

The Integrity of Creation and Living Environment Sustainability Viewed from Christian Ethics

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Abstract

Living environment has a very important life-supporting function. Therefore, management and development are directed to maintain its existence in a dynamic balance through various protection and rehabilitation efforts and efforts to maintain the balance between its elements continuously. Furthermore, efforts must be made to harmonize the population and the environment. Environmental awareness needs to be developed. And encourage community participation and self-help in preserving life skills (preserving the environment). The attitude and mentality of humans who are not aware of the meaning of environmental functions, as well as the meaning of humanity as God's creation has caused various problems in the environment. Humans are given a mandate by God to look after it.

Keywords: integrity of creation, environment sustainability

The Meaning of the Integrity of Creation and the Living Environment

The integrity of creation

The integrity of creation is an ecumenical language that has been very popular in recent years. It seems that it was intentionally disseminated to all participants of the ecumenical movement to characterize Christian thought patterns, and as an alternative to other thoughts.

This term was first raised by the churches of the world in the DGD VI session in Vancouver, Canada in 1983 and the invitation of the United Kingdom Assembly of Indonesian Churches in Surabaya in 1989. The next conference was held in Seoul (South Korea) in March 1990, namely to encourage the churches so that all improve themselves together to fight for the integrity of creation.

The term of creation integrity gives an overall perspective impression. This perspective opposes narrow and fragmented ways of thinking. This way of thinking encourages exploring the meaning of the whole environment not only in the local community, nation, region and continent but globally even including the entire universe.

In the theological assumptions as reflected in the word 'integrity of creation', both the particularity of all beings and the unity of all these creatures are to be confirmed fundamentally or theologically. The word 'integrity' is related to 'creation' which gives the impression of a 'structural connection' with the Creator. All lives are laid and recognized for their sincerity in the relation of the Creator and creation. In other words, in God's relationship with beings. Therefore, the integrity of creation provides a framework whereby humans with all the contents of the world are united as God's 'creation'. On the one hand, the creation has autonomy and lives within its own laws.

However, it is also recognized on the other hand that human and other creatures are not absolute. Only God is absolute. Creations come and go, live and die, exist and not exist. God is the center that gives a more realistic dimension to this existence. Therefore, the integrity of creation causes us to affirm the truth that all things present, visible and invisible are God's creations. It does not only mention / show the dignity and value of the creation itself, whose lives are supported and valued with great price.

- Living environment

The living environment comes from the words 'environment' and 'living'. In Indonesian Large Dictionary, the environment is defined as a region, which is included in it, while the natural environment is defined as the condition (power) that affects the development and behavior of organisms. Indonesian General Dictionary, Poerwadarminta, defines the environment as a circle that surrounds (circular); circles that are

surrounded in a region or natural surroundings, work as it should that can affect the livelihoods and lives of humans, animals, plants or other creatures.

From the description above, it can be concluded that the words of the living environment contain the meaning of the place, container or space occupied by living things and non-living things that are related and mutually influencing each other, both between the creatures themselves and between the creatures and nature around it.

To get a clearer description of the environment, the opinions of experts from the environmental field will be presented below, including:

1. Otto Soemarwoto, a leading environmental expert defines the environment as follows: "environment is the sum of all things and conditions that exist in the space we occupy that affect our lives".
2. Emil Salim, stated in general that the environment is defined as all things, conditions and influences contained in the space we occupy that affect the things of life including human life.
3. Munadjat Danusaputro, defines the environment as all objects and conditions including human beings and their actions, which are in the space in which humans are, and affect the life and well-being of humans and other living bodies.

Regarding environmental elements, N.H.T. Siahaan, formulates the environmental elements as follows:

1. All objects, in the form of: humans, animals, plants, organisms, soil, air, water, houses, etc. The whole so-called is classified as material while the units are referred to as components.
2. Power, also called energy
3. Circumstance, also called condition or situation
4. Behavior or character
5. Space, which is where various components are located
6. The process of interaction, also called mutual influence or commonly referred to as the network of life

All of the elements above are not elements that are separated from each other. These elements have a certain pattern of relationships that are fixed and regular which is a system of mutual relations (interactions) that affect each other.

