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Hesed: Engaging New Generations for Earthkeeping

Keith Ham

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KEITH HAM

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

Keith Ham

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Dissertation Committee:

Primary Advisor: Gregg Borror, DMin

Secondary Advisor: Ekaputra Tupamahu, PhD

Lead Mentor: Leonard I. Sweet, PhD

Expert Advisor: Todd Clark

For Missions of Hope children and their children's children.
With love and pride.

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Jesus comes to us from beyond and pulls us from the future more than pushes us from the past. The Holy Spirit encourages time travel, most often to the future.

—Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church*

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ABSTRACT

Within the Christian community, a critical gap of failing to address the degradation of the planet in a meaningful way has led to impoverished views theologically and in praxis and experience. In the context of earth care, independent African churches acquiesce her role and responsibility to conserve the land and conceive of new ways to envision creation care because of her models of prosperity theology and a millennium future. By intensifying a trust in God and allowing his covenantal love for and with creation the coherence of the Christian story is not compromised. Research in the metaphors of trusteeship and stewardship collaborates a value that fosters focused Christian earthkeeping.

This dissertation heightens the value of the Christian narrative that offers an ethical metaphor of trusteeship embedded in the storyline. Section one addresses the environmental crisis and the various theological vagrancies and tensions of Christian experience in modernity and shallow interpretations of Scripture. Section two compares three distinct theological positions primarily associated with biodiversity conservation and Christian ethics on the environment. Section three reexamines the Christian story in the context of experience and praxis of covenantal *hesed*. Christian ethics as seen through *hesed* has four markers: living in the awareness of the prime directive in Genesis chapter two; embracing the universal rainbow covenant of Noah; focusing on hope linking creation and Christ's incarnation; and valuing the communal journey of *hesed* through expressions of responsibly acting in the best interests to future generations and self-respect as fiduciaries of the planet. Section four describes the artifact, a weeklong Christian camp experience for disadvantaged kids from Nairobi, Kenya called "*Angaza*

Discovery Camp" that will offer an out-door school experiencing ecological awareness and skill-building in earthkeeping. Section five articulates the specifications for the artifact. Section six encapsulates the implementation of the *Angaza* Discovery Camp and suggests insights learned to be addressed in the future.

SECTION ONE:

THE PROBLEM

The Christian community has failed to address the issue of the current ecological crisis in a meaningful way. With a "defiant earth"[1] that is more unpredictable and less controllable, changing existing beliefs and behaviors proves difficult in the 21st century. Evangelical and Charismatic Christianity is faced with her internal discord and theological inflexibility to move beyond herself to be able to address the eco-crisis. Other problems come to the surface in the inherent political polemics and ministry issues,[2] such as redemption theology,[3] which focuses on human redemption over and above creation narratives and popular prosperity teachings pushing closer to forms of Gnosticism,[4] and conservative eschatology compared to holistic eschatology.[5] Holding a significant conversation on the dilemma poses a difficult motivation because the issue is vast and

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[1] Clive Hamilton, *Defiant Earth: The Fate of Humans in the Anthropocene* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2017), 9.

[2] Daniel L. Brunner, Jennifer L. Butler, and A. J. Swoboda, *Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology: Foundations in Scripture, Theology, History, and Praxis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 17.

[3] Denis Edwards, *Deep Incarnation: God's Redemptive Suffering with Creatures*, Duffy Lectures in Global Christianity (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2019), intro., sec. 1, Kindle.

[4] David W. Jones and Russell S. Woodbridge, *Health, Wealth, and Happiness: How the Prosperity Gospel Overshadows the Gospel of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2017), 21.

[5] Richard Bauckham, "Eschatology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology, The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 306–23.

global. Traditionally, the Evangelical world is skeptical[6] that there is an ecological crisis and instead prioritizes other pressing problems.[7]

Unfortunately, raising ecological issues so that meaningful conversations come about creates problems for most Evangelical Christians because of the different anxieties associated with it. Christian communities fear an attraction to nature that could lead to misdirected worship, anti-capitalistic political tendencies, and neo-paganism that reduces the exceptionality of humans created in the image of God.[8] These problems make it difficult for the Christian community to address the ecological crisis in any significant way. Conversations can start as environmental concerns in the context of Christian traditions are embraced, revisiting her origin stories and infusing her experiences with a loyal God concerning her loving covenantal obligations. Dialog begins as shared values within the Christian community such as collective stewardship of the land and care for the poor are prioritized.

Reflection by Christian communities and theologians in Africa consistently incline to be concerned with their religious roots. In Africa, creation myths abound with a localized god and a beautiful story on a mountain, creating man and instructing him to find a grove of trees with birds' songs. Frequently, the man finds a woman, and they start a family, with the trees representing nourishment and fertility. In near pantheistic immanent insight, the presence of a god's spirit in the trees becomes evident,

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[6] Napp Nazworth, "Evangelicals and Climate Change: Global Warming Skeptics (Pt. 3)," *Christian Post*, June 26, 2012, https://www.christianpost.com/news/hold-evangelicals-and-climate-change-global-warming-skeptics-part3.html.

[7] David M. Lodge and Christopher Hamlin, *Religion and the New Ecology: Environmental Responsibility in a World in Flux* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 128.

[8] Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 14.

encouraging dialogue and thinking about how spirit and matter are related. The African traditional experience reminds many African Christians of God's Eden narrative creating and planting the first tress. Usually, in African theology and church experience, Adam and Noah are seen as heroes and "men of God" for their care of the earth, and liberators in their own right."[9] Connecting the symbolism and stories of tree planting events on the continent, webs of relationships develop. The stress is on dignity as humans and a value placed on trees that no longer are seen as a means to make money or as routine entities.

History on Africa's continent confirms how residents of a region confront issues such as environmental deterioration. The legacy of Western colonialism and unbalanced capitalism impeded development on the continent of Africa. This lack of development produced endemic illiteracy, undernourishment, and neglect of female health and nutrition.[10] Capitalism took root during colonial and post-colonial periods, but its development was disjointed and uneven, especially towards non-indigenous businesses and women.[11] In ecological terms, "Africa and its inhabitants are vulnerable to current climate sensitivity because of existing development challenges and endemic poverty."[12] In relative terms, Africa has contributed less to climate change, and it has the least resources to respond to this crisis, creating some of the worst ecological degradation conditions and endemic poverty.

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[9] Marthinus L. Daneel, "African Initiated Churches as Vehicles of Earth-Care in Africa," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, ed. Roger Gottlieb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 563.

[10] Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 99.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Jesse N. K. Mugambi, "African Heritage and Ecological Stewardship," in *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology,* ed. Willis Jenkins, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and John Grim (New York: Routledge, 2017), 110.

The Story

Mwangi, also known as "Pastor," was born and brought up in the Mathare Valley, an impoverished urban slum in Nairobi, Kenya. Mwangi's family shanty was next to a sizeable toxic dumping facility, and there was little sanitation due to lack of infrastructure. For a family of eight, Pastor's small eight- by ten-foot iron-sheet house where all kitchen duties and socializing happened was too much to grip. One room and crowded, the shack at risk of a landslide, as the landlord haphazardly erected it many years ago. The Mathare Valley had been a stone quarry before it became a slum, so the cliffs and ragged edges were dangerous obstacles to proper housing.

Mwangi had always heard the preaching of the gospel as a child but never was interested. He was too busy scraping a living with his carpentry skills to be involved in "those useless gatherings." A few years back, he heard a sermon in a church on the outskirts of the Mathare slum. He remembers listening and leaning into the preaching. Still, after further reflection later that day, he remembers hearing only about Bill Gates, the guy who invented computers, but not one mention of Jesus Christ. He was confused to hear that all believers will be removed from the Earth at Christ's return as the environment worsens as the words of the preacher ran counter to his understanding from his father's home in the countryside, where land was precious and beautiful.

Hearing of a preaching event in the business district of town, Mwangi went to check it out. He had always been exposed to the "good life" but struggled to get it. He hoped now that, through religion, he would get quick access to finances as promised in much of the preaching he heard in the streets and on the radio. Mwangi loved hearing that God was present to help with the many material needs and financial constraints he was

going through. He was having a difficult time paying rent for his shanty, and the price a 20-liter jerry can of water increased in town because of the water shortage in the country.

Mwangi pledged himself to God that night after going forward for prayer. He dedicated his life to Christ by becoming a pastor to his people in the Mathare Valley. He served humbly and provided for his daily needs by making beds and tables and selling them on the side of the road. As a pastor, he unconsciously knew the importance of the environment because he has always believed in God as the Creator and watched his extended family care for their plots of land. When he was young, his father told Mwangi stories about how their ancestral farmlands stood tied to the people. He loved preaching on the creation story and produced many sermons on Adam and Eve, the Tree of Life, and the Garden of Eden. His Bible was worn out, especially in those first pages of the book of Genesis.

After a Sunday service and prayers with his congregation, Pastor heard a voice inside say, “Take care of My home.” Because he was hungry, he dismissed it as his stomach making noise, and he went to a local kiosk to purchase some ugali and sukuma. The very next Sunday, a similar experience happened. The voice inside, which by then Mwangi recognized as God speaking to him, said again, “Take care of My home.” He wondered what God meant by “My Home.” Was it his congregation? God’s people in the slum? Or the depth of his soul, his spirituality?

On his way home to his hut on the cliff, Mwangi’s attention was drawn to plastic bags caught in the barbed wire fence, blowing in the wind. Those bags, combined with the smell coming from the toxic dump and open sewage gushing from the public toilets made him cough. He passed a dead dog that was left to rot on the street as crows fought

over its flesh. He said to himself, “Mwangi, I see on this journey back to my house that I am waking up to the realization that this Earth is God’s home. We have done wrong as stewards of God’s home.”

He prayed, “God forgive me, forgive us, for you have not done this, the devil did not do this—we have. Give me a vision to see and a heart to care for your home.” His first Sunday in church after this experience, he gathered the choir together and shared his vision with them. Together they wrote and performed a hymn with a choreographed dance for church the very next Sunday, entitled “Journey Back to Eden.” Not only did they celebrate with voice and dance, but the choir’s drums, strings, and flutes almost drowned out the jumping and whirling. He reflected on various priorities for action that night. In response to hearing the voice of God and celebrating with the congregation, Pastor started to feel a sense of trust. He knew there was plenty of work that needed attention, but he rested in the reassurance of a good God and pushed in his soul to trust God enough—just enough for this great work ahead.

Ecological Awareness

In the first quarter of the 21st century, multiple significant situations in the state of the earth, the atmosphere, and its inhabitants have been occurring, escalating to what climate scientists regard as a global ecological crisis. Among these are pollution of the oceans, rivers, and air; large-scale deforestation; overfishing of the oceans and rivers;

endangerment and extinction of species; exponential growth of the world's human population; and, the most concerning, global warming and climate change.[13]

May 9, 2013 was a watershed date in humanity's history as it was the day a handful of scientists observed the daily average carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels rise above 400 parts per million (ppm) for the first time. By April 1, 2018, the carbon dioxide levels reached 409 ppm.[14] Implications of this trend are multi-layered: "The chemical balance of the oceans set by forces far beyond human control—until now, when the excess of human-produced CO_2 has made the oceans 30 percent more acidic. We are making mother's milk unsafe to drink because of pollutants in the mother's body."[15] Carbon dioxide levels cause more than human health issues; mass extinction is taking place:[16] "Estimations are that a species goes extinct every hour," and others claim that "approximately one species every 11 minutes"[17] fades, "environmental migration of displaced peoples is increasing because of rising seas and mineral extraction,"[18] and

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[13] The evidence is strong enough on its own. For an overview of the evidence of climate change and the ecological crisis, see Mark Maslin, *Climate Change: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), chap. 3. See also Daniel L. Brunner, Jennifer L. Butler, and A. J. Swoboda, *Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology: Foundations in Scripture, Theology, History, and Praxis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), chap. 3. Finally, see Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007) for a local account of deforestation in Kenya.

[14] "Global Monitoring Laboratory," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, September 2019, https://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/.

[15] Roger Gottlieb, *Morality and the Environemntal Crisis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 6.

[16] Yuval N. Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (New York: Harper, 2017), chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

[17] Dammian Carrington, "Humanity Has Wiped Out 60% of Animal Populations Since 1970, Report Finds," *The Guardian*, October 29, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/30/humanity-wiped-out-animals-since-1970-major-report-finds.

[18] Gottlieb, 8. Also, before Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed for protecting the Ogoni peoples, he

"overburdened rainforests are giving off rather than absorbing CO_2."[19] In exploring various approaches, this dissertation delineates between specific moral systems and the values associated with them and how the different models affect biblical hermeneutics and constructive theology.

Flawed Christian Traditions

Dualism

The failure to see humanity as related to nature in a positive way stems from the root of *dualism*, a product of Greek thought that separates spiritual realities from the material world. Hellenistic dualism was a historically significant shift in Christian thought because some aspects of early Christianity had a dualistic outlook that sought to reach high spiritual realms and was at odds with the material world.[20] In the 1st century, Christian theology held that humans resided in a relationship with the natural world around them as viewed in holistic terms (1 Thess. 5:23–24). Christian ethics were rooted in Hebraic thought patterns and her geographical and historical beginnings with Rabbinic Palestine.[21] When Greek humanism "joined" biblical Christianity, it reflected an

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wrote the poem "Ogoni! Ogoni!" that was smuggled out of Nigeria before he died. See Neil Astley, *Earth Shattering EcoPoems* (Northumberland, UK: Bloodaxe Books, 2007), 169.

[19] Gottlieb, 4.

[20] Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2015), 125.

[21] Mont W. Smith, *What the Bible Says About Covenant* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1981), 53–56.

anthropocentric worldview of the earth.[22] Therefore, theological discussions faded in relating creation with redemption and vice versa.

Joseph Sittler the influential Lutheran theologian wrote on the need to think of a "theology of earth" clear back in the 1950s. Sittler commented, "This doctrinal cleavage, particularly fateful in western Christendom, has been an element in the inability of the church to relate the powers of grace to the vitalities and processes of nature."[23] This "vagrancy" developed theologically because of a limited view of the Incarnation and its locality concerned with only human interests.[24] The implication of some of these theological fancies is that the Christian community will not be able to take the planet honestly enough to see the ecological crisis as a matter of faith and to adapt in time and mitigate course and sacrifice conveniences.

Gnosticism is a technical term describing several different groups of the first centuries of the Common Era. It grew out of a Hellenistic dualism, having categories classifying reality into two domains, equating the spiritual with good and matter with evil. A Gnostic formulation of the world viewed the body as lower than the spirit, opposed the material world to a higher spiritual one, had complicated myths of origins, and was disposed toward the ascetics.[25] It was believed that the creation of the material world was the work of an immoral and inept lesser god. How this affected Christian theology, nevertheless, is seen in the idea that "one must turn away from nature in order

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[22] Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* (New York: Bell Tower, 1999), 136.

[23] Joseph Sittler, *Evocations of Grace: Writings on Ecology, Theology, and Ethics,* ed. Steven Bouma-Prediger and Peter Bakken (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 42.

[24] Sittler, 121.

[25] Linda Woodhead, *Christianity: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 73.

to have communication with God."[26] Typically, when modern religious groups push up close to gnostic outlooks, they share these tendencies of devaluing the earth.

Our failure to see humanity as "kin" to others in the world came when Christianity was baptized in enlightenment thinking, which made nature an object and placed human reason as supreme:[27] "Although we are wholly dependent upon its {air} nourishment for all our actions and all our thoughts, the immersing medium has no mystery for us, no conscious influence or meaning. Lacking all sacredness, stripped of all spiritual significance, the air is today little more than a conveniently forgotten dump site."[28] This division between the secular and sacred increased over time. Spiritual concerns receded, and industry expanded with the help of science and technology. Economic models developed and soon began to control the natural world.

Anthropocene[29]

Dutch chemist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Paul Crutzen first introduced *Anthropocene* in the early 21st century.[30] Anthropocene is the geologic period that is defined by the influence of human activity and its effects. By 2003 and 2004, the name was popularized in scientific journals and recognized as the new term to describe humanity's current era.

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[26] Johnson, 125.

[27] Larry L. Rasmussen, *Earth-honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), chap. 5, sec. 4, Kindle.

[28] David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997), 260.

[29] See Harari chap. 2. Also see Celia Deane-Drummond, Sigurd Bergmann, and Markus Vogt, *Religion in the Anthropocene* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), chap. 1.

[30] Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (New York: Picador, Henry Holt, 2015), 107.

Anthropocentrism is the philosophical view that nothing in the world is as significant or as central as human beings. It derives from the basic concept that humans are distinct from all non-humans and that all rights are described exclusively as human rights:[31] "Everything that happens in the cosmos is judged to be good or bad according to its impact on *Homo sapiens*."[32] When the natural world is observed with an anthropocentric mindset, animals, soil, water, and air are justifiably seen as elements to be exploited for the benefit of humanity. This mode of consciousness has resulted in humans considering themselves free to engage in activities that have resulted in severe damage to the planet, outstretching resources, and harming to other inhabitants, whether immediately or over time.[33] It is primarily the impact of human activity on the earth that has affected the earth's temperature, and that in turn has created rising sea levels, with vast implications for both humans and non-humans.[34] Water, land, and air pollution, overpopulation, loss of habitat, and an ever-increasing rate of species extinction are all indirectly due to human activity and climate change.[35]

How do people read the current thinking of humanity as seen through the anthropocentric worldview? There is an emerging understanding of where humanity is in this ecological crisis, but far less knowledge of how humans have gotten here.

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[31] Edward O. Wilson, *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life* (New York: Liveright, 2016), 49.

[32] Harari, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

[33] Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990), 21.

[34] Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda, chap. 3.

[35] Hubert Meisinger, Willem B. Drees, Zbigniew Liana, *Wisdom or Knowledge? Science, Theology and Cultural Dynamics* (London: T and T Clark International, 2006), 111.

Anthropocentrism practically means that humans believe that they are not a part of the natural world, but that they are instead separate from all other species.

Theological and cultural implications emerge within the Christian community on numerous levels, particularly biblical hermeneutics and constructive theology. Understanding the Scriptures chronologically and logically, "starting with the human story in creation,"[36] a referent is offered up with metaphors and narratives to make statements of individuals and society in modernity. This specific and historical identity has resulted in significant works on biblically recovering a coherent form of Christian experience located in the Genesis account:[37] "It is not the nature of 'nature' but rather the place of the human in the cosmos: whether we shall conceive of ourselves as integrally continuous with the world about us or as contingently thrown into it as strangers into an alien medium."[38] When viewed anthropocentrically, the natural world of animals, soil, water, and air are seen as a means to an end, and consequentially the unity of the Christian story is compromised.[39]

Historically, Christianity has been complicit in this destructive worldview. Early theologians such as Augustine developed paradigms with human identity and interests as a frame of reference.[40] Adopting an anthropocentric model, several institutions comprised

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[36] Theodore Hiebert, "Reclaiming the World: Biblical Resources for the Ecological Crisis," *Interpretation* 65, no. 4 (October 2011): 344, https://doi.org/10.1177/002096431106500402.

