

WINTER NEWSLETTER



CENTER FOR
Sustainable
Climate Solutions

PREPARED BY
DANIEL BELLEROSE, PROGRAM ASSISTANT
SUSTAINABLECLIMATESOLUTIONS.ORG

DOUG GRABER NEUFELD

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

What gives you hope? This is one of the most common questions asked to those of us that work with climate change, and understandably is foremost on the minds of those concerned about this vital issue. And concern is rising, with 2019 arguably marking a turning point with increased and sustained attention given to climate change. Witness the effects of the Australian fires, and how youth responses to climate change like the Sunrise Movement have gone viral. Or witness this year's Global Risks Report of the World Economic Forum, where for the first time three of the top five concerns on the list are environmental.

We need to be clear on what role hope has in the face of a climate landscape which is rapidly changing in both the literal and figurative sense. This is where those working on climate issues can draw from experts around the world who are able to dedicate their time and wisdom to helping us understand the most effective path forward. Two examples serve to illustrate the crucial role that innovative research can have. Smith and Leiserowitz(1) of Yale's Project on Climate Change Communication (from which we draw our own survey methods) have helped us understand how hope needs to be combined with concern and interest to be an effective emotion at motivating support for climate action. Likewise, Merlon et al(2) have helped us understand the difference between 'constructive hope', and 'false hope', and that hope will move us forward only if it translates into action. Such innovative research helps us understand how hope combined with human innovation and creativity is key to effectively responding to the increasingly clear scenarios of environmental impacts, but that hope needs grounding in realistic assessments of the challenge.

How can CSCS likewise contribute to innovative solutions? And how do we fulfill our mission to "Conduct and synthesize interdisciplinary research to increase faith communities' and faith-based organizations' understanding, engagement, and advocacy around climate change"?

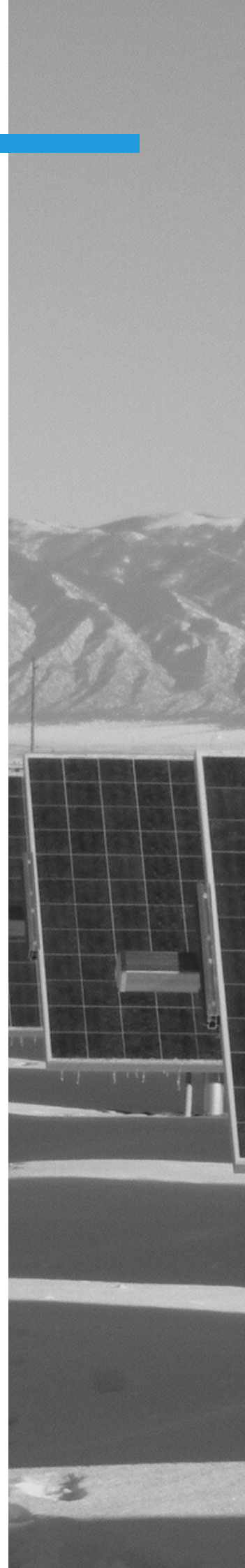
Over the past several years, we've focused newsletters on three of our four strategic areas of activity - students, congregations, and global voices. In this issue we highlight our fourth area, the innovative solutions projects. These projects tap into the expertise and unique perspectives of those within our communities who contribute novel approaches to dealing with climate change. These are efforts which are increasingly coming to fruition.

I see hope in many areas, but am especially encouraged by how an evidence-based approach to solving climate solutions can translate our passion into progress. Our innovative solutions projects add to the larger pool of creative solutions that give an active hope that we can make progress on climate issues, even as the urgency of the situation becomes more evident by the day.



(1) Smith and Leiserowitz. 2014. *The Role of Emotion in Global Warming Policy*. *Risk Analysis*.

(2) Merlon et al. 2019. *How Hope and Doubt Affect Climate Change Mobilization*. *Frontiers in Communication*.



Upcoming web resource: Sustainable Housing

For the past few years, Professor Jim Leaman of Eastern Mennonite University has been working with CSCS on an expansive project, which has the potential to turn the world of sustainable housing upside down.

The research project, which Leaman conducted with an architect, and residential builder, is culminating this year in a book, and an accompanying website which will be hosted by CSCS. When the website becomes available this February, it will serve as a portal to understanding Jim's belief that the traditional view of sustainable housing needs to be reassessed.

Find below a section from the website, in which Leaman explains his initial findings, and the purpose of the website:

"What if we could cut climate emissions in half without sacrificing living standards? New research and analysis unveils new understanding about the ecological impact of the American household, leading to counter-conventional recommendations that are both surprising and enormously consequential. Notably, this novel research design demonstrates that climate-neutral housing and private transportation are not only achievable today, but are actually less costly in both dollars and natural resources.

