



## Editorial

The approach to the theme of climate justice was started already in September 2010, when the preparation committee for the *Climate Justice Now!* Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe - WSCF-E joint study session met for the first time. As a member of that group, I was overwhelmed by the huge topic; we were struggling to cover all the issues vital to climate change with a Christian perspective. Believe it or not, but this theme is huge...

Regardless of the place where you live, you can appreciate the beauty of creation. Touch the bark of a tree that wakes you up in the morning with its rustling leaves; see the clouds, sun, water. Wherever you are, even in the most industrialized place, you can feel the presence of that all-embracing smoothness. Sometimes one can have the impression that by our behavior we are trying to escape from the natural. Fortifying ourselves in the concrete cities; preferring to cry over the species that are becoming obsolete... In the context of environment, not caring is destroying.

In this issue, you can see how people from different settings understand climate justice and how they try to lead sustainable lives. What we are aiming for, is to show as broad approach to environmental issues as possible. We need to go beyond worrying about the huge problems of the irreversible loss of biodiversity, increasing temperature of the planet and suffocating gasses and find a way to personally contribute to a solution. We need to do something down-to-earth and do it together. As long as we are united in the will to change, we can do it.

We are very happy to present you the *Climate Justice Now!* Statement, which is one of the results of the joint study session. The text was written by the participants after a



long debate that helped us to understand each other better. Our message was presented at the Council of European Churches and World Council of Churches session on *Poverty, Wealth and Ecology* – the voice of the youth was united and strong!

Finally, let me express my gratitude to the European Regional Committee of WSCF-E for appointing me to the Editor-in-Chief position. I will make my every effort to meet expectations of our current and future readers. I would like offer my thanks to Andrew Wild, who was leading the editorial team over the last two years. Continuing the work of the previous editors we will keep Mozaik open to the discussion full of broadness and understanding.

Peace and Grace be with you,

Paweł Pustelnik

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# Climate Justice Now!



We, the participants of the study session *Climate Justice Now!* organised by the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE) and the World Student Christian Federation Europe region (WSCF-E), discussed climate justice on practical and theoretical levels.

As young Christians we acknowledge that we should be agents of change, living examples and multipliers of a sustainable way of life. Solidarity and social justice on local, national and global levels should be manifested through education, prayer, lobbying and sharing our expertise.

We have agreed that addressing the following issues is crucial for a just and sustainable future.

## ***Christian Perspectives***

According to scriptures and our Christian roots, we understand that human beings are part of creation and depend on it. At the same time, we have a responsibility to act as ministers of creation, tending and protecting it as the Good Shepherd tends and protects the sheep (John 10: 1-30, Romans 8: 18-22).

Creation is more than the natural world. Creation encompasses social, political and economic structures. Human beings are co-creators with God.

We call on Christian leaders to promote eco-theology, and to be actively involved in education

and political campaigns on climate justice. We recognise the need to raise awareness about the environment and remind humankind that God calls upon us to care for creation (Genesis 2: 15).

## ***Consumerism***

Excessive consumption and unlimited growth are dominant features of many societies. A prevalent belief is that there are no viable alternatives to this way of life, which is based on unsustainable technology and development.

Yet, as Christians, we are called to live politically active and socially responsible lives. Moreover, we demand that our churches join together in the effort to promote responsible consumption and sufficiency. We must question the status quo, and lead by example, demonstrating that a sustainable, yet progressive way of life is indeed possible.

## ***Education***

Present realities in different countries indicate that there is a lack of holistic, realistic and fact-based education. This can lead to ineffective responses to climate challenges.

Education is one of the crucial tools in combating climate challenges and must embody the ideas that follow.

Firstly, holistic climate education must include aspects of awareness raising through formal, non-formal and informal education. We must also



PHOTO: NIKOS KOSMIDIS



Finally, the cooperation of various sectors in society (e.g. private sector, government, media and civil society) is essential to provide sufficient access to climate education on all levels and to secure the financial basis for this. We need the whole society to contribute.

## ***Climate Refugees***

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25: 40).

We acknowledge that the ever increasing number of climate refugees is impossible to ignore. People who need refuge due to detrimental effects of climate change must be recognised as climate refugees and thus benefit from the same rights as all other categories of refugees. Lobbying and awareness raising among society and stakeholders is needed in order to achieve this recognition.

encourage research and development of technology for sustainable ways of life.

Secondly, inter-generational and inter-religious dialogue should be secured in order to achieve stronger cooperation in society, transmitting information, experiences and best practice.





*The Four Laws of Ecology:  
Everything is connected to everything else.  
Everything must go somewhere.  
Nature knows best.  
There is no such thing  
as a free lunch.*

— Barry Commoner —

*You are not Atlas  
carrying the world on your shoulder.  
It is good to remember that  
the planet is  
carrying you.*

— Vandana Shiva —



Janne Dale Hauger (born in Norway, 2 August 1986) has a background in psychology and gender studies and is now finishing her Master's Degree in Public Health. She also works at a crisis centre for women with chemical dependency, is an environmental activist, and serves on boards for international and ecumenical issues in the Church of Norway. Janne was a delegate to the Climate Justice Now! conference held in France in September 2010.

# The Good Girl?

## The story of a hungry woman trying to live sustainably

Janne Dale Hauger

As a Christian and as a citizen of the world, I want to live a sustainable life. I know that my every-day choices, like what I eat and what I buy, will impact the environment – either in a good way or in a bad way. For example, I can choose to buy a kilo of beef, which takes up massive resources, or I can buy a kilo of potatoes, which takes 99.6% less water to produce. You don't have to be a math genius to realize that it's going to cost mother earth *a lot* more resources for me to have hamburgers for dinner, than if I made some home-made mashed potatoes with sautéed vegetables.

Being the 'good girl' I try to be, I set off on my quest to live a vegetarian and sustainable life.

This was great... until I realized how much I love meat! After starting to have dreams about juicy hamburgers, I decided that a more sustainable path for me would be to eat meat, but rarely. So I made up my own term, and became a 'restrictatarian', that is, someone who restricts their meat consumption to a few days a week. So far, so good.



Or so I thought. I went on for a few weeks, merrily filling my refrigerator with all sorts of vegetables and fruits: tomatoes from Italy, bananas from South Africa, mangoes from Peru, etc. Then, one day, I learned that if you want to live a sustainable life, you ought to eat locally produced food. You can't just consider what food you're eating, but you must also find out where and how it is produced, and how far it's travelled, and how it has been transported to your local supermarket.

Good heavens! I guess I hadn't been living quite as ecologically responsibly as I had thought. But at least I still knew this to be true: vegetables are better for the planet than meat. So I started my hunt for locally produced vegetables. Sure, they were kind of expensive, but that's a small price to pay to know that you're living as sustainably as possible.

Then, came that tragic day, where I realized that I had been misguided... again! As it turns out, the tomatoes that are locally produced in Norway, require massive amounts of energy because they are produced in greenhouses. And

guess what? Producing tomatoes in Norway emits so much greenhouse gasses, that it would be better to eat a pound of chicken than a pound of Norwegian tomatoes! So, I had been wrong all along, believing that locally grown veggies are always better than meat. And if I was wrong about the Norwegian tomatoes, what else was I naïvely purchasing under the pretence of living ecologically? In the process of trying to make the right choices, I had ended up with nothing more than exhaustion and an empty stomach.

So what is the moral of the story here? I believe that caring about where our food comes from is not a lost cause, even if it might feel like it sometimes. As more and more of us start to question where our food comes from and how it is produced, the producers of food will learn that their customers *do* care about more than just the price-tag. We, the consumers, have incredible power! Let's use our consumer power responsibly, and demand to know where our food comes from and how it is produced. Even if it's an exhausting journey, it will make a difference. Amen.



*Producing tomatoes in Norway emits so much greenhouse gasses, that it would be better to eat a pound of chicken than a pound of Norwegian tomatoes.*



# On Politics and Piety



Marta Gustavsson is a Master's student of Theology at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. She is especially interested in the so called "wordly" aspects of theology; ethics, politics, economy, etc. and of the theological aspects of these fields. No matter what impression the article gives you, Marta is a vegetarian and biker, but not politically active.

## Marta Gustavsson

What content should a Christian lifestyle have, in the age of global warming, environmental destruction, and increasing violence often due to global inequality and widespread exposure of the world's poor? Two years ago, my answer would have been very much oriented towards personal piety; abstaining meat and preferably dairies as well, living in ecological and ascetic simplicity, taking short and cold showers and biking wherever I was going. I was a pious, climate-friendly moralist, and probably enormously annoying to people around me.

Today my view has changed somewhat and I will let a story from Swedish politics illustrate this: Two politicians, one conservative and one from the Green Party met in the parking lot. "I didn't know you Greens were allowed to go by car", the conservative said ironically. "We are", said the Green. "But you are all about the climate issues, aren't you? How can you be this irresponsible and go by car to work?" "Differing from you" the Green politician said, "we do not believe people will change lifestyle by themselves. It is you who claim that individuals can take responsibility and stop the climate changes. So it is you who should take yours and bike".

These two poles of argumentation illustrate very well the split of self-understanding that has been debated in the Church ever since Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire. A church where all tradition and theology came from a minority perspective, all of a sudden had the world's power in their hands. Ethics and ecclesiology made for living beside the power

(in the world but not of it) now had to engage very intimately with the same power. The little person's (Christian's) own ethical responsibility was exchanged for a powerful opportunity for the Church to order piety ('change of lifestyle') and to transform the society.

I have heard a lot of grief over this, over the forced and inconsistent insertion of violence to the Christian doctrine and how the Church opened up for the violent powers of this world. When talking about the climate, many Christians don't call for acts of 'human' power but instead for a classical 'wake-up movement' making the souls ready for all veganism and whatever might be needed for solving this issue. The motive for this is, I believe, that they want to be piously neat-and-nice not upsetting anyone. Often the sacrifice of these brothers and sisters is very large; they attain an ambitious eco-awareness just to proof the possibility of waking up to the new-born life of a zero ecological footprint. To be a fool for Christ might be a virtue to admire, but I sadly must say that these efforts tend to make people all the further away from waking up, and even from doing anything at all.

This is of course not a problem only concerning the Christian clique of the climate-friendly movement. I have met new-born environmentalists of several faith traditions and I can for surely tell that pious climate moralism is not solely a Christian phenomenon but when it occurs within a Christian interpretation it must be understood in quite a different way, which I will examine later. I, myself, would probably still be of this kind if



*"I didn't know you  
Greens were allowed  
to go by car"*

I still believed that it would be the only way of coming to terms with global warming. Now I am, on the contrary, quite convinced that personal piety in this form is not a possible pattern (although not an unimportant feature) for the problem's solution at all; I will give three reasons for this.

First, global warming is a challenge demanding from the rich world acts that are too difficult, not to say impossible, to wish for oneself. The asceticism of climate-friendliness tends to fail to decrease the ecological footprint as much as necessary. The political act of forcing one to change their lifestyle must, for most of us, come from the outside, in the form of taxes, regulations and prohibitions. This cannot, I believe, be done in a way pleasing all or being voluntarily wished for by a large number of people. Still, it needs to be done.

Secondly, this failure of the personal piety tends to provoke a feeling of guilt that we, from a Christian perspective cannot accept as a theological end. If you are requested to do the impossible, swimming against the stream of the indecent (meat-eating, airplane-flying and so on) and with no results in sight; is this really in accordance with a merciful God? Is not the individual responsibility too heavy of a burden for one person to carry?

I want to make clear that I am the first to admit the demands that Christian faith poses. I agree that we from a missiological perspective (the Church reaching out to the poor and needy) have the responsibility to work for a better climate; so how? This leads me to my third point: The work

of the individual Christian is always a participation in the work of the Church leading us from the perspective of personal piety to the communal acts of faith. This is also where piety has its place; as a driving force of the Church's work, and maybe as a sign that is collectively sent from the Church to the world showing what is actually achievable. The communal body that we form, as Saint Paul pointed out, consist of parts but for each part to work for the mission of the body, it has to admit the interdependence and belonging that connects it to the others.

This demands something of the Church that is difficult for big organisational bodies; to in unity request the power needed to take its responsibility. I may agree that the act of the 4<sup>th</sup> century to Christianize the empire and to add the acceptance for violence and power-abuse into doctrine is questionable. This does not, though, mean that Church must reject power in general. On the contrary, I believe that the pattern we see in the 4<sup>th</sup> century change can be positively interpreted for our present situation. I believe that the united Church, together with other good forces, could have the power to change the global political perspective so that the global community, instead of the responsible individual, makes the effort needed to make society sustainable.

If there is a pious and, in the eyes of this world, "foolish" work for Christians to undertake, maybe this is to stand up in political assemblies around the world demanding the impossible; the potentially painful transition to a just, equal and sustainable world.

# Faith in the Furrow: Farming as devotion



Nick Schuurman lives in Ontario, Canada, where he serves pastorally, works agriculturally, and writes. While himself Dutch, he works with an ethnically Hmong congregation, as well as on a small, family run organic farm.

Nick Schuurman

*The problem with our role in creation is that we don't remember it. In our fallen state we have forgotten our place, both within God's will and love and also in our love and care for creation. We need to be reminded of who we are and what we are about. Practices and disciplines are our primary way of learning to remember, of being recollected to our place and call as creatures. I would like to offer farming, done well, as one of those disciplines.*

Ragan Sutterfield,  
*Farming as a Spiritual Discipline*

Standing at the front of the sanctuary each week, I am witness to a peculiar sight. I notice it even more so now that it is winter, and the sunlight that normally filters through the stained glass into our little gathering space is gone by the time I open up my Bible. Little glowing lights rest on the laps of several of my congregants, usually with little wires strung up from the source of illumination towards their ears. Last week, I preached by candlelight, joking that it was so I would be able to catch everyone who was playing games or listening to music on their iPod or smart phone.

I work with the first cohort to have been born into an entirely media-saturated world. Generation Me, iGeneration, Generation Net, whatever you want to call them, they were the first batch of newborns to enter into a world that never was without computers or the internet. They are known for fast-paced information overload while at the same time suffering from an acquired attention deficit disorder. So, before I can finish

saying “I’m going to invite you to turn to Isaiah 9: 2,” they’ve scrolled to it on their Blackberry, and within ten minutes, they’ve almost certainly lost the ability to focus on what I am saying.

We live in some of the most connected societies the world has ever seen, and yet we are so profoundly disconnected – from the earth, from each other, from God. We can communicate faster, more often, and over greater distances than any civilization the world has ever known, and yet I am confronted on a weekly basis with individuals who feel alienated, alone, longing for community and distant from their God.

Sometimes I wish I could take them to help feed the horses or pick rocks out of the vegetable gardens.

I work with a little church that was born out of a community of first and second generation immigrants and refugees. Because of a lack of resources, I also work during the week at a small equestrian and organic vegetable operation to help pay the bills. I have lived and worked on farms for as long as I can remember. As much of a stigma as the work carries with it around here, I take a lot of pleasure and pride in it, and have found in it a certain spiritual nourishment that I often think members of my community – and followers of Christ in general – could learn from.

Theologian and ecologist Norman Wirzba<sup>1</sup> suggests that a terminological shift occurred

<sup>1</sup> Norman Wirzba, *The Paradise of God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pg. 2.



at some point when the modern English word ‘culture’ moved from being a noun laden with agricultural connotation to a term dealing with societies, economics, and fields of politics. Accompanying this semantic change, he argues, came a paradigmatic shift marking the beginning of a divide between civilization and nature.

Simply stated, in the western world we find ourselves increasingly disconnected from creation. There is, alternatively, a profound immediacy to the labour of agriculture. While other work involving one’s hands manipulates some far-removed by-product of the earth, the farmer rescinds the separation fabricated by the industrial revolution and driven by sloth and greed, and stoops to the dirt to lay down seeds. It is the same joy and pleasure that is found when one wanders through a forest: the beauty of God’s glory displayed in creation uncluttered by the work of our hands.