[37] Hiebert, 345.

[38] Erazim V. Kohák, *The Embers and the Stars*: *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Moral Sense of Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 8.

[39] Rasmussen, chap. 4, sec. 1, Kindle.

[40] Idella J. Gallagher and Donald Arthur Gallagher, trans., *The Catholic and Manichaean Ways of Life*, Fathers of the Church, v. 56 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1966), 102. Augustine was following Aristotle in Greek thinking here: "In like manner we may infer that, after the birth

the main culprits in this misuse: governments, higher education, corporations, and religious organizations.[41] The concept of nature and her part deteriorated during the Industrial Revolution.[42] It turned nature into a mechanical process, reducing the sacredness and awe of nature to scientific mechanisms. Humanity's inability to value all living entities and all of nature and respond ethically has put the natural world in a vulnerable situation. Nature's primary value has become its usefulness to people. Nature's resources have been exploited solely for the desires of people.[43] The outcome of this dangerous worldview is that the growth, development, and production of goods is not because there is a real need, but because of how it creates an inflow of wealth.[44] The result is alienation from one's environment, others, and a lack of self-awareness.

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of animals, plants exist for their sake, and that the other animals exist for the sake of man, the tame for use and food, the wild, if not all at least the greater part of them, for food, and for the provision of clothing and various instruments. Now if nature makes nothing incomplete, and nothing in vain, the inference must be that she has made all animals for the sake of man. And so, in one point of view, the art of war is a natural art of acquisition, for the art of acquisition includes hunting, an art which we ought to practice against wild beasts, and against men who, though intended by nature, to be governed, will not submit; for war of such a kind is naturally just." See Aristotle, *Politics*, book 8, trans. Benjamin Jowett, accessed July 15, 2020, http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.8.eight.html.

[41] Berry, *Dream of the Earth*, 77.

[42] Kohák, 13.

[43] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press in Association with Basil Blackwell, 1991), 165. Giddens explains in detail how nature subtly disappears from the human conscious and "loses its very character as an extrinsic source of reference" (166).

[44] Wilson, *Half-Earth*, 71.

Subjectivism[45]

French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist Rene Descartes (1596–1650) coined the term *Cogito, ergo sum,* which is Latin for "I think; therefore, I am." Often referred to as the father of modern Western philosophy, Descartes perfected the idea that real knowledge and proven facts center in the human mind. *Subjectivism*'s dominant framework in the 17th century suggested the mind and body are different materials, and therefore established a separation of the spiritual and material worlds. Subjectivism as introduced by Descartes pushed the idea that the mind and body not only differed in explaining meaning in life, but also referenced two different kinds of substances. This process actualized the natural world as something "other" and "out there" and brought reason to the center of human experience and knowledge. In 1663 the Roman Catholic Church banned Descartes' writings because his ideas ran contrary to Roman Church tradition and authority.[46] The radical mind and body subjectivism in Descartes brought up a leap in philosophical thinking that was more extensive and broader than anything Plato discussed.[47]

Subjectivism brought about the ideology that values and ethics outside the mind are unsure and cannot be fully known.[48] The impact that concerns Eco theology is the gap

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[45] Rasmussen, 297. He writes: "The key is that the human mind and its thoughts exist as a different category and on some other plane than the physical world. The world 'out there' was cleft from the mind 'within.' With that clevage modernity's subjectivism, and its profound alieation from the rest of nature, was born" (297).

[46] Richard Watson, "Rene Descartes French Mathematician and Philosopher," Encyclopedia, April, 28, 2015, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rene-Descartes.

[47] Lodge and Hamlin, 254.

[48] Stuart Rachels and James Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2019), 33.

widened between the soul—"mind" in the Enlightenment sense—and body. Values and ethics centered in the human mind and the non-human world were mechanisms to be used for personal ends. Subjectivism brought a change in thinking that led to the idea that meaning and purpose focused on the freedom of the individual to produce a moral sense. This subjective thought made a sharp delineation between the mind and the body: "The point is not only Descartes's extreme mind/body dualism, however. It is the alienated subject/object relationship they create. The disassociated human mind is *ranged over against* [emphasis added] all else as disconnected objects, including its own body."[49] In categorizing the different parts of the human, it valued the material world as objects in relation to humans rather than as essential subjects.[50]

Christian theologies have their philosophy rooted in what God wanted in humanity and the natural world and less about how God could relate to nature. Subjectivism fetishizes reason, and when Christian experience reduces in this way, faulty assumptions arise in biblical interpretation and compromise origin stories. The Eden event narrates a reality in the sense of rights, responsibilities, and duties for humans and the environment. Cartesian thought implies that humans are distinct from the rest of nature physically so that material objects lay no moral sense or hold on us.[51] The core element is that human understanding exclusively reveals the only foundation of dependable knowledge.[52] The implication of this shift in thinking was not only in gaining

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[49] Rasmussen, chap. 10, sec. 4, Kindle.

[50] Lodge and Hamlin, 254.

[51] John B. Cobb, Jr., "Process Theology and Environmental Issues," *Journal of Religion* 60, no. 4 (October 1980): 447.

[52] Rasmussen, chap. 7, sec. 7, Kindle.

knowledge of the surrounding world but also in placing value on "other things" influencing scientific thought and ethics.

Alienationism

The result of a human-centered reality and separation of the human species from the rest of nature created an alienated sense of being.[53] This sense of isolation and alienation from the environment has caused an existential problem for humanity. The problem is exacerbated because people are, most importantly, very social.[54] Humanity's self-awareness is confused. Her relationship with the soil, air, water, and other non-humans diminishes real social identity with others. Out of sync and separated from nature, humans do not know how to interact with their surroundings; humans do not know what to do: "Alienation is generated…by the complete failure of even the most affluent societies to achieve harmonious relationships between human life and the total environment."[55] Humans are lost and wandering, not knowing how to find themselves again.

The feeling of loneliness blinds possible solutions to the ecological crisis. Management efforts like clear-cutting woodlands and adding fertilizer to the soil are not solutions, but rather blind attempts to regulate and stall the inevitable.[56] Not only does one's alienation from nature cause these environmental issues, but together humanity has

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[53] René J. Dubos, *So Human an Animal: How We Are Shaped by Surroundings and Events* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 15.

[54] Cobb, 443.

[55] Dubos, *So Human,* 15.

[56] Thomas Berry, *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the 21st Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 36.

lost connectedness from each other, and the socioeconomic gap between the haves and have-nots has increased.[57] In 1995, process theologian John Cobb, in his classic essay "Toward a Just and Sustainable Economic Order," commented on how current economic policies and principles "concentrate wealth in fewer hands, leaving the poor more destitute." Moreover, those same economic actions "speed the destruction of natural resources, especially in poorer countries."[58] This insight of perceiving "ourselves as self-identical from birth to death, with relations to our environment as external to our essential being," has "produced loneliness, isolation, and alienation," especially in economic terms "in the doctrine that each seeks to maximize his or her good."[59] Alienated, people thereby re-center themselves as independent overlords without aptitude and ability.

Growthism

Growthism is attitudes and behaviors that view more productivity and growth as reasonable, and necessary, and the purpose of humanity. The positive aspects of economic progress seen through accomplishments in human health services, relative peace in comparison to the past, and reductions in global poverty give rise to humanity's hope.[60] According to Clive Hamilton, this type of thinking has had a large hand in

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[57] Cobb, 453.

[58] Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston, *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 359.

[59] Cobb, 453.

[60] Johan Norberg, *Progress: Ten Reasons to Look Forward to the Future* (London: OneWorld Publications, 2016) and Steven Pinker, "A History of Violence: Edge Master Class 2011," Edge, September 27, 2011, https://www.edge.org/conversation/steven_pinker-a-history-of-violence-edge-master-class-2011.

leading humanity to the current ecological crisis.[61] Sometimes economic growth in nations or specific geographical places has reduced environmental degradation because of the available resources to plan and implement sustainable development.[62] However, it also has been a critical factor in what was previously described as alienation and in causing neglect of the earth. Growthism or productivism are more significant than pure economics as it is concentrated in the political, legal, and economic life "over the rest of life."[63]

Thomas Berry was a Catholic priest of the Passionist order, cultural historian, and ecotheologian who proposed a deep understanding of history and a proper functioning of the universe was necessary to inspire and guide ecological ethics. Berry lists three key historical moments when controlling nature for productive ends was realized. "The first event" occurred when the biblical-Christian emphasis on the spiritually of the human joined with the traditions of Greek humanism to create an anthropocentric view of the universe. Dualist elements happened when Hellenistic presuppositions were placed as a filter to read and interpret early church documents.[64] Another moment in history was when a spiritual alienation developed into a feeling that the natural world was an actual threat to both the physical and spiritual well-being of the human. This feeling arose when the Black Death occurred in Europe from 1347 to 1349.[65] The last moment in history that

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[61] Hamilton, 60–61 and 83.

[62] Robin Attfield, *Environmental Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 192–93.

[63] Lodge and Hamlin, 259.

[64] Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda, 71.

[65] Zenter McLauine, "The Black Death and its Impact on the Church and Pop Religion," (PhD diss., University of Mississippi, 2015), 41–44.

Berry describes was 17th century philosophy. It was particularly strong as the result of Descartes' rationalism and Newton's physics: The world is a machine that only needs adjustments—one only needs to redesign it.

Anthony Giddens is the former Director of the London School of Economics and has continually argued that individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their implications and consequences: "Nature: the natural environment as constituted independently of human social activity"[66] loses intrinsic value and "its very character as an extrinsic source of reference."[67] The end of the 19th century was a "transition from an organic economy to an extractive economy. Modern technologies and the industrial establishment under the control of the modern corporation seemed to have effected an unqualified human conquest of the forces of nature."[68] Traditional biblical interpretations bolster this ideology in that humans are to dominate and subdue the earth. This perception of domination is a misreading and misinterpretation of the Genesis story (Gen. 1:26–28).

The first garden story is trying to show that people are a part of nature, and not to rule it in a destructive, selfish way. Instead, productivism adheres to the idea that human identity is found in economic growth, which leads to over-consumption and greed.[69] The path of growthism "ultimately was a power struggle between contending social forces,

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[66] Giddens, 168.

[67] Ibid., 166.

[68] Berry, *Great Work*, 136–38.

[69] Bill McKibben, *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future* (New York: Henry Holt, 2008), chap. 1, sec. 2, Kindle.

the force of neglect—power-hunger, greed, growth fetishism, hedonism and psychological weakness—against the forces of care: self-restraint, respect for the natural world, love of one's children and the desire for civilization to flourish."[70] Productivity has resulted in directing a whole-world system that measures its well-being by its production, purposefully built into law:

> As political and economic power shifted to merchant and entrepreneurial groups in the post-Revolutionary period, they began to forge an alliance with the legal profession to advance their interests through a transformation of the legal system… By the middle of the nineteenth century, the legal system had been reshaped to the advantage of men of commerce and industry at the expense of farmers, workers, consumers, and other less powerful groups within the society.[71]

Thus law, politics, and economics create a system that exploits the earth's resources.

Recently there has been a shift in thinking as more awareness of the ecological crisis has forced industries to take a hard look at their practices. As they have come under scrutiny and are beginning to be held accountable, a definite shift to economic sustainable development has been taking place. Beneficial steps happen, for example the buying and selling of carbon credits, but they do not efficiently diminish the damage done.

In examining the ethics and morality involved with consumerism, the point is not that the planet is already destroyed. Marked by the innate characteristic to do good,[72] humans can choose not to do something in self-binding decision-making. The end is that society has embraced the idea that purpose and meaning in life comes from unlimited progress. A problem arises when Christian theology embraces productivism and incorporates themes of progress in her theology. Most Charismatic forms of Christianity

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[70] Hamilton, 124.

[71] Berry, *Sacred Universe*, 167.

[72] Johnson, 156–57.

preach a "prosperity gospel" that promises both spiritual and physical blessings, together with success in wealth. In particular an enterprising appetite furthers growth. Some of these successful pastors become very wealthy and have large mega-churches.[73]

Eschatology is one example where Christian doctrine allows compromise by growthism.[74] Many of the prosperity-gospel churches have strong eschatological weight in their theologies and feel that the world is about to end but the physical promises are more this-worldly than other-worldly in positioning. From the 19th century, progress was seen as the "great race" that must be run when, in fact, it has become the "rat race" that infects lives.[75] Blinded to humans' role in and with nature, people are tangled up with greed and consumerism to justify their existence.[76] Consumerism has robbed the earth's natural resources as well as laid excessive waste upon them, causing environmental destruction. Consumerism has been defining our role as humans on the earth to that of an alienated individual as part of a higher "production" process[77] instead of from a purposeful dependence on God deliberately regenerating the earth and positively insuring the flourishing of non-humans.

Carefully examining productivism provides a mirror image to people's values, the implications they have on behavior, and how these consequences have affected the

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[73] Kate Bowler, *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), chap. 3, sec. 5, Kindle.

[74] Bauckham, "Eschatology," chap. 18.

[75] McKibben, *Deep Economy*, chap. 1, sec. 2, Kindle.

[76] Kohák, 26.

[77] Berry, *Sacred Universe*, 160.

planet. Recognizing the negative impact of cultural arrogance is vital.[78] This attitude of superiority is so influential that it affects humanity's self-awareness of living on a shared planet and having a responsibility to nature and the rest of humanity. The reality of humanity's shared limited resources—as are all the species of Earth—has been lost in the drive to produce and consume.[79] Productivism has led to consequences beyond social, societal issues. Through consumerism, the biodiversity of the planet alters the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the soil where we exist change to our detriment. We have lost the innate sense of the wonder and grandeur of nature, as we have fully embraced the idea that economic growth and production are the highest value: "While Earth's resources are finite, what is not limited is our desire to understand, to appreciate, and to celebrate the Earth. We do need continuous progress, but not, however, in material development."[80] What is needed is a renewed sense of self-awareness that encapsulates humanity as part of and parcel to the community of creation.

Summary

While the truth and beauty revealed in Scripture can lead to a robust theology of ecological care, Christianity has, in many cases, been a culprit in creating the problems seen in the environmental crisis. Historically, where did the Christian faith lose sight of the calling to creation care? Thomas Berry asks more pointedly, "Why did this process develop in a civilization that emerged out of a Biblical Christian matrix goes on to

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[78] Leonard I. Sweet, *Rings of Fire: Walking in Faith Through a Volcanic Future* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 48–51.

[79] Deane-Drummond, Bergmann, and Vogt, 273.

[80] Berry, *Sacred Universe*, 132.

declare that this is the most urgent theological issue. Lynn White, Jr., a US-American historian specializing in medieval history, argued that early Middle Age Christianity was partly responsible for the current ecological crisis. White's famous article, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," lays the blame of the ecological crisis directly on medieval Christianity.[81] White's article is straightforward and succinct, arguing that Christianity has been too heavenly minded—as previously mentioned, because of the Black Death and the Church's historical experience with it—intentionally separating herself from the world in order to remain pure and protected against disease and death. His most compelling argument with historical biblical Christianity is the traditional interpretation of the Genesis account of God telling Adam to subdue and dominate the earth. White's article with be further addressed in section three.

The significant challenge for Christianity today is to answer the question of what Christians are going to do in response to the brokenness found in our relationship with nature: "God's creation made for the good of all has been despoiled by societies that professed to be godly."[82] The spiritual failures that have contributed to the ecological crisis are many: pride, greed, cruelty, materialism, injustice to others—human or non-human—and an overall failure to appreciate the sacredness of life and nature. The current ecological crisis is theological in orientation.[83] Therefore, a shift in perspective within certain strains of Christianity can influence positive attitudes toward the environment.

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[81] Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–207, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1720120.

[82] Lodge and Hamlin, 3.

[83] Attfield, 202.

The theological position that humans, created in the image of God to control the Earth, and dominate the Earth, has been used as justification to give license to mistreat and despoil nature without limitations or accountability.[84] White's main argument is that the traditional interpretation of Genesis 1:26–28 focused on the words "dominion" and "subdue." This interpretation does not carry the intended connotation of "manage" and "care," but instead carries an idea that has led to abuse.[85] Some took those verses and applied them in ethnocentric and anthropocentric terms resulting in "desacralizing" the earth.[86] Others have taken the same verses as a call to better steward the Earth.[87] David Hallman, in *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, writes:

> I believe that churches in the North have not yet come to grips with the degree to which Christian theology and tradition are implicated in the Western capitalist development model that has dominated our countries since the industrial revolution, many other countries through the colonial periods and more recently every part of the world that is touched by the new "global economy." Hallman's assessment goes well beyond the famous critique of Lynn White, Jr. and the theological responses to it.[88]

James Nash, one of the first Christian ecotheologians, worked diligently to place environmental protection directly within the Christian agenda. He attributes dualism and anthropocentrism as the primary traits in most Christian theological institutions[89] and

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[84] E. M. Conradie, *Christianity and Earthkeeping: In Search of an Inspiring Vision* (Stellenbosch, SA: Sun Press, 2011), 7.

[85] R. J. Berry, *Environmental Stewardship: Critical Perspectives, Past and Present* (New York: T and T Clark, 2006), 68.

[86] Willis Jenkins, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and John Grim, *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 73.

[87] Conradie, *Christianity and Earthkeeping*, 76.

[88] David Hallman, *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North* (Geneva, CH: World Council of Churches, 1994), 5.

[89] James A. Nash, "Toward the Ecological Reformation of Christianity," *Interpretation* 50, no. 1

contends that theological and ethical focus is "almost exclusively on human history… ignoring natural history" and therefore these traditions have "distorted, indeed, truncated God's creative, active, and redemptive relationship to the whole good creation."[90] He identifies three flaws within modern Christianity that are fundamentally rooted in the present crisis: failure to adapt to climate change; failure to recognize our connectedness to nature; and failure to respond to our kinship to other species.[91] Current ecotheologians have been addressing these issues ever since White assessed historical ideas that lead to the "greening" of religion and Christianity in particular.[92] The greening of Christianity re-centered can give direction not to poison, pillage, or polish off creation but alternatively discover that the people of God can become vigorous trustees for future generations.

Modern Christian Movements

With crucial theological weaknesses such as a lack of kinship with all of creation and Hellenistic dualism, 20th century Christianity participated in the political and economic dominance over the natural world and "bought into this optimistic vision."[93] Theologically in the 19th and 20th centuries, unclear gnostic theologies were developing along with economic narratives and a "theology of history" within Evangelical and modern Protestantism. Certain strains of conservative Christianity now focus on "human-

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(January 1996): 6.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda, 89–90.

[93] Bowler, 37. See also John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006); and William C. Placher, *Unapologetic Theology: A Christian Voice in a Pluralistic Conversation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989).

centered prosperity" and the narrow emphasis on individualistic material wealth and physical health.[94]

Pastor Mwangi was not sure if he wanted to be a part of the narrative that emphasized a higher and better life in the world to come. He wanted a better life now and mostly for his immediate and extended family. He was torn between hearing about the afterlife and turning away from the world, and the tangible prosperity it offered in the way of rewards and blessings.

