The catastrophic hurricanes that just pummeled Texas and Florida have given us an early peek at what climate change holds in store for our world. Back-to-back Category 4 landfalls with 130-mile winds and record precipitation (Houston got four feet of rain) should alert even the most skeptical that there’s something unusual going on with the weather. The stable climate we’ve taken for granted for centuries is changing before our eyes and shifting under our very feet. It’s time accordingly we take a long, hard look at our behavior as a species and start thinking about how we’re going to adapt to this harsher, more dangerous future.

The 2017 Annual Peace Conference Saturday, October 7 in Lincoln at Trinity United Methodist Church will give Nebraskans an opportunity to consider these matters in depth with a ‘double-header’ keynote presentation by two leading activists who are dedicating their lives to the protection of our food and water.

Casey Camp-Horinek is a councilwoman for the Ponca Nation of Oklahoma. A long-time Native rights activist, environmentalist and actress, she is the traditional “Drumkeeper” for the Ponca Pa-tha-ta (Woman’s Scalp Dance Society) and helps maintain the cultural identity of the Ponca Nation of Oklahoma for herself, her family and her community. She has been at the forefront of grassroots community efforts to educate and empower both Native and non-Native community members on environmental and civil rights issues. In April of 2008 Camp-Horinek, as a delegate of the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), was chosen to speak to the United Nations Permanent Forum on indigenous Issues and present IEN’s global platform regarding the environment and Native rights.

Now 70 years old and a great-grandmother, she is also a “Water Protector” who was arrested last October at Standing Rock for nonviolently opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline. Probably no other person on earth is better equipped to speak to Nebraskans for Peace on the subject of “Living Within the Natural Laws”—the title of her Annual Peace Conference keynote address.

Local food activist Michael Brownlee of Boulder, Colorado will deliver the conclusion on page 2
second keynote in this morning double-header with a talk entitled, “A Revolutionary Approach to Reclaiming Our Democracy… Beginning with Local Food and Farming.” A leader in food localization efforts since 2006, Brownlee is the author of The Local Food Revolution: How Humanity Will Feed Itself in Uncertain Times (North Atlantic Books, Fall 2016)—a manifesto for localizing the nation’s food supply and a strategic guide for those who are in a position to be catalysts in this process. With Lynette Marie Hanthorn, he is the co-creator of the online “Local Food Summit” (August 2017), featuring more than 90 pre-recorded presentations and interviews from leaders at the front lines of the local food movement in the U.S. and around the globe (www.the-localfoodsummit.com). Together they are now offering an online course for emerging foodshed catalysts, “Igniting the Local Food Revolution in Your Community.”

The morning keynotes will be followed by lunch and an address by Winnebago Tribe Member and NFP Advisory Board Member Frank LaMere on the 20-year-long struggle to close and rehabilitate the border town Whiteclay.

For the afternoon segment of the conference, a choice of eight “Peace & Justice Workshops” treating a variety of issues will be offered, including ones by Casey Camp-Horinek on “What Kind of Legacy Are You Going to Leave Behind?” and Michael Brownlee on “Becoming a Local Food Catalyst.” The other six workshops are entitled “Starving the Hungry; Feeding the Guns: The 2018 Federal Budget”; “In the Era of Trump: The Future of Healthcare”; “Fixing the Child Welfare System at Nebraska’s Department of Health and Human Services”; “Will Nebraska Still Be a Home for Immigrants?”; “Getting to Know Our Muslim Neighbors”; and “Three Years to Safeguard Our Climate”.

Once again, this year’s Annual Peace Conference is being cosponsored by the University of Nebraska-Omaha Grace Abbott School of Social Work, and CEUs are being offered to all certified Masters Social Workers and Licensed Mental Health Practitioners in Iowa and Nebraska.

Registration for the conference is $20 per person, which includes breakfast and lunch. The all-day conference will be held at Trinity United Methodist Church, 7130 Kentwell Lane in Lincoln from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. You can contact the NFP State Office by phone at 402-475-4620 or by email at nfpstate@nebraskansforpeace.org to register, or download the registration brochure on the website: http://nebraskansforpeace.org/annual_peace_conference
The Reverend Stephen Griffith delivered the following comments August 29 at the “We Will Not Be Left Behind: The Proposed Federal Budget and Ordinary People” event hosted by the Malone Community Center in Lincoln. The program was sponsored by Nebraskans for Peace, the Lincoln Branch of the NAACP, the Appleseed Center, Sacred Winds Church and El Centro de las Americas.

Rev. Henry-Crowe then reflected on the proposed budget, which would shift billions of dollars away from anti-poverty programs including nutrition, housing, international development assistance and health care, in order to fund tax cuts and a dramatic buildup of the U.S. military.

She wrote: “Our elected officials must understand that behind the budget numbers are the names and lives of people with whom we are in ministry. … Leadership in Congress needs to hear from us. They need to hear our vision for our common life together rooted in peace and justice. They must understand that budgets are moral documents—reflections of who and what we value.”

So let’s look very briefly at how the budget the White House proposes for the U.S. stacks up.