Gardening is a way of slowing one’s breath, so to speak. In an age of quick fixes and short-cuts, I celebrate this sort of slowness. In a world driven by, and in many ways dependent on, cultures and systems of immediacy and instant

gratification, gardening and small-scale animal husbandry are in many ways utterly unthinkable tasks. They require patience and attention that the average, modern westerner living in the age of Google knows nothing about.<sup>2</sup> Serving in a position of spiritual leadership, this is one of the most important lessons I have learned. While at times it comes dramatically, suddenly, and with a great display of force, change most often happens gradually, the way the snow peas and sweet corn inch their way skyward. And so, when I am discouraged at the pace of transformation – in my life and the life of those in my community – I stoop down and look at those plants which take months to grow but will, after my patience has been tried, eventually produce fruit.

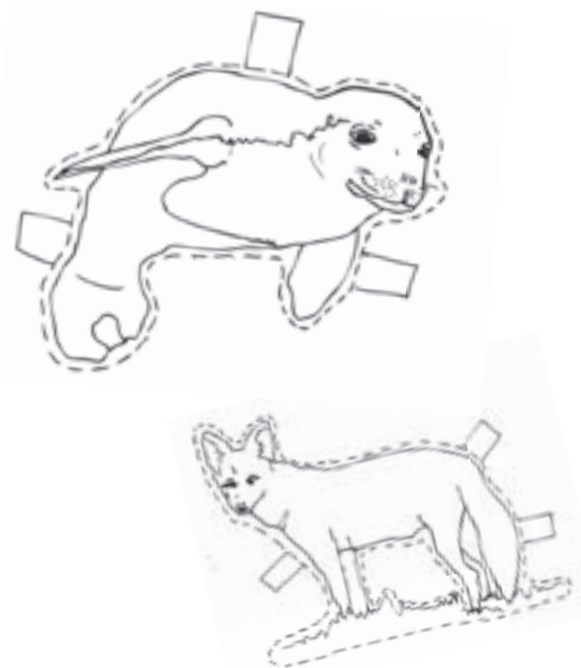
Agricultural work also serves to make us aware of our limitations. Even with the astounding advances made in the science and technology of modern agriculture, there are things simply out of our control. There is, in fact, a lot of money that moves around in the business of crop insurance, which exists to protect against these kinds of things that are beyond human control.<sup>3</sup> The spiritual parallels here are obvious. The apostle Paul, in the tradition of Jesus, who spoke often in the language of the fieldsmen of his day, said that we can only plant seeds when it comes to advancing the kingdom; the rest lies in forces of

<sup>2</sup> There is a growing body of research that suggests that we, as a Western culture, have a sort of “acquired attention deficit disorder”, as Dr. John Ratey, associate professor of Psychiatry at Harvard, describes it rendering most individuals incapable of concentrating for any significant period of time: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/22/weekinreview/22richtel.html>

<sup>3</sup> Similar programs have been introduced and more are in the works for livestock producers.

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– from the  
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each other,  
from God.*

# Something That Unites Us



spiritual nature directed by Divine hands.<sup>4</sup> Both kingdom and agricultural work require a commitment to faithfully do everything we possibly can on our own right while being at peace with the fact that much lies out of our control.

Maybe it all sounds romantic – a thoreauvian cry for simplicity, independence, and the ‘good old days’ – but maybe there is really something deeper here, a way of reconnecting with Creator and creation. Unlike Thoreau, a Harvard graduate made most famous by his memoir of his time spent living alone in the woods in northern Massachusetts,<sup>5</sup> I am not proposing agrarianism as a means of independence or virtue. Simplicity is admirable, and there was a lot of good in the old days, no doubt, but I think there is something even more profound in the labour of agriculture.

I recognize that if the statistics are right, you are probably reading this from a densely populated urban centre, where working on a farm is not exactly an option. And if other statistics are also right, working on a small, family-run operation is an even less likely possibility.<sup>6</sup> Try to do what you can with the dirt around you, and see if it brings about any change. Start an indoor herb garden, participate in an urban gardening project, plant some tomatoes in your flowerbed, and prepare your own food from scratch. These are simply things that we can do with our hands that in turn can transform our hearts.

<sup>6</sup> Findings from the latest Canadian census indicate a dramatic decline in the number of reported farms since the previous census, approximately 17,550 to be precise: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/articles/finpicture-portrait-eng.htm>

<sup>4</sup> “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.” 1 Corinthians 3:6:

<sup>5</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, and Other Writings*, (New York: Modern Library, 1950).

## Mattias Irving

I spoke with a Christian environmental worker not too long ago, and he related to me how difficult it can be to express concern over climate change by referring to his Christian faith. It is unfortunately all too common for a person who expresses any kind of religious conviction to be treated with follow-up questions or critics. The facts disappear from sight all too easily in the discussion and, therefore, it might seem easier to simply refer to secular literature and research instead.

## Who is the Samaritan?

The problem goes deeper than merely lack of communication or historical controversies. It springs from the prejudiced mind *per se*. Prejudice divides and focuses on the differences between people. It tries to make out groups in the world and label them accordingly. At one time, the Samaritans were thought to be an inhospitable bunch; nobody would have expected help from any of them. Nowadays, we ought to know that helpers come in all shapes and from all places, and ask ourselves “does it really matter just where the helper comes from?”

To put it a little differently, would it be relevant or even appropriate to say that the earth itself has wishes and a consciousness? I wouldn’t venture so far. But let us ponder for a moment what she would say to us if she had the opportunity.

Would she pause and ask, “in what God’s name have you come to rescue me? I would not be

saved by just anyone”. No, probably not. I believe that if the earth itself could speak, she would be quite uninterested in whether her saviours were Christians or atheists. And so should we.

## Our only home

Space is barren, hostile and vast in every sense of the word. Sensible people, like the renaissance scientist Blaise Pascal, have turned their gaze skyward and trembled deep in their hearts as they have begun to fathom the incredible, cold eternity of space. Our home is but a tiny, barely even visible speck of blue in a cosmic ocean of immense depths. It’s our only home among the stars.

Maybe you recognize this phrasing? It’s a paraphrase from the lovely and world-famous work of astronomer Carl Sagan, called *Cosmos*.<sup>1</sup> It was a stunningly poetic and sublime TV series from 1980, many years ahead of its time in the issues it addressed. When we confront a person, such as Carl Sagan, (who was an avid spokesman of science and convincingly outspoken in his anti-religious standpoints) and acknowledge his burning compassion and love for this world, we are once again reminded of what unites us, rather than what separates us.



Mattias Irving is a Swedish author, freelance journalist and philosopher. He studies philosophy at Södertörns Högskola (Stockholm) and presently writes for the Swedish progressive Christian think tank “Seglora Smedja”. Mattias frequently writes on the topics of free culture, existential questions and postmodernism.

<sup>1</sup> The television series *Cosmos*, PBS, 28 Sept.-21 Dec. 1980 based on the book: Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 1980).



## Looking for the common ground

I believe that this is where all our interests converge – atheists, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists; all the people of the world share a common home under the beautiful, blue sky of planet earth. In this we are as brothers and sisters. I ask again, does it really matter in whose name we act, when we take action for the good of the planet itself? There is a very famous poem by John Donne, which I think everybody ought to read at least once in their life:

*No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.*

John Donne, 1572-1631

To paraphrase this poem I'd therefore like to say: Do not ask me whom I serve, for I serve you.

But service to the planet, from whichever perspective we are departing, demands a steadfastness and dedication that is unusual to find. Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote in his magnum opus *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*<sup>2</sup> about 'the last men', those who loathed passions and lacked the ability to sacrifice themselves for anything. The last men are a sad sight to behold, stilled by

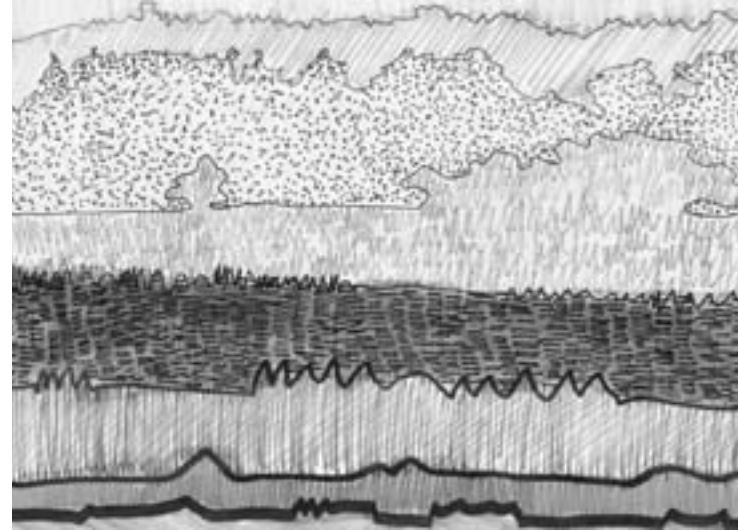
the conveniences and lullabies of modern life to a mediocre and lukewarm existence, devoid of pain and struggle. They look down on the radicals; wanting something with every bone in your body is seen as something vulgar and innately befitting only the misfits in the eyes of those who no longer know what it means to freeze, to be hungry, to feel fear. But when compassion and passion thus dies out, there is nothing left of man anymore, according to Nietzsche.

## Empty words and a dark future?

Is it not odd then, that our politicians, when mother earth is knocking on the door, show the same, at best lukewarm, willingness to act as Nietzsche's 'last man'? Nature does indeed not compromise. If CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere climbs above certain limits it's the start, for all that we know, of a new and unprecedented dark period in the history of the world. We all share this fate, without exception or compromise.

Meanwhile, targeted emission cuts and international treaties have too often proven to be empty words. The political will is simply lacking. But how can it be so? How is it possible to not want to save our only home in space? It seems absurd to me.

I think that Britain's former Prime Minister Tony Blair expressed the problem very aptly back in



2005, in Montréal: "The blunt truth about the politics of Climate Change is that no country will want to sacrifice its economy in order to meet this challenge".<sup>3</sup>

It's actually been a long time since I stopped believing in a political solution for the climate crisis, to be perfectly honest. Blair's statement quoted above was but the icing on the cake, the last nail in the coffin for my own trust in the efficiency of the political process. Since then I have come to suspect that Nietzsche's metaphor about the 'last man' might be even more accurate than he himself would have surmised.

## Overcoming the divisions

I believe that everyone who works for the survival of the planet acts in the name of God. We are called to action out of love for this earthly, heavenly place that is our origin and our home, and this deep feeling I believe to be the same whether we like to call ourselves Christians, atheists or whatever. But we have to rely on our Christian faith or our ideological beliefs to find the strength to resist – in fact, to exceed – the wallowing darkness of contemporary cynicism and short-sightedness.

In the words of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Albert Schweitzer, we are called to act out of a reverence for life itself. Such reverence includes all of us and turns against the selfish way of thinking expressed by the likes of Tony Blair.

When we look out into the empty, inhospitable expanses of space we are right to fear, as Pascal did, for out there we will find no salvation. Space remains the hostile frontier of mankind's endeavours. But a divine mercy has given us this world alone and filled it with beauty. It is our only chance for life, happiness and peace. It is our home, and maybe the only thing that unites us all.



<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (Germany, 1885).

<sup>3</sup> David Adam, "Blair signals shift over climate change", *The Guardian*, 2 Nov. 2005 < <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2005/nov/02/greenpolitics.frontpagenews> >.

***The activist is not the man who says  
the river is dirty. The activist is the  
man who cleans up the river.***

- Ross Perot



***There would be very little point in my exhausting  
myself and other conservationist themselves  
in trying to protect animals and habitats if we  
weren't at the same time raising young people to  
be better stewards.***

- Jane Goodall





# COP 15



Jonathan Wiksten is a student of Political Science. He lives in Gothenburg and has been involved in the Swedish SCM since 2009. Currently, he is a member of its board. He hopes to obtain a BA degree in Political Science and Arabic this year. Although his final goal is rather unclear, Jonathan thinks he would like to work on the issues concerning migration or interfaith dialogue. He is also involved in the fair trade movement and particularly, in the possible future of fair electronics.

## Jonathan Wiksten

*The climate summit in Copenhagen held in December 2009 might, in retrospect, seem like a grand failure. In many ways it certainly was. A good part of the hopes and efforts invested into the meeting were essentially wasted. Still, taking part in the demonstration in Copenhagen left me filled with hope.*

The protest in Copenhagen lasted for roughly a week with some 50,000 participants, at least according to rather sketchy rumours and an estimations of different figures from various newspapers. With those 50,000 people came a massive amount of zealotness and creativity. A Welsh dragon met partying carbon traders and South-East Asian vegetarians in animal costumes urging those around not to eat them. I have experienced the feeling of international companionship before from other events, like the huge Taizé meetings or WSCF conferences; but in a certain kind of international environment, when united by one goal, mindset or at least common acceptance, there can be a rather special atmosphere of openness and warmth. With the one exception when the Black Bloc walked past us I felt this special atmosphere in Copenhagen, and I think most of the people we met, shared and talked with shared my emotion.

Those who were participating at the negotiations in Copenhagen representing nations such as Bangladesh or Bolivia, who have already been plagued by the changes taking place, must have found the experience incredibly frustrating. Seeing the proposed treaty going down the drain must have been a nightmare for those



who already encounter the devastating effects of global warming.

I felt a striking contrast. On the one hand, I saw thousands of optimistic, determined and angry activists and on the other, we heard very pessimistic reports of the negotiating politicians. In one aspect, I believe the difference in perspective to be equally different. For us when participating in protests, rallies or events, cost is not an important issue. We made an effort to attend and there was little risk involved in us attending. Whereas, the negotiators have to consider a lot of issues; they're under pressure from NGOs, corporations and national governments. In that position, worrying about the environment is probably not their top priority.

If we want real change I wonder where that change will come from and I find it hard to believe that politicians will find real motivation to change; especially since they also have to consider both the voices of climate sceptics, environmental activists as well as oil companies who in turn could be co-funders of their political campaigns. Growth is partly built on semi- or post-colonial structures and therefore the incentive to give developing countries real options is essentially missing. I wonder if the concept of 'us versus them', spurred by nationalism is the biggest obstacle towards the realisation that when facing a global problem there really is just one humanity and that the consequences could ultimately affect us all, regardless of the relative success of different nations.

PHOTO: ANNA BURENIUS



In the several thousand headstrong crowd of protesting people the notion of solidarity was probably felt and shared with much greater ease. It gave me the feeling that the possibility for change was there; rather than resting with the debating negotiators. Seeing that huge crowd made me think change really is possible and that hope isn't a naïve feeling but a realistic perspective. But if change is to come, the meeting in Copenhagen convinced me that it will not come from politicians facing an overpowering workload but rather it will come from the protesting crowd that has to make the change happen or one day pay the price for their indifference.

As believers we often have a shared experience of belonging to something bigger than the boundaries of our home-towns or even the nation-state. Many young religious people go abroad to meet with people of other their own faith, but from a different nationality. Some even meet with adherers of another religion to openly discover and enjoy the differences that make us all interesting and the similarities that make us all human. To meet with people united through the same goal of climate justice gives me the feeling that we have the possibility to mutually create the change that is so direly needed. As believers we share a multitude of stories of just that happening, people coming together, united by faith or common strife and changing something for the better. For one thing, think of the anti-slavery movement where religious people came together moved by their faith in the equal rights of all humans and ended one of its time's greatest atrocities. Apart from just having the collective experience of change we also have



faith in something greater than quarrelling politicians, a good God with a want for what is right. With that in mind, how can one not feel hopeful towards the strife to stop global warming?



PHOTO: JONATHAN WIKSTEN



# Divided Loyalties:

## Ecumenism or the environment?



David Masters is the Regional Secretary of WSCF Europe. He studied theology at Manchester University and reconciliation at the Irish School of Ecumenics.

### David Masters

*My heart is moved by all I cannot save:  
so much has been destroyed*

In the realm of ideology, I have two loves: ecumenism, and the environment. I show my love for ecumenism by being part of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF). My love for the environment manifests itself in my lifestyle. I prefer public transport to driving. I eat only vegetarian food. Until recently, I boycotted aeroplanes.