Dispensationalism

Another prevalent theory that developed in 1830 was "dispensational theology" by a vision from Margaret McDonald and later "adopted and amplified by John Nelson Darby."[95] In this metanarrative, "the old world of creation is left behind," and the future is a spiritual life that is unrelated to the earth that's now deep in misery.[96] The problem with this theology is that it pushes up so close to Gnosticism that they highlight the ancient unorthodoxy of Manicheism.[97]

The narrative of dispensationalism was based on the idea that the real prophecies of the Old Testament were "suspended" until the dispensation of the end of the church[98]

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[94] A. J. Swoboda, "Posterity or Prosperity? Critiquing and Refiguring Prosperity Theologies in an Ecological Age" (2015), 94, https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu.

[95] Barbara R. Rossing, *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation* (New York: Basic Books, Perseus Group, 2005), 52. See also Dave MacPherson, *The Incredible Cover-up: The True Story on the Pre-Trib Rapture* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975).

[96] Hiebert, 346.

[97] Rossing, 38–40.

[98] Smith, 233. "The era of the church was the fulfillment of the passages describing the glories of the returned remnant. They became the 'gathered' of the New Testament and they saw the church as the

age.[99] Exegetically, hyper-dispensationalism leaves an example of an external schema of salvation history instead of allowing for other historical interpretations. End-time theology highlights both human-centered preoccupation and strong dualistic tendencies. Holding out for the last day, many fundamental branches of Evangelicalism dismiss earthkeeping; they are less inclined to participate in creation care.[100]

Human Exceptionalism

Anthropocentric tendencies within prosperity theology focus the healing and the blessings squarely—and only—on the human. Leaving out creation and other elements in prosperity teachings are limiting and shallow.[101] A primary biblical interpretation used in prosperity teaching is the narrative of socioeconomic mobility. Promises of health joined to the cross of Christ through the atonement and offers of future wealth were tied to Christ, defeating "the curse of poverty" on the cross, and all the physical blessings of the Old Testament promised in the Abrahamic covenant.[102] The health and wealth gospel misses the New Testament emphasis on simplicity, patience, and moderation and is ecologically unsustainable.[103]

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only 'Israel of God'" (Gal. 6:14–16).

[99] Smith, 402.

[100] David C. Barker and David H. Bearce, "End-Times Theology, the Shadow of the Future, and Public Resistance to Addressing Global Climate Change," *Political Research Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (June 2013): 267–79.

[101] A. J. Swoboda, "Posterity or Prosperity," 94.

[102] Bowler, 96.

[103] Conradie, *Christianity and Earthkeeping*, 28.

The separating of body and soul and the failure to respond lovingly and responsibly in kinship relationship with non-human creatures have been detrimental to earthkeeping. People living in poverty are often attracted to flawed theologies, such as an end-time scenario that turns attention away from the world offering them hopeful expectations of a better life, particularly in the world to come and charismatic evangelical Christianity, which focuses on prosperity and health, offering on-the-spot concrete advantages. The narrative of human exceptionalism in the health and wealth movements provides meaning in their situation for immediate individual needs, proving a striking indifference to address biodiversity. Mass extinction is simply not a subject matter for discussion or policymaking. Species extinction is the direct result of human-centered activities and economic development,[104] yet this gnostic tendency attracts the poor with economic promises but fails to address ecological concerns.

Heavy influences both theologically in would-be gnostic prosperity teachings and internationally in the distribution of those teachings via popular television have reached global proportions. Ecclesiastically, with the planting of modern prosperity megachurches,[105] a message that is human-centered and divides spirit and matter is embraced, and the earth, as a referent, trivialized. The popularity and influences of prosperity teachings as far as East Africa reflect the reach. Some of the largest and wealthiest pastors live and work on the African continent,[106] which contributes to the idea

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[104] Wilson, *Half- Earth*, 54.

[105] Rossing, 239–48.

[106] Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 60.

that Evangelical charismatic Christianity has no interest in the wider world and concerns only the individual.

Prosperity theologies are promoted and imitated across many denominational lines and is a central theology of the African Independent churches. It "divorces individual salvation from society and society from nature, and that is unbiblical."[107] As previously discussed in the vignette, Pastor Mwangi struggled with the processes of the message but eventually embraced it because of his socioeconomic need. Furthermore, he accepted the message so that he could not only move up economically but also better the lives of his children and extended family. Pastor Mwangi's new-found faith motivated him to search the Scriptures, and what he often found was mandates and calls to tend to the earth and care for creation. Recently, voices in representative Pentecostal movements that embrace different degrees of the prosperity movement call for a more balanced approach to social issues and the eco-crisis[108] so that her theologies and practices embrace a more holistic approach to the truth in Scripture about earthkeeping.

Certain strains of conservative Christianity have biblical interpretations that lead to devaluing the earth and lend to a skeptical view of the current ecological crisis. Fundamental movements within Evangelicalism that have a "high" view of the written text of Scripture seem doubt the reality of climate change and therefore do not typically engage in creation care activism.[109] The Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) found

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[107] Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Ecology and Theology: Ecojustice at the Center of the Church's Mission," *Interpretation 65,* no. 4 (2011): 354, http://doi.org/10.1177/002096431106500403.

[108] Swoboda, "Posterity or Prosperity," 94.

[109] Daniel Cox, Juhem Navarro-Rivera, and Robert P. Jones, "Believers, Sympathizers and Skeptics: Why Americans are Conflicted About Climate Change, Environmental Policy and Science," Public Religion Research Institute, November 21, 2014, https://www.prri.org/research/believers-

the majority of Evangelicals to be "unconcerned" about climate change.[110] Similarly, Barna Group research revealed that 89 percent of churchgoers have never heard of creation care. Further exploring whether churchgoers have ever been exposed to any teachings on environmental issues the survey found that, overall, 64 percent have never heard a sermon on creation care or ecological issues.[111] The hermeneutic of dispensational millennialism is a narrative that Jesus suspended the Kingdom of God. The next period to come is when Jesus sets up his literal one-thousand-year reign. When he comes, he will "rapture" his people from Earth and take them to heaven. All attention and focus are toward an eventual removal of people from Earth to heaven.[112] This over-spiritualization of faith has left the land to be something expendable, placing it at a low priority and has even led to some acting as if the earth is evil.[113] A substantial confusion follows in theological circles, popular Christian fiction writings, and religious institutions defending or otherwise promoting a hermeneutic to justify skeptical views toward earthkeeping and indifference to ecological justice issues.

Conclusion

Many factors have led to the ecological crisis that is plaguing the earth today. The worldview of anthropocentrism that elevates the status of humanity to be preeminent over

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sympathizers-skeptics-americans-conflicted-climate-change-environmental-policy-science/.

[110] "Climate Change Concern Index by Religious Affliation," Public Religion Research Institute, November 21, 2014, https://www.prri.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/PRRI-AAR-Climate-change-2014-climate-change-concern-by-religious-affiliation.jpg.

[111] "Evangelicals Go 'Green' with Caution," Barna, September 22, 2008. https://www.barna.com/research/evangelicals-go-green-with-caution/.

[112] Rossing, 20.

[113] Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda, 137.

all other created beings has caused considerable damage to the planet. A shift in perspective occurs that sees the world through the lens of God's creation story in Genesis and the intrinsic value that God placed on all his creation. The ideology that arose from the marriage of Christianity with Greek philosophy, creating a dualism that led to a distinction between the spiritual and the physical, has led to the neglect of the earth as we see the world split between spirit and matter, God and nature, soul and body.[114] With this division, spirit won over matter, and the earth has suffered the consequences. St. Augustine led in this thinking: "The soul is not the entire man, but only his better part; nor is the body the entire, but merely his inferior part."[115] Ramifications of this kind of thinking not only diminish our spiritual life but also our imagination of how the world was put together. Addressing the rift between spirit and matter is essential in bridging the gap.

Most theologians have identified anthropocentrism and dualism as main philosophical traits that have influenced Christian theological thinking. Adopting a Neoplatonic philosophy led to a dangerous position. Heavily influenced by Platonic ideas, this position reduced personal and societal responsibility and agency. In departing from a Hebraic outlook on religion, living a life in harmony with laws and the will of God, ancient Christianity lost her power and became deterministic. Historically, this shift determined Western Christianity for centuries, at least in part. Nature exploited, these "capital assets" and the non-human world become economic production and growthism results. Humans alienated from non-humans and nature, during the agricultural

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[114] Hiebert, 342.

[115] Ibid.

revolution, eventually led to humanity becoming "the single most important agent of change in the global ecology."[116] Rise in agricultural production impacted humanity's worldview of anthropocentrism. Humanity's rewritten "rules of the game" impacted global ecosystems negatively and habitat loss was set in motion. Some believe that anthropocentrism was the original sin; that the ideology of the fall placed humanity at the center of everything.[117]

This dissertation concludes that certain strains of conservative Christianity confuse the ecological crisis with indifference or even skeptical voices. It diminishes any meaningful conversations and is "an illusion of the mind" that continues the status quo and fears adaptation and mitigation.[118] Instead of moving forward with new data, rereading Scripture, and creating new stories, Evangelical churches seem stuck in a circular cycle of repeating failures and ignoring human history of dependence on God, each other, and His creation. The most substantial influence of environmental attitudes in modern Christianity found conservative eschatology a profound predictor.[119] An eschatology enmeshed in studying prophecy and believing the world is about to end,

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[116] Harari, chap. 2, sec. 2, Kindle.

[117] Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, *Worldviews and Ecology: Religion, Philosophy, and the Environment* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 78.

[118] Napp Nazworth, "Evangelicals and Climate Change: Global Warming Activists (Pt. 2)," *Chrisitan Post*, June 20, 2012, https://www.christianpost.com/news/evangelicals-and-climate-change-global-warming-activists-pt-2.html.

[119] James Guth, John Green, Lyman Kellstedt, and Corwin Smidt, "Faith and the Environment: Religious Beliefs and Attitudes on Environmental Policy," *American Journal of Political Science* (1995): 364, https://doi.org/10.2307/2111617. See also John M. Clements, "Green Christians? An Empirical Examination of Environmental Concern Within the U.S. General Public," *Organization and Environment* 27, no. 1 (2014): 85, https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026613495475.

diminishes ethical, environmental stewardship, and takes on less responsibility.[120] Prosperity teaching that pushes up against Gnosticism also falls into the temptation of weakening ecological concerns with a focus on humans flourishing both economically and physically, to maintain that the human species has greater relevance, ecological matters do not warrant the church's attention.[121]

The conviction for a fruitful ecological trusteeship in Africa is in internal innovation, recasting the web of relationships and tapping into existing symbols and narratives. Pastor Mwangi's two boys attend a nearby informal school. The school offered to send his children to a Christian camp for a weeklong experience on the Kenyan Coast. The boys were excited about the opportunity, and Pastor needed a break; the workload was getting tough. The week was through, and the boys returned home and told dad about all their experiences of planting trees and swimming in the Indian Ocean. Oh, the joy they felt as they reminisced. They indicated meeting a Christian conservationist who spoke of protecting the Sokoke Forest and how he gave an inspirational and challenging call to have their class be the next Noah's generation. Mwangi laid his head down to sleep that night with a smirk and a smile, thinking about how he would communicate to his congregation the next day about planning a tree-planting event down by the Mathare River. Sweet dreams, Pastor Mwangi.

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[120] Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda, 137.

[121] Marisa Ronan, "Religion and the Environment: Twenty-First Century American Evangelicalism and the Anthropocene," *Humanities* 6, no. 4 (2017): 92, https://doi.org/10.3390/h6040092.

SECTION TWO:

OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

This section addresses the extensive influences around environmental ethics and Christian eco-theology. To begin, environmental theologies and ecclesiological strategies provide an overview for understanding ecological issues. The discourse and reflection that follows highlights biblical hermeneutical approaches, constructive theologies, and missional earthkeeping activities in each of the broad influences, metaphors are gleaned and compared for explanatory power and practical Christian strategies.

In addition to the compared theologies, this section describes weaknesses inherent in each and underscores the strengths they bring to features within Christian eco-theology. Because some modern Christian movements stress otherworldly escapism and others emphasize this-worldly economic success, Evangelicalism perpetuates, sometimes unintentionally, indifference to environmental issues and cannot suggest a practical ethic for action. The far-reaching effects of the ecological crisis have built-in difficulties that require analysis.

The final focus in this section describes three fundamental theocentric approaches to missional earthkeeping: Creation Spiritually, Christian Stewardship, and Ecojustice. These three theological strategies highlight the differences in ecclesiology and practice in the particular Christian contexts they represent. The differences are underscored by the various metaphors, or lack thereof, in explaining each environmental ethic. For now, the flowing discourse detects and addresses these variances.

Biocentrism

In 1967, Professor Lynn White, Jr. gave a keynote speech to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)[122] in which he suggested that Christianity is culpable for the ecological crisis.[123] White explained how Christianity has always valued heaven more than earth. Returning to the instructions given in the first chapter of Genesis regarding human domination and subjection over all the creatures on the earth, the essay argued that the passage (Gen. 1:28) gave a conclusive validation for ecological destruction. He showed how medieval Western Christianity practically implemented technological progress and modern science that caused the ecological changes seen today. Though the arguments were concise, the essay highlighted Francis of Assisi as an excellent example of biocentrism, and the lecture laid most of the blame on Christianity for separating a "supreme god" from the material world.[124] The analysis underscored that Eastern Christianity was excused from the allegations because of her humble approach with the natural world.

The often-reprinted essay was correct in highlighting the environmental concerns of the Western world in the mid-20th century and that Western Christendom was complicit. Interestingly, several spiritual failings such as pride, greed, and consumer capitalism by societies that professed the Christian faith were mentioned. He related that creation was for the common good but was spoiled by these same communities,

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[122] Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Version for Creation Care* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 59–67.

[123] Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–207.

[124] Ibid.

particularly in the Christian West.[125] The argument was in fact that Western Christianity had sanctioned the misuse of science and technology. Summarizing his own argument,

> We would seem to be heading toward conclusions unpalatable to many Christians. Since both *science* and *technology* are blessed words in our contemporary vocabulary, some may be happy at the notions, first, that, viewed historically, modern science is an extrapolation of (Christian) natural theology and, second, that modern technology is at least partly to be explained as an Occidental, voluntarist realization of the Christian dogma of man's transcendence of, and rightful mastery over, nature. But, as we now recognize, somewhat over a century ago science and technology—hitherto quite separate activities—joined to give mankind powers which, to judge by many of the ecological effects, are out of control. If so, Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt.[126]

Western Christendom is not clear in her involvement with the current ecological crisis.

White's keynote speech caused different reactions within the Christian community.[127] Three sensitive issues arose within the Christian community and were tackled by such scholars as Susan Power Bratton, Clarence Glacken, Robin Attfield, Joseh Sittler, John B. Cobb, Jr., Rosemary Radford Ruether, and H. Paul Santmire[128] after a reflective understanding of the thesis. First, several theologians saw the need for a reformation of Christian theology and ethics to confront ecological extinction.[129] One theologian, Leonard I. Sweet, preacher, teacher, scholar, bestselling author, and distinguished professor at George Fox University, led in facing the challenges of a more and more disrupted planet in 1990 with *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic*. These scholars embarked on the process of rereading the creation stories in Genesis,

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[125] White, 1203–207.

[126] Ibid., 1206 (italics in the original).

[127] Elspeth Whitney, "Lynn White Jr.'s 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis' After 50 Years," *History Compass* 13, no. 8 (2015): 402.

[128] Ibid., 401.

[129] James A. Nash, "Toward the Ecological Reformation of Christianity" *Interpretation* 50, no. 1 (January 1996): 5–15, https://doi.org/10.1177/002096439605000102.

rethinking the domination of nature readings, and looking for passages that promote the flourishing of the earth. Second, as an ecological term explaining the role of humans, *stewardship* was put into question because of its anthropocentric standpoint and what Sweet views as archaic usage.[130] Third, theologians began to ask, in light of their intellectual disciplines, how they could contribute an eco-theology to meet future situations with vitality. Developing a full-bodied theology prepared to encounter different cultural values and incorporate Christian concerns for the environmental readiness of future generations began in earnest.

The culpability of Christianity in the environmental crisis is indeed a part of history, but as White's thesis criticized the Middle-Age era of Christendom, what came out was that White was neither an expert in religion nor the environment,[131] resulting in harsh critiques from traditional Christianity. One consistent critique was that White tended to focus on a small range of particular texts while ignoring others. Willis Jenkins, professor of religion, ethics, and environment at the University of Virginia, stresses the connection between religious creativity and ethical ideas in helping to change behavior and help mitigate climate change. Jenkins observed, "No matter Christianity's culpability, whether novel threat or paradise lost, some deformed worldview explains the problem, and a reconstructed or reclaimed cosmology remains the hinge to an adequate ethic."[132] To develop this ethic, the story of God's covenantal faithfulness to the land and

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[130] Leonard I. Sweet, "Freely You Have Received" *Sweet* (blog), November 29, 2016, https://leonardsweet.com/freely-you-have-received/.

[131] Whitney, 400.

[132] Willis Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 13.

her inhabitants must be reclaimed.[133] Important to note in regards to Noah's covenant (Gen. 9) is the need to "engage" and "represent" future generations.[134] Pope Francis, in his communication to the world via his *Laudato Si*, similarly commented, "Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us."[135] Focusing on future inhabitants for the benefit of future generations helps concentrate minds on issues needing priority that might be forgotten.

Awareness of environmental dangers suggests an ontological awareness of who humans are. Vital for remaining within the Christian origin stories and transforming modern Christian creative arts and music, reconciliation rests in crafting metaphors of creation, grace, and *hesed* love. Useful metaphors are unexpected and translate awareness and insight into action.[136] Some helpful metaphors envision believers as trustees in caring for creation, Christians as priests of creation sacrificially giving oneself to mitigate danger and as prophets defending the land and upholding a sacred duty to a loyal God. White's lecture on the "Historical Roots of the Ecological Crisis" began a "greening" of US-American religion, "what is often called 'eco-theology' and humanity's obligations towards the planet and its creatures."[137] Although the essay craftily complained about

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[133] Len Sweet, *Rings of Fire: Walking in Faith Through a Volcanic Future* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2019), 121–22.

[134] Robin Attfield, *Environmental Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 109–12.

[135] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home* (Hunnington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, 2015), chap. 4, sec. 5, Kindle.

[136] James Geary, *I Is an Other: The Secret Life of Metaphor and How it Shapes the Way We See the World* (New York: Harper Collins, 2011), 149.

[137] Attfield, 202.

Christianity's role in the ecological crisis, it did shape a concerted effort on part of Christian individuals and institutions to reexamine Scripture, reengage with God, and renter one's community to love our planetary home.

