



**Christianity (Religion) and Natural Resources Conservation:
The Environmental Theology Perspective**

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Abstract

This review research was carried out to investigate the relationship between Christianity (Religion) and environmental resources conservation using the Environmental Theology prism. It was observed that from the story of creation in the Holy Bible, God gave man unfettered dominion to increase and multiply, subdue, dominate, kill and till nature to meet his daily needs. This domineering attitude and authority given to man from creation has led man to do all sorts of unkind, unsustainable exploitation and abuse on other aspects of the environment, not minding the degree and spate of regeneration and the commensurate waste generated by man. This mistake of creation and the authority of domineering was further displayed by Jesus Christ, a co-traveler in the history of creation to curse the fig tree on his way to Jericho, not minding the season for the fig tree to bear fruits, not even considering other environmental services that the fig tree could provide like nutrient recycling, carbon sink, wind breaking function, water cycle services and carbon sequestration among others. For Jesus to have done this, it means He is an anti-environment. Several portions of the scriptures where irresponsible environmental decisions and actions were carried out were x-rayed and it was discovered that the biblical account of creation and other environmental practices suggested that the Christian religion was against the environment. But on further observations, the same Holy bible became environmentally conscious about the state of the environment. Hence, this synopsis for promoting sustainable environment has been captured by the postulations and teaching of Environmental Theology. It was however discovered that Environmental Theology has the answers to most global environmental issues being faced by man, all hidden in the bible. It was recommended among others that there should be a curriculum overhauling to include Environmental Theology in all school curriculums, especially for environment and religion related courses.

Keywords: environmental theology, sustainability, environmental resources conservation, global environmental problems, creation story and dominion.

Introduction

Human activities are adversely affecting the land, water, air, and various forms of biological lives that comprise the ecosystems of our planet. Indicators of global warming and ozone layer depletion inhibit the normal functions vital to the biosphere. Environmental damage to the planet has become more damaging to human health and well-being now than ever before; and its effects now and in the future is worrisome, and too often that damage affects those who are least able to protect themselves. These points to only one thing; that the earth is imperiled (Jacobus, 2010). Concerted efforts have been made to see if this can be halted at both global and local levels, but these efforts seems to produce very abysmal results to beam any hope for the future.

Scholars have no other choice than to look inwards and ask some fundamental questions on how to reduce these global environmental trends. Can religion make any positive contribution to preventing further destruction of biological diversity and ecosystems and threats to our earth? Environmental theology comes in handy to examine the thought of Christian Church fathers and medieval theologians to reveal and retrieve insights that may speak to our current plight (Grant, 2000; Jacobus, 2001; Conradie, 2006). Thus, studies have shown that environmental theology has come in to reconstruct the teachings of St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and other classic thinkers to reflect our current scientific understanding of the world. The thinking of the "green" the Catholic faith is to value the goodness of creation; to appreciate the beauty of creation; to respect creation's praise for God; to acknowledge the kinship of all creatures; to use creation with gratitude and restraint, and to live virtuously within the earth community (Grant, 2000; Jacobus, 2001; Conradie, 2006; Schaefer, 2009).

Studies have shown that some secular environmentalists have assumed that Christianity is so otherworldly in its interests that it cannot offer a solid rationale for ecological responsibility. However, that Christian tradition and the biblical writings from which it draws the substance of its faith and moral traditions provide the framework for a worldview that can reasonably ground a robust ecological ethic and that it can do so more coherently than the inherently pessimistic materialism espoused by contemporary scientific naturalism. Christianity posture of hope for what is imperishably good and beautiful, a theological view that has its roots deep in Christian tradition, is a reasonable foundation for intergenerational commitment on the part of perishable human beings to the long-term care of Nature in general and life in particular (Deane-Drummond, 2008 & 2009; Haluza, 2013; Haught, 2017). These ambiguities and misconceptions can be rectified within the purview of environmental theology.

