeeming death of Christ, and several expressed their firm belief that Larry had heard the words “well done” when he set foot upon the “mountain of the Lord” of which David wrote in Psalm 24.

What does West Virginia story have to do with us in northern Virginia? Well, to be blunt, most of the coal derived from mountaintop removal mining goes to power our homes and offices. As one Charleston speaker put it, “Appalachia gets one third of the electricity but 100% of the problems.” Few of us know the full costs involved in keeping our thermostat at 72 degrees year round. If we did we might do as Bill and Tara Haley have done at Corhaven and choose to support wind power or other sources of electrons that do not require the elimination of mountains or endanger the health of our neighbors who live on them. (Now windmills required, by the way. Search “Dominion Green Power” to find out about an easy but effective “on the grid” option.)

(Continued on page 7)

Larry grew up in the hills and “hollers” of West Virginia. The son of a coal miner, Gibson's family life was marked by domestic violence and true privation at times, but he found joy in the woods where he counted a three legged fox and a bobcat as his pets. At one trying point, the shade of a willow tree was the closest thing to a roof over his young head before his father moved the family away to search for work. Larry then spent his early adulthood as what one friend called a “young punk” working in the industrial towns of the Midwest.

In the 1980s, after he suffered a major on-the-job injury, he returned to his West Virginia birthplace and was horrified to see the landscape of his youth literally being torn apart by a violent new mining technique that stripped away anything and everything above a seam of coal and dumped the mountainside into streambeds until the valley was no more. The people nearby faced polluted air and water and other hazards like massive waste ponds that would sometimes give way, releasing toxic deluge on those living below. Some have described the process as “strip-mining on steroids,” with similarly unhealthy side-effects.

My friend Allen Johnson, leader of the group

The Gospel and Community Investment

By Robert (Sage) Phillips Russo

(continued from Page 6)

At a minimum, if we heard a little of the deafening boom coming from the mountains when we turn them on, we might be more likely to change to some energy efficient bulbs and flip off the lights when we leave a room.

The memorial service closed by remembering Larry's oft repeated challenge to those first learning the sad truth of mountaintop removal mining. Lots of people would look out at the destruction visible from Kayford Mountain and say, "Somebody ought to do something about this," to which Larry would respond, "Well, you are somebody." In Charleston, dozens who had been touched by Larry's life and witness donned day-glow shirts and walked on stage to declare, "I am somebody." And each of us can be a "somebody" too, for as our own Book of Common Prayer reminds us, echoing sentiments found throughout Scripture, mountains were raised up for a purpose higher than being brought low: "Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills, and all that grows upon the earth, praise him and highly exalt him forever."

John Murdock & Larry Gibson (8-25-13)

John Murdock is a member of The Falls Church Anglican, which publishes The Current magazine that this article was first published (Jan-Feb, 2013), and has granted us the courteous permission to republish it. Visit www.tfcanglican.org/

Please Support Larry Gibson's legacy and hope. Larry Gibson founded the The Keepers of the Mountain Foundation as a 501-c-3 nonprofit organization to educate and inspire people to work for healthier, more sustainable mountain communities and to end Mountaintop Removal. Your financial and/or volunteer help is needed. Visit www.mountainkeeper.blogspot.com.

A Dying Appalachian Livelihood

Coal is in decline and the local economy is hurting. In 1997 coal production was peaking at nearly 300 million tons and has since dropped to around 180 million tons in 2013. That's a roughly 100 million ton decline. The U.S. Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook has greatly shifted their predictions over the past 20 years and now shows Appalachian coal production decreasing by another 100 million tons in the next 7 years. With many coal-fired power plants scheduled for retirement the market is simply dropping out for Appalachian coal.

This has real effects in many communities. People's jobs are disappearing and the little economy that is there is rapidly falling. Counties in WV, VA, KY and TN with coal based economies are very vulnerable to diving even deeper into poverty. Simply put, their economy is dying.

Everyday we as people live dying, slowly decaying due to sin. We want to get better but there seems to be no way to revive ourselves with our own strength and especially in the same routines. Ephesians 2 puts it bluntly - we were dead in sin. In these counties of Appalachia, just like each and every one of us in life, there is a need for transition. However, there is a real challenge to see past the current ways of doing things to see an alternate new life. This is the grip of sin in our lives, and it takes honest humility and even despair to move forward.

("But when he came to himself..." (Luke 15:17).

We will stay in the grip of death until we can humbly admit our need for not just help, but full rescue. Even though we were dead in our sins, God in His rich mercy, rescued us giving us new life in Christ Jesus, where the old has passed away and we are completely made new (Eph 2:4-5; 2 Cor. 5:17).

Just like God pursues us, investing Himself in us, and working in us to transform us, we need to invest ourselves in these communities. Investing in community restoration means investing in the economic, social, creative, and spiritual health of the community. Since God is about relationship, we invest not just in the economy, but in the people. God doesn't see us as just a mass of humans, but knows each of us by name, and tends to each of us individually and collectively.

Gospel-centered investing means helping nurture the creative spirit that God has put inside us and others, not being stuck in the past, but envisioning the new work that can now happen. Prayerfully, collectively listening to the dreams of people; asking the question: What may God want

to do here? Seeking the new life and livelihood based in justice for people financially rich and poor, and based in biblical covenantal stewardship from our covenantal relationship with God.

