

RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE IS TOTAL CULTURAL CHANGE AND A CALL FOR A NEW ETHICS

Damianus Abun^{1*}, Theogenia Magallanez²

¹MBA, Ph.D (Divine Word College of Vigan, Vigan City, Philipines)

²MAEd, EdD (St. Benedict College of the Northern Luzon)

***Corresponding Author:-**

Abstract:-

Solving environmental problems needs a holistic approach. It involves social, cultural and moral approach. This paper presents cultural and moral approach. It argues that culture affects the mind and the mind affects the attitude of persons toward something and such attitude affects the behavior. In line with such argument, the author agrees that solving environmental problem need to reverse the culture, the basic world views which are held by the community. Old views need to be revisited and a new perspective about the world needs to be introduced. Laws may not be enough to solve environmental problem unless there is a total transformation of culture and mind.

Key words:- Climate change, new ethics, cultural change.

INTRODUCTION

Growing concern on the environment is increasing because the world is changing. Friedman (2006) said that the world is getting hot, flat and crowded. The world is flat because of the technology. Technological revolution levels the global economic playing field and enables many people around the world to compete, connect and collaborate. Asian cooperation makes it possible that Asian countries do not need Visa to travel to other Asian countries for a certain period or number of days. This is good not only for travel but also for the economy. The market is global, not limited to domestic market. There is free flow of goods without barriers with fewer tariffs. The needs of one country can be supplied by other countries. Countries do not need to cry for lack of supply. That's good news.

The world is also crowded because of the world population is growing. According to UN's projection, that by 2053, there will be more than nine billion people on the planet. The United Nations Populations Divisions (2017) predicted that there will be an increase of 2, 5 billion over the next 43 years passing from the current 6,7 billion to 9,2 billion in 2050. The world is getting crowded. Such crowded world is made it worse to live when it is hot because it is experiencing a warming trend which is over and above natural and normal variations. It is almost certain such change is due to human activities associated with large scale of mining and manufacturing. These developments concern us all.

Crowded world and the hot world are related, one really affects the other. Crowded world could cause a problem of supply and demand. The world resources are limited while the demand keeps on increasing. Consequently there will be time that the natural resources will run out. Before such things happen, the time to act is now. The solution is on our hands. Though legal solutions are necessary, but it may not answer the problem because the cause of the problem is more cultural and ethical in nature. Thus it needs cultural and ethical overhaul to respond to climate change. .

In view of the increasing population, energy shifts, resource consumption and pollution, the creation of a sustainable world will need massive change in human attitudes and actions, in fact a "new ethic" for humankind. In short, it is a cultural change; a change of views and behavior, a conversion. Changing views means people need to see environment in new way which is ethical way. Ethical perception or views on the environment must be introduced and developed so that new ethical behavior in dealing with the environment is adopted. This will call a collective and individual change of views and behavior. UN's climate change report, which contains about the alarming effect that human-caused carbon emissions reminds the world to act immediately. The chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that the report "should jolt people into action, the time is now not later" (UN, n.d)).

People cannot just ignore with what is happening with the environment. Issues on climate change and global warming is a call for alarm and reminding the world to change way of life, change of cultural perception. It has been always in the UN's report that the 21st century is entering a troubling age, and all are reminded to pay attention if all wanted to be assured of a sustainable future (Meadows and Meadows 1972). Thompson (2009) argued that there are "Limits to Growth" and if we were to continue at the then current rate of consumption of the Earth's resources we would not have a sustainable world in the longer-range future. Peccei and Ikeda (1984), called for a "New Ethic for Mankind". It is a call to change the principles of conduct through change of views. Old ways of doing things or business as usual is no longer the behavior or the argument of present generation in dealing with the climate change. The bottom line of this change is cultural change because it is the culture that affects human attitude and behavior.

