

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

The Mountain Vision

A Free Publication of Christians For The Mountains

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Knowledge As Service

*What if I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge?
And what if I had faith that moved mountains?
I would be nothing, unless I loved others. (1 Corinthians 13:2, CEV)*

The Apostle Paul boils down the essence of human existence as love. The 13th Chapter of his letter to the Church at Corinth is often read at weddings. And although the **Agape love** that Paul writes about centers on unmerited, freely given, unconditional grace toward others, the intimacy of marriage is also enveloped. Biblically speaking, knowledge is not abstract, detached manipulation of facts and information; rather, **knowledge involves intimate awareness and relationship.** Or as Wendell Berry puts it, "**affection.**"



One can only "know something" by entering into and surrendering to its mysteries and power. **George Washington Carver**, born as a slave to later become a premier scientist, arose every morning before daybreak to spend prayerful hours in fields and woods with his "little talks with God" while caressing and loving individual plants he would encounter.

"As I loved these plants, their secrets would become open to me," he said. "And then I would go back to my laboratory and share their secrets for the betterment of my fellow human beings."

Education is supported by the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars annually. Passing on knowledge to our children is critically important. Yet **meaningful education must incorporate knowledge of our world with intimate affection.** In the Genesis 2 creation account, God brings each animal to the human to name it, that is, to relationally know it. When a person loves

something with humble gratitude and affection, he or she will nurture it to fulfill its potential and protect it from exploitation and harm.

By the time this issue of *The Mountain Vision* reaches your hands, **Pope Francis** will have issued his **Encyclical** on our responsibility to God's creation. Pope Francis is a trained chemist and a pastor with the responsibility to nurture his flock. Our issue discusses the need to bring together science and faith in God, and how a child's trusting, open-eyed attitude can lead the way.



Mountaintop removal coal extraction is a crime against God, humanity, and nature! Another related crime is frack pollution, as **Brandon Richardson's** tale of Lochgelly cries out (p. 14). CFTM supporter **Frances Lamberts** quotes **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, who confronting disgraceful social sin, pleaded to others "**The fierce urgency of acting now**" (p. 15).

We with *Christians For The Mountains* bless you with these words of scripture. "**This is our prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight.**" (Philippians 1:9)

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Creation Praises God by Allen Johnson, Editor

The heavens tell about the glory of God.

The skies announce what his hands have made. Each new day tells more of the story, and each night reveals more and more about God's power. [Psalm 19:1, ERV]

"Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures..." So goes beginning stanzas of *Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister Moon* attributed to Francis of Assisi. Pope Francis's eagerly awaited Encyclical on the environment is titled, *Laudato Sii*, translated from Latin as "Praised Be You" from the first lines of The Canticle. The Encyclical will be subtitled "Sulla cura della casa comune, (On the care of the common home). Papal encyclicals authoritatively address significant doctrinal issues within the context of contemporary social behavior.

The encyclical is expected to be announced about the time this issue of *The Mountain Vision* comes out. The buzz is already loud. Archbishop Pedro Barreto Jimeno of Huancayo, Peru, told Catholic News Service: "(The encyclical) will have many critics, because they want to continue setting rules of the game in which money takes first place. We have to be prepared for those kinds of attacks."

"Pope Francis has repeatedly stated that the environment is not only an economic or political issue, but is an anthropological and ethical matter," Archbishop Barreto said. "How can you have wealth if it comes at the expense of the suffering and death of other people and the deterioration of the environment?"

Some influential Catholic politicians, business executives, and thinkers are seeking a strategy to retain their Catholic standing while dismissing the Pope's encyclical. When climate-change denying presidential aspirant Rick Santorum said the Church should "leave the science to the scientists" was reminded that Pope Francis had a Master's degree in chemistry, he changed his tune to say that matters such as climate are for politicians to deal with, not religious heads.

Pope Francis recently spoke of the importance of caring for creation during his May 24 homily for the feast of Pentecost. "Respect for creation, then, is a requirement of our faith: the 'garden' in which we live is not entrusted to us to be exploited, but rather to be cultivated and tended with respect."

A personal story. When at age 17 I began my freshman year at Manchester College, I had little career aspiration, just a love of nature, music, and a nascent Christian faith. I was too shy to even conceive thinking of becoming a preacher. I was good at playing the tuba and string bass, but not so driven as to pursue the arduous practice needed to become a professional. So I chose a major in Biology under the tutelage of Dr. William Eberly, and I thrived on anything that smacked of ecology. Upon graduation I was lined up for graduate study in limnology (fresh water science), but decided to lay out a year to work and save up to marry my girlfriend who had another year of college to go.

"Life happened," as the saying goes. I married Debora, we moved to West Virginia, we had kids, I took various employment, and I did not go to grad school. I grew in love for Jesus and studied theology and biblical justice as much as I could squeeze time in. And then in what some might call a "God event," at age 44 I was in grad school at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary studying theology and public policy supported by a fellowship internship with the start-up of the Evangelical Environmental Network.

Science and Christian faith united in my life. Just as music requires both an expressive heart and a skillful head, so also does science and faith. Science and faith in God are different planes of truth that converge.

Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury almost a millennium ago, defined theology as "faith seeking understanding" (*fides quaerens intellectum*). Anselm drew upon St. Augustine, who wrote, "Do not seek to understand in order to believe, but believe that you may understand."

Many scientists are drawn by insatiable curiosity to explore the marvels and wonders within the universe. Sir Joseph Thomson, Nobel Prize winning atomic physicist who discovered the electron said of scientific exploration,

"As we conquer peak after peak we see in front of us regions full of interest and beauty, but we do not see our goal, we do not see the horizon; in the distance tower still higher peaks, which will yield to those who ascend them still wider prospects, and deepen the feeling, the truth of which is emphasized by every advance in science, that 'Great are the Works of the Lord'."

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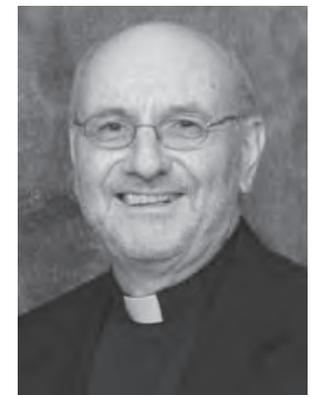
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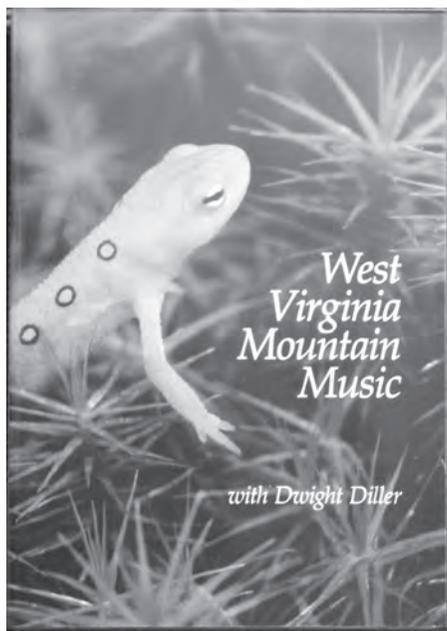
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Allen Johnson

www.ChristiansForTheMountains.org
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Christians For The Mountains (CFTM) invites you to join with us together in partnership for wholesome communities, vigorous clean economies, honest effective governments, rich culture, and healthy populations. CFTM seeks to follow the path Jesus taught of gratitude, service, compassion, truth-telling, and reconciliation.



Dwight Diller

www.dwightdiller.com

West Virginia Mountain Music DVD Free for CFTM Members

CFTM invites our members to enjoy this professional DVD featuring extraordinary beauty and wonder of Creation in the highest mountains of West Virginia, accompanied by the finest in Appalachian Traditional Music. Few of these copies are currently in circulation; however this DVD will be widely marketed in the near future.

As our way of saying “Thank You” for your support, we are offering this DVD Free for any CFTM membership.

For those of you who are current members or who donated to CFTM in 2014 or 2015, just let us know and we will send you a free DVD. Please enclose \$3 for postage and packaging. Additional donations will be appreciated!

Supplies on hand are limited. When we run out we will make a waiting list. Exclusive offer to CFTM members.

The West Virginia Mountain Music DVD immerses viewers into the wonder and beauty of Appalachia. There are no spoken words, only traditional clawhammer banjo and fiddle tunes (28 to be exact), while footage of insects, tadpoles, ferns, snow flakes, birds, and dew drops flit, crawl, and shimmer before our eyes. One does not watch this film, rather, one soaks in it like a relaxing, invigorating bath. There is no plot, no speaker, no buildup to climax; only the rhythm of seasons and the miracle of vibrant life. Inobtrusive subtitles identify locale and species.