New Life Based in Grace

Too often we ask the question, what makes a community deserving of such investment or what makes people worthy to give their input? This question is anti-gospel. The answer is nothing. The question has to be thrown out. None of us deserved Jesus' work on the cross and resurrection to be applied to us; freely bestowing to us new restored life. It is not seeking out the poorest community, however noble that may seem, or the one that seems easiest to transition. God did not look upon us with that criteria. We were all equally impossible to restore without God's mighty move of love. Yet He restores all who ask. May we think about the whole person and each of them. A new just and sustainable economy is a good goal, but it can not be the goal. It extends from the old mines, to the drugs, to the classrooms. It's from the pew bench to the park bench and the mountain streams, for worship of the Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer, is a way of life (Romans 12). May we invest in God's Appalachia in ways that glorify our Savior

Editor's Note: This is the second in a quarterly series by Russo exploring how the gospel relates to other aspects of CFTM. Future topics will include the restoration of people's health, care for the land, and biblical justice within the context of God's Kingdom work through CFTM. Russo holds an M.Div from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, and is doing church mission work alongside his wife, Jessi, in the Asheville, NC area in addition to his work with CFTM.

Robert Phillips (Sage) Russo with his wife, Jessi Nixon Russo.

How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
"Your God reigns!" (Isaiah 52:7)

Poisoning Appalachia?

Mountaintop Removal coal extraction is ugly. Once lush wooded mountains are decapitated with powerful explosives and enormous machinery. First-timers ying over in a small plane often gasp when the green forests below open up into vast tracts of scarred moonscape. Yes, ugly. But as the mining industry says, making sausage is ugly, too.

But uglier still, indeed downright evil, is when people get sick and die from someone else's profit-seeking pollution. Research from two dozen peer-reviewed studies points to much worse health among people living in proximity to mountaintop removal operations. Tests show high levels of air and water pollutants. Beyond the cold facts of scientific research are more and more hospitalizations and funerals of friends, neighbors, and family members.

Stop the poison! Support the ACHE Act!

e ACHE Act Bill

HR 526, reintroduced Feb. 6, 2013 by Rep. John Yarmuth (D-KY) and Rep. Lousie Slaughter (D-NY) and joined by 22 other original co-sponsors. More are being added.

Calls for a moratorium on new mountaintop removal permits, or expansions of existing permits.

Requires air and water monitoring at existing permitted MTR operations, to be reported to the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

HHS conducts a comprehensive health study in Appalachian MTR communities on health disparities.

Study is paid for by a one-time fee on MTR operators.

Secretary of HHS reports to Congress.

e Appalachian Community Health Emergency Act HR 526 (e ACHE Act)

Official Summary

This summary was written by the Congressional Research Service, a nonpartisan arm of the Library of Congress.

Appalachian Communities Health Emergency Act or the ACHE Act - Requires the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to conduct support comprehensive studies on the health impacts of mountaintop removal coal mining on individuals in the surrounding communities.

Directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), upon receipt of a report on study results, to publish a determination of whether such mining presents any health risks to individuals in those communities.

Defines "mountaintop removal coal mining" as surface coal mining that uses blasting with explosives in the steep slope regions of Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Virginia. Prohibits issuance of an authorization for any mountaintop removal coal mining project (or expansion), under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (commonly known as the Clean Water Act) or the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, until and unless the Secretary publishes a determination that such mining does not present any health risk to individuals in the surrounding communities.

Imposes requirements for continuous monitoring of air, noise, and water pollution and frequent monitoring of soil until a determination by the Secretary is made.

Assesses a one-time fee upon persons that conduct such mining projects sufficient to cover the federal cost of the health studies and pollution monitoring required by this Act.

Full text of the HR 526 can be accessed at the following Link.

<http://www.christiansforthemountains.org/site/Topics/Issues/MTR/HR526.pdf>

Health Impacts of Mountaintop Removal

Preventative action in the face of uncertainty is warranted. The findings in this report make clear that there is sufficient documentation of the hazards of MTR mining to place an immediate moratorium on MTR mining until such time as health studies have been conducted that provide a clearer understanding of the associations between adverse health impacts, notably adverse reproductive outcomes, and MTR mining. In addition, during the moratorium period, appropriate safeguards including remediation and engineering controls should be implemented to mitigate existing air and water pollution related to MTR mining activities. (from the Statement of The National Commission to the Center for Health, Environment, & Justice, April, 2013)

The Center for Health, Environment, & Justice sponsored a National Commission of top environmental and health experts to review their documentation that summarizes the studies on health in mountaintop removal communities. The National Commission report was released at a Press Conference in Washington, DC on April 23, 2013. Included in the findings: A 5% higher rate of Cancer in the MTR exposed Coal River communities, which, if representative of the entire Central Appalachian region, translates to an additional 60,000 mining county residents with cancer.

After adjusting for factors such as poverty rate, percent with college education or higher, obesity, smoking, and access to primary care physicians, chronic Chronic Cardiovascular Disease mortality rates are significantly higher in counties with active MTR mining than in counties exposed to other types of mining or no mining at all. These mortality rates seem to increase as a function of greater levels of surface mining.

Birth Defect rates are 26% higher in MTR areas compared to non-mining areas. Circulatory and respiratory birth defects in MTR areas are double.

Download the complete Report to the National Commission.

http://www.chej.org/wp-content/uploads/MTR_Mining_Final_April_18_2013.pdf

Reintroduced ACHE Act Is the No-Brainer Bill of the Year: by Je Biggers Will Congress Finally Deal With is Health Emergency? Hu ngton Post, February 7, 2013

With the daily silica-laced blizzard from ve million pounds of toxic explosives in the background, U.S. Rep. John Yarmuth and Rep. Louise Slaughter reintroduced the biggest no-brainer bill of the year for Congress -- the Appalachian Community Health Emergency Act.

Given its 40-year rap sheet, and 20 peer-reviewed academic studies on the devastating health impacts of mountaintop removal, the job-killing mechanized form of strip mining that only provides 5-7 percent of all U.S. coal production, the ACHE Act simply asks Congress to do what it should have done back in 1971: Place a moratorium on new mountaintop removal mining operations while the rst comprehensive federal study of the health dangers is conducted.

