

LET US NOT BE THE PROBLEM...BUT THE SOLUTION

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The bright sky is telling me that it will be a beautiful day today. I was preparing for work, and then suddenly I heard a thunderstorm... I hurried outside and found the sky dark and angry. Why so sudden? Then, the sky starts pouring its anger...so hard for me to see the surroundings... I wondered why such a sudden change in the mood of the beautiful sky?

This is just a simple observation telling us that our environment nowadays is unpredictable. Who is to be blamed for this? No one is to be blamed... but everyone. Each one of us contributed something that made our environment what it is today. Our climate is different each day and getting worst each day. I miss those years when we know that this month is going to be raining so we need to prepare umbrellas and raincoats... and that this month is going to be sunny and that we need to bring with us a cap or an umbrella. However, nowadays...it is very much different because you do not know what is the weather condition 10 kilometers from where you are...sometimes it is raining in one place and then very hot in another place of the same city. Or what will be the atmospheric condition of the place one to two hours from this moment.

When I was pondering on what to write about the environment... I realized that there are many things to write about our environment today but I cannot find a reason why I should be writing. While I am sitting in one corner, I thought that maybe I should be writing to inform people of what our environment is nowadays and that we should do something to somehow relieve it of so much stress. Then I wonder again... Where should I start? What should I talk about? I am not a writer but I should start somewhere. I think it will be better to start with a question, "What is an environment?". Each of us will need to understand our environment. For me and for the common people, we should know that our environment is the place where we live and do our daily routines. Maybe for some, it is a place where their house and maybe their business are found; or maybe where they are working. The bottom line is our environment means where we usually live and make our living. Next, you need to know and/or identify who or what surrounds where you live and make your living. This includes both the living and the non-living components and their connections to you. How about the small living insects and pests... I believe they should be included in the definition.

Now what?... we already have all these data, what is our next concern. Maybe, we should understand both the living and non-living components of our environment. We need to understand their importance to our existence, and then maybe we can decide on what to do with them. We should understand the best ways to eliminate components of our environment of little importance to us without causing damage to other components of our environment which means so much to us.

Let us face the truth that we have benefitted much from our environment that it will be very unfair for us to see it dying without doing anything to save it. In our own little ways there are many things that we can do. It might not be as big as any recycling technologies but it will be as important as those either expensive technologies or methodologies.

For example, most Filipinos are planting either fruit trees or ornamental plants to make a living or simply to decorate their surroundings. The problem that we always have with this habit is garbage. It is with the Filipinos to keep our surroundings clean...that is without litter. It does not matter if the litter is biodegradable or not. In this case, any litter from trees or ornamental plants is biodegradable or organic in which case...we can see it decay or decompose in our backyard rather than burn it that eventually emits a greenhouse gas – carbon dioxide (CO₂). Few people understand the importance and benefits of keeping the organic litter in the soil and let it decay naturally. Most wanted to see these litters vanish from the moment they touch the ground of their backyard. Just what the bible says “every creature of this planet belongs to the planet...so let it be”.

Another observation is the use of plastic bags rather than paper bags. Most Filipinos, the use of paper bags is just for occasions and gift wrapping purposes only while plastic bags can be used anywhere because it can be disposed easily. This observation is even true for educated and learned people. In some places in Zamboanga City, the use of plastic bags is very much disgusting especially during rainy season. Why? Most people in “barangays” like Talon-Talon; Mampang, Tugbungan, Tetuan, Guiwan, Putik and other far-flung areas use plastic bags as cover for their shoes or feet as they walk in muddy places; and then they leave these plastic bags along the road. Sad to note this, but it is true and very much practiced up to now during rainy season.

Thus, I can say everyone has contributed to the polluted environment that we have right now. So, no one is to be blamed but every single individual living in this planet. Let us not be a problem to our environment but a solution... a solution no matter how small is important for the preservation of the planet's life and all its living and non-living systems. It is also important for the preservation of human life in the generations to come. Just imagine the kind of air, water, and land that our children's children will inherit from us. How will be their life? Are we not bothered by these? So, let us be brave to start cleaning, in our own little ways, the environment where we are right now. Let us preserve whatever we have and try to do something to regenerate what we lost.