If the Golden Age of Greece, from around 500 to 300 BC, was built on the energy of slaves but we are now blessed with energy from an abundant supply of oil and natural resources. However, this will of course not be so in the longer range future. Warning signs are abundantly apparent. We do not need to wait until everything is gone and all species of the world are gone. We will need to plan now for a true transition to a new age and a new ethic (Thompson, 2009) in solving these problems. Natural resources are limited and the resources that we have now will not be sustainable in the near future. The time to change is now and that change is a call to cultural change.

This paper argues that human behavior is influenced by of the culture. Culture is our world views. This is how it works that the culture affects the mind or the views and the mind affects the attitude and the attitude influences the behavior of the person. Thus, change needs a change of culture.

Cultural Change: What is it?

Cultural change is changing cultures or changing the old ways of views, behavior and values. The issue here is change. People need to change because the world is changing. We cannot remain the same again as of yesterday, today and tomorrow. This is a challenge. It creates a new dimension and great uncertainty. However such reason should not dampen our spirit to change. Change is inevitable. It is difficult task, if not impossible because how we change what others think, feel, believe and do. People have been used to think, feel, believe and behave in certain ways and to change them is a difficult one. However, when we are confronted by two choices, between life and death, then we need to take a stand, we must change, though it is difficult. We choose life, we change our way of life, despite the odds. Therefore, change of culture is possible, not impossible.

Before going further, let us understand what culture is from the point of anthropologists. Here are two good definitions by two people whom we should know. Hofstede (1984) as cited by Brown (1995) defined a very common set of models for international cultures, "Culture is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values." While Schein (1994) defined culture as "Culture is the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization that operate unconsciously and define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organization's view of its self and its environment."

Based on those definitions, culture is playing an important role in programming the mind of an individual. Thus the total cultural change is the change of mind, behavior and values of the people who have been formed in a certain pattern of ways of thinking or beliefs, behaving and relating. In this case, it is a call to revisit again our mind, thought or concepts, perceptions and held values on the environment and evaluate whether those thoughts, views, values are not the main cause of problem in society. Radical change is necessary. Old ways have to be changed with the new ways. Thus the culture that damages the relationship, the society, and environment, then it is our moral responsibility to change those old views. However building up new behavior and value systems would be a great challenge. However cultural overhaul is not impossible if the members of society determine to change.

The challenge would be that "is it possible to change the culture? Some may argue that a cultural change is hard but I would argue that it is possible, there is nothing impossible. If the organizational culture can be changed, then society's culture can be changed too. It is just that people need to feel the urgency to change. There must be a trigger. In our case, we have global warming or climate change. This is not simple. In this effort, someone or leader of any group should come out to proclaim that urgency and make people feel that the time is now for change. Unless people feel the urgency, then they would not change. The UN has already proclaimed the urgency. Now people need to reinvent themselves. Reinventing lies not only in marginally changing the current ways of doing things or behaving, but creating a totally new approaches, new views, new behavior and new world because the world is changing and people need to change. Organizational development expert would argue that a static organizational culture can no longer be effective. Thus managers or leaders must be able to recognize when changes are needed and must possess the necessary skills and competence to implement these changes. The society must try to adapt itself to a dynamic environment by introducing new views, approaches, behavior and values on how to deal with the changing world to become more effective (Harvey, & Brown, 2001)

The message of change is urgent. The environment is changing not in the right direction but in the wrong direction. Climate change and global warming is an urgent call to intervene on how to prevent a further damage. This time we need to create a winning culture because it is the cultures that brings us forward or bringing us down. In the companies, it is the culture that differentiates excellent companies and low performing companies. Thus to make a better or excellent company, organization cultural change is important. Therefore, what is important here is how to make the changes happen. Cultural resistance to change is always there. Changing the mind, the behavior, and values of people is not easy. People are not ready to accept new things; they prefer to stay in their comfort zones because of uncertainty of the output what is going to happen. Thus it really takes time for a cultural transformation to take effect. It needs a process to follow. Thus a change agent must identify what particular aspects of culture need to change and explain the need to change. After the identification of the problem and explain the problem and finally inform the people why they need to change or shift their views. Thus information dissemination of new sets of beliefs or views must be disseminated. Media can be the main tools to disseminate new information (Harvey & Brown, 2001).