Produced by husband and wife Bates and Jody Littlehales, the film is top calibre professional quality. As a staff photographer for the National Geographic Society for 37 years, Bates Littlehales covered a wide range of assignments around the world. He is considered one of the pioneers of underwater photography. After his retirement he embarked on a second career as a nature photographer publishing numerous articles and books. Jody also has decades in her career with National Geographic. Many of the scenes in this film were shot near their West Virginia summer home on Allegheny Mountain on the eastern watershed divide.

Dwight Diller is internationally known for his expertise in traditional Appalachian music. Teacher, banjo and fiddle player, ordained minister, folklorist, friend, Diller’s music embodies the spirit of the mountain culture. Diller has recorded numerous music albums and teaching films. Several cuts of Diller’s music are on CFTM’s Mountain Mourning Collection DVD.

CFTM thanks Dwight Diller for sharing this DVD.

Invitation to Join Together With Us

Name _____			
Address _____			
City _____	State _____	Zip _____	
Phone _____		Email _____	
Organization/School(s) _____			
We welcome any other information you would like to share (such as your faith; experience; skills; special interests; etc....use separate sheet)			
Mail to: Christians For The Mountains 12664 Frost Road, Dunmore, WV 24934 [Note: This form is not necessary. We welcome pertinent info. Our web online form is also available.]			
CFTM has 501(c)3 nonprofit tax exempt status through a partnership with World Stewardship Institute. P.O. Box 7348, [3840 Finley Ave., Bldg. 33, Ste. 202] Santa Rosa, California 95407. Contact is Fred Krueger. Telephone 707-573-3161.			

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Your donations are tax deductible. Thank you for prayer support.			

“THE CROSS IN THE MOUNTAINS” A Prayer Service Held At Kayford Mountain on April 18

“The Cross In the Mountains: An Ecumenical Prayer Service to Renew Appalachian Communities”

Purpose Statement: We of various faith communities assemble to pray as residents of the mountains. Our communities live with fear caused by the devastation of extractive industries. We pray for renewal of human and ecological communities throughout the mountains and for alternative work to bring greater diversity and choice for employment and energy sources. We pray by raising the Cross of Christ to remind us that Earth belongs to God by creation and we are designated as stewards of creation.

1. The first station—Jesus is **condemned to death**

Policies that separate mineral rights from surface rights continue to condemn the land.

All: Loving God, you taught love and offered alternatives to oppressive laws. May we be faithful in following your examples.

2. The second station—Jesus **takes up His cross**

Short-sighted societal greed weighs heavily upon the people and the land.

All: Gracious God, remove from us tendencies to greed. Help us to live under no other sign of power than the sign of the cross and to take up the burdens others carry especially miners and their families.

3. Jesus **falls for the first time**

All manner of fossil fuel waste contaminates our streams and rivers.

All: Creator God, our journey as Christians began with the baptism of water. May we affirm the sacredness of water and the right of all people to feel secure in the safety of their drinking water.

4. Jesus **meets his Mother**

Cabin Creek feeds the Kanawha River which is one of the most polluted rivers in the country with reproductive toxins.

All: Creator God, Giver of all life, forgive us for the ways that our societal choices threaten the well-being of future generations.

5. **Simon of Cyrene helps carry the cross**

People who speak out against environmental injustice are often marginalized within their own communities.

All: Almighty God, give us strength to use our voices and actively recruit others to work for justice.

6. Veronica **wipes the face of Jesus**

We are called to recognize and address the stains of abuse on the people and the land.

All: Loving God, we commit ourselves to the practice of empathy, to be present to others in their pain, and to use our own resources to touch and heal.

7. Jesus **falls the second time**

We stumble through frustration and anger as we face destructive practices.

All: Creator God, let us continue to persevere in striving to overcome the decimation of creation.

8. Jesus **consoles the women of Jerusalem**

Families and communities weep over the sickness, injury and death of loved ones who are caught in the lethal path of extractive industries.

All: God of mercy, you are our help and our guide. May we grow in compassion for one another.

9. Jesus **falls the third time**

Good intentions of individuals are often overpowered by the corporate mindset.

All: Almighty God, give us courage to resist the corporate evils that oppress.

10. Jesus is **stripped of his garments**

Mountains are stripped of their beauty, and mountain communities are stripped of their dignity and identity.

All: Loving God, as we observe the beauty of your creation may we strive to prevent any carbon footprint of ours that mars this beauty or harms our neighbors.

11. Jesus is **nailed to the cross**

Over 500 mountains and thousands of miles of streams in central Appalachia are already desecrated... and it continues.

All: God of Justice, inspire us to bring about justice with courage and insight.

12. Jesus **dies on the cross**

We are often indifferent to the most vulnerable humans and other species who die or whose lives are endangered.

All: Creator God, may life be revered by us so that our diverse ecosystem can thrive.

13. Jesus' body is **taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb**

So many people are not able to be buried in their family cemetery today due to the blocking or destruction of them by industry.

All: Loving God, give peace, consolation and rest to those who have been afflicted by greed and violence.

14. The **Resurrection** of Jesus

Our faith gives us hope for new sources of energy and sustainable livelihoods.

All: God of Love, thank you for leading us from the darkness into the light. Gift us with the wisdom and strength to become a sustainable community to be a witness in this world.



Catholic Committee of Appalachia organized “Cross In The Mountains.”



Photo by Chuck Ray Connor



Grave of Larry Gibson

QUOTES & COMMENTS From Scientists On God

“A scientific discovery is also a religious discovery. There is no conflict between science and religion. Our knowledge of God is made larger with every discovery we make about the world.”

—Joseph H. Taylor, Jr., who received the 1993 Nobel Prize in Physics for the discovery of the first known binary pulsar, and for his work which supported the Big Bang theory of the creation of the universe.

“It seems to me that when confronted with the marvels of life and the universe, one must ask why and not just how. The only possible answers are religious. . . . I find a need for God in the universe and in my own life.”

“But the context of religion is a great background for doing science. In the words of Psalm 19, ‘The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork.’ Thus scientific research is a worshipful act, in that it reveals more of the wonders of God’s creation.”

—Arthur L. Schawlow, Professor of Physics at Stanford University and winner of the 1981 Nobel Prize in Physics.

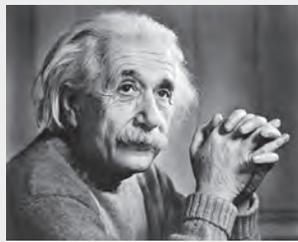
“There can never be any real opposition between religion and science; for the one is the complement of the other. Every serious and reflective person realizes, I think, that the religious element in his nature must be recognized and cultivated if all the powers of the human soul are to act together in perfect balance and harmony. And indeed it was not by accident that the greatest thinkers of all ages were deeply religious souls.”

—Max Planck, (the Nobel Prize winning physicist considered to be the founder of quantum theory, and one of the most important physicists of all time).

“The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass God is waiting for you.”

“In the history of science, ever since the famous trial of Galileo, it has repeatedly been claimed that scientific truth cannot be reconciled with the religious interpretation of the world. Although I am now convinced that scientific truth is unassailable in its own field, I have never found it possible to dismiss the content of religious thinking as simply part of an outmoded phase in the consciousness of mankind, a part we shall have to give up from now on. Thus in the course of my life I have repeatedly been compelled to ponder on the relationship of these two regions of thought, for I have never been able to doubt the reality of that to which they point.”

—Werner Heisenberg, who was awarded the 1932 Nobel Prize in Physics for the creation of quantum mechanics (which is crucial to modern science).



“I want to know how God created this world. I am not interested in this or that phenomenon. I want to know his thoughts; the rest are details.”

“Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”

“In view of such harmony in the cosmos which I, with my limited human mind, am able to recognize, there are yet people who say there is no God. But what really makes me angry is that they quote me for the support of such views.”

—Albert Einstein

“This much I can say with definiteness – namely, that there is no scientific basis for the denial of religion – nor is there in my judgment any excuse for a conflict between science and religion, for their fields are entirely different. Men who know very little of science and men who know very little of religion do indeed get to quarreling, and the onlookers imagine that there is a conflict between science and religion, whereas the conflict is only between two different species of ignorance.”

“The impossibility of real science and real religion ever conflicting becomes evident when one examines the purpose of science and the purpose of religion. The purpose of science is to develop – without prejudice or preconception of any kind – a knowledge of the facts, the laws and the processes of nature. The even more important task of religion, on the other hand, is to develop the consciences, the ideals and the aspirations of mankind.”

—Robert Andrews Millikan, who won the 1923 Nobel Prize in Physics for his work on the elementary charge of electricity and on the photoelectric effect.

“God [is] the author of the universe, and the free establisher of the laws of motion.”

—Robert Boyle, who is considered to be the founder of modern chemistry.

“If you study science deep enough and long enough, it will force you to believe in God.”

—Lord William Kelvin, who was noted for his theoretical work on thermodynamics, the concept of absolute zero and the Kelvin temperature scale based upon it.

“Science, with its experiments and logic, tries to understand the order or structure of the universe. Religion, with its theological inspiration and reflection, tries to understand the purpose or meaning of the universe. These two are cross-related. Purpose implies structure, and structure ought somehow to be interpretable in terms of purpose.”

