

Climate, Energy and Community: Vermont 2023

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This is a compilation of my 2023 columns from the Rutland Herald and Barre/Montpelier Times Argus. This is a series that started in January 2008. A 2012 overview paper is available¹. **In the first decade**, these columns dealt with weather, climate, climate change, energy and policy issues. They blended science and opinion from a systems perspective, and encouraged the reader to explore alternative and hopeful paths for their families and society. They were framed so that a scientist will perceive them as technically accurate (although simplified); while the public can relate their tangible experience of weather and climate to the much less tangible issues of climate change, energy policy and strategies for living sustainably with the Earth system. **However, in recent years**, politically motivated attacks on climate science, the global rebellions to save the Earth, and rapidly deepening political corruption have expanded my commentary. The climate and extinction emergencies will bring immense suffering to our children and all of life. Earth scientists have a responsibility to communicate clearly and directly to the public² – as we are all responsible for the future of the Earth. Now remarkably the living Creation/ Creator appears to be taking over the climate system, since society will not.

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¹ **Betts, A.K. and E. Gibson (2012)**, Environmental journalism revisited. *Environmental Leadership: a Reference Handbook*. Deborah R. Gallagher, Editor, SAGE publications Inc., Sept. 2012, ISBN: 9781412981507. Available at <http://alanbetts.com/research/paper/environmental-journalism-revisited/#abstract>

² **Betts, A. K. (2011)**, Communicating Climate Science. *EOS Transactions*, 92, No. 24, 14 June 2011. Available at <http://alanbetts.com/research/paper/communicating-climate-science/#abstract>

Confront the Fossil Empire Rutland Herald, Times-Argus, March 4, 2023
Alan Betts, Atmospheric Research (alanbetts.com)

Every year there are international Council of Parties (COP) meetings on climate change, where it is simply accepted that the fossil fuel companies will not pay for any of the global damages from burning the fossil fuels, despite making hundreds of billions in profits every year. There is no choice. At COP 27 in November 2022 in Egypt, there were a record number of 636 fossil fuel lobbyists to ensure their companies' profits were protected. Why do we just accept this?



The International Energy Agency recently accused fossil fuel industries of doing too little to curb methane emissions and undermining global climate goals to limit warming.

Olivia Zhang / AP FILE PHOTO

Back in 1978, James Black, the chief scientist of the current Exxon-Mobil did the global modeling and correctly concluded that doubling atmospheric CO₂ would be a disaster for the global climate and for life on Earth. He told management they had five years to change their business plan. Their response was simple: “Be quiet. We have trillions of dollars to bribe politicians and fund webs of lies and advertising to confuse the public for decades.” This is exactly what they have done.

Collectively I call the fossil fuel companies the “Fossil Fuel Empire”. For forty-five years they have deliberately hidden the truth that they are consciously destroying the Earth to maximize their profits. This is clearly a staggering crime against all life on Earth including our children. Millions are starving from climate disasters in poor countries and many have died or been forced to migrate. Catastrophic floods have killed many more.

It is also shameful that society and politicians have simply accepted the webs of lies and criminal deceit from the Fossil Empire. It is time to face the truth and save our children and grandchildren and life on Earth from the climate catastrophe the Fossil Empire has consciously created. These lying criminals must be explicitly billed for the damages they have caused since 1978, and pay compensation for the millions of people they have chosen to kill or starve across the world.

Explicitly the COP27 loss and damage provision should be billed directly to the fossil fuel companies. In addition, the costs of every recent disaster in both rich and poor countries should be explicitly billed to them in proportion to each company's annual profits. For simplicity, all nations should start publicly billing the oil companies now, starting with disasters in 2020, 2021 and 2022, since we have adequate data.

In principle, we could set up an international body to go back in time and calculate past costs, using perhaps a 7% tax on annual profits. However this would introduce endless delays, because bribery, corruption and deceit would be rampant.

Of course the initial response of the Fossil Empire will be evasive denials, refusals to pay and more political bribes and maneuvers. But now responsible nations should simply give companies 30 days, and then start arresting and jailing their executives, starting from the top and going down the hierarchy to the local level, since they have all been part of this criminal conspiracy for decades – and they know it.