New Ethics: Change Views and Behavior toward the Environment

The main question here is how humans view the environment. To help us in gaining new ideas on how we see the environment, we can see and read the statement of Pope Benedict as cited by Bricker (2009, 2012) in one of his speeches before the youth during a rally near Ancona, on the Adriatic coast in September 2007. "Before it is too late, we need to make courageous choices that will create strong alliance between humankind and the environment" From this statement we draw an idea that environment is not a mere object to be exploited but equal alliance. An alliance is equal; one is not greater than the other. Both sides are dependent and there is mutual relationship that benefits both sides. Human and environment are equal importance. Human needs a healthy environment and environment needs human, not to destroy but to take care. In other words, environment is part of the network that human being need to develop in order to survive. In this case, we need to develop an ethical relationship, just like ethical relationship between human and human. We need to treat the environment as we treat human being.

Ethics is defined by Webster's dictionary as: "the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation". In this case, there are moral standards that we need to apply. There are allowed and not allowed behaviors when we deal with other human and environment.

We have a moral duty to do or to protect the environment like what do to other human beings. Moral commands like helping the sick and the poor are also applied to the environment that we should take care and protect the environment. We have no choice, except to implement it. Such principles of conduct are not only applied to human but also to the environment. The transition from a growth society that the developed countries presently enjoy, to one with a stable world population and economic sustainability, could require the greatest evolutionary change in the history of humankind. The changing conduct and ethical base of the world's population must indeed change. This is no exaggeration as will be pointed out in the text that follows (Thompson, 2009).

Changing conduct and wear a new ethical conduct is a call to all people to have a new view of environment and a new kind of relationship. What is that new view on environment? Anything that surrounds us whether they are trees or animals are independent subject, they are no longer object to be used by human beings. Thus the new relationship between human and environment is no longer between subject and object but it is a subject to subject because of equal importance. Both have mutual relationship and interdependence. Both sides need each other. Mutual relationship is not applied to subject and object but only subject to subject. The philosophy of Martin Buber, interpersonal relationship, *I-Thou/You*, must be applied in which one is treated as independent subject, not an object to be manipulated, *I-It*, (Friedman, 1955) Dwelling in this concept, consequently human should treat the environment as the extension of himself or herself. He or she herself

as part of the environment and destroying the environment means destroying himself or herself. In this case, respect for oneself is equal to respect to the environment.

New kind of relationship will always depend on the way how we see the environment. How I treat the tree depending on how I see the tree. In the olden time, people do not just cut down the big trees because they are afraid and they believe that big trees are the house of the spirit. If they force to cut it, something might happen to them, they get sick in return. Enforcing such idea into the modern mind might be funny for some but if we see in the different perspective, such idea enforce harmony with the environment. Human needs to build a harmony with the environment because damaging the environment can cause harm to the humans. Destroying the environment is destroying the harmony. The idea of Baruch Spinoza may support the argument. He equated God and nature. He disagrees that God alone is perfect and the natural order less than perfect. Spinoza equates reality with perfection. Since it is true that nothing in nature could be otherwise than it is, and all things in nature are a part of God and follow necessarily from his nature, God would not be complete without the whole natural order. Spinoza equated God (infinite substance) with nature, which is consistent with Einstein's belief in an impersonal deity. Spinoza's God who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of what exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fates and actions of human beings (Nery, 2007). Dwelling on this idea means humans need to see themselves as a part of a bigger whole, they are part of a bigger reality which is God and that God reveals himself in the harmony of nature. Building a harmonious relationship with others with the nature is the same with building relationship with God. Destroying nature meaning we are destroying God and in return we are punished through environmental disaster.