My passion for WSCF was ignited in Manchester. In an ugly 1960s chaplaincy, in the basement which always stank of sweat because it was used in the daytime for yoga and aerobics, a few of us would meet, sometimes five, sometimes ten – a small number for the biggest university city in western Europe – to discuss issues we felt were important. We talked about fair trade, child soldiers, university tuition fees. We examined our faith, taking it to pieces in the same way medical students cut up human bodies, so we could learn how to keep it alive in a world where religious belief is constantly challenged. We chanted songs written by monks, sitting in a circle around a small table of candles. We were from different towns, different countries. We spoke with different accents, and at the pub after our meetings we had different tastes in alcohol. But we were united by our faith.

This meeting of the Manchester Student Christian Movement happened every Thursday night. Each of us would walk, or take the bus, from his or her home, and come to this special meeting, where

God's hand worked among us. These special nights inspired me to dream, and taught me of a Christianity directly engaged with the issues of the world.

Getting involved with WSCF Europe, I have heard stories from many people who have had similarly special experiences at WSCF conferences. Young Christians gather together from across the continent to discuss issues that matter to them: climate justice, new technologies, gender identities, the theology of empire. They share food, dances and songs from their home culture. They stay up all night in deep conversation. They make lifelong friends.

My passion for the environment began as a child, in my experience of nature. I loved playing outside on the moorland opposite my parents' house, climbing the trees, and catching small fish in the river. Mum worked on a farm, and as she earned our daily bread, my brother and I were left to make friends with the goats. At primary school I learned about global warming. A teacher left a notice in the toilets, asking us turn off the taps to preserve water. Intuitively, I understood this was a good thing.

At Manchester University I got involved with environmental groups. I was a member of People and Planet, a group of eco-friendly students. I wrote articles for the university newspaper on environmental issues. I rode a bike rather

than catching the bus. In our student house we installed low-energy light bulbs. I had close friends who were part of Plane Stupid, a campaign group focusing on the environmental destruction caused by air travel.

I find myself torn inside by these two loyalties: a loyalty to WSCF, a place where Christians from across the world can come together to fight for justice, yet which requires extensive air travel, and has a huge carbon footprint; and a loyalty to my environmental roots, where every tiny step towards a sustainable lifestyle mattered, and where stepping on board an aeroplane was unthinkable.

When I lived in Belfast, Northern Ireland, I refused to fly home to England to visit my family. The flight time was one hour. Travelling by boat and train took twelve hours, a full day of travel. My question is: can WSCF, which professes a concern for climate justice, embrace similar commitments? Can we, as young Christians, the future leaders of the church, envision and forge an environmental ecumenism? Can we remove the huge black stain on ecumenism: that at the moment our beautiful conversations have a vast, unsustainable environmental cost?

Ecumenism stands on a threshold, a place of challenge and opportunity. The challenge is environmental: as we head towards – and beyond – peak oil, and the price of air, rail and bus travel doubles, triples, and even quadruples, international conferences will become increasingly unaffordable. Furthermore, it seems ironic, if not hypocritical, to jet around the world to discuss how we are concerned about the environment.

The environmental challenge is linked to other challenges. Ecumenical groups are currently finding it difficult to raise funds. Like all those working for justice, the ecumenical movement has found itself wounded by the global economic crisis. Further, ecumenism has become unsure of its own identity and place within the church. Ecumenical Christians have struggled to communicate their message to the wider church community. A recent survey in Ireland found that a significant number of Christians don't know what the word ecumenism means.<sup>1</sup> Many of those polled were engaged in ecumenical practice – such as dialogue with people from other denominations – but didn't want to call it ecumenism. When I started my university degree in theology, born and raised a Christian, I had never heard the word. It sounded like a special cult.

Yet these challenges are also a threshold of opportunity. The financial challenge pushes us to question the value of our work. What is most valuable in what we do? How we can demonstrate what we do is valuable, both to ourselves, and to those who offer us financial support? Are we spending money in the best way possible – after all, international conferences cost tens of thousands of Euros – or, if we profess to believe in justice and peace, would the money be better spent feeding the hungry and giving shelter to the homeless?

The challenge of identity encourages us to communicate ourselves to the church. As we learn to re-articulate ourselves in meaningful ways to

<sup>1</sup> Gladys Ganiel, *21st Century Faith: Results of the Survey of Laypeople in the Republic of Ireland & Northern Ireland*, (Belfast: Irish School of Ecumenics, 2010).

*The  
challenge is  
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beyond – peak  
oil, and the  
price of air,  
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triples,  
and even  
quadruples,  
international  
conferences  
will become  
increasingly  
unaffordable.*

# Exhausting Our Natural Resources



fundes, we can also learn to engage with Christians from across the spectrum: conservative, liberal, Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Catholic, mainline Protestant, and the emerging church.

This re-articulation of ecumenism will, by necessity, involve recognising the unsustainable nature of our current practice. It will mean discovering environmentally and financially sustainable ways of engaging with those different from ourselves. Environmental ecumenism will mean re-localising our work, bringing it back down into the local communities where we are rooted.

As the ecumenical movement re-examines its practice in this way, we can begin again to ask questions of what ecumenical practice might look like in our local context.

And local ecumenism – as with my local SCM in Manchester – can be as beautiful, as meaningful and as transformative as its international sibling.

We cannot save the ecumenical movement as it currently stands. It is environmentally and financially unsustainable. But perhaps this is a good thing.

*I have to cast my lot with those  
who age after age, perversely,*

*with no extraordinary power,  
reconstitute the world.*

Poetry from “Natural Resources” by Adrienne Rich

## Aileen Few

It is difficult to conceptualise climate change, even as we see it happening. There are floods from Pakistan to Penrith and my brain still can't quite grasp the fact that this is caused by rising levels of CO<sub>2</sub> pumped into the atmosphere, largely by the oil-guzzling lifestyles of the wealthier portion of humanity (myself included). Of course, I can watch news items about islanders having to leave their ancestral homes and feel awful, but when winter sets in and I'd like to be a few degrees warmer and get a few more lifts I soon return to my state of caring in principle rather than in practice. The truth is that campaigning has exhausted me so many times that I find my enthusiasm dwindling.

There are moments when I get it; brief fleeting hours when the immediacy of this crisis bares down on me and I feel the impetus to act, to fight, to really make changes; not just separate my glass from my plastics. In March 2009, I sat in Coventry Cathedral with hundreds of fellow Christians who gathered to pray and protest together. We listened to James Galgall, a climate change campaigner from Northern Kenya, talk about how drought and increasingly unreliable rainfall is already endangering the livelihoods of pastoralists (that is, livestock farmers who move their herds to find fresh pasture and water). As water disappears, some of them are resorting to lives of crime in order to survive. It was the first time the direct link between poverty and climate change hit me. I remember being suddenly and strongly convicted that if you contribute to climate change you are directly con-

tributing to poverty. Of course I probably already *knew* this, but somehow it felt stronger, more real.

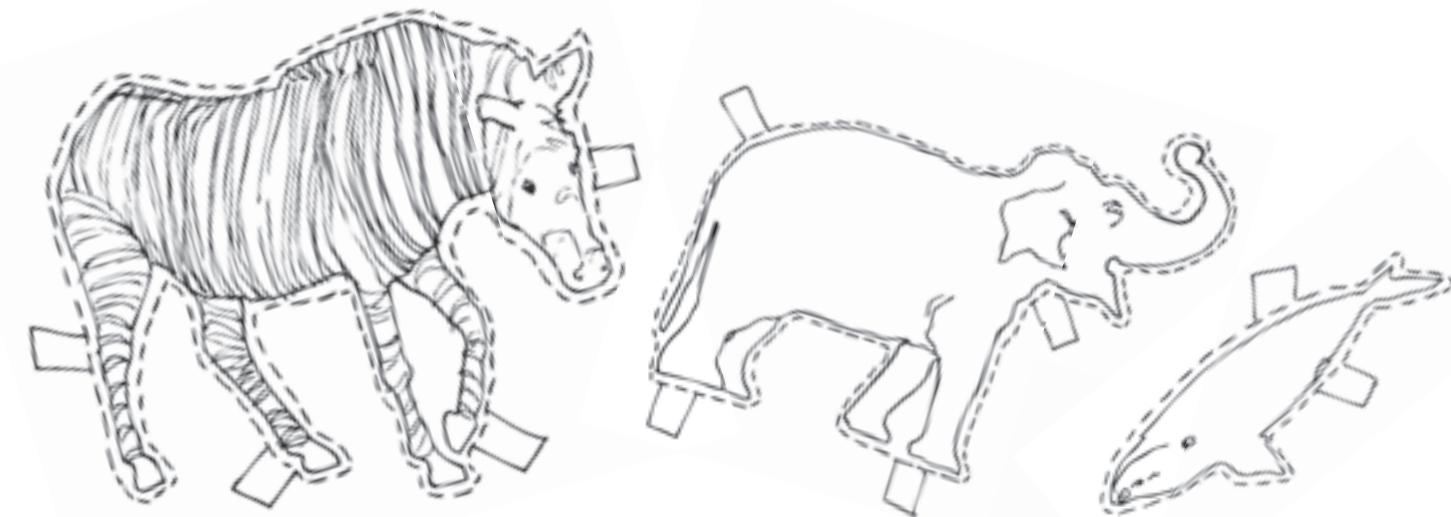
My problem is that, though an underlying sense of injustice persists, the strong inspiration to action is more fleeting. Issues like climate change are so vast and wide-ranging in their implications that they become almost abstract. When things are this big it is easy to become so overwhelmed that the only way out is apathy. Well, apathy when it comes to political campaigning; many of us are still committed to 'green' behaviour. Short flights are out of the question, recycling is executed with religious efficiency and meals become more seasonal. Perhaps these are seen as token gestures by the more active campaigners among us, but they at least communicate an awareness and a willingness to change. More than this, with an issue so huge that it can leave us feeling powerless, they are things we can *do*, areas of our lives that we have control of. I have marched many times, I have even blockaded a petrol station, but have been left feeling drained and questioning what impact any of it has made. When I make small changes in my own life there is something more solid about what I'm doing; in a tiny way I'm being the change I want to see in the world.

Before a chorus of 'boos' ring out from the activist wing, I would never try to play down the value of public protest and direct action. It is vital that the issues remain high profile, in the media and in the minds of politicians. I wish I could keep up with the momentum and determination of some of my activist friends, but when I throw myself into these kinds of things I often find that I'm exhausted by



Aileen Few is chaplaincy assistant at St Peter's House, chaplaincy to the universities in Manchester. She has been involved with SCM in Britain for two years and is also a singer-songwriter and keen tea-drinker.





them mentally and physically. Perhaps it's the vastness of the issue and the pigeon-steps of the victories that leave me feeling this way. Perhaps it is the culture of activism, which accepts burn-out as a sort of collateral damage. Perhaps I just don't care enough...

At last year's national SCM conference in Britain, I went to a seminar on local campaigning where I expressed this feeling of exhaustion when confronted with global justice issues. The seminar leader, Chris Howson from Bradford Just Space, suggested that one way to access these issues is by addressing them at a local level. For example, during the Iraq war he connected with the Iraqi community in Bradford and this shaped his response to the conflict. With climate change we can support and establish local grow-your-own, cycling-promotion and transition town projects. These community initiatives combined can make a big difference and ground our response to climate change in tangible local change.

I am not naïve, I know all the council estates in Britain could produce all the fruit and vegetables they like but make little difference if government and big business don't get on board. But these projects can help to change minds as well as

diets and they can connect people with issues in a more concrete way than rallies and letters to Members of Parliaments. Hopefully those who become connected will make the transition into more direct campaigning, not as overwhelmed individuals but as empowered communities. Wouldn't that be something?

And these communities could be the key. When campaigning, I have never really had a sense of mutual support in the groups I've been a part of. There is certainly a lot of fun; jokes and drinks after meetings, entertaining late night circular-debates, but there never seems to be a culture of care for one another. As I mentioned earlier, burn out is seen as just one of those things; it happens to everyone, so it doesn't engender much sympathy. But is this right? Is this the kind of ethos we want in groups that are supposed to be changing the way we think about and interact with our planet? Aren't we, too – body, mind and spirit – natural resources that need care?

My parents met in an active socialist part in the early 1980s. It was exactly what it sounds like; a far left party campaigning against the heartlessness of capitalism and a Thatcher government that oversaw an ever-enlarging gap

*I feel it would be revolutionary in a society that sees us as resources to be exploited, along with everything else.*

between rich and poor. There were some great ideals in that party; a desire for equality and better world where the rich no longer oppressed the poor. They made good friends there too, some of whom they still know today. But, though there was kindness on a person-to-person level, there was no general culture of care. In fact, when my mother had just given birth to me and said she couldn't attend a sector meeting they brought the meeting to her house instead – how thoughtful! As she said to me many years later, a group can have great ideals and be striving for a better world, but if it's not kind, then what the point?

This phrase has stuck with me and I often wonder how much more involved I'd be if I got a bit more kindness with my campaigning. Perhaps it wouldn't make any difference. But I can't help thinking that on issues like climate change our attitudes need to change holistically. Human energy, like other forms, should be valued and cultivated rather than squeezed until little is left. I would like to see this principle lived out in our campaigning culture. In fact, I feel it would be really revolutionary in a society that sees us as resources to be exploited, along with everything else. This kind of overarching shift in mindset, this rejection of exploitation in all its forms is surely a Christian calling.

Could we build a place where it was okay to be overwhelmed by the weight of the issues we face? Where care is both global and local? I believe the answer is yes and that in so doing we cannot but help to tackle climate change. There is a reason that we are commanded to love one another; because when we do this we have to choose but to change the world.





# Universal Day of Prayer for Students 2010

Liturgy prepared by the Reverend Ejike Okoro (Nigeria) on behalf of the Africa Region, formatted and edited by the WSCF Interregional Office.

*First celebrated in 1898, the Universal Day of Prayer for Students is observed on the third Sunday of February; in 2010 it is celebrated on February 21st. The UDPS is one of the oldest ecumenical days of prayer.*

*In line with WSCF's theme for 2010 the UDPS theme is Climate Justice. Former WSCF Chairperson Rev. Ejike Okoro of Nigeria has prepared the 2010 UDPS liturgy and accompanying Bible study on behalf of the Africa region.*

*The theme for the UDPS on 22 March 2011 will focus on Water Justice for more details please see page 64.*

## Preparation and Call to Worship

*(Provide or improvise the sound of a siren, an alarm clock or a gong.)  
As the alarm sounds, the following call is made:*

**Leader:** Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble...

The sound of the alarm tells to us it is time to wake up, it is the time we must prepare – the climate has changed and is changing, it is time for action. The siren is blasting – we have an emergency, make way for the dying! The village crier with his gong calls us to the village square – the rains have not come as usual, the land has dried up, crops fail and the flocks have no forage; and now comes the rain but it's an unprecedented flood destroying in its trail.

We look up to the heavens; to the clouds – from where will our help come? Our hope is in God who made the universe.

**All: Teach us to consider our ways Lord, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom in these times.**

*Song*

# Climate Justice

## Prayer of Adoration, Thanksgiving and Confession

**Reader A:** Almighty and Sovereign God, Maker of the heavens and earth, Creator of all that lives, You formed the seasons and the times to provide for all of your creation. We worship, adore and revere You.

We stand in awe of the greatness, beauty and harmony of that which Your hand has made – the suns, moons, stars, clouds that bring us light, warmth, rain and shade; the soil, the streams, lakes and ocean, the grass and trees, animals and birds with which we share the gift of life and provisions of nature – and say 'Thank You'.

**Reader B:** For failing to live up to the privilege and responsibility of managing and caring for the earth we ask for forgiveness. For our self-centered exploitation of the earth's resources to the detriment of others, forgive us. For satisfying our extreme appetites and comfort in ways that have unjustly harmed the earth and brought suffering to others, have mercy on us.



