

The Way of Peace

ISSUE 6

Respect For Creation

This is the sixth in a series of eight pamphlets offered by the Columban Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice focusing on peace and active non-violence.

Peace, ecology and justice are intricately interconnected. Human beings are called to live harmoniously with the natural world since all creatures are parts of the one web of life. In recent decades environmental scientists have been explaining the interconnections between all things and people. We are called to make decisions that locate us within these natural cycles, not outside them.

In building a culture of peace, people need to recognise their intimate relationship with the natural world. We depend on it as God upholds every moment of our existence. An attitude of respect and reverence for creation is grounded in a deep sense of the sacred.

Today, because of an attitude of domination and disrespect for the integrity of creation, humanity has become a threat, not only to the survival of other species, but to the survival of the human species itself. The values and ideas that contribute to environmental destruction are the same as those that contribute to injustice and the oppression of people. Pope John Paul 11 has called for an ecological conversion for all people. Through our lifestyle choices and through the planning and implementation of strategies at every level - local, national and international - we can become peacemakers, healing and creating harmonious relationships not only with humans but with all of creation.

Some Principles from the Earth Charter:

- ✦ Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems.
- ✦ Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and be cautious when knowledge is limited.
- ✦ Adopt patterns of consumption that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, while still meeting reasonable human needs.
- ✦ Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange of knowledge.

A Prayer for Creation

God our Creator
You have given us the earth,
the sky and the seas.

Show us the way to care
for the earth
Not just for today but
for ages to come.

Let no plan or work of ours
Damage or destroy
the beauty of
your creation.

Send forth your Spirit to
direct us
To care for the earth
and all creation.

(Columban Mission)

"Christians in particular, realise that their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith"

Pope John Paul 11, New Year Message 1990, no 15

"The whole universe together participates in the divine goodness more perfectly and represents it better than any single creature whatever." St Thomas Aquinas



"Human domination over inanimate and other living things being granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by the quality of life of neighbour, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, no 2415.

PROFILE OF A PEACE MAKER

Colin Brown

Colin is an environmental and corporate lawyer who is the Director of Catholic EarthCare Australia. In his role on this advisory Council to the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development, Ecology and Peace he, along with the other members, does research, networks with other groups, provides resources, and carries out advocacy initiatives by encouraging a reverence for Creation, and a responsible stewardship of Earth's natural resources. Colin's passion and drive has contributed to the establishment of Catholic EarthCare Australia. He sees his work for the environment as a way contributing to a more peaceful Australia.

USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.catholicearthcareoz.net

Catholic EarthCare Australia

www.acfonline.org.au

Australia Conservation Foundation

<http://conservation.catholic.org>

Catholic Welfare Commission Australia

www.landcareaustralia.com.au

Landcare Australia

<http://eca.anu.edu.au/>

The Earth Charter Movement

www.csiro.gov.au

CSIRO



COLUMBAN MISSION

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"The Australian Dream – is it killing us?" Derek Eames, University of Technology of Sydney 2002

FACT FILE

- ✦ Four major environmental problems face the globe in the early 21st century
 - the state of the oceans
 - loss of biodiversity
 - land and water degradation
 - greenhouse gas emissions.
 Australia is worst performed of all developed countries on three of the four (Blueprint for a Sustainable Australia, Australian Conservation Foundation, 2000, p3).
- ✦ Under present conditions, Australia is not environmentally sustainable (State of the Environment Report, 2001, www.ea.gov.au/).
- ✦ Australian native bush is being cleared at well over one hundred times the rate that it is being replaced.
- ✦ In 2000, Australia exported seven million tonnes of wood chip from native forests – the majority from Tasmania.
- ✦ Just over 10% of Australia's old growth forests remain sustainable (State of the Environment Report, 2001, www.ea.gov.au/).
- ✦ The health of the Murray-Darling basin epitomises the ecological crisis. This once great waterway now surrenders 80% of its flow for human consumption. Since European settlement, between 12 and 15 billion trees have been lost from the Basin. (A New Earth: The Environmental Challenge, Australian Bishops Social Justice Sunday Statement 2002).
- ✦ In Australia, 70% of all water is used by agriculture.
 - 80 000 litres of water can evaporate in a day from 1 hectare
 - 200 000 litres of water earns \$100 profit in fruit growing
 - 2 780 000 litres of water earns \$100 profit from pasture.

What can you do?

- ✦ "I have no power!" Oh yes, you do!
- ✦ **Our lifestyle choices make a difference. Reduce, Re-Use, Recycle!**
- ✦ Check the energy rating on your home/work appliances and eliminate high energy usage.
- ✦ Save water by planting a low - water - use garden.
- ✦ Use your car less and public transport more often.
- ✦ Say no to plastic bags from stores – use your own cloth bag.
- ✦ Order a free copy of the video and discussion booklet "The Garden Planet", follow the suggestions, and support Catholic EarthCare Australia by phoning Sascha at 02 4253 0858.