Yes, a no-brainer: Especially when Big Coal, like the Patriot Coal Company, now recognizes the health crisis from mountaintop removal and agrees to phase out large-scale operations, and support for the bill comes from big green groups like the Sierra Club and Earthjustice and religious groups like Christians for the Mountains.

Kentucky Rep. Yarmuth kept it simple: "If it can't be proven that mountaintop removal mining is safe, we shouldn't allow it to continue."

If President Obama and the U.S. Congress are committed to keeping the children in the hills of Appalachia -- or the coal country on the Navajo Nation, the heartland and West, for that matter -- "always safe from harm," as the president noted in his inaugural address last month, they need to wake up and deal with the daily reality of terrifying birth defect rates, cancer risks, chronic cardiovascular diseases and even y rock on our nation's most vulnerable citizens -- kids.

"The U.S. Geological Survey has advised us not to eat the vegetables or fruits from our gardens because toxic fallout from mountaintop removal blasting has contaminated our soil," said Laura Antrim Caskey, founder of Appalachia Watch, Rock

Creek, West Virginia. "We need swift passage of the ACHE Act." "I have fought the impacts of mountaintop removal (MTR) on my home and health for 18 years," added Maria Gunnoe, a West Virginia-based organizer with Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, and the 2009 North American Goldman Prize recipient. "Now science is showing that it's killing me and my community, and Congress needs to listen. Cancer here is as common as the cold. The fact is this is not about who is winning; it is about who is dying from the violent impacts of mountaintop removal."

Rep. Slaughter, a New Yorker raised in Harlan County, Kentucky and the nation's only microbiologist serving in the U.S. Congress, spelled it out:

"Every American has a right to live and work in a community free from environmental health risks. And it is our duty to ensure that this right

is not infringed upon by industries that consider community health and environmental protection to be less important than their profit margins. Given the growing eld of evidence that people living near mountaintop removal coal mining sites are at an elevated risk for a range of major health problems, we should place a moratorium on further mountaintop coal removal activity until we can ensure the health and safety of families in these communities."

Appalachia has not cornered the marketing on coal mining misery; industrial strip mining got its birth in my Illinois woods in the 1850s, and after 150 years of non-stop plunder of our farms, forests and communities the heartland is now facing an unabashed coal rush. Last month, Dine (Navajo) residents traveled to Peabody Energy headquarters to remind the nation of a half-century of destruction and corruption on Black Mesa. The largest strip mine in the East is now expanding unfettered by regulations across Indiana. The colossal Powder River Basin in the West is ramping up efforts to export to the Asian markets.

In the 20-odd states beholden to strip mining, Congress would be wise to create a Coal Elds Regeneration Fund like Great Britain to jump start clean energy manufacturing and transition coal mining communities into a sustainable economy.

In the meantime, the ACHE Act is the rst step in addressing the long-overdue health costs in Appalachia, and hopefully beyond.

"The failure to do so," as President Obama referred to the threat of climate change, "would betray our children and future generations."

Je Biggers is the American Book Award-winning author of Reckoning at Eagle Creek: The Secret Legacy of Coal in the Heartland (Nation/Basic Books), along with several other other books. Visit his website: www.jebiggers.com/ Biggers is a grandson of a southern Illinois coal miner, and an astute critic of mountaintop removal, fracking, and inadequate mine safety. CFTM thanks Biggers for permission to reprint this article from the Hu ngton Post, February 7, 2013.

What is Special and Unique about the ACHE Act?

- t The rst and only federal legislation that speci cally addresses mountaintop removal.
- t Focuses solely on community health in mountaintop removal communities.
- t Does not address aesthetic, ecological, economic, or sociological matters of MTR.
- t Will not end miner's jobs on current permitted MTR operations.
- t Unites conscientious Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals...
- t Has the support of the environmentalist community, but just as important...
- t Advocates health, family values, and scal responsibility.
- t Exercises the "Precautionary Principle" with a moratorium on new MTR permits.
- t Is a response to concerted citizens exercising their fundamental obligations.
- t Asserts that community health holds a higher moral value than industry interests.

"I was sick, and you visited me." says Jesus (Matthew 25:36; 45)

A mother who lives in the southern coal elds of West Virginia holds the multiple prescriptions that aid with her 10-year old son's breathing.

Squandering the Fountains of Life-giving Water: A Biblical Cry by Allen Johnson

Water is just too easy to take for granted. We turn on the faucet and presto, plenty of water. We swallow a cool drink, wash our hands, flush the toilet, clean our clothes, mop the floor, boil tea, wash the car, and water the garden. We experience water coming down from the sky as rain and snow. We enjoy water for recreation such as swimming, fishing, snorkeling, or just being around its mysterious beauty. We also know that water is important for some people in their work such as in food growing, water transport, and manufacturing. Climate change is already altering weather patterns enough to spew extremes of food and drought disaster on some agricultural regions. The current trajectory portends more drastic fates especially to many of the world's most vulnerable Poor. Ocean acidification due to increased CO2 load is killing coral and altering ocean biomass.

I open a Bible as an all-day soft rain soaks the ground, refreshes the air, and gentles my mind. The Bible developed over many centuries by authors who had one trait in common—they lived where water was scarce. The hill country where much of biblical Israel's history occurred was bereft of rain most of the year and frequented by droughts. On the north, the Jordan River began as a rivulet seeping from snow-capped mountains into the sizable Lake of Galilee, then out again through a hot and fertile valley into the appropriately-named Dead Sea. Israel often faced hostile nations who had an edge in their water-based economies. To the west lay the Mediterranean Sea and its seafaring traders; to the east, Egypt to the southwest with its Nile River, and Babylon to the east with its Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, built strong agriculture economies and aggrandized that power through foreign conquest.