“At least this is the way I see it. I am a physicist. I also consider myself a Christian. As I try to understand the nature of our universe in these two modes of thinking, I see many commonalities and crossovers between science and religion. It seems logical that in the long run the two will even converge.”

—Charles Hard Townes, who received the 1964 Nobel Prize in Physics for his fundamental work in the field of quantum electronics.

“I am proud to be a Christian. I believe not only as a Christian, but as a scientist as well. A wireless device can deliver a message through the wilderness. In prayer the human spirit can send invisible waves to eternity, waves that achieve their goal in front of God.”



—Guglielmo Marconi, winner of the 1909 Nobel Prize in Physics for his invention of the first successful system of wireless telegraphy. Marconi is the inventor of the radio; his revolutionary work made possible the electronic communications of the modern world.



“Although I know of no reference to Christ ever commenting on scientific work, I do know that He said, ‘Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’ Thus I am certain that, were He among us today, Christ

would encourage scientific research as modern man’s most noble striving to comprehend and admire His Father’s handiwork. The universe as revealed through scientific inquiry is the living witness that God has indeed been at work.”

—Werner von Braun, the father of space science and the most important rocket scientist involved in the development of the U.S. space program.

Quotations are from www.Godevidence.com/
Sources for the above cited quotes are available on their website, along with many other quotes from scientists.

Nurturing a Child by Allen Johnson

*The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children.*¹ [—Jesus]

*Our response upon encountering a child must be nothing less than reverence...Reverence is more than just love. It includes an appreciation for the qualities children possess (and which we ourselves have lost), a readiness to rediscover their value and the humility to learn from them...Reverence is also an attitude of deep respect.*² [—Christoph Arnold]

A child is the greatest privilege and utmost responsibility of the parents. This holds true of the larger society, which also must prioritize the good of children. Biology holds several axiomatic truths about all life: Nourishment, Protection, and Reproduction. Whether sentient creatures or not, each generation holds gratitude for the previous generation, has to cope with its own present generation, and must prepare the next generation. How does the uniquely endowed human species in American society stack up under the lens of biology? And in human terms, faithful covenant love for the past, present, and future?



American children are undergoing a major cultural shift. For example, take **screen time a child is engaged with a television, computer, or tablet**. Anyone who is about children in restaurants, playgrounds, shopping malls, or family homes sees what studies confirm: Children are in front of a television, tablet, or computer screen on average over 7 hours a day. Even one-third of babies under one year old are watching television or videos 90 minutes daily, viewing that increases to 2 to 4 hours daily in later preschool age. Studies in 2004 by the Kaiser Family Foundation reported 11 years old as the average age of first Internet exposure to pornography.

Children also play indoors much more. Even their less-frequent time outdoors is much more likely to be in adult-supervised organized activities such as soccer or field trips, which can be good, but what about unstructured outdoor play time?

As older people are apt to do, I look back at my own childhood and compare with today's child upbringing. I walked to school, or squeezed my bicycle into its full bike racks. As a young grade-schooler living in a Washington, DC suburb, I would ride my bike for miles, play in Rock Creek with friends, play hide-

and-peek in the dark, with our parents assuming safe neighborhoods. Later, living in northern Indiana, I played organized Little League baseball, a sideline compared to the daily pickup games we neighborhood boys would put together as we set up equalizing rules for each game depending on our numbers, ages, and skill gap. We kids climbed trees, built forts, caught frogs in the marshes, and bottled up fireflies at night. Television viewing in front of our Emerson 10" B&W screen with three channels was mesmerizing, but severely time-limited by my parents. When alone, I might go outdoors and entertain myself for hours playing with a stick.

Today, many children are kept indoors for fear of neighborhood gangs. The increasing numbers of single-parent households have difficulty managing weekend camping trips that engage kids to the outdoors. Upwardly-mobile kids are inundated with time-consuming structured activities. More children live in urban areas with less access to free-roaming woodlands and waters. The upshot, fewer children are experiencing creative play in the outdoors.³ The real world has been replaced by mirages.

Knowledge For Service

Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect. [Romans 12:2, NCV]

A self-centered person with a high level of education and skill can all the worse exploit others. On the other hand, the altruistic service of those with loving hearts can be less when insufficiently trained. "What do you know?" and "What will you do with what you know?" are the core questions of education, according to Steven Garber, head of the *Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation, and Culture*. Garber observes that **the hardest thing we are called to do in life is to know and still love. That is, knowing the brokenness of the world, sharing its pain, and using that "heart and mind knowledge" to develop relationships and responsibly act.**⁴

So How Can We Come to Know And To Love?

The prince says that the world will be saved by beauty! And I maintain that the reason he has such playful ideas is that he is in love. [Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*]

We love because God first loved us [1 John 4:19, NCV]

I've been around **Appalachian children** for more than 40 years as a high school teacher, social worker in child advocacy and health, a librarian, Sunday school teacher and church youth leader, and parent. When kids become adults they leave Appalachia by the droves. Those who stay often struggle to find healthy social friendships, meaningful employment, and modern infrastructure. A local



pastor once told me that **our most valuable export is not our timber, coal, or produce, but rather our talented, trained young adults.**

Rural Appalachia is rich in culture and ecology. Our children need "to know their own identity." Our parents and schools should impart knowledge and appreciation for "our own place and people." Our school curricula ought to integrate local culture and ecology into reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies at all levels. **Local community members are valuable resources** to share their knowledge with heart and passion in their stories, music, art, and skill.⁵ Field trips and community-integrated projects develop skills in observing and identifying plants, birds, building cooking fires, growing herbs, processing local food. **Parents** strengthen their offspring by taking them camping, hiking, fishing, as well as having them help at a local food bank, visit a nursing home, or mentor younger children in organized activities. Household chores can be expanded to include community service projects. **Vibrant churches** structure themselves to be family and children-welcoming-and-assisting. **Vibrant communities** are kid-friendly and encouraging. **Neighbors** step up to help struggling families. Children absorb the nurturing of their homes and neighborhoods to become nurturers themselves as adults.

Children look up to grownups. Adults set the pace and tone. How adults love will influence how children love. Love always has risk, love always entails sacrifice. Yet love triumphs.

Endnotes

1 [Matthew 19:14, NLT]

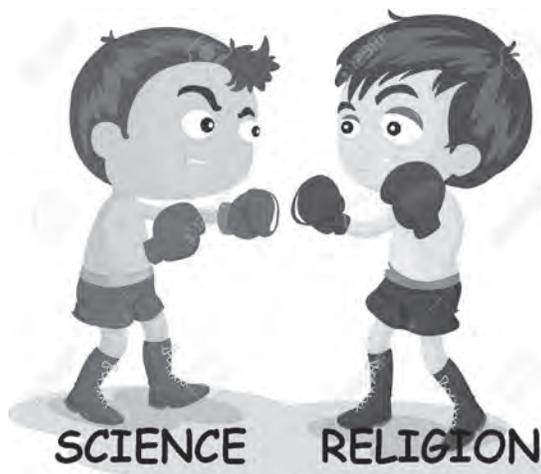
2 Johann Christoph Arnold, *Their Name Is Today: Reclaiming Childhood In A Hostile World* (New York: Plough Publishing House, 2014), 134.

3 I highly recommend James Louv, *Last Child In The Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin Books, 2005).

4 Steven Garber, *Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for the Common Good* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2014).

5 Foxfire was an early leader in student engagement projects with local Appalachian culture. <http://foxfire.org/>

Can Science and Religion Kiss? by Allen Johnson



A modern meeting between science and religion, it often seems portrayed, can be compared to contending prizefighters in a boxing ring. Each fighter warily circles the other, keeping light on his feet, gloves up to deflect any punch thrown his way, throwing jabs that might open a vulnerability in his opponent for a strong body punch or knockout head punch.

A meeting between science and religion, it often seems, can be compared to contending prizefighters in a boxing ring.

Why the Fuss?

The Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) significantly influenced the foundations of science. Their belief systems that nature is not comprised of gods but rather nature is a creation of One Transcendent God opened the door to examine nature as ordered.

Medieval Muslim scholars retrieved from obscurity Aristotle, the “Father of Science.” The Muslim scholar, Averroes, passed Aristotle through his writings to the influential Christian theologian, Thomas Aquinas. During the same era, a Franciscan monk, Roger Bacon, began to develop what is now called the scientific method. Several centuries later, the Enlightenment burst upon European soil, with Rene Descartes, Francis Bacon, and John Newton taking science leaps forward. Science and religion also began experiencing conflict, such as the well-known muzzling of Galileo. Nonetheless, during that era most scientists accepted conventional religious dogma.

Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud rocked Western religion. Darwin taught that life evolved from lower forms over vast expanses of time through competition and adaptation. For some, this contradicted the creation account and timeline in The Bible. Furthermore, certain 19th century influential theologians began applying the scientific method to the Bible and to Christian dogma. This “historical critical method” sought to understand ancient texts and human societies within their original historical contexts. A “hermeneutic of suspicion” as an interpretive method explored the “hidden

agenda of political, cultural, or economic motives” that might be cloaked in religious garb. The 1925 Scopes evolution trial in Tennessee further split the church and general public into polarized camps of conservative and liberal, religion and science.

Today, pockets of suspicion and hostility fester in certain religious and science corners. In 2009, the Pew Research Center reported a study that 51 percent of scientists believe that God or some higher power exists, while 41 percent of scientists reject both of those concepts. Some high profile atheist scientists such as William Demski and Richard Dawkins are openly hostile to religion, seeing it as undermining science. Other atheist or agnostic scientists, such as E. O. Wilson, and the late Carl Sagan and Stephen Jay Gould, have made sincere outreaches to religion to cooperate on issues of global importance. On the other hand, some religious leaders view conventional science darkly, offering up their own versions of science that they say is compatible with scripture. Yet synergy is also common. Katherine Hayhoe exemplifies a winsome personality, committed Christian faith, along with impressive credentials as a climate scientist. Pope Francis has a Master’s degree in chemistry.

50 religious leaders and scientists issued “The Joint Appeal by Religion and Science for the Environment” in May, 1992. The signatories consciously sought to reduce the tension and sometimes antagonism between science and religion.

Scientists Appeal to Religious Leaders

In January 1990, 32 internationally eminent scientists, led by Carl Sagan, an atheist, issued an impassioned “Open Letter To The Religious Community” to address serious global environmental degradation. They named human “self-inflicted, swiftly moving environmental alterations” including depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, deforestation, species extinction, and the prospect of global nuclear war. Following a series of subsequent meetings, 150 religious leaders and scientists issued “The Joint Appeal by Religion and Science for the Environment” in May, 1992. The signatories consciously sought to reduce the tension and sometimes antagonism between science and religion.

We believe that science and religion, working together, have an essential contribution to make toward any significant mitigation and resolution of the world environmental crisis. What good are the most fervent moral imperatives if we do not understand the dangers and how to avoid them? What good is all the data in the world without a steadfast moral compass? [excerpt, paragraph 4]

The National Religious Partnership on the Environment (NRPE) developed out of these meetings, comprised of four cooperative partners, each maintaining its own respective theological perspective—The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; the National Council of Churches in Christ; the Coalition of Jewish Life and the Environment; and the Evangelical Environmental Network as a joint project of World Vision and Evangelicals for Social Action. I interned with this latter group in its startup in 1993-94. The NRPE member groups continue to develop materials for congregations, colleges and religious education institutions, and disseminate position statements on the environment.

Can There Be Peace In The Valley With Science And Religion?

Science teaches us much how the physical world operates. Religion and the humanities teach us how to use knowledge well.

Science teaches us much how the physical world operates. Religion and the humanities teach us how to use knowledge well. One without the other is a debacle. Ignorance is not bliss. Gandhi famously listed “Science Without Humanity” as one of the *Seven Deadly Sins*.

Wendell Berry believes scientific research is only valid and beneficial when its attitude is toward enabling and strengthening society. This requires an attitude for life that has a base of affectionately and intimately knowing persons and places. Otherwise scientific abstractions that reduce everything to categories and commodities readily lead to new problems. For example, nuclear energy might solve some problems yet its presence threatens the earth with annihilation. Antibiotics when overused create superbugs. Ecologists sometimes design “mitigation banking for which a developer may purchase the right to spoil one place by preserving another.” [Wendell Berry, *Life is a Miracle: An Essay Against Modern Superstition* (Washington,DC: Counterpoint, 2000), 42.]

Berry writes,

“There is no reason, as I hope and believe, that science and religion might not live together in amity and peace, so long as they both acknowledge their real differences and each remains within its own competence. Religion, that is, should not attempt to dispute what science has actually proved; and science should not confuse theory and knowledge, and it should disavow any claim on what is empirically unknowable.” [Ibid; 98]

***** Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them. *** Psalm 111:2,ESV**

Mountaintop Removal Mining is a Crime Against Appalachia By Jeff Biggers [Al-Jazeera America, April 7, 2015]

President Barack Obama's budget proposal last month for an effective Appalachian regeneration fund opened a door to the future for ailing coal mining communities. The Power Plus Plan supports reclamation and reforestation projects, job training and transition programs for unemployed coal miners, as well as pension plans for retired miners.

The plan's focus on diversifying the region's economy is welcome acknowledgment that it is locked in a "death spiral," as one analyst recently noted — a result of the coal industry's shift to the heartland and western coal fields and a rapidly changing global energy market.

But for Appalachia to truly move on, another door must be closed on its deadly past. It's time for Obama and for Congress to recognize the indubitable scientific data on the mounting health damages of mountaintop removal (MTR) mining and enact a moratorium on all such radical strip mining operations through the Appalachian Community Health Emergency Act.

The lethal effects of MTR mining ...are no longer up for debate.

The lethal effects of MTR mining — in which the tops of mountains are lopped off and dumped into valleys to expose coal seams — are no longer up for debate.

In what should have been game-changing news last fall, a team of scientists from West Virginia University's Mary Babb Randolph Cancer Center found that "dust collected from MTR communities promotes lung cancer."

Michael Hendryx, a professor of applied health science at Indiana University Bloomington and one of the study's authors, added:

Previous studies have shown that people who live in these communities have higher lung cancer rates not due just to smoking, but with this study we now have solid evidence that dust collected from residential areas near MTR sites causes cancerous changes to human lung cells.

This study follows two-dozen peer-reviewed health studies that have documented the high rates of birth defects, heart disease and cancer in communities that face the fallout of millions of pounds of mining explosives, silica dust and pulverized heavy metals in waterways.

Locals have witnessed the death of their landscape as a precursor to the death in their own communities. "Near the once booming coal mining towns of Matoaka and Montcalm in Mercer County, West Virginia, the once steep mountainside covered in trees and local fauna is now barren and

unrecognizable," Wendy Johnson, a farmer and librarian who grew up in the area, said, describing the long-term repercussions of a nearby MTR operation. "A few homes sit across the road from the mine, which reaches all the way down to the roadside now, faced with massive amounts of run-off. A once lush mountainside is now a barren and muddy landscape."

How much more wreckage will it take for a top-level Obama official to even visit an MTR operation — a request by affected residents that in six years has never been answered?

How much more wreckage will it take for a top-level Obama official to even visit an MTR operation — a request by affected residents that in six years has never been answered?

Leaders in Washington can take responsibility for residents affected by extreme MTR practices or leave them to the whims of mining outlaws in the marketplace.

Thirty years ago, I listened to the beleaguered breathing of union mine leader John Woody in Matoaka as he described the industry's denial of deadly black lung problems in the face of scientific evidence, and the need for federal intervention to implement new workplace safety laws.

I hear the same expressions of denial about mountaintop removal's deadly impact from coal industry lobbyists and their political sycophants in coal-heavy state governments today. And while there is some movement — last month, health officials in West Virginia finally agreed to review existing research on the health effects of MTR mining — Appalachians can't afford to wait on state agencies entrenched in coal politics.

Leaders in Washington thus have a basic choice: Take responsibility for residents affected by extreme MTR practices or leave them to the whims of mining outlaws...

Leaders in Washington thus have a basic choice: Take responsibility for residents affected by extreme MTR practices or leave them to the whims of mining outlaws in the marketplace who continue to apply for new permits, even as the financial viability of high-cost central Appalachian coal bottoms out.

Because let's be clear: Mountaintop removal is in a tailspin. It only provides a fraction of our national coal production — an estimated 5-7 percent. The jobs argument has long been debunked: Since my first interview with Appalachian coal miners in 1983, two thirds of coal mining jobs have disappeared or been displaced to the West due to heavily mechanized

strip mining and the underground technique known as longwall mining, not environmental regulations.

Even banking institutions have recognized MTR's lack of tenability. PNC Financial lined up last month behind a slew of other major banks that have already made the same decision to stop lending money to MTR operations.

In recent weeks, coal-mining communities and national environmental groups have taken initiative as well, filing law suits against the Environmental Protection Agency for failing to enforce the Clean Water Act, and against the Department of Interior for failing to take over floundering state regulatory programs, as required by the Surface Mining Control and Regulatory Act.

On Monday, in response to a lawsuit from the Center for Biological Diversity, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to protect two species of crayfish from Appalachia under the Endangered Species Act. And the White House has announced it will soon release long-awaited revisions to the controversial "stream buffer zone" on mining discharges, which regulates the proximity of operations near waterways.

Evidence in hand, we must recognize that mountaintop removal mining is a crime against the citizenry's health and must be abolished

But a half-century of irreversible damage has made it clear that such regulatory compromises are no longer sufficient. Evidence in hand, we must recognize that mountaintop removal mining is a crime against the citizenry's health and must be abolished, not simply regulated. It's time for the president and Congress to bring it to an end with an immediate moratorium.



