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MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

Soak it in, and Share it!

By Jenny Holmes

Stunning alpine landscapes, thinkers and artists on the cutting edge of knowledge and of transforming our relationships with Creation and each other, in-depth Biblical and theological that touches the heart and challenges the mind, creative worship, fellowship, appreciating God's Creation with seasoned field guides and visiting the center of clean energy innovation. I hope that you are excited about PEC's 2011 Colorado conference as I am! My body, mind and soul are ready for such a feast.

It is truly a privilege to be able participate in such a unique gathering. As with all PEC conferences, while we enjoy our anticipation of it, we also look to how this gathering can take our work to the next level, and what new initiatives we might want to fashion in response to what we hear. The topic of our conference is *God's Earth: Too Big to Fail? An Eco-Justice Conversation Among, Faith, Science and Culture*. The intersection of this triad in our difficult times is an exciting, and a bit dangerous, place to go. Some may say "don't go there" just provide comfort and avoid confronting the fears that immobilize us. But our God is not small. Jesus Christ came so that we may have life, and have it abundantly. Our dreams must be big enough to find a new way forward when big systems that institutionalize injustice and environmental harm fail God's dream of Shalom, massively. Join us August 31-Sept. 3. Soak it in, then, share your dreams and practical knowledge with your church and community when you get back. If you can't go, consider providing a scholarship for a church leader or a young adult in your church or presbytery. A rich table has been set. Let's feast!

2011 Conference

By Rev. Ashley-Anne Masters, Conference Coordinator

Register by August 15 for \$150. This event will be held in the heart of the Rocky Mountains at Highlands Presbyterian Camp and Retreat Center (www.highlandscamp.org) August 31-September 3. The conference will include workshops, table fellowship, dialogue, field trips, and Sabbath as we explore God's creation and discuss eco-justice passions and issues across the bounds of faith, science, and culture. All of this will be done with worship and Sabbath at the heart of our time together. During worship, we will explore God's creation and our responsibility to it and in it through the music and liturgical influence of the Iona Community and Celtic Spirituality. We will worship God with our voices, minds, bodies, and senses under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Bill Brown, Rev. Ashley-Anne Masters, Rev. Stacy Smith, and creative artist Tevyn East. We are thrilled that Tevyn will be performing her one woman show, *Leaps and Bounds*, which explores the intersection of faith, ecology, and the global economy. To learn more about Tevyn's passion and mission through The Affording Hope Project, please visit www.affordinghopeproject.org. We look forward to **you** joining the conversation and hearing how you strive to live in the image of God as a good steward of God's amazing creation. For more information about this event, please visit www.presbyearthcare.org. Look forward to seeing you in Colorado!



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Presbyterians for Earth Care
2011 National Conference

God's Earth: Too Big to Fail?
An Eco-Justice Conversation Among
Faith, Science, & Culture

August 31-September 3
Highlands Camp & Retreat Center

www.presbyearthcare.org
www.highlandscamp.org
www.toobigtofail.wordpress.com



New Opportunity for Environmental Ministry: Stewardship of Creation Enabler Changes to Environmental Ministry Action Network. - By Katie Holmes, Coordinator, PCUSA Environmental Ministries.

Are you active in an environmental stewardship ministry in your church or presbytery? If so, or if you would like to become involved, please join the Environmental Ministries Action Network (EMAN).

Environmental Ministries launched this new network in early May that is open to anyone who is involved in environmental stewardship in their congregation and/or presbytery. The goal of EMAN is to inspire and equip Presbyterians to care for God's earth and to increase the channels of communication between PC(USA) Environmental Ministries and congregations and presbyteries with environmental stewardship programs. Participants in EMAN will work with their churches and/or presbyteries to care for God's creation. PC(USA) Environmental Ministries will be in regular communication with EMAN participants to provide them with tools and resources for this work.

Learn more and sign up for EMAN on the PC(USA) website. (at www.pcusa.org/eman)

This new network will follow in the footsteps of the Stewardship of Creation Enabler (SCE) network. Since 1995 SCEs have been active on a presbytery level as educators, motivators, and facilitators of action to protect God's Creation. As we transition from this structure to one that involves more people who are active on a local congregation level, Environmental Ministries would like to thank SCEs for their service. Many of these SCEs will continue in their ministry and for this we are also grateful. We look forward to continuing to work with them and to welcoming new folks into EMAN.

