

VAIHARAI

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VAIHARAI

Care for Nature

From Editor's Desk

“The whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God”. (Rom 8:22-23).

The industrial and technological advancement marvelously achieved in the last half century has created an illusion that human persons are in complete control of their destiny as never before. But it is alarming to note that we have lost our balance, externally and within. The wealth generated in the developed countries has not put an end to the untold pain and suffering of millions and millions of the poor and dehumanized in the underdeveloped countries. The explosion of new and profound knowledge in science and technology has not been accompanied by an increase in wisdom. Unfortunately we have not realized the fact that the creation is an interdependent and undivided whole.

Creation is groaning for liberation from bondage which has disfigured the face of humanity. We have lost half of the great forest of the world due to an unimaginably increasing demand for timber and for conversion to agriculture, without thinking that these giant wet sponges are responsible for the delivery of much of the fresh water. Irrigation for agriculture consumes 70% of global demand for water, and some of the world's greatest rivers are so depleted by the selfish and greedy minded rich and finally they no longer

flow to the sea: Due to this unjust and inhuman exploitation the rivers are totally spoiled and finally they carry with them all kinds of chemicals, fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides and waste materials. We are building bigger nuclear arsenals and armaments, and rich nations are crazily providing more luxurious standards of living for their tiny population. The immense and spectacular growth of industrialization has caused a major ecological crisis like pollution on all fronts and global warming. In fact, we are consuming earth's resources and destroying its capital as if there is no tomorrow for future generation. .

“Subdue the earth's forces” (Gen 1:28) is God's specific will for all the human persons, for their own good and for God's greater glory. Everyone has a part to play, and a responsibility in conserving creation. Our successes or failures, personal and collective, determine the lives of billions. Our decisions, personal and collective, determine the future of the planet. As Pope Francis warned the leaders of the World, “I recall a popular saying: ‘God always forgives, we sometimes forgive, but when nature – creation – is mistreated, she never forgives’!”.

We are immensely glad to present in this issue of *Vaiharai* five articles on the theme of CARE FOR NATURE. In the first article Dr. John Kulandai deals with the topic on “Care for the Earth: The Statement of the Question”. He clarifies that the care for the earth should be understood as a two way process: We care for the Earth and the Earth will care for us. He brings to light the necessity of realizing and acknowledging the fact that certain awareness about the urgency for the matters which gives an account of natural disasters during the past two years 2017 and 2018. Then in the light of the *Laudato Si* and some other studies he attempts to delineate some nodal points in the process of caring for the earth.

Dr. V. Maria Alphonse, in his article on “Follow the Flow of Nature” makes a wakeup call by showing the current situation of water crisis, severe drought, felling of trees, filling of ponds, flattening of hills, poor water

management system in Tamil Nadu. He continues to underline that tampering with the eco-system has endangered human life through disasters and calamities. He beautifully states that following the flow of nature reflects a new life style which protects the nature. Finally quoting from the much acclaimed book authored by Shumacher "The Small Is Beautiful", he makes a clarion call for an authentic and constructive development and an integral improvement which would strengthen environmental and human sustainability, and ensure the development of all people.

Dr. A. S. John Peter, in his article on "Christian Response to the Ecological Challenges in the Globalized World", takes concerted effort to shed light on the Church teachings on Ecology. He elaborately discusses the ecological challenges in the modern world, namely the culture of irresponsibility, commoditization of nature, urbanization, global inequality, ecological debt and weak response to the culture of ecological crisis. Finally, basing on the teachings of the Church he highlights the Christian responses. Respecting the various cultural riches of different people and their spirituality that is so important, he succinctly states that without nature one cannot experience the Divine. God's blessings and caring for nature is one of the key features of one's faith. Quoting Pope Francis he proposes economic ecology, social ecology and cultural ecology for maintaining integral ecology and incorporate our daily life with Nature by eco-conversion.

Dr. Michael Raj, in his article, "Biblical Models of Co-existence with Nature" proposes a few models which point out the relationship that exists among the Biblical God, humanity and nature. He observes that God created earth and found it good which invites each and every person to care for the God of the earth and to care for goodness of humanity. God commands us to keep and care for the earth but God's edict to have dominion over the earth doesn't mean to have complete dominion and exploitation of it. Moreover, as indicated in the Bible, the care takers are called upon to collaborate with

God and practice stewardship. From among the seven models proposed by the author, the servant model is much relevant which provides an image of walking with God and experiencing both joys of creation and tensions of living within. All the models offer insights for building up proper relationship among God, human persons and nature.

In the topic “Major Environmental Movements in India”, Dr. Binny Mary Das makes a sincere and hard effort to present the important ecological movements in India as well as in Tamil Nadu. The author briefly develops a historical background for the origin of the environment movements of India. Then, he clearly describes the major non-violent action movements, and their nature and function both in India as well as in Tamil Nadu, namely: Bishnoi Movement, the Chipko Movement, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Appiko Movement, Silent Valley Movement, Tehri Dam Conflict, Save Ganga Movement, Poovilagin Nanbargal (Friends of the Earth), Anu Ulaikku Ethirana Makkal Iyakkam (People’s Movement against Sterlite), Iyarkai Vivasaya Iyakkam (Organic Farming Movement), Saleme Kural Kodu (Salem Citizen Forum). He distinctly points out how the environmental movements have really responded to the projects that have threatened the people to dislocate and thereby affect their basic human rights to land, water and ecological stability of life support system.

Dr A. Albert

Editor