While there are no specific Christian beliefs or practices that adequately describe humanity's estrangement from one's environment experienced in the current ecological situation, there is a sense, a feeling of being disjointed away from the natural world. Within some of the Christian traditions, humans are the only part of creation that has rights; everything else exists to serve human utility. Within modern Christianity, a new sense of God's involvement and interaction in his creation must be created.

By recognizing and engaging various eco-friendly theological models in conversations among a broad group of different types of thinkers, the potential for creative thought to foster successful change in the ecological situation emerges. A respectful atmosphere of inclusion and recognition can result in encouraging cooperation and a greater sense of hope for all parties engaged in the process. Examining the biocentric model assists the modern Christian by giving significance to the non-human and the biosphere.

Ecocentrism

The term *ecological egalitarianism*,[138] first used by Denis Edwards, aptly describes dimensions of ecological thought throughout the environmental movement, from radical activism to contemplative creation spirituality. This model is known as an ecocentric approach as it promotes the veracity and health of ecosystems. This ethic

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[138] Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 21.

draws from the philosophical work of Arne Naess in what he calls *deep ecology*.[139] Naess refuses to define deep ecology; instead outlining key proposals as a platform for discussion and action on the polity. Naess' platform calls for a more democratic approach to issues and for a less anthropocentric understanding of what it fundamentally means to be human. Naess explains, "The deep ecology movement is, therefore, 'the ecology movement that questions deeper.'"[140] His platform holds that human and non-human life has intrinsic value; diversity of life forms contribute to these (intrinsic) values and also values in themselves; humans have no right to reduce this diversity; the flourishing of non-human life requires a smaller human population; human interference with the non-human world is excessive; policies must be changed; the change will be that of cherishing life quality rather than wanting a higher standard of living; and those who subscribe to this platform have an obligation to implement the changes.[141]

Leaning into Christian theology from an egalitarian approach creates questions, mingling what it means to be human with how to live well. A significant problem with deep ecology is that it is weak on ethics within individuals, and therefore promise-keeping and self-binding are impossible. There is no individual self or human communities, only nature. Also, with a focus on ecosystems, problematic issues arise, insisting on population control as a solution.

Braid J. Callicott, a US-American philosopher who helped develop the field of environmental philosophy and who is the leading exponent of Aldo Leopold's land ethic,

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[139] Arne Naess, "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects," in *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology*, ed. Andrew Light and Rolston Holmes (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 264.

[140] Ibid., 269.

[141] Ibid., 264.

sees intrinsic value in nature. Perhaps the most potent critique is Callicot's: "Deep Ecology a la Naess is not environmental ethics but environmental metaphysics."[142] Positively, deep ecology has influenced theologians such as Niels Henrik Gregersen and his creative *deep incarnation* as a "welcomed development in contemporary Christology, especially in light of the growing concerns of life in the Anthropocene."[143] Integration of creation theology, Christology, and the Spirit in creation offers theological reflection to show how human beings are fellow members with God's other creatures and that any true reconciliation to God essentially includes the entire creation.

Creation spiritualities and Christian theology can learn much from ecological egalitarianism to inform commitments and action.[144] Arguing for the intrinsic value of ecosystems, asking for a humble attitude toward one another, and opposing the destructive behavior known all too well in this crisis is good news in current discussions. Typically, when questions arise in political debate or global warming conversations, plans for action stall. In essence, the egalitarian approach is helpful because it acts democratically, questions everything, and moves beyond human exceptionalism resulting in a rigorous approach to the Bible's idea of a "community of creation"[145] instead of the tradition of dominion and exploitation.

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[142] Willis Jenkins, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and John Grim, *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 368.

[143] Celia Deane-Drummond, Sigurd Bergmann, and Markus Vogt, *Religion in the Anthropocene* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017, 204.

[144] Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 197.

[145] Ibid., 267.

Though it has many strengths, the ecocentric approach has its weaknesses. Within its deep and penetrating assumptions, it is challenging to retrieve a simple rule of the heuristics to make moral judgments. Another difficulty of this approach is one of human agency. In keeping everything "flat," and on equal footing, the ecocentric approach dilutes human agency and ingenuity.

The dissolving of human agency, when faced with the Christian theological view of the uniqueness of the human, causes more problems than it answers. Philosophically, it has difficulties aligning non-human entities with human consequences, purposes, and intentions. As Larry Rasmussen shares, with a weighty heart, "a hefty burden falls on human knowing, human skill, and human agency. Wisdom's ways (Prov. 3:18) can be fathomed; to transgress them leads to grave human loss."[146] To deny human particularity undermines social justice, policymaking, and creativity. Clive Hamilton calls for a shift in perception: "We need an ontology founded on human distinctiveness within networks rather than an ontology that deprives humans of their unique form of agency."[147] In the end, human agency brought on a paradox: on one hand the dangers of climate change that often feel overwhelming is driven primarily by human activities; on the other hand, the feeling of waiting for ecological dangers to become acute human agency also sits on their hands and does nothing tangible. The tendency is that it is too late for any serious action.

Rather than a paradigm of human control, Elizabeth Johnson suggests, "More common is the paradigm of the community of creation, based on the understanding that

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[146] Larry L. Rasmussen, *Earth-honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), chap. 12, sec. 1, Kindle.

[147] Clive Hamilton, *Defiant Earth: The Fate of Humans in the Anthropocene* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2017), 99.

humans and other living beings, for all their differences, form one community woven together by the common thread of having been created by God."[148] Appreciating deep ecology, many in the Christian faith respect the beauty and depth in its approach. It aids in providing a platform for a dialog regarding human embeddedness in nature and the moral agency of humans.

Theocentric Approaches

Three theocentric approaches inform environmental ethics: Creation Spirituality, Christian Stewardship, and Ecojustice. Creation Spirituality is concerned with worship seen in the liturgy, and the central role that the incarnation of Christ plays in the Eucharist. The focus is on all of creation participating in worshiping God, who is both Creator and Sustainer. This model uses the metaphor that humanity is the priest of creation. Within the Christian Stewardship model of ecotheology, the emphasis inclines toward a biblical authority for Christian faith and practice, highlighting an apologetic for ethics related to environmental care; Humanity takes responsibility for the earth as caretakers. Ecojustice makes ecological issues significant for Christian responsibility, underscoring communities of Christians and churches' cooperation with disadvantaged communities and the marginalized. Ecojustice addresses the question of what it means to be in a relationship with God and humanity's relation to creation. Each model binds together practices, beliefs, and experiences within the greater Christian community and connects ecological issues with Christian history and tradition.

Divergent conversations focus on greening Christianity and many different areas of focus for Christian ecological reflection. The different aspects are legion: rereading of

[148] Johnson, 261.

biblical texts, Christian history critiques, virtue and ethics, applied morality, cosmology narratives, practical theology, political theory, social justice issues, liturgy, preaching, and church mission. Trying to summarize this "fragmentation"[149] of focus, Willis Jenkins proposes three broad "ecologies of grace" to assist positive Christian reflection on the ethics of the matter: ecojustice, Christian stewardship, and creation spirituality.[150]

Setting these frameworks within the context of Christian history and theology, Joseph Sittler, who wrote thirteen years before the Lynn White lecture, suggests a triadic understanding: "God, man [human], nature [creation]! These three are meant for each other, and restlessness will stalk our hearts and ambiguity our world until their cleavage is redeemed."[151] A theocentric approach forms an appropriate reflection regarding shared avenues of a spiritual life with God, a collective faith community, and a well-lived life with the earth. When this triad is lost or reduced, Christian spiritual practices lose their power, and future generations "can foreseeably be affected by current people's actions."[152] Sittler calls for a "large, most insistent and most delicate task awaiting Christian theology to articulate a theology for nature as shall do justice in the vitalities of earth."[153] His answer is to listen to the "ontological-revelational overtones of the Incarnation."[154] Engaging deeply into the theological ramifications of the Incarnation infuses ecotheology with relevance and liveliness, not only from Calvary's tree, but also

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[149] Jenkins, Tucker, and Grim, 73.

[150] Jenkins, 18.

[151] Joseph Sittler, "A Theology for the Earth," in *Environmental Stewardship: Critical Perspectives, Past and Present*, ed. R. J. Berry, (New York: T and T Clark, 2006), 54.

[152] Attfield, 91.

[153] Sittler, "Theology for the Eath," 54.

[154] Ibid., 55.

looking back to Eden's tree, and looking forward as "creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God."[155]

A theocentric approach begins and ends in Jesus Christ, as the image of God, the "icon" of God: "This reality then is nothing less than the risen Christ as the actual image in whom all creatures find salvation and new life. Christ Jesus is the image of God and not just for human beings, but all creatures. In him, the reconciliation of all things has begun."[156] The explanatory power of theological ecologies enriched with Christian belief, practice and experience empowers the Christian community to revisit her creation origins, her Jesus story, and the metaphors in those narratives giving moral obligations even to the weakest.

Creation Spirituality

Eastern Orthodoxy, in her formulation of ecotheology and environmental ethics, tends to focus on liturgy, especially in the Eucharist, and cosmic narratives that involve all of creation and often point to the *Logos* for a theological basis.[157] Three distinctive functions within the Orthodox liturgy reflect promisingly on Christian spirituality. First, there tends to be a focus on the non-human in creation through worship primarily found in texts for the Nativity, Good Friday, and Easter. Second, in some liturgy, the non-human takes a distinctive role.[158] In Orthodox theology, as well as in Calvinistic theology, humans broke the formal agreement. They broke down morally, while non-

[155] Romans 8:19

[156] Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart*, 15.

[157] Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2008), 56.

[158] Ibid., 57.

humans provided a consistent and enduring service to God[159] by acts of praise and worship (Gen. 1 and Ps. 104). Scripture tells of trees clapping their hands and rivers jumping in praise all in reply to the life giving Spirit: "Thirdly, the incarnation of Christ builds on an existing relationship between God and creation."[160] Christ mostly described in human terms, but there are other images and metaphors used throughout Scripture to describe him in creaturely terms. For example, in many Eastern liturgical texts, the river Jordan speaks to John the Baptist at Christ's baptism and, most profoundly, Christ's death is nuanced with his cross being a tree. The ramifications for rivers and trees broadly functions to bring an awareness of scaredness in creation itself and God's presence available in this material world.

A spiritual strength of the Eastern Orthodox is in her metaphor for creation care. Reading Genesis chapters one and two anthropologically, the Orthodox tradition lands on the human as priests of creation.[161] Genesis 2:15 lends itself to a priestly outlook in the Hebrew words for "tending and watching." This idea of ontologically being a priest of creation has ramifications for perceiving the world in sacramental ways. Christian spirituality and Christian liturgy offer perspectives for ecological creatively in using sacred objects and artifacts for faith and devotion: Sacramental use of creation at once respects its integrity and imaginatively invites the whole world into praise. Inventiveness cooperates with divine love so that sacramental humans share a role with God in drawing

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[159] Bouma-Prediger, 114.

[160] Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology*, 58.

[161] John Zizioulas, "Priest of Creation," in Berry, *Environmental Stewardship*, 274.

out the divine potential of the world."[162] This sacramental understanding assumes that life relies on the mysteries in human creativity. A priest in creation, the human element, along with the flux in nature, carries within those relationships much ambiguity and causes risks and threats, beauty, and ugliness while including the grace of God in creation.

As a priest, the human is front and center regarding creation, placing humanity in a position of freedom, coupled with a great responsibility to help the world flourish and to cease from disruptive tendencies. It is a position, in a conventional sense, of first revering all that is from God, blessing others, and interceding on their behalf:

> First, the basic definition of man is that he is the priest. He stands at the center of the world. He unifies it in his art of blessing God, of both receiving the world from God and offering it to God, and by filling the world with this eucharist, he transforms his life, the one that he receives from the world, into life in God, into communion with Him. The world was created as the "matter," the material of one all-embracing eucharist, and man creates as a priest of this cosmic sacrament.[163]

The positivity of this model is the participatory acts of human and non-humans together, bringing glory to God. What is refreshing here is that it correlates with the ecocentric view. No real answers are offered or ethics demanded, but an ethos and new way of relating to the earth is emphasized. Ethical issues are indirectly approached.

Rather than answering any questions regarding what to do with the onslaught of ecological data, creation spirituality does not offer concrete solutions to ecological problems. However, in the context of being a priest and offering the Eucharist as a gift, it becomes a joyful acceptance of God's gifts. Alexander Schmemann concludes that deep within this spirituality, the gifts of God—Jesus, the earth, joy, peace, and love—make

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[162] Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart*, 99.

[163] Alexander Schmeman, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), 154.

both problems and solutions unnecessary.[164] Within Eastern Orthodox spirituality, one is not trying to solve problems; humanity's whole purpose is to intercede prayerfully on behalf of difficulties and leave them in God's sovereign hands.

One problem inherent within the sacramental view is that when wonder and surprise take over, the present experience obscures what should be or what could be. Larry Rasmussen, a Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics emeritus at Union Theological Seminary recognized as a foremost Christian environmental ethicist, comments on this weakness: "It can glory in what is, to the neglect of what ought to be. When it does, it sacrifices its inherent moral and ethical power."[165] The other concept inherent in the priestly view is that creation needs the human to mediate on their behalf. Creation viewed with this understanding smacks of a deep-seated sense of superiority. Human creatureliness affirmed, and other creatures acknowledged are perceived for their intrinsic value; there is no pecking order, and all are free to worship their Creator.[166] Assuming that non-humans need humans to assist in their worship of their Creator leaves a sense of dominance where instead other creatures actually help humans in their worship. Holding up an intrinsic value of other creatures in the context of Christian worship enhances liturgy.

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[164] Schmeman, 130.

[165] Larry Rasmussen, "Symbols to Live By," in Berry, *Environmental Stewardship,* 182.

[166] Richard Bauckham, "Modern Domination of Nature – Historical Origins and Biblical Critique," in Berry, *Environmental Stewardship,* 49.

Christian Stewardship[167]

In contrast to the creation spirituality of the Orthodox tradition, Evangelical Christian stewardship models a perspective of moralistic, apologetic, and polemic reasoning.[168] The metaphor of stewardship has close ties to the metaphor of a priest. Both metaphors speak to understandings of the responsibility of humans to call creation back to the Creator and participate in nature through prayer and care. As the priestly referent is necessarily concerned with ethos, character, and attitude, the stewardship model leans into ethics, principles, and morality. A significant contribution of this model is one of apologetics.

Useful models and metaphors incorporating theology into environmental issues must be courageous enough to hold on to the major beliefs of Christian faith without being limited by ethics driven by the crisis. Biblical ethics tend to drive Christian stewardship. Emphasizing ethics in this model sometimes leads to "more moralization" than is needed. Steven Pinker, a Canadian-American cognitive psychologist, linguist, and popular science author specializing in visual cognition concludes his article, "The Moral Instinct," with environmentalism as an example of "our habit of moralizing problems, merging them with intuitions of purity and contamination and resting content when we feel the right feelings, can get in the way of doing the right thing."[169] The strength of the metaphor lies in descriptive language requiring justice, truthfulness, and sensitivity, and

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[167] Bauckham, "Modern Domination," 32. "Bauckham argues that we must recover the biblical doctrine of the theocentric community of creation in order to balance the otherwise one-sided emphasis on stewardship."

[168] Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart*, 18.

[169] Steven Pinker, "The Moral Instinct," *New York Times Magazine*, January 13, 2008, 32–37, 52, 55–56, 58.

weaknesses arise when the metaphor represents managerial elements and aloofness toward nature.[170]

Implications of a claim of stewardship link up with apologetics as Christian witness. In 1990 the Anglican Church added the fifth definition to her world mission "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth."[171] This particular task is succinctly laid out by Calvin de Witt in "Four Biblical Principles of Stewardship in Context": "First, the conservancy principle: loving the Creator, God's loving of creation and our reflecting the love of God"[172] gives the church its first commission found in Genesis 1–2. Second, the safeguarding principle: "We should safeguard the Lord's creation as the Lord safeguards us."[173] This principle reflects Genesis 2:15 about caring and keeping the garden. Third, the fruitfulness principle: "We should enjoy the fruit of creation but not destroy its fruitfulness."[174] God asks all of creation to be fruitful and multiply, and lastly, the Sabbath principle: "We should provide for creation's Sabbath rests with no relentless pressing."[175] These four biblical principles, focusing on concern and action, result in a pragmatic creation care ethic.

The strength of this pragmatic perspective is that characteristics come from a robust biblical reading and strategy of biblical interpretation. De Witt contends that these

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[170] Robin Attfield, "Environmental Sensitivity and Critiques of Stewardshp," in Berry, *Environmental Stewardship*, 76.

[171] Berry, *Environmental Stewardship*, 11.

[172] Calvin B. De Witt, "Ecology and Ethics: Relation of Religious Belief to Ecological Practice in the Biblical Tradition," *Biodiversity and Conservation* 4, no. 8 (1995): 843, http://doi.org/10.1007/BF00056191.

[173] Ibid., 844.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Andrew F. Walls and Cathy Ross, *Mission in the Twenty-first Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 89–90.

principles come from an influence of the Incarnation and covenantal context of Scripture.[176] The explanatory power of De Witt's model is in its activity and pragmatism. Ecosystems are a given, and biospheres are practical in how they work. The heart of this framework is that "stewardship dynamically shapes and reshapes human behavior in the direction of maintaining individual, community, and biospheric sustainability in accord with the way the biosphere works."[177] Respecting creation and her ecosystems reciprocates with human activity toward service for ecosystems, peoples, and their cultures.

Within the context of Lynn White's accusations in 1967, this apologetic of stewardship from mostly Evangelicals intended to provide concrete answers and supply reasons to endorse these particular ethical and moral practices. R. J. Berry addresses the polemic in no uncertain terms: "Creation care is more than pragmatic witness and evangelistic possibility; it is fundamental to our faith in the God who is Redeemer and Sustainer as well as Creator: He has commissioned us to be his agents, factors, stewards, trustees—the name does not matter."[178] The theocentric approach of Christian stewardship linked up with a biocentric approach empowers Christian practice to work with creation and not over and against it.

An explanation of earthkeeping and mission within these models of stewardship and biblical interpretation lies with the high status of the Bible and texts related to God's

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[176] R. J. Berry, *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action* (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 72.

[177] Calvin B. DeWitt, "Stewardship: Responding Dynamically to the Consequences of Human Action in the World," in *Environmental Stewardship*, 151.

[178] Berry, *Environmental Stewardship*, 11.

creation and it is friendly to ecological concerns.[179] The assumption of this theory is the ability to exegete the scriptures and draw heavily on theological reflection of divine Providence. The hermeneutical thrust in the Christian stewardship model is essential for the Christian community who look toward Scripture for vision and wisdom about one's responsibility with creation.

Three strengths arise from a model of Christian stewardship: the scientific understanding of the biosphere is upheld; this knowledge is integrated with the humanities to help human beings learn how to live in the biosphere; and the combination of this ethical knowledge drive actions and practice. The robustness of this framework assists in answering some weaknesses found therein. Two questions will help frame this discussion: Is the metaphor of stewardship legitimate to narrate the relationship between nature and humanity and give a basis for environmental ethics? Furthermore, can a theology of stewardship sufficiently narrate human responsibility within God's creation?