What then is Environmental Theology? Environmental Theology means that our planetary system (i.e. planet earth) and it's beautiful animal and botanical ecosystems could not have been product of chance, but visibly and sensibly products of awesome extra-terrestrial (higher) intelligence (Romans 1:18-20). That the interface of man breathing out carbon-dioxide for plants to take in, while plants breath out oxygen for man and animals to inhale, remains a supernaturally designs ecosystem which Biblical records warns that human excesses defiles (this ecosystem) and makes the human habitat or environment unbearable to live in. Environmental theology seeks to construct the nexus between religion (Christianity and other types of religion and the environment). This strand of knowledge has been seen from either of environmental theology or ecological theology, both meant one and the same thing. Either Environmental Theology or Ecological Theology tries to extrapolate the relationship between religion and the environment.

Ecological theology also called ecotheology, explores the relationships between humans, non-human, nature and God and works in its practical forms to modify human-environment relationship into a desired direction of nature-earthsmanship. As an academic discipline, ecological theology is part of the larger field of study on religion and nature (religion and ecology). Like environmental ethics, Environmental or ecological theology has a kind of double history. Environmental theology does not only aim at retrieving theological, biblical and ethical resources from Christianity to address contemporary ecological issues, but rather looks at how meaning-making practices are changed in the contemporary context of globalization and global climate change. How do globalization challenge concepts of meaning that claim universality? How does climate change challenge a separation between moral and natural 'evil'? How do urban ecology and environmental justice challenge distinctions between humans, technology, and the rest of the natural world, and what might this mean for theological understandings of creation? In the end, these questions highlight an overall shift in theological thinking: moving from global understandings of the world toward planetary understandings (Buman, 2011).

Justifications for Environmental Theology

1. Environmental Theology (even before it was coined,) already gave us the moral framework upon which modern Environmentalist built their moral codes: From Genesis 4:1-15 we learn that polluting the land defiles its resources with murdered blood curses; in Genesis 4:11-12 upon the land and upon the murderer are to be noted in relation to Leviticus 18:27-28: which states that the polluted land or defiled land will vomit (or become uninhabitable) or unfavorable to its polluters and occupiers to the extent of the occupants evicting themselves from such environments.
2. In other words, the Old Testament scriptures had already stated it over 4,000 years ago that our natural and beautiful physical and geographical environment should not be defiled or polluted.

Robinson and Davidson (2007) defined Ecosystem and Ecology as living organisms interacting with their environment: Hence man either controls or is controlled by his environment: this is the cardinal point of the teachings of Environmental Determinism (Carl Ritters, Racheal Carson, etc). This which takes us into "Eco-theology" (kanachikuzhy; 2008) that God gave man dominion or power to control God's creations; particularly that this study in its research finding noted that man is a product of his geographical environment; whereby Nnaji, (2010) quoting the Bible commentary as stating that mankind and all living beings are products from the earth's soil; this which the Bible boldly stated over 3,700 years that man possibly evolved, before Charles Darwins (1859: Origin of species) currently called mutagenesis and biological evolution of human, animal and plant lives from

inorganic materials; Not forgetting that periodically natural environmental disasters like floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, heat waves etc, plagues man and animals.

Eco-Theology thus means identifying Biblical records of man being a product of his own geographical environment, (Genesis 2:4-9) of which divine providence gave man the intellectual capacity to control and dominate that environment (Genesis 1:27-30: Genesis 2:4-9). Environmental-Theology on the other hand accommodates every aspect of Eco-Theology but concentrates more on Biblical records of environmental disasters of antiquities and how ancient peoples handled such disasters; also, if such Ecological disasters were actually Divine pronouncements, human errors, or interpreted according to different perspectives of recorders of such eventualities (See the Hebrew Old Testament; 2008; Genesis 7:11;kanachikuzhy; 2008).

The genealogy of environmental conservation problems in the bible

From creation in Genesis chapter 1:28, God created man, and saw that all his creations were good, God blessed man and said to man, “ be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, subdue it, and have dominion over the fishes of the seas and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the surface of the earth” Verse 29-30, God went further to state that “ I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of the earth and every tree with seed in its fruits. You shall have them for food. Theologians of the environmental extractions have variously cited Leviticus 20:22-25 and Leviticus 18:22-29 “ you must keep all my statutes and laws so that the land I am going to give to you may not vomit you”. Particularly from Genesis 1:28-29 (Genesis 2:7-20) man has been divinely empowered to subdue, till, tend, dominate, control his environment (i.e. planet earth and its surroundings) for his own well being. Man currently contributes to emerging negative and dangerous environmental conditions, particularly from nuclear and chemical pollutions of his own environment (Kortetmaki, 2008).