Jeff Biggers is the author of "Reckoning at Eagle Creek: The Secret Legacy of Coal in the Heartland," among other books. His website is JeffRBiggers.com.

Note from the Editor:



HR 912, The ACHE ACT calls for a moratorium on all new mountaintop removal permits, and a federal health study. For further information, go to www.acheact.org/ Christians For The Mountains is a founding member of the ACHE coalition.

NEWS & EVENTS

Fracked-Gas Pipeline Resistance Is Strong

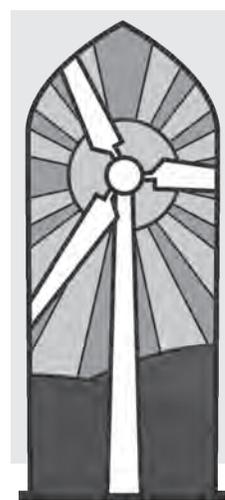
The natural gas boom in the Marcellus Shale region of West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania has resulted in proposed pipeline construction projects at a cost of \$15 billion. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP), Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP), Rover Pipeline, and Leach XPress are major proposals to transport liquid natural gas through up to 42 inch diameter pipes to consumers in other parts of the country.

The 330 mile long MVP and the 550 mile long ACP would cross some of the most rugged, pristine, and ecologically-sensitive areas in the East, including sections of the Jefferson, George Washington, and Monongahela National Forests, to reach markets in Virginia and North Carolina. *Christians For The Mountains* is working with other groups and thousands of local citizens to stop these pipelines.

Investors and power companies tout natural gas as a cleaner, cheaper alternative to coal, with pipelines being a safe method of transport. Opponents charge that investing massive funds into pipelines will increase the horizontal hydraulic fracturing (fracking) industry that is polluting and upsetting communities along with gas methane leakage that may contribute as much to climate change as coal. Rural areas slated for pipeline pass-through will receive only modest property tax and risk property devaluation, visual impairment from the 125 foot right-of-way swath, and pipeline explosion. Some property owners are resisting the pipelines by refusing surveyors onto their property.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Agency (FERC) has significant jurisdiction on pipeline approval and conditions. Further information on the pipelines and how to be involved is included on the following websites:

www.pipelineupdate.org
www.mareproject.org
www.abralliance.org
www.eight-rivers.org



Interfaith Power & Light Coming to West Virginia

“West Virginia will join 40 other states in having a chapter of Interfaith Power & Light (IPL).” This was the commitment of 14 religious leaders who met together at John XXIII Center on April 19, 2015 to take steps in organizing. IPL has over a decade of experience helping congregations address global warming by being better stewards of energy. IPL also brings the voice of the faith community into the policy-making arena to support policy change at the local, state, and national levels.

Catholic Committee of Appalachia 45th Anniversary

Catholic Committee of Appalachia celebrates its 45th anniversary at John XXIII Center in Charleston, WV, September 18-20, 2015. The theme of the gathering is “WATER: Practical, Political and Spiritual Implications.” To join the celebration, contact Jeannie Kirkhope at cca@ccappal.org

Join Climate Week in Washington, DC in September

Numerous groups are gearing up for an intensive week of climate advocacy in Washington, DC, the week of September 20-25. The Interfaith Moral Action on Climate (IMAC) is sponsoring a “Moral March For Climate” on Sunday Sept. 20. The National Religious Coalition on Creation Care (NRCCC) is sponsoring its annual Prayer Breakfast on Monday Sept. 21. Pope Francis will be in Washington, DC from September 22-24, including meetings at the White House and a joint session of Congress. All this and more is to advocate for effective global policy at the COP-21 climate meetings in Paris Nov. 30 – Dec. 11, 2015. Your prayers and involvement are needed during this critical year for international climate policy.

Unity the Theme at Preserving Sacred Appalachia Conference

Approximately 40 ecological preservationists joined together in Charleston at the St. John’s XXIII Pastoral Center from April 19-21 to champion responsible environmental stewardship in the context of understanding that Appalachia – and all the earth – is sacred. Among those at the “Preserving Sacred Appalachia” conference were people of faith, activists, artists, scientists, politicians, and educators.

The keynote speaker was Tierra Curry, the senior scientist and a conservation biologist at the Center for Biological Diversity. The conference kicked off with an extended trailer of the feature film, “In the Hills and Hollows,” a documentary by Keely Kernan, an award winning freelance photographer and videographer. The documentary, which Kernan is presently filming, investigates the boom and bust impacts that mono-economies based on fossil fuel extraction have on people and their local communities.

Topics addressed include Appalachia’s sacredness, climate change, water quality, the role of art and music in telling Appalachia’ story, mountaintop removal, fracking, natural gas pipeline development, child health, politics and policy. It also included times of meditation, reflection and sharing.



Organizer Michael Barrick (center) flanked by Autumn Bryson (left) and daughter Lindsay Barrick (right), listen attentively to a presentation

Michael Barrick was the organizer of the gathering. Barrick is a native of West Virginia, spent much of his career as an investigative journalist in North Carolina, and has recently returned to his home state. Barrick hosts www.AppalachianPreservationProject.com and publishes the **Appalachian Chronicle** blog from which the above is excerpted from the May 1, 2015 post.

Christians For The Mountains 10 Years Birthday by Allen Johnson

Christians For The Mountains (CFTM) reached the double-digit age of 10 on May 15, 2015. Our special birthday, then, is an occasion to offer praise and gratitude to God for anointing and favor, and thankfulness to those many people who have given gifts of intercessory prayer, their time, their money, and their counsel and encouragement.



Rev. Jim Lewis has provided wise counsel since our beginning. Pictured here along with Larry Gibson on our May, 2005 organizing visit to Kayford Mountain.

In October, 2004, Matt Wasson (*Appalachian Voices*), Fred Krueger and Allen Johnson (*National Religious Campaign for Forest Conservation*), met near Boone, North Carolina, to deliberate the concept of a regional network and strategies to energize and motivate Christians and their churches and leadership to actively care for and advocate for God's creation. A special focus was on the mining method known as Mountaintop Removal as an egregious assault upon the mountains and the communities in their shadow.

A few months later Bob Marshall and Allen Johnson, both West Virginia residents, worked up a planning conference in Charleston, West Virginia, held May 13-15, 2005, to organize a strategy to protect and restore God's creation in the Appalachian region. Deriving our stance from an array of scriptures including Psalm 24's, "The Earth is the Lord's, and all



"Why are you so late?" scolded Larry Gibson. We had arrived to Kayford over an hour later than planned. But what Gibson meant was, "Why are Christians so late in dealing with mountaintop removal." His challenge powerfully stirred us.

that it contains," the conference called for efforts to mobilize Christians and their churches to combat grievous ravages against God's Earth such as Mountaintop Removal coal extraction.

This initial meeting was first of all to see if there was interest in such an organization, and if so, to begin steps to set it up. A number of persons known to be Christians and active in creation care issues were invited, although this still represented only a fraction of active Christian conservationists in our region. About two dozen of us met at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Charleston, WV, over the weekend conference. We took a field trip to Kayford Mountain where Larry Gibson talked with us about Mountaintop Removal. "I'm so glad you are here, but why did you [meaning Christians] take so long?" Judy Bonds exclaimed, "My faith in God is what gives me motivation and strength to carry on in the fight to save the mountains and the communities."

A Letter of Declaration was written to disseminate among the Christian communities of our region. A Steering Committee was set up for governance, comprised of Bob Marshall, Janet Keating, Mary Ellen O'Farrell, Carol Warren, and Allen Johnson. Two initial goals were set. One, to build an information toolkit. Dave Cooper offered his slides from his



Judy Bonds was deeply involved with CFTM. Two weeks after "CFTM's birth," some of us participated in a rally at a Massey Coal processing plant. Judy's passionate call for justice continues to ring in our hearts.

"Traveling MTR Road Show for us to make a DVD. Second, we would invite church leaders to do flyovers. At the closing meeting Sunday, the name, "Christians For The Mountains" was nominated and acclaimed as the name of the organization. We had no money, but felt we could network with existing religious social justice organizations and existing environmental groups, first of all by serving them.

CFTM's first activity was in support of a protest rally at the entrance to Massey Goals Coal processing plant at Sundial, West Virginia, on May 31, 2005. Adjacent Marsh Fork Elementary School was in the shadow of the plant with coal dust and associated hazardous toxins permeating the building and playground, with looming overhead a quarter



Some of the two dozen participants during our organizing conference in May 2005. Brian O'Donnell, Janet Keating, Bob Marshall, Fred Krueger, Robbie Pentecost, Mary Ellen O'Farrell, Fred Samson, Elizabeth Samson

mile away a dammed up coal sludge impoundment containing 2.8 billion gallons of arsenic, cadmium, and mercury laden sludge. This first of many protests eventually led to the building of a new school in a safer location.

Newsweek magazine published three months later a double issue, "Spirituality in America." [Aug. 29-Sept. 5, 2005] What can only be attributed as a miracle of God was a two page spread with photo featuring *Christians For The Mountains*. This attention spawned more press to come, including PBS documentaries by Bill Moyers, newspaper write-ups, and film spots.