Behind these questions lies significant interest and intention: Can Evangelicalism theologically obtain human moral responsibility from the account in the first two chapters of Genesis? The concept of stewardship does not appear in the Old Testament—in fact the first citing of stewardship is first seen only in some of the parables of Jesus: "For example, while some bemoan our failure to respond to the call to 'stewardship' in Gen. 1:28, others trace the root causes of environmental destruction to the 'successful' collective response in Abrahamic traditions to this call to 'subdue' the earth and to 'rule'

[179] Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology*, 82.

over it."[180] Claiming stewardship as a powerful metaphor in a biblical sense is weak based on the fact that if that is true, humans have done a terrible job as stewards.

Several theologians describe *stewardship* as "alien" as a technical term, and others say "stewardship" in fact is not used in Scripture to describe our role in creation.[181] Some want to replace the stewardship metaphor. For example, Leonard Sweet complains, "Stewardship is a stale word that conveys to the hearer a host of couldas, shouldas, wouldas. More is at stake in the word stewardship than nomenclature. The entire stewardship metaphor is anachronistic and arrogant."[182] The stewardship metaphor is often couched only in economic terms and assumes that what Christians offer to God in the tithing context belongs to the individual to start with. As traditionally held, stewardship shortcuts the theological and ecological principle that all of life is a gift.

Along with the weak notion of responsibility and far from the Genesis account itself, the metaphor does not work.[183] The Bible has other traditions that say more about human responsibility; for example, the wisdom tradition found in Job and Ecclesiastes and apocalyptic traditions of the Apostle Paul and Revelation. Not only is stewardship outdated, but the history of the word is "associated with its ancient and medieval origins, where the role of stewards included the supervision of slaves and serfs."[184] Some, for example, are convinced that the idea of stewardship is outlived because it reinforces at least philosophically unhealthy views of domination and power.

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[180] Jenkins, Tucker, and Grim, 73.

[181] Douglas J. Moo and Jonathan A. Moo, *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World*, Biblical Theology for Life (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 85.

[182] Sweet, "Freely You Have Received," 16.

[183] Ibid., 17.

[184] Attfield, *Environmental Ethics*, 207.

To appreciate the tension between the stewardship metaphor and other analogies, and to help observe more than one answer to the problem, a proper critique of environmental sensitivity brings to light some implications. One implication is, if we accept a model of stewardship when practiced within a community of faith and with an attitude of service the metaphor is useful in that it upholds human responsibility. More questions arise: Is stewardship, any more than domination, a reliable reading of the Biblical text? Jenkins, Tucker, and Grim ask, "Is it more like a point of departure for a critique of the same text?"[185] Some answers to this question come through creating new moral metaphors that help explain humanity's role and responsibilities. Perhaps a renewed metaphor is needed, picturing the God-human-creation triad in a biblical framework. Revisiting the metaphor of a trustee can give an impetus to the overall scenario.

The modern understanding of a trustee carries with its fiduciary responsibilities and the additional elements of affinity with others, collegiality, and cooperation with others, in the context of this issue, with many others for example ecologists aligning with environmental activists and Christian earth keepers collaborating with agriculturalists. The element of legal accountability raises the stakes and asks not, "How much do I give away what is mine? However, how much of this estate do I receive for myself so that the estate might grow and prosper and do good?"[186] The metaphor of a trustee re-enchants creation as a living thing, not as owners, but as citizens grounded in a place.

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[185] Jenkins, Tucker, and Grim, 73.

[186] Sweet, "Freely You Have Received," 19.

Ethics related to trusteeship address the environmental problems, not individualistically but rather as holistic agents. Three implications arise within this analogy: first, a moral standing of responsibility to future generations "is not owed to particular individuals only, but extend to whoever will live in the foreseeable future."[187] Second, self-respect is insured as fiduciaries of the planet because of the high legal duty by handling assets and ethically acting in the other's best interests. Third, the planet itself as a living being charges the trustee in re-creating place and re-enchantment of the web of relationships intrinsic in the universe. Trusteeship combines the triad of acting holistically, legally, and intrinsically to empower ecological thought, inspire respect for creation and future generations and imagination to creativity find concrete ways to tackle the ecological crisis.

Positively, the Christian stewardship approach can answer some of the dilemmas regarding three biblical models of redemption proposed by Jenkins: reclaim the image of God in humanity; reconnect Jesus' life and teachings to the Genesis narratives; and show how earthkeeping practices witness to the good news of Jesus. In dialogue in ecology within the Christian community, the human is often embedded so deeply with nature that human uniqueness fades from the conversation. The stewardship model is at its strongest when the story of Jesus is front and center. Sometimes conferences on creation care or earthkeeping can fall into traps of pragmatism and ethical causes while the narrative of Jesus is pushed to the background.

Reinterpreting the image of God foregrounds creation theology and the Christian community experiences the meaning of originality and acts of creativity: "One model is

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[187] Attfield, *Environmental Ethics,* 95.

to emphasize Christ's redemption of the image of God in humans."[188] Jenkins is asking for a "reestablishing" of the relationship between God, humans, and creation. Many have tried to identify the image of God in humans. Some see free will, reason, mind-consciousness, and being social animals as the image of God in humans.[189]

Steven Bouma-Prediger writes, "Humans are thoroughly relational, inextricably related to and bound up not only with God, and not only with other human beings but also with the animals and plants, the microbes and mountains of this exquisitely complex and beautiful blue-green earth."[190] Reflecting God in this way stretches the human ability and capacity to love others and have a rapport with other beings. This subjectivity is not nostalgic nor romantic nor viewed anthropocentrically. It means that the human being, as an image-bearer, recognizes the subjectivity and difference in the bird, the bee, and the whale. A clear view of locating the image of God in humans comes from Karl Rahner. His "view of the human being as creation comes to self-consciousness, able to respond to the Creator in freedom and love."[191] This model of redemption adequately explains the metaphor of trusteeship.

From this perspective, there is a link between Jesus and the Genesis garden directives. Most stewardship mandates reside in the Genesis account without connecting to the New Testament or read New Testament concepts back into the Genesis account without thoughtful hermeneutics. The term remains in the past, and the elements focus on preserving and protecting with no future outlook. How can one find ecological heuristics

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[188] Jenkins, 85.

[189] Bouma-Prediger, 115.

[190] Ibid., 116.

[191] Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart*, 15.

combining the redemption narratives of Genesis and the Gospels? A constructive theology in this paradigm is to ontologically work back to connect the Second Adam with the First Adam.[192] The *Second Adam* is an eschatological term, and Paul ties the typology to Christ's resurrection and the Christian hope (1 Corinthians 15:42–49). The Christian hope futuristically empowers the Genesis accounts.

Jenkins suggests, "A third way [of witnessing to the good news] connects earthkeeping practices to Christ's resurrection victory over forces of chaos and evil in creation."[193] In this model, an awareness of being a witness to Christ's passion and saving acts places creation care and the responsibilities in a framework of the ministry of reconciliation. Moo and Moo support this model: "We need to highlight how the good news of Jesus Christ embraces all of reality and to proclaim the breathtaking grandeur and cosmic scope of God's purposes."[194] Paul Tillich has said, "If I were asked to sum up the Christian message for our time in two words, I would say with Paul (Gal. 6:15): It is the message of a 'New Creation.'"[195] Echoing Tillich, Richard Hays summarizes, "The New Testament calls the covenant community of God's people into participation in the cross of Christ in such a way that the death and resurrection of Jesus becomes a paradigm for their common life as harbingers of God's new creation."[196] To date, Christians are

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[192] Leonard I. Sweet and Frank Viola, *Jesus: A Theography,* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 53.

[193] Jenkins, 85.

[194] Moo and Moo, 222.

[195] Paul Tillich, *The New Being* (New York: Scribner, 1955), 15.

[196] R. B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contempory Introduction to New Testamnet Ethics* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 292.

generally not self-aware of their relationship with creation; therefore, as John Houghton summarizes the Christian stewardship model,

> We need a praxis of stewardship that is more thoughtful, honest, and holistic than much of what is on offer. I say holistic because environmental action is littered with examples of "solutions" that have failed to address all the interconnected issues—scientific, technological, economic, environmental, social, and spiritual. An overall attitude (ethos) as we address such complex issues must be one of humility, recognizing that we do not have all the answers.[197]

The issue is so overwhelming that it can be difficult for the disciple of Christ to find the motivation to address it. Enthusiasm is found in looking to the future where Jesus is calling us.

Ecojustice[198]

Christian spirituality focuses on ethos and attitude regarding gratitude in the Eucharist as giving life to the world. Christian stewardship concentrates in its metaphor of a trustee given an estate to flourish. As a trustee, the human being is participatory in the redemption story. However, the stewardship model, lacking teeth and a bite,[199] is weak because it does not portray or incentivize the initiative to pursue change and action. Providing strength to the trustee metaphor, a third model emerges: the Ecojustice model.

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[197] John Houghton, "Stewardship for the Twenty-first Century," in Berry, *Environmental Stewardship,* 317.

[198] E. M. Conradie, *Christianity and Earthkeeping: In Search of an Inspiring Vision* (Stellenbosch, SA: Sun Press, 2011), 45. Conradie quoting Dieter Hessel defines ecojustice as, "A combination of ecology and social justice, 'eco-justice' refers to the interlocking web of concern about the earth's carrying capacity, its ability to support the lives of its inhabitants and the human family's ability to live together in harmony. It highlights the interrelatedness of such pressing issues such as world hunger and world peace, the energy crisis and unemployment, appropriate technology and good work, biblical stewardship and feminist consciousness, radical justice and pluralistic community, life-style choices in response to poverty and pollution."

[199] Christopher Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 108.

Ecojustice provides an ethic of compassion for the poor and struggles for economic justice. Because of climate change, more intense floods and droughts have and will continue to occur, affecting the marginalized. Communities that are the most vulnerable to things such as pollution and rising sea levels are the more impoverished communities of the southern hemisphere. Low-lying lands and island communities are particularly in jeopardy as sea levels rise.[200] The subsequent loss of land, ravished biodiversity, and disempowered human communities has the potential to cause an alarming rise in environmental refugees.[201] Beginning in 1995, the average estimate is 150–200 million climate-change refugees by 2050.[202] These social problems necessarily force the issue of environmental justice. Climate change and environmental loss involve air pollution resulting in an estimated 7 million premature human deaths a year,[203] sea pollution, mass extinction—one thousand times more than natural extinction rates[204]—and deforestation.

These impacts and social concerns intensify the issue of environmental justice. Celia Deane-Drummond writes, "Environmental justice (or more properly, perhaps, 'injustice,' though this term is not normally used) is the disproportionate impact of

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[200] Robert Gottlieb, *Morality and the Environmental Crisis* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 12.

[201] Bill McKibben, "We're Not Even Close to Being Prepared for the Rising Waters," *Washington Post*, November 10, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/were-not-even-close-to-being-prepared-for-the-rising-waters/2017/11/09/441f4752-97d7-11e7-87fc-c3f7ee4035c9_story.html.

[202] Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology*, 6.

[203] Gottlieb, 183.

[204] "Current Extinction Rate 10 Times Worse Than Previously Thought," iflscience.com, November 19, 2019, https://www.iflscience.com/plants-and-animals/current-extinction-rate-10-times-worse-previously-thought/.

environmental harms on vulnerable populations."[205] Justice issues concern moral theologians, and with these pressing issues, a host of perspectives have come forth. Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston write, "The terrain of environmental ethics is rich. What we have in environmental ethics . . . is the attempt to create new foundations and conceptual schemes for a host of questions concerning the moral consideration of the community of life on Earth."[206] In most of the Christian literature regarding ecojustice, a considerable gap becomes apparent. Future interests and future generations are missing from the definitions and discussions. Compared to secular literature, the issue of future interests continually is addressed from several levels.[207] One reason could be the uncertainty of future interests, and the pressing current needs are overwhelming.

Within the model of ecojustice, there are two underlying approaches. One outlook focuses on how the church relates to society and emphasizes justice and individual rights. Ethics are the primary concern and main topic of discussion. Within this approach, the church often loses her particularities. The other approach emphasizes what the church is—ecclesiology—and prioritizes issues of faith and order rather than ethics. Sometimes these issues confuse priorities of human rights and creation stability, and conversations lag and policies stall. Willis Jenkins clarifies, "While the ethics of ecojustice evaluated right relations directly about creation's dignity, advocates of 'environmental justice'

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[205] Celia Deane-Drummond, *A Primer in Ecotheology: Theology for a Fragile Earth* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017), chap. 7, sec. 1, Kindle.

[206] Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston, *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 10.

[207] Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac, *The Future We Choose: Surviving the Climate Crisis,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2020), 169–70.

critiqued environment degradations concerning human dignity."[208] These issues overlap in conversations because they treat the same problems and have familiar organizations, such as the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches. The central tension arises when discussions occur on what the church is—faith and creed issues—and what the church should be doing—ethical issues. Ernst Conradie explicitly says, "This debate between ecclesiology and ethics remains unresolved."[209] The challenges of communication and deciding on priorities in the context of what can be done and what is the church often brings disunity and stalls further needed action.

To respond to the impacts and be on the frontlines with ecojustice, Larry Rasmussen writes, "Christianity shows itself to be a genuine 'earth faith'. . . at home in the cosmos."[210] He proposes four strong historical traditions to challenge the ethics of modernity: First, asceticism, or saying "Yes" and "No!" in the simplicity of life. Second, sacramentalism sees life is an excellent gift from God, and grace is the medium. This approach was highlighted earlier in creation spirituality. Third, mysticism touches on Hildegard of Bingen and Karl Rahner, Simone Weil, and Annie Dillard: "The testimony of the mystics is that all can soar in this manner."[211] As seen before, the mysticism aspect plays nicely in a creation spirituality of the Eastern traditions of the church. Fourth, the Prophetic-Liberative practice switches from an ethic in Christian practice to a value-

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[208] Jenkins, 63.

[209] Jenkins, Tucker, and Grim, 74.

[210] David Lodge and Christopher Hamlin, *Religion and the New Ecology: Environmental Responsibility in a World in Flux* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 228.

[211] Rasmussen, chap. 10, sec. 1, Kindle.

oriented life: "Right relations with one another, the land and God."[212] The ecojustice model explicitly reflects this point. Rasmussen summarizes, "As co-members of creation and community of life that is home to us and upon which we are wholly dependent, earth's economy is primary."[213]

The Ecojustice model emphasizes that Christian spiritual practices can reshape individuals: "The ecojustice respect for God's relation to creation shapes what it means for humans to be in relation to God."[214] This reshaping has practical implications for Christian qualities and mission. The strength of this model is that "fidelity to God is lived as fidelity to the Earth."[215] Ecojustice theologians continually connect ecojustice with living a godly life. By connecting Christian spiritual practices with ecological concerns with the community of faith, this framework appeals to sanctification. Sanctification through Christian formation is its most significant strength because one of the main characteristics that is required is for humanity to adapt and change. Sanctification as a Christian concept is essential to hold together the vision, change route based on consequences and to remain open to doing things in new ways.

There are some weaknesses in the paradigm of ecojustice. In the vast body of literature and academic works, there does not seem to be an attempt to bring into the discussion metaphors to explain and give meaning to the paradigm. Because of the absence of metaphors, a narrative to bridge the situation as it is (mass extinction) and

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[212] Rasmussen, chap. 11, sec. 1, Kindle.

[213] Lodge and Hamlin, 275.

[214] Jenkins, 67.

[215] Rasmussen, chap. 3, sec. 2, Kindle.

what can happen (ethics) did not develop. Moralization and lack of action weaken the model.

Justice is difficult to define, even by Locke, Hume, Bacon, and other British empiricists. Defining rights in terms of humans, animals, and land are also tricky. Within the Christian community, tensions remain that make it challenging to construct a solid bridge between ecclesiology and ethics. Even though these issues are discussed openly in dialogue, the fact remains that priorities change, and agreement for action is lost. There are many issues, such as poverty, pollution, human rights, and racism, and whatever cause is excellent turns out to be prioritized.[216] According to the Ecojustice model of environmental engagement, other priorities hinder action and general concern directed toward creation. Instead of including creation care in missional statements or prioritizing earthkeeping missional approaches, most Christian faith communities point concerns plainly affecting human beings.

Conclusion

The three theocentric models—creation spirituality, Christian stewardship, and ecojustice—provide a greater understanding of the perspectives that have developed within Christian history and the ecological crisis. The model of biocentrism assists the conversation because of the focus it places on the non-human and habitats. A biocentric approach also strengthens any earthkeeping model keeping attention on the biosphere. In the context of the environmental discussions, ecocentrism scores high marks with its priority of ecosystems and democratic feel in decision-making. The strengths of the

[216] Jenkins, Tucker, and Grim, 70.

theocentric method emphasize a different effect of the gospel: justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Looking at these models through a 3-D theological lens, the model of creation spirituality focuses on glorification as God's presence in the original ongoing creation and God's presence in and through the Eucharist: "Sacramental use of creation at once respects its integrity and imaginatively invites the whole world into praise."[217] The Christian stewardship model reflects the redemptive story of justification: "The pattern of Christ's acts sets Christians into an attentive, responsive relationship with the earth as grace…."[218] The model of ecojustice exemplifies how one can conform oneself "to creation that makes us friends with God."[219] Within the theological framework of sanctification, according to Jurgen Moltmann, "The Church will live out its recognition that salvation is not merely a matter of the soul, restricted to human beings. The Church of Christ will know herself in the light of God's Word and Spirit as the advance radiance and beginning of God's presence in glory, through the new creation of all things."[220] Moltmann envisions, through sanctification and personal holiness, a day when the church will be oriented toward the light and radiate God in creation. Arguably, the weaknesses in all three models are the lack of attention to future generations and future people's interests, the satisfaction of their needs, and preferences. If there were any reason to engage fully in conservation and the flourishing of ecosystems here, relevancy shows

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[217] Jenkins, 99.

[218] Ibid., 87.

[219] Ibid., 71.

[220] Jurgen Moltmann, "God's Covenant and Our Responsibility," in *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action*, ed. R. J. Berry (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 110.

"accepting the need of future people for a relatively unpolluted environment already tells us a good deal about what kind of provision we should make in their regard."[221]

Seeing the ecological crisis through these theological lenses sets the stage for a narrative of loving, covenantal mercy. God's grace is evident in the relationship he has with all his creation. A counter-story emerges, moving from "oughts and shoulds" toward a relationship of faithful love with the faithful Creator, future creatures, and a flourishing creation.

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[221] Attfield, *Environmental Ethics,* 103.

