



CARMEngo

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Although people are rightly worried about preserving natural habitats, too little effort has been made to safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic human ecology. Such an ecology will place the human person at the centre of environmental concerns, while simultaneously promoting an urgent sense of human responsibility for the Earth, be it at the level of states, commerce or individuals. Happily, as the essential symbiosis of life on the planet becomes plain, there is already a growing acknowledgement that good environmental policies are by extension good people policies too.

*Archbishop Migliore
14th Session of the
Commission on Sustainable
Development of the Economic
and Social Council*

May 11, 2006

INTRODUCTION

Facts are not always easy to assimilate. Reality reveals our limits. While I think of myself as an athlete and can run a marathon, my weight, lack of flexibility, muscle strength, and joints swollen due to age reveal another side of me – an undesired but true and hidden side. A fantasy delirious with my prowess is indeed dangerous. To daydream about such a desired reality does not mean that those dreams can become real. This example applies to sustainable development in a changing globe that paradoxically seems to be unchanged in its fundamentals.

It is evident that after many years of trying to form a social conscience on the sustainable development of production and consumption patterns in the West, and now globally, has failed. The questions that arise are simple: Why? What are we doing wrong?

WHY?

I suggest that seeking sustainable development can become a hypothesis *ad hoc*. It continues to explore and exploit nature and human beings within the conventional framework of economic expansion and the maximization of benefits. In other words, sustainable development does not change the pattern of development.

Sustainable Development: A Spiritual Challenge or Just Nothing – A Utopia

by Eduardo Agosta Scarel, O. Carm.

A hypothesis *ad hoc* is understood not from a scientific viewpoint, but in the ethical premise to act. Usually by using such a hypothesis, we try to justify everything that cannot be “proven yet” as valid, necessary, and that we hope to achieve soon. Thus to look at sustainable development as a hypothesis *ad hoc* can serve to justify our continuing doing what we have been doing. Our conscious speech is acting as if we are acting reasonably and following sane proposals. However, sustainable development becomes only an attempt to delay the violent decomposition of our societies. We still think that science and technology can amazingly save us even while we are destroying the planet.

DATA SPEAKS ABOUT FACTS

Global warming is like fever in a body. It warns us that there is a disturbance in the internal balance of the body and it is affecting the body’s overall health – we are



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This article is an excerpt from Eduardo Scarel's presentation at the United Nations on May 11, 2010. To read his complete presentation, go to our website at carmelitengo.org

sick. The Earth–Body fever is warning us of an ecological sickness, a total human and environmental crisis.

We have so much technical information and scientific data that allow us to see the reality, to see what is really happening. The environmental crisis is not the mere madness of a few green environmentalists. The ecological crisis is also revealing a serious inner crisis among human beings. During the recent decades, we have been daydreaming about a technological future that would bring growing benefits and progress. We have not questioned ourselves to know if we can really run the marathon.



Eduardo Agosta Scarel, O. Carm., with Ambassador Pablo Solon of Bolivia to the United Nations

WHAT HAVE WE SCIENTIFICALLY OBSERVED

We have already degraded the soil, polluted rivers, lakes and seas. We are experts in massive deforestation and the irreversible extinction of the biodiversity of our planet. In addition, we consume enormous amounts of oil, coal and natural gas that are non–renewable and disappearing energy sources. There is an increasing distance between the richest and the poorest sectors of our nations. There also are other real facts; the increase of world hunger, severe undernourishment, both food and fresh water shortages in vast areas. Simultaneously we are reaching world records of grain harvests and transferring heavily polluting and highly extractive industries towards peripheral areas of the “developed world.” Barely 25% of the world’s population devours 80% of the natural resources of the Earth and 70% of the world’s food production.

Global warming is a symptom of a global socio–economic model that is unsustainable in nature. The earth’s temperature increases because there are more greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂, etc.). There are more emissions because the world consumes more energy. The energy mostly comes from non–renewable resources and most of them are at the limit of exhaustion. High energy demands are associated with highly developed societies whose lifestyles are characterized by exorbitant consumption. Exorbitant consumption means that we consume more than we actually need.