These findings emerged from applying the tools and analysis of finance and economics to the building industry, and they reveal a new paradigm in housing and energy that will lead to dramatic reduction in ecological harm.

Most consequentially, this book [and website] provide an argument and a roadmap for immediate and widespread implementation of a new set of practices that will slash the American climate footprint in half and democratize access to sustainable living."

Leaman believes that the findings from his research suggest three key points, which will revolutionize the sustainable housing industry:

1. Cut Climate Emissions in Half

"Roughly 25% of American climate emissions come from household operations, and a further 25% from private transportation. Onsite solar photovoltaic systems sized to power both home and auto cuts the American climate footprint in half."

2. Cutting Climate Emissions is LESS Costly

Onsite solar PV is less costly than utility energy for most American homes, and factoring renewable energy leads to least costly construction methods. Further, electric vehicles powered by home-produced solar energy are less costly than oil-based alternatives.

3. Cutting Climate Emissions is NOT more complex

Residential solar not complicated on most installations, and factoring renewable energy allows for the most simple home construction methods. Electric vehicles are now available in many styles and sizes, and from a number of manufacturers.

Keep an eye out for the website, set to be released in February, at sustainableclimatesolutions.org/sustainable-housing



ENRICHING ANABAPTIST ENVIRONMENTAL THEOLOGY

Selections from Mennonite Quarterly Review by Peter Dula and Doug Kaufman

In our mission, CSCS aims to “Conduct and synthesize interdisciplinary research to increase faith communities’ and faith-based organizations’ understanding, engagement, and advocacy around climate change.” Two articles in the most recent issue of the Mennonite Quarterly Review (MQR) do just that.

CSCS has supported Peter Dula, Professor of Bible, Religion and Theology (Eastern Mennonite University), and Doug Kaufman, Director of Pastoral Ecology (based at Goshen College) in their scholarly research around Anabaptist perspectives of environmental ethics and theology. These works go together with other leading Anabaptist creation care scholars to “enrich and renew the agenda of Anabaptist environmental theology and ethics”, as described in the introduction to this MQR volume.

We highlight here two excerpts which we hope will whet your appetite to explore their work more:



“At the end of his chapter on stewardship, [Willis] Jenkins argues that Christians need to develop a stewardship theology that doesn’t silence nature. He then goes on to say, ‘The peacemaking agricultural traditions of Anabaptist communities may offer suggestions for how to do that. For these communities morally organize themselves around kingdom orders of Christ, yet have historically worked in close responsiveness to the land.’ As an Anabaptist drawn to eco-theology, I am very interested in this claim, particularly in that little “yet” that separates the “kingdom orders of Christ” and “responsiveness to the land.”

When I first read it, before I embarked on this review of Anabaptist creation care literature, I assumed he was probably right. It turns out, however, that things are more complicated. While early Anabaptist work on eco-theology was dominated by a stewardship paradigm, recently it has become every bit as diverse as the wider field of eco-theology. In what follows, I review Anabaptist approaches to creation care in the context of Jenkins’s typology of Christian environmental theologies, in an effort to discern some of the emerging directions among Anabaptists.”



Anabaptist Environmental Ethics: A Review Essay, Peter Dula



MQR Story Cont'd

"This essay argues for a pastoral response to .. climate denial, a response built on both pastoral theology and practice. The first section describes the complex reality of climate denial and how denial protects us from troubling emotions, especially despair. The second section explores the theological concept of the "gospel of all creatures"—a vision of Christ's cruciform solidarity with all creation articulated by the sixteenth-century Anabaptist Hans Hut—as a framework for a pastoral

response that can integrate the complexity of hope and despair in the midst of a tragic reality like climate change. The "gospel of all creatures" makes explicit the link between the suffering of the cross of Christ with the suffering of all creation, including humans. But it also offers hope in the midst of that suffering because of the solidarity of Christ with us and all creation. This theology then informs and infuses the two pastoral and congregational practices that I recommend in the final sections of the essay: 1) conversations that expose and engage climate denial and that guide people toward personal and social responses to climate change; and 2) services of lament and grief that engage feelings of helplessness and despair but also offer a way through to hopeful action."