Genesis 9:1-3, again the bible further stated that “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear and the terror of you will exude will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. Again in Psalm 8:6-8, the bible said “You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas” Man has exploited environment and its resources in more serious ways with damaging effects like man’s industrial processes, nuclear weapon production, agricultural expansion with the use of agrochemicals, urbanization and infrastructural development,

quarry activities and mineral exploration and exploitation, terrorism, wars and other civil unrest among nations of the world. All these at one point or the other has seriously affected the ecological balance of the ecosystem, thereby altering the normal functioning of the ecosystem and its resources (Pihkala, 2015).

The Genesis 3:17-23, 2:6-7 story of the garden of Eden, (Gen. 3:17) to Adam, God said, because you listen to your wife (Eve) and ate from the tree about which I commanded you not to eat from, cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life”. Verse 18: “It will produce thorns and thistles for you and you will eat the plant of the field”.

Verse 19: “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return” (Pihkala, 2015).

Verse 20: “Adam named his wife Eve because she would become the mother of all the living”

Verse 21: “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them”.

Verse 22: “And the Lord said, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”

Verse 23: “So the Lord God banished him from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.” (NIV) (Pihkala, 2016).

Thus, in this second creation story, companionship is the explicit ground given for the creation of the two sexes. But it is important to note not only human beings are intended for relationship to one another. This is also the reason for the creation of "the various wild beasts and birds of the air" (Gen. 2:19). The natural world is not merely intended for subjugation by human beings but for companionship.

Human population is on the rise every day, with no commensurate population decline from mortality factors like early death rates, epidemics, famine, diseases, from the tropical regions, violence and war situation. All these factors ordinarily were expected to reduce or balance human population to equilibrium. The quest for feeding this teeming population, improving their way of lives, regenerating environmental resources among others, have always put the environment and all its resources in jeopardy including man who is a major factor in the business of survival of the environment. This has led man in to very serious confusion, it is on the basis of this postulation that environmental theologian try to reconnect the religious perspective with modern reality. It is therefore necessary to advance some of the biblical injunctions and commands given in the Holy

bible concerning the environment and its resources and the way man should subdue and relate with this cosmos (Pihkala, 2016).

Genesis 4:10-11 (Bloodshed, Hebrew “Losopheq-Dam”) Verse 10: The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground” (NIV) Verse 11: “And now you are cursed from polluting the earth (with murdered blood)”, (Goodnews Bible, 2014). Again, in 2 Kings 4:38-41 “And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and there was a dearth (famine) in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the prophets”. Verse 39: “And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not” (Pihkala, 2015b). Many who ate were discomforted, but Elisha called for the whole pot to be brought, he blessed the pot and ordered to be served to the people.

The first of the two stories has been the basis of both the over-lordship and stewardship images for the role of humanity in the natural world. "Let us make the human being in our image and likeness God blessed them, saying to them, 'Be fertile and increase; fill the whole earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and all the living things that move on the earth'" (Gen. 1:26 and 28). Part of the human being's likeness to God is the exercise of dominion over the rest of creation. The twin images of being given dominion and being commanded to subdue the earth and all the creatures which fill it are closely connected with sovereignty. God's sovereignty is asserted often in the Hebrew Scriptures. Here the image and likeness of God, the human being, is entrusted with sovereignty. From the perspective of the first creation myth in Genesis, without such dominion and power over the rest of creation, the human being would not be "like God" (Schaefer, 2009).

According to Himes and Himes, (1990), the central theme of the second of Genesis's creation myths (2:4b-25) is that of domination. The dominion motive is depicted in the first human being naming all the animals that God has made and led before him "to see what he would call them" (Gen. 2:19). All other creatures will be what the human being says they are—certainly an extraordinary statement of the power over creation given by God to humanity. But the context of this conferral is the human hunger for companionship. In the first of the creation myths, the first divine judgment on humanity is that it is "very good" (Gen. 1:31), that judgment is made on humanity differentiated into male and female, relational being. The first judgment of God regarding human beings in the second myth makes this even more explicit. Having fashioned the human being from the clods of the earth and breathed the divine breath into him, God announces that "it is not good for the human being to be

alone" (Gen. 2:18). Again there is the insistence that human beings are meant to be in relationship to one another (Schaefer, 2009).