Yes there will be protests, since so many politicians in the US have been bribed to back the Fossil Empire and “legalize” their crimes. At every step the media must be reminded that it is the Truth that sets us Free from the criminal webs of lies of these companies, who are killing our children and life on Earth to maximize profits. They will do this until they are stopped!

Either we confront the Fossil Empire, right down to the local level, or we continue to passively acquiesce and cooperate with this monstrous crime that the public has been brain-washed into accepting for forty-five years.

Alan Betts is the founder of Atmospheric Research in Pittsford.

The Church must confront its past

Alan Betts Rutland Herald, May 6, 2023

There have been many news reports of how the Roman Catholic Church makes determined efforts to cover up cases of abuse mostly of women and children in church communities, as well as abuse in orphanages. Remarkably there is no public discussion of the history of this dark side of the church, and no discussion of when the church will confront its dark past so that change is possible.

Pope Francis appears to understand the issues, even though his power is limited. Last summer he visited Canada to apologize to Indigenous peoples for the Catholic Church's role in the abuse and oppression they suffered at residential schools, where they were taken away from their families and cultures and subjected to forced assimilation. He has broadened the role of women in the Catholic Church. He added women to the committee that advises him on picking the world's bishops. In 2021, Francis amended the church's laws so that women could be Bible readers at Mass, serve at the altar and distribute communion. He has given women voting rights in the synod of bishops this October, which makes plans for the future of the Church.

The fundamental issue, which is easy to understand, but extraordinarily difficult for the church to face goes back to the creation of the Roman Church at the Council on Nicea in 325 AD by the Roman Emperor Constantine to meet his needs, not the teachings of Jesus Christ. Specifically, Emperor Constantine needed male power for warfare, and specified male power over women, male power over indigenous people and male power over nature. The Roman church has followed this "male power" doctrine for 1700 years and this has led to much abuse. Even worse we now face the destruction of most of life on Earth from climate change, because without thinking capitalism adopted male and corporate power over the natural world.

Jesus (or Yeshua) was an Aramaic speaking indigenous saint, who understood both the Creation of the Earth, and how the deep understanding of this Truth sets us Free to serve the Creation; rather than the male power which then ruled both Rome and the Jewish religious authorities. Yeshua's teachings were absolutely incompatible with these male authorities, so he was executed (crucified). However Yeshua left his Aramaic gospels outlining his indigenous teachings. Constantine ordered the destruction of the Aramaic gospels as he must have known they were a deep threat to his Roman Church. One crucial issue was that in the Aramaic world the Creator was not a male "Our Father which art in Heaven" but the "Birther of the Cosmos and the Creation" (1).

Stepping out of the past into the actual present is a critical issue for science and society as well as for the Roman Catholic Church, and other Christian churches. Mother Nature (the birther of the Creation) is taking over the climate system to save life on Earth (2) since capitalism is destroying life on Earth for profit. We simply cannot ignore the radical new climate extremes that go beyond our current scientific analyses, since the Creator is infinitely more powerful than humanity.

Understanding the Truth that sets us Free is very difficult in a society that is buried in webs of lies and deceptive advertising, as well as almost universal political dishonesty. Yet we must face the Truth as Mother Nature the Creator takes over. Since she can read our minds, her blessing

and love return to us when we join the Truth, and we are connected to all as Jesus taught so long ago.

(1) Douglas-Klotz, N, 1990: Prayers of the Cosmos. Harper Collins Publishers.

(2) Betts, A.K, 2023: Accelerating Climate Change and the Living Earth. International Journal of Environment and Climate Change, 13, 2, pp 1-11. DOI: [10.9734/ijecc/2023/v13i21639](https://doi.org/10.9734/ijecc/2023/v13i21639).

You Can't Fool Mother Nature

Alan Betts 8/12/23

- Copy article link: https://www.rutlandherald.com/opinion/perspective/betts-mother-nature/article_cb09ee43-d7c7-5dde-8667-9d7c0a1cb05b.html

The purpose of this commentary is to discuss the takeover of the climate system by the living Earth, colloquially known as Mother Nature, in response to the refusal of global societies to significantly reduce the burning of the fossil fuels that are driving the extreme climate change destroying life on Earth. So it covers issues beyond the conventional science perspective.