What are the benefits of participation in EMAN? Regular email updates from Environmental Ministries with information on new resources, upcoming events, advocacy opportunities, and more. Receive a guide for being involved in environmental stewardship in your church/presbytery (coming in summer 2011). Be eligible to apply for grant funds for an environmental project at your church/presbytery (starting in fall 2011). Receive a list of other EMAN participants in your presbytery.

What is expected of EMAN participants? Publicize new resources, programs, events, and Earth Day Sunday resources from Environmental Ministries in your presbytery and church. Connect with other EMAN participants in your presbytery. Update Environmental Ministries on how your church and/or presbytery are involved in environmental stewardship every 6 months.

A Point in Time PC(USA) Advocacy: 1971 – 1980

1971 - The 183rd General Assembly accepted the Christian Responsibility for Environmental Renewal statement that calls for a new order of values based on an "eco-ethic" and a Statement on Environmental Renewal.

- *The compact disc is developed by RCA
- *Nuclear Magnetic Resonance, the technology behind MRI scanning, is developed
- *Skylab, the first American space station is launched
- *India successfully tests an atomic device, becoming the world's sixth nuclear power
- *For safety reasons, the National Academy of Science calls for a temporary ban on some types of genetic engineering research

1975 - A recommendation is made to the 187th General Assembly to affirm advocacy of the protection of wild-life areas and parklands.

- *Mysterious disease strikes American Legion convention in Philadelphia, claiming 29 lives
- *Nuclear proliferation pact, curbing spread of nuclear weapons, is signed by 15 countries
- *Balloon Angioplasty is developed to treat coronary artery disease
- *Nuclear power plant accident at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, releases radiation, 144,000 residents of Middletown are evacuated
- *Accidental release of anthrax spores at a Soviet bio-weapons facility kills several hundred people

1980 - The 192nd General Assembly votes to (1) develop educational resources on the adverse impact that careless technology has on the environment and health of the unborn; (2) instruct the Board of Investment Committee to review corporate responsibility regarding manufacture of dioxins.

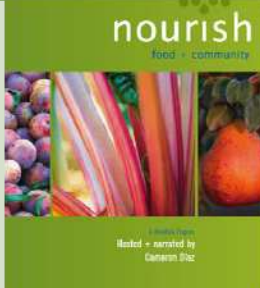
From a timeline of PC(USA) environmental policies developed by Karen Turney, PEC Advocacy Committee Member from Atlanta, Georgia for PEC.

REVIEW CORNER

Making the Food, Faith, Climate Connection Nourish (30 minutes, DVD) narrated by Cameron Diaz

What's the story of your food???

That's the focus of Nourish, the DVD from (IPL) Interfaith Power and Light's new program, Cool Harvest, which connects what we eat with climate change.



Food experts Anna Lappe, Michael Pollan and Bryant Terry provide authoritative commentary. Opinions from multi-ethnic young people have appeal for youthful audiences. The film uses lovely visuals, making a case for naturally raised meats without descriptions of “animal factories” used in some other food films. Thus, it is appropriate for all ages. Common food concepts, such as organic, local, urban gardens, industrial farming, and fair trade, as well as the issues of biodiversity, climate change, public health, and social justice, are concisely described and illustrated in the 26 minute film. Narration is by actress Cameron Diaz

Nourish's four sections for building a healthy food culture are: 1) Connections [global perspective] 2) Seed to Table [industrial corn farming and local organic farming of tomatoes] 3) Vote with your Fork [the amazing power of our food choices] 4) Be the Difference [12 tips for creating change]. The DVD also includes a collection of 11 short films such as “Supermarket Secrets” with Michael Pollan, “Edible Education” with Alice Waters, and “Herbs” with Jamie Oliver. A discussion guide is available on-line. The Cool Harvest package (\$15 from IPL) includes the Nourish DVD, a table grace booklet, and the [Seafood Watch Guide](#). (I modified my own fish purchases after reading it.) Be sure to download the organizers guide at interfaithpower-andlight.org/coolharvestkit which includes Nourish Discussion Guide, What Congregations Can Do, Cool Potluck Ideas, Film Screening/Cool Potluck Flyers, Tips for Lowering Your **Food**print, A Climate-Friendly Farm Bill Handout and links to other resources. *Additional [Seafood Watch Guides](#) may be ordered at montereybay-aquarium.org.*