In another bible portion, Mark 11:20-22, when Jesus was going to Jericho, He was very hungry, He saw a fig tree and decided to go get some fruits from the fig tree, on getting to the fig tree, there was no fruit on the fig tree, the fig tree did not bear any fruit, Jesus cursed the fig tree to die, Verse 21'' when Jesus and his disciples were returning from Jericho, they saw that the fig tree was dead because Jesus cursed it, the disciple drew Jesus' attention to the dead fig tree. Verse 22 '' Jesus said yes, if they have a little faith as a mustard seed, they can command a mountain to be moved from here into the river and it will happen''. Environmentally, Jesus even though was seen as the man who commanded creation, did not act in good faith, in effect this Jesus did not take other environmental services provided by the tree into considerations. Environmentally, trees serves a variety of purpose, as carbon sink, wind breakers, habitat for most micro organisms, serves soil fertility replenishment, help in photosynthesis and lots more. Jesus did not consider the season and period under which He expected the fig tree to bear fruits, what if the fig tree was in the season where it does not bear fruits? Couldn't Jesus consider this period? The fact that the fig tree did not bear fruit at that material time, does it mean the tree is not performing any other environmental services, except fruit production? This is another aspect of the subdue, kill, till and dominate nature as instructed by the bible over all parts of the environment and its resources (Buman, 2011).

Another expression of the biblical injunction of subdue, kill, till and dominate nature was also shown when 'Peter the apostle said he saw a vision and in that vision, God sent down different species of animals from heaven and asked Peter to rise, kill and eat'', Peter said God how do I eat unclean things and he was warned by the angels for calling what God has created and made clean ''unclean''? Here, the expression of ''what God has created is clean'' means Peter should kill all aspects of the environment including its resources. There are several portions in the bible where God demonstrated the authority of subduing nature in every ramification. But with all these, environmental theologians are trying to create a nexus between the real relationship between nature, humans and other parts of the environment and its resources (Buman, 2011).

Himes and Himes (1990) cited in Pihkala (2016) posited that a number of critics (Arnold Toynbee, Lynn White) have argued that the Christian tradition are suspicious on the matter of the environment. These authors argue that Judaism and Christianity have fed an anthropocentrism which, intentionally or not, demeans the rest of creation as it exalts those who are a "little less than the angels (man)" above other creatures (Psalm 8:5). Certainly Hebraic monotheism declared that all others but Yahweh were "no-gods." included among those denied divine status were the deities of

Greek and Roman mythology who protected streams, mountains, and forests. It is possible to see in this demythologizing a loss of reverence for nature. Christianity's contribution to the problem: its celebration of the Incarnation has promoted the centrality of humanity in the plan of creation and redemption and accorded secondary status to the rest of creation (Himes and Himes (1990) cited in Pihkala 2016).

Environmental Implication of dominion, subdue and consume nature: The Biblical side

From the book of Job 17:14-16, the bible points to a natural flood water disaster used to destroy an earlier existence, replicated in Genesis 7:11 which explains sources of the flood waters of Genesis 1:2, that ancient or primeval origins of planet earth has trapped underground and suspended waters or around the ozone layer which fell as “Geshem” (i.e. Hebrew for heavy rain-storm: or “soheph” and supha) hence, water surged from below the earth crust; i.e. or that the solid earth- crust burst open and the Heavens (Shamaim) opened up (phetha: see Job 7:34 “Ephphathah” i.e. be opened) and water surged from below and above and devastated planet earth with ancient waters (Hebrew “the-hoim”, on basic (or first) element for creation translated “Deep” or deep ocean waters) which took over 12 months to dry up. (Genesis 7:24, Genesis 8:3-14; Jacobus, 2010).

