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ECOLOGY AND HUMAN WELL-BEING

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INTRODUCTION

Definition of Terms

Before getting through this essay, I would like to explain these two main terms “Ecology,” and “Well-being”. According to the Encyclopedia of Knowledge, the word “Ecology” is derived from two Greek words: “oikos” meaning “house,” and “logos” that means, “study of.”¹ This word is believed to have been coined by the German naturalist Ernst Haeckel who used it, and defined it in 1869². Hence, the word has been defined as a “scientific study of the interrelationships of plants, animals, and their environment”³. In same line of idea, Colin Tudge defines it as the study of the interaction between organisms and their physical environment, and between different kinds of organisms⁴. It is in this context of inter-relationship between beings and their environment that this essay will be developed. This planet earth will be considered as a common house all kinds of organisms, wither they be animate, or inanimate.

Concerning the word “Well-being,” I will refer to the definition of Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary that defines it as “a state of being well,” or “welfare.”⁵ And in this essay, this word “well-being” is to be understood in the sense of living healthly prosperously, and happily in different aspects of life.

¹ “Ecology” ENCYCLOPEDIA OF KNOWLEDGE, Vol.6(U.S.A.: Grolier incorporated,1995), 325

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Colin Tudge, GLOBAL ECOLOGY (London: Published by the Natural History Museum Cromwell, 1991),164

Background: The World in Crisis

In fact, it seems today that the world faces crucial problems, and difficult to solve. In many places throughout the world people are threatened with natural catastrophes such as drought, famines, epidemics, floods of water, and so on. As it was observed,

“Our age is paradoxical. It is one of opportunity, progress, expansion, and hope and desire for peace, prosperity, equality, and liberty. But at the same time our actions create the opposite. We seem to experience a painful ambiguity that assails most human activities. Man appears to live his life in a vicious circle of uncertainty and fear... For many reasons we have to admit that our age is one of trouble, distrust, perplexity, confusion, and uncertainty..⁶”

At times, it appears that some of the difficulties the world is facing today; result unfortunately, from human activities that cause damage to nature⁷. In most cases, their consequences affect not only human beings, but also other innocent organisms, and their environment.

Therefore, now it seems to be an appropriate time to think deeply about our environment and to find out solid strategies that will prevent it from falling continuously in dramatic and tragic situation.

Purpose

Considering that, Earth is the only one planet that fulfils all conditions for human life, among all planets evolving around the sun; I have felt responsible to warn my fellow colleagues, students, and, in a special way, my community in Rwanda, my homeland, about this big issue concerning the effect resulting from ecology crisis on human wel-being. I hope that all who will be able to get in contact with this essay will have a different look at the welfare of all beings, and their environment.

⁵ “ Well-being” WEBSTER’S COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY, 4th edition.,(USA: G&C. Msrria co., 1934),1087

⁶ V.Norskov Olsen, Opp. cit,p.10

MAN, A MORAL BEING

Dignity of Man

Among all animate creatures existing throughout the world, man seems to be a special creature, because he can think, choose freely; can create, and plan for the future. No other creature in the world can perform all these actions done by man. Hence we should ask ourselves why other creatures can not perform these activities that are unique to man. Frankly speaking this question needs a prompt and clear answer. Some people who initiated an anthropological study on this up till now, have not yet come out with a result. Man remains a mysterious creature in the world. According to V.Norskov Olsen,

"Each part of human body- from its microscopic part to those visible with the human eyes, as well as their interaction and interdependence- is wonder; and when observed, it becomes an object of surprise and astonishment. As an example we may consider the human brain"⁸

In fact this regards a physiological aspect of man. What really makes man different from other beings is that he originates from an infinite being. How a finite No other creature in the world can perform all these actions done by man. Hence, we should ask ourselves why other creatures couldn't perform these activities that are unique to man.

Frankly speaking, this question needs a prompt and clear answer. Some people who initiated an anthropological study on this up till now have not come out with the result. Man remains a mysterious creature in the world. How a creature, like man can define exhaustively what originates from a supreme God? If he could define himself, it would mean that he came into existence by himself, which is not true.