Water is central in Christian narrative and doctrine. The Spirit of God moves over water at the beginning of the creation story. God liberates the enslaved Hebrew people from Egypt as they cross the parted Red Sea, and then years later crosses the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Christian water baptism is liberation from the enslavement of sin and entrance into God's future. At the consummation of history, the River of Life flows from the throne of God and The Lamb [Jesus], where all who are thirsty are invited to drink the free gift of the Water of Life.

I snap out of my biblical musings and try to face into the reality that the world today is dangerously running out of clean, sufficient water. Deadly wars have been fought over water. More conflicts are sure to come if society does not quickly practice water conservation, protection, and just allocation.

I ponder grim statistics that point out 80% of sewage in developing countries is discharged untreated to pollute rivers, lakes and coastal areas. 6000 children die every day from disease associated with lack of access to safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene. Millions of women and children spend several hours a day collecting water from distant, often polluted sources. Investment in drinking-water and sanitation would result in 272 million more school

attendance days a year. The value of deaths averted, based on discounted future earnings, would amount to US\$ 3.6 billion a year. However, investment in safe drinking water and sanitation contributes to economic growth. For each \$1 invested, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates returns of \$3 to \$34, depending on the region and technology. The Jordan River today is spiritually dissonant, a parable of how far humanity has twisted a symbol

of liberation, promise, and sin-deliverance to the very opposite. For how humanity treats its most essential gifts for life is how we ourselves will end up. If humanity cherishes, conserves, and cleans up life-giving air, water, soil, and biodiversity of life, then blessings inherent within God's creation order will accrue to humanity. But if humanity scorns, pollutes, and squanders these God-given, life-essential gifts, we ourselves will become what we did to these gifts.

<http://www.ensaa.eu/index.php/water-and-food/110-water-everywhere-and-not-a-drop-to-drink.html>

Industrial agriculture is especially water hungry, wasteful, and polluting. Irrigation-intensive agriculture is depleting aquifers and rivers at rates far exceeding recharge. Farm runoff can carry fertilizers such as nitrates and phosphates along with pesticides that contaminate drinking water, harm aquatic life, and often result in bodies of water with massive-sized dead zones bereft of life.

Thermoelectric power is the biggest hog of water in the nation! This will surprise most Americans, but electricity generation uses 49% of the nation's water. Yes, essentially half. Try practicing every time you draw water thinking that an equivalent amount is going for electric power generation. And as an aside, about 40% of the heat energy used to make steam is wasted.

The United States puts out detailed reports on the nation's water use. Following are some data from what apparently is their current report, 2005 data:

Steam-driven electric power draws vast amounts of water to spin the turbine-generators, while large bodies of water are required for cooling. 72% of water consumed is fresh water, the rest is saline.

Irrigation is next with 31% of all national water withdrawal. The categories then get a bit muddled. Public Supply is 11% which encompasses a lot of industrial, commercial, and domestic purposes, of which just over half is for drinking water, yard watering, toilet flushing, and household needs. Livestock and Aquaculture is 3%. Self-supplied water for the Industrial manufacturing, refining, and processing of commodities is 4%. Mining is 1%, although this 2005 figure does not reflect the horizontal hydrofracturing (fracking) boom that has since exploded.

"Water, water, everywhere
And all the boards did shrink
Water, water everywhere
Nor any drop to drink."

(Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

Beyond Business As Usual: Realizing an American Renewable Energy Future by 2030

by the Committee for an American Clean Energy Agenda

Citizen Groups Urge Release of Overdue Water and Energy "Roadmap"

Local groups are part of a nationwide coalition urging U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz to release a long-overdue "roadmap" of how to manage the development of U.S. energy resources without harming the quality and supply of water supplies. These water-related recommendations are required by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and have yet to be submitted to Congress.

In late May, Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) and 22 of her House colleagues sent a letter to Secretary Moniz urging him to fulfill the Act's Congressional mandate by releasing a comprehensive analysis of the impact of current energy production on our nation's water quality and water supply.

Three citizens groups operating in West Virginia – Christians for the Mountains, Coal River Mountain Watch (CRMW) and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC) – are part of the Committee for an American Clean Energy Agenda (ACEA) which is comprised of 120 citizen organizations with nearly 2 million members in 33 states and the District of Columbia. ACEA praised the House letter and joined in calling for release of the report.

"West Virginia citizens should urge our federal

lawmakers to weigh in on a request for this much needed study. We know that mountaintop removal coal mining harmfully impacts both water quality and quantity. With burgeoning shale gas fracking, it is only common sense to learn more about its impacts on water. Let's face it, without sufficient water we will have neither life nor economic development," said OVEC executive director Janet Keating.

"Citizens are losing the clean water that we depend on for healthy families, healthy communities and healthy economies. Current energy policy drives this loss through selfish, irresponsible extreme energy extraction methods such as mountaintop removal and fracking, as well as the extreme loss of usable water at power plants. It's long past time for this administration to acknowledge the impacts and take meaningful steps to protect the people's water, on which our lives depend," said CRMW executive director Vernon Haltom.

"The lessons of history are clear about the centrality of water resources for the development and flourishing of civilizations," said Allen Johnson, with Christians for the Mountains. "The increasing trajectory of human-use pressures on finite water resources obliges our government to responsibly develop a plan based upon sound science, justice, economics, and solid regulatory oversight. This is a high priority for our nation and world."

