

## CREATION NOT FOR SALE

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. for he founded it on the sea and established it on the waters." Psalm 24:1-2

### 1. Introduction.

This is a brief presentation to the Pre Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation. The Creation is not for Sale. In a world such as ours the creation has been subjected to exploitation and as agents and stewards there is an urgent need to reflect upon and defend the earth within the terms of justice.

### 2. "He saw the earth and it was good"

Undoubtedly, to see the creation, the earth was good and beautiful with incomparable beauty; behold the heavens, the sky, the sun shine and the stars. All was good beautiful and incomparable beauty. To pass through the mountains, the beautiful flowers, to hear birds singing and the murmur of the spring. We realize the goodness or the "good" of creation that challenges us today to a new responsibility. In Genesis 1 we read:

*"Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."*

*"Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness."*

*"Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so."*

*"Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years."*

*"Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky."*

*"Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.'...and God saw that it was good."*

*"Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness,"...and so from the ground, God created humankind in his own image, male and female he created them."*

*Today the earth is losing that beauty is disfigured as a result of humanity's greed . Rivers and streams are contaminated, the disappearance of large lakes, catastrophic floods, deforestation in the Amazon basin, reduction of glaciers across the world's mountains, desert lands encroach more as a result of droughts. Excessive global warming because of the greenhouse gases is killing the ecological systems that humans need to survive.*

This humanity that was good, allied with God, now has become the abusive bully of the earth, enemies of the earth, having lost respect for the earth and obedience, we have forgotten what it is to be an ally of God. All of this because of our pride and arrogance.

### 3. The importance of the earth.

In the biblical creation story we meet God who entrusts us with His creation to humanity. God does it to benefit all human beings so that they can care for creation, at the same time that creation can be used to sustain life. (1)

Humanity was put on earth to care for and work on it, that is, the Lord made us stewards, and the earth is God's, as Lev. 25:23 says: The steward is called to work to care, protect and preserve, that is, the humanity was called to protect the land.

The land is for Co-living. Co-living well is knowing how to live in community with everyone and everything. The individual is not denied in the vision of Living Well but always within the context of living in community. To be a person, one must meet the needs of community. The individual works for the common good of the community to which they belong. The individual cannot be above the community. This community is not only among humans but includes nature. Living well postulates an intercultural encounter of different cultures on an equal footing. (2)

The land is for living well, it means to live in community, in harmony and especially in complementarity behaviors, that is to share and not compete, to live in harmony between people and as part of nature. (3)

The land for indigenous peoples is paramount, not having land makes one an outsider, not being of this people. For this reason the good life in the indigenous world means having a land, to have a home, and a healthy and fertile territory; to grow sufficient and in a diversified manner, to preserve, care, to keep clean the rivers, forests, air, mountains, to have a territory managed collectively, an education based on their own values and constant communication, implies governed by a code of ethics and mutual recognition and respect for the rights of others, also it involves deciding collectively the priorities of each village or community. (4)

Unfortunately this principle was broken, environmental problems arose and the world became corrupted, the human being was responsible for contaminating water sources, sin has infected our food and the air we breathe. Selfish actions of men and women have begun to fill their ambitions and gradually destroy the earth using destructive gases that have caused problems in the ozone layer and today we call the "greenhouse effect". Others have satisfied their desires indiscriminately using non-renewable resources, to the point that those considered renewable resources are now extinct or on their verge thereof.

Not content with that shamelessly, they seek to take all of creation, without owning, they take all as if it belonged to them. Yet, God the Creator remains the author and owner until the end of time .

*The Word says: "The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers." Lev. 25:23*

Therefore humanity does not own nor producer, but "caregiver", "grower" and "facilitator". The only productive force in the strict sense is Mother Earth, and her various aspects such as water, minerals, hydrocarbons, and energy source in general. Human beings do not "produce" or "create" but cultivate or grow so that mother earth produces. The human being is the tool for "transformation" of elements and processes that if you do not depend on humanity. (5)

The main problem of humanity regarding environmental abuse is: Humanity is selfish and ambitious nothing is enough for him or her, we exceed our needs and pitifully we harm the earth. God has taught us "Sabbath" "to stop doing things" for the sake of a full and happy life. The Sabbath reminds us that everything should stop. "Stop, there are more important things than money."

### **3. Problem of Land Possession/Rights**

The land remains a problem in our countries. In the case of Bolivia, before the agrarian reform, the large landowners, particularly in the highlands and the valley regions, large estates controlled more than 95 % of the arable land. In other words, the peasants had no right to the land. Thanks to the struggle of the people, the indigenous movements, on August 2, 1953 the National government,

made reality the so-called agrarian reform under the slogan "**land is for those who work it**" premise with which in the valleys and the Bolivian altiplano land was distributed in favor of the original peasants. Unfortunately, that situation or, reality, did not occur in the Amazon, Chaco and east of our country, in the less populated regions and indigenous population where there is little contact with the state.

Later during the de facto government, this situation would change, "**and is for those who pay.**" Relatives of those in power received hundreds of thousands of hectares while peasants and indigenous people lived in poverty and were subjected to the level of slavery by landowners.

The consequence of the reform over the years was the creation of small land trusts, that is the creation of the small land plots which are minimally productive, which continues to divide and get smaller passing by inheritance from parents to children. Today, 59 years after the issue of land rights and territory remains a real issue, mainly because the issue of land rights has not been corrected and there are still peasants, landless indigenous and original land dwellers without land or insufficient land for self-sufficiency

#### **4. Conclusion**

Let's agree that creation is not, nor neither should it be for sale. There is no right to propose its sale because we are neither owners nor property owners of creation. To sell creation in the end is a catastrophe for humankind. The reason for that affirmation is that land is life, because we live here and, if sailing the land others have to survive. Our existence here and now depends in our relation with the creation. Thus creation is not for sale. We have to defend, reflect and strive to live well. Living well is to live in equality and justice. To live where there are neither exploiters nor exploited persons; living where there are neither excluded nor those who would exclude; living where there are neither the marginalized nor those who marginalize. It means living in community, in collectivity, in reciprocity, in solidarity, and especially in harmony. "The land belongs to those who work it, and cherish it and protect it."

#### **Bibliography**

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