

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The Future is Now

Sorry God. I misunderstood. When I heard that on a day long ago you looked at all you had created and you said it was "good", I thought you meant it was good for humankind. But it was more than that, wasn't it? Oh, sure it's great for us humans to look at all the wondrous diversity of colours, shapes and variety of life that we encounter every day. We love the subtle and distinct differences of fragrances and sharp smells all around us. But these are not just "good" because we say so: your creation is "good" in its own right. It was not created "for" us or "by" us – your creation comes as a personal expression of who or what you are. And as one of my favourite hymns reminds us, you are "creating still".



But God, something is happening to your creation and it is not good. Recent scripture reminds us that the earth, your creation, "groans for the liberating truths of your gospel which have been given for the salvation of the world.." (Doctrine and Covenants section 156, verse 7). Not just the salvation of humanity, but the entire world of which we are only a component part. The whole ball and wax.

The articles in this edition of the Herald reflect the need for urgency and action. Most of them are selections by the Australia Earth Stewardship Team (AEST). I would like to personally thank each member past and present for their wonderful work in raising my consciousness (and I'm sure I speak for many of the Herald's readers also) of the environmental issues which are critical in our time. There is a common theme linking the articles together: the future depends on what we do NOW. The excerpts from the podcast transcript have been greatly abbreviated and readers are encouraged to listen to the full transcript on <http://www.projectzionpodcast.org/362-climate-brewing-engaging-the-faith-community/>

Our heritage and vision and indeed, our calling, challenge us to be stewards over God's creation. Stewardship involves far more than simply putting a few dollars in the offering plate every now and then. It means being partners with God in caring for ALL God's creation. We are to be not simply spectators tut-tutting when things go wrong and pointing the finger at those to blame. We are equally to blame if we take no action

to help put things right. Inaction is actually negative action. Doctrine and Covenants, section 161, verse 4b tells us that the earth "shudders in distress ... from carrying the burden of human greed and conflict." The results of a recent national poll conducted by the Lowy Institute show that 60% of Australians see global warming as a serious and pressing problem and 78% want to see a target of zero polluting emissions achieved by the year 2050. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report was also recently released. It highlights the increasing severity of the problem. It also provides pathways and actions for communities and governments to take action that will help move us in a positive direction (see link: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/#SPM>)

As I write this editorial, the memory of a former member of AEST sits in my heart. I would like to dedicate this issue of the Herald to Deanna Scott, a tireless worker on environmental issues, both as a member of AEST and in her professional life, before her untimely death on August 26, 2019 at the tender age of 46 years. Vale Deanna – you continue to inspire many people to carry on your legacy. And part of our response to your inspiration is for each of us to seriously consider this question: How can I/we be a positive force for change in the world in which we live? Our practical responses to this question are among the most critical choices we may ever have to make.

SHALOM!

Harry Fielding

Editorial Team Member

Above all else, strive to be faithful to Christ's vision of the peaceable Kingdom of God on earth. Courageously challenge cultural, political, and religious trends that are contrary to the reconciling and restoring purposes of God. Pursue peace.

There are subtle, yet powerful, influences in the world, some even claiming to represent Christ, that seek to divide people and nations to accomplish their destructive aims. That which seeks to harden one human heart against another by constructing walls of fear and prejudice is not of God. Be especially alert to these influences, lest they divide you or divert you from the mission to which you are called.

God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God's will. Open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children. Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare.

The earth, lovingly created as an environment for life to flourish, shudders in distress because creation's natural and living systems are becoming exhausted from carrying the burden of human greed and conflict. Humankind must awaken from its illusion of independence and unrestrained consumption without lasting consequences.

Doctrine and Covenants Section 163 3b - 4b