We Support these Shared Premises:

1. We must generate the political will to create a sustainable healthy energy future by 2030 by accelerating the phase-out of nuclear power, natural gas, coal and industrial biomass and driving a grand transition to efficient use of renewable, non-polluting resources.
2. Achieving a sustainable energy future hinges on grassroots organizing to mobilize and educate the public and to demand support from our community, business, and political leaders.
3. The entrenched dirty energy industry's public relations machine and lobbyists block the path to healthy energy options and sources. We will expose their misleading tactics and promote a truly healthy and renewable energy system.
4. The renewable energy standard is a proven model for a sustainable future, and our goal is to see it implemented on a national basis – as it already is in many states and other nations. We oppose the so-called "clean energy standard" as a dishonest political ploy designed to protect polluting energy industries – coal, nuclear, oil, gas and unsustainable biomass – that have brought us to the crisis we are in today.
5. We urge our local, state and federal authorities with jurisdiction over energy generation, power distribution and rate-setting to ensure a level playing field for renewable energy and efficiency. It is essential to take fully into account the long-term risks and costs to health, environment and communities of all energy resources, and to adopt policies based on least cost to consumers and minimal risk. We urge specific policies that will ensure this full reckoning as well as strong energy efficiency standards that minimize the demand for resources and provide good jobs and clear benefits to consumers.
6. We hold that the overall use of taxpayer dollars for energy projects – whether called "subsidies," "tax incentives" or "loan guarantees" – currently runs counter to the public interest. Government incentives must benefit public health, economic well-being and the environment. We will develop clear guidelines to direct smarter public investment in energy.
7. We will educate our fellow citizens about the negative impacts of water-intensive energy choices on human and environmental health. Families and communities deserve clean air, access to clean water, safe, sustainable food and good health.
8. We will demonstrate that renewable energy and energy efficiency programs can be flexibly configured and adapted across the country to accommodate regional differences in energy portfolios.
9. Exporting dirty energy harms public health and contaminates our water, with the result that Americans pay the environmental and health price of meeting the energy needs of other countries while gaining nothing in the way of energy independence. Exporting coal extracted by mountaintop removal and shale gas obtained by fracking are especially egregious examples. Forcing US industries to compete with other nations for domestic supplies is likely to drive up prices dramatically and may cause them to relocate overseas.

Environmental Defense Fund Does Not Speak For Us EDF's Fracking "Greenwashing" Called Out

WASHINGTON, D.C.//May 22, 2013//A total of 68 leading grassroots organizations focused on citizen and environmental issues today released a joint letter to the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) disapproving of the group's willingness to be coopted by industry interests on the issue of hydraulic fracturing (or "fracking") for shale gas.

Available online at <http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org/fracking> EDF the letter addressed to EDF President Fred Krupp states: "Those of us concerned with charting a rational and sustainable energy policy for the United States were disheartened to see the Environmental Defense Fund lend its name and support to an entity called the Center for Sustainable Shale Development (CSSD). The very use of the word sustainable in the name is misleading, because there is nothing sustainable about shale oil or shale gas. These are fossil fuels, and their extraction and consumption will inevitably degrade our environment and contribute to climate change. Hydraulic fracturing, the method used to extract them, will permanently remove huge quantities of water from the hydrological cycle, pollute the air, contaminate drinking water, and release high levels of methane into the atmosphere. It should be eminently clear to everyone that an economy based on fossil fuels is unsustainable."

The 68 signatory groups do not believe that voluntary standards, approved by the industry and 'greenwashed' by an environmental organization are the way to go about it. There is a better way to protect the public—it's called regulation. The oil and gas industry is exempt from scores of state and federal laws and regulations, including key provisions of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. Any genuine effort to limit the damage caused by oil and gas extraction begins by closing these legal and regulatory loopholes but as far as we can tell, CSSD does not advocate this important, commonsense measure. Responsible oil and gas corporations should welcome strict regulations and enforcement with damage proportional fines, because they will apply to the bad actors as well as good corporate citizens.

Websites: www.americancleanenergyagenda.org
www.civilsocietyinstitute.org

Church Renewal and Strengthening Appalachian Communities Allen Johnson

“How can churches in central Appalachia sponsored in the Kentucky tobacco-producing area as first phase will involve a team going into a number of struggling coal-culture communities, ideally with less than a 500 population, to listen to local church leaders, utilizing a question-response dialogue template. We will be looking for a population that has a relatively homogenous Christian view, a willingness of different congregations to work alongside each other, and who desire community transformation out of stagnancy. A serious commitment to deep spiritual revival will be important.

community transformation?” “ How can we reach the industry declined and the region struggled to adapt. Susan Emmerich discussed her experience on Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay in its relevance to our situation in the coal-culture communities in central Appalachia. Tangier Island is an o shore isolated small community whose economy has been the harvest of sh, crabs, and oysters from the bay. In recent years, overharvesting and bay pollution contributed to declining catches, leading some watermen to illegally harvest beyond state law. The watermen were also dumping harmful waste into the bay. Emmerich worked through the two island churches such that many of the watermen covenanted to God to obey the laws and to responsibly care for creation. Through the process leading up to this, Emmerich’s life was threatened, and she navigated through numerous pitfalls. A Im,When Heaven Meets Earth documents her work on Tangier and is well-worth viewing. Contact CFTM to borrow a copy, or see the 11 minute trailer online at [www.http://whenheavenmeetsearth.org](http://whenheavenmeetsearth.org)

agents?” Those were central questions that drew 13 participants to the Blessed John XXIII Center in Charleston, WV on a lovely day in March. Our group focused on the idea of drawing out the transformative potential of church congregations in the heart of struggling coal-culture areas where the lands are being destroyed, communities are disappearing, talented young folks are leaving, and where bad health, depression, and poverty is entrenched. Many of these church congregations are barely holding on to their own existence. Hope, an essential Christian attribute, often seems in short supply.

Yet the mission of the church is to be couriers of good news reaching out into hope-starved communities. We seek to stand with these congregations in work for reconciliation, unity, and inspired hope to breathe justice and vibrant life into their communities.

Participants included several regional religious and organizational leaders and sta, as well as several from outside our region. The common thread of Tangier Island, the tobacco Mountainssponsored the event, with several of ourtheirone industry mono-economies that are volatile sta and governance board in attendance —Allen in environmental and/or health consequences. Job Johnson, Sage Russo, Jessi Russo, Bob Marshall, producing economic alternatives are scarce, multi-generational traditions are entrenched, and many talented youth are now leaving. Challenges to harmful polluting practices are often met with denial or resistance. Yet lessons from history show that spiritually-strong, envisioned churches can contribute significantly to a reversal of decline into a positive transformation of their communities.