Consistent with the above idea, then respect for the environment is not only because of its instrumental value but because of its intrinsic value and its divine intrinsic value. Instrumental value is based on the use of the object for human purpose. In this regard, we protect the environment because it is important for future generation. We protect the plants because it can be used for research and medicine. In other words, if the object, the plants or animal are not useful for human needs or endanger human life, then they can be destroyed. That is an old view of the environment. While intrinsic value and divine intrinsic is the value of thing which is created /given by God, it does not depend on its usefulness to human purpose or needs. We believe that all objects in the nature have its own value in itself and have its own purpose in itself. And something that has value, we have a moral responsibility to respect and to protect (Stanford Encyclopedia, 2002, 2008). It is our moral mandate to protect the environment because of its independent value, its own dignity and its usefulness for human needs and future generation. This is a new view of the environment.

Natural resources have its limits and if there is no intervention in the process, then it will reach to the point that natural resources will be emptied in the future and everything will completely stop. To explain the situation, we can borrow the Queuing theory. Queuing Theory says that a small restriction in supply cannot just slow the process by a small percentage, but that it comes to a complete stop. For example, a busy highway is loaded to capacity but flowing rapidly. Then some car or truck slows down to look at an accident at the side of the road. No obstruction is in the way of the flow, but it has been slowed by a very small percentage and the whole system comes to a dead stop. Similarly, the housewife stocks up on sugar when it is announced that sugar will be rationed. Result: no more sugar on the shelves and the system shuts down. When such a phenomenon occurs to supplying a large city, it may well shut down. A power blackout is an example of such an overloaded system and consequent shutdown. Now, all this is to give a glimpse of what could happen as resources worldwide get in short supply. The urgency is apparent and must be dealt with well before it happens (Thompson, 2009). The answer here is not only through legal solutions in which laws must be established to protect the environment but human behavior.

New ethic is needed to prevent further damage of the environment. We need to change our behavior in dealing with the environment by adopting new understanding of the universe that we are not the master of the universe but we are steward to cultivate and to take care of the earth. Genesis 2:15 clearly said that the Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it. Thus the order to subdue the earth (Genesis, 1:28) is not everything, there is a limit. The earth and everything in it is the source of food for human kind, not only for the present human kind but future human kind. Emptying everything would mean killing the future generation which is immoral. The current crises need response from all of us.

Collective and Personal response to climate change

Days are getting warmer and warmer and we keep on complaining why it is getting warmer and warmer. The climate has changed. It means that if there is no intervention to prevent further damage, then there will time that everything will be gone, the planet would be simply a desert and no human species would live on it and everything would be dead. All of us do not want these catastrophic consequences. Thus, instead of complaining, it is time to get action collectively and individually to prevent further damage in the environment. Climate change affects everyone, rich and poor.

Nowadays we are facing two crises: first there is a limited supply of fossil fuels. The consumption has been growing every year and definitely the earth's resource will start to dwindle. Such situation will cause price instability. When the supply continues to be limited, the price will continue to rise. The second crisis is that when the atmosphere reach its limit to absorb carbon without causing rapid increase of energy in the atmosphere and oceans. These two crises are threatening. They are posing a massive challenge to human survival and to modern civilization (McNerney, 2012). The solution is not impossible.

As a consequence of the limited resources is war. I am reminded again by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) that in the pure state of human nature, man is a being in constant state of war against all others (Philosophical Explorations, n.d). Human beings are motivated by self-interest. This war will be caused by limited resource available in the nature. Countries will look for more resources outside of their own territory to support their industry survival and of their people. One in

front of us is China. Its population and its industry are bigger than the supply and the resources are getting limited and as a consequence they are desperate to look for more natural resources outside their own territory. Other Asian countries are under threat because China is desperate looking for more natural resources to support their industries and the survival of their people. Islands that are claimed by other countries would be claimed by China. Military power would come into play. However, war may not be our concern here but our concern would be how we are going to prevent the environment disaster as the consequence of the use of the fossil fuel.