SECTION THREE:

THESIS

The difficulties and challenges of ecological issues that face humanity in the 21st century force new ways of approaching integrated and holistic solutions. A new reading of biblical traditions that can meet the challenges is needed. Re-reading the origin accounts from a perspective of the earth, hermeneutics itself can be shaped by ecological concerns. This dissertation looks to living with a loyal and covenant-keeping God as shaping, empowering, and aligning the Christian community in covenantal relationships with God, humans, and creation. Explanatory power comes available using metaphors. There are many metaphors for understanding humanity's role and responsibilities in earthkeeping. The goal of visiting the metaphor in this dissertation is to translate insight into action. To understand metaphor, the biblical hermeneutical context and earth perspective is king. Interpreting the metaphors gleaned from the traditional biblical stories and the context of those narratives demonstrate the power of perception.

To build the hypothesis that earthkeeping occurs through the truth of relationships grounded in *hesed* love, the foundation begins with the preferred story of origins. The methodology of reexamining a range of biblical texts articulates how human beings are fellow members with God's creatures and persuasively expresses reconciliation with God that involves the entire creation. Covenantal relationships with commitments through *hesed* love provide a compelling and an encouraging way of being with the world that is conducive to the mission of the church.

Highlighting the Edenic and Universal Noahic Covenants provides a relevant and starting point for Christian mission. Linking the origin stories with the New Covenant

provides an architype to enhance and reshape Eden's creation mandate. Looking to the welfare of future generations a metaphor of a journey is supplied to assist in modeling that mission. Committed to an evangelical view of the Church the range of Christology through the doctrines of creation and redemption perceives Christian faith in ecological terms.

Ecological Wisdom: Foregrounding

According to some modern Christian movements, the physical environment, the earth as a biosphere and ecosystem, is theological, ethically, and biblically of little value or importance. The church sees the earth as trivial, and the story of creation becomes only scenery or background for the ethereal—human drama that alone has redemptive significance. Creation in the grand Theo-Drama becomes a backcloth. By ignoring the physical environment and natural history in Christian traditions, modern churches have a few skeletons in her closet: Anthropocentrism and dualism.[222]

In relationship to Western Christianity, Anthropocentrism is an elusive force. It is both a philosophical worldview and a lived-out way of life. Anthropocentrism forces humanity's self-awareness to see the different contributions to the current ecological crisis through one lens: arrogant personal advantage without responsibility. Within this epic of time called the Anthropocene, beginning in 1945 or the Industrial Revolution or the Agricultural Revolution,[223] and living out the ramifications in human history, Christian traditions have distorted and curtailed God's original aesthetic relationship to

[222] James A. Nash, "Toward the Ecological Reformation of Christianity," *Interpretation* 50, no. 1 (January 1996): 5–15, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host*.

[223] Yuval N. Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2017), chap. 2, Kindle.

creation.[224] By propagating a human-centered salvation history in Christian theology, biblical hermeneutics,[225] ecclesiology, and ethics, the church has failed in this perspective that is at the root of the current ecological crisis.[226]

The second factor in the Christian tradition was an emphasis on "dualisms of soul and body and spirit and matter" and how this placed instrumental[227] value in nature and gave credence to the earth's misuse. Today in Western Christianity, the ambiguity between spirituality and the body has incontestably participated in a significant role in prioritizing spiritual things and downplaying the physical world.[228] An emphasis on studying prophecies of escapism and the functional anthropocentrism of prosperity teachings have perpetrated the flaws both in biblical interpretation and Christian theology.

To build the hypothesis that the earth is a referent in the history of salvation foundationally starts with creation in the foreground. The methodology of emphasis lies in revisiting and rereading the Church's origin stories. Creation theology provides metaphors for creating beneficial traits, application, and actions in earthkeeping.

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[224] Celia Deane-Drummond, *Christ and Evolution*: *Wonder and Wisdom* (London: SCM, 2009), 271.

[225] David G. Horrell, *The Bible and the Environment: Towards a Critical Ecological Biblical Theology* (Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2010), 121–22.

[226] A. J. Swoboda, "Posterity or Prosperity? Critiquing and Refiguring Prosperity Theologies in an Ecological Age" (2015), 94, Faculty Publications - Portland Seminary.

[227] Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 61.

[228] Daniel L. Brunner, Jennifer L. Butler, and A. J. Swoboda, *Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology: Foundations in Scripture, Theology, History, and Praxis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2014), 147.

Formed from Earthly Elements

In Genesis 2, God shapes the first man, Adam, "from the dust of the ground."[229] This molding of Adam reflects a common idea found in many cultures: he is an intrinsic part of his natural surroundings. Profound insights emerge from this encounter of water, dust, and Yahweh materializing humanity. This usage of the term "Adam" is the collective noun in Hebrew for "humankind."[230] More is at stake in the word "Adam" than nomenclature. This name and its usage in the creation story point out its best parts: namely the unity of humankind to natural elements that provide solidarity and embeddedness to the physical world.

Regarding the creation of humanity, Elizabeth Johnson recalls that "a particular Hebrew wordplay emphasizes the earthly kinship between humans and other animals, both being made of the same stuff. In colorful verse, the Creator gets the divine hands dirty by sculpting the earth creature (*adam*) from the dust of the ground (*adamah*) and breathing the breath of life up its nostrils."[231] The metaphors of dirt, water, and wind complement the narrative that underscores covenantal responsibility: "The Bible begins with a disquisition on dirt. Biblical faith is a down-to-earth faith."[232] God's character shines through in all its intricacy, bursting out in fullness. God creates, reflects, thinks, refashions, relaxes, jokes, and blesses the humans, nonhumans, and the earth. He "enters

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[229] Walter J. Harrelson, *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 9.

[230] Bruce M. Metzger and Michael David Coogan, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 10.

[231] Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 263

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[232] Leonard I. Sweet and Frank Viola, *Jesus: A Theography* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 40.

into the fray of earthly existence, blessing and guiding human beings"[233]—a beautiful and poetic way to begin life. Beginning life is "etymologically in the Hebrew a pun, adam, 'human,' from the soil, adamah."[234] The joy of life originates with a pun, and narrates God playing with earthly elements highlights the intimacy of the relationships between God, the human—adam—and creation.

Life's Breath

Humanity receives the breath of life. The Hebrew word *ruach*, often translated "soul" or "spirit" as in Genesis 2:7 (KJV and MSG), is better translated as "life-breath." Robert Alter has done a recent Hebrew translation of the Bible, and he explains why he translates *ruach* to mean "life-breath": "It [life breath] is a very physical thing, and there is no concept among biblical writers in a split between body and soul."[235] This life-breath is the ability to breathe, and all animals share in it (Gen. 7:22). This observation clarifies the "life-breath" is corporeal and earthly.

God disseminates this ability to breath.[236] An outcome of this gift received is the relationship that develops between humankind and his Creator: "God breathes his breath into the first human being, and in the third century, Irenaeus wrote that God crafted the world with two hands of his Son and his Spirit. God creates, so God relates."[237] This

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[233] Paul J. Achtemeier, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), 367.

[234] Robert Alter, *Genesis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

[235] Rachel Martin, "After 24 Years, Scholar Completes 3,000-Page Translation of the Hebrew Bible," npr.org, January 14, 2019, https://www.npr.org/2019/01/14/684120470/after-24-years-scholar-completes-3-000-page-translation-of-the-hebrew-bible.

[236] Harrelson, 9.

[237] Dave Bookless, *PlanetWise: Dare to Care for God's World* (Nottingham, UK: Inter-Varsity

relationship, established now with God's Spirit, gives humankind a distinctive role in creation as an ethical responsibility to others, and inventive imagination for a purposeful life. Bouma-Prediger, echoing Joseph Sittler, writes, "We are made from the dust—made out of and absolutely dependent upon the earth (*adam* from the *adama*, humans from the hummus). Thus, Sittler concludes, 'I am stuck with God, stuck with my neighbor, and stuck with nature (the 'garden'), within which and out of the stuff of which I am made.'"[238] Humans are special and unique, united with moral accountability.

This life-breath now flowing in and through these earthbound elements creates all kinds of potentialities and possibilities. Humanity's distinctiveness is both an artistic influence in their natural surroundings and a modest, watchful concern in that same environment. Johnson explains the life-breath from that elemental beginning as one of dynamism: "Once life begins, there is a disposition in biological nature to improvise, to be creative in ways that cannot be foreseen. While the narrative of life is unique, it partakes of the forward drive of the cosmos, which has brought forth a suite of fantastic structures ever since the initial flaring forth."[239] The Genesis narrative is alive with adventure for all participants—human and non-human—but it takes place in time and space.

Press, 1988), 22.

[238] Joseph Sittler, "Evangelism nad the Care of the Earth," in *Evocations of Grace: The Writings of Joseph Sittler on Ecology and Ethics,* ed. Steven Bouma-Prediger and Peter Bakken (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 204.

[239] Johnson, 115.

Territory

God placed Adam in a garden named Eden. *Eden* in Hebrew is "rich," a mixture of words resembling "delight," "fertility," and "abundance." The biblical narrative in Genesis grew out of the Agricultural Era during 3000 BCE in the Fertile Crescent. Thus the Genesis text reflects the concerns and interests of an agricultural era. Technological advances during this time were writing, glass making, the wheel, agriculture, and irrigation.[240] The relationship to the land is the habitat where the narrative takes place. The social context of this garden scene reveals the world of the domestic Israelite farming family.

Humanity breathing the breath of God becomes domesticated. Leonard Sweet explains that a "better word than 'domestic' is *terrior.* The concept of *terroir* is an almost untranslatable Gallic concept that is primarily used of wine, but it can apply to coffee, carrots, in fact, anything organic. *Terrior* says that good wine has a 'somewhereness.' Wine with *terrior* has an unmistakable signature, an arrhythmic personality that is a product of climate, soil, topography, and human interaction."[241] The first Adam was a product of his territory. Within the context of the creation story, this habitation tells the incredible narrative of a familiar place of self-awareness grounded in somewhereness and a community with numerous networks.[242]

The placing of Adam in the garden connects humanity's origins and beginnings with the land, and here originate explanations of humanity's self-awareness and what

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[240] Metzger and Coogan, 178.

[241] Leonard I. Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church: Missional, Relational, Incarnational* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 154.

[242] Sweet, *So Beautiful*, 151.

humans shall become. The garden is a suitable and flourishing place. The challenge identified here is humanity's interrelatedness with animals, water, land, and air. This symbiotic relationship with oxygen and soil "places the living being in a deepening state of dependence on his surroundings. More than dependence, this all-encompassing space for life represents one common gift. Its glory is revealed in the complexity, diversity, and interconnectedness of life systems in the unity of one, single planetary space for all."[243] Creation's spatial emphasis suggests a more biocentric stance with a view towards favorable foreseeable consequences.

Food

In the garden, there are a plethora of trees. God continues in his creative acts and places trees in the land. Mutual reciprocity is significant here. The trees provide not only food but also beauty. Interconnection is threefold. The beauty of the tree produces joy and delight[244]—there is no architecture, no need for structures or buildings. The trees produce good-tasting fruit to be enjoyed and bring sustaining life. The trees also produce oxygen, and God's intention for mutuality is apparent.[245]

Covenant does not appear in the story told in Genesis chapter two. However, the concept of God's fidelity and humanity's roles and responsibilities begin to show (compare Prov. 3:3 with 3:16–18). A story of kinship and mutuality emerges. The Tree of

[243] Celia Deane-Drummond, Sigurd Bergmann, and Markus Vogt, *Religion in the Anthropocene* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 83.

[244] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus,* 44.

[245] Johnson, 267.

Life is the sign of God's "steadfast love" or *hesed*.[246] Symbolically, the Tree of Life is the "fount of eternal life.[247] The tree metaphor explains the presence and purpose of God within the narrative: "The first mentioning of God's dealing with man is that God put Adam in front of the tree of life, charging him to be careful about his eating."[248] Witness Lee analogously continues, explaining why God symbolically placed Adam near the tree: "God's intention for man is not a matter of doing but a matter of eating. If a man eats well and eats rightly, then he will be right."[249] Necessarily, Adam's comfort, happiness, and well-being are contingent on his relationship with God:[250] "This tree of life is God in Christ as the Spirit to be life to us."[251] God's intention shines through with this scene of the first Adam eating: "God presented Himself to the man in the form of food."[252] The emphasis of the narrative is enhancing life and people flourishing in the context of a good and green earth. Even amid conflict and ecological degradation, the mandate to enhance life remains.

Lee links the need to eat spiritually to the Last Adam's rally cry, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of me."[253] Without that first encounter in the middle of the garden with the trees, it is impossible to understand life in Christ fully. Jesus references

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[246] Achtemeier, 625.

[247] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 45.

[248] Witness Lee, *The Tree of Life* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 2016), 9.

[249] Ibid.

[250] Ibid., 15.

[251] Ibid., 9.

[252] Ibid., 10.

[253] John 6:57

his statements about the Kingdom of God in this light (Matt. 13:31–32). The trees frame our covenant relationship in terms of grace, mercy, and life. The trees place value on the ethic reflected in a consequential biocentric approach in that our actions have repercussions, and nature has intrinsic value. They frame our place and responsibility within God's creation and to future generations. Picturing God's purpose, these trees explain that human beings ultimately have their being in God himself.[254]

Further, these trees signify God's future mission. God placed humanity—Adam—in front of the trees for a reason. Sweet names this mission the "Prime Directive."[255] The ethic resulting from the directive is "the real meaning of originally: going back to origins and recapitulating the new out of the original."[256] The "roots" of this first mission with Adam sets the stage for ensuing missions. The development of this story of being placed in front of the trees (Gen. 2:15–17) is one of mission and determination. God sent humanity on a mission to conserve and conceive: "What flowers ultimately in all Scripture has its roots in this primal mission and the purpose behind it."[257] God enters loving covenantal relationships for a reason. In those relationships, he exercises *hesed* toward the other party and shows tenderness through his faithfulness to others. Graceful and kind acts establish the relationship. As the relationship develops, instruction comes into play and commitments to one another grow. To have any significant relationship,

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[254] Leonard I. Sweet and Frank Viola, *Jesus Manifesto: Restoring the Supremacy and Sovereignty of Jesus Christ* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 167.

[255] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 43.

[256] Ibid., 43–44.

[257] Francis M. DuBose, *God Who Sends: A Fresh Quest for Biblical Mission* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1983), 57.

one needs to have "skin in the game."[258] When one has skin in the game, he or she keeps promises on behalf of others, even if it means death: "Our mission is to make talk less cheap."[259] The essence of a covenant relationship is faithfulness in action based on obligations.[260]

In the Genesis account, God expressed obligations and commitments in contrasting the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge: "The Tree of Knowledge is a tree that invites the feeder to enter into a relationship with the mystery of good and evil, a mystery reserved for God alone."[261] The problem that emerges between the two trees is one of mishandling the gifts of beauty and life. Taking advantage of the given biosphere in the first garden, one senses a lack of responsibility and care. The metaphor of the trees is precisely the covenantal language of making and entering into agreements through relationships built on faithfulness, loyalty, and devotion.[262] The trees show kindness to the human by producing life-giving oxygen, shade, sustenance, mystery, and loveliness (Gen. 2:9). In contrast, the human cultivates and cares for the trees so that the trees flourish and succeed, implying that the human is dependent and responsible to his Maker.[263] This relationship is beautifully symbiotic: "Every day in summer, trees release about twenty-nine tons of oxygen into the air per square mile of forest. A person breathes

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[258] Nicholas Nassim Taleb, *Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder* (New York: Random House, 2012), 374.

[259] Ibid., 392.

[260] Katharine D. Sakenfeld, *Faithfulness in Action: Loyalty in Biblical Perspective: Overtures to Biblical Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 40.

[261] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 45.

[262] Sakenfeld, 2.

[263] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 168.

in nearly two pounds of oxygen a day, so that is a daily requirement for about ten thousand people. Every walk in the forest is like taking a shower in oxygen."[264] Humanity's symbolic and symbiotic relationship with the two tress partially reveals that creation's integrity and beauty was lost when protection and care of the earth was forgotten.

Nourishment for the lungs (oxygen), sustenance for the stomach (fruit), and food for the personality (beauty) implies a responsibility of mutual dependence and is necessary to one's well-being.[265] Before God says a word in the garden, the indicators of accountability to the Maker begin. This involvement of being alive with multiplicity between human bodies provides kinship with other creations that are wedged together in spatiality. Swoboda, quotes his favorite definition of ecology: "G. Tyler Miller, who says it means 'everyone and everything is *downwind* from everyone and everything else.' That is, nothing is isolated."[266] One failure in earthkeeping is nowhere more evident than in humanity's lack of understanding of one's kinship with all things.

Undergirding the account in the garden is that humanity bears "the responsibility for their actions and for what befalls them. God is neither arbitrary nor capricious."[267] The command about the two trees is an integral part of being an image-bearer of the Maker:

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[264] Peter Wohlleben, Tim F. Flannery, S. Simard, and Jane Billinghurst, *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate: Discoveries from a Secret World* (Vancouver, BC: Greystone Books, 2016), 224.

[265] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 43.

[266] A. J. Swoboda, *Subversive Sabbath: The Surprising Power of Rest in a Nonstop World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018), chap. 7, sec. 1, Kindle.

[267] Stephen Greenblatt, *The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2017), 50.

> Human beings are made in the image of God in the sense that they are capable of interpersonal love. A mountain range, a brilliant parrot, a great soaring tree, a delicate wildflower bending in the wind—these too are images of God. They are the self-expression of God, sacraments of divine presence in the world. They image God in their specificity. But the precise specificity of the human is the personal and the relational, and this involves the human in the vocation to relate to other creatures as God does.[268]

This relationship to others involves a role of responsibility and action toward the well-being of the "other."

Answerability is an essential aspect of being human. Empathy is a part of what it means to be in relationship with others: "Our uniqueness does not exempt us from extending care but rather summons us to faithfully exercise our God-given responsibility to till and keep the garden that is the Earth. Human uniqueness is not a license for exploitation but a call to service. If God cares for nonhuman creatures, then as God's image-bearers, so should we."[269] To perceive the other in its context involves a responsibility.

The ecological wisdom brimming from the founding story is not limited to certain texts by cherry-picking them haphazardly.[270] The story is grounded in a hermeneutic that trusts the greater narrative of the biblical story of theology and ethics: "The hermeneutical proof is in the exegetical pudding."[271] A frequent problem in biblical hermeneutics is that the random texts that highlight ecological concerns are not related to the central message of redemption. When the origin story becomes only a background to

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[268] Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 17.

[269] Bouma-Prediger, 171.

[270] Willis Jenkins, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and John Grim, *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Ecology* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 73.

[271] Bouma-Prediger, 84.

the larger redemption story, problems arise. However, when the founding story is on the stage, the rest of the story can be expressed. Leonard Sweet puts this discussion into perspective:

> Redemption is the contingency program put into place to get us back to God's purpose—a purpose that predated Adam's fall into sin. Consequently, the history of humanity comprises three parallel stories:
> - The story of God's original purpose, which stands apart from the Fall and redemption—a purpose that God had never let go of
> - The story of human attempts to find loopholes to avoid the legacy of the Fall
> - The story of God's various strategies for corralling humanity back through the gates of Eden.[272]

The similar stories of origins, entering into agreements, sending messengers, choosing a people, and finally sending Jesus place the core message of salvation within an ecological rereading of Scripture.