⁷ Cheryl Simon et Ruth S.DeFries, UNE PLANETE, UN AVENIR,(Washington D.C., Sang de la Terre(la traduction Francaise) Nouveau Horizon,1992), 57,58

Man is a wonderful creature because God has created him in His image, says the Holy Scriptures (Genesis 1: 26,27). It is for this reason that V.Norskov Olsen states,

“ Man is the imago Dei of God because of his spiritual nature, mental capacity, and moral responsibilities, as well relational (social) abilities not only with his fellow men, but with the invisible creator. This moral spiritual relationship Christ expressed as the love to God and love to man. Man ‘s individuality- with his self determination, as well as his creativity and ruler ship of the earth –expresses his likeness to God.”⁸

Indeed, to be created in the image of God is a special privilege for man. And this privilege goes along with the faculty of reason and freedom of choice. In addition, God gifted man with dominion over all creatures on the earth (Genesis 1:28). According to John H. Gerstner having dominion over them - by virtue of his ability to know and to love his creator, “Man is a creature superior to all creatures in this world”⁹

Simply put, man is a special creature, created in God’ s image. It means that God has made him His representative, His steward on the earth. The dignity of man is God centered. As Francis A. Schaeffer declares, “ the dignity of human life is unbreakably linked to the existence of the personal –infinite God. It is because there is a personal infinite God who has made men and women in his own image that they have a unique dignity of life as human beings.”¹⁰ Even though man has been strongly affected with the consequences of sin, it is affirmed that, yet he still remains man with rational nature, endowments, creative abilities rulership of the earth and the capacity for a responsible relationship to God and his fellowmen.”¹¹

However, it should be understood that this dignity goes together with the responsibility. Man is to care for nature, and to protect it. This is God’s responsibility to man (Genesis 2:15). To

⁸ V.Norskov. Olsen. Opp.Cit.,p.28

⁹ Ibid.p.28-28

¹⁰ Francis A.Schaeffer, A CHRISTIAN MANIFESTO(Westcher,III: Crossway Books, 1981),p. 69

¹¹ V.Norskov Olsen, Opp. Cit.. p.29

care for nature is not an option, but God's command. Human welfare has much to do with this command.

Nature

It would be senseless to talk about man without talking about nature, the environment in which God has installed him. Man is not like an island floating on the surface of the ocean. He is surrounded by other livings that God has created. God has installed man in a place that reflected the beauty of heaven. This place, the Garden of Eden was to be the capital of our planet earth. God has chosen this planet because in his wisdom he has found it fit for human life. Accordingly, Colin Tudge states that a place for life to exist must also have a liquid water on its surface... Hence we should count ourselves happy because the planet earth is big enough to retain an atmosphere that has liquid surface water¹².

Among the nine planets of solar system, apart from the planet earth, there is none that could fit for human life. For instance, planet Venus is exhaustively hot; Mercury is not only too hot, but it lacks an atmosphere. On the other side, Mars lacks an ozone layer that may protect living beings against ultraviolet rays. In the same line of idea, planets Jupiter, and Saturn are made of gases, and have no solid surface. In addition, they are so too cold that livings can not survive there. It is the same problem with planets: Neptune, Uranus, and Pluto, which also are too cold.¹³

God prepared for man a place that was to enjoy him. His environment was fine and perfect. Through the beauty of nature man could see the hands of God and his creating power. In the same line of idea, E.G. White declares,

“The creator chose for our first parents the surrounding best adapted for their health and happiness. He did not place them in a place or surround them with

¹² Colin Tudge, opp.cit,p.10

¹³ Ibid. p.8-9

artificial adornment and luxuries that so many today are struggling to obtain. He placed them in close touch with nature and in close communion with the holy ones of heaven.”¹⁴

It is very evident that both man, and nature are precious in the eyes of God. All of them are the result of God’s creating work. This is why, in the Garden of Eden, God had made grow all kind of trees and vegetation, and had populated it with all kind of other creatures. Man had to live harmoniously with them. He was expected to protect and care for his beautiful environment. But, as says Emil Brunner, man was not called to an absolute, arbitrary master of nature but to be a master of nature which remains under the order of the creator, and therefore honors and loves the created universe as God’s creation.¹⁵

LAWS MORAL AND NATURAL

Moral Law

Wherever there is no law to follow, or any instruction, things go wrongly. People do whatever they like. Anarchy, disorder, injustice and violence prevail. The law protects the weak, and forbids the despot to overuse his authority, or power .It is in this context that God has established laws to regulate the conduct of human beings. These ones are termed “moral laws.”

