



Top stories in this newsletter



Conference



Progress, Not Perfection



C3 Board Members



Compost 150



Fascinating Facts



“From Food to Faith: How our Food Matters to our Faith”
C3 Spring Conference

May 6, 2023

9:30 - 11:30 am

Covenant Presbyterian Church
1000 E. Morehead St., Charlotte, NC

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Catherine Wright, Associate Professor,
Ethics and Ecotheology, Wingate University

Group Conversation

Creation-Themed Worship

Registration Fee: \$15, includes
practical ideas and prayer resources

To register: use this



Dr. Wright is an interdisciplinary Christian ecotheologian teaching at Wingate University (NC) in the Religion and Philosophy Department as an Associate Professor. She is also the first Executive Director of Collaborative for the Common Good.



Progress, Not Perfection

If you ever thought about addressing the world’s greatest problems, you’ve probably encountered someone called “Overwhelmed.” Overwhelmed can bring up all the reasons you

don’t need to try to do something about these problems. When donating food to a local food pantry, Overwhelmed will say, “Do you really think you’re going to end world hunger with a bag of groceries?” He’s relentless. He goes around and around in your head, until you throw your hands into the air and say, “What’s the use!”

(Continued on page 2)



Christians Caring for Creation

(Continued from page 1)

Overwhelmed is crafty. At times, he'll use humor, just so you don't get disgusted with him. He's the voice who came up with the saying, "If the children in China go hungry because I'm not eating all my supper, I'll be glad to let them have this supper." What kid hasn't tried that one at the dinner table!

There are perpetual menaces in the world that never seem to go away: world hunger, the wars of powerful nations against weaker ones, economic disparities between the rich and the poor, political corruption, and racism, to name just a few. These seemingly intractable problems can make our efforts at peace, equity and justice seem futile. Has there ever been a generation that didn't face these demons? Even Jesus said, "*The poor you will always have with you*" (Mt 26:11). It takes imagination, energy and wisdom to confront these enduring problems. These powerful friends are given by the Holy Spirit to summon the will to engage the enemy. Overwhelmed is our enemy. The will to engage is our friend.

Climate change is a historically recent addition to these intractable problems that have been developing over the last couple of hundred years, since the dawn of the industrial revolution when we began to



pumping gas emissions into the atmosphere and cutting down more trees than we were planting. Mr. Overwhelmed has lots of tricks in his bag to shut us up and shut down our efforts.

"Climate change is part of the natural flow of planetary life; there's nothing you can do about it."

"There's not enough minerals in the earth to produce the electric cars we need."

"Do you really think building a compost pile in your backyard is going to save the planet?"

"This is just another way for the government to control our lives."

"You're a hypocrite. You say you care about the climate while you fly to a climate conference half way around the world."

Overwhelmed has lots of things to make us throw up our hands and simply flow down the stream of materialistic consumption. Overwhelmed wants us to think of ourselves as consumers rather than citizens. In fact, Overwhelmed is the leading lobbyist for the fossil fuel industry and the large corporations making billions of dollars cutting down the Amazon rain forests. They want regular individuals to become consumed with individual responsibility as a form of distraction. If we can just shame each other for

eating meat, driving a car, or using air conditioning, then we will not notice what we are doing to the planet.



We need to send Overwhelmed into the desert where he won't bother us and undermine our collective efforts to love God's creation and our neighbors around the world. It's progress, not perfection. We can take collective social action even while we reduce our personal carbon footprint. We must hold politicians and the fossil fuel industry accountable for the degradation of the environment under their watch. It's a both/and scenario. We've got to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. Social/corporate responsibility and personal responsibility. There is an urgency in the matter and the window for action is closing down upon us. Our task is to make progress as individuals, churches, corporations and nations so we can love God's creation in a more perfect way. Not perfect, just progress.

Overwhelmed, get behind me!



C3 Board Members

Why do members of the C3 board see the need of our work?

