

How the Church can act as a catalyst in building up a new sustainable economy

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God's purpose in Christ is to heal and bring to wholeness not only persons but the entire created order. "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross. (Col.1: 19-20) The Church should work for a godly, just and sustainable economy which enable men, women and children to flourish along with all diversity of creation. We should be open to all models. We may accept one model as the starting point but should be open to learning from the others as well, thus broadening and deepening our commitment to the renewal of God's creation.

1. Monastic Model

Ascetic or monastic model, is the oldest form of the Church's responses aimed at integrating some concerns relating to ecology as well as the crisis created by the misuse of the natural environment. Living in harmony with Nature and keeping her needs to a minimum, the monastic communities proclaimed the message that the earth is the Lord's and that it should not be indiscriminately used to satisfy human avarice and greed. It was also a powerful protest against a wasteful lifestyle that is devoid of any responsibility to the world of nature. The Indian philosophical tradition culminated in an organic, holistic and spiritual world view and renunciative way of life. Hence, reduced consumption is an obvious outcome of the philosophy. There emerges, thus, a pattern which is eco-friendly and sustainable.

2. Liberative model

Ecological liberation approach is based on the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus. Bringing about the Kingdom of God is an active process of removing the sources of oppression and working towards the day when God's justice will reign in the human and non-human world. The Church must recognise and challenge the sinful socio-economic and political systems that oppress the Earth, its environmental systems and its people. The church in solidarity with the weakest, with that part of the creation that is victimised, seeks the renewal of whole creation. The Church has to declare its solidarity with the with the groups like Chipko, Appico, Narmada Bachavo Andolan(NBA), National Fishworkers' Forum(NFF), Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangh(KRRS), etc. struggling for ecological justice.

3. Eco-friendly Outlook- Study from Nature

The resources in Nature are finite or limited. These finite resources are used for an infinite period of time by getting constantly renewed. This is possible only if the resources are recycled. That is the reason behind cyclicity. One of the most inevitable results of this cyclicity is that all the living and nonliving things get connected to one

another. Such connected or inter related things are involved in a constant process of 'give and take'. Every living organism accepts something either from other organism or from the environment, and in return gives something to it. eg. honeybee accepts honey from nature as her food, and gives pollination(gives honey and pollination done). Environment maintains diversity. It doesn't allow any particular species becoming so dominant that it will affect the existence of other species. There is no VIP-ism in nature. Environment is a system which is 'of all, by all, for all'. Everything in nature is decentralized. Through decentralization, Nature tries to divide the burden equally at all places. Food gets produced or is available everywhere; water quenches thirst everywhere; waste is decomposed everywhere. Everything in nature is biodegradable. Human attitude is responsible for all the problems of environment. We only take everything from nature, there is no giving. Whatever goes away from us to nature is hazardous, toxic or non-biodegradable. this affects the Natural cycles.

4.Catalyst in building up a new economy

The Church should act as a catalyst in building up a new sustainable economy. Building a new economy involves phasing out the old industries, restructuring the existing ones, and creating new ones. It is being replaced by efficiency gains in some countries; by natural gas in others, such as the United Kingdom and China; and by wind power in others such as Denmark. The new economy will also bring major new industries, ones that either do not yet exist or that are just beginning. Wind electricity generation is one such industry. Now in its embryonic stage, it promises to become the foundation of the new energy economy. In effect, there will be three new subsidiary industries associated with wind power: turbine manufacturing, installation, and maintenance. Manufacturing facilities will be found in scores of countries, industrial and developing. Installation, which is basically a construction industry, will be more local in nature. Maintenance, since it is a day-to-day activity, will be a source of ongoing local employment.

5. Training the personnels for a new economic system.

The Church already owns scores of educational institutions. If we have a vision about a new society emerging, then we should start institutions to train the personnel for the new economy.

“ And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). It is true that Church could not bring out such a new economic order which has political, economic, social, and other dimensions are involved. Church should have an ecological vision of the new society that should emerge. A prophetic Church should foresee such changes. i.e Expanding Professions in an Eco-friendly Economy. This will be a catalytic work for building up a new economy. Here the role of the Church is the role of a midwife. Mr.Lester R Brown in his book Eco-Economics mentions some of the job opportunities available in the new economic order.

1. Wind meteorologists

As wind becomes an increasingly prominent energy source, there will be a need for thousands of wind meteorologists to analyse potential wind sites, monitor wind speeds, and select the best sites for wind farms. The better the data on wind resources, the more

efficient the industry will become. Wind meteorologists will play a role in the new energy economy comparable to that of petroleum geologists in the old one. World-wide, use of wind power alone has multiplied nearly fourfold over the last five years, a growth rate matched only by the computer industry.

Closely related to this new profession will be the wind engineers who design the wind turbines. Again, the appropriate turbine size and design can vary widely according to site. It will be the job of wind engineers to tailor designs to specific wind regimes in order to maximise electricity generation.

2. Family planning midwives

If the world population is to stabilise soon, literally millions of family planning midwives will be required.

3. Foresters

Reforestation of the earth will require professional guidance on what species to plant where and in what combination.

4. Hydrologists

In a future of water scarcity, watershed hydrologists will be in demand. It will be their responsibility to understand the hydrological cycle, including the movement of underground water, and to know the depth of aquifers and determine their sustainable yield. They will be at the center of watershed management regimes.