In 1976, I realized we were heading for a climate disaster because humanity and our leaders did not accept responsibility for the Earth. I was told to do what I was paid to do, and let those in charge make decisions despite their ignorance of the complex climate system. So, in parallel with my climate research career, I restructured my life, bought land in Vermont and built a passive solar house with a few solar panels. **Then in 1980, I posed the question: “How do we merge science with wisdom?”** I was sent to Tiruvannamalai in southeast India. To my utter surprise, as I sat in a meditation room upon arrival, the Creator took me through my whole life to show me it was all known to her — leaving me ecstatic and transformed.

I will start by reviewing four keys for understanding the living Earth in human terms. First, let us shift to a more colloquial image and say “Mother Nature is taking over the climate system” to protect life on Earth, because our global economic system has refused to act wisely and do this. Of course, Mother Nature, the Creation and concepts like Gaia are just different human labels for the common reality that we need to understand deeply. The Indigenous concept of Mother Nature has an advantage over other human labels for the Creator because it is understood clearly by local communities. It has another huge advantage that it is free of the male chauvinism that has been dominant for thousands of years, and has contributed greatly to the exploitation of people, the planet and the current destruction of life on Earth.

The second is that, for European culture, the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD was critical.

The Roman Catholic Church was created to meet the needs of the Roman Emperor Constantine for male human power for warfare and over women, Indigenous people and nature. Constantine insisted that the Aramaic gospels of the Indigenous Aramaic-speaking teacher Yeshua (whom we know as Jesus) be destroyed, because they referred to the birther of the cosmos and the creation — a female concept. The original Aramaic gospels have only recently been retranslated. The male Catholic priests worshiped a male god safely removed to heaven, so he would not interfere with their human power. Indirectly, the priests ruled societies and influenced the rise of science for more than 1,500 years. Christianity split into many groups, but almost none understand how Yeshua as an Indigenous person chose the truth of Mother Nature over (male) human power. In the present era, Pope Francis understands many of these issues, and has pushed successfully for wise strategies on global climate change, and apologized for the abuse of women by priests.

The third is that the Indigenous world view which understands Mother Nature takes precedence over amoral capitalism. Of course, this is why European and North American societies tried so hard to stamp out Indigenous thought, and suppress the culture. For many

centuries, Catholic priests supervised the killing of millions of Indigenous people, both to seize their land, and perhaps because they feared the Indigenous teachers, who had a better understanding than they did of the teachings of the Indigenous Jesus. Last year, Pope Francis visited Canada to apologize for the church's role in running residential schools for more than a century. Indigenous children were forcibly taken from their parents, forbidden to speak their own language, and abused in an attempt to destroy their Indigenous heritage. On a more humorous note, there are three groups of Indigenous people across Canada, who are associated with three sets of grizzly bears that have not interbred in the past thousand years. Scientists are puzzled how this is possible. But the Indigenous people laugh. They are "our bears" — we have been together through the seasons for a thousand years.

The fourth is the powerful concept that it is the "truth that set us free" to act on behalf of the Creation and Mother Nature. We attribute this deep understanding to the Indigenous Aramaic teacher Yeshua. He had an intimate connection to the Creation, so the Jewish and Roman authorities had to kill him, since his deep understanding was a threat to their male human power. However, it is important to understand that the overt takeover of the climate system by Mother Nature is not a religious issue. It is just the reality of the entire web of life and the Creation here on Earth that Yeshua understood so well. However, this truth is still today a direct threat to human power over nature. We believe we are the "only" intelligent species and that we are "in charge," when, in reality, we are the only species on Earth that does not listen to, or communicate directly with, Mother Nature, even though we could. Our society tries to hide the fact that "business as usual capitalism" is destroying the climate system and life on Earth for profit. So Mother Nature, which is far more powerful than we are, appears to be taking over on behalf of all of life on Earth. Living with webs of lies, very few in our world can face the truth.

This Figure (not published by the Herald) frames this clash of irreconcilable realities between Mother Nature's powerful perspective and the 45 years of criminal behavior by the capitalist 'Fossil Empire'. My web-site alanbetts.com/research has detailed examples and reference

Clash of Realities

Mother Nature

- Indigenous world
- Preserve web of life
- *She is the Truth that sets you Free*
- *Power unlimited*
- *Join her: she can help you!*

Capitalism/Fossil Empire

- Human/natural resources
- Exploit people and the Earth for profit
- Maximize \$ profit
- Use money and lies to bribe & control
- *"We're in charge"*