In fact, even though God is transcendent, he is still near his people. As Paul has stated, “God is not far from each of us”(Acts 17:27) Man is expected to live in good terms not only with God, but also with his fellow men. For this reason, John states, “If man says, I love God and hateth his brother, he is liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? (1John 4:20 K.J.V)

¹⁴ E.G.White. THE MINISTRY OF HEALING,(California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942),261

¹⁵ Emil Brunner, THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF CREATION AND REDEMPTION, trans.,Olive Wyon, Vol.2, DOGMATICS(Philadelphia: Westmister Press, 1952),p.68

The principles of moral laws are well expressed in the Decalogue, that is, the Ten Commandments that God gave Moses at the mount of Sinai (Exodus 20:3-17). The first four commandments describe how man should relate to God, while the last six show how man should relate to his fellow men. Jesus summed them up saying that man is demanded to express sincere love towards God, and love his neighbor as he loves himself (Math. 22:37-37)

To love God implies also to love all what He has created and give their right value. It implies also to love nature and to protect it. In his infinite love, God did not only give man moral laws, but some others, regarding his well being in general. Some of these are sanitary laws (Levit. 13:1155: 33), laws concerning diet (Genesis 1: 30-31; Levit.11: 1-27), social laws (Exodus 21-22) etc. All these were to let man be in full communion with his creator, and in perfect harmony with his fellow men.

Natural Laws

In fact, we should know that the one, who created man, is the one who also made nature, animals, and other beings wherever they be. He knows all requirements for their survival. As He established laws to regulate human conduct; likewise he made laws to govern nature, in general. And every created being is demanded to observe strictly those laws.

Logically speaking, people are destined to live on dry land, and if you remove them from that place, and place them into water to live like fish, within few minutes they will die. Likewise, if you remove fish from water to let them live on dry land like men, they will also die. What about stars, and planet? God has organized things in such a way that, in their course around the sun there may be no collision. In his wisdom, God created things, and fixed ahead laws that will govern their existence. To violate those laws is to rebel against God's command. Referring to the complexity of natural laws, V.Norskov Olsen declares,

“ Natural law has been created so infinitely complex that even the strict law that maintains order in physical world allow for individuality. The growth of a crystal in a chemical solution is governed by rigid laws, and yet no two crystals are alike. Snowflakes are type of microscopic crystal with a basic hexagonal shape yet exhibiting an endless variety of patterns. In God’s universe there is order in a diversity.”¹⁶

Without natural laws human beings, animals and plants may encounter serious problems to solve. For this reason, Jean Flori declares, “ Man is to be acquainted with nature. He has to learn about nature in order to understand natural laws, and he has to understand natural laws in order to rule properly over nature.”¹⁷ People are to know that laws God has established are their benefit and their good. They should obey, and observe them without doubt.

Interaction between Moral and Natural Laws

As it has been spoken so far, there is close relationship between moral and natural laws. All of them originate from God for the welfare of man and nature. Man is to observe moral laws in order to live in harmony with his creator. But being in harmony with God also implies observing natural laws because his well-being is related to a strict observance of those laws. E.G.White states that to transgress God’s law physically, mentally, or morally is to place oneself out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, and ruin.¹⁸

Every human being would like to live peacefully, prosperously, and comfortably. But this may be impossible to achieve if he does not obey God and strictly observe both the moral and the natural laws. They are related to each other. Therefore, man as a moral being is to stand in the world as God’s representative, and rule over the earth according to the command of his Creator.

