

Self-reflect and Repent to Mitigate Disasters

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Monday, 23 May 2016 11:07



[[Words to Volunteers](#)]

Climate changes have been causing disasters around the world. The wildfire in Alberta, Canada, has become a state of emergency. Tens of thousands of residents have evacuated their homes, and more than 1,000 firefighters have been struggling to contain the wildfire. Yet, even though aircraft are being used to spray fire retardant on the blaze, fire continues to spread to other areas.

Mother Nature is truly out of balance. With this raging wildfire burning up the ground, the surface of Earth is damaged. It seems that humans cannot do anything to bring the wildfires under control. However, help will come if people change their mindset. At a time like this, the most important thing is for people to harbor a heart of sincere piety and repent deeply—only repentance will help this situation. Do not think that this disaster is far away and has nothing to do with us. We all live on the Earth and under the same sky; this makes us one family.

The Lotus Sutra mentions the burning house and the three realms: the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of formlessness. These are metaphors of our world and our state of mind. The Buddha tells us to view our world from the perspective of the three realms. The realm of desire simply refers to our desire. The realm of form refers to material things, such as money and assets. The mental aspect of the realm of form refers to people's thoughts of desires that are triggered by material things, such as wanting to take possession of whatever they see.

The realm of formlessness refers to our thinking. We cannot see what people are thinking, so it's hard to tell if they are being honest and sincere in what they say. People's minds are also fickle. At one moment, people get along happily. Yet, at the next, when something does not go their way, they change their mind instantly, lose their temper, become upset and angry, and vent their anger on innocent bystanders.

In the three realms, people's hearts are filled with the impurities of desire, greed, anger, and ignorance. In pursuing one's desires, such as fame, fortune, and social status, people create conflicts among fellow human beings and cause great damage to the environment. Therefore, we really must self-reflect and contemplate deeply why there are so many disasters in our world, and cleanse away the impurities in our heart. At the same time, we must pray for the peace and safety of our world.

Tzu Chi volunteers in Canada have started fundraising for those affected by the fire and have been encouraging people to pray for the world with sincerity. To contain the wildfire, battling the fire with all possible traditional means is not enough; it requires the prayers of many so that our collective prayers can resonate and reach the Buddhas, the guardian spirits, and heavenly beings. We hope that there'll be timely rain to put out the wildfire soon. Let us pray sincerely for everyone in the world to be safe and sound.

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From Morning Volunteer Assembly teachings on May 7th, 10th, and 12th, 2016
Compiled into English by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team