Blakeman OVEC, Chuck Nelson Keeper of the Mountain, Je Allen (WV Council of Churches), Ron Preston (a retired biologist), Jim Lewis (a retired Episcopal priest), Lowell Bliss (den Vigil), Sarita Hoyt A Rocha and also a licensed conflict management specialist), and Susan Emmerich (The Center Je Allen, Ron Preston, Jessi & Sage Russo, Susan Emmeric, Ben Poage (retired Disciples of Christ minister), and John Rauschinto a positive transformation of their communities. Our group endorsed the concept of a “Listening Project.” Christians For The Mountains is willing to be a lead sponsor. As it is being conceptually worked out, the Listening Project will be based upon a “Faith-based Stewardship model” with four phases. The

governance member) were unable to attend due to prior commitments, but are active in the process. Poage is the editor of The Tobacco Church, vol. 1 & 2 with essays discussing the role of churches

Next, a team will be trained, and sent into a welcoming community to work alongside them in developing acommunity-driven and biblically-based stewardship e ort that will foster social, economic, and environmental transformational change for the betterment of the individuals and community. The goal will be for signi cant community transformation. A follow up goal will be to replicate a successful e ort in other communities through an expanding network of congregations and their leaders. Funding will be sought after the proposal is completed. Please contact CFTM for further information, or if you have good leads on potential communities. We welcome your support, counsel, and direct involvement.

(More pictures at the bottom of Page 13)

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(More pictures at the bottom of Page 13)

Sarita Hoyt, Robin Blakeman, Jim Lewis

Happy Birthday Chuck Nelson

THE Catholic Committee of Appalachia

by John S. Rausch

When the youth group of St. Paul's Church in Lexington wanted an experience of ministry to serve Appalachia, they called me. The nine teens and two adults lived within an hour's drive of the mountains but in their world of technology they seldom raised their eyes from I-Phones and texting. I had a Saturday to walk them through God's Garden.

Mountaintop removal (MTR) remains the most graphic example of exploitation in Appalachia. I rely on the ten-minute DVD that features Evangelicals including Allen Johnson of CFTM, reflecting on the destruction caused by MTR, because now it's near impossible to come close to an active strip job. A short drive outside of Hazard, however, showed the kids two reclaimed strip sites side by side, one reclaimed 30 years ago, the other just 5 years ago. No real difference. The discussion by the side of the cars focused on top soil, orphan lands and greed.

To finish the tour we traveled to a remote area near the Red River Gorge in Wolfe County, where my friends, Russ and Reenie have lived on the grid for over 30 years. Their rows of meticulously-tended vegetables with lively pets running free signaled a satisfying lifestyle of simplicity amidst God's creation.

To the kids and chaperons the contrast acted like shock therapy: destruction on one mountain, harmony on another. For me that Saturday epitomized how the Catholic Committee of Appalachia (CCA) works by teaching through the experience of tours and by challenging people's ideas through critical thinking.

CCA finds itself offering programs few others address. Its annual week-day Cherokee spirituality retreat allows participants to reflect about care of creation in light of Native American respect for the land. Its annual meetings choose themes that challenge the values of the dominant culture, like unplugging from overdependence on electronic devices, or creating community in the midst of rugged individualism. Critical thinking in light of the Gospel does not allow for easy answers. When Patriot Coal declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy, I as director of CCA was arrested in a protest demonstration with 15 others to retain health benefits for active and retired miners. Here's an insight about CCA: in one demonstration our prayer service atop a mountain might cry out to end MTR, and in another demonstration I might console my cell mate, a retired strip miner, anxious about his health benefits. That's the difference between ideology and justice work. In one instance we must address the structural sin of MTR, but in another instance we must stand with workers abused by the system. CCA gets the difference while it continually struggles to proclaim Gospel justice throughout the mountains.

In the 1970s Appalachia's religious climate was different. With the encouragement of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA), mainline denominations collaborated together, coordinated social efforts and promoted a regional perspective about the thorny problems of Appalachia. Today, unfortunately, denominations seemingly have gone their individual ways. They mainly favor direct service projects in Appalachia and only occasionally pursue national legislative efforts, like immigration reform. CCA, like CFTM, collaborates with any group working nonviolently for justice in the mountains.

MISSION STATEMENT

CCA is a faith-based network of people raising a prophetic voice for Appalachia and her people.

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Fr. John Rausch is a Glenmary Priest in the Roman Catholic Church, living in Stanton, Kentucky. He is a member of the following organizations: LV RIWHQ FDOOHG WR ;OO LQ IUHTXHQW VSHDNHU ZULWHV ZLGHOL GLVWULEXWHG SXEOLFO DUNHWSODFH -RKQ 5DXVFK PRXQWDLQWRS UHPRYDO ,Q WKH QDWLRQDO &DWKROLF SHD

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Your support will be appreciated.

Allen Johnson, Lowell Bliss, Sage and Jessi Russo, Susan Emmerich visits the old Marsh Fork School
Susan Emmerich on Kayford Mountain

(Continued from Page 12) The day before the meeting at Blessed John XXIII Center in Charleston, CFTM's Allen Johnson and Sage and Jessi Russo hosted our visiting consultants with a field trip to Coal River and Kayford Mountain, where we prayed and paid respects at Larry Gibson's grave. Susan Emmerich lives in Illinois, Lowell Bliss in Kansas, Sarita Hoyt (not pictured) in Maryland.