Bear in mind the following: “Western societies believe that the evil is unreal”. We probably understand evil as the absence of goods. Within this paradigm of the evil unreality, the desire and the greed are inoffensive. Better, they produce the abundance when emulating the producer–consumer relationship.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED

The important step is to pass from information to learning. Learning always requires a decision making process, discerned from both the personal and global data reflecting the entire reality. The current economy rests on the logic of the dissatisfaction of desire that is an endogenous violence common to all human beings and which every society at some time in history must face up to. The current economy empowers the production of an abundance of objects (goods) to alleviate the tension of the desire. But human desire is an inner dynamism that can be easily manipulated. The consumption of goods is external to the freedom and decision of every individual.

THE NEW CHALLENGES: THE SPIRITUAL PATH

A challenge always comes out every time we encounter a limit. Limits really

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Links to Sustainable Development Sites:

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division for Sustainable Development
un.org/esa/dsd/index.shtml

Education for Sustainable Development
www.unesco.org/en/esd/

United Nations Foundation–Sustainable Development
www.unfoundation.org/global-issues/sustainable-development/

UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
www.gdrc.org/sustdev/un-desd/

IISD Linkages: Sustainable Development
www.iisd.ca/process/sustdevt.htm

UN System Wide Earth Watch
earthwatch.unep.net/sdev/index.php

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development – Rio+20
157.150.195.10/esa/dsd/rio20/

For your convenience, these and other resources are linked on our website: carmelitengo.org



Declaration to be introduced at the United Nations in September

Mother Earth: A Universal Declaration

“God created man in his image; in the divine image God created him; male and female God created them. God blessed them, saying: ‘Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth.’ God also said: ‘See I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food.’ And so it happened. God looked at everything and found it good.” Genesis 1:27–31.

This story of creation reveals God’s tremendous love and concern for all of creation by providing humankind and all creatures with an abundance of the basic needs for life, i.e. food, water, energy, etc. Since the writing of Genesis much has happened regarding the *abundance of the basic needs for life*. Today the natural resources of our planet are in serious danger. Because of our insatiable consumption, the resources of earth are being polluted, depleted and/or degraded. Time has shown that we are irresponsible caretakers of creation.

The time has come for us to become responsible caretakers of creation. To do this we need a change in attitude toward the environment. We can begin to change our attitude by changing the words we use when speaking about Earth. For example, in the Genesis story of creation suppose the text would read; “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and *care for it* (instead of subdue it).” “*Have responsibility over* the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth (instead of “Have dominion over ...).”

“**The time has come for us to be responsible caretakers of creation.**”

Often when we speak about earth, we say “the”

earth as if we are speaking of an object that we have no relationship with. We don’t say The Mars or The Jupiter when speaking of the other planets. Why do we speak of Earth this way? Earth is extremely important to us and we need to understand our relationship with Earth.

There is a movement to speak of earth as ‘mother’. All are born from our mothers and depend upon them for life. So it is with Mother Earth. All are born from and depend upon the fruits of Mother Earth for life.

In September Ambassador Pablo Solon of Bolivia will introduce the *Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth* at the United Nations. The preamble of the Declaration states: We, the peoples and nations of Earth: considering that we are all part of Mother Earth, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings with a common destiny; gratefully acknowledging that Mother Earth is the source of life, nourishment and learning and provides everything we need to live well; recognizing that the capitalist system and all forms of depredation, exploitation, abuse and contamination have caused great destruction, degradation and disruption of Mother Earth, putting life as we know it today at risk through phenomena such as climate change; convinced that in an interdependent living community it is not possible to recognize the rights of only human beings without causing an imbalance within Mother Earth; affirming that to guarantee human rights it is necessary to recognize and defend the rights of Mother Earth and all beings in her and that there are existing cultures, practices and laws that do so; conscious of the urgency of taking decisive, collective action to transform structures and systems that cause climate change and other threats to Mother Earth; proclaim this Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, and call on the General Assembly of the United Nations to adopt it, as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations of the world, and to the end that every individual and institution takes responsibility for promoting through teaching, education, and consciousness raising, respect for the rights recognized in this Declaration and ensure through prompt and progressive measures and mechanisms, national and international, their universal and effective recognition and observance among all peoples and States in the world.

