

Care of Creation Blog – August 2020

In this time of lockdown, it is hard to find out what our Auckland groups are doing. A Rocha rejoices in some new members, but lockdown has forced the cancellation of some Saturday activities. Planning concentrates on a public teaching event towards the end of the year.

Cathy Bi-Riley, Sustainability Fieldworker for AARCC, tells me of what she learns from meetings with her Sustainability Champions. Lockdowns have made meetings difficult and parishes have not all chosen people to join them. Certain city parishes have made progress, at this stage mainly to do with how their parishes use their buildings and land. This is a beginning, but one must remember that the big thing is to find ways to capture energy from the sun without using fossil fuels which upset the balance of gases in the upper atmosphere. As a former farm forester, I hope to see people learning about biochar – making charcoal from waste wood and mixing it in powdered form with compost so that the microscopic creatures and fungi in the soil can make a home there, improving plant growth and holding water. There is carbon doing good rather than being part of a gaseous molecule upsetting things – a discovery based on what some Amazonian tribes did long before modern science came to explain to us what to avoid and what to aim for.

NZ Christians In Science had a professor ready to give his views on one part of the big picture – Brian Broom was to speak on ‘Finding Meaning in Disease’, but his talk will now be postponed to September. Professor Peter Lineham, however, will lecture at a webinar on Wednesday, 19 August on ‘Finding Meaning in History’, in particular from previous pandemics. See <http://www.nzcis.org/> for more details.

As with COVID-19, we are all together in the matter of climate change. I find the local Council of Christians and Muslims concerned as well as various groups with no religious side. I also read of an Apostolic church called PAZ in Brazil bringing the gospel to tribes along the Amazon and appealing for help in planting more trees in a place where political leadership is weak and there is a great deal of illegal logging, leaving poor soil for cattle farming and poor people. Other sources warn of how history could repeat itself as isolated tribes encounter foreigners carrying unknown infections. Some such tribes attack any stranger.

Plant breeders have now found a way to raise food plants which produce a better crop as the leaves make better use of the sunlight. As we learn more about how wonderful creation is and how we are blessed, we need to watch out for what goes wrong. In reading the Psalms and Jonah, we are reminded that people want to see evil punished, but Jesus came bringing forgiveness and life, leaving judgment for later. Care of creation means turning from mistakes and finding alternatives: the use of solar power instead of fossil fuels; the use of natural means to defeat pests rather than poisons; being kind to other people and animals rather than seeking domination; avoiding upsetting other creatures and ourselves by carelessness with plastics. In God’s creation everything is recycled – there are no landfills!

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