PHOTO: KOLOZSI BEA, HUNGARY

We now come in repentance and plead that the light of your love be rekindled in our hearts and that we will use our hands in the service of your Creation, through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

*Song*

*Scripture Readings*

Job 38: 39 – 39: 8 and 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15

**Scripture Reader:** Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

**All: Thanks be to God**



## ***Intercessions***

*(Provide cards for people to write prayers on. Invite people to write prayers on them before the service begins or distribute them during the service. The prayers on each card can be read out during the intercessions and pasted on a board or elsewhere, or the prayers below can be used.)*

**Leader:** The prayers we say are reminders of our fears about climate change and our hopes for climate justice. We pray to the God over us and the same God who is within us by the Spirit empowering us for action.

Let us pray,

For vulnerable, poor and devastated communities who are already suffering the effects of climate change

**All: Giver of life sustain your creation**

**Leader:** For the land, the waters, the islands, the air, the animals and plants which struggle for survival as a result of human greed and abuse

**All: Giver of life sustain your creation**

**Leader:** For industrialised nations which urgently need to make adjustments to their lifestyles and adopt appropriate environmental policies

**All: Giver of life sustain your creation**

**Leader:** For developing nations whose national economy is largely dependent on earning from export crude petroleum and other polluting substances, who will have to diversify their economies

**All: Giver of life sustain your creation**

**Leader:** For an increase in solidarity in all your people and practical support with those communities most affected by climate change

**All: Giver of life sustain your creation**

**Leader:** For ourselves, that we may adjust our lives to be in harmony with creation and that we may work for climate justice for all people

**All: Giver of life sustain your creation**

**Leader:** All these prayers we bring together in the prayer Jesus teaches us

## *The Lord's Prayer*

### *Song*

## *Prayer for WSCF*

God we pray for the World Student Christian Federation. We thank you for the blessings you continually give to our Federation. This year we give thanks and praise for 115 years of WSCF work and witness.

We pray for the Federation at every level: locally, nationally, regionally and globally. We pray for all the students involved today, for the senior friends and for all those who support and encourage us.

We pray for the strengthening of the Federation's work and that we may continually welcome more students into this ecumenical community of justice, love and peace.

We pray that your Holy Spirit will guide the Federation's officers, Executive Committee and staff, and the entire Federation in the year ahead.

We pray that every part of the Federation may more effectively proclaim your gospel to the students of the world so 'that they may all be one'.

**Amen**

## *The Peace*

**Leader:** The peace of the Lord be always with you

**All: And also with you**

**Leader:** Let us share a sign of Christ's peace with each other

*Participants share a sign of God's peace with each other*

## *The Benediction*

May we live in peace and justice with all our sisters and brothers,

May we live in harmony with God's creation,

May our hearts move in compassion to bring succour and hope to the helpless,

May we commit to care for God's creation and God's people,

May the blessing of God the creator, the liberator and the sustainer of life be amongst us now and always,

**Amen.**

# KNOW



*Suddenly, from behind the rim of the moon, in long, slow-motion moments of immense majesty, there emerges a sparkling blue and white jewel, a light, delicate sky-blue sphere laced with slowly swirling veils of white, rising gradually like a small pearl in a thick sea of black mystery. It takes more than a moment to full realise this is Earth... home.*

— Edgar Mitchell



# Climate Change – A story of the Present: WCC Living Letters to the Pacific Churches



**Nikos Kosmidis**

Nikos Kosmidis serves as a member in the Echos Commission; World Council of Churches youth body. He has the responsibility of the ecumenical youth project "KIVOTOS – Bridge of love and communion", which is an ongoing effort to engage the youth in Greece with the work and history of the ecumenical movement and to be a link for Inter-Christian cooperation in Europe. He is currently studying European Civilization. You can contact him at [kivotosgr@gmail.com](mailto:kivotosgr@gmail.com)

## *The departure*

I would like to share with you a little story; a story about a small island. To follow it we have to travel very far, over endless deserts and deep seas, more than 16,400 kilometres; in particular to the southeast coast of Viti Levu, the largest island of Fiji. In these warm waters lays the island of Viwa.

This story is about beautiful people with very warm hearts, magnificent landscapes, blue-green crystal waters, exotic plants and colourful fish. At the same time, it is a story of sorrow, fear, violence and uncertainty for what the future will bring. But my hope is that in the end the message of this story will be about self examination, raising awareness and activation; a Christian prophetic voice to our families, friends, Churches, communities and to the entire world.

## *The ecumenical family striving for peace with the earth*

As a part of the 2001-2010 Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) several ecumenical teams, the so called 'Living Letters', have travelled around the world visiting and encountering local contexts around the issues related to violence of different forms. The core of this programme was to deliver a message of Christian solidarity with Churches

and people affected by a particularly painful experience of violence through listening, mutual learning, sharing and praying.

The knowledge the ecumenical family gained through these visits will be presented during the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC), that will take place in Kingston, Jamaica, 17-25 May 2011. This gathering, which is expected to bring together up to 1000 participants and among them dozens of youth, will be a 'harvest festival'; a celebration for the achievements of the DOV and at the same time it will encourage the world Christian community to renew its commitment to nonviolence, peace and justice.

The IEPC will approach the crucial issue of peace through the four themes, one of which will be 'Peace with the Earth'. Indeed peace is in danger today due to the desecration of God's Creation by our lust for more natural resources and energy, the super profit of the multinational corporations, the rise of world industrial production and the improvident hyper-consumption of goods.

## *Climate change and the Pacific*

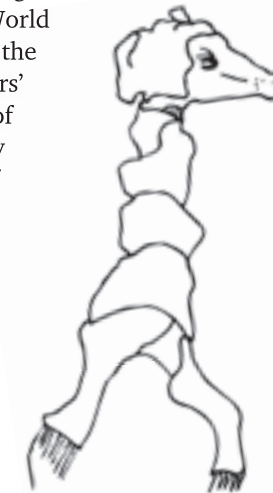
Day by day, year by year we experience climate change, which affects the way of life of many people around the globe and even threatens their sustenance. Global warming is indeed a fact. The results include the increase of the

average temperature in the past two decades – the highest ever recorded; the extinction of the population for more and more species of fauna and flora; the lack of fresh and clean water; upcoming danger for exquisite landscapes and the increase of the ecological refugees. Under this consideration the World Council of Churches decided the assignment of a 'Living Letters' delegation in South Pacific; one of the world regions that is already experiencing the consequences of climate change.<sup>1</sup> From 27-29 May 2010, a team visited churches, ecumenical organizations and civil society movements in Fiji as part of a mission for Christian love, fraternal accompaniment and solidarity, as regards the catastrophic consequences of climate change.

Today, seven million people live in the twenty-two Pacific island states. The emissions of greenhouse gases in this region, that intensify the global warming effect, come to 0.06% of the global emissions, a figure very insignificant. The inhabitants of the Pacific, who have contributed least to the global threat of climate change, are already suffering the effects. Among the many dangers the three major ones are:

<sup>1</sup> The report of the WCC Living Letters solidarity visit to the Pacific Churches can be found here: <http://www.overcomingviolence.org/en/news-and-events/news/dov-news-english/browse/4/article/1323/losing-paradise.html>

*This story is about beautiful people with very warm hearts, magnificent landscapes, blue-green crystal waters, exotic plants and colourful fish.*



- Increase of the surface of the sea, due to ice and glaciers melting at the poles. Many islands, like Tuvalu, Kiribati, Micronesia, Vanuatu, are threatened with imminent extinction.
- Erosion of coastal land as a result of the increasing intensity of tropical cyclones, hurricanes and by deforestation, caused by human intervention of the coastal mangroves plants that constrained the ground. The usual annual period of extreme weather phenomena from November to April has been destabilized, causing the disruption of residents' lives. At the same time the flow of saltwater in the aquifer makes it difficult to ensure the necessary quantity of drinking water.
- Warming of sea water becomes an immediate threat for the rich coral biodiversity of the area and causes the reduction of the schools of fishes, both valuable for the daily maintenance of the island populations, and of the larger aquatic mammals that rely on these waters for food.

For the residents these threats are not based on a dramatic scenario for the future or an intimidating scientific model. They already experience the changes.

In our meetings with local ecumenical and church leaders special attention was given to ethical issues related to the effects of climate change to the life in the Pacific, like the potential forced resettlement of whole communities to other countries of the region due to the rise in sea level. Already the governments of several Pacific countries are working for the preparation of international agreements with neighbouring states such as New Zealand and Australia, for the future potential of a compulsory relocation of entire populations.



PHOTOS: NIKOS KOSMIDIS, GREECE



## Threatening a small paradise – the case of Viwa

Apart from meeting the official authorities we had the opportunity to visit a small earthly paradise, Viwa Island, which is also a significant Christian centre in Fiji. Here the New Testament was translated from the original Greek text into Fijian, by Rev. John Hunt, an English missionary and scholar of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The village, with its 100 members and Chief, officially received and welcomed the ‘Living Letters’ delegation as representatives of the whole world by inviting them to join the traditional Kava Ceremony and opening heartily their houses.

As we were informed by the natives and testified with our own eyes, Viwa is also experiencing the effects of climate change. During our staying, Isikeli Komaisavai, the second in class of hierarchy and prospective community leader, invited the delegates to witness the first effects of climate change. Our mission alone with some residents took a boat and sailed around the island, a journey that lasted 15-20 minutes. The same picture everywhere! Lush tropical vegetation that reached the water and exotic birds nestled in the roots of mangroves plants. We were wondering where these signs of climate

change were. But this idyllic view was hiding some very dark secrets.

The coastal zone bears deep cracks and caves; the sea water increases its destructive work. Since 2002, due to coastal erosion, the total area of the island has dropped more than 40,000 square meters of land! As a result of this erosion, trees, which were ten metres above the sea level some years ago, today are almost touching the water. An image that seemed so exotic in our eyes and, at the same time, was testifying the dire change...

The village and its viability are threatened. In order to retain the soil, residents constructed a stone wall around the port. Ten years ago, Isikeli’s house was quite a distance from the coast; now, it’s likely to be found in the water. It is unknown if the sea wall will keep away the high waves of tropical storms and protect the village from a future disaster.

In March 2010, the powerful cyclone ‘Thomas’ caused major damage in homes, infrastructure and vegetation in most of Fijian islands. Despite these new circumstances and given the fact that life is becoming more difficult, the people of Viwa, both the old and the young, trust that the world community will finally take a strong

decision to reverse the destruction of God’s Creation and that they will not have to abandon their fathers’ land, the place they were born, in order to become refugees in foreign lands.

## Climate change is my problem too!

For the older generations in the Pacific these challenges are not easy handled. Many among them still deny that they are dealing with a potential danger, even as they witness the changes in nature. They believe that as God promised to the righteous Noah (Genesis 9: 8-17) there will be no more catastrophic floods.

Today most of the children in the Pacific learn about climate change and what really cause these changes very early. The children of Funafuty, the capital of the island nation of Tuvalu, learn about it from the age of six, as they start primary school. Now they know that it is not Atua (meaning *God* in the Polynesian languages) who creates the floods; it is not Atua who changes the stream of tropical cyclones; it not Atua who calls them to abandon their land. It is likely that this will be the last generation of children to grow up in Tuvalu before the whole community will have to move away. But still, the people of the Tuvalu, together with their brothers and sisters in the Pacific, continue to pray unceasingly for a miracle:

*Atua! Your Pacific people call out to you,  
even as the waters continue to rise...  
hear our prayer, we who trust in your love!  
Atua! Your Pacific people call out to you,  
even as our land disappears before our eyes...  
hear our prayer, we who hope in your love!  
Atua! Our strength! Our life! Our love!*<sup>2</sup>

How long will we refuse to see the results of our actions? Have we wondered whether we have the luxury of time to ignore the signs of nature or do we believe that our choices will have an impact only on other people far away from us? As a young Christian who is concerned about this crucial crossroad, I would like to raise my voice together with the voices of the Viwa people.

The destruction of Creation is the last sin of humanity against God. God who created the world *ex amore* and made us lords and ministers. “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2: 15). But instead of being lords and ministers we became violators and abusers, destroying in this way our peace with God and Creation, our only home. Thus it is an imperative need for the churches to call now for repentance. It is important to understand that our growth,

<sup>2</sup> As part of the 13 December 2009 church bell-ringing campaign, the members of the Ecumenical Centre Worship Committee in Geneva prepared a special service which proposed 350 drum beats – fifty beats for each of the seven days of creation. This prayer was offered during the service by and for the people of the Pacific.

*The children  
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start primary  
school.*





development and prosperity affected dramatically other parts of the world and its people; to recognize “that unsustainable methods of wealth creation and the adherence to unlimited growth impoverish communities and harm creation as a whole”.<sup>3</sup> As Christian citizens of the western world we are called to find the courage to confess and to ask forgiveness for the mistakes of our forefathers and their injustice towards other people. This injustice has to stop NOW!

Especially as our world is dealing with the current crisis of the financial system, more and more religious leaders highlight both the connection between the financial crisis with the environmental one, as well as the truth that these crises are rooted in the same problem. One of the most prominent world religious leaders, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I, also known worldwide as the “Green Patriarch” for his strong ecological sensitivity, declared:

*the present [financial] crisis offers an opportunity for us to deal with the problems in a different way, because the methods that created these problems cannot provide their*

*best solution. We need to bring love into all our dealings, the love that inspires courage and compassion. Human progress is not just the accumulation of wealth and the thoughtless consumption of the earth's resources.*<sup>4</sup>

## Luxurious waiting?

This is not the time to become pessimists; we do not have that luxury! Instead, it is a time to speak a prophetic voice in the world. It is time for the implementation of major policy decisions by the global community, which will take as a priority the balance between economic growth and sustainable continuation of our existence, in harmony with nature. It is time for the conscious adoption of a way of life with new practices in all aspects; a way of life that will respect and protects the sanctity of Creation, the protection of human dignity and promote the demand for eco-justice “between people, countries and generations, human and non humans and with the Earth itself”.<sup>5</sup> The tears in the eyes of the Viwa people and their farewell songs will always stay a reminder of what we are called to do!

<sup>3</sup> Budapest Call for Climate Justice - Addressing Poverty, Wealth and Ecology, Joint WCC-CEC AGAPE Consultation: Linking poverty, wealth and ecology: Ecumenical Perspectives in Europe, (8-12 November 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I, *Message for the Day of the Protection of the Environment* (1 September 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid 3

# Recognition of the Gift of Creation as a Motivation for Climate Justice

Rev. Dr. Peter Pavlovič

## Religion and environment

The foundation stone of the approach of all Christians to care for the environment is the conviction shared with other Abrahamic religions that the world is God's creation. This is closely linked with the fact that human beings, with all their activities, are an intrinsic part of this creation. We cannot think of the environment as something which is outside of us. Questions about the environment, its protection and care, are inseparably linked with other complex enquiries, such as our relation to other human beings, to society and to the economy. Care for the environment from the religious perspective is not something added to the basic worldview. It is an integral and essential part of it. This basic recognition has then two far-reaching consequences. The first is that care for the environment is not only an inseparable part of the Christian worldview, but that it indeed contains a dimension which can be described as religious. The other is that the current problems of the environment cannot be solved in isolation. Ecology and anthropology cannot be separated.

## Biblical foundations

Biblical understanding of creation is much richer than it is very often thought. It is shaped by an imagery far exceeding the widespread and popular creation story presented by the book of Genesis. The Old Testament offers a rich collection of texts further elaborating the Genesis

creation story.<sup>1</sup> Together with the basic features of biblical cosmology, they remind us of the essential parameters of the human relationship with the created and uncreated world. What is very often beyond the horizon of the narrow views limiting creation theology to the words of Genesis, is the New Testament extension of the story, underlining that Jesus Christ is not only ‘the word’ through which the creation exists, but He is also the one who gives to the whole creation its meaning and fulfilment.<sup>2</sup>

At the centre of the Christian understanding of creation is the unity of the Old and New Testament. The distinctive signs of this teaching can be noted already in the first centuries of Christianity, which are of invaluable importance for us in the modern approach to care for creation.