President Trump would cut the Department of Housing and Urban Development by 12 percent—targeting affordable housing, Low Income Home Energy Assistance, rental assistance and more.

Education—Trump would reduce spending on education by 14 percent. Among other things, this would downsize or eliminate grants that provide aid to low-income and minority college students.

Trump’s cuts would eliminate funding for after-school programs, which serve many students who live in extreme poverty.

Some lawmakers have justified this by saying the government shouldn’t be in the business of helping the needy because that’s the job of churches and religious congregations. Even some religious people believe it’s chiefly up to individuals through charitable contributions to decide how to help the needy.

David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, estimates that if this logic were enacted, every congregation in America—Christian and otherwise—would have to add $714,000 to their budgets. “There is no way our country’s 350,000 religious congregations can make up for the cuts in the services that help hungry, poor and other vulnerable people,” Beckmann said.

Let’s look at a few specifics:

Housing—Trump’s budget would cut the Department of Housing and Urban Development by 12 percent—targeting affordable housing, Low Income Home Energy Assistance, rental assistance and more.

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The White House’s proposed budget would shift billions of dollars away from anti-poverty programs including nutrition, housing, international development assistance and health care, in order to fund tax cuts and a dramatic buildup of the U.S. military.
programs that serve 7 million individuals and families every year.

Trump’s budget would eliminate 10 percent of employees from critical civil rights offices. These offices ensure that students have equal opportunities to education, job applicants are not denied work for reasons unrelated to their qualifications, families are not denied housing because they have children, people with disabilities are afforded accommodations that remove barriers to essential services, and many other basic rights.

Trump’s budget would eliminate the Legal Services Corporation. What’s that? Let me explain. Recently I had the privilege of working on a project with Legal Aid of Nebraska. Legal Aid’s purpose is “to promote justice, dignity, hope and self-sufficiency through quality legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn.” They’re the people you go to if you need legal help in a civil matter and can’t afford a lawyer. They help more than 21,000 people every year in Nebraska get justice in cases like unpaid wages and benefits; consumer issues like medical debts and keeping their utilities on; fighting unfair evictions and other housing problems; and family issues like domestic abuse, protection orders, child custody and divorce. The people at Legal Aid do amazing work!

Almost 30 percent of their funding comes from the Legal Services Corporation, and Trump would cut it all. So, imagine the effect on our neighbors—and our families—of cutting 30 percent of these services that so many rely on! Even more people would be left with nowhere at all to turn.

These are just a few areas where these proposed budget cuts will affect real people—people we know, people we see every day, people whom we call friends and neighbors and even family.

I began by saying budgets are moral documents.

But if the budget cuts funding for the most needy in our midst, it’s not moral.

If the budget leaves behind the least able and most vulnerable in our midst, it’s not moral.

If the budget abandons African Americans, Latinos/Latinas, and First Peoples, it’s not moral.

If the budget shuts out the stranger, the refugee and the immigrant, it’s not moral.

If the budget denies the reality of racism, anti-semitism and islamophobia, it’s not moral.

If the budget emboldens and encourages the voices of hate in our midst…

If it refuses to investigate and combat violence against women and against minorities, it’s not moral.

If it cuts funding for science and tries to ignore the reality of climate change, it’s not moral.

If a budget is a moral document, then this budget is immoral. It must be changed. It must be amended until it represents the highest values of all our citizens, until it serves the highest purposes we aspire to as people of faith and as Americans. It must be re-written, so it leaves no one behind. We will not be left behind!

Sources:

General Board of Church and Society, The United Methodist Church. Faith in Action email, “Budgets are Moral Documents”

*Bread for the World, “Analysis: Congregations can’t make up for proposed federal budget cuts”

*NFP handout, “Stop These Budget Proposal Changes”

*Washington Post, Michelle Ye Hee Lee, “President Trump’s claim that he has done ‘far more than anyone’ for ‘inner cities’

*AP/Brennan Linsley, “The Trump Budget Neglects Basic Protections and Funds a Deportation Force Instead”

Legal Aid of Nebraska, Annual Report 2015

*indicates sources included in the packet distributed at the rally
by Michael Brownlee
The Local Food Revolution
www.localfoodrevolution.net

We are a hungry people, malnourished and underfed.

Yet, for the most part we do not suffer from a lack of food. One-third of our citizens are chronically obese. Our food is so cheap and abundant that we throw away more than a third of it (even though, as environmentalists remind us, there is no ‘away’).

But the food that is so reliably delivered to us by the industrial food system does not nourish us or support us. Instead, it undermines our health, degrades our environment, poisons the biota, destroys the soil, weakens our economies, and eviscerates our communities. This cannot, in any meaningful sense, be considered ‘food.’

Meanwhile, we suffer from a different kind of hunger, a deeper, existential or spiritual hunger that is too often unspoken, unconscious, and ignored. Silently, we hunger for meaningful connection with the earth. We hunger for connection with the cycles and processes of nature, for connection with the sacredness of life. And we hunger for connection in community with each other.

Our industrial food system has broken these connections.

It’s not that our current food system is broken, for it functions very well indeed. It is more that is has broken our connections with the most fundamental relationships of life itself. Our food system has left us starved for life.