A Review of The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder

By: Rev. Alan Jenkins Founder, Assoc. for Preaching and Teaching, Earth Covenant Ministry Atlanta,

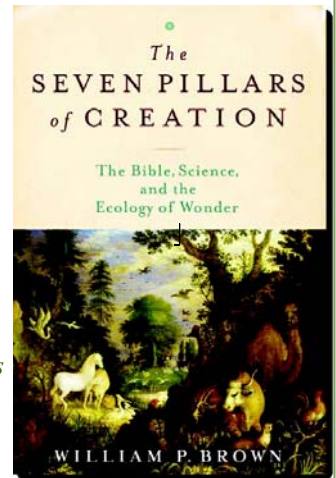
390 ppm CO2, oceans' Ph levels, Darwinian evolution, toxicity rates of the world's aquifers, soil depletion, biological diversity, EPA air quality standards ... Those of us called to eco-justice ministry know that such scientific concerns are essential to comprehending the signs of the times. They inform our response to the urgent calling of eco-justice ministry. Awareness of such issues as ecological tipping points and thresholds of the land's carrying capacity provide foundation for our living and spreading the Good News for all God's created order. Yet from here we stumble upon a key question: *Given the sciences' importance for informed eco-justice ministry, how, then, do we faithfully straddle these two worlds of science and Bible, worlds so perilously at odds in the modern era?*

In *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder*, biblical theologian William P. Brown takes on this monumental question in a disarming, invitational form that provides an empowering foundation for a serious integration of science into the life of faith. To say Brown qualifies for the task understates his credentials. He is an ordained minister and Old Testament professor of Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia who is not only a ‘scholar's scholar’ sought out to present at institutions across the country and the globe (If you must fly, don't forget to offset your carbon footprint at NativeEnergy.org), but his is also a leader in the greening of campus life and an accessible Sunday School teacher. On a further note of personal privilege, I am most thankful for his active leadership on Earth Covenant Ministry's steering committee, for whom he graciously presents to congregations of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta. Bill Brown is this year's plenary moderator and worship leader for our PEC conference (August 31st – September 3rd).

Brown's bold proposition in *Pillars* is to champion a dialogue and “feedback loop between biblical faith and scientific understanding whereby the former is enriched by the latter” (16). In short, “If biblical creation faith is to be intelligible today, then it requires the feedback of science (16). Put frankly, if we stick our heads in the sand, our faith is parked on a lot of irrelevance amidst today's unparalleled ecological crises. Put positively, and given that PEC readers are indeed attentive to the import of natural sciences (many are professionals in scientific fields), Brown's *Pillars* empowers readers with the tools to weave the scientific world alongside the biblical, as if patching a quilt (17). The affect is wisdom to strengthen this *emerging alliance* (20) and wisdom to make sense of the world around us. The Bible and science: apart from one another, we are bulls in a china shop, heading down the road of the planet's sixth mass extinction of species.

Brown magnifies the cultural context of the ancient Near East, amidst which Israel's creation stories emerge. From there, he dives into seven distinct Old Testament stories of creation: The Priestly and Yahwist in Genesis 1-3, Job 38-41, Psalm 104, Proverbs 8:22-31, Ecclesiastes, and finally, the creation story as presented in Second Isaiah. Within each of these chapters, Brown creatively interfaces current scientific perspectives. For example, *Pillars* compares and contrasts the Genesis creation stories with current science on cosmic, geological and biological evolution. He honors wisdom found in the studies of both biblical text and scientific data, but not by simplistically melting them together. Rather, Brown illumines the trajectories of both traditions with intelligence and reverence. In another slice of the book, chapter five engages the reader with a fresh reading of Job's creation texts, which he creatively brings into dialogue with Charles Darwin's 1830's globe-sailing journeys. Both texts have wonder-filled inquiry and needed wisdom for our habitation of the Creator's divine, complex ecosystems.

Brown's grasp of both science and the biblical world amazes me. He weaves vast knowledge into an accessible, empowering work. I encourage you to add it to your church library!