In acknowledging the role of history and tradition in shaping the Christian understanding of the world and the human relationship to it, at the same time at least two dangers have to be recognised which are revealed in different parts of history.

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Psalms 24, 139 and many others, as well as the Prophetic texts, as Is 48:7; 4; 43:19; 45:7; Ez 37: 1-14; etc.

<sup>2</sup> See in particular texts like: “for in Him [Christ] all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:16-17); “in the presence of the God ... who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist” (Rom 4:17); “by faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible” (Hebr 13:2); “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (Rev 4:11); etc.



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The Conference of European Churches (CEC) is a fellowship of some 120 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches from all countries of Europe, plus 40 associated organisations. CEC was founded in 1959. With its offices in Geneva, Brussels and Strasbourg works on promotion of dialogue between the churches and European political institutions.

European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) is a platform of European churches for deepening of the dialogue, exchange of experience and joint work in protection of environment among churches in Europe.



*Luther underlined human dependency on creation. Another important element of the whole teaching is that this dependency is not expressed in an abstract way, but dependency is personal.*

One is the danger of misuse of theology for unjustified human dominance over the creation, for its exploitation and misuse. The other is the danger of replacing the God of creation by the substitutes. The God of creation has to be and remain the centre and the focal point of all Christian care for the world and creation. This has to be repeated again and again; in particular in a time when environmental destruction has reached such a level that sometimes even good-minded care for creation loses its focus and becomes the centre of religious reverence on its own.

## Two great Christian theologians

The greatest theologian of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Maximus the Confessor, put forward those highlights of Christian care for environment, which then and now are highly significant. Maximus' Trinitarian theology is well known, which then has far-reaching consequences on his theology of Creation. Maximus, in line with his predecessors, underlined that God is One, according to the principle of God's essence. This is a way of expressing God's ontological unity. At the same time, God is Triune according to the mode of existence. Maximus

developed an understanding of *creation as being a divine Trinitarian motion toward perfection and fulfilment*.

Following this recognition, St. Maximus gave particular attention to the *doctrine of reciprocity*. Reciprocity is seen as a dynamic exchange between God and humans. God's incarnation is accompanied by the parallel move of human divinisation. This means that this *reciprocity should express itself in action*, or rather in the activity of man leading to the salvation. This activity is at the same time not only enacted in creation, but is oriented towards creation. Salvation is a process realised in and through creation. In Maximus' view, God and human beings are cooperating for the benefit of the whole creation.<sup>3</sup>

Maximus developed and elaborated an idea of man who was understood as a microcosm. Parallel to that, the world was seen as a makroantropos.<sup>4</sup> The point of these two conceptions is not so much the parallel between them. What is more important is the specific role which was given on the basis of these conceptions to human beings. Humans were seen not only in the role and task given to them. *The human being is also a mediator between him/herself and the external world*, the universe. This task has been refused by humans, who are described as sinners, which has led them to depend on the world rather than mastering it. It is the conviction of Christianity that only through God's incarnation in Christ can this task or active mediation fully take place.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there were in particular Reformers who took a new and fresh look at creation and a new

<sup>3</sup> Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos – The Vision of St. Maximus The Confessor*, (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), p.71.

<sup>4</sup> Macroanthropos (from gr. makro – long, and anthropos – human being) is used as a counter pole to microcosms (micro – small and cosmos – universe). The accept is put on a close interconnection between principles determining existence of the universe and the human being: the human being as determined by the rules valid for the whole universe and the universe determined by the principles guiding existence of the human being.

relationship between man and nature was put it into opposition to the spiritualising view of the middle ages. From among them, it was Martin Luther, who, in line with the tradition of the early church and early Christian teachings in his elaboration of the theology of creation, re-affirmed in particular those aspects of Christian teaching about creation, which are of central importance in efforts towards developing a modern attitude towards creation.

Luther underlined human *dependency on creation*. Another important element of the whole teaching is that this dependency is not expressed in an abstract way, but dependency is personal. Luther is very concrete in elaborating this part of his theology. The consequence of this approach is not only that he was able to avoid speaking about it in abstract philosophical categories. He describes God most often as the one whom we meet as a person. Personal dependency and direct relationship between the human being and God leads him to a very specific acknowledgment of creation as a gift. This recognition is particularly important in the modern era, when overemphasised rationality and overstatement of the value of technological progress puts forward human's individual ability and human power to solve all existing problems by means of logic, human reason and modern technologies. The world as a gift reminds us of the exact opposite — emphasising our dependency, vulnerability and our limitedness.

A very distinct feature of Luther's theology of creation is a notion of *partnership*. Luther is very clear that there is a substantial difference between the world as it is, as it should be and will be. As he is convinced, theology of creation cannot be complete without the eschatological dimension.<sup>5</sup> Full realisation of a creature created in God's

<sup>5</sup> Eschatology is the study of the eschaton, the times of the end, or 'last things'. This is to be understood not only in the perspective of continuing and in one day finalised time sequence. It includes broader perspectives, as being concerned with what are the final and shaping events in history, the ultimate destiny of humanity etc.

image can be completed only in future and, as Luther says, in expectation and hope. Until this happens, it is the task of all Christians to fight for what is good and eliminate what is bad. The task of the Christian is to be part of the struggle between the old and new life. Only in new life can we realise full participation with God. The emphases on participation are of substantial importance. It is, however, not only participation of man with God. Luther teaches a new relationship between the human being and nature.

In Luther's imagination, as elaborated in one of his sermons, creation is introduced as a woman at the moment of giving birth. She would like everything to be finished, but does not know yet what the final result will be. A consciousness is ascribed to creation which goes parallel with human consciousness. That one, as Luther says, which God prepared for his children through the Gospel and through baptism. Neither Gospel and nature, nor human activity and nature can be separated. What is to be noted as well is that the beauty of creation, although achievable, is described as hidden and veiled. Its full dimension can be discovered only in and through faith.

There are many places in Luther's teaching where he expresses a protest call against the misuse of creation. This is very appealing, in particular today. What is of substantial importance in Luther's theology of creation, as Gerhard Ebeling reminds us, is the groaning of creation in expectation and hope for a new creation. This suffering and persecution is still hidden and unrecognisable. It is in the process of being revealed.<sup>6</sup>

From all these signs, it is clear that parallelism between man and nature and partnership between them is a line, which brings theologians and Christian thinkers of different

<sup>6</sup> Gerhard Ebeling, "Das Sein des Menschen als Gottes Handeln an ihm, in Anthropologie und Christologie", *Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg*, Band 15, (Martin-Luther-Verlag, Erlangen 1990), p.48.



provenance close to each other. Following that line, it is of no surprise that these traditional theological resources are carefully reflected and further developed in a creative way in modern theological approaches.

## ***Christian approach to care for creation***

In all Christian approaches to creation, principal attention is given to the terminology of gift and to the understanding of creation as a gift. For both St. Maximus and Martin Luther, offered above as inspirational examples for modern creation theology, the notion of gift is the spiritual centre of their approach to the theology of creation.

Recognition of creation as a gift comprises an acknowledgement of the wider meaning of creation far exceeding its utilitarian purposes. In recognising the world as creation we recognise that we are a part of God's plan. This is the confirmation not only of the good meaning of creation as such, but also the fact that the world is worthy of salvation. The world is a place of God's personal agency and his personal presence in us and among us. Creation is closely linked to the salvation of the human being. Salvation has therefore not runaway into other worlds. Salvation is something that happens here and now, in this time. Human beings have to take part in their salvation.

At the same time, this means that the human approach to the gift of creation cannot be fully expressed by rational means. For the Christian, intelligent, rational action in the world is, as Luther says, an expression of the conviction that what we encounter is a gift, so that we shall only tell the truth about the world as and when we treat the world accordingly.

With the notion of gift, another term is closely linked which

shapes the Christian approach to creation in the modern era – the notion of justice. Recognition of creation as a gift calls for a response to the received gift. It is exactly in shaping this response, where justice comes to the fore. Christian action responding to the gift of creation is motivated by the principle of justice. Justice is increasingly recognised as an inseparable dimension of care for creation. In this regard, justice is far more than a legalistic following of the principle of rights. Justice is the recognition of wrongdoing, as well as the recognition of vulnerability and compassion with those who are suffering. It is, however, also an active sharing of available knowledge and resources with those who are in need, particularly with those who have to go through difficulties because of our wrongdoing in the past.

## ***A new ecumenical approach***

Care for creation, as it was developed in the early years of Christianity and reinvigorated in modern times, is by its character not only a distinct part of Christian theology. It is equally an ecumenical journey. Speaking about an ecumenical approach to care for creation in our days is not a search for the lowest common denominator among different churches' traditions. This would be short-sighted ecumenism: ecumenism of self-limitation. What we are looking for is an ecumenical approach in which the scope and the depth of different church traditions would be revealed, appreciated, and further developed in full respect to each other. The theology of creation has a chance to use and develop traditions in a way free from conflict, which do not contradict but supplement each other.

Only equipped with such a background, will the Christian approach be prepared for a meaningful dialogue with politics and with secular approaches to environmental protection, which is a dialogue that is particularly needed in modern society.

**God,**

***In the morning sun and quiet moment of a day  
yet to begin; we are present with open hearts.  
Your earth is our home, it is our hiding place, it  
is sacred.***

***We remember those who have been here  
before, the moments we have had together and  
those who are to follow.***

***We a grateful for the first dew of spring;***

***the fresh summer rain;***

***the cool wind of autumn;***

***the first frost of winter crunching beneath our  
feet.***

***We are thankful and rejoice in the joys that are  
provided to us.***

***This is holy land,***

***We are walking on holy land,***

***We give thanks that we have been given the  
gift of creation to nurture, to rejoice in and  
take care of,***

***Amen***



# Ecological Imperative:

## A response to the ecological challenge in Eastern Europe



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### Siarhei Yushkevich

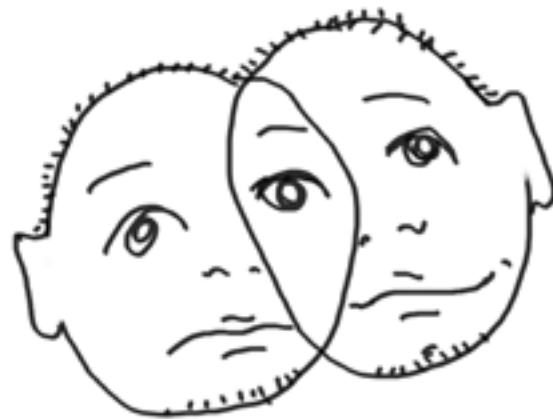
The problem of the ecological crisis is not a fresh theme for conversation. But still, it's topical and I would say vital for our world today. Therefore, many different conceptions, theories and propositions appear which try to give a response to the ecological challenge (and these hypotheses are always different). I will try to make a short review of the situation that has emerged in Russia and Belarus in last few years in the ecological discourse of the government and of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Russian philosophers and scientists develop the noosphere concept of society-nature interaction, which was offered by Russian scientist Vladimir Ivanovich Vernadsky (1863-1945).<sup>1</sup> These concepts, in turn, generate such notions as the 'ecological imperative' and 'ecological moral'. The ecological imperative is a term, supposed to be understood in juridical sense, as an injunction or requirement to follow the rules of environmental protection. The first to use this term and try to clarify it was N. N. Moiseev. He defines the ecological imperative as a complex set of restrictions on human activity; non-fulfilment

of which can soon turn out to disastrous consequences for mankind.<sup>2</sup> For Moiseev, the ecological imperative is a fundamental part of a new human consciousness. The Russian philosopher uses this term in a singular form to underline neither the juridical nor the natural-science meaning of it, but to bring this term to the wider contest of philosophical research. It is so, that there could be several ecological imperatives: every kind of science can state its own ecological imperative. But it is obvious that to solve ecological problems it is essentially important to use a complexity of scientific methods. The ecological imperative is essentially combined with the idea of integrative ideology (in a sense of vision) and the ethical result of understanding of the ecological crisis.

At the same time, Moiseev developed the idea of the moral imperative. This means that behind the ecological imperative reveals a universal conception of a new vision, of a new moral, accepted and adopted by a human consciousness. Today the reorientation of human moral, with a new relation towards nature and to each other is necessary. Certainly, the realization of the ecological imperative requires a new moral and new ecological ethic.

The intention of the ecological imperative is described more or less clearly in a special document - The National Strategy of Sustainable Social and Economical Development of Republic of Belarus.<sup>3</sup> Ecological imperative is described



in a few points, which are at the same time, an essential requirement of its realization. They are:

- A human should be in the spotlight, because s/he has the right for a healthy and fruitful life in harmony with nature;
- The right for development should be directed in order to preserve the environment for present and future generations;
- The environment should become an integral feature of the social and economic process and shouldn't be considered in isolation from it;
- It is necessary to put into practice the ecologisation of industry, in order to eliminate the negative anthropogenic impacts on the environment;
- Social and economic development must improve the quality of people's life in acceptable limits of the economy's and ecosystem's capacity;
- Ecologisation of the consciousness and the vision of a human and the ecologisation of upbringing and education.

Shortly, this is the essence of the ecological imperative, considered by Belorussian scientists.

### The response of the Russian Orthodox Church

Following the *Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*<sup>4</sup> the unity and wholeness of the created world is the main concept in the ecological position of the Russian Orthodox Church. Orthodox Christianity considers environment as not a separate and closed system: flora and fauna and the human world are interrelated. Human beings are not a landlord, but a housekeeper and priest. Correspondingly, nature is a house and temple; not a storage of resources. Here the concept of theocentricism plays important role. Life itself, in all its variety, is sacred and given by God, therefore disregarding the environment is a challenge not just to God's creatures, but to God as well.