Our food system is breaking us. Participating in it disconnects us from living systems and from each other, unintentionally producing broken economies, broken communities, and broken people.

There is much anguish about food deserts these days, and rightfully so. But the uncomfortable reality is that almost all of us live in something of a food desert, where healthy, fresh, local, sustainably produced food is available to almost no one except the relatively wealthy—and to those who have learned to grow it for themselves.

If humanity is to have a future that is both tolerable and resilient, on a planet where life can thrive, we must regain control over our food supply. We must recover our capacity to feed ourselves. In doing so, we will regain our food sovereignty and food security, which have been almost completely lost over the last 70 years—along with our democracy. All this is essential to secure the future of humanity and the viability of life on this planet.

When we, as a people, find ourselves dependent on systems that are beyond redemption, when we can no longer countenance our own complicity, we begin to resist. We rebel. We distance ourselves. We speak out. We begin to cobble together alternatives. Soon, especially if the existing system reacts with even greater destructiveness (which it always will), something will ignite a revolution.

The vision of this revolution is to restore food to its rightful place in our society, to bring it home again, so that it is grown on farms close to where we live, by people whom we know and trust and love; joyfully prepared in our own kitchens; gratefully shared with neighbors, friends, and family; and received into our lives in ways that nourish body, mind, and soul—so that food once again becomes sacred, sacramental, central to our communities.

Localizing our food supply is right at the heart of a vast and spontaneous bottom-up effort to bring healing, restoration, and regeneration to our troubled world, to begin to reverse the widespread destruction caused by the industrial growth society—including by sequestering carbon and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Since food is what catalyzed human civilization in the first place, it is only appropriate that our efforts to begin healing and regeneration should also begin with food. There is no issue or human activity more fundamental than the way we feed ourselves.

What is most profoundly needed in our predicament is a systemic, collaborative approach to localizing our food supply to the greatest extent possible in the briefest possible time. This requires, in Jack Kloppenburg’s poignant terminology, “thinking like a foodshed”—a new and greatly needed skill set in our society.

If we are to feed our own populations to any significant degree—our local populations—and if we are to assist people in other nations in feeding themselves sustainably, we must find ways to convert a significant amount of our current commodity-crop production and export-oriented agriculture to
Local Food, conclusion

sustainably growing food for local consumption. We now have an opportunity to build regional foodsheds that are economically robust, environmentally sustainable, resilient, and self-reliant; that ensure food security, food sovereignty, and food justice for all our citizens; that contribute to the health and well-being of our communities; that rediscover and cultivate a sense of place; and that strengthen our local economies. This is how we restore democracy.

Declaration of Local Food Independence

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, declare our independence from the global industrial food system.

We join a growing community of local eaters and local food producers who are building regional foodsheds.

Together, we are reclaiming our food sovereignty by shifting our food supply from the global to the local.

We hold local food and our foodsheds as sacred.

We pledge to eat (and drink) as local as possible.
We pledge to actively support our local farmers and ranchers who produce food for our community.
We pledge to actively support local food enterprises that source from local farmers and ranchers.
We pledge to seek the appropriate role of animals in our agriculture and in our diets.
We pledge to grow some of our own food, more every year.
We pledge to rebuild soil, more every year.
We pledge to grow our community, more every year.

To this local food revolution we commit our lives, our health, our well-being, our financial and social resources, and our sacred honor.

We will honor and nurture the sacredness of food and the sharing of food.
We will honor and nurture our lands, our waters, and the living soils from which food arises.
We will honor and nurture the living ecosystem of plants, animals, and microorganisms that nourishes us.
We will honor and celebrate the natural cycles and seasons of life.
We will cherish, cultivate, and protect the conditions that make life possible and allow it to evolve.

We will love our living foodsheds into regenerative sustainability and resilience.
And we will do whatever we can to support our brothers and sisters everywhere who are reclaiming their food sovereignty and building their own regional foodsheds.
Together, we are the local food revolution.

Signed, _______________________________
The following article by Jon Rainwater, Executive Director of the Peace Action Education Fund, appeared on huffingtonpost.com September 7, 2017.

The Trump administration’s recent mixed messages could well be causing a global outbreak of whiplash. On one day the Secretary of State takes to the airwaves and calls for bringing “Pyongyang to the negotiating table to begin a dialogue,” on another day the Secretary of Defense threatens a “massive military response” that could include the “total annihilation” of North Korea, on the very next day the U.N. ambassador accuses North Korea of “begging for war.”

Mixing a war of words with intermittent calls for diplomacy makes it harder to jump-start serious negotiations. Unfortunately, the administration appears united in its one-sided view of the history of the conflict, which is equally harmful to diplomatic progress.

President Trump recently tweeted a brief history lesson. “The U.S. has been talking to North Korea, and paying them extortion money, for 25 years. Talking is not the answer!” Previously, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson offered his own version of this history at a press conference:

“This 20 years of talking has brought us to the point we are today... America has provided $1.3 billion in assistance to North Korea since 1995. In return, North Korea has detonated nuclear weapons, and dramatically increased its launches of ballistic missiles.”