In Exodus 7:14 and Exodus 11:1-6, the bible also told of the ten plague that took place in Egypt as these depicts ancient environmental disaster, the changing of water into blood was a sign of environmental disaster (water pollution, Exodus 7:20-24). This phenomenon was captured in Hebrew, “Hephequ Lo-Dam” i.e. to turn (or alter) water to blood, hence there was no water to drink. Another form of revolt from man’s subdue of the environment was also observed in Exodus 9:25, this portion of the bible states that throughout Egypt the hail struck everything in the fields, both humans and animals. It beats down everything growing in the fields and fell every tree (kanachikuizhy, 2008). Also in Exodus 8:14 (mosquitoes tormented men and animals). In Exodus 9:1-7, Pests invaded and killed Egyptian animals (Exodus 7:27-29), frogs invaded Egyptian farms and homes (Conradie, 2006; Eneji, Ntamu, Ajor, Ben, Bassey and Williams, 2012).

Balancing the nexus using environmental theology

Scholars like Thomas Berry, Matthew Fox and a host of others have sought to re-present the tradition and demonstrate a more sensible Christian attitude toward the created order. Some of this work has borne fruit, awakening among believers an interest in the environment and providing a degree of religious seriousness for addressing an issue that is more important and complex than the faddishness and trivialization which mass media politics inevitably encourages. Despite these efforts, it is lamentable but true that the question still can fairly be asked, "What does Christianity

have to say to the contemporary ecological movement?" That it has something to say is important to assert, but what it has to say is not primarily advice on public policy or clear moral judgments for settling disputes about economic growth versus ecological protection. In this regard, the Christian tradition is, in the words of Richard McCormick, "more a value raiser than a problem solver (Conradie, 2006; Eneji, Gubo, Jian, Oden, and Okpiliya, 2009).

A similar kind of process seems to take place whenever a church body is confronted with a demand for recognition of certain environmental values, as Risto Saarinen originally observed (Grant, 2000). In the process, the church body seeks to discover whether or not the Bible and tradition would allow a greater weight for environmental causes. Usually the result has been affirmative, although in various forms. The most common Christian response has been an emphasis on restricted responsibility, "stewardship" (or even an enlightened form of "dominion"), which points to the need to be more responsible towards the environment, but at the same time stresses the rights of humans to use nature wisely. As a theological and Biblical basis, the command to "till and keep" (Gen.2:15) has been emphasized as the key to stewardship, and usually in order to explain what is actually meant by dominion (Gen.1:26). Like every myth of origin, the two Genesis stories of the beginning of all things (Genesis I:1-2:4a and 2:4b-25) have been used to explain and justify the ways human beings relate to one another and to the nonhuman world. As narratives of how things came to be and depictions of how things were and presumably ought to be, these creation stories have been elaborated into cosmologies and theories of the soul and twisted into ideological support for male-dominance and industrial exploitation (Grant, 2000; Henshey, 2011).

In exercising the dominion over the earth and all that it contains and the command "to fill the whole earth and subdue it"—certainly this conveys power. Such a claim to power by human beings over all nonhuman creation contains the possibility, all too often realized, of domination and exploitation of the earth. Clearly the claim to power must be balanced by the call to responsibility, the traditional appeal to stewardship. The relationship between humanity and the rest of creation has often been cast in the Jewish and Christian traditions as that of a caretaker, one charged by God with the maintenance of the earth. The nonhuman world has been given to human beings for our good, to be used responsibly for our self-development, to answer to our purposes and thus to fulfill God's purpose in creating it. To be sure, this stewardship image prohibited wanton wastefulness, the mere exploitation of nature by humankind. The world is presented as a garden given into our care to be tended and nurtured. But undeniably the role of stewardship carries the implication that nonhuman creation is to be used, but wisely and with carefulness (Haught, 2017).