Theological Basis About Integrity of Creation and Environmental Sustainability

The Bible explains that the world was created by God. Creation happens because of God's will and love. As a creator, God sees His creation as a complete and perfect part. Humans as creatures of God who are given the opportunity to try and maintain His creation, apparently did not use it or maintain the integrity of God's creation. This inability is characterized by damage that occurs to the soil and the environment, so that the earth's base is threatened by deforestation through massive deforestation that can result in low carrying capacity of the soil to rainfall. It is also important to note that deforestation has resulted in the dramatic disappearance of certain trees and species of insects. Scientists have suggested that every hour, one species of trees / plants and animals disappear from the surface of the earth, all of this is the result of human activity exploiting natural resources on a large scale without any efforts to restore it. In the Bible, it is explained that it was God who created the earth and all of its contents, and all of these creations have been empowered to mankind to be properly cultivated and maintained (Gen. 1-2; 1 Cor 8:6; Rom 11:36; Joh 1:3). Therefore, all creations extend praise and thanks to God. In Psalm 148, it is explained that the sun, moon and stars, fire and storm, snow and ice, trees, mountains, wild animals and livestock are invited to praise God. In another part, Psalm 96:1, it explains that the whole earth "sing to praise God" (Ps. 97:1, 6; 19:1).

In the accompaniment of Holy Spirit, humans are made aware of receiving renewed understanding of the meaning of the divine mandate to 'conquer and rule' (Gen. 1:28) earth in relation to God's command to humans to 'try and restore it' (Gen. 2:15), not destroy, just satisfy human greed.

It can be concluded that we have understood how much God loves the world and everything in it (Joh 3:16). In addition, God has given the land of grace and the kingdom of God in this world so that people can meet in the love of God and their fellow human beings. Truly, God continues to preserve this world, even though mankind has fallen into sin and always does what is contrary to God's will. Testimony about the consequences of human efforts to dominate God's creation turned out to result in the destruction of all creations such as land, air, water, fish, forest, and so on. All of this results in suffering for His creation, including illness, suffering, and death. Throughout history, humanity has experienced tension between life in relation to creation and the effort to master it. The encouragement to master creation has resulted in the exploitation of natural resources without feelings, alienation of land from humans which also has an impact

on the destruction of culture / human civilization. Therefore, not to repeat events that have taken place based on biblical history (the events of Noah and the flood), people are asked / required to exercise their rights and responsibilities according to God's will. God always saves His people / His creation (2 Cor 5:19).

The Problems About Living Environment

Environmental problems are not new problems. Problems that occur in the environment due to a disturbance in the functioning of the ecosystem chain, where the disturbance exceeds the ability of ecosystems to recover naturally.

If one of the cycle links is disturbed, then the other components will also experience interference. To pursue the level of economic life, most countries in the world take policies to deplete their natural resources without taking into account their sustainability. Likewise, groups of people who want to be rich and powerful soon, tend to take shortcuts to brush up and deplete natural resources, so that environmental balance is threatened.

If we pay attention, then we see environmental problems such as:

- Air, water, and soil pollution
- Deforestation
- Excessive use of energy
- Industrial and nuclear waste
- Use of chemicals

As a result of this problem, soil erosion occurs, the extinction of plants and animals, the destruction of forests, the emergence of disease and destruction of creation.

The lacks of environmental awareness followed by the high use of plastic packaging and cans that cannot rot contribute to environmental pollution.

The desire to spur agricultural production coupled with a policy to market the products of chemical factories has encouraged excessive use of pesticides and plant poisons or pests that threaten the lives of other creatures and even humans themselves by contaminating water and soil.