¹⁶ V.Norskov Olsen, opp.cit.,46

¹⁷ Jean Flori.p.117

¹⁸ E.G.White, EDUCATION(Canada: Pacific Press Publishing Association ,1952),99-100

MAN AND ECOLOGY

Nature and its Complexity

A thorough observation of nature leads us to wonders and admiration. The way all things are organized is a testimony of the most intelligent designer of everything that exists. And this designer is no one else than God. The way planets turn around the sun without falling down or colliding with it, show that there is a supreme being who also is an excellent lawgiver. To a thinking man, there is no excuse to deny the existence of God because, declares Paul, “ That which may be known of God is manifest in them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power, and Godhead (Romans 1:19-20).

In addition, it is read, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his hand work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.”(Psalm.19:1-2).Even though things may look alike, they are not also the same. This is a sign of the complexity of nature. According to some observations made about nature, it is affirmed,“The leaves on a tree are all different from one another, for the exact shape of each leaf and the pattern of the veins is unique. We see this same uniqueness in an insect’s wings or the pattern of kernels on an ear of corn. None of these phenomena are haphazard.”¹⁹

This complexity is observed on human beings. For instance, according to some observers,

“Our fingers constitute an individual identification of mark. The Federal Bureau of Investigation maintains the largest of fingerprints in the world approaching 200 million. No person can scrape off his skin hoping that another pattern will appear. He is identified by his fingerprints; none else has his pattern...”²⁰

This complexity of fingerprints is a divine stamp distinguishing God’s work from any other man-made product.

¹⁹Ibid.p. 45

Man an Ecology

As it was noted so far, we talk about ecology in reference to human beings, animals, plants, air, water, and so on. However all of these are under human governance. All animals ranging from the smallest to the biggest, like an elephant, are under human control. Man rules over nature by virtue of God's charge to do so at creation. For this reason, man could say, "I will praise the; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well."(Psalms 139:14).

Once again, though man is superior to other beings, still he is a creature. He must neither be worshiped, nor take the place of God. He must submit to God's will and rule over nature according to the laws established by the Creator.

ECOSYSTEM AND INTERDEPENDENCE PRINCIPLE**Interaction between Beings and Ecology.**

Ecologists have divided living beings into groups called biological communities or biomes (biocenese, in French). In addition, they call biotope (from Greek words " bios," meaning "soul," and " topos," which means "place") a physical, and chemical environment in which these biological communities are installed. Hence, an ecosystem is presented as a combination of both the biological community and the environment in which the living beings inhabit. And so all ecosystems of the planet put together they form what ecologists have called " biosphere."²¹

Etymologically speaking, ecology should literally be defined as " a study of a household." When we study about household we relate to the house itself, and to people living therein. If the house is bad or infected in any way, people and all things living therein become

²⁰ Ibid.p.46

²¹ "Ecologie" ENCYCLOPAEDIA UNIVERSALIS, Vol.6(Paris; Encyclopaedia Universalis, 1984), 577

affected. Mosquitoes may enter through broken windows and bite people. During the rain season, raindrops may make damage to things stored in the house, because the roof will be leaking.

In fact the welfare of human beings, and other organisms depends on conditions of their environment. Environment may be compared with a common house that accommodates different kinds of creatures, animate or inanimate. Let us think about a forest in fire. What will happen to the plants, animals, birds and other beings which are living there? All of them will be in trouble. What may happen, when there is no rain at all? Plants will dry-up, people and animals will suffer from hunger and dehydration.

Living beings and their environment work like the human body. In human body, all organs work together to achieve different functions in the body (Romans 12:4-6; 1Corinth.12:12-20).