Environmental theology clearly states that God personified and divinized land and the human environment as all living part of human existence, little wonder the Ibos see the land as “Ala or Ani” (Oguguo, 2006 cited in Nnaji and Agboga, 2015); the “Ala” the earth goddess which means that land and its geographical features (or environment) are not inanimate, but animate because they are seen as living part of the environment, this clearly, shows that the land is “Anima” (latin, “spiritual”), (Horrell, Hunt and Southgate 2008). It should be clearly understood that according to the Old Testament and the Ibo belief systems (Eke, 2001); Ala, see the environment (and land) as spirit personified (not inanimate objects). That these spirit beings called “land and the environment”, are sensitive to, and often offended by human immoralities like bloodshed and sexual offences, how much more the great evil of modern Crude Oil, Nuclear, Gas and Chemical pollutions of land and human environments by modern technological race and competitive manufacturing industries. This command by God, who is believed to be the creator of the universe, gave man a fiat and unfettered rights to explore, exploit, subdue and destroy environmental resources without replacement. What an open check to man to wantonly and indiscriminately destroy the environment and all its resources (Johansen, 2003; Jacobus, 2010).

Psalm 24:1-2 : The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it. For the Lord has founded the earth upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. Psalm 50:9-12; "I shall take neither young bull out of your house nor male goats out of your folds."For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. "I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is mine."If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all it contains. Leviticus 25:23: 'The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me. The bible in the gospels of Matthew 6:26-30 and Luke 12: 24-28, "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? "And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! (Deane-Drummond, 2008; Mkenda, 2010).

"For the land, into which you are entering to possess it, is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you used to sow your seed and water it with your foot like a vegetable garden."But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven, a land for which the Lord your God cares; the eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year. "It shall come about, if you listen obediently to

my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil."He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied (Deuteronomy 11:10-15; Appiah-Opoku, 2007; Deane-Drummond, 2008).

Warning the Israelites about destroying nature and its resources, Deuteronomy 20:19 holds that “When you besiege a city a long time, to make war against it in order to capture it, you shall not destroy its trees by swinging an axe against them; for you may eat from them, and you shall not cut them down. For is the tree of the field a man, that it should be besieged by you? The bible further stated in Proverbs 12:10 that a righteous man has regards for the life of his animal, but even the compassion of the wicked is cruel. Using rotational bush fallowing, the bible further holds that “You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield, but on the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove (Exodus 23:10-11; Haluza, 2013).

In Christian churches and theology, a partly similar development has taken place in many countries. A “stewardship” agenda has been accepted and environmental concerns have become at least some portion of the work of the churches, but, at the same time, more or less vague identity groups have continued to act in order to gain more recognition for environmental causes in their churches. Many have championed more extensive rights of nature by advocating a framework of the “intrinsic value of nature”, which in Christian theology is usually, in the end, a theocentric value. Others have even more radical agendas, which have usually led them to establish new groups. A rather famous example is the Creation Spirituality movement led by such figures as the former Roman Catholic Priest Matthew Fox, who lost his position in the church and parts of the movement were further radicalized (Deane-Drummond and Clough, 2009).

Deane-Drummond and Clough, (2009) found that in animal ethics (animal theology), the question of similarity and difference between humans and other animals is a crucial one. A major focus in the work of proponents of animal rights and animal wellbeing has been the need to avoid overly strong anthropocentrism, which means a view where humans would hold as their right to use animals in ways which cause pain or diminish their flourishing. Often the value and rights of animals have been grounded in certain similarities with humans: animals also experience pain and suffer, they have feelings and they would like to flourish. However, the question of what animals want and need is sometimes complicated by the human perspective: some thinkers have argued that humans should be careful in order not to think too strongly that animals want human-like things. For example, some

people think that pet dogs want similar living conditions with humans, while others think that they would need more “natural” conditions. The situation is complicated by the fact that humans and many animals have a long history in common, and the behavior of both species has been changed during the process (Deane-Drummond, 2008). Conradie, (2006) posited that it is both a joy and a challenge to recognize creaturely difference, and an ongoing process (Conradie, 2006).

The values that Christianity points to in the cluster of issues raised by the environmental crisis is humankind's essential relatedness to nature, an understanding of the created order that is precisely what is at stake here. Too often the discussion over the ecosystem turns on arguments from self-interest, even if enlightened self-interest, a stance that we believe is fundamentally flawed. Treating environmental issue as primarily a calculation of long-term versus short-term interests maintains an attitude of instrumental rationality that is essentially part of the problem. The Jewish and Christian understanding of creation, at least in one of its strands, is profoundly insightful and potentially transformative of modern ways of addressing the crisis of creation (Johansen, 1996; Horrell, Hunt and Southgate, 2008).