Health, Spirituality, and Non-toxic Living IV: Health, Radiation Effects, Environment, and Spirit

By Diane Waddell, RN, Family Nurse Practitioner

Health, Radiation Effects, Environment, and Spirit. “Radiation is all around us. It is naturally present in our environment and has been since the birth of this planet. Consequently, life has evolved in an environment which has significant levels of ionizing radiation. It comes from outer space (cosmic), the ground (terrestrial), and even from within our own bodies. It is present in the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, and in the construction materials used to build our homes.... A lot of our natural exposure is due to radon, a gas from the earth’s crust that is present in the air we breathe....About half the total annual average U.S. individual’s radiation exposure comes from natural sources. The other half is mostly from diagnostic medical procedures.’ (1) CT Scans have much more radiation than regular diagnostic x-rays (and therefore one should attempt to limit CT scans when possible).

There is an association between radiation exposure and development of certain cancers including leukemia and thyroid cancer. It can take years before cancer can develop. Thyroid cancer is the most common malignancy caused by nuclear power plants. Reactor accidents release radioactive elements which our body absorbs by inhaling contaminated air, and by ingesting contaminated food. This is rapidly taken up into the thyroid gland.

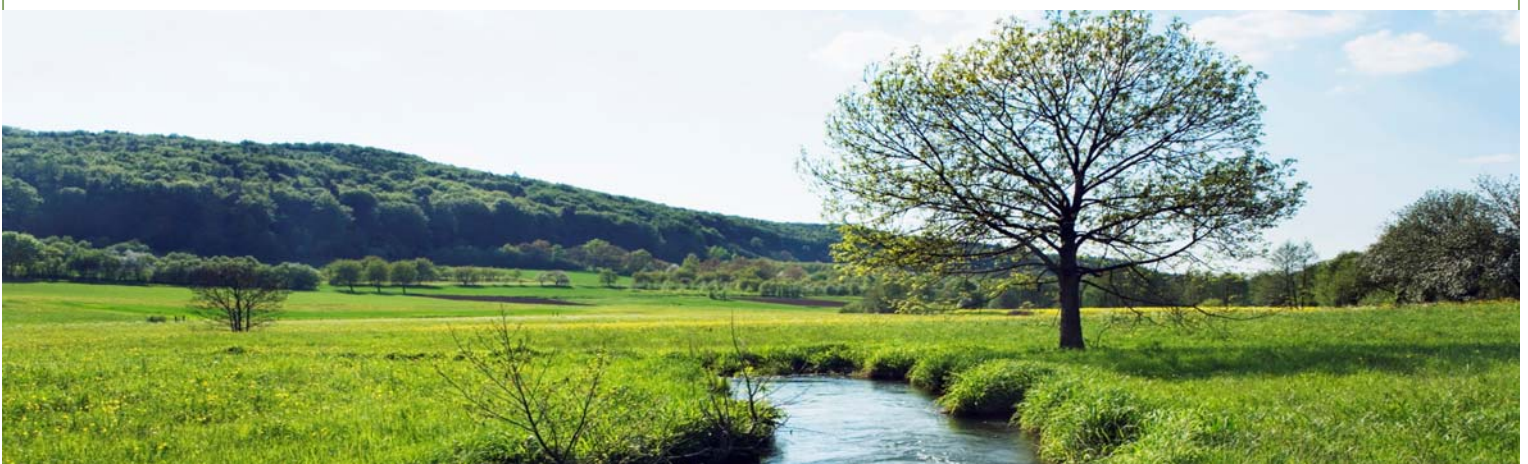
Nuclear radiation inflicts free radical damage to our cells. We are consistently (‘naturally’) attacked by free radicals anyway, but radiation hastens the damage. We should normally make every attempt to protect our bodies from free radicals routinely.. Ways to

do that include good nutrition of fresh vegetables and fruits (the more colorful the better) and of course, avoiding smoking and other types of toxins. Green tea and green tea extracts can be protective. Resveratrol, which has been recently touted as an ‘anti-aging’ supplement, is the one found under the skin in red grapes (and in red wine). Curcumin, derived from the curry spice tumeric is a powerful radioprotective antioxidant. Other protectants include garlic, ginger, and Vitamin E. (Always purchase ‘natural’ vitamin E with mixed tocopherals).

Our prayers, thoughts and heartfelt concern go to the people of Japan and all of those affected by their ongoing nuclear disaster. Countries around the world have re-assessed their plans for nuclear power plants and re-visited the safety of existing plants. The effects of the disaster are far-reaching.

(The EPA is monitoring for radiation effects in the U.S. and it is not found to be problematic.) However, it is important for us to look once again at who we are as children of God...”using” the resources of this planet. (I don’t like the word using, but it does put things into perspective). We must, as fellow citizens, and as concerned Christians, consistently look at how much energy we are using; how many resources we consume.