CFTM held "The Earth Is The Lord's Conferecne" in Charleston and at Kayford in November, 2005. Supporters from as far away as St. Louis and Washington, DC, participated. Larry Gibson and Maria Gunnoe talked with us on Kayford Mountain. Southwings provided flyovers of mountaintop removal. We screened a first draft of our *Mountain Mourning* film project. Denise Giardina, raised in the coalfields, trained in theological studies, and a well-known writer, succinctly noted in her keynote address, "When we destroy Gods mountains, we reject God's blessing." Kate Long led the evenings' song and music. Other presenters included coal sludge impoundment expert and corruption fighter Jack Spadaro; theologian Howard Snyder; and OCEC leader Janet Keating. Mary Ellen O'Farrell emphasized, "To poison, pollute, and degrade Gods creation is to heap contempt on our Creator." Co-founder Bob Marshall, a Charleston area veterinarian, pointing out that the group includes Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant members, said, "We have a big tent because irrespective of denominational differences all Christians should agree that we need to live responsibly upon this earth. To ruin and pollute the land is sin."

Christians For The Mountains continues as a service ministry for biblically-informed, Christ honoring justice, restoration, and renewal for people and the land, water, air, and fellow creatures of God's creation.

Christians For The Mountains 10 Years Birthday [Continued from page 10]



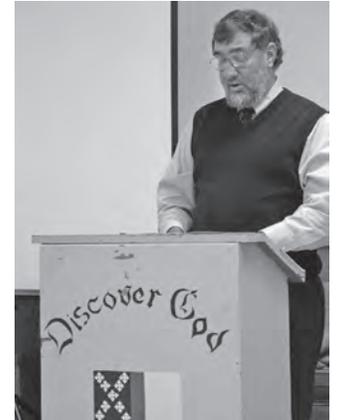
Sr. Joellen Sbrissa, CSJ (Illinois), Sr. Diana Oleskevich, CSJ (Missouri); Sr. Ruth Kuhn, SC (Ohio); Sr. Edna Hess, CPPS (Ohio)



Patty Sebok and Kathryn Stone



Kate Long



Jack Spadaro



Sr. Diana Oleskevich; Regina Hendrix; Janice Nease; Sr. Joellen Sbrissa at "The Earth Is The Lord's Conference" in November 2005



Lindsay Moseley and Paul Wilson (foreground) and Greg Leffel and Brian Bolton (background)

Below is *Christians For The Mountains'* initial public announcement. Mary Ellen O'Farrell accepted the assignment to write this DECLARATION, which continues to be our framework of commitment and covenant.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world and all they that dwell therein." Psalms 8:1
 16 May 2005

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We ask you to give prayerful consideration to the results of the method of coal-mining known as mountaintop removal mining. The Bible tells us that we are accountable to God for the health of His good Creation. The book of Genesis says, *"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it."*

God has made us His stewards, and we must give account of our stewardship to our Creator. We may not avoid this responsibility, for it is God-given. To poison, pollute, and destroy God's Creation is sinful. When we do this, we heap contempt on our Creator, and we endanger our health, our neighbor's health, and the health of future generations. We endanger the welfare and survival of God's work—our world.

As people of faith who believe that all things were made in and through Christ, we are called to treat with reverence all that Christ has ransomed from the power of sin and death. This includes His created world.

Therefore, as Christians we must stand in opposition to the massive and irresponsible destruction resulting from the method of coal-mining known as mountaintop removal mining. We are accountable for assisting those who depend on this industry for supporting their families, as alternative ways for them to earn a living are sought.

We must provide a Christian witness by participating in activities that expose and oppose the devastating damage to individuals, communities, and the air, water and soil that sustain us.

Please discuss these matters with your fellow Christians, pastors, church members and friends, and sustain these activities in prayer.

If you or your church would like to know more about these efforts, please contact Allen Johnson at 304-4137 or Mary Ellen O'Farrell at 304-346-3303.

Yours in Christ,
 Christians for the Mountains



Newsweek publishes a two-page spread 3 months after CFTM's founding!!! (pictured are Allen Johnson with his wife, Debora, and a son, Micah)

Coal activist: Communities Near Mountaintop Removal Live In 'Sacrifice Zone'

by Taylor Kuykendall [SNL, April 6, 2015]

Bo Webb is one of the most active citizens fighting the controversial coal mining technique of mountaintop removal. Though Webb now also spends time in Washington, D.C., and Boston, it was the activities around his Peachtree, W.Va., home, which sits adjacent to Alpha Natural Resources Inc.'s Edwight surface mine, that spurred him to action.

Webb is the campaign director of the Appalachian Community Health Emergency Campaign, a coalition of organizations that advocate for "government action and protection of the public from the health crisis in mountaintop removal communities." Mountaintop removal is the process of blasting away at the rock and dirt to access the coal seam beneath. The overburden is often placed in adjacent valleys and sometimes buries miles of streams.

While numerous studies have linked health issues to living near mountaintop removal sites, the industry has largely been dismissive or critical of those studies. The campaign is hoping to pass the Appalachian Communities Health Emergency Act, or ACHE Act, a piece of legislation that would call for a moratorium on mountaintop removal mines — one of the most economical methods for a company to extract coal in Appalachia — until researchers have fully evaluated the health consequences for those living near the operations. The following is an edited transcript of a recent conversation between SNL Energy and Webb.

SNL Energy: What are some of the day-to-day issues and other challenges that arise from living near mountaintop removal sites?

Bo Webb: Living beneath mountaintop removal blasting is the unpleasant reality of knowing you live in what must be a government-approved designated sacrifice zone. A person that lives beneath MTR faces many challenges.

Wiping toxic blasting dust off outdoor furniture is a daily chore. Sometimes the dust is black, sometimes yellow or brown, or a yellowish brown. Sometimes it's a gooey substance. It penetrates everything inside and outside your home.

Knowing your family and yourself are breathing these same toxins is a constant worry. In trying to protect your family and your community by speaking out you place yourself in ill favor of some of your neighbors who might either work on an MTR site or they simply are in a state of denial of the truth about mountaintop removal and human health.



Bo Webb, campaign director, Appalachian Community Health Emergency Campaign



Dust clouds float off of a surface coal mine in West Virginia. The photo was taken above the home of Bo Webb, an environmental activist fighting the coal industry's mountaintop removal practices.

In petitioning the government you are shrugged off and ignored. Community services are nearly nonexistent. The vast majority of people you talk to in the community don't like mountaintop removal mining and are worried about their health but feel it can't be stopped.

Watching family members and neighbors become stricken with cancer is the hardest part to accept for me. How can a government that professes to be a government of all the people turn its back on a segment of people just because they live where a profit can be made at the cost of their health?

We've seen numerous studies about the impacts of mountaintop removal coal mining on the communities that live near them. What are some of the findings you find most compelling and demanding of action?

In my opinion the most compelling science to date is the connection of fine particulate dust to the growth of tumors in human lungs. U.S. Geological Survey scientists collected dust in our communities that identify the particulates present in the dust, the size of the particulates, and concluded the source of the dust is generated at the MTR sites.

Last November a report from medical scientists at the Mary Babb Randolph Cancer Center proved in the lab that the dust present in the air people are breathing in mountaintop removal communities promotes the growth of tumors in human lungs. That connection calls for an immediate halt to MTR blasting, yet the [West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection] continues to issue MTR permits.

What is the ACHE Act and what sort of change do you think it could spark in Appalachia?

The ACHE Act is a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives that protects human health from further exposure to mountaintop removal blasting dust. The changes it will spark are beyond predicting.

Our children will be healthier and born with less

respiratory illnesses. Our air, water and garden soils will begin to recover. Health care costs will decline. New job opportunities will be created with the cleanup of MTR sites and the damage they have created. Numerous other job opportunities will no doubt arise, but the main purpose of the ACHE Act is to provide health protection for the unborn, our children, and all peoples living in these places where mountaintop removal mining has brought harm.

What sort of support have you seen for the ACHE Act so far?

We are gaining more and more support as we continue the ACHE health campaign. We have a good number of national organizations now that have endorsed our bill and our effort and that will continue as we move forward. Just some of those include: Center for Biological Diversity, Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Appalachian Voices, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, Highlands Conservancy, Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, Save Our Cumberland Mountains, Sierra Club, Kentuckians For The Commonwealth, Earth Justice, Coal River Mountain Watch, 350.org, Center For Health, Environment and Justice, Christians For The Mountains, Mountain Health and Heritage Association, Citizens Coal Council, Union of Concerned Scientists, United Methodist Church, World Stewardship.

There are a number of U.S. senators now that are aware of the ACHE Act and the health science. We expect our effort in the Senate to bring more senatorial awareness over the next few months.

In West Virginia, it seems it can be difficult to get support for anything that poses a threat to the viability of the coal industry. How do you plan to overcome that?