Labor

The word *eden* does not necessarily or traditionally mean "paradise," rather "wilderness," or "plain," or "plateau" comes closer to the Hebrew:[273] "The dream in Genesis is not leisure but rather purposive work—tilling and watching—that is experienced as pleasure."[274] This division of labor is to provide food for the family and attentive care to the land for future descendants. The Hebrew words for till (*abad*) and watch (*samar*) are more sacred and priest-like in description than agricultural in tasks.[275]

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[272] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 51.

[273] T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 202.

[274] Greenblatt, 59.

[275] Alexander and Baker, 206.

The power of explaining the place and responsibility of humanity within God's creation resides in this aspect of the story. As a priest, humanity does not toil and labor and see the world as a commodity. The world now has value because it has found meaning in God and value is given "when it is the 'sacrament' of God's presence."[276]

Developing in the narrative is that this place—the land, the garden—where humankind now lives and works is a consecrated place, demanding religious, priestly duties to conserve and cultivate. Covenantal language is in the narrative. Covenantal language is sacramental: "In the case of the covenant, you plant the seed of God's love and presence into the hearts of others, so that not only you but also many will bear fruit going forward . . . We are called to pass on the story, the relationship, the sacredness"[277] so that a sense of opening up to other beings parallels to that love in its deepest sagacity. Agriculture is not hard labor; because there is a "river" to water the garden (Gen. 2:10), it seems the problematic task of irrigation is lifted. The responsibility is to offer a blessing over the fruits of the earth and confirm one's faith in the endurance of creation. Together these elements of sacred work and sacred land[278] reinforce humanity's kinship rather than subtract from its entrenchment with the land, water, and air.

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[276] Alexander Schmeman, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 200), chap. 1, Kindle.

[277] Leonard Sweet, *Me and We: God's New Social Gospel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 88.

[278] Norman Wirzba, *The Essential Agrarian Reader: The Future of Culture, Community, and the Land* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2004), 80.

Community

The narrative continues with the creation of woman, stressing the unity of the sexes and their respective supportive roles and needs. No matter how healthy an individual is, no one person can function alone. Another wordplay in the Hebrew impacts the story with "the eerie sense that man and woman are interlaced: 'This one shall be called Woman (*ishah*), For from man (*ish*) was this one taken' (Gen. 2:23 Alter Translation)."[279] The human community is built upon joy in jesting, beauty in the naming-poem, and the human speech comes alive. If anything is derived from the creation story of man and woman, it is the moral ambiguities.

A sense of community is developed in the narrative as the man leaves his father and mother, and metaphorically becomes "one flesh." This deep friendship is the bringing together of the man and the woman. There is an absence of the word "covenant" in this interaction, but the concept and corresponding words are there. To "leave" and to "cling" are covenant-breaking and covenant-keeping words (see Jer. 2:12 and Deut. 4:4). The frame of reference for the community is a people of the covenant. Humanity enters this covenant in freedom and love. In the context of *hesed*, relationships "should be accessed in terms of what God is doing and how we may best at any time embody God's loyalty."[280] A covenantal relationship assumes freedom in responsibility and kindness in response: "A covenant relationship means loyalty and faithfulness."[281] The picture is

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[279] Greenblatt, 216.

[280] Sakenfeld,140.

[281] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus,* 15.

becoming apparent as the story unfolds. Yahweh has initiated a covenantal relationship with humanity—*ish* and *ishah*.

The blessings and promises of this agreement frequently connect to the land. The grace-filled gifts of air, water, food, labor, pleasure, and human relations are all placed in the context and categories of the physical/material environment. The stipulations were to "till and tend," "cling," "eat freely," and "not eat" from one specified tree. With Adam and Eve representing humanity, the basis of the community's life is God entering a relationship built upon a loving covenantal obligation. His mercy shows his loyalty to follow through and support the people of the covenant. By entering in covenant with a pledge and maintaining the stipulations with promises, God's faithfulness becomes a reality: "As God's people, we are caretakers and vineyard servants not of just the earth but in a covenant relationship with God that affects all of our behavior."[282] This covenant living is a lived-out life of *hesed*.

The beauty of *hesed* is that it is untranslatable. Michael Card admits to its mystery but offers this definition in humility: "*Hesed*: When the person from whom I have a right to expect nothing gives me everything."[283] A good attempt indeed, but the concept is larger and more nuanced than Card's attempt. In a triadic grouping, the Christian community can come closer to *hesed*'s fuller meaning. Leading *hesed* scholar Nelson Glueck's research shows *hesed* as the "essence of a covenant."[284] *Hesed* is covenant-keeping; the parallel in English that fits well is "faithfulness" (Ps. 89:33ff): "It was not

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[282] Sweet, *Me and We*, 99.

[283] Michael Card, *Inexpressible: Hesed and the Mystery of God's Lovingkindness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), pref., sec. 1, Kindle.

[284] Mont W. Smith, *What the Bible Says About Covenant* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1981), 26.

the motive for action, nor the attitude itself; it was the performance of the agreed stipulations. It was faithfulness to an oath. It was the very doing of the covenant."[285] *Hesed* was concrete action based on agreed terms and conditions within a context of loving obligations.

A second element was to act as a companion to come and support the other and benefit in times of trouble: "The help provided went beyond the written stipulations. There was a loving concern for the other's welfare, which went beyond what was stipulated."[286] The third component is a grouping of ingenuity, creativity, and innovation. *Hesed* is a concept fashioned in the heart of God before the beginning of time. *Hesed* is eternal (Ps. 89:2). Covenants were to link people together with God, themselves, and their surroundings. Attention was on the parties to the covenant. *Hesed* provided the loving covenantal obligation that sought the best interests of the other party; it was the linkage in the relationship:

> Created in the image of God, humans are called to collaborate [*hesed*] with the divine in the unfinished symphony of creation. A continuum of human creativity and divine action is established in Genesis: participation in the created order known in the Hebrew tradition as *TIKKUN OLAM*, the Midrashic Rabbi's view of human responsibility in the covenantal relationship. Each one of us has been gifted with creative power.[287]

Relationships built on *hesed* faithfulness are the vehicle for originality: "And so *Tikkun Olam* has come to mean 'repairing of the world.' It is God restoring the brokenness of a design that has been shattered and finds itself without peace—that is, without shalom. *Tikkun Olam* is God restoring our shattered bodies, minds, communities, and ecosystems

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[285] Ibid., 354.

[286] Ibid., 345.

[287] Sweet, *Me and We*, 104.

through our letting go of our mastery over the world and entering into the mystery of God."[288] A triad of *hesed* emerges mercy/support, faithfulness/loyalty, and mutuality/creativity. In covenantal summary, the parties in the Edenic Covenant are God, humanity, nonhumans, and the earth. As to the terms and conditions, humanity is to observe the land, apply oneself to improving and developing the land, remain faithful and cherish each other with mutual responsibility (command about the trees) concerning God through freedom, love (*hesed*—see Gen. 2:16–17 and Rom. 5:12), and peace with oneself, harmony with each other, and cooperation within the environment. To signify the covenant, the Tree of Life was placed before humanity and pointed to God's tender loving care and eternal life. The benefits and promises of Eden are seen in the provision of life in abundance, companionship, a flourishing eco system, reproduction, innovation and humanity as "sub-creators."[289]

The covenant of God with the creation and his faithfulness to humans, and nonhumans, which is higher than our faithlessness, gives hope and assurance in the context of environmental degradation. God keeps covenants, comes to the aid of the "Other" partner. He is "a God who is constantly creating and a God who has left a creation still unfinished."[290] God's vision in the origin story is about the integrity of each creature and esteeming the Other with holy respect in the hope that God himself will continue to show faithfulness: "All living beings are partners in God's covenant, each in their own way. All living beings must, therefore, be respected by us as partners in God's

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[288] Swoboda, *Subversive Sabbath*, 49.

[289] Sweet, *Me and We*, 105.

[290] Sweet, *So Beautiful*, 59.

covenant."[291] The essence of the covenant, *hesed*, links us to one another in community, to God in devotion, and to nonhumans in creative tender mercy.

Language

The naming and calling of the animals brought self-awareness to humanity to a full level of consciousness. This ability of language marks a quality in humanity as unique and distinct. Language is more than syntax and semantics. This particular quality shapes humanity's moral consciousness and power to reason. Beyond these statements, language allows people to tell stories, make alliances, to organize themselves in a community, and make concrete plans. Language is symbolic.

When Adam named creation, he was not viewing things and then naming them. Instead, by naming them, Adam was calling things into being, continuing God's creativity by speaking ("And God said"), and thus calling the world into big-bang being ("let there be light"). Adam's first act was to "conserve and conceive."[292] In naming the animals, Adam conceived a voice for each of them. Also, there is one to respond to Adam's first recorded speech in the form of a poem, therefore empowering[293] the "Other."

When Adam named the animals, the innovative and metaphorical aesthetic surprised him and gave him pleasure; when he called out *ishah*—woman—his first words were "at last!"[294] and he then recited a poem. Symbolism and assigning meaning to things

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[291] Jurgen Moltmann, "God's Covenant and Our Responsibilty," in *Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Care*, ed. R. J. Berry (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 111.

[292] Sweet, *Me and We,* 106.

[293] Cierra N. Wallace, email message to the author, July 23, 2020.

[294] Genesis 2:23

began in that Edenic experience. Throughout this experience, the power of language commissions the human to not only empower oneself, but also others and nonhumans.

The uniqueness of humanity as shaper—to till and to tend—begins here, but also humanity's interdependence as the receiver lies in humanity's remarkable strength.[295] Out of this same soil, this dirt (Gen. 2:19), every animal is made and then named. The account that all come from the same ground "underscores the earthly solidarity women and men have with each other and with the rest of creation."[296] Communication made collaboration possible, and this cooperation with God and nonhumans created culture. With language, the beauty of cultural expressions developed; poetry, narratives, myths, traditions, and rituals point to rich diversity in human life.

Edenic Covenant[297]

The Genesis account paints a picture of the Covenantal God (a gardener) initiating and entering a filial covenantal relationship with humanity (*ish* and *ishah*), with the land (trees, air, water, soil) and the animals. Humanity created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) is part of the natural world but given unique status with the prime directive to conserve and conceive[298] (Gen. 2:15) and to cultivate and safeguard the earth. Humanity entering this relationship relies on God's *hesed* and His graceful gifts to enable them to flourish and succeed. The sign of this covenant was the Tree of Life. The promises

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[295] Johann-Albrecht A. Meylahn, "Doing Public Theology in the Anthropocene towards Life-creating Theology," *Verbum Et Ecclesia 36*, no. 3 (2015): xiii.

[296] Johnson, 264.

[297] Swoboda, *Subversive Sabbath*, 67. Swoboda philosophically argues that God does not particularly have connections. "God is relationship," meaning God himself is life and community.

[298] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 43.

included language ability, creative work, spatiality, beauty, joy, life-breath, companionship, and community. The promises are spiritual, physical, social, and economical, and rooted in a faith-filled relationship with God. The covenant has a warning that if the covenant is broken or one leaves, consequences follow (Gen. 2:17); A vibrant part of covenant-keeping is following through on commitments. God keeps his part of the agreement by following through on the stipulated terms and promises.

Humanity's self-awareness is about perception within the environment. Because of the advancing Anthropocene, the timing is pertinent to turn and focus on our origins and envision how the Creator can draw us in through the beauty of the natural world, receive goodness in God's provisional gifts, and live in truth with a right relationship with the Maker. The Creation account and rereading the original story with an ecological lens create mindful awareness of one's role and responsibility in the world. The metaphors of soil and clay ground the human ontologically in the structure of experience. The life-breath, air, water, and oxygen mean that creation is never a final work but rather is always bringing forth life (Gen. 1:20).

The two trees signify nourishment for the body and soul, flourishing with life and reproduction qualities. Metaphorically, the two trees also point to a moral responsibility born out of image-bearing the Maker. The interiority, pleasure, and creativity found in work/labor are a priestly duty in service to God. Language provides the means to retell the story powerfully in allegorical terms, explaining humankind's relationship to God, each other, nonhumans, and the environment. In the covenantal framework of Genesis 2, the community fully understands its roles and responsibilities in fulfilling the stated terms with virtue and ethos in the core meaning of *hesed*.

Noahic Covenant[299]

Adam and Eve made a moral choice that lies at the heart of the origin story. Those first humans were free to observe or violate, "to leave or cleave" to the divine prohibition (Gen. 3:6). This deliberate action was not an impersonal, random genetic function of natural selection. This action determined the shape of things to come and had severe consequences for humanity.[300] Things deteriorated, and people worsened over time in history. God questioned humanity, and the response from our ancestors was to escape. God said, "Where are you?"[301] to the first human descendants. God asked a similar question to Job, "Where were you…?"[302] The questions God poses to the first humans articulate moments in history of splits between humanity and God, and humanity and each other and eventually humanity and nature (Gen. 3:15).

Furthermore, God's heart broke when he deliberated in Genesis 6:9 about his creation. Then God sent a flood to cleanse the situation. The improbable happened. God, in the beginning, created living things and people and asked that they live in the same habitat. God risked himself in entering a covenant with people. One can feel the heartache in his questions and in his decision to try again. In sending the deluge, he chose Noah and his family to start again and protect animals, a type of Second Adam.[303] Noah

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[299] Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda, 27.

[300] Harrelson, 11–12.

[301] Genesis 3:9

[302] Job 38:4

[303] Metzger and Coogan, 558.

and his descendants are typologies that reflect the Creator's original intent, and a covenant people who practice *hesed* and support the creation in filial loyalty.

God's Pledge to Humanity. What was pertinent to the covenant God entered into with Noah, was that Noah represented humankind. God first pledged loyalty (*hesed*) to Noah. Noah entered into this covenantal relationship with thanksgiving and sacrifice. God chose Noah because of his character. An excellent summary of Noah's behavior with God, others, and his environment is that he "walked with God."[304] He practiced faithfulness in all his relationships. The stipulations laid out, Noah did "all God commanded him."[305] The promises are in the sign of the covenant, the colorful rainbow. It signifies peace, security, life, and the flourishing of the earth. This covenant is meaningful and serves as a remembrance of the promise that is inviolable. Noah's global covenant was not party to particular people, places, or time. Relevant to ecological concerns the Noahic Covenant included animals and the land. God's initiative to renew the Edenic Covenant shows its significance. The goal of this agreement is to protect and keep intact all forms of life from eradication: "Thus, God enters into a sacred relationship with every kind of animal on earth in order to preserve [safeguard] its life from widespread extinction, a covenant relationship endangered in the modern era [Anthropocene] more by human exploitation than by natural catastrophe."[306] God's covenant with the earth in its rich biblical story initiated by God and loyally entered into by Noah is structurally an ecological covenant. Two important elements emerge: one is

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[304] Genesis 6:9

[305] Genesis 6:22

[306] Harrelson, 21.

an everlasting covenant for all ages and furthermore this covenant incorporates as party to the agreement future generations.

God's guarantee of faithfulness to Noah reverberates back to the Edenic Covenant.[307] The focal points of the story are God's processes of using Noah to conserve life in and out of the floodwaters. Moreover, God renewed his covenant with mercy and grace, rooting this agreement in the origin story.[308] Stimulating in this renewal of God's commitment to humanity represented by Noah (Gen. 9:9–10), the command to "be fruitful and multiply"[309] is not met with the actions of "bringing under control" and "ruling,"[310] but is instead a beautiful sealing of the covenant with an oath and a promise. In reflective, poetic aesthetics: "I am putting my rainbow in the clouds, a sign of the covenant between the Earth and me. From now on, when I form a cloud over the Earth, and the rainbow appears in the cloud, I'll remember my covenant between you and me and everything living."[311]

The concept of covenant-keeping is clear through God's initiative and the sign of the rainbow. For the first time in Genesis, the specific covenantal language of making a covenant is seen.[312] The promises detailed in this agreement demonstrate the mutuality played out between God, humanity, nonhumans, and the earth. This interrelatedness is a principal reason for any rational creation care: "The well-being of humankind is

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[307] Alexander and Baker, 143.

[308] Richard Cartwright Austin, *Hope for the Land* (Atlanta, GA: J. Knox Press, 1987), 33.

[309] Genesis 9:7

[310] Bouma-Prediger, 92.

[311] Genesis 9:13–14 (MSG)

[312] Bouma-Prediger, 92.

dependent on the well-being of the planet."[313] Being faithful or disloyal to this covenant has consequences. This begs the question raised by Bouma-Prediger, "With whom does God make a covenant?"[314] The answer lies within the narrative as it is a story of remembrance,[315] in covenantal renewal with humanity, all creatures and the land.

God's Pledge to Non-Humans. Mutuality and mercy—*hesed*—continue in the discussion as God includes nonhumans as a party to the covenant and enters into, or more precisely, renews (Gen. 1–2) the covenant with an oath (Isa. 54:9) and a sign to seal the agreement: "As for me (God), I am establishing my covenant" (Gen. 9:9); "The word for 'establishing' employs and emphasizes making a covenant."[316] The juxtaposition of the Edenic and Noahic Covenants reveals a remarkable confirmation of God's relationship to his creation and how intimate he is with nonhuman creatureliness. Pledging his faithfulness in this language plays against the devastation that occurred earlier (Gen. 7:21–22): "God decides that never again will living creatures be treated in this way, no matter how badly people behave."[317]

The Noahic universal agreement with the animals emphasizes something unique. Echoing Genesis 1:11, 24: "Let the earth bring forth" (NKJV), the answer to God's will and Word, "is *participatory* in the creative process. In other words, they are *empowered* by God to venture in order to bring forth particular creatures."[318] The beauty of this

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[313] Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda, 17.

[314] Bouma-Prediger, 90.

[315] Ibid., 91.

[316] Harrelson, 22.

[317] Johnson, 23.

[318] Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2008), 87.

interaction is that it renews the original schema in Genesis 1, that nonhuman life participates with God in the creation, and it is a repeated promise in the Noahic Covenant. The animal-friendly ethic found in the story of Noah conveys accountability reflected in this ancient Talmudic story:

> A Talmudic tale recounts how on the way to the slaughterhouse, a calf escaped and sought refuge with Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, one of the founders of rabbinical Judaism. The calf tucked his head under the rabbi's flowing robes and started crying. Yet the rabbi pushed the calf away, saying, "Go. You were created for that very purpose." Since the rabbi showed no mercy [*hesed*], God punished him, and he suffered from a painful illness for thirteen years. Then, one day, a servant cleaning the rabbi's house found some newborn rats and began sweeping them out. Rabbi Yehuda rushed to save the helpless creatures, instructing the servant to leave them in peace, because "God is good to all, and has compassion on all he has made" (Psalms 145:9). Since the rabbi showed compassion to these rats, God showed compassion to the rabbi, and he was cured of his illness.[319]

Explicit within the Talmudic tale is the back and forth drama of *hesed*. Thinking through the origin stories of Adam and Noah, one obtains the awareness that the core message is one of compassion, faithfulness, and keeping commitments. God's mercy is the essence of relationships between humanity, nonhumans, and the Earth.