The next point of the Orthodox Church is that ecological problems are essentially anthropological problems. Therefore responses for many problems, caused by the environmental crisis, can be found more in the human heart and soul than in the sphere of economics, biology, technology and politics. The spiritual state of humans has a great impact on the environment, both in cases of external action on the environment and when there are no such actions. So, another problem appears simultaneously – spiritual crisis. People lost awareness of life as God's gift; sometimes the sense of life and existence is lost. Spiritual degradation of a person allowed the degradation of the environment, because people couldn't change or transform themselves and thus couldn't transform or change the environment. Overcoming the ecological crisis without overcoming of spiritual crisis is impossible: "...a

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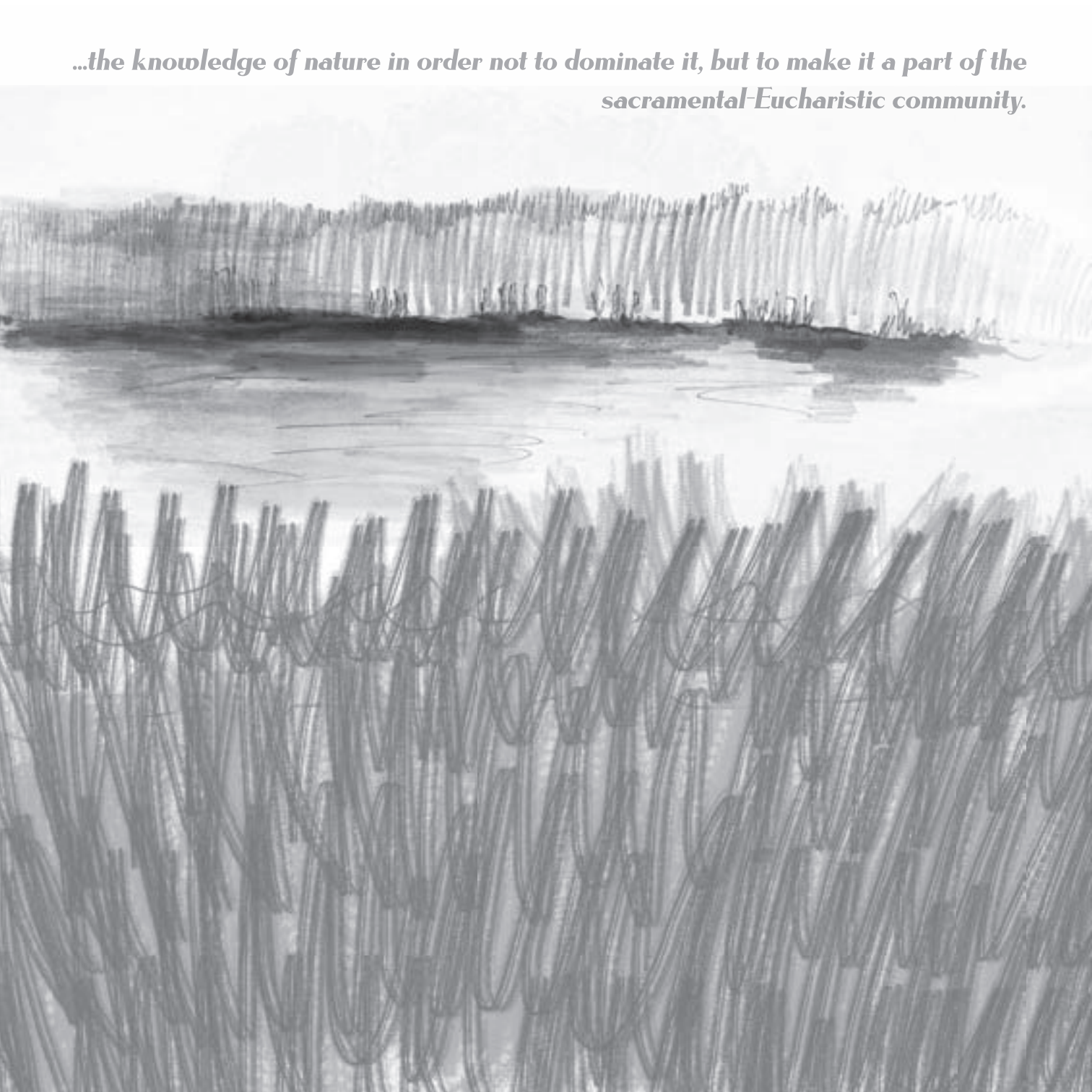
1 According to the thought of V.I. Vernadsky and Teilhard de Chardin, noosphere, (greek nous "mind" + sphaira "sphere") is a concept which denotes the "sphere of human thought". In the original theory of Vernadsky, the noosphere is the third in a succession of phases of development of the Earth, after the geosphere (inanimate matter) and the biosphere (biological life). Just as the emergence of life fundamentally transformed the geosphere, the emergence of human cognition fundamentally transforms the biosphere. Contemporary philosophers use this concept to understand the way in which Russians approach the concept of sustainable development. N. N. Moiseev also uses Vernadsky's concept and calls it the "age of noosphere" – a period of human being when the collective mind and collective-will will be able to provide joint society-nature development. He calls this joint development by the principle of co-evolution.

2 N.N. Moiseev, *Voskhozhdeniye k razumu*, (1993), p.120.

3 "“Natsionalnaya strategiya ustoychivogo sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya Respubliki Belarus’ na period do 2020 g.” *Natsionalnaya kommissiya po ustoychivomu razvitiyu Resp. Belarus*, Mn, 200 p.

4 "Tserkov' i problemy ekologii," *Osnovy sotsial'noy kontseptsii Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi*. M., (2001), p.106.





...the knowledge of nature in order not to dominate it, but to make it a part of the sacramental-Eucharistic community.

human being can turn the whole world into heaven, when he will be bearing heaven in himself”.<sup>5</sup>

Kirill, Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, (today Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus’) emphasized that the tragedy of the contemporary human lay in a hierarchy of values by a principle of use and benefit, what leads humans to indifference to truth. It is a process of substitution of ends by means. At the same time, Christianity should also understand that justice, peace and integrity of creation are means but not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is an Eternal Life in God and deification (theosis) of world. Of course, besides the ultimate goals there are other temporary goals, which must be submitted to the ultimate goal. Great hopes are set also on theocentric ethics, which helps to avoid ethical relativism. Theocentric ethics states integrity, interdependency and importance of all creation, and considers nature and humans not as autonomous and self-sufficient, but indicates that they find their sense and destination in the Creator.<sup>6</sup>

Orthodox theologians in turn, underline a liturgical (sacramental) aspect in ecological questions. They consider the Eucharist to be the most brilliant moment of the matter of consecration.<sup>7</sup> The Eucharist is the highest way humans treats the universe. The matter is brought forward in the form of bread and wine to God, because all creation belongs to God. Christians just return it back to God. This calls them to take care about God’s creation and preserve its integrity. The Holy Communion represents God meeting us in the very centre of our relationships with creation and enters in the heart of our biological life.<sup>8</sup>

5 “Tserkov’ i problemy ekologii,” *Osnovy sotsial’noy kontseptsii Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi, M.*, (2001), p. 108  
6 Mitropolit Smolenskiy i Kaliningradskiy Kirill (Gundyayev), “K ekologii dukha” *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii*, No.6, (1991), p. 52.  
7 J. Chrysavgis, “The earth as sacrament: insights from Orthodox Christian theology and spirituality” *The Oxford handbook of religion and ecology*, (Oxford Univ. Press: New York, 2006), p. 92.  
8 Milton Efthimiou, “Pravoslaviye i ekologicheskiy krizis”, [http://krotov.info/libr\\_min/ae/aecoteol/eco\\_130.html](http://krotov.info/libr_min/ae/aecoteol/eco_130.html).

## Christian ethics

Orthodox theology opens a new vision of asceticism. Christianity calls man to turn to unconstrained self-restriction. Unconstrained self-restriction reminds humans of the Saints and hermits of the ancient Church, didn’t negate life, but on the contrary, through asceticism tried to affirm life. The Greek Fathers named the complex of people’s wrong actions by the word ‘pride’. Pride creates all our sins, not only towards God and our neighbours, but also towards the environment. Through ecological asceticism we can get rid of pride today. It is possible to destroy our pride only through free self-restriction, through constant changing of our behaviour with the help of liberation from ourselves.<sup>9</sup> Orthodox theology considers the possibility to overcome contemporary crises on the ground of such ethics. Such ethics expected from a human being are the refusal from dominion over nature, self-restriction of consumption, careful usage of science and engineering, and veneration for life.

## Cooperation between the State and Church

Both the government and the Church have the same aim in ecological discourse – generating moral norms, and the so called ecological imperative. But at the same time on this ethical ground appear paradoxical problems. Most ecological thinkers and philosophers in Russia and Belarus are consecutive evolutionists, but they came to the conclusion that the moral aspect of Christianity (as the most spread religion of their region) plays an important role: “Initial principles of Christianity in combination with primary passion<sup>10</sup> of western culture and with a support of the collective intelligence could play a decisive role in

9 Ibid 8.  
10 Passionarity is the concept of L. Gumilev, which he introduced to describe his ideas on the genesis and evolution of ethnoses. The concept of passionarity may be explained as the level of vital energy and power characteristic of any given ethnic group.

Western theologians are interested in another way proposed by East-Orthodox theologians: to give more attention to the Church Father’s theology and their perception of nature.

overcoming the crises of the coming century”.<sup>11</sup> The ethical principles propagated by Christ 2000 years ago are still real for contemporary society and could become a fundament of the contemporary ecological imperative.

Thus, it is necessary to make several conclusions:

1. The ecological policy of the government (both in Russia and in Belarus) is rather clear: it is necessary to form a so called ecological imperative in society. To this effect it is necessary to form a new moral imperative, which means an acceptance of a new value system. But a huge problem appears when scientists try to propose a way in which one or another moral system is accepted by society. Norms and rules of behaviour, which are accepted to name the moral, take place spontaneously and the mechanisms of such processes are hard to understand. Here it must get specific, when they take place in a transition in the spiritual sphere of a human.
2. It seems Orthodox Christian theology can propose a way to understand the accepting of moral values, at least in Christian society: through liturgical, patristic and moral theology. Orthodox Christians realize that to overcome ecological problems a global moral consensus on the fundament of universal values is needed. But the voice of the Russian Orthodox Church is too small, to change something in the ecological discourse in Russia or Belarus. The problem is not only in the political specificity of these regions, in relations between government and church; there is a lack of Orthodox theologians who try to give a wise and constructive response to the ecological challenge. Nobody tries to propose a Christian Orthodox eco-theology.
3. The most important point is that there is no fruitful

11 N.N. Moiseev, “Mir XXI veka i khristianskaya traditsiya” *Ekologiya i zhizn*, No.1, M, (2003), p.40-45.

dialogue between science and religion. It is possible to say, that both natural science and theology are self-contained, and even demonstrate indifference to each other in Russia and Belarus.

So, in my mind, it is obvious that it is necessary for the Russian Orthodox Church and Orthodox theology to get abreast ecological discourse. On the other hand, ecological discourse in Russia and Belarus, without appeal to Orthodox theology, loses a chance to see images of God in the relationships between humans and the environment.

In this respect western European countries show a genuine interest in the theology of Orthodox Christianity.<sup>12</sup> As far back as 1985, a German Calvinist theologian Jürgen Moltmann notes in his magisterial work *God in Creation* that East-Orthodox theology is worth investigation because the Orthodox teaching about creation has preserved ideas, which were rejected and forgotten in the West and that in the oldest traditions of Christian theology humans, can often find a strategy for the future.<sup>13</sup> Western theologians are interested in another way proposed by East-Orthodox theologians: to give more attention to the Church Father’s theology and their perception of nature.<sup>14</sup>

In correlation to environmental problems some aspects of Orthodox theology are significant for western theology and culture: Orthodox spirituality, soteriology and

12 It is worth to say that a great impact into witness of Orthodoxy to the West was made by Metr. Paulos Gregorios of the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East. Among his works are: Paulos Gregorios, *The human presence: an Orthodox view of nature*, (WCC: Geneva, 1978), p. 104.; Paulos Gregorios, *The Cosmic Man: the Divine presence*, (NewDelhi, 1980), p. 273. 13 Jürgen Moltmann, *Gott in der Schöpfung. Ökologische Schöpfungslehre*, (Chr.Keiser: München, 1985), p.13. Moltmann follows here his so called “ecumenical method” in his theology of nature, according to which it is necessary to be opened to different traditions of understanding of creation including Jewish, Catholic, East-Orthodox theologies and secular world (achievements of sciences).

14 An excellent example is a book of Sigurd Bergmann, *Geist der Natur Befreit: die trinitarische Kosmologie Gregors von Nazianz im Horizont einer ökologischen Theologie der Befreiung*, (Matthias-Grünewald-Verl: Mainz, 1995), p. 522 .

sacramentology. The Orthodox spirituality as a practical search for unity between the environment, humans and God, based on theocentric ethics, points to other alternatives for the industrial, western mentality. Through the Orthodox view humans are called to realize that together with their basic requirements for survival – breathable air, drinkable water, non-toxic food – there are true needs that are no less real; for beauty, for space, for contact with the living world around us.<sup>15</sup>

The Orthodox soteriology focuses on a holistic perspective of reality of humans and nature. On the one hand the salvation of environment is an indispensable fundament for human’s salvation, and on the other – a unique position for humans: to bring all creation to salvation.<sup>16</sup>

The Orthodox sacramentology offers a specific way of understanding nature: the knowledge of nature in order not to dominate it, but to make it a part of the sacramental-Eucharistic community. The obstacle here is how to turn this view into practice in the conditions of western consciousness.<sup>17</sup> To find common ecological orientations it is obvious there is a necessity for a dialogue between East-Orthodox and western churches. Finally western theology is interested in the apophatic principle<sup>18</sup> of Orthodox theology

15 S. Degen-Ballmer, *Gott-Mensch-Welt: eine Untersuchung über mögliche holistische Denkmodelle in der Prozesstheologie und der ostkirchlich-orthodoxen Theologie als Beitrag für ein ethikrelevantes Natur-und Schöpfungsverständnis*, (Lang: Frankfurt am Main, 2001), p. 245.

16 Elizabeth Theokritoff, *The Orthodox Church and the Environmental Movement*, <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith8024>.

17 S. Degen-Ballmer, *Gott-Mensch-Welt*, p. 270.

18 Apophatic principle (apophatic theology) – or negative theology – is a theology that attempts to describe God by negation, to speak of God only in



and the correlation between Orthodoxy and the theology of process<sup>19</sup> as a starting point of detection of practical understanding of nature.<sup>20</sup>

Curiously enough, sometimes barriers of the Orthodox tradition have to confess that they have a scanty knowledge of their own faith and don’t even expect the kind of prospects Orthodox theology can open on the way to the ecological imperative.

absolutely certain terms and to avoid what may not be said.

19 Theology of process – is a school of thought influenced by the meta-physical process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. Theological and philosophical aspects Whitehead’s philosophy have been expanded and developed by Charles Hartshorne, John B. Cobb, Jr., and David Ray Griffin. One of the major concepts of process theology is that the universe is characterized by process and change carried out by the agents of free will. Self-determination characterizes everything in the universe, not just human beings. God cannot totally control any series of events or any individual, but God influences the creaturely exercise of this universal free will by offering possibilities. (See: John B. Cobb, David R. Griffin, *Prozess-Theologie: eine einführende Darstellung*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), p. 193.

20 S. Degen-Ballmer, *Gott-Mensch-Welt*, p. 279, 299.



# Climate Change and the General Election in Peru



Victor Liza Jaramillo was born in Lima, Peru in 1981. He is a journalist and university professor. He also works as a correspondent in Lima for Latin American and Caribbean Agency Communications (ALC News). He was also the coordinator of youth ministry for the Latin American Council of Churches in the Andean Region from 2007 – 2010. Victor coordinates the Student Christian Movement of Peru.

**Victor Liza Jaramillo**

*Translation: Ruth Tyldesley*

On 10 April 2010, the presidential elections were held in Peru for the congressmen and representatives of the Andean parliament. As we imagined the aspiring members of the first magistrate of the nation began the electoral campaign with all manner of promises which spanned a diverse range of topics; the working generation, the fight against drug trafficking, the reduction of poverty and the fight against corruption amongst other subjects.

No one can deny that these issues are important in an electoral campaign and that they arouse a certain interest from the general public. Everyone wants to have a secure job with social benefits now and in the future. Everyone wants the scourge of drug trafficking to end, as it is currently feeding terrorism. Additionally, poverty and corruption should stop once and for all throughout the whole country. However, one of the issues that the presidential candidates did not touch upon is climate change. It is something that everyone talks about and has an opinion about, it is even written about in articles like this one, but no one does anything about it. In Peru, the issue seems to be a lot worse then the fact that there is not a lot of discussion on the topic and that the presidential candidates haven't said anything about it.

It is well known that Peru forms part of the Amazon; this gigantic green area which is the

heart of South America and the lungs of our continent. Without this enormous rain forest our ecological balance would be in serious trouble. However, in Peru, as in other South American countries where the Amazon is found, little effort is being made to preserve the rainforest. What is worse is that in some cases, it is exploited with indifference or complicity of the governments of this part of the continent; with the exception of Ecuador whose government has promised to protect the forests by banning the exploration for oil and excavations of mines. The other republics seem to think that money is worth more than looking after the environment.

Peru doesn't escape from this rule, and was consequently even more radical. Alan Garcia's government instigated some controversial laws, called the 'laws of the rainforest' in which he gave free reign to foreign companies to explore large areas of the Amazon and exploit minerals and oil. In light of this, the communities of the Amazon reacted with emphatic protests; they believed that as residents of the land they had the right to be consulted about these measures. In protection of what they call the 'Mother Land' and the protection of the trees, rivers and the air, contaminated without any impunity for many miners and other Peruvian citizens, as in the case of La Oroya. Agreement 169 of the International Labour Organisation protected them legitimately.

At first the congress was able to revoke some



of the laws in August 2008, and later it set up a commission to debate the issue that didn't come to fruition. Faced with the indifference of the regime, the indigenous people of the Amazon protested again with a strike that lasted two months and ended abruptly on 5 June 2009, when the police tried to move the protesters who were blocking a road in the city of Bagua. It resulted in the deaths of twenty-four troops and ten indigenous people, and became known as the 'Baguazo'.