Just two weeks ago on March 16, ACHE organized The People's Foot rally at the headquarters of the WVDEP. Three days before The People's Foot event, with media pressure mounting, West Virginia Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection Randy Huffman declared we need to take a close look at the health science related to mountaintop removal.

That acknowledgement by the WVDEP was the first ever of its kind to acknowledge peer-reviewed and published science indicating mountaintop removal to be a major public health hazard. Immediately following The People's Foot event the office of West Virginia Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin publicly stated they are going to review the health science around mountaintop removal. That is another first. The governor of West Virginia has never before acknowledged the existence of this health science.

We are looking forward to learning how this review will be conducted and when it will begin. Meantime, we will continue to educate other government

Coal Activist (continued from page 12)

agencies as well.

Supporters of the industry tout its job and economic benefits — if not coal, what other options are available for the people working at these operations?

Our focus at ACHE is not one of jobs. Our focus and first priority is to protect our children, the unborn, and all people living in MTR communities. It only stands to reason that jobs will be created simply by the act of cleaning up the toxic mess created by the coal industry, and they should be liable for the cleanup costs that will be incurred.

Let's not pretend mountaintop removal is a viable job creator to begin with. At best these current MTR jobs are temporary jobs, they are not sustainable. Mountaintop removal has been a job eliminator. It has served coal industry profits at the cost of jobs and health to the Appalachian people.

It seems those opposing mountaintop removal, or coal in general, have enjoyed some success with this administration though maybe not as much as they have liked. How instrumental do you think 2016 elections may be to keep this momentum or to build upon it?

No matter who is elected in 2016 they are going to be faced with the fact that people in mountaintop removal communities are sick and dying because of this one specific method of mining coal. If the ACHE Act is not passed into law by the time those elected in 2016 take office they can be assured that we will make this fact known to the American people and they will be held accountable if they fail to take action to protect Appalachia. ###



SUPPORT THE ACHE CAMPAIGN

The Appalachian Community Health Emergency (ACHE) Campaign seeks to educate others about the rapid escalation

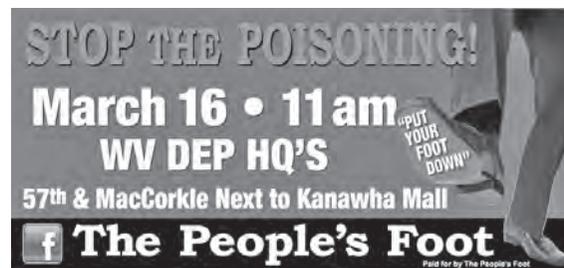
of cancer, birth defects, respiratory and heart diseases that are affecting communities of Appalachia where mountaintop removal mining is conducted. **Goals are:**

Educate the United States Congress (via the committee structure) about the science-based public health crisis affecting citizens living in areas with mountain top removal and to seek solutions and government intervention from those agencies with the responsibility to protect the health of Americans.

For the United States government to declare an **immediate moratorium on mountaintop removal** mining, evaluate the health problems citizens face because of mountain top removal, and report results of such study to Congress.

Please go to www.acheact.org to contribute and help.

The People's Foot



The People's Foot mobilized outside the West Virginia Department of Environmental (WVDEP) headquarters in Charleston on March 16, 2015, to *demand acknowledgement of the science on mountaintop removal-related sickness, and to immediately stop issuing issuing mountaintop removal permits.*

Red "People's Foot" T-Shirts bedecked most of the assembly and impassioned speakers and musicians with a clear message. *"Time to put your foot down! No more mountaintop removal permits!"*

A meeting with WVDEP officials had been scheduled following the rally. However, the WVDEP only wanted to meet with a few, not all of us the people, so that meeting was called off.

For a month preceding the rally, billboards announced the rally and reason for it. Just prior to the rally, state officials including WVDEP head Randy Huffman, governor Earl Ray Tomblin, and DHHR Bureau of Public Health Commissioner Rahul Gupta announced openness to consider the scientific evidence correlating mountaintop removal and nearby community health severe health problems.

The People's Foot is a collaboration of numerous WV advocacy organizations.

Follow The People's Foot on Facebook.



Billboards announced The People's Foot Rally



Bob Kincaid emceeded the rally



West Virginia native Debbie Jarrell continues her many-year's struggle to end mountaintop removal



Out of the mouths of babes...wisdom



"We are Keepers of the Mountains." Elise Keaton and Carol Gibson (widow of Larry Gibson)



WVDEP Official at headquarters after rally

GREED + POLITICS + TOXIC FRACK FLUIDS ASSAULT A COMMUNITY by Brandon Richardson

Editor's Note: Horizontal Hydraulic Fracturing, commonly called "fracking," uses chemical-laced water to force out oil and gas in deep shale formations that often bear unacceptable levels of radiation. Storage or disposal of returned frack fluid is a logistical and costly problem that has not been satisfactorily resolved. Brandon Richardson's report that follows is a tale of heedless greed, unregulated and unenforced pollution, causing devastating impacts in a local community not far from where *Christians For The Mountains* held its outreach office in 2009-2010. Many community members are now raising their voices with petitions, hearings, and outcries. May the voice of moral reason prevail.

GREED + POLITICS + TOXIC FRACK FLUIDS ASSAULT A COMMUNITY by Brandon Richardson

Lochgelly, another sacrificed West Virginian community, has been the home of two injection wells used for disposal of oil and gas waste from the hydraulic fracturing process. This site has been in operation by Danny Webb Construction, Inc. since the year 2002. This facility has been nothing but problems for Fayette County communities ever since.

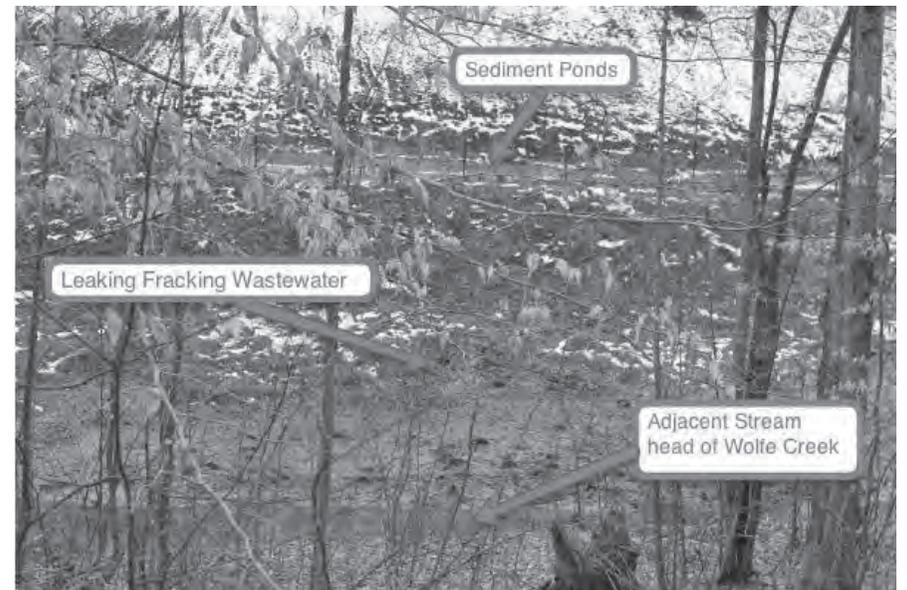
Members of the community have expressed worries about this fracking waste disposal site only to be told not to worry, that visible contamination was from old abandoned coal mines in Lochgelly. Residents have also complained for years about noxious odors. For example, according to an air quality complaint filed with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP), residents complained about a horrible odor in the year 2004. The site manager told the WVDEP that Danny Webb Construction had received a load from BobCat Oil and Gas that "caused a cloud from and created an obnoxious odor from Lochgelly to Fayetteville". The odor was from hydrogen sulfide gas, a gas that is toxic to almost every system in the body.



Picture taken in response to WVDEP claims that dye tests were performed and the pits in Lochgelly were not leaking. Notice the "high water" mark is about the pit liner. See www.dirtysecretwater.com for color graphic.

The community was told that the contamination they were seeing in the nearby stream was coal-related acid mine drainage. Concerned property owners, residents, and local organizations had soil and water samples taken that showed contamination from chemicals used in the fracked oil and gas production. In September of 2014, Professor Avner Vengosh from Duke University and the U.S. Geological Survey found radioactive elements Radium 226 and Radium 228, the "fingerprint" of the Marcellus Shale rock layer, in nearby Wolfe Creek. This radioactive material which is so-called "safely injected"(recklessly

mismanaged) tested to be around 3000pCi/L. To really understand this threat, the maximum combined radium 226 and radium 228 levels in safe drinking water is 5pCi/L, and industrial waste in other industries must not exceed 60pCi/L. **How is it that someone can get away with mismanaging waste that is 600 times more radioactive than safe drinking water?** There is not currently an official response to that question.