Likewise, in the world, all livings work in complementary ways in order to survive. In the same context, Colin Tudge declares,

“Climate is determined by all kinds of influences, (distance from the equator, winds, water, heights of mountains etc); that the nature of soil depends on the climate (which breaks down the rocks), upon the kind of rocks involved (hard, soft, granitic, and upon their age; while vegetation is determined by both the climate and the nature of soil”.²²

It is therefore a universal law of nature that no creature lives independently of itself but symbiotically with one another. As it was observe:

“The animals affect the plants, and the plants affect the soil (for example, by producing protection against heavy rains, or by breaking up rocks with their roots, or producing acid which dissolve limestone); and the plants also directly or indirectly affect the climate for example by directing winds, or by transpiring soil moisture into the air.”²³

If we consider things objectively, no single creature can depend on himself alone for survival on this earth. Children depend upon their parents, wild animals find accommodations in forests,

²² Colin Tudge, *Opp.Cit.*,p.61-62

²³ *Ibid.*, p.62

poor countries depend on the rich ones. This interdependence principle is evident in different aspects of life. Therefore, I could say that wherever he may go, whoever he may be, and whatever he may do, man should know that there is no way he can act divorced from any environment he finds himself. Hence the saying, when you are in Rome do as Romans.

Destruction of Ecology by Man

All created beings, at the beginning seemed to be in harmony with man. Nature really reflected the beauty of heaven. But after the fall of man, many things changed. They were affected by consequences of sin, and the change of human mentality. This change introduced by sin of man affected the entire creation of God. As declares the apostle Paul, “ The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”(1Romans 8:22)

The world today seems to go through an ongoing crisis. Unfortunately, as moral beings, man seems to be behind this ongoing crisis, by his attempt to conquer nature and to dominate it. His activities, to some extent, are causing damages to nature in general. It is very sad because some people are not conscious of this dramatic situation ecology is facing. Accordingly, E.F Schumacher states, “ Modern man does not view himself as part of nature, but as an outside force destined to dominate and conquer it. He even talks of a battle with nature, forgetting that, even if he wins the battle, he would find himself on the losing side.”²⁴

Ecological crisis has ceased to be a local issue but a global one. The United Nations seem also to be concerned with this crucial issue. They are struggling for environmental protection. Expressing their concern about ecology, Barbara Ward and Rene Dubos assert that humanity is heading towards prompt and global crisis.²⁵ Humanity is going through a global crisis because the environment is threatened.

²⁴ V.Norskov Olsen, MAN, THE IMAGE OF GOD, Opp.cit. 117

²⁵ Chery Simon Silveer et Ruth S. DNE PLANETE, UN AVENIR. Opp.Cit.XIX

Among the many causes of the ecological crisis is the problem of demographic explosion that leads to deforestation activities. Most of the time, people destroy forests in order to farm, to build house, to cook their food, and sometimes, to meet some industrial needs²⁶. This deforestation affects ecology in different ways. For instance:

- Cultivable lands become deserts and loses its fertility
- Because of lack of their natural home, animals invading people either kill them, or destroy their crops
- During season rains, most of lands erode because of by floods of water.
- Some medicinal plants disappear.

All of these consequences affect survival people, animals and plants. As it was observed, “ Worldwide deserts have increased by 150 percent during the past 100 years, so that almost 50 percent of the earth's land surface is now desert or semi-desert.”²⁷

The experience of deforestation in Rwanda, my homeland comes readily to my mind. During its tragic crisis, around 1994 and thereafter, people destroyed forests so that mountains have become bare with no vegetation. And when rainy season started the soil along with houses were washed out by flood of water. This experience clearly demonstrated the effect of deforestation wherever it may be done.²⁸

Another cause of ecological crisis is the occurrence of acid rain. This occurs in most industrialized countries, like United States of America, Canada, and in Europe. It is affirmed that the effect of acid rain extends beyond the lake to forests, crops, soil, wildlife, ground-water, man-made materials, and no doubt directly or indirectly to human health.²⁹

²⁶ Claude Calamand, BIOLOGIE, GEOLOGIE 2 de SCIENCES DE LA VIE DE LA TERRE(Paris: Hachette Livre,1993), p.252

²⁷V.Norskov Olsen, opp.cit.118

²⁹ Ibid.,p.117

This acid rain results, from industrial smoke into the air, from toxic chemical wastes scattered everywhere, and fuel smoke. As, it has been observed,

