

CARING FOR CREATION NEWS

A Rose By Any Other Name...

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I've just finished reading the summary of an article from the *National Geographic News*. Flowers, it seems, aren't as fragrant as they used to be. Really! It's not that flowers aren't producing aroma. They are. It's our opportunity to detect aroma that's changed. Scent molecules used to travel up to 3,900 feet. But now they travel only about 980 feet. So, our chances of encountering aroma have been reduced.

Scientists now understand that the scent molecules bond with the air pollutants being produced by automobiles and power plants. This unholy alliance breaks down the aroma. Consequently, scent molecules aren't potent for as long and travel shorter distances on the wind.

Interesting, if that's all there was to it; but the story doesn't stop. Insect populations that need the aroma—in order to find the flower—in order to get flower-based food—in order to survive—are being stressed. Flower species, that need the insects—in order to pollinate—in order to produce seed—in order to survive—are also being stressed. And one could go on reflecting about the whole circle of life--the animals that need the plants—the predators that need the animals, -- the....

This working together of all things leads me back to the words of the Apostle Paul, "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8: 28) I don't want to suggest that Paul was the first environmentalist. I doubt that he was. But it does seem to me that Paul is touching upon a very deep truth here; that in God's creation, it's the working together of all things that produces good – shalom. Conversely, it's the not working together that produces sadness and death.

The Biblical witness helps us to understand that God is both Creator and Redeemer. God is working toward and will accomplish the redemption of all creation. We of course find ourselves somewhere short of that final amen; but that's why Paul singles out those "... who are called according to his purpose." Paul is identifying God's agents for this interim time. Working for clean water is the work of God. Lessening your environmental footprint is the work of God. Speaking out for those who are the victims of pollution is the work of God. May God hasten the day when all things do in fact work together for good.

Shalom

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