In reaction to these violent events, the communities of the Amazon, together with the Andean people and different human rights groups, led a mass march to the congress, in which they not only demanded justice for the deaths in Bagua, they also asked them to abolish all the laws once and for all. The legislative power had to give in, again

under the social pressure, and comply with what the people were asking for. Over this year, the subject of protecting the environment has been under discussion. But as time has passed it seems to have been forgotten about; as seen in the march to commemorate the first anniversary of 'Baguazo' which tried to stress the importance of the subject on the government.

If the 'Baguazo' tragedy had occurred (although it never should have happened) in October or November last year maybe the presidential candidates would have touched upon the subject of protecting the environment. However, climate change is an ongoing issue that should not be controlled by circumstances. Citizens should pressure the government about climate change so that candidates will declare themselves in favour of the preservation of our rainforest, the Amazon. In this way, we will know who will sacrifice themselves in order to fight against the effects of climate change and also those who will go deeper into the issues in the name of progress.



*In Peru, as in other South American countries where the Amazon is found, little effort is being made to preserve the rainforest.*



***Forever is composed of Nows.***

-Emily Dickinson



***The sun, the moon and the stars would have disappeared long ago...***

***had they happened to be***

***within the reach***

***of predatory***

***human hands.***

-Havelock Ellis



# Poverty, Wealth and Ecology



Katka Babicová (1988) is a Roman-Catholic student from Slovakia. She was involved in EKUNET, the SCM in Slovakia in 2005 and since then has been active in the Central European Subregion of WSCF-E. Also, since 2009, Katka has volunteered as WSCF-E's Links Coordinator and Vice-Chair. She graduated with BA from Comenius University in Swedish and German in 2009, and is currently doing her MA in the Psychology of Language at University of Copenhagen.

## Katka Babicová

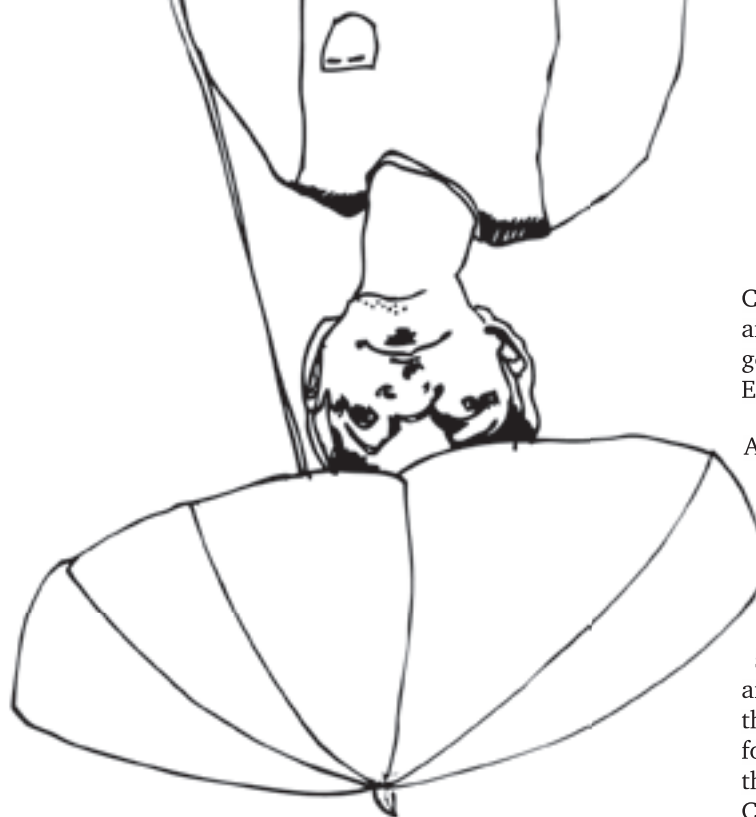
In Budapest, Hungary, between 8-12 November 2010, representatives of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) met together to contribute as Europeans to the global ecumenical discussion on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology. By the end of 2011 consultations will have been held on all continents and the context and issues of Poverty, Wealth and Ecology will be interlinked. WSCF-E, the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE) and the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth (Syndesmos) were invited to be present as the associated youth organisations in Europe and to provide youth input and insights to the topics alongside with different representatives of churches and church organisations.

Lectures, discussions, presentations, workshops, even theories, and finally drafting the final statement outlining the issues explored during the consultation. All of those are usual procedures on the programme of such a meeting. But why was this consultation not just another 'talky-talky' event?

At times, this meeting did feel like many other events full of talking – it was a nice encounter with kind people and *a lot* of talking without an implementation of a recommendation – the impact just did not have a chance to make itself visible. If we take all three issues: Poverty, Wealth and Ecology, and their aspects in the European societies and churches, it was through the openness, testimonies, presentations and witnessing, which the churches and especially

grassroots organisations present provided. These very deep experiences are what actually make the change in our everyday life, they make us think about the consequences of our deeds and living. They set us on the way of active involvement; help us finding courage to make such a change. The excursion to different Roma initiatives; the presentation of an activity run by a Scottish organisation, which simply brings both the poorest and the most wealthy from the parish together; or simply just to preach about the wealth in European churches were examples of this. Furthermore, an interesting question was posed: Why don't we hear more preaching more about wealth? Why do we not want to hear about global wealth or the wealthy? Why do we listen actively when we are preached to about poverty? We all can identify poverty as a problem and stand in solidarity with people suffering, but do we ever think about our wealth and opportunities, the chances and privileges we have in comparison to others?

So, what is it we, as churches and church organisations, envision? A better world only with words? The answer from this Consultation is a Statement prepared by the representatives, which calls for climate justice and just economic development. It addresses mainly churches and secular institutions, which we as youth organisations felt was a rather unreachable address. Therefore, our reply, as youth organisations, to this question was in our own part of the statement based on the already existing one from the EYCE and WSCF-E joint study session



Climate Justice Now!, held in September. We, as an example, committed ourselves to a number of goals to be reached in our work and called upon European churches to do so as well.

Apart from this, we were able to lead three workshops alongside other organisations at the conference. We presented and discussed the situation of the European Youth in the context of poverty and wealth in the recent years of financial crisis; here we also addressed the lack of involvement and participation of students and youth. The second workshop was an interactive contribution to the debate about the climate justice, presenting the ecological footprint calculation and consequences and the third was a presentation of the statement from the Climate Justice Now! study session and discussion about the global political and economical power relations. Throughout all workshops we were trying to highlight the question of education and in particular informal ways of learning as a crucial player in the future development and solutions of the questions of Poverty, Wealth and Ecology.

The solutions can be very simplistic and straightforward, and the only complicated or difficult side is the courage we lack. We have seen it with our own eyes during the presentations and I am sure, there are more examples. What is more, seeing that in a global, interconnected society solutions to problems need to be a joint effort, but still focused solutions to be successful and so that we have had the opportunity to learn from them.

So, where do we go from here? That is a question both for the CEC and youth organisations to answer in our near future, the future of all of us!

*So, what is it we, as churches and church organisations, envision? A better world only with words?*



# A Recipe for Environmentalism:

## Ecology and the Future of Central Europe: With or Without Life? Central European Sub-Region seminar in Zaježová, Slovakia



Márta Sinkó, is 22 and from Csongrád, Hungary. Her life has always been connected to the environment because she grew up in the countryside. Márta studied International Relations and is currently studying International Economics at the University of Szeged. She believes environmental problems can't be solved without international cooperation. Márta got involved with WSCF-E one year ago. In her free time she enjoys folkdance, singing, writing poems, and running. She also enjoys travelling, transmitting Hungarian culture and speaking foreign languages.

### Márta Sinkó

Take the untouched natural environment; a little, ecological house; some home-made dishes; the local wildlife and add one group of young, Central-European Christians to it, a handful of well-prepared lecturers, and finally fill it with believe and enthusiasm. Now, let's see, what we can bake from it.

This recipe came to life in Zaježová, Slovakia, in the middle of September 2010, with participants coming from Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Latvia and Belarus. As a participant at the conference I would like to offer you a slice of this creation.

Nowadays almost everyone talks about environmental protection and climate change, but it is hard to see any improvements or changes being made. More and more companies support ideas of sustainability but at the same time they continue mass production and with that the production of more waste.

What is the problem? Nature and its current condition interweaves both with the story of creation and the story of the last times. For this reason, young Christians couldn't miss the

chance to meet and discuss in Zaježová! The environment is not the same today it once was. What humanity creates is with the help of God, however nature is the God's direct work, nothing else can give as much energy and feeling towards such a project like God can. We have separated ourselves from this creation. Why don't we pay more attention to the earth? We need more events, like this seminar, closer to the nature.

Do you think young people can find something to eat in a valley far from the city and shops with no money in their pockets? I say yes; God helps us when we are in need, when we ask. The Slovakian valley's farmers provided helping hands to the seminar's participants with great love, giving bread, preserved fruits, eggs - though we can't forget that the trees also offered their fruits for free without any a voice.

Should we be afraid of walking alone in the forest at night? Do the strange voices of the animals frighten us? Is your answer yes – I ask you why? Walking in the forest at night isn't any more dangerous than the threat of humans we see riding the train or walking down the street. Animals, even if it is a bear, didn't eat the forbidden fruit, humans did. God protected the seminar participants through the forest even late



PHOTOS: MÁRTA SINKÓ

into the evening. They returned to the farm in one piece and with the peace that comes with the sounds of the wilderness like the grunting of a nearby deer.

Can young participants really learn and have fun in a little house, far from party venues and schools? Yes, yes, yes! Nature is the most inspirational environment for learning. This is especially true in autumn, when every colour spreads across the valley, like every experience over all these years are brought together to prepare for the birth of Jesus. We know, Jesus will come for us at the end of days, and yes, some people now believe that that the end is close, because human's have contact with the earth. But we have to believe that before this God will give us at least one more chance to survive. We only must look back, gather the experiences, learn from these, make changes and pray together!

Some people blame the Christian legacy for the present day ecological situation, but Christians are only partly responsible, as we are just humans, who are tired, and have to deal with the hands of strangers who block them. By paying attention to God's message we perceive and understand what we need to do, we cannot rest until we implement this call. We must not forget that "something is going wrong in the world". What is wrong with the Earth? Pollution, polarisation, overpopulation, deforestation, extinction of species, global warming. Perhaps you ask – OK, but what can we do? With the Lord's help we can become a sustainable community, which means that we

receive from the Father and give to the Father, we give to nature, and receive from it. Sustainability's secret is an equal degree of reciprocity – that's all.

So what does the spoils of Zaježová's recipe taste like? Imagine that you are in the middle of the mountainous countryside, far from civilization, in a valley through which a stream gently flows. You stand on the green grass, and pray alone to the Lord. You throw your sins – like stones which feel heavy in your hand – into the stream, and your heart clears, as the stones under the water. Suddenly many people gather around you, creating a perfect circle, and you pray and sing together to God in the fresh air:

*For those who make decisions about the resources of the Earth,  
that we may use your gifts responsibly.*

*For those who work on the land and sea, and in industry,  
that they may enjoy the fruits of their labours,  
and marvel at your creation.*

*For artists, scientists and visionaries,  
that through their work we may see creation afresh.*

*We thank you for giving us life,  
For all who enrich our experience.*

- From the *New Zealand Book of Common Prayer*



# A Magic Window of Scottish Theology



Stanislau Paulau was born in 1989 in Mogilev, Belarus. Since 2006, he has studied Orthodox Theology at Saints' Methodius and Cyril Institute of Theology of the Belarusian State University in Minsk. In 2010, he began studying in Germany at the Faculty of Evangelical Theology of the Humboldt University in Berlin.

## Stanislau Paulau

2010 was a year with several significant anniversaries: the Reformation, including Calvin and Knox and the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference, which inspired much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's ecumenical hope and energy. But 2010 was also a year of a modest Jubilee of Scottish Churches House, founded in 1960 by the Scottish churches as "a place that the churches hold in common, and from which they together develop their ministry and mission". And exactly this House became a place where people from all around the world came together in order to share their visions for the future.

*Visions for the Future* was the second International Theological Summer School at Scottish Churches House, held from 26 June to 9 July in the Scotland's smallest city - Dunblane. Organizers managed to welcome twenty-two participants from fourteen countries for the two week study visit which took them to Edinburgh and Glasgow, St. Andrews and New Lanark, Paisley and Iona; visiting places of social, ecclesiastical and theological interest as well as meeting people in context. All of this created a unique space where people from different cultural and confessional backgrounds could share their experience and study the complex social, religious and cultural life of Scotland.

This school was without doubt one of the most impressive events in my life in the last while; and this event was so versatile that I hardly can describe it in brief. But one word occurs to me – *Window*. *Window* is the best image I can find to describe what this school was personally for me.

I should say, that it is indeed not a usual window but a magic one, because you can look out of it and see every time other places and people. This magic window gives also an incredibly wide perspective of what is happening outside, and can show even the future! What have I seen through this window? Mainly three dimensions: the world, the church and the future.

## Window to the world

Through Scotland to the whole world! The hospitality of Scotland was a real gift for each participant. At the Theological Summer School we were people from all around the world who met each other in this country with a great history and culture, in order to reflect on the problems which are relevant to everyone. We not only met each other as individuals but also as representatives of different cultural and social backgrounds. Through communication with each other and presentations of our countries we were able to discover the world in its diversity. Together we were trying to investigate the interaction of Christians with other people within contemporary society and analyze the theological, social, political and economical conditions of contemporary intercultural transformation process.

## Window to the Church

Russian religious philosopher and theologian, Father Pavel Florensky, said that icon was a window to the other, heavenly world. It



PHOTOS: STANISLAU PAULAU

## Window to the future

represents reality which we cannot perceive in our usual life and which is revealed to us only in religious experience. But this reality can be indicated with the help of icons. Such a window to the essence of the Church was this school. I am firmly convinced that one of the most important things, which we have done together, was painting the icon. We were painting an icon of the One, Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church but not with help of paints, but with help of our communion, which we realized in the life and prayer during these weeks. We were an icon of the Church where people from every corner of the globe and of all ages are one in Christ. So to say theology in paints without any paints.

I have distinctly seen through the magic window of the International Theological Summer School one very important vision: the future of the world and the church is the same future, on the same earth. It is our responsibility to shape how this future will look like. We should not separate one from another. We have to courageously recognize that the problems of the world (global warming, poverty, consumerism) are the problems of the Church. I hope that through this statement in the future the true essence of the Church will become more and more evident. Church is the light of the world, salt of earth, and leaven in dough. Thus, Church is connected with the world like Sun – concentrated fire – affords to shine and warm until the borders of the solar system.

Russian religious philosopher and theologian, Father Pavel Florensky, said that icon was a window to the other, heavenly world.



[HTTP://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:PAVEL\\_FLORENSKY.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pavel_Florensky.jpg)



# Women and Ecology: The fascist potential of some feminist theories



This article was first published in April 1978 in "The Bread is Rising" a compilation of papers presented to the WSCF meeting of European women at the 1977 'Ecumene' conference in, Italy. The publication was produced by SCM Britain on behalf of the European region's Women's Project. They had three main areas of study: Women and socialism; Woman and Theology; and Woman and the Church. Anna Fraling, the author, was from the Federal Republic of Germany

*This article, from the late seventies, gives a glimpse into the discussions and debates occurring within the second-wave feminist movement and in particular into the understanding of eco-feminism. Eco-feminism was a term coined in 1974 by Francoise d'Eaubonne converging feminist and ecological thinking together with the belief that the social mentality that leads*

*to the domination and oppression of women is directly connected to the social mentality that leads to the abuse of the natural environment. Therefore overcoming the oppression of women and the oppression of the environment were seen as fundamentally linked to one another. This article is a direct response what was a newly emerging environmental theory.*

## Anna Fraling

If we want to try to understand the connection between the fight for women's liberation and the fight against the permanent destruction of the ecological balance, then this should be done – we believe – on two levels. In the first place, recent radical feminist literature offers possible theoretical analyses of this relationship whose usefulness must be examined. In the second place, on the practical level, women have developed specific methods of fighting which arose from their concrete needs and have nothing to do with the above-mentioned theoretical approaches...