Leakage from the pits containing toxic and highly radioactive frack waste migrating into Wolfe Creek. [from www.dirtysecretwater.com]

The mixture used for hydraulic fracturing has been found to contain up to 700 different man-made chemicals. Many of these cause cancer in addition to many other diseases. This poison can be toxic if breathed, drank, or touched. Such toxic brew has lain in pits open to the air for around ten years in Lochgelly, West Virginia. There are also numerous other areas in the United States that have toxic exposure levels of airborne poisonous chemicals miles about surrounding hydraulic fracturing oil and gas operations.

A former employee of Danny Webb Construction claims wastewater was illegally dumped at Danny Webb Construction property and on its entrance road. This same worker remembers times handling waste that would eat through his boots. He could only shovel it in short spurts because the air was unbreathable. This same former employee is now suffering from a fatal disease in his nervous system confirmed to be caused by exposure to that waste.

Kristine Gilkey, an elementary school teacher for Fayette County, states she has seen cancers in elementary school age children drastically increase in the twenty years since she started teaching in the County. In recent years, healthy children raised in smoke-free homes that attended Ms. Gilkey's school have died due to rare cancers. With the haphazard handling of some of the most toxic waste known, who is to say that this contamination in Lochgelly is not causing these cancers among healthy children in Fayetteville and its surrounding communities? Ms. Gilkey is now aware of this source of toxins in Lochgelly and in her words, "I am ready to chain myself to the gates!"

Fayette County is experiencing rate increases of Cancer, Leukemia, and Thyroid disease. No health impact study has been conducted to connect the waste dumping in Lochgelly to the recent disease increase. However, other states are using Lochgelly as an example of potential environmental disasters from fracking and as a strong reason for fracking moratoriums or bans.

Danny Webb Construction is currently operating without any kind of permit, an outrage that violates state and federal law! Fayette County Commissioners are developing plans to stop Danny Webb Construction from operating. However, much damage has been done to our people and our environment in Fayette County. Furthermore, 759 similar wells operate in West Virginia, of which 16 such wells are currently [continued on page 15]

Greed +... [Continued from page 14]

operating in West Virginia without a permit including the two in Lochgelly, West Virginia.

West Virginia American Water is a company that supplies 1/6 of West Virginia's population. Its 2011 Source Water Assessment and Protection Plan for the New River Treatment Plant in Fayette County stated that hydraulic fracturing fluid is being disposed in abandoned coal mines in West Virginia. Our state already experiences widespread pollution effects from coal slurry underground injections and dumping into abandoned mines. With hydraulic fracturing waste laced with radioactivity and toxic chemicals, and a state with thousands of abandoned mines, the actual situation might be worse than we ever thought.

“Underground mines in some locations are being used to dispose of mine waste and fracturing water from oil and gas operations.

The water system staff has expressed concerns about what types of things may be injected into abandoned underground mines and how that will potentially impact the surface water in the future.”

-2011 SWAPP performed by Tetrattech for New River Treatment Plant

How long will people suffer before justice is done? What is going on in Lochgelly and across the state must be stopped! Let's trust ourselves to do what is right to keep this toxic and radioactive fracking waste out of our communities. Greed-driven companies and compliant regulatory agencies have only shown contempt in putting human and environmental health at risk through disposal of this waste. What is going on in Lochgelly and around the state is evil. It is our duty as a community to act on our morals and push solutions to save lives.

 Brandon Richardson is a geologist, and serves as administrator for Friends of Water in Fayette County, West Virginia.

For further information:

www.facebook.com/groups/FayetteCountyHWC/
www.dirtysecretwater.com/
www.plateauactionnetwork.org/

BREAKING NEWS!!!

The American Medical Association adopted a new policy at its annual meeting June 9 calling for a full disclosure of all chemicals used in the fracking. In addition to requiring the chemical disclosures, monitoring “should focus on human exposure in well water and surface water and government agencies should share this information with physicians and the public.”

**“Fierce Urgency” Needed to Protect Climate
by Frances Lamberts**

“Demeter and Persephone,” a book by an author at Jonesborough's Storytelling Festival, relates an ancient Greek version of the creation story.

It pictures the all-powerful god Zeus, enthroned on Mount Olympus, watching over our world below. From his throne in a dark and cold underworld, Hades watches the world above. The world in-between is ruled over by Demeter, the goddess of the harvest. Burgeoning growth, this world's air is heavy with the scent of flowers and the songs of birds. Our green Earth is “bursting with life.”

When Hades abducts Demeter's daughter Persephone in an earthquake, Zeus sends his messenger Hermes to him. A compromise is negotiated. Without fail for half the yearly cycle, fall and winter, Persephone will go to the underworld as Hades' wife. The earth must share the mother's grief during that time: it turns silent, dark, and cold. But promptly and dependably at the beginning of spring, Persephone returns to her mother and the world buds with new life, light, warmth and birdsong. Demeter teaches people the rituals of welcoming, rejoicing and caring for the Earth that will “ensure that their harvests will always be plentiful.”

For more than ten thousand years, this natural order of seasonal weather transitions held firm. It let nature delight and nourish its many children, let humans develop agriculture and their civilizations thrive. The Christian biblical story, too, acknowledges and celebrates the goodness of the divine force which thus privileges the tiny orb, in a vast universe, on which we live.

About two hundred years ago, through burning coal in railroad engines, factories and power plants following the industrial revolution, we began disgorging smoke heavenward in massive amounts. God soon sent messengers to warn of unhappy consequences. In Europe in the 19th century, scientists studying the properties of gases realized that some of them, produced in fossil fuel burning, tend to trap solar-radiation heat. If they accumulate in the sky, Swedish chemical-physicist Arrhenius, a Nobel prize winner, said, they would warm the planet to the point of affecting “our fields and gardens.” He even calculated, laboriously with pen and paper in 1894, the likely global-warming temperature rise which modern, sophisticated computer models have corroborated. It would reach between nine and eleven degrees (Fahrenheit), he concluded, if carbon dioxide levels were to double in the atmosphere.



The Biblical Hebrew Prophets Preached “Fierce

They have risen ominously, from 280 (parts per million) at his time to 360 a century later and 400 now. Without swift and decisive action, the doubling point could be reached within our lifetime, dooming the prospects for a livable and healthy world for future children.

The messengers, from the authentic climate-science community, have kept coming. Heard but largely ignored in action, they now are frequently attacked by industrial-interest boosters. A modern-day prophet whose legacy the nation celebrates in January, Martin Luther King, used to speak of “the fierce urgency of [acting] now.” We should heed him, through swift energy transitioning, in the matter of restoring a natural and climate-benign – not man-altered and destructive – atmosphere around Mother Earth.



Dr. Frances Lamberts is a retired psychologist, conservationist, and practitioner of low-carbon living. Lamberts served 25 years as conservation chair of the League of Women Voters, and continues as an active member of the Union of Concerned Scientists. Lamberts home received an “Energy Efficiency Champion” award from the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy. Her acre yard contains more than 150 native trees and shrubs, and her gardens and small stock produce most of her food.

Published in Lamberts' column, “Eye on the Environment,” in the *Herald & Tribune* newspaper in Jonesborough, Tennessee, January 28, 2015. Used with gracious permission of the author.



Congratualtions to CFTM staff Robert (Sage) Russo and wife, Jessi, with their newborn son, Jonathan Silas Russo, born May 4, 2015.

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them; for it is to those who are childlike that the Kingdom of the Heavens belongs.”

--Jesus [Matthew 19:14, Weymouth]

“The prevailing economy is often concentrated on the enjoyment of individual wellbeing, but it largely exploits family ties.... Yet, the interior formation of the person and the social flow of affections have their mainstay precisely there. Should it be removed, everything would fall apart.”

Pope Francis
Family and Poverty
June 2015



If you want to identify me, ask me not where I live, or what I like to eat, or how I comb my hair, but ask me what I am living for, in detail, and ask me what I think is keeping me from living fully for the thing I want to live for.

—Thomas Merton (1915-1968)
Source: *My Argument with the Gestapo*

“The knowledge of God is very far from the love of Him.”

“The heart has reasons that reason cannot know.”

“Justice and power must be brought together, so that whatever is just may be powerful, and whatever is powerful may be just.”

“Men despise religion. They hate it and are afraid it may be true.”

“Faith is different from proof; the latter is human, the former is a Gift from God.”

“There are only two kinds of men: the righteous who believe they are sinners, the sinners who believe they are righteous.”

—Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) was a groundbreaking French mathematician, writer, physicist, inventor, and Christian philosopher. His most influential theological treatises are in his *Pensees*.



The Peaceable Kingdom by Fritz Eichenberg

Upcoming for the Next Edition of *The Mountain Vision*

The sixth edition will be this fall.. Please let us know if your friends would like a sample copy.

The upcoming issue will discuss idolatries of power, money, and ideology, and explore “environmental and human justice” as a true homeland security. Infrastructure for rural needs will be another topic.

We invite you to send your own personal stories of your conversions and insights to Kingdom of God ethical behavior with emphasis on environmental justice.

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