We must help shepherd others toward a deeper understanding of our inter-dependence on and with this beautiful planet. We must pray and work toward a deeper communion of all beings with goals encompassing spiritual richness rather than material products. We thank God for the depth and breadth of life in all its mystery; and look toward increasing health of humankind and the planet. Amen.



One Year After the Spill By Evan Ponder, Presbyterian Young Adult Volunteer in New Orleans

OVER a year has passed since the oil spill began, we still know relatively little about what the future holds. For the rest of the country, the oil spill is over. Here in Louisiana, we will be dealing with this spill and its effects for decades to come, and it has already begun to change the way of life here. Pictures of the short-term devastation to wildlife are still haunting, and a testament to the terrible initial effects from the oil. But we are left with questions as to the social, environmental and economic impacts in the medium and long term. What are the long term effects on economically important species such as oysters, shrimp and crabs? What caused the large number of dead dolphins and sea turtles found washed ashore on Gulf Coast beaches? How much oil and dispersant is on the bottom of the gulf? Will our oiled coastal marshes survive?

Stories, Ideas and Inspiration: New Ohio congregation finds welcome in rebuilding community through its food and farming ministry — Goodness Grows

God's ultimate truth exists not just in our minds and hearts but in the fabric of the universe. It is found in the natural laws that will always shape our world; humanity's damage, depletion and destabilization are occurring because we have not acknowledged those rules. God's truth is seen in the ever-evolving web of relationships that nurture and sustain all life; we get into trouble when we shred that web and pretend that we are not part of it. ~Rev. Peter Sawtell, Eco-Justice Notes, 4/22/2011

Goodness Grows, a ministry of Common Ground Church Community (Eastminster Presbytery of Ohio), serves as a bridge from what is to the vision of everybody experiencing God's shalom of having their own vine and fig tree, at peace in righteousness, and unafraid. It serves this role by helping:

- Large and small congregations explore food justice and community gardening as an outreach ministry;
- Individuals in supported daytime activities find joy in working with plants and soil;
- Residents of food deserts who want to grow fresh vegetables in vacant lots;
- MBA students charged with developing a triple-bottom line business plan for a faith-based social enterprise.

Business to ministry makeover

When the fledgling Common Ground Church took possession of an abandoned 31-acre tree nursery and mail-order business in 2006, just transforming a commercial building complex into a worship center was the first priority. Yet Pastor Steve Fortenberry was repeatedly drawn to the potential for ministry posed by the greenhouses (some with saplings growing up through them), garden-able areas, 10,000 feet of warehouse space, and acres of woods and wetlands.

Many people in the congregation have participated in Goodness Grows projects on campus over the years, particularly in food-growing efforts in former greenhouse areas and outdoors. Still in a formative stage itself, the body's participants and leaders are working out their relationship to this non-profit that works collaboratively with church and non-church groups with a missional focus.

Plants, buckets and beauty Locally, Goodness Grows provides transplants and garden produce to a multi-church food distribution site and guides on-campus gardening of a high school special gifts class. Staff, board and community members are cooperating to develop a container garden enterprise that repurposes used plastic buckets, provides supported employment, uses compost from local restaurants and the congregation, and revolves around enabling more people to grow more food and more beauty. In near-by and economically challenged Youngstown, the ministry is coordinating six farmers and four urban organizations in a Community Supported Agriculture project that co-locates new community gardens it is helping to start with food desert distribution sites. Regionally, Fortenberry retains the group's "strategic food system innovator" portfolio. (He passed on the executive director role to Greg Bowman, formerly of the Rodale Institute, in January.) Pastor Steve is guiding a regional Presbyterian camp in adding an agro-ecological entrepreneurial component to its traditional outdoor program, even as he engages a regional multi-national corporation and its union leaders in bringing healthy food distribution (and possible production) to its sprawling campus.

Yearning for values

"The people asking the good, hard questions about creating a new economic future for Northeast Ohio based on sustainable food production and distribution welcome our participation as a clearly Christian voice," Fortenberry says. "There's a yearning for deep values to direct what needs to be a truly redemptive era in this post-Rust Belt region." "Heirloom tomatoes won't save the world," Bowman admits, "but leading new gardeners through the process of growing, tasting, then sharing them with their community, creates a kind of excitement that gives God-centered creation care a very personal, very tangible new energy."