In terms of war as one of the consequences of limited energy can be prevented but climate change as a consequence of human behavior toward environment and the use of fossil fuel cannot be prevented unless humans change their behavior or lifestyle. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel (2013) on Climate Change in its Fifth Assessment Report pointed out that the warming of the climate is human influence and recommended that limiting climate change will require substantial and sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. This declaration comes as no surprise to anyone who has been paying the least bit of attention of what is happening in the climate change. However, it seems that first declaration was not successful enough to encourage everyone to get involved in preventing climate change. The first IPCC report, issued in 1990, came to virtually the same conclusion, while in the interim a great deal of energy and greenhouse gas emissions have gone into debates over how many degrees the planet will warm and how many inches the seas will rise, while efforts to substantially and sustainably reduce greenhouse gas emissions have languished (Baird, 2014). This time the declaration is to reiterate again the concern over climate change. Would it be good to ignore? The answer is not. The time is near and transformation is needed. How are we going to get involved?

Capitalism is to be blamed for environmental problem. The current economy functions more like a knockout monopoly tournament, where the objective of the game is to bankrupt everyone else, and only the strongest is to survive the game. It is no longer an intellectual games but the game of money. Money is the capital and not the intelligence. Money plays the game in order to succeed. This game is really motivated by greed and self-interest. These game results to only few are rich and majority of the world population are poor and almost half of the world's wealth is now owned by just one percent of the population. It is ridiculous. One might legitimately ask, to what end? It would be one thing if that one percent was marshalling their wealth on behalf of mankind but for the most part they are not. They are more likely to be found trying to summit the Forbes Billionaires list. Their greediness result to do whatever they can to attain their ambitious goal even to the extent of environmental problem (Sweezy, 2004).

Blame game does not work to solve environmental problems. Climate change brings us risks and natural human reaction would necessitate us to respond, for us not to be killed. Climate change will soon cross that threshold and some might say, as in the case of Typhoon Yolanda, at least thousands of people dead in the Philippines alone, it already has. However, reactive behavior may not be needed in responding to climate change because it might be too late like in the Yolanda typhoon case. Preventive action is needed.

We know who the actors in environmental problems are; they are the capitalists or the one percent of the world total world population (Brooks, 2006). They are the developed countries that had amassed the resources of the world for their economy. Logically they should be the one to solve the climate change problem. Unfortunately they are the ones who are crying around the world to solve environmental problems. Why other people should be bothered? The consequence of what they have been doing is all human kind, though the benefits are theirs. We are not also staying away and pointing fingers to them because we all are dying, rich and poor.

As our world slowly and belatedly makes the complex transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, leading climate-change scientists give us a mere five years to radically change how we power our industrial civilization without causing runaway global warming.

We may get confused on what to do in this situation. However, staying without doing anything is to allow the deterioration of the environment. Some proposal can be forwarded:

Collectively. All citizens must become global warming activism. This is an invitation that all citizens must support for policies designed to reduce the risk of global warming. In this case all citizens must participate together with the environmental group to propose activities and recommend to the policy makers to write laws to protect the environment. Substantively, global warming policy will only succeed if citizens support these policies in a variety of political venues and are also willing to implement these policies by engaging in recommended environmental behaviors (Lubell, Zahran & Vedlitz, 2007). The unity principle plays a key role by linking individual and group actions to make a great impact. If the individual believes that group unity is necessary for success, then the individual expected value of collective action is conditional on the behavior of the other group members.