Why An Unbiased History Matters

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, the architect of the Vietnam war, spent the last years of his life apologizing for the bloodshed while analyzing what went wrong. He would say of those we are in conflict with, “We must try to put ourselves inside their skin and look at us through their eyes.”

Understanding this, President Obama slipped a critical line into his early Cairo speech: “In the middle of the cold war, the United States played a role in the overthrow of a democratically elected Iranian government.”

Obama’s nod to Iranian concerns helped pave the way for negotiations that led to the Iran nuclear agreement. Malcolm Byrne, of the National Security Archive, pointed out how the acknowledgement of the Iranian coup “bodes well for our ability to get a less distorted version of history about other events in the future.”

A True History of the Korean Conflict: Partition and the Korean War

We need an un-biased history not to defend or excuse the brutality of the Kim regime, of course, but to ensure
Why a Single Nuke’s Impact Shouldn’t Only Be Measured in Megatons

Nebraska experts: Even ‘limited’ nuclear strike could cause widespread drought, famine

The following article by Leslie Reed of University Communication at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was posted on the Nebraska Today website, July 6, 2017.

As the notion of nuclear hostilities leaps from its old, Cold War perch and back into modern debate, new calculations by University of Nebraska-Lincoln researchers show that even a limited nuclear strike could have disastrous global consequences.

In a new report, a group of experts led by Adam Liska, a biological systems engineer at Nebraska, has determined that a single nuclear warhead could cause devastating climate change resulting in widespread drought and famine that could cost a billion lives.

During the five decades of the Cold War, the doctrine of “mutual assured destruction” kept the Soviet Union and the United States in counterbalance, each nation recognizing that both would be annihilated if either attacked.

But the old rules may no longer apply as more nations, including North Korea, have gained nuclear weapons.

“We’re losing our memory of the Cold War and we’re losing our memory of how important it is to get this right,” said co-author Tyler White, a political scientist who specializes in international security and nuclear policy. “Even a conflict that doesn’t involve the United States can impact us and people around the world.”

Even though North Korea does not yet have a warhead capable of delivering the damage described in the article, the nuclear stakes were raised this week when it successfully launched an intercontinental ballistic missile with the capability to deliver a nuclear payload to Alaska as well as cities in Asia and the Middle East.

Additionally, policy analysts say some nuclear powers have adopted doctrines that allow for limited strikes and for ‘first use’ of nuclear weapons. Russian defense strategy, for example, contemplates limited nuclear strikes to deter or end conventional wars. Military

[N]uclear blasts sufficient to ignite a developed area roughly the size of Los Angeles—500 square miles—would throw 5.5 million tons of ash and soot into the stratosphere. Sunlight, temperatures and rainfall would decrease around the world…
In addition, the land under Houston, as well as much of the Gulf and Atlantic coasts (including Miami, Houston, New Orleans, and nearby areas) are slowly sinking in part due to human withdrawal of underground water, but also because of geophysical factors. Urban expansion increases the amount of space devoted to parking lots, sidewalks, roads, and roofs, and reduces the area capable of absorbing torrential rains, just as warming causes storms to intensify. All of this makes flooding worse.

We need to be reminded of the fact that these disasters are mainly self-inflicted wounds, and that the willful ignorance of our ruling class is going to make it worse.

HARVEY AND IRMA: WE’RE DOING IT TO OURSELVES

Anyone who has been watching the news does not need to be reminded of the horrific disaster wrought by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in Texas, Louisiana and Florida. What we may need to be reminded of is the fact that these disasters are mainly self-inflicted wounds, and that the willful ignorance of our ruling class is going to make it worse.

Only part of the disaster is due to human generation of greenhouse gases. Warmer air holds more moisture, which provokes more intense precipitation. Global warming does not cause hurricanes, but (given the co-incidence of favorable conditions in the atmosphere), it does amplify them. It raises their wind speeds, moisture level, and physical size, multiplying human and material peril. Thus, the Weather Service ran out of superlatives to describe Harvey’s record rainfall, as well as Irma’s size and intensity.

Melting ice raises sea levels as warmth also expands seawater volume through thermal expansion. Even the weight of floods in Houston compressed the land by 2 centimeters. The Gulf of Mexico was 7 degrees F. when Harvey and Irma rolled through.

Notwithstanding practical problems (at least 80 percent of the homes and businesses flooded lack any kind of flood insurance, even from the government’s deeply indebted program), Trump’s puffery ignores geophysical reality—nothing new for him. In the meantime, the government doesn’t even realize that his Mar-a-Lago estate, on a barrier island at Palm Beach, Florida, is going under water. Mar-a-Lago sits roughly three to five feet above the high-tide line, which makes its owner’s rejection of the Paris accords on global warming look rather foolish. Denying the geophysical facts will not spare Mar-a-Lago a wet, salty demise. It’s not simply rising seas that are going to put Trump’s prized estate under water. Like most of that giant sand-spit we call Florida, Mar-a-Lago sits on land that is slowing sinking, accelerating relative sea-level rise.