For information go to: pwccc.wordpress.com

by Jane Remson, O. Carm.
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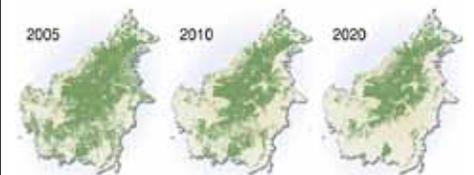
Booklets on Human Trafficking



Arie Kuil, O. Carm., the European Union representative to the Carmelite NGO, has headed up a project to print five booklets on different forms of human trafficking. The booklets, currently available only in Dutch, are reflections based on the writings of Carlos Mesters, O. Carm., of Brazil.

More information about the publications is available from ajkuil@ziggo.nl

Real Time World Statistics



This website tracks the world’s population as well as statistics related to government and economics, society and media, the environment, food, water, energy, and health. Available in 32 different languages, the *Worldometers* website is part of the Real Time Statistics Project, managed by an international team of developers, researchers, and volunteers with the goal of making world statistics available in a thought-provoking and time relevant format to a worldwide audience.

Statistics come from data published by the most reputable organizations and statistical offices in the world.

For more information: www.worldometers.info/

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make us grow from inside. The changing world is not only because of global climate change. The interpretation of nature and of the human being and the relationship between them is subtly changing. However interpretation is a work of the Spirit, a mental activity and must be in agreement with reality offering the limits. The main obstacle for the desire-based economy is the physical limit. We live on a limited planet. Our wishes are infinite and the indefinite growth proposed by some is impossible, amorphous in terms of the energy balance for a natural and limited system as our planet is. In other words, such a growth without taking into account the complexity of the underlying interconnections in the biosphere and the geosphere involves irreversible cancer at all levels in every natural system.

Our planet is too small for the economic system built on human desire. It is the first time our activities are born locally and their effects become global. We are unable to understand the reach of our actions, and that comprises a human limit. Furthermore, there is in every human being a vocation to the limitless (God) that it is sometimes confused with desire of objects (goods). When this limitless desire for goods is released on a planetary scale, the planet no longer has enough resources to satisfy it.

For Catholic theology, the source of human wishes is really the desire of being whose roots lie deep in our nature as human beings. Every one of us is somehow incomplete. The desire is expressed as a search for community; the opening to others, to creation, to God. The traditional societies, the sacred traditions as well as the ancient religions with their rituals and sacrifices, worked like limits to the world of the desire.

We are mind and spirit. What we discern are values. The values are those essential ideas that are charged of affective human force. The values are those force-ideas that mobilize us. Once seen, illuminated by the spirit, values move our desires and aspirations, our body and mind. They are essential because once discovered they are nonnegotiable.

There are values that are essentially nonnegotiable – convictions that turn to life attitudes. Thus a pro-sustainable development life attitude must discover that: few things are essential, little is often sufficient, dissatisfaction is part of life, local actions have global effects, human desires are infinite, and an economy of human needs and not maximization of profits.

If you are a believer to rediscover the limitless desire is a manifestation of the human beings' vocation to turn to God through other people and nature.

Carmelite Angelo Paoli: Father of the Poor

A 17–18th century Carmelite who worked among the poor and sick as well as the rich and noble of Rome has been raised to the rank of “Blessed” by the Catholic Church. Angelo Paoli lived a life characterized by the concern and charity to the needy. He had a holistic approach, understanding that to give a person bread would only feed the body. So Blessed Angelo also provided nourishment for the soul. His pastoral care for the sick included music therapy and “clown therapy,” two techniques widely employed in medical care today.

Paoli's devotion to the cross of Christ led him to place crosses on several hilltops around Italy as well as in the Roman coliseum. The cross currently in the coliseum was restored in 2000.

Fr. Fernando Millán, the Prior General of the Carmelite Order, wrote that “For Blessed Angelo, the poor are not a metaphor, a topic for discussion, or a mere statistic. He approached the poor as a contemplative who saw in them the real Christ, the suffering Christ, poor and crucified for whom he had so much devotion. From this he drew his infamous phrase which he often repeated with great humility, “Whoever loves God must look for him among the poor.”

The testimony of Blessed Angelo's life opens the eyes of our hearts to listen to the murmurs of our time, and to respond generously and in solidarity to the new forms of poverty and marginalization that our society generates.

For more on the life of Angelo Paoli, go to carmelites.info



Cross erected in Rome's coliseum by Angelo Paoli, O. Carm. and reflected upon by thousands of tourists daily.

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