Individually. There must be a change in individual behavior. Each individual should not stay idle and doing nothing. Engaging in personal environmental behaviors that influence global warming is a must. Individual must make a difference in adapting behaviors that help preventing climate change. Behaviors that damage the environment must not be continued. Definitely views or philosophies that are not supporting for the reduction of global warming must be changed. In the individual level, it is a total transformation. All citizens need to wear new ethics, new behavior and new relationship with the environment. Everyone should see the environment, the living things and non-living things as subject, not as an object. They are all good and have value in themselves even though they may not be useful for humans. Everything that has value in themselves, humans have moral responsibility to respect, not to destroy (Sapiains, Beeton & Walker, 2016). Adopting new behavior is necessary. Green behaviors are the immediate answer on the personal level. Everyone should consider behavior that would not contribute to the pollution and the damage of the environment. It is the imperative to drastically reduce our own and our family's carbon-dioxide footprint. This is something people can do regardless of the

slow response by many business and political leaders to the serious planetary changes expected as climate change speeds up.

In the coming decades, energy production will need to be more localized, gasoline usage will shrink because of the peak-oil phenomenon as to climate change mandates, and air travel will decline. People will need to work toward producing more of the energy and goods they need closer to home. Recycling will become even more important than it is today. Reducing the consumption of fossil fuel should be reduced because the amount of energy consumed by transporting current volumes is simply not sustainable. Reducing their consumption accordingly, others of us have already been voluntarily simplifying our lives and our consumption patterns to reach a more sustainable level of usage of the planet's resources (forests, minerals, fossil fuels, agriculture, water, etc.). Our greediness to consume and to use many things contributes to the damage of the environment. Life style has to be scrutinized if that life style contributes to the climate change (Kannan, n,d).

Collective and individual respond to climate change must be immediate and it does not need to be expensive. According to UN report on Climate Change conducted by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that catastrophic climate change can be averted without sacrificing living standards. The report concludes that the transformation required to a world of clean energy is eminently affordable. The cheapest and least risky route to dealing with global warming is to abandon all dirty fossil fuels in coming decades (IPCC, 2014). This requires a shift in mind set of countries and people who are used to use fossil fuels to a renewable energy. Such report dismisses the earlier speculations that slashing carbon emission would cost much to the economy. According to the report diverting hundreds of billions of dollars from fossil fuels into renewable energy and cutting energy waste would shave just 0.06% off expected annual economic growth rates of 1.3%-3%, the IPCC report concluded. The report is a wakeup call. The action must be now. The more we wait, the more it will cost and the more difficult it will become. This is not only a call to the countries, companies but also to individual persons to shift life style by reducing the use fossil fuels or not depending on fossil fuel. It means that people need not to use private cars for travel and for their daily kitchen operation.

Conclusion

Solving environmental problems is more complex. It is not just the absence of laws that protect the environment but it is more than that. Human behaviors are influenced by their culture and their culture affects their minds or their beliefs and their values and their belief affect their behavior. Those beliefs and values are formed by the existing culture in which they live and such culture has been in existence for centuries. This is to remind us that changing such cultures might take time and a tedious process but it is not impossible. My argument is that solving environmental problem is a cultural issue. In this case, total cultural change is necessary. This is not an easy job but it is not an impossible one. Culture can be changed even though is considered to be hard. We need to reexamine our own beliefs and values and ask ourselves whether those beliefs and values are helping us to protect the environment.

If the old view, we look at the environment as an object to be manipulated or to be subdued but the new view is that environment is a subject. It is an alliance of human being. As a subject, it is equal with human beings. Thus our relationship with the environment is subject to subject. We need to respect one another.

Respecting the environment is not just because of its instrumental value or because of its usefulness but because it has its intrinsic value. It has intrinsic value in itself. And something that has intrinsic value in itself, then we have the moral duty to respect.

Global warming is our issue at hand as a result of environmental problem. These environmental problems are caused by the wrong belief, and wrong values of human. Thus, the answer to solve environmental problem is to change our attitude or our beliefs and values.

Who are responsible for solving such problem? It is a huge problem. The world has been asking the industrial countries or developed countries like USA, UK, Germany and other European countries to take the lead in solving the problems but little move to be seen. These countries were the first one to destroy the environment because of their industries. Waiting for them to solve the problem might be too late. It is time for us to go hand in hand collectively and individually in our way to contribute what we can do to solve environmental problem.

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