Thermal inertia—the amount of sea-level rise already “in the pipeline” due to fossil fuels already burned—guarantees a dunking for conclusion on page 14
“Hail Mary Full of Grace. Punch a Nazi in the face.” My father and uncles fought fascists in WWII, and I was brought up by socialists and fellow travelers in towns where Holocaust survivors lived. I make no apologies for Stalin. Fascism is as fascism does. Racism and fascism together are particularly lethal in practice as we know to our sorrow, and I never forget.

I too would like to strike out sometimes at people who preach hate, only I am old and crippled. More important, I am pretty well convinced that lasting change for the good is best pursued through nonviolence where that is at all possible.

Play nice, we tell our children long before they can speak or know what we mean. Don’t hit. Empathy is the emotional and conceptual foundation for all fairness, all justice. Self control is the practical foundation for living in a group, and it is a priceless skill, not least because there is so little else in this shifting world that finally any one of us can control. The road from terrible two to productive schoolchild and beyond is moral education—leading out of native barbarism towards the expression of better selves.

About five million years ago, a range of human-like apes were living on Earth. Our separation from chimpanzees and bonobos (the genus Pan) occurred over a drawn out period of speciation, during which we three diverged first from genus Gorilla then from one another, between twelve and five million years ago. In his prizewinning book, The Third Chimpanzee (1991), Jared Diamond argues that chimps and bonobos belong with humans in the genus Homo rather than Pan, noting other species have been reclassified by genus for less genetic similarity than we three possess.

I like to think of chimp and bonobo as the devil and the angel, respectively, that sit on our shoulders and, as in the old cartoons, whisper always in our ears, the voice of aggression and dominance on the one hand, the voice of cooperation and sensuality on the other. Human propensity for self-seeking violence runs deep as the 98.8-99 percent of our shared DNA.

In our time, this violence seems to be on the rise on many fronts, as we pass the limit of the useful life of capitalist economics as played out upon this likewise limited planet. Perhaps the notions of original sin and karma are ways of acknowledging our species’ baggage, those millions of years of violence—where unequal groups of humans meet, if resources are at stake, genocide has been the usual result over the recoverable past.

Early humans did not invent hunting parties. Chimps hunt in purposeful groups, and move out carrying sticks, with meat on their mind, including that of other chimps. They use stealth, chase and ambush, and they work as a team, with different roles. This is good evidence that our common ancestors were killers too. With simian agility, adaptability and big brains, our line eventually dominated the other so-called Great Apes in Africa and beyond, and in time most other large animals, and the rest as they say is prehistory. In recorded history, we can see that our tendency to think well of ourselves (being the Lords of Earth and all) has caused many cultures and civilizations to actively enshrine our murderous impulses, when channeled by the elite, and to confound virtue and warfare in deep and lasting ways.

Real-time information technology, still new last century, meant the events of the two great wars shocked the senses of the world, but perhaps equally shocking was the industrialization of death. Between August 1914 when the French fired tear gas at the Germans and August 1945 when the U.S. dropped atomic weapons on Japan, the machinery of wholesale human slaughter achieved its apotheosis in the Holocaust—all in just 31 short years.

The 20th century, for all its terrors, also produced pushback. The modern peace and justice movement, a world wide wave of nonviolent actions, has resulted in some breathtaking advances, however fragile and incomplete, for many oppressed people over a remarkably short period of time. Think of the Women’s Movement in this country, already three generations strong by the 1920s when women won the vote. Do women enjoy full equality in the U.S. today? Not yet, but life for most women is better, safer and more free, than the lives of women a century ago—and these gains were achieved almost entirely through peaceful means, and serve today as inspiration for women’s movements around the world. Anti-colonial movements in India and South Africa followed Gandhi and Nelson.
Thoughts on Charlottesville

by A’Jamal Rashad Byndon

Since the skin-head and white supremacy incident in Charlottesville, Virginia, there has been a heightened awareness—particularly on social media—of the pain and suffering people of color have experienced from racism. And yet these Facebook and thoughtful blog comments demonstrate that many Americans lack the skills to have healthy conversations and dialogues about racial issues. In talking with colleagues, I’m continually amazed at how many are unable to articulate coherent ideas and concepts about the level of racism, prejudice, bias and white supremacy still present in this country. Some suffer from a level of white fragility where they really don’t know where to start. Others want to make those concepts of racism, prejudice and bias synonymous when in fact each term can carry different meanings based on the situation. For still others, watching this hideous behavior being so blatantly and shamelessly played out in the national media makes them want to fold their hands and disengage from reality. None of these reactions are surprising to people of color—we’ve witnessed this behavior all of our lives. But those who have buried their heads in the color-blind sand must either begin facing the reality of racism now—or expect to continue being confronted with it over and over again in the future... because, after Charlottesville, there’s no schmoozing over what’s going on.

These thoughts are being juxtaposed with the images of Klansmen, Nazis and white supremacists marching in the streets of the Charlottesville. It is ironic to see these white supremacists with “Tiki”-brand mosquito repellent torches—bamboo torches that are identified with the peaceful Hawaiian culture. But for anyone laboring under the illusion that the overt display of racism had been relegated to the distant past, we now know that the kind of hate we saw exhibited in Charlottesville can be found in any town, village or city in the United States. Even in the White House.