“Air pollution has been known to have adverse effect on plants. Damage to plants usually occurs in the leaf structure. The leaf Veins function much the blood vessels do in animals, acting as the transport system for water, minerals and food. The leaf tissue is in layers with the epidermis forming a layer outside and the photosynthesis cells in between. These cells are called the palisade and the spongy parenchyma. Of particulate interest in air pollution studies are the stomata through which gases and vapors pass in and out of the leaf. These openings (stomata) are protected by special guard cells which open and close the stomata.”³⁰

It is true that people and animals that eat food from contaminated plants, or drink polluted water, may become sick, or even die. It is asserted that damage to leaves through air pollution takes several forms such as: necrosis referring to dead area on a leaf structure, a chlorosis, that is the loss or reduction of chlorophyll with a resulting yellowing of the leaf; an abscission in reference to dropping of leaves, and finally an epinasty with a downward curvative of the leaf due to a higher of growth on the upper surface.”³¹

Human beings should be very conscious of their environment because polluted air may result also from the abusive use of nuclear weapons. Scientific researchers also discover that:

“The ecological crisis has created a long and frightful list: radioactive nuclear waste, toxic chemical waste, pollution by noxious fumes, tillable soil threatened by erosions, and steady buildup of chemicals are some of the factors in our environment degradation.”³²

Because of the presence of acid rain most affected lakes are becoming fishless, and this is a serious problem for humanity.

“The problem of scattering rubbish, garbage, and refuse everywhere causes also damage to the environment. They destroy and contaminate plants, animals, water and the air.”³³ All

³⁰ A.K. Chatterjee. WATER SUPPLY, WASTE DISPOSAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION ENGINEERING, (Nai Sarak, Dheli-110006:Khana Publishers,1996), p.624-625.

³¹Ibid.p.,625

³² V.Norskov.opp.cit. p.117

these factors stated above along with some others not mentioned here, contribute to ecology crisis. But still, there is hope for humanity. Man as moral beings, if he feels concerned with this danger, can cause a change, because the welfare of nature contributes to the promotion of his well-being. He must not leave things to get to bad before solutions are sought.

Protection of Ecology

As it was observed above, man is a special creature, in the sense that he can think, create, and make some changes. This is a privilege he has by virtue of creation. Since he is able to affect ecology either positively or negatively, it means that, once motivated with a good will he can contribute to the protection of nature. Even though the consequences of sin have affected most things on this earth, man is still a rational being; hence he can perform changes that may improve ecological conditions.

Ecology or environment protection should start at home. Our homes and their environment should make proof of cleanliness, and be surrounded with fresh and pure air from nature. Accordingly, E.G. White states,

“Every form of uncleanness tends to disease. Death-producing germs abound in dark, neglected corners, decaying refuse, in dampness and moldy spots. No waste, be it vegetables or heaps of fallen leaves should be allowed to remain near the house to decay and poison the air. Nothing unclean or decaying should be tolerated within a home.”³⁴

A variety of some beautiful selected trees and flowers with sweet fragrance should be planted around homes. The entire family must take care of them. The house and its environment should reflect edenic beauty. Ecology protection should be a universal concern; therefore, we

³³ A.K. Chatterjee, WATER SUPPLY, WASTE DISPOSAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION ENGINEERING(Nai Sarak; Delh: Khana Publishers, 1996,), 517, 615-617 Opp. cit.

³⁴ E.G.White., Opp.cit.p.276.

earnestly appeal to the developed countries to stop, if not, to reduce their overuse of nuclear weapons, because they pollute and destroy the environment.

The same appeal is addressed to industries that pollute the air with clouds of smoke or fuel. As it was observed, "The greatest impact of air pollutants on human health results from day-to-day exposure under unexceptional conditions. It is believed that these effects occur through continued irritation by pollutants interacting with other environmental or biologic factors to initiate disease or exacerbate previously existing disease."³⁵

Man should avoid abusive destruction of the forests, because without them all of us will suffer from lack of rain and oxygen. Wild animals also may invade us, since their dwelling (forest) is no more. Furthermore people should stop scattering carelessly rubbish, garbage, and refuse everywhere. And this is to start from individual homes. Chemical and toxic wastes should be dumped in an appropriate place where people, animals and plants will not get contaminated. In a special way, the industrialized countries should stop, if not, reduce the abusive use of nuclear weapons. Throwing into oceans and seas toxic and chemical wastes should be regarded as a crime against humanity because innocent beings living therein lose their lives by consuming intoxicated food.

