

# OIKOLOGIE: WISDOM FROM OUR HOME PLANET

Celebrating the Season of Creation



by Revd.  
Ishanesu  
Gusha



THE ANGLICAN CHAPLAIN FROM PALMA

**T**HE theme of the second week of celebrating the season of creation is Oikologie: Wisdom from our home planet. The biblical texts used for the exposition of the theme are; Proverbs 1: 20-33; Psalm 19; James 3: 1-12 and Mark 8: 27-end. My favourite text among the four is Psalm 19 because we studied it extensively in one of the Biblical interpretation courses at Nashotah House with Professors Anderson and Bott. Commenting on the Psalm, C.S. Lewis writes "I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world." The key term in theme this week is Oikologie which is a Greek term. It is a compound Greek word made up of two words Oikos meaning household and logos meaning study. This is where the scientific word ecology is derived from.

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Ecology in simple terms is therefore the study of the household (nature). The German zoologist Ernst Haeckel coined the term Oikologie in reference to the study of the relationship between animals and the environment. Proverbs clearly states that wisdom is from God and is accessed both through the study of nature (God's world) and scripture (God's word). The psalmist in chapter 19 contemplates the greatness of God by merely studying the created order. The beauty and splendour of the created order says a lot about its creator. Nature provides what is called general or natural revelation of God. This means that one can learn a lot about God by observing nature and this is even evident in the teachings of Jesus where He had to use examples from nature. On His eschatological dis-

courses he made references to seasons of the year and trees. He would simply ask people to look at nature and apply what they see to the kingdom of God. Even in our scientific innovations we have borrowed a lot from nature, look at the aeroplane designs, like the dreamliners, that take the shape of the shark. There is lot of wisdom from our home planet and the question then is; where we will get that wisdom when we plunder our home planet? Nature plays a pivotal role in our designs of technology as well as in our understanding of God.

Many development programmes are degrading the environment because people do not understand their relationship with it. Though we were given the role to manage the planet by God, we were not given the liberty to plunder it but to care and protect it. The planet is our very home where we get food, water, protection, inspira-

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tion, warmth, medicine, shelter and clothing. Therefore, by plundering it we are endangering our own existence as well and our future is uncertain. Bishop Geoff Davies from South Africa once said if we plunder nature it will not keep silent, it will kick us back. Look at what is currently happening with the issues of global warming. Temperatures are rising, fires are destroying properties and people are dying. Parts of Europe for the first time in many years experienced the worst floods that destroyed properties and killed so many people. Countries like Madagascar have experienced the worst drought since time immemorial. We have acted foolishly by failing to utilize the wisdom from our home planet. The supposed home is no longer home but a jungle where only the fittest survive. Nothing is inferior in the created order; everything was created for a purpose and human beings, as stewards of the planet, need to ensure that there is harmony among all creatures. As we celebrate the season of creation, let us work on improving our relationship with other creatures and, by doing so, a sustainable future is guaranteed.