I am reminded of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” He wrote that letter about the indifference of the clergy and silence of so-called friends well over 60 years ago during times of great importance and pain. Then as now, what this country and society needs is a real dialogue and change agents. We’ve had many half-attempts at healing dialogues as the result of racist terrorist actions in the past that came to no avail. Yet, changing both our institutions and individuals is essential if events like Charlottesville are to longer be part of our nation’s culture.

Some African Americans have noted that, in a racialized society, when a member of the affected group is murdered or dies at the hands of others unknown, it becomes ‘normalized.’ No one outside the group itself notices. Contrast that with the death of Heather Heyer—the white female killed when she was protesting the white nationalists march in Charlottesville. That tragedy brought out the media and the many who have been indifferent to other senseless murders and killings of people of color. There’s a racial double standard with regards to worth and significance at play here, when in fact murder and death is the same for all of us.

If anyone thought the overt display of racism had been relegated to the distant past, we now know that the kind of hate we saw exhibited in Charlottesville can be found in any town, village or city in the United States.

Many of those who embrace the supremacist or terrorist mentality are bent on destruction, and they really don’t care who is killed when their weapons are aimed at crowds exercising their constitutional right of protest. Sadly, our very own Commander-in-Chief has rallied to the defense of these supremacists, validating their noxious beliefs and tactics. If we are so see change, though, each and every one of us has to work on the elimination of racism and the hate that is bantered within our communities.

If we fail to acknowledge the conditions of today and deconstruct the current realities, then we will be forced to conclusion on page 15
A single nuke’s impact, conclusion

strategists in the United States might consider limited use of nuclear weapons if the nation or an ally is in serious military jeopardy; in retaliation for a chemical or biological weapons attack; or to bring rogue nuclear states under control.

Along with White, Liska enlisted experts in climate modeling and climate change to assemble the report, which appears July 6 in Environment Magazine. Robert Oglesby, a professor of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, specializes in climate modeling and climate change; and Eric Holley, a doctoral student in natural resources, has studied how insurance and financial incentives might be used to adapt to climate change.

Using publicly available data on 19 types of weapons now held by five major nuclear powers—the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom and France—Liska and his colleagues calculated how many nuclear bombs in each category could be used before triggering conditions they describe as “nuclear autumn” or “nuclear drought.” Not as severe as the nuclear winter predicted by scientists in the 1980s, a nuclear autumn nonetheless would significantly impact Earth’s climate.

“The question is not if a nuclear drought can occur, but what factors increase its probability of occurring and what actions can be taken to mitigate the potentially devastating global impacts?” said Liska, who specializes in life-cycle analysis to assess the environmental impacts of products and services.

Other scientists previously have found nuclear blasts sufficient to ignite a developed area roughly the size of Los Angeles—500 square miles—would throw 5.5 million tons of ash and soot into the stratosphere. Sunlight, temperatures and rainfall would decrease around the world, growing seasons would be significantly reduced for at least five years and global temperatures would be their lowest in 1,000 years. Rainfall could decrease by as much as 80 percent in some areas of the world.

The black ash created by a nuclear blast would cool temperatures at the Earth’s surface, Oglesby said. Because there would be less temperature difference between the lower and upper atmosphere, rainfall would dwindle and cast large areas of the planet into drought.

“If the ash reaches the stratosphere, many months could pass before it dissipates,” Oglesby said.

Physicist Stephen Hawking and former Defense Secretary William Perry are among those who have recently warned about the growing danger of nuclear weapons use.

Liska and colleagues found that the United States, Russia and China each have weapons, including air-dropped, intercontinental ballistic missiles and land-based missiles, that could trigger a nuclear drought with the detonation of fewer than five bombs. Each weapon represents only a fraction of their arsenals. China could cause a nuclear drought with the launch of a single land-based missile. It holds 20 of that type in its arsenal.

The potential climate destruction posed by nuclear weapons is further compounded by climate change related to fossil fuel consumption, Liska added. More nations are turning to nuclear energy to reduce fossil fuel usage, which also creates opportunities for more nations to obtain nuclear weapons. Political instability as a result of people fleeing higher sea levels in the long term could exacerbate global conflict and increase the chance of limited nuclear confrontations.

“We pulled together what is known about nuclear weapons today, to make a case about the magnitude of these impacts,” Liska said. “With that understanding, we can make better choices going forward.”

...Growing seasons would be significantly reduced for at least five years and global temperatures would be their lowest in 1,000 years. Rainfall could decrease by as much as 80 percent in some areas of the world.
we recognize the most realistic diplomatic opportunities. So, what would a “less distorted version of history” of the U.S.-North Korea relationship look like? That history begins not with the last 25 years of on and off talks but 72 years ago with the division of Korea and the Korean War.

Few Americans remember the massive scale of destruction—and the massive trauma—caused by the Korean War. The U.S. carpet bombing during the war was merciless; well over one million North Koreans perished. Air Force General Curtis LeMay, head of Strategic Air Command at the time, shared this blunt assessment: “Over a period of three years or so, we killed off—what—20 percent of the population.”