As water scarcity spreads, the demand for hydrologists to advise on watershed management, water sources, and water efficiency will increase.

5. Aqua-cultural veterinarians

Until now, veterinarians have typically specialised in either large animals or small animals, but with fish farming likely to overtake beef production before the end of this decade, marine veterinarians will be in demand.

6. Ecological economists

As it becomes clear that the basic principles of ecology must be incorporated into economic planning and policymaking, the demand for economists able to think like ecologists will grow.

7. Geothermal geologists

With the likelihood that large areas of the world will turn to geothermal energy both for electricity and for heating, the demand for geothermal geologists will increase.

8. Environmental architects

Architects are learning the principles of ecology so they can incorporate them into the buildings in which we live and work. Environmental architecture is another fast-growing profession. Among the signposts of an environmentally sustainable economy are buildings that are in harmony with the environment. Environmental architects design buildings that are energy- and materials-efficient and that maximise natural heating, cooling, and lighting.

9. Bicycle mechanics

As the world turns to the bicycle for transportation and exercise, bicycle mechanics will be needed to keep the fleet running.

10. Wind turbine engineers

With millions of wind turbines likely to be installed in the decades ahead, there will be strong worldwide demand for wind turbine engineers.

11. Sanitary engineers

Another pressing need, particularly in developing countries, is for sanitary engineers who can design sewage systems not dependent on water, a trend that is already under way in some water-scarce countries.

12. Technologists for Hydrogen generation

As the transition from a carbon-based to a hydrogen-based energy economy progresses, hydrogen generation will become a huge industry as hydrogen replaces coal and oil.

13. Fuel cell manufacturing technician

As fuel cells replace internal combustion engines in automobiles and begin generating power in buildings, a huge market will evolve.

14. Solar cell manufacturing technician

For many of the 2 billion people living in rural Third World communities who lack electricity, solar cells will be the best bet for electrification.

15. Light rail construction

As people tire of the traffic congestion and pollution associated with the automobile, cities in industrial and developing countries alike will be turning to light rail to provide mobility.

16. Comprehensive re-cycling technologists

As efforts to close the materials cycle intensify, many throwaway products will be either banned or taxed out of existence. As the world shifts from a throwaway economy, engineers will be needed to design products that can be recycled—from cars to computers. Once products are designed to be disassembled quickly and easily into component parts and materials, comprehensive re-cycling is relatively easy.

17. Teleconferencing

Another industry that will play a prominent role in the new economy, one that will reduce energy use, is teleconferencing. Increasingly for environmental reasons and to save time, individuals will be “attending” conferences electronically with both audio and visual connections. This industry involves developing the electronic global infrastructure, as well as the services, to make this possible. One day there will likely be literally thousands of firms organising electronic conferences. Restructuring the global economy will create not only new industries, but also new jobs—indeed, whole new professions and new specialities within professions.

6. Restructuring the Economy

These aspects give us some idea of the size of the ecological crisis of the planetary system. The Earth is sick and wounded. Human beings, especially with the advent of the industrial revolution, have proved that they are

exterminating angels, veritable demons of the earth. But human beings could also become guardian angels, intent upon saving the earth, which is fatherland and motherland. What kind of society do we want? Surely we want it to be more participatory, egalitarian, aiming at solidarity, and capable of uniting imagination and analytical reason.

The world energy economy is on the verge of a major transformation. Historically, the twentieth century was the century of fossil fuels. Coal, already well established as a major fuel source in 1900, was joined by oil when the automobile came on the scene. It was not until 1967, however, that oil finally replaced coal as the workhorse of the world energy economy. Natural gas gained in popularity during the closing decades of the century as concern about urban air pollution and global climate change escalated, moving ahead of coal in 1999. We know the kind of restructuring that is needed. In simplest terms, our fossil-fuel-based, automobile-centered, throwaway economy is not a viable model for the world. According to Lester R Brown, the alternative is a solar/hydrogen energy economy, an urban transport system that is centred on advanced-design public rail systems and that relies more on the bicycle and less on the automobile, and a comprehensive reuse/recycle economy. And we need to stabilise population as soon as possible.

Conclusion

We believe that God loves creation and wants its life to flourish. No creature is different in God's sight. Every creature has its own dignity and its own rights, because all are included in God's covenant. So it is said in the story of Noah: "Behold", says God, " I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and every living creature" (Gen 9: 9-10). The fundamental human rights come from this covenant "with us". The rights of future generations come from the covenant "with us and our descendants." The rights of nature come from the covenant "with us and our descendants and with every living creature". Before God, the creator, we and our descendants and every living creature are equal partners of God's covenant. Nature is not our property. ALL Living beings must be respected by humanity as God's partners in the covenant. Whoever destroys the nature, destroys him/herself. Whoever injures the dignity of the animals, injures God. We should consider earth as a single complex system, as a living organism. Every subsystem is linked to all other subsystems through the blowing of the winds, the oceans, the migration of species, the cycles of growth, maturation, ageing and death. By means of the air that we breathe we are united with all animals, all plants, but also our vehicles, factories, and all our industrial chimneys. Hence We have to build an economy that will support, not undermine, future generations. As an organised body, Church can work as a catalyst in this transformation for a sustainable economy. Green Church movements are for building up a sustainable economy to protect the rights of future generations.