In fact, this planet is the only one that fulfils all conditions for human life, thus, it should be regarded as a precious jewel to be protected and kept out of all dangers. How can somebody spoil his house, and at the same time, hope to live well in it. Man should not deceive himself, because by doing so he does not only lead himself into danger, but also he endangers others as well.

In order to increase human awareness about environment protection, Seventh-day Adventist churches and institutions such as secondary schools, colleges, and universities should

parallel the proclamation of the third angel message with teaching concerning environment protection. And in a special way, this should be one of the first priorities for Rwanda because this very country is so small, so mountainous and so overpopulated that now it is becoming unfit dwelling place for both people and animals.

Hence, all Rwandians should be motivated, and mobilized for environment protection. And the Adventist University of Central Africa should stand as a big lantern in the darkest sky, and lead people to the restoration of environment. Her contribution may occur according to the following steps:

- To make environment protection part of school curriculums. It can be taught in Classroom by qualified lecturers.
- The school can also organize seminars in which professors and students may exchange their views and ideas about environment protection. Accordingly, some video-tapes, and adapted literature can be provided to help students to understand very well this topic.
- To mobilize students for Family Planning Program:
- This subject intends to reduce birth rate. At times, some parents do not know contraceptive methods, and so they give birth year after year. As result they find themselves difficult to support their families. In order to meet the basic needs, such as : accommodation facilities, farming, firewood, and so on they destroy forests and leave most lands naked of vegetation. Once graduate students have understood the importance of Family Planning Program, it will be very easy to communicate it to their fellow brothers in community.
- To reinforce forestation programs:
Through educating students the school can influence the government in protecting existing forests, and in planting the new ones in appropriate places. By doing so, the country will be prevented from eroding. In addition, forests will liberate necessary oxygen needed by human beings for their survival.

³⁵ A. K. Chatterjee. Opp. cit. PP.615,616

- Students should be warned about contamination and dangers resulting from rubbish, garbage, and waste scattered anyhow, and everywhere.
- To insist on sanitary laws, and hygiene principles. As affirms E.G.White," The air, laden with smoke and dust, with poisonous gases, and with germs of disease is a peril to life..."³⁶. In addition, students should be aware of the effect of industrial and fuel smoke on the functioning of human body.
- In fact, these strategies along with some others not mentioned above, once paralleled with the proclamation of the third angel message will help to increase human awareness about environment protection. In addition, man will be able to live healthily and to serve God properly(3John 1,2)

CONCLUSION

As it was demonstrated above, man is a marvelous creature. He was created in the image of God, and he can commune with Him. God has appointed him to reign over nature according to laws established by Him. In other words, God has given him a responsibility to care for and protect nature on His behalf. To ignore this responsibility, and to work against God is command is to lead himself to self-destruction, which may be eternal since he is accountable to God for all his actions.

All created beings in this world relate to each other. In order to survive, they are required to collaborate and to complement one another like different organs of human body, which achieve different functions in spite of their plurality (1Corinth.12: 12-26). This means that we, human beings, are to work in unity, and the spirit of co-operation. God has created us as social beings. The Ten Commandments reinforce this fact in its appeal to love God with our heart and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Math.22: 37-40).

In all things men may do, they should know there is interaction between them and other beings, and between all of these ones and their environment. This affirms the fact that all beings live according to the principle of interdependence. This is evident in our social life, spiritual realm, and in all aspects of life. Accordingly, Jesus says, "You can do nothing without me."(John 15:5).

³⁶ E.G.White, opp.,262

Environmental protection is not an option but necessary a command to be obeyed because human well-being relies upon it. It is true that God will punish those who destroy the world (Revel.11: 18). Nature was created for man to enjoy and to put him in perfect communion with God. To work against nature is to violate God's law, and to lead oneself to destruction. Both man and nature are to be restored to their original state the reason why all of them are precious before God (Rev.21: 1-4).

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