The needed transformation lies at the level of our deep convictions, our world view. The relational dimension of the Jewish-Christian heritage must replace the atomized individualism of our current outlook based on Environmental theology's perspective (Christianity's perspective). The mentality of consumerism, the myth of progress, and our technological mind-set are all problematic in regard to the environment; they are also symptomatic. Each is the distortion of a human good, a distortion rising from the non-relational anthropology of our age. If our environmental sensitivity is to change, the transformation must take place at the root of the problem. But that transformation is more convoluted than might first appear (Kortetmaki, 2008).

Having seen from these perspectives enumerated above, there are positive postulations to how religion has contributed to value other creation from God including man. God realizing the need for the conservation of resources, God went further to make some adjustments, like the feeding of the five thousand (5000) who followed him as recorded in Mark 6:42 9Luke 8:1-9), to reduce waste and also reduce pressure on the natural world, twelve and seven (7) baskets full of broken bread were respectively collected after feeding the five thousand on two occasions. This shows the injunction of judicious or wise use of environmental resources, hence “do not want, do not waste”, the basic principle of sustainable development. God raised some dead people to life (Lazarus, Tabitha also known as Dorcas), this shows how God value the sanctity of lives no matter the species of living things involved (Kearns, 2003; Kortetmaki, 2008).

Conclusion

Ecosystem in the views of Simpson and Weiner (1989) involves living organisms (man, animals and plants) dominating or being dominated by their environments or surroundings; hence, giving rise to migrational birds, and emigrating people searching for much more friendly ecosystems or environments free from heat waves, drought or famine, and free from earth tremors, volcanoes and waves etc. Similarly, Environmental Theology in this sense is another way of saying “Ecumenism” i.e. peaceful co-existence between rival Religions, while man is also expected to respect animals and plants rights. The study primarily notes that man is a product of his own environment; i.e. be it from the Theological point of view (Genesis 2:7) or biological evolution (Charles Darwin (1859) origin of species etc, man (biological life generally) originated from the ground, earth or soil-(Hebrew “Adamah”) Man i.e. (Adam) evolved from the ground (i.e. Hebrew “Adamah”) under the right biochemical environmental astral and micro-organic conditions.

Based on this analogy, man, the environment and all its resources are product created by God and man happens to be first among equal species of all living organisms. Hence, the biblical injunction of increase and multiply and fill the earth, dominate, subdue, kill and till the environment and all its resources should be redirected to mean nature earthsmanship, where both man and nature are in a symbiotic relationship. Man and nature should be seen as being intricately intertwined like Siamese triplet or conjoined twins, where they are at the mercy of each other for survival. Until man understands this intricate relationship and begin to see nature as a co-traveler in the scheme of human development and existence, man would continue to face harsh environmental conditions including not having adequate resources to feed his teeming population and living under the threats of environmental pollution. To achieve this, Environmental Theology seems to have the solution to the problems of environmental resources conservation based on the bible principles.

Recommendation

It is necessary that church leaders, evangelist, pastors and priest introduce some components of environmental conservations (Environmental Theology) into their church activities.

The aspect of the bible which stresses the need for conservation should be emphasized and encourage church members to observed such church teaching seriously.

Christianity should encourage the practical application of conservation principles like tree planting, afforestation, animal husbandry to reduce pressure on natural resources and other forms of wildlife.

Communities with forbidden items (totemism) should be encouraged; communities like Gakem in Bekwarra (Road runner bird), Umuaro (male deer; stag), Nnewi (python), Muslims (pig), among many others should be encouraged to continue these practices since these are latent methods of resources conservation.

Environmental theology should be introduced at all levels of our school system to inculcate in the learners the basic theological concept and perspectives which deals with resources conservation.

Above all, environmental awareness creating organizations should mount more awareness in churches, communities and in theological seminaries, where environmental theology can be properly introduced and taught.

There should be curriculum overhauling to include Environmental Theology into our school curriculum.

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