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As a matter of policy, *AWRC/iGi* respects our contributors' / writers' use of English, provided it is proper and acceptable in Asia and worldwide. From henceforth footnotes and references quoting *iGi* will use the form "in God's image" and not "In God's Image".

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About the Cover

The cover artwork by Malaysian artist Lam Le Siang (藍逸祥), titled "Fondering / 相惜", depicts a strong sense of caring, cherishing and loving all creatures as well as surrounding beauty. When looking at the painting it projects a sense of calm that draws the onlooker into the world of the artwork to observe and explore the expressions of every detail. Several pieces of Lam's artwork have appeared in previous issues of *in God's image*.

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Media and the Truth; Caring for the Earth

We are in the midst of a global pandemic—the COVID-19 virus that has been infecting and killing millions of people around the world. Most of the world's population are in a “locked in” state—with physical distancing being seen as the only way to stop the spread of the virus which passes from human to human. Humans are forced to stay within the walls of their homes; the roads in the cities and towns are emptied of cars and other traffic—industries, offices and educational institutions being shut. Animals and birds have been seen occupying this space which once may have been their home!

We, as human beings have behaved as if we are the sole proprietors of the earth. We have pushed so much of other forms of life, especially animals, sea life and birds, further and further away from their habitat. One of the most amazing phenomena as an outcome of the shut-down of the earth is that even the quality of air has suddenly improved; scientists have shared images of the healing of the ozone layer; people have pointed out that the Himalayan mountains are seen from locations in mid India—from where a generation of people had not been able to view the mountains! But what is even more amazing is the fact that wild animals which dared not enter the places where their predators resided have begun re-occupying “their space.” Mountain goats, deer, sea birds and a variety of other birds, rabbits, peacocks, flamingos, monkeys, geese and even a puma have been seen strolling through the downtown regions of cities in different parts of the world. All of creation has come alive! What a treasure we have lost—a healthy clean earth!

Two issues of *iGi* 2019 are merged into one in this present edition: “Climate Justice” and “Communication in Bytes: True or Fake News?” The derivative theme for this edition is **Media and the Truth; Caring for the Earth** drawing together the two themes. It is a very apt and fitting theme for this moment in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The power of social media has been displayed on informative and educative stories on the impact of COVID-19. But media, particularly social media, also spreads rumours and fake news that has been confusing, leaving people traumatised. We need to learn how to affirm the truth and discard fake media. A great lesson from this pandemic is rejuvenation of mother earth as described earlier. The earth is home to all living and non-living beings and we as humans need to learn lessons from

nature and change our lifestyles after COVID-19. The articles in this volume give us important pointers.

A. C. Thomas reflects on ecological degradation and women from a biblical perspective. He draws on the image of the earth as the body of God. Like a child depends on its mother for existence so also humankind depends on a healthy environment—a mother par excellence, the earth. Humans owe a debt of gratitude to our caring Mother Earth.

B. Padmaja brings out the seriousness of plastic pollution of the planet earth which destroys water bodies, animals, air and the earth as well as hazardous to health. She urges the development of a “theology of sustainability” to back up a pastoral response by cleaning the environment and banning plastic waste.

Renemsongla brings out the importance of traditional Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) for preserving seeds and food sovereignty practiced by Indigenous women of North East India which is more sustainable, eco-friendly and points to a greater food security system which can ensure sustainability and climate justice.

There is a beautiful liturgy on “Creation” by **Melanie Yong** in which she stresses on the hope of restoring and healing the creation through caring for the world.

There are four articles dealing with social media. **Aruna Gnanadason** writes about the rapid changes and transformation brought about by information technology on traditional community system. Social media has brought positive information as well as fake media which stirs tensions and chaos in the community. She raises the issues of how to handle both the truth and all that is fake? How do we provide a feminist alternative by affirming truth in the media?

Mary Kath and **Lanusenla** focus on the impact of social media on women. Mary Kath stresses on the fact that in spite of its, sometimes, negative impact, social media does promote positive movements for women's empowerment such as the hashtag “#MeToo” movement, etc. Lanusenla deals with the negative portrayal of women in media pointing out that social media is based on patriarchal ideologies and therefore, passivity and subordination of women are promoted by it. Both writers advocate a feminist theological response to media.

M. Peter Singh brings out the importance of social media which is becoming a new location for Christian mission today. Social media becomes very relevant during this Covid-19 pandemic where all religious gatherings and worships have been banned, and the churches are turning to social media apps to conduct online worship. He describes this phenomenon as social media creating new faith relationships and mission practices. The churches need to focus on

formulating a new theology of mission to discover God in a new way which is unthinkable in traditional practices of mission.

We sincerely thank all the contributors for their thought provoking articles in this *iGi* edition. We hope that readers will benefit from what they read in these pages.

Aruna Gnanadason & Limatula Longkumer

Guest Editors

Acknowledgement

On behalf of the publication team of AWRC, I could not be more thankful for the contributions of Aruna Gnanadason and Limala Longkumer! Regardless of their hectic schedules, both of them consented to solicit and edit articles as co-guest editors for the *iGi* Issue 2019. Our thanks to all the individual writers for their willingness to share precious articles with *iGi*. In addition, our deep appreciation to Lam Le Siang for his generosity to share inspiring artwork. It is owing to you contributors, that our readers can enter a great adventure of reading and thinking.

Chan Hsiu Yin (Showin)

AWRC Coordinator