Goodness Grows seeks interns for the summer, design support for its campus gardens, and technical help with creating its social entrepreneurship. Contact Bowman at greg@goodnessgrows.net.



Let's Move! Act for Health and Creation Care

From www.pcusa.org/letsmove: "The PC(USA) has become involved with the Let's Move Initiative because of our commitment to ending childhood poverty, hunger and obesity. We believe that 'poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's good creation' and hunger and obesity are symptoms of such poverty." PC(USA) is trying to involve 1,000 congregations in the Let's Move Initiative. To become involved, churches take steps to alleviate hunger and promote health through a variety of programs. Some of these activities also work to care for God's earth. For instance, if your church hosts a community garden, a farmers' market, or serves as a drop off site for a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, you can be a Let's Move congregation. There are many other ways to become involved surrounding children's programming and healthy living. Learn more and sign up to be a Let's Move Congregation at www.pcusa.org/letsmove.

The Sustainable Society: Forty Years Later By: Bob Stivers



WE SHOULD BE WELL ON THE WAY TO WHAT I CALLED “A VISION” FOR THE FUTURE. IT IS TIME TO ASSESS HOW FAR WE HAVE ACTUALLY GONE.

Nearly forty years ago I began research on a book that later was published under the title *The Sustainable Society*. To my knowledge it was the first book with the word *sustainable* in its title. Today sustainability is a buzz word. After forty years, we should be well on the way to what I then called “a vision” for the future. It is time to assess how far we have actually gone.

Forty years ago I argued there were limits to the ability of earth’s ecosystems: 1) to support a large human population; 2) to supply resources to satisfy the needs of affluent consumers; 3) to sustain earth degrading technologies; and 4) to withstand values that degrade, disparage, and ignore ecosystems. I added a fifth to the list, our economic system (corporate capitalism) with its vast and increasing inequalities of income and wealth and our political system (democracy). I linked the two, as they have been since the Gilded Age.

To make the transition to a Sustainable Society would, I further argued, require massive action on all five variables AND their interrelationships. Such a revolution, I added, would be unprecedented in human history. The appearance of climate change in the 1980s, the outstanding example

of technological degradation, made the revolution both more difficult and more urgent. So let’s briefly assess how much we have progressed with these five variables.

The human population recently passed seven billion. (I hardly had time to scratch out the six and the five in my lecture notes.) Demographers say we are on our way to ten billion plus or minus a billion. One positive sign is declining birth rates. We may be able to achieve a lower figure, but if nine billion, can the earth sustain even this number? Lingered in the background are North/South, rich/poor arguments that have often stymied aid to the poor. And, of course, the unbearable question also lingers here: if the earth cannot sustain this number, what then happens? The disaster to be avoided, of course, is starvation. This depends on food production which will be influenced both by climate change and degraded habitat. (So many things to put together!) Consumption is increasing with China and India joining Japan and the West, and several other nations in line. The current economic slowdown probably won’t last very long. Recovery is all the talk. Most of us seem to want an easy return to affluence. Environmental news has slipped off

the back page. “Reduce” has itself been reduced to a four letter word. Worthy of note also is how difficult it is to pass legislation during recessions.

New science-based technology is a bright spot. It is still reasonable to think new developments in energy technologies, especially those that are renewable, will save us from the time of trial, and allow us to ease into the Sustainable Society. Investment in new energy saving technologies continues apace. Most public utilities, at least in my area, are onboard. But watch out for energy CEOs and their supporters who tell us “not to worry, you are in safe hands.” The Fukushima accident should at least stall nuclear energy for the time being. It gives us time to stop ideological warfare and to think this politically charged matter through.

Attitudes toward nature are changing slowly, at least in my subjective opinion. I have been teaching attitudes more favorably attuned to nature for forty years. The teaching was fun and hopefully not in vain. My evidence, among other things, is the number of schools that teach environmental courses, the number of new majors in environmental studies, the increase of jobs in the field, and until recently, much more in newspapers about protecting the environment and valuing nature. On the other side the emergence of the Tea Party, whose members overwhelmingly reject concerns scientific or otherwise about the environment, has taken center stage for the time being. But even if the Tea Party phenomenon passes, the attitudes of members will remain and be taken up by other groups of the same persuasion sooner or later.