Prayer Breakfast Honors Bill McKibben and Larry Gibson (Posthumous) with Steward of Creation Award

The National Religious Coalition on Creation Care (NRCCC) sponsored its annual Prayer Breakfast on May 20, 2013 held at 10th Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC. Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Jewish, and Muslim leaders participated in celebrating God's gift of creation.

Bill McKibben was awarded the "Steward of Creation" for 2013. Inscribed on the bronze plaque given to McKibben is written, Presented in acknowledgment of Prophetic Vision, Inspired Leadership and Service on behalf of God's Good Earth

McKibben is a renowned author, teacher, and activist. He is Methodist, has written a number of articles on biblical and theological precepts related to creation care, and serves as a Sunday School teacher.

McKibben founded and heads 350.org, which in 4 short years has grown into an international grassroots movement with the goal to stop increased global warming. 350.org mobilizes citizens to confront the powers that contribute to climate change, including civil disobedience campaigns against the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline, a current "Do the Math Tour" that makes climate science understandable, and a major disinvestment campaign calling for colleges, church denominations, municipal governments, and individuals to take their savings out of dirty energy. 350.org draws its name from foremost climate scientist James Hansen's conclusion that atmospheric CO₂ above 350 parts per million will significantly change the conditions that human civilization developed upon Earth in the past 10 millennia.

Hansen, himself a past recipient of the Steward of Creation Award, gave one of the nominating speeches for McKibben. In his remarks, Hansen extolled McKibben's amazing work ethic, his prescient books, and his mobilizing ability. Hansen said, "This is extremely important...getting young people involved in this [climate advocacy]...but it's the young people who have to get involved in this. Bill has been exceptionally effective."

Dr. Lise Van Susteren, a forensic psychiatrist and co-founder of the Interfaith Moral Action on Climate, nominated McKibben with a stirring battle cry for the planet, culminating with, "I place in nomination, without exaggeration, writer,

warrior, philosopher, and patriot, and if you think we're kidding, come meet Bill McKibben."

CFTM's own Laura Dagley nominated Bill McKibben in behalf of the growing numbers of young people he inspires with his courageous, creative, brilliant, and sincere organizing. "I especially want to thank you [McKibben] for giving us a sense of empowerment...you have let us know that we have a voice, that it is heard, and that it has an impact. You have shown a love for the future, and a recognition that the young people are the future, and that we will be carrying out the battle."

Bill McKibben challenged us with three points. (1) "We desperately need a sense of the science...how quickly we need to move and on what scale" rhetorical answer? "We have almost no time in which to get things done on an enormous scale. This is the biggest transition humans have ever talked about. This cannot be done simply by individual and small group acts, but by engagement with the structural change...we are enmeshed in structural sin. If we are not willing to challenge those structures forthrightly, then it won't get us where we want to go."

(2) Following up on the previous point, McKibben noted, "That involves a creation of an amount of conflict... which is part of our faith tradition." McKibben said this includes naming enemies such as the fossil fuel industry. Alluding to scripture, "In our time, these are the powers and principalities. Speaking of divestment from these industries," McKibben quoted from Luke 12:34, "Where your treasure is, there is your heart."

(3) McKibben looked up at us with a challenge. "This fight is going to get harder before it gets easier. It's going to require a real willingness to commit on deep levels. People are starting to go to jail, which is a good thing." He went on to elaborate on what he considered one of the great accomplishments

of the last century, the power of nonviolent action to change institutions and people. "We've got to make it work on a global basis." Noting that young people risk their future careers with strong civil disobedience, McKibben challenged older people to step up in this witness. "We need a lot of collars [religious leaders] on the front lines...if we had all the time in the world, then the easy way would be the slow educational and cultural transformation of one person and one institution at a time." We don't have the luxury of plenty of time.

McKibben concluded, "One of the good things about being people of faith is that we're not completely consigned to scientific analysis only;

we're allowed to hope that if we do everything that we can possibly do, that there are forces inside and outside this world that will meet us half way. But that hope is cheap hope unless it comes from people who are doing absolutely everything they can be doing to make this happen."

A posthumous Steward of Creation Award was dedicated to Larry Gibson who passed away last September. Allen Johnson displayed Gibson's trademark fluorescent Keeper of the Mountains T-Shirt, and told how a short-statured man with a limited education and an obscure career had become so inspirational to thousands of people. Gibson's uncompromising courage to speak and live in truth and integrity continues to resonate in our lives. In his remarks, Hansen told how Gibson was the person who inspired him to take the bold step of civil disobedience as a witness to the serious issues of today.

Prayers, short presentations, and reports were offered by the following: Rabbi Fred Dobb, Dr. Mirele Goldsmith, Rabbi Larry Troster (Jewish); Fr. Jacek Orzechowski OFM (Roman Catholic); Fr. Dimitri Antokas (Eastern Orthodox); Rev. Dr. Olin Ivey (Mainline Protestant); Rev. Mitch Hescox (Evangelical); Imam Ibrahim Ramey (Muslim). David Krantz (Green Zionist Alliance) and Marybeth Lorbiecki spoke on development. Davidson talked about the startup of the Carbon Confession project. Dave Carroll discussed a new energy saving LED light bulb he has developed. Allen Johnson reported on epidemiological studies pointing to increased sickness in communities with surface coal mining. Dr. Richard Miller discussed the public hearings on the proposed Keystone XL pipeline in Nebraska. Rabbi Warren Stone and Rev. Owen Owens once again capably hosted the gathering. NRCCC director Fred Krueger is again to be commended for his effort in setting up the logistics that brought together this stellar leadership committed to advocacy for God's Earth and all it contains (Psalm 24:1).