Caring About Climate Change: An Anabaptist Cruciform Response, Doug Kaufman

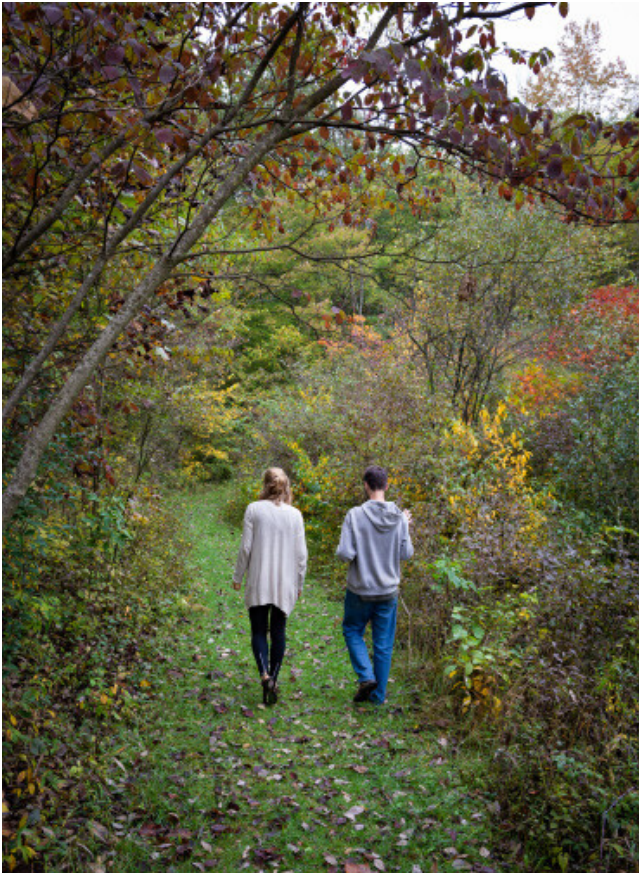
To read more, be sure to find the Mennonite Quarterly Review at goshen.edu/mqr

To find out more about the research being done with the support of the Center, go to sustainableclimatesolutions.org/innovative-solutions.



VISUALIZING CLIMATE STORIES FROM THE SHIFTING CLIMATES PODCAST

These photos were taken while collecting material for the Shifting Climates Podcast, a project of last year's Climate Futures Fellows Sarah Longenecker, Michaela Mast, and Harrison Horst. You can find more photos and listen to the podcast at shiftingclimates.com



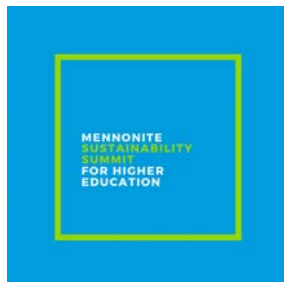
UPCOMING

PROJECTS AND EVENTS



SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

CSCS is excited to announce that we have received a grant from the Marpeck Fund to host a Sustainability Summit at Eastern Mennonite University this summer. The summit will bring together faculty, staff and students from each of the nine Mennonite higher education institutions in the US and Canada to discuss sustainability on their campuses, and to learn from each other. The summit will be the first time representatives from each college have come together to discuss sustainability on their campuses, and will hopefully lead to further initiatives and collaboration between the schools.



CREATION CARE ADVOCACY TEAMS

CSCS is also excited to announce that we have received a grant from the Stoesz Family Fund to expand our advocacy work with the creation of advocacy teams. In partnership with the Sustainability Alumni Network, CSCS will train a group of young adults to advocate for climate justice in their local community, and work with them to create a sustainable culture of advocacy in the Mennonite church. The training will take place at the MCC Washington office, where advocates will be given the opportunity to lobby "on the hill," and learn from some of the most experienced advocates in Washington, DC.

STUDENT PROGRAMS

Applications have opened for our **summer internships**, and are available at sustainableclimatesolutions.org/student-engagement. This summer we are offering internships in Climate Advocacy (Washington, DC), Environmental Impact Investing (Goshen, IN), and Communications (Harrisonburg, VA). If you are interested in applying, or know someone who might be, feel free to send an email to our Student Programs Coordinator, Daniel Bellerose, who will be able to help you through the process, at daniel.bellerose@emu.edu



THE CSCS IMPACT

CSCS has been working hard at achieving our mission of moving the needle on climate change in the Mennonite church. In the last year, we've seen some significant impacts from our work:

- **10% of MCUSA pastors engaged in climate retreats**
- **1600 people reached by Global Voices program**
- **9 Mennonite colleges with Campus Sustainability Ambassadors**
- **6 research projects on climate attitudes and practices**

CSCS IMPACT MAP

Our impact has been felt all around the country. Each marker below represents an event or impactful project conducted by CSCS.



We are also pleased to welcome our new Advancement Officer, Anna Ruth Hershberger, who comes to us with a wealth of experience and passion for climate issues. If you are interested in helping CSCS maintain and increase its impact in the coming years, you can reach out to her at cscs@sustainableclimatesolutions.org.



When asked about what she is looking forward to in working with CSCS, Anna Ruth said, "I look forward to the challenge of finding more ways to connect more people with CSCS. Also, I want to hear and see what others are doing to live into God's call for us to be good stewards of the earth."