The North Korean regime’s response to Trump’s “fire and fury” comments sought to tap into the public’s anger and fear and this legacy of destruction: “The U.S. once waged a tragic war that plunged this land into a sea of blood and fire, and has been leaving no stone unturned to obliterate the DPRK’s ideology and system century after century.”

While the 1953 armistice that ended the fighting called for a peace treaty within 90 days, 64 years later there is no formal peace. There have long been U.S.-South Korean joint military exercises that perpetuate the war footing. Reports in Japanese and South Korean media claim that the exercises include preemptive strikes up to and including “decapitation” strikes against Kim Jong-un. This ongoing war footing breeds endless insecurity all around.

The Clinton and Bush Years: Successes and Self-Inflicted Failures

President Trump promoted his distorted historical gloss earlier this month at a press conference, saying “they’ve been negotiating now for 25 years, look at Clinton, he folded on the negotiations, he was weak and ineffective.” Contrary to this narrative, for eight years Clinton’s “Agreed Framework” successfully froze North Korea’s plutonium-based weapons program. Experts estimate that North Korea could have had 100 nuclear weapons by now without the negotiated freeze.

When the Bush Administration came into office, some officials sought confrontation. Revelations about a uranium enrichment program apparently thrilled Deputy Secretary of State John Bolton who wrote: “this was the hammer I had been looking for to shatter the Agreed Framework.”

Instead of repairing the arrangement (the enrichment programs were potentially problematic but not prohibited by the agreement), the Bush Administration pulled out of the deal. When the U.S. invaded Iraq and deposed Saddam Hussein, Bolton urged North Korea to “draw the appropriate lesson” from the Iraq invasion.

Kim Jong-il did indeed draw a lesson from the invasion. In 2006 he tested North Korea’s first nuclear device.

The Diplomatic Path Forward

Looking through North Korean eyes we see how the ruling cadre’s insecurity drives the current conflict. Immediate negotiations could address this insecurity with a ‘freeze for freeze’: trading a freeze in U.S. military exercises in the region for a freeze in the North Korean nuclear and missile programs.

Continuing negotiations could include a formal end to the Korean War. At the same time a normalization of relationships throughout the region coupled with an end to sanctions, and closer economic ties could address North Korea’s feeling of isolation. The long-term goal of de-nuclearization of the Korean peninsula is unlikely without an ambitious approach to regional security cooperation that dramatically changes a North Korean threat perception equation developed over the last 72 years. Regional security cooperation would need to be built in stages but ultimately might include a Northeast Asia nuclear free zone that would include Japan and South Korea.

Diplomacy can work, as it has in the past. But those who recall a false history are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the unremembered past.

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Ignorance Rules Trump’s World

Even so, ignorance is in control of Trump’s limited world. One will recall that Trump tweeted in 2012 that global warming is a hoax concocted by the Chinese to make U.S. industry less competitive. In early December, 2016, he told Fox News that “nobody really knows” whether climate change is real. He also chose Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, a staunch denier of climate change, to run the U.S. EPA, where ignorance of climatic reality is now a litmus test.

Trump can’t tweet away geophysical reality. The context is worldwide. Bangladesh, for example, an analogue for our Gulf of Mexico coast, suffered monsoon floods that killed 1,000 people at the same time that Harvey ravaged Houston and its vicinity. So, as President Trump brags of a bigger and better future for the flood zone, the geophysical reality has not changed. We are sitting ducks waiting for the next catastrophe. Our grandchildren and their children will throw rotten tomatoes at portraits of Trump and his cronies in the Greenhouse Gas Museum.

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Wars and violence decide winners and losers in the short term, but real human progress is a matter of building communities and institutions over time that support peace.

Mandela to win self-determination and democracy through steadfast nonviolent resistance, and Polish unions pulled the thread that unravelled a superpower.

Wars are mostly good for politicians and war profiteers. Wars and violence decide winners and losers in the short term, but real human progress is a matter of building communities and institutions over time that support peace. Through nonviolent protest and civil disobedience, the American Civil Rights Movement achieved passage of historic federal legislation—the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

During the period from 1954-1968, African-Americans became a force in politics in the South for the first time since Reconstruction. Though many are still left behind, and much work for justice is yet to be done, the rise of so-called ‘minority millions’ in this country is undeniable and unstoppable. Over the long run, many Americans were galvanized into action on social justice issues and others, including opposition to foreign wars and protecting the environment. Race riots, however understandable and maybe even inevitable, generate backlash.

The AntiFa protesters of today no doubt see themselves as inheritors of a long and honorable line of freedom fighters, going back to the Spanish Civil War and the Chinese Communist revolution with performance art than with guerrilla warfare. They are much like uniforms, only more so—uniforms on steroids. Masks in this context, like the hoods of the KKK, are meant to intimidate. A mask does more than hide identity—masks transform wearers, making them larger than life. The masks Greek actors wore in antiquity served as megaphones, but the very wearing of a balaclava is itself a kind of shout: Look at me!