Our economic system is in good shape for the wealthy, although few others have experienced comparable income and wealth growth since about 1970. The wealthy few are entrenched often enough in environmentally degrading industries and flush with cash looking for new speculative investments. Self interest, as Adam Smith pointed out in 1776, is the heart of the system. The pursuit of self-interest supposedly produces the social good, but in today’s unregulated and often uncompetitive markets a power bloc has emerged that has no parallel in U.S. history. This bloc is political as well as economic in nature and currently has federal and state governments lined-up in support of the wealthy few. So what happens when the way to sustainability runs into this power bloc and threatens it. Guess?

Our political system is gridlocked for the near term. The separation of powers enshrined in the U.S. Constitution to prevent the arbitrary use of power, also protects the wealthy few and inhibits social change. The shift in a sustainable direction is currently mired in partisan bickering. The bright lights of a few years ago are already dim. A big question also lingers here. Are we humans really capable of the change we need? Are there limits to social change?

These six variables are all problems in themselves. They also are interrelated and feedback on each other. Coordinating these interactions and feedbacks is yet another difficult problem to overcome; and, at the same time we do this coordination, we must face the ongoing, every day problems of our common life. Wars and terrorism will not go away just because we need to change direction.

So how close are we to the Sustainable Society? Theologically, it's here but yet to come. Realistically, we have begun and made some progress, but have a long way to go along a difficult road. When I first wrote, I saw it as a limited "vision" for a new future and encouraged implementation. First steps came soon after, and for a while things seemed to be going well; then came the Reagan revolution and eight plus years of political stall, although scientists were hard at work on defining the problems. Near the end of Reagan's years in office, the road opened a bit. I was surprised. This was the time our Presbyterian policy document, *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, was adopted by the General Assembly.

Clinton opened the road a bit but passed most of the work to Al Gore, a great environmental hero. Bush II did all he could to shut the road down again. With Obama things soared and then crashed as the recession deepened and the far right shouted "drill baby, drill." In addition to loud voices they brought hatred for government and demands for severe budget reductions, at least for organizations and people not deemed a part of their constituency. Environmentalists became public enemy number one in the view of many on the right.

Today after soaring in the short-lived Obama enthusiasm I am more restrained. I am not now a pessimist, or for that matter have I ever been an optimist, or even that new cliché on the block, a (get this) "pessoptimist." These words do not fit a Christian vocabulary.

My vocabulary is different. I try, with Reinhold Niebuhr, to take into account all factors that frustrate the realization of ideals and visions, especially the factor of sin. At the same time I hope. I hope because in faith I experience a Spirit that runs deeply in my being and our being together. As the old hymn puts it, God is "the tree of life." Many of us will not see this vision become a reality in new trees, but maybe we have seen a bit of a new Promised Land. 🕊

Events

- August 20-Sept 2 "Stop the Pipeline!" Tar Sands Action in DC**
<http://www.tarsandsaction.org>
- Sept. 1— Aug. 4 World Council of Churches "Time for Creation"**
Prayer Week Theme: International Year of Forests
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/events-sections/countdown-to-climate-justice/time-for-creation.html>
- September 19-23 Sustainable Pathways: Best Practices in Creation Care for Camp & Retreat Ministries**
At Ferncliff Camp & Conference Center, Arkansas
<http://presbyearthcare.org/events2.html>
- September 24 Moving Planet Day**
<http://www.moving-planet.org>
- October 16 World Food Day**
<http://www.worldfooddayusa.org>
- October 20-23 Renewal Summit: Students Caring for Creation**
<http://renewingcreation.org>
- October 24 National Food Day**
<http://foodday.org>

Newsletter Update:

Dear Friends,

Our summer newsletter is a bit late this summer as we made the transition to another newsletter template that does not require us to use the services of a graphic designer. This expense was around \$2,000 per year. The savings will allow PEC to get more done with your donations and membership fees.

Thanks to Bryan Fite who volunteered his time to help after we had tried several things that didn't work out. By the way, we are looking for a newsletter editor and writers for the PEC Update. Also, we are looking folks to serve on a short term task force to rename and improve the newsletter.

If you are interested, please e-mail Jenny Holmes at jehrestore@aol.com.



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* Please check to receive 4 copies of PEC Update.

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You will be sent an e-mail ballot this summer to vote for new PEC officers if we have your e-mail, or by mail if we only have your mailing address.