To begin with, I shall describe the theses of Francoise d'Eaubonne which are summarized in her book *The Time of Eco-Feminism*. D'Eaubonne sees a new feminist humanism as a long-range objective of the fight "which would mean the inevitable end of the male-dominated society and can be built up only on the solution of the ecological question".<sup>1</sup> For her, the most urgent objective is the reorganization of the planet, which is faced with extinction. This global objective is her answer to the segmentation

of the feminist front. In the foreground of her thesis, however, is the assumption that women are the only sex "that is able to accept, to refuse, to delay or to accelerate the reproduction of our species", – in other words: they are the only sex that at present represent both death warrant and salvation of mankind.

For d'Eaubonne, eco-feminism is the only possibility of securing the future of our species. In her argumentation, d'Eaubonne mentions overpopulation and the destruction of natural resources as deadly threats. She thinks that these two factors are caused by the male system, as they are the logical result of one of two parallel discoveries that rendered power to the men fifty centuries ago: their faculty to fertilise not only the earth but also women, and their participation in the act of procreation. D'Eaubonne does not, however, explain the causal relationship between these discoveries and patriarchy on the one hand, as well as over-exploitation in the shape of overpopulation or the destruction of the environment on the other hand.

I am not going to mention the facts that d'Eaubonne gives in order to prove the threat from the above-mentioned two phenomena as they do not correspond to the present state of research, and thus are no longer applicable because the ecological crises has been aggravated since the publication of the book. There is, however, one point which seems to explain why d'Eaubonne declares overpopulation as an extra target of attack. She gives the statistics of what an American citizen consumes during his lifetime, and concludes that the birth of one American baby is twenty-five times graver for ecology than the birth of a Hindu baby. The birth of an American baby costs the lives of six-eight babies from the third world.

In other words: the problem of over-population is not one of the third world as is maintained over and over again with the intention of disguising the real facts. This aspect has to be included in the fight for the control of reproduction. In summing up d'Eaubonne's theory, we should note the following essential points:

1. The oppression of women is the result of a male dominated society. Therefore the fight for socialism cannot affect the liberation of women.
2. In a profit system, the ecological problem is connected with capitalism, but its existence in socialist countries proves that it is not identical with capitalism.
3. Phallocracy is the basis for the destruction of nature – in a capitalist society, it devotes itself to profit, in a socialist system to progress.
4. "The planet has to be taken from the present-

day men in order to place it in the hands of the mankind of tomorrow. This is the only alternative, because if the male-dominated society continues to exist, there won't be any mankind tomorrow".<sup>2</sup>

The dangerous logic of this theory has perhaps been made clear so far. Nevertheless, I shall describe another attempt at explanation, namely Gabrielle Kuby's *The End of Patriarchal Supremacy*.<sup>3</sup>

Kuby regards the ecological crisis as the material basis of the women's movement. For her the destruction of nature represents the last stage of patriarchal domination:

*Men have got the world into such a state that the living conditions of all people are severely jeopardized. That's new; up to now, 'only' the majority of minorities, groups and nations has been oppressed and exterminated. Now life as such is endangered whether in the shape of human beings, animals, plants, soil, water or air. A new stage of violence has been reached. Marx realized that the metabolism between man and nature under capitalistic conditions takes place in the form of exploitation of man and nature. But as the destruction of our planet had not presented itself as a problem at that time, his analysis centres on the physical and psychic destruction of man. ... To be radical means to tackle a matter at its root. The root of man, however, is man himself. Through the destruction of nature we realize man has roots too. They are in the soil. To have this knowledge in the centre of man's thinking and acting means to be radical.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 1

<sup>3</sup> Gabrielle Kuby, "The End of Patriarchal Supremacy", *Frauenoffensive*, No.2, (April, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 2

<sup>1</sup> Francoise d'Eaubonne, *Feminsmus oder Tod*, (Munich, 1977).

On the basis of this criticism we should try to develop a sound explanation of the relationship of our fight for liberation and the fight against the destruction of the essential foundations of our lives.

Kuby looks upon the capitalist form of metabolism with nature as the highest form of destruction of nature, and regards capitalism as the highest form of patriarchal tyranny. In her view, however, the establishment of a socialistic society is only a necessary precondition of restoring the balance of nature. In the last analysis she demands the matriarchal principle of control. Kuby sees the mother-child relationship as the origin of the patriarchal destruction of nature. While daughters experience an identity with their mothers, sons do not have such an experience. This original experience of man leads to the separation of the conscious and the unconscious which subsequently causes the one-sided development of the intellect, “the detachment from the concrete, a precondition of thinking as such”. Kuby does not take into account the disadvantages which the daughter’s original identification with the mother can entail. The identification with the mother can severely impedes the daughter in finding her own identity.

Referring to this, Moeller Gambaroff expressed the view that women’s fear of emancipating themselves, of leaving the mother-child relationship, may lead to repressions and to the projection of man as enemy. Therefore she holds that the discussion of the mother-problem is indispensable for the feminist movement: “The individual mastering of the matriarchy precedes the collective mastering of the patriarchy”.<sup>5</sup> Kuby on, the other hand, values the identification with the mother as a wholly positive affair.

*The identification with the mother and the functioning of the female body does not allow a detachment from the unconscious, from nature. The development of this material basis, the ecological crisis, makes it necessary for women to recover their identity by studying the history of matriarchy and putting it in to use for the process of*

*exchange with nature. In this process balance must be achieved in order to guarantee permanence.*

As practical consequences for the feminist movement, Kuby suggests CR-groups in the main and establishment of a counterculture as an area free from control. She demands wages for housework, as the production of the next generation should be recognised as a socially necessary and productive occupation. “The material independence from men, and the rejection of marriage, are the preconditions for educating our children towards matriarchal consciousness”.

## Feminism and Fascism

...In the following, I shall try to formulate some provisional criticisms of these theories. I shall use as a basis an analyses from the magazine *Mummies peaches Women and Literature*, titled “Fascist Analogies in Feminist Publications”.<sup>6</sup>

The two theories presented are based on the assumption that an original matriarchy has been superseded by a patriarchy that must now be superseded itself, because of its destroyed ecological basis, by a society of – or at least controlled by – women. While d’Eaubonne regards women as that sex which has to decide on the future, Kuby talks about the nature of women as one that has close original links with nature. Thus both proceed from a ‘natural’ privilege of women in societies-to-come. The role of man in these societies becomes clear, for instance, in the last quote from Kuby in the final analysis her demands for isolation reduce men to their function of procreation. This pattern of thinking has a striking resemblance to the following quotation from a completely difference source:

6 Heide Heinz, “Faschistische Tendenzen in feministischen Publikationen” *mamas prirsiche – fraen und literature*, No.6 (1977).

*It must not be overlooked that political opponents may also come from families of healthy stock from whom (the unreliable parents) we wish to have a large number of children for reason of race and inheritance, and that we must therefore make sure of their children at least. We shall then bring up the children according to our ideals and employ them in the causes of National Socialism on strength of their good hereditary factors...*

“Decree of the Party Chancellery”

D’Eaubonne, too, allows men only a very questionable existence when she demands the removal of the incest taboo between mother and son in order to subvert the father’s dictatorship over both of them. Referring to this, Heinz says:

*The mother-son incest does in fact bring out the exclusion of the father, but that is not the only effect. In addition to this, it also causes the son’s manhood to be engulfed by his mother, that is to say – in a highly symptomatic way – in the last resort highly psychotic or homosexual – he becomes himself almost a woman.*

On the other hand, I find that the recurrent claims of women’s originality especially dangerous. They can be found in Kuby, who talks about the characteristic female features that ascribe to women the “objective historical mission of introducing female rule”. Compare the following quotation from the National Socialist era: “The German man had become a stranger to himself. He had exchanged an apparent external liberty for an almost complete violation of his inner self”. Or, “He was the plaything of foreign nations and the slave of a bourgeois-proletarian, to be precise, of a Jewish-dominated world. The origin of this slavery? The impure races are after all diabolic by nature!”

Without wanting to go into details in the matter of analogous ways of thinking in feminist and fascist ideology, I’d like to sum up a few points for further criticism:

1. The general historical theory of the superiority of original natural state, the attack of evil forces on it, (compare the supposed humiliation of the German people by the Western Allies after World War One), the subsequent rule of Evil (the Jew had been set up as the personification of evil itself by National Socialism), the salvation by latent forces of the original state which is still effective and finally the setting up of the ideal and eternal state – this model can be found both in National Socialist and feminist literature as described above.
2. A further characteristic is the biologicalist ideology of naturalness which can be found in fascist writings as well as feminist theoretical texts.
3. Furthermore, one can establish in texts from both these movements a special predilection for ‘direct perception’, that is, intuition as the means of understanding and in contrast to this a distrust of knowledge which has intellectual and scientific basis.

On the basis of this criticism we should try to develop a sound explanation of the relationship of our fight for liberation and the fight against the destruction of the essential foundations of our lives. At present, because of our historically developed function of reproduction we, as women, can experience more concretely how much our capacity to reproduce is in fact becoming more and more limited through various results of the ecological crisis. In order to disprove the thesis of the original female nature as well as to gain a starting point for our commitment, it will be necessary for us to develop a more concrete picture of our needs.

5 Marina Moeller-Gambaroff, “Emanzipation macht Angst”, *Kursbuch*, 47 (March, 1977).



# World Student Christian Federation's Water Justice Campaign

*Let justice roll down like a river, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.* - Amos 5: 24

As stewards of creation, water reminds us to connect to most basic elemental level. We recognize that water is a real, universal need and that connects all of God's world. As Christians, we know that water is a powerful symbol of our thirst for justice, of the power of the Holy Spirit, and of the Wellspring of life in Jesus Christ. As student activists, we see that due to human action, water scarcity, water pollution and water commercialisation and privatisation are serious threats to our fellow people of Earth – the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized, with whom we are called to walk in solidarity.

The *World Water Day* slated on **22 March 2011** is our official worldwide launch of the campaign, which this year will also mark the Universal Day of Prayer for Students (UDPS). The *World Water Day* which is also declared by the United Nations, can be maximized and can be taken to herald the issue of water deprivation and raise awareness among our students, movements and communities. This we hope can be sustained in years of advocacy as our students look deeper into water justice issues and its impact on our local communities and in-contexts and connections with survival, sustainability, equality and justice.

## ***How can we launch the Water Justice Campaign on the World Water Day?***

Here are some suggestions:

- Use UDPS liturgy on Water Justice, to be published this year by the WSCF in partnership with the Ecumenical Water Network that will be sent to your SCM.
- Encourage SCMs across the Federation to stage a “flash mob freeze” on their local campuses to highlight the issue of water justice, and encourage other creative symbolic actions.
- We ask that students come together at a place that highlights local or global water issues with signs/slogans on water as a human right, water scarcity, water privatization and control, conflict and for one minute freeze in place, to call attention to these important issues.



Sample slogans we can use:

1. WATER is a Human Right (to highlight water as fundamental need and human right)
  2. We Thirst for JUSTICE! Water is a Right! (to stress scarcity of water/privatization )
  3. Giant DAMs = Environment DAMage (to connect on dam/water privatization, environment degradation and displacement of people)
  4. Peoples/Public Control NOT Corporate Control on Water!
- Hold a forum, discussion on the issues of Water Justice to raise awareness and create concern among students, ecumenical youth network, and local communities.

Although this is a global campaign to highlight that the water crisis is also a only a local issue as the media and political/business elites often portray, but a world-wide problem, students are encouraged to make this campaign relevant to their local contexts.

We encourage students partaking in this action to take pictures and videos and share them with the rest of the Federation through WSCF Connection and with the Interregional Office in Geneva. The campaign will aim to trigger conversations and reflections on how the water crisis is affecting local realities, indigenous people, marginalized communities and need for governments to genuinely respond to it.

## ***Sustaining the Water Justice Campaign.***

In order to respond in a sustained way, the federation has organized a Water Justice Task Force which will help in guiding our campaign and advocacy on this issue.

- Water Task Force also challenges SCMs across the Federation to collect “water testimonies”, stories of local water issues, struggles and campaigns. The Water Task Force will collect these stories into a book of testimonies to be published at the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston, Jamaica in May 2011. These testimonies will showcase how the fight for water justice is both global and local, both unique and universal. Through these stories we can see and work toward a world where all may truly be one.
- It would be important for local SCMs to partner with groups and alliances already working on water issues to become part of advocacy groups putting pressure on water corporations and governments on water as a human right.
- Suggestion for students to start a local campaign to pressure their local municipality (or join a group that is already advocating this) to approve a water justice declaration and/or work on keeping/reverting their privatized water system to be public.
- Encourage students to inquire with their universities what they have done to conserve water and whether it would be feasible to make the campus a bottle water free zone (obviously if the sanitary conditions of the local context allow for it).
- The WSCF also exhort local and national SCMs and WSCF region to plan water pilgrimages to educate students on water issue, visit communities affected by water shortage and reflect theologically on water abundance/scarcity.

This two-year campaign will intertwine with the 2011 and 2012 WSCF advocacy themes of Overcoming Violence and Economic Justice, as we recognize that water is inextricably linked to these issues of mining justice, gender justice, land justice and indigenous rights. We invite SCMs to explore the interconnections between these themes, and to use these themes as they incorporate the Water Justice campaign to their local context.

*The Water Justice Taskforce is open to volunteers, please contact:*

**wscf.watertaskforce@gmail.com**  
Please contact Water Task Force or the WSCF Interregional Office with any questions!

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TO BE  
HUMAN IS TO  
COMMUNICATE

TO BE HUMAN  
IS TO BE  
GENDERED



Гендар  
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pohlavia spol

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The ERA is the general meeting of the WSCF-Europe region, held to discuss common views and goals for future activities and to elect the European Regional Committee. If you are interested in becoming more involved in WSCF-E, running for a position on the ERC or the future of our campaigns and events please contact your national SCM about attending.

**COMMUNICATING GENDER**  
24-28 October 2011

**EUROPEAN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
29-30 October 2011

**LØGUMKLOSTER, DENMARK**

The project Gender Identities in a Globalised Europe is funded by







## Submissions

As the ecumenical journal of the European Region of WSCF, *Mozaik* aims to provide a forum to explore and share your ideas, experiences and faith. It is a space to take up burning questions from theology, society, culture, education and other arenas; to explore Christian experience; to clear up misinformation; to provide a firm basis for dialogue and cooperation and to suggest innovative answers to the challenges we face.

We accept essays and articles about 800-2000 words long, with footnotes, including some suggest readings when appropriate. For information about formatting please consult previous *Mozaiks*.

*Mozaik* is also a space to share news about your SCMs, to reflect on discipleship and culture and to express your creativity. So, we also value shorter articles, interviews, book and film reviews, reflections, resources, and reports from your SCM. Contributions of artwork, poetry, short stories, prayers, and liturgies are also strongly encouraged

**Submissions**



## Climate Justice Now!

The next *Mozaik* will follow the WSCF-E's latest culture and higher education conference *Living in a World of Technology – The change of social behaviour* to be held in Låyliäinen, Finland this Spring.

Communication between people, cultures and societies has been dramatically transformed by technology. Cultural exchange is literally at our fingertips. The shift to the online world has reshaped interpersonal communication, changed our virtual and real communities, transformed the collection and storage of information and reconstructed education methodologies.

The faceless aspect of the online world defines people by their interests rather than by their nationalities, race, gender, social or religious backgrounds. The Internet has become a substitute for direct contact and little information is available about the negative physical and mental health costs of online life. Off-line information is decreasing, creating an information gap between countries and people with online access and those without. How can we ensure that this phenomenon does not become a new division in the global community?

If you are interested in contributing to this or any issue of *Mozaik*, please inform the editors as soon as possible at [mozaik@wscf-europe.org](mailto:mozaik@wscf-europe.org). They will also be able to help you with any questions you may have.