A group of African Christians was blessed with mango trees and they were often excited that God blessed them with abundance of nature. Africa, they claimed, was oversupplied with nature, and this was evident in the abundance of mangoes that surrounded them. Some women would celebrate this abundance by plucking mangoes from the trees and taking the surplus to the local markets for sale, making money out of it to support their families.

After a few years of this manifested blessings from God, a church planter arrived unexpectedly and convinced the villagers to cut the mango trees down and erect a church building instead. The intruder stated that the congregants can pray more effectively as a group inside the church building, and not under the mango trees. So manipulated, the men and women at the African village cut down their God-given mango trees and used the trees to erect a beautiful church building nearby.



Caleb Oladipo

When the church opened for worship, an elderly lady led a prayer. In her prayer, she asked God to give the villagers mangoes so that the villagers would have something to eat by selling the surplus mangoes as they used to do. A small girl then came forward and challenged the elderly lady. She said that before the members built the church by cutting down the mango trees, everyone had mangoes to eat. But now that the mango trees were cut down to build the house of worship, everyone had to pray for mangoes that were given to them by God. She explained that God blessed the villagers by giving them mangoes and that God will not answer them now that they have cut down the mango trees that God provided naturally to bless them.

This means that caring for God's creation is consistent with a doxological expression before our creator. That is why I chose to become part of C3. Nature is a gift of God.

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C3

Christians Caring for Creation
P.O. Box 18605
Charlotte, NC 28218

christianscaringforcreation@gmail.com
(919) 972-1933

To Donate:

<https://www.christianscaringforcreation.com/donate>

C3 Consultants

Robert Davies, Consulting Scientist,
Logan, Utah
Norman Wirzba, Consulting Theologian,
Durham, NC

Newsletter Editor

Lynn Odom,
care4godsearch@gmail.com



Compost 150

Let 2023 be the year you and/or your church begins to compost. Compost is nature's way of recycling. It's one of the best ways we can reduce our trash, send less into landfills, address climate change and build healthy soils organically.

C3 wants to encourage the building or continuance of 150 compost bins in 2023. Why 150? Because the components of compost piles begin to break down at 150 degrees as micro-organisms unleash their natural energy into leaves, twigs and scraps of food.

Send us a photo of your compost pile. Tell us your story if you like. We will post as a form of encouragement to others. It is yet another way to care for God's creation and love our neighbors living on the earth in the future.



Send photos and stories to:
christianscaringforcreation@gmail.com



Fascinating Facts

South Africa generates **80 percent of its electricity** by burning coal, more than any other industrialized nation. Now there is a \$8.5 billion plan, with the help of the U.S. and Europe, to quit coal and shift to renewable energy.
New York Times, January 15, 2023

The world produces about **400 million metric tons of plastic waste** each year, according to a United Nations report. About half is tossed out after a single use.
New York Times, January 15, 2023

The **Clean Air Act of 1970** passed the U.S. House of Representatives 374 to 1 and the Senate 74 to 0. It was signed by Republican President Richard Nixon.
From *Silent Spring Revolution*, Douglas Brinkley

The **Endangered Species Act of 1973** was passed by a 355 to 4 vote in Congress and a 92 to 0 votes in the Senate, then signed by President Nixon.
From *Silent Spring Revolution*, Douglas Brinkley

If you walk a mile along an average US highway, you will see, on average, about **1,457 pieces of litter**.
According to *Keep America Beautiful*

Third Annual C3 Sigmon Sermon Challenge

C3-Christians Caring for Creation is sponsoring its third C3 Sermon Challenge, named in honor of Mike Sigmon, a retired Baptist pastor who, along with wife Sandy, love God's creation and want to see it cared for faithfully.

Submit sermons as manuscripts or videos to C3: christianscaringforcreation@gmail.com.

Deadline for submission: Earth Day, April 22
Judged by a panel of experienced theologians, ethicists and homileticians.

The preacher of the award-winning sermon will receive \$500 and two honorable mention sermons will receive \$250.

Mike and Sandy Sigmon