The indirect result of the mastery of technology and the promised progress of technology, humans are tempted to reach further than people are able to absorb. In this case, we should note the greed and ignorance of the consequences and the development of technology and its use, which is too focused on satisfying human desires without regard for the environment or even ignoring others and their communities. Is not this attitude also does not care about his Lord?

This situation has caused a crisis of imbalance faced by the world community, disharmony in the habitat (action) of humans and other creatures and the survival of the next generation, especially Latin living things. Often people (humans) implement decisions that are useful to meet immediate and local needs without considering the further consequences of the entire natural order; such as the case of ozone depletion in space (the water element needed for healthy breathing) and the extinction of flora and fauna (plants and animals) due to their use and chemicals and others.

Therefore, it is very important that all humanity unite to prevent the arbitrary use of natural resources. At the same time, we need to take joint actions to improve the integrity of our creation so that we truly become God's partners to glorify or protect nature.

Christian Attitudes and Responsibilities About the Integrity of Creation and Environmental Sustainability

God's mandate for humans in Genesis 1:28 is to keep, maintain, protect, and conserve the universe as well as possible. In this task implies that humans play a role in setting and organizing all life in the universe so that there is harmony and conformity in a responsible manner. Man's duty and responsibility to maintain and manage creation is related to man's image to God.

With this image, human is raised as the 'crown of creation'. The task as the crown of creation is to realize the integrity as the creation that can create. This image embodies mankind as a friend of God in maintaining and preserving the creation, for the sake of the balance of life in the creation. The maintenance of the creation will not occur if the maintenance of the life of the creation is not carried out.

Maintaining life means acting for justice that will bring up preserved creations. Our attitude as humans who are mandated to rule over God's created nature is not attitude accompanied by greed. There is only one earth, and humans have a very important role on this earth.

Humans must realize that the continuation of their life depends on how far they are friendly to the universe. Perhaps this should be the basic attitude of human beings in addition to efforts to replanting (reforestation), energy savings, family planning, etc.

Again, humans are reminded to stop their selfish and egocentric attitudes to exploit, dominate, and manipulate nature.

Based on all that, humans are called to be able to:

- Further enhance policies in managing natural resources.
- Further enhance the ability to develop precise and appropriate technology so that it does not endanger the human environment and preserve their environment.
- Besides that, the sciences about the natural environment must be developed. At present, little is known about the process of circle and balance in nature. New discoveries must be controlled, first of all by the scientists themselves so as not to cause disruption to the existence of nature.

From some of the attitudes and efforts of humans towards nature, the most need to be considered and realized is how humans themselves can be friendly with nature. They love nature and are responsible for maintaining the balance and harmony of nature. For all that, the term 'fellow beings' should be used in discussing human relations with other creatures so that there are harmony, balance, and suitability in the ecosystem. Humans need to feel the oneness with other creatures, because these creatures are the same creation of God. In this case, an attitude of respect for nature and its contents is created not by an attitude that exploits, dominates, or manipulates nature for the sake of enjoyment of life.

Conclusion

Preserving an environment also means treating natural objects in such a way that the ecosystems in them can be preserved and not damaged, both flora and fauna, and the natural resources within them. All of that can be used to meet the needs of human life itself, but it must be maintained and endeavored to burden it and renew it continuously.

Ecological problems or environmental destruction related to the attitude of human view itself and the pattern of human interaction with nature. Humans must realize that the continuation of their life is very dependent on the extent to which they are gracious and friendly with the universe. For this reason, a reforestation, energy saving, etc. must be sought.

The principle of Christians must be realized that this nature belongs to God. Duties and responsibilities given to humans must be accountable to God. With that, human beings and other creatures have the right to live, be respected, protected and maintained and are constantly being addressed so that the integrity of creation, justice and human peace with nature occur. Humans must show a sweet and harmonious attitude as an act of faith. That is what is demanded by God (The Creator), that humans want to be friends with 'fellow creatures' as human peace with nature.

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