AntiFa may actually have more in common with performance art than with guerrilla warfare. Bringing batons to any confrontation in this country—where guns outnumber people—is both touching in its innocence and a terrible risk. Masks and sticks are no defense at all against lasers and bullets. The greater risk is in giving some Republican governor—or the Trump Administration—an excuse to declare martial law.

Think it can't happen here? You haven’t been paying attention. Someday soon, one of these brawls is going to trigger a shooting. Or many. Mark my words.
Paul Olson, conclusion

no real respect for government for the people. The ruling elites of Houston have long resisted any serious government planning with respect to how the city is laid out to handle water, how stream flow from the bayous and rivers is to be handled, what to do with urban sprawl, floodplain issues or the relationship between reservoirs and homes as the city grows [http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/31/us/houston-harvey-flooding-urban-planning/index.html]]. What happened in Houston is said to have been an unavoidable natural disaster, an ‘act of God,’ but God should not be blamed for the ruling class stupidity that went into Houston’s planning or into our nation’s withdrawal from serious efforts to counter climate change.

The specter of Sen. Ted Cruz trying to explain how he opposed Hurricane Sandy appropriations as pork barrel money while he holds out his hand for big dollars from the Trump Administration for Hurricane Harvey tells us how hollow is the belief of the anti-government forces who espouse Ronald Reagan’s famous mantra that “The nine most terrifying words in the English language are, ‘I’m from the government and I’m here to help.’” The nine most terrifying words in the English language are, “I am from the government; I come with arms.” With those words go a withdrawal of the government from almost all forms of human development and a commitment to force alone. With those nine words go the largest military budget in the world, larger than the next seven countries in the world, larger by $52 billion than last year’s military budget—so large that $54 billion has to be taken away from the environment, international aid, agriculture, labor, civil rights, health, education, housing, and energy; so large that we have to withdraw from the Paris climate accord; so large that we have to withdraw from the environment in which they move, or the justice toward which they reach. If, as our Capitol building motto taken from Aristotle indicates, “Political society exists for the sake of noble living,” then we must provide our citizens with, at the very least, the minimal conditions under which noble living is possible—a decent environment, the possibility of health and intellectual development, and the assurance of basic human rights.

Study the budget. Write to your Washington people. Hope for sanity.

Charlottesville, conclusion

The budget before us proposed to the present Congress by our administration says that we care about coercion—about bullying other people into our positions, here at home and in the world. It is of a coercive piece with our actions against African Americans from the beginning and Native Americans from our settlement. It does not say that we care about our own people: their intellectual development, physical well-being, the environment in which they move, or the justice toward which they reach. If, as our Capitol building motto taken from Aristotle indicates, “Political society exists for the sake of noble living,” then we must provide our citizens with, at the very least, the minimal conditions under which noble living is possible—a decent environment, the possibility of health and intellectual development, and the assurance of basic human rights.

At one time or the other, we’ve all heard the fatalistic pronouncements of arm-chair pundits on race issues. Their comments frequently echo the sentiment that we can never rid ourselves of the level of racism, discrimination and hate that has always been part of the fiber of this country. What this says to me though is that these folks don’t perceive themselves as having any skin in the game, that they have the luxury of being a bystander and can somehow detach themselves from the problem.

But if we are serious about social transformation, then we must ensure that all hands are on deck to change this country. Anything less is to support the current dismal conditions of despair and to repeat the terrible lessons of history. So, when someone asks the question of what can they do, then an answer that will help is to urge them to work to make the odds even—by pushing back on those segregated environments that have historically kept the oppressed locked down and from having a seat at the table. That’s the very advice that over 60 years ago Dr. King offered from the Birmingham jail. And it’s still valid today in the aftermath of Charlottesville.
Speaking Our Peace

by Paul Olson, NFP President Emeritus

Confederate Statues, Houston, and the Nine Most Terrifying Words in the Language

Sometimes one disagrees with even the best of one’s friends. I do not believe that the statues of Confederate treasun-able generals and leaders should be torn down. They are part of our history of shame, as our breaking of the over 300 U.S.-Indian treaties should have always been kept before us. The retained statues should be labeled somewhat in this fashion: “This general committed treason against the government of the United States to protect his right to own, buy, sell, and abuse human beings as property. His statue was erected by the Daughters of the Confederacy who believed simi-
larly, who believed in the Klan and the Old South. It is left here to remind us of their and his historic shame” [http://ar-lingtonconfederatemonument.blogspot.com/2011/02/united-daughters-of-confederacy-and.html#.WamLE7pFwaE].

I also disagree with many of my friends’ unequivocal concern for the plight of Houston. I believe that concern, money, and resources should be extended and extended lavishly to the suffering people of the city, but Houston’s rulers have been wrong and should be held to account. I further believe that the present administration’s cutting of the programs that would have assisted Houston -- its general withdrawal from climate change initiatives and many environmental remediation initiatives—is an obscen-
ity. Those actions will promise us many more Houstons in future years. We are not witnessing a 1000-year event in this age of climate change. We are witnessing a likely common one.

Concern for Houston should be ac-
companied by a realization of what sort of city Houston is. It is a city built by oil billionaires, having no real zoning, and

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