Why Does CFTM Takes a Stand Against Fracking? Allen Johnson

Horizontal Hydraulic Fracturing, or “pollutant”... does not mean (B) water, gas, suits that claim fracking ruined their water. As a Fracking, is a new technique for extracting or other material which is injected into a well condition for settlement, homeowners typically unconventional oil and gas from deep to facilitate production of oil or gas must agree to keep quiet. The gag strategy underground layers of shale. Drills bore holes 2. Fracking fluids are toxic when injected. keeps data from regulators, policymakers, the thousands of feet under the earth, then turns Yet the industry has been able to maintain news media and health researchers, and makes horizontal to drill thousands of feet further like trade secrecy from the public on the identity it more difficult to challenge the industry’s claim spokes on a wheel. Millions of gallons of chemical of the injection chemicals. that fracking has never tainted anyone’s water. laced water along with sand are then injected 3. Methane leakage is high in many of 8. Fracking not only fractures shale, it also under high pressure into each well, which then the fracking wells. Methane is many times fractures rural communities. A few people get forces the gas or oil out for collection. more potent a greenhouse gas than carbon very rich, while most folks see their property

Within the space of only a handful of years, fracking has changed the face of energy. The looming specter of “Peak Oil” when demand would begin to outstrip supply is now pushed back into the far-off future. The United States is poised to radically shift from an energy importing nation to an energy exporting nation, which dramatically changes geopolitical and balance-of-trade dynamics. Cheap fossil fuel energy is driving force for economic growth and modern lifestyle.

So why is CFTM in opposition to fracking? Following are 10 reasons that we feel touch upon important moral principles.

1. Fracking is exempt from important federal regulations and the Clean Water Act. The so-called Haliburton Loophole of 2005 amended the Safe Drinking Water Act [Paragraph (1) of section 1421(d) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300h(d))] to exclude the underground injection of fluids or propping agents (other than diesel fuels) pursuant to hydraulic fracturing operations related to oil, gas, or geothermal production activities. The Clean Water Act had a change in definition [SEC 502 [33 U.S.C. 1362] General Definitions] The term
2. Fracking fluids are toxic when injected. Yet the industry has been able to maintain trade secrecy from the public on the identity of the injection chemicals.
3. Methane leakage is high in many of the fracking wells. Methane is many times more potent a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.
4. The concrete well casings are designed to prevent injection fluids from passing into aquifers during the lifespan of the well, then plugged. However, even slight tectonic movement over time is expected to eventually erode the concrete casing.
5. Surface landowners often do not own the mineral rights beneath them. In many cases the mineral rights were severed from the surface rights decades before the advent of the horizontal hydraulic fracturing technology. Mineral rights trump surface rights, thus mineral owners can and do set up their massive 24/7 operations on farms and other property, even within a few hundred yards of a landowner’s home.
6. Fracking operations are highly disruptive to rural neighborhoods with constant large truck traffic hauling water, the noise of compressors, the lighting at night, and the air pollution from diesel fumes.
7. Drillers may agree to cash settlements or property buyouts with people who press
8. Fracking not only fractures shale, it also fractures rural communities. A few people get very rich, while most folks see their property values go down, their lifestyle quality deteriorate, and the price of rent, commodities, and services climb. Many of the jobs go to experienced workers from out of state who have no interest or involvement in the well-being of the schools, churches, youth programs, and community social life. Fracking jobs are really not family-friendly due to its 24/7 shifts and long hours. Fracking is a boom to bust economic model.
9. Fracking continues reliance upon greenhouse-producing fossil fuels. Natural gas when burned still gives off carbon dioxide. Dependence upon another fossil fuel only exacerbates the ultra-serious issue of climate change. CFTM advocates for a clean, renewable energy agenda that is now technologically and economically feasible.
10. Fracking consumes and degrades vast quantities of water. Current regulations are simply too lax to protect against the voracious thirst of the drillers. Water is a precious commodity that needs to be carefully protected and valued.

James Hansen

Psalm 72 (KJV) e Reign of the Righteous Ruler

Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.
 2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.
 3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.
 4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.
 5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.
 6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.
 7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.
 8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.
 9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.
 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
 11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.
 12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.
 13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.
 14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.
 15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.
 16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.
 17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.
 18 Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.
 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.
 20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

"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 and walk together as sisters and brothers."
 ----Martin Luther King, jr.

Great Is y Faithfulness

Hymn by omas Chisolm and William Runyon
 Scripture reference is Lamentations 3:22-23

Great is Thy faithfulness, oh God my Father;
 There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
 Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
 As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
 Morning by morning new mercies I see.
 All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
 Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
 Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
 Join with all nature in manifold witness
 to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
 Morning by morning new mercies I see.
 All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
 Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
 Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
 Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
 Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

"What in your life is not for sale? What I'm saying is, 'think of what is precious to you. Does it have a price tag?'"
 Larry Gibson

A Prayer of Peace

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
 where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 when there is injury, pardon;
 where there is doubt, faith;
 where there is despair, hope;
 where there is darkness, light;
 and where there is sadness, joy.

"One of the good things about being people of faith is that we're not completely consigned to scientific analysis only; we're allowed to hope that if we do everything that we can possibly do, that there are forces inside and outside this world that will meet us half way. But that hope is cheap, hope unless it comes from people who are doing absolutely everything they can be doing to make this happen."
 Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
 to be understood, as to understand,
 to be loved as to love;
 for it is in giving that we receive,
 and it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
 and it is in dying [to ourselves] that we are born to eternal life."
 Bill McKibben (from remarks at 2013 Prayer Breakfast)
 ----St. Francis of Assisi

Beloved, let us love one another:
 for love is of God; and every one
 that loveth is born of God, and
 knoweth God.
 1 John 4: 7

Upcoming for the Next Edition of e Mountain Vision

The third edition is scheduled for September. Please let us know if your friends would like a sample copy.

In the upcoming issue we plan to delve into the biblical concept of the "Powers and Principalities" as they relate to King Coal, discuss parameters of the agriculture and gardening in Appalachia, and discuss the emerging Ocean Ethic within a biblical framework.

We invite and welcome your comments and suggestions.