God's Pledge to the Earth. The rainbow covenant God made with Noah does not exclude the land: "I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."[320] God does not stop; he continues with is promises and extends mercy to the earth itself. This universal/cosmic covenant reaching all humans, nonhumans, and the planet is characteristically an ecological covenant.[321] The most significant implication of this covenantal ethic and promise is to move Noah's

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[319] Harari, 94.

[320] Genesis 9:13

[321] Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda, 27.

descendants from viewing the natural world as an object that is abstract and only significant to humans.

God's pledge to the earth itself, and humans being a party to the same agreement, reinforces the interrelatedness that signifies that nonhumans and the earth have value and are mutually related—*hesed*.[322] Covenant links humanity with the earth in agreement on terms fashioned in loyalty, kept in faithfulness, and followed through on ecological commitments.[323] The drive for this agreement is in the story of God's *hesed.*
Noah's story gave an ethic to help create the "Declaration of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches" in 1990, the "Evangelical Declaration of the Care of Creation" in 1994 and echoes words in the preamble of the "UN World Charter for Nature."[324] The Noahic Covenant ethic reflected in those declarations offers a source of protection for animals and nature with human responsibility. It is not sentimentality or wishful thinking to love nature for its own sake. Instead, it is a universal, rational binding agreement entered freely and devotedly, and sealed with an oath.[325]

In establishing a covenant with the earth, God does not leave room for pantheism. God is separate from the land but initiates a formal agreement to work with and support the earth by practicing *hesed* with the earth. In covenantal formula summary: The Noahic Covenant is party to an agreement between God, Noah (and his descendants), nonhumans, and the Earth. The covenant stipulations are a consistent walk with God—renewing the till and tend ethic by companionship with one another; multiplicity seen in

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[322] Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda, 39.

[323] Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart*, 4.

[324] Jurgen Moltmann, "God's Covenant and Our Responsibilty," in *Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Care* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 110–11.

[325] Moltmann, "God's Covenant," 111.

creativity; prohibitions to not kill; the practice of *hesed* by safeguarding animals and the land, in remembrance to obey Genesis 1:11 and 24; allowing the land to flourish; and the practice of *hesed* by applying reasonable compassion. The oath-taking ceremony of Noah's altar sealed the commitment with thanksgiving, and God promised never to curse the land or animals again. Signifying the covenant with Noah's dove, the olive branch, and the rainbow brought the story to a climatic end. Found throughout the covenant are the promises of God: peace, security, provision, love, care, faithfulness, freedom, fellowship with God, a flourishing land, regeneration, participation in the creative process, justice, seasons, and *hesed* to future generations.

Summary

God's commission to Adam and Eve in Eden to work the ground and keep it in order is not only ancient history or poetry but also a story of origins. Eden is in the context of God's character as a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God. The garden is a metaphor for human creativity to flourish within the promise of the first commandment to eat. It is not human history alone that is in these covenants.[326]

The creation narrative cries out that natural history is inevitable and necessary for any meaningful discussion and explanation of current issues, especially the current environmental crisis. Human history alone does not give explanatory power to things that matter; the natural history of the earth must come to the forefront for more in-depth explanations and theological potential. Noah's covenant reinforces and renews the Edenic Covenant (Gen. 1–2) in the sense of mutuality (*hesed*), interrelatedness (corporeality),

[326] Theodore Hiebert, "Reclaiming the World: Biblical Resources for the Ecological Crisis," *Interpretation* 65, no. 4 (October 2011): 341–52, https://doi.org/10.1177/002096431106500402.

and spatiality (land and place). Integrating the understanding of both human history and natural history and identifying specific ecological knowledge bring explanatory power to the Creation story and Creation care.

The elegant commands of letting water and earth "bring forth" and let birds fly (Gen. 1:20) are still contractual, still obligatory, and are as beautiful today as when Eden was born. Those commands envision all of creation in the same creative processes with the Creator. With Noah's covenant God pledges faithfulness to those same waters and birds and air and land, and the covenant is everlasting. The promise is for all generations.

Linking Creation with Salvation[327]

The covenantal story of God's dealing with humans through his faithfulness and loyalty through the narratives of Adam and Noah reach a climax and fullness in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Historically the early church and her theologians affirmed and amplified God himself has assumed human nature in full, materially. Most of the deliberations and conversations were concerning hostile false teachings and "unorthodoxies"[328] regarding the person and work of Christ. The early church's main disagreement stemmed from the influences of Gnosticism enmeshing with Christianity.[329]

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[327] Denis Edwards, *Deep Incarnation: God's Redemptive Suffering with Creatures*, Duffy Lectures in Global Christianity (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2019), intro., sec. 1, Kindle.

[328] Norman Wirzba, *From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving Our World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 21.

[329] Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 70.

Early 2nd century Gnosticism was rapidly infiltrating the infant Church and was philosophically "based on dualism: the spirit is good, and matter is evil."[330] The dualistic thinking was countered with a strong emphasis on the goodness of God's creation and the Incarnation: "Thus, creation is, at best, a kind of illusion and, at worst, demonic."[331] Irenaeus, in the 2nd century, gave a strong repudiation to this dualistic understanding of the cosmos: "For Irenaeus, then, redemption was a process of restoring creation rather than one of escaping creation as in the Gnostic's soteriology."[332] Second century theologians and Christian philosophers held a high view of the created world and God's participatory action in the world.

The beginnings of a theology of Christ's incarnation connecting God personally to the totality of His creation are evident. Norman Wirzba's commentary on the Word becoming flesh (John 1:1–3) identifies six implications of this deep "action of Jesus' fleshly body" as it:

a. brings unity between Creator and creatures;
b. rectifies the disobedience, corruption, and alienation that keeps us from God;
c. [signified]as the New Adam [Jesus]leads humans to their complete fulfillment and perfection in God;
d. inaugurates in his resurrection an utterly new life, for the whole of creation;
e. reveals the life that God has wanted for the world from the beginning; and
f. shows us what it means to live as God intends.[333]

Jesus Christ born a human being intimately connected spirit to matter declaring creation good. At the heart of the Christian faith is the Incarnation reconnecting matter and spirit.

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[330] Diana Butler Bass, *A People's History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story* (New York: Harper One, 2009), 37.

[331] Bass, *People's History*, 37.

[332] Olson, 76.

[333] Wirzba, *From Nature to Creation*, 23.

The incarnation not only affirms the goodness of creation but also looks forward to a new creation and an arrival of something novel and surprising. Robert Jenson offers a stimulating eschatological outlook stating that Christ's incarnation "comes from his resurrection" and conditions his statement by saying all of God's activity comes from the future.[334] The future in relation to which God signifies is always already present with him. Rethinking God's place in creation, theology could not ignore how spirit and matter are related so that Christianity is at its best when in dialogue with materiality.

A robust argument Irenaeus brought forward was his thinking and biblical interpretation of Adam and Christ in Romans 5: "When Irenaeus wrote that in Jesus Christ God recapitulated the ancient formation of man, he meant that in the incarnation, the Word (*Logos*) took on the very 'protoplast' (physical source) of humanity—the body of Adam—and lived the inverse of Adam's course of life."[335] The early church from Paul to Irenaeus understood Jesus and creation through the origin story in the Hebrew Scriptures: "No, Adam, no Jesus."[336]

To restore God's image in humanity and mend all things, including creation, is a central theme of the biblical story. One thread of the New Covenant is God's work through the New Adam, Jesus Christ, to restore everything, especially the image of God in humanity, to fulfill the original directive to conserve and conceive. Stephen Greenblatt writes,

> Jesus made sense precisely as a response to Adam. Paul had established the crucial connection: "for since by man came death," he wrote to the Corinthians,

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[334] Oliver D. Crisp, "Incarnation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, ed. John Webster, Kathryn Tanner, and Iain Torrance (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 160–75.

[335] Olson, 97.

[336] Greenblatt, 75.

> "by man came also the resurrection of the dead." It was, the apostle's words suggested, impossible to understand Christ without understanding the sin of the first humans and the consequences of that sin. Christianity could not do without the story of the Garden of Eden.[337]

Experientially, Paul wrote extensively of Christ as "the image of the invisible God"[338] and "Christ who is the image of God,"[339] finding that first story of humanity bearing God's image and the given directive to cultivate and care for others and the earth. Creation's destiny caught up in the resurrection story is the Christian hope. Original covenantal promise reclaimed in the coming of the Second Adam "is at once the exact imprints of the eternal God and fully apart of his created world, and the one who acts to renew the image of God in us too."[340] The salvation story of Bethlehem and the resurrection takes up all creation—humans, all creatures, and the earth itself.

The second Adam depicts a God who is devoted to his creation, and "the Earth was created primarily for Jesus Christ. Therefore, God does not despise Earth. He loves it and has created humans to be trustees of this estate that he loves. In fact, God has sworn by Himself that He will redeem the Earth, deliver it from its corruptions, and fill it with His glory: (Rom. 8:19–23, Num. 14:21, Hab. 2:14, Isa. 11:6–9, Isa. 2:4)."[341] The metaphor of the trustee depicted in the person of Jesus Christ becomes nuanced corporately. The Church universal, reflecting the Second Adam, is now called to embrace

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[337] Ibid., 70.

[338] Colossians 1:15

[339] 2 Corinthians 4:4

[340] Bruce R. Reichenbach and V. Elving Anderson, "Tensions in a Stewardship Paradigm," in Berry, *Environmental Stewardship,* 115.

[341] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus,* 283.

trusteeship with deep empathy and decisive action in the relationship between humans, nonhumans, the earth, and God.

In linking the First Adam with the Second Adam, the promises of God illustrate the continuity between the first covenant and the second covenant. Interestingly, Paul works from Christ's resurrection and corporately into the future with those in Christ. The future is adequately read in a holistic eschatological interpretation (1 Cor. 15:20–22, 45–52) and expanded upon concerning the creation story in Romans 5.[342] In the Corinthian correspondence, Paul points to the "new creation" in one dramatic act, "but we will all be changed."[343] *Hesed* was the essence of the first covenant in the garden, and now in the second covenant, *hesed* is incarnated in flesh and blood in the person of Jesus Christ. The one who, through grace, initiated the covenant has literal "skin in the game." He loves his covenant people and good creation so much that he entered in bodily form (Luke 24:36–42). The call of the Second Adam people is "do not turn away from the world but turn toward it in love and compassion [*hesed*]."[344] In living out that mission, the Last Adam "shows us how to be the kind of humans God created us to be and to bring us back into a garden relationship with God."[345] The body of Christ living futuristically does not mean that it is on mission in some future time and space. What is meant as Second Adam people is the creation mandate is something available and that this is where the risen Christ is experienced.

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[342] Hans Conzelmann, James W. Leitch, James Warren Dunkly, and George W. MacRae, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, *Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975), 287.

[343] 1 Corinthians 15:52; also see Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 5:17

[344] Sweet, *So Beautiful*, 180.

[345] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus,* 52.

Metaphors embedded in the origin story are dust, water, and breath. The incarnation of Christ confirms this and reimagines the given metaphors with vitality and a renewed eschatological vision in the New Testament.[346] With Christ assuming the form of a human being, he renews his image in humanity and demonstrates how to be fully human. By God assuming our human nature, he has become a partner in the vulnerable human predicament. With a loving covenantal partnership with the whole of creation and creatures, the promise of Christian hope is a reality. God's covenant people in a *hesed* relationship, at least bio-centrically and at most to those who do not yet exist, the church can count on his aid in the present ecological crisis and can hope in the future as a people of the Second Adam, who is both Creator and Redeemer.

The Second Adam Architype

"Why can't the church get ahead on the creation front?"[347] This question helps frame the issue for theological reflection on ecological destruction and Christianity's response. Several problems come to the forefront when trying to answer the question. Along with flaws of deep anthropocentrism and dualism within Christian traditions, there remains theological inflexibility. Christianity's historical culpability and internal strife of conflicting variety of schools, associations, and modalities have created widespread difficulties in communicating with one another to help solve problems. Lack of communication is keenly in the area of climate change. This paralysis to address a critical global and political problem has left the church appearing irrelevant and obscure to most of the world.

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[346] Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda, 103–04.

[347] Sweet, *Me and We*, 123.

Science and technology recognize that if humanity "is ever to mitigate and adapt in the ecological crisis, there will need to be a cultural, moral, and spiritual transformation."[348] Meaningful dialogue and rethinking at least theologically the power of cultural symbols assists the Christian community in finding a way forward: "It is not the ecologists, engineers, economists, or earth scientist who will save spaceship earth, but the poets, priests, artists, and philosophers."[349] Christianity's origin story of Cross and tomb inspire and ignite creative ways to mitigate, adapt, and even sacrifice for a better world.

Change of heart will ultimately come through aesthetics, a compelling narrative, and an ethos of heart. The need to tap into the most profound symbols, archetypes, and value systems of the Christian community will be the means to be able to change minds, habits, perceptions, and behaviors.[350] Christianity's most significant contribution to the critical ecological issue lies in addressing the issue along these lines: "Without doubt, religions have much to offer here: the lens of faith turned to the environment offers a variety of different materials for and cultural modes of expression."[351] Christianity is at its best when it has meaningful conversations about how physical properties relate to cultural symbols and artifacts.

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[348] Ghillean T. Prance, "The Earth Under Threat," in Berry, *Care of Creation,* 117.

[349] Ibid., 116.

[350] E. M. Conradie, C*hristian Faith and the Earth: Current Paths and Emerging Horizons in Ecotheology* (New York: Bloomsbury T and T Clark, 2014), 6.

[351] Deane-Drummond, Bergmann, and Vogt, 79.

Within the varied texts at the heart of the Christian faith, there is an archetype and a metaphor of the Second Adam "to help us see that the mission of Christ was to restore God's image in humankind through his redemptive life and work":[352]

> The advent of Christ inaugurates the long-awaited new creation (Rev. 21:1–4), both of the universe (Rom. 8:19–20) and of humanity (2 Cor. 5:17). This [*Christ's Incarnation*] comes about because, on the one hand, Jesus recapitulates the former creation: he is the New Adam (I Cor. 15:45) and the image and likeness of God (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4) on the other hand; Christ is the agent and sustainer of all creation (Col. 1:16) and is described as the word of God (Rev. 19:13) and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24).[353]

The signifying metaphor of the New Adam is the most striking in "ecologically reframing Christianity"[354] because of its Christology. The core message of the gospel is Jesus Christ and his life, death, and resurrection. The Second Adam metaphor provides richness and power in the narrative. The experience of the Second Adam is the result of God's *hesed* promise in the primordial story. Drawing from Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:21–23 and 45–49, a couple of vital factors illuminate the ministry of the Second Adam: to discover true humanity and highlight the meaning of being "in Christ" biblical writers envision it with a viewpoint of the old and new creation interacting. Often biblical writers use participatory language contrasting the First and Last Adam. To explain the two representing figures, the New Testament begins from a belief in the resurrection of Christ.

Johnson extends Niels Gregersen's theological conceptual "insight into a deep incarnation that unites the crucified Christ with all creatures in their suffering. I suggest

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[352] "Creation," in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger, Michael D. Coogan, J. R. Porter, *Oxford Biblical Studies Online*, accessed August 12, 2020, http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/article/opr/t120/e0161.

[353] Metzger and Coogan, 141.

[354] Conradie, *Christian Faith*, 134.

we employ the idea of 'deep resurrection' to extend the risen Christ's affiliation to the whole natural world."[355] Johnson continues to explain that the resurrection was not "simply spiritual,"[356] but that "he rose again in his body. In the risen Christ, by an act of infinite mercy and fidelity,"[357] God stretches out hope for all. This new beginning is a new start for humanity to embrace the Second Adam's mission. The mission is sharing in Christ's image and becoming a source of life for others. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God was restoring his image in a new people: "Only a redeemed human nature can truly radiate the divine nature, can radiate Christ. Jesus is the fulfillment of all God's promises and the flowering of humanity. In coming to know Jesus, we come to know God, ourselves, others, and creation."[358] The metaphor of the Second Adam, or as the apostle Paul would say, the "Last Adam,"[359] stands for humanity under grace, living in the power of the life-giving Spirit.

The mission of the Second Adam implies forward movement: "Perhaps it is not fortuitous that John of the Gospel deliberately places Jesus' burial and resurrection in a 'garden' (John 19:41) and has Mary identifying the resurrected Christ, the new Adam, as its gardener (20:15)."[360] The model of the Church as a community of creation "is a community that not only lives in between the times, 'waiting for the consummation of its hope,' but also at the juncture between places, between two gardens, two sanctuaries, two

[355] Johnson, 208.

[356] Johnson, 208.

[357] Ibid.

[358] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 53.

[359] 1 Corinthians 15:45

[360] William P. Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 405.

cities, the *Diesseits* and *Jenseits* of creation's consummation."[361] The theocentric view of the modern church, as a community of creation, positions towards traits of interdependence and participatory actions that value future generations.

A proposed metaphor for the Second Adam people is one of a quest, a journey. God fully invested in the people of the Way, chose fellowship as the means.[362] The Christian life is a journey into life, a flourishing life. Framing experiences of God in relationships and not as a philosophical postulate is healthy biblical thinking. Participating with the Second Adam in this quest of life is a helpful narrative for eco-theology. This ongoing journey requires living dangerously in the context of climate change. Theologians in the 20th century focused mainly on Christian history after the two world wars.[363] Twenty-first-century theologians are searching for theological ideas in terms of the "spatiality of creation."[364] This journey is less about grand moral theories and forming rational theoretical models; instead, the focus is on aesthetics, traits of reciprocity, benefits for future generations, and foreseeable consequences.

A new journey living within the whole story of creation is awaiting the Second Adam people. Along this journey, we appreciate and cherish unique objects, artifacts, surroundings, personas, and experiences. These associations with beauty are integral to systems of values, and this journey is about the perception of the environment.[365] Living

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[361] Ibid.

[362] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 28.

[363] Deane-Drummond, Bergmann and Vogt, *Religion in the Anthropocene*, 83.

[364] Ibid.

[365] Ibid., 78.

within the whole story of God's salvation means a differentiated perception formed from self-awareness to a "Creation-Awareness."[366]

Jesus' aesthetic dimension is rooted in the First Covenant: "References to the cedars of Lebanon and the snows of Mt. Hermon (Song of Sol. 5:15, Isa. 14:8, Ezek. 31:3, Ps. 92:12, Jer. 18:4) is epitomized."[367] God, who orchestrated "Jesus' appreciation of beauty, is seen in his comparison of the splendor of Solomon with the beauty of the lilies (Matt. 6:28–29). Integral to Jesus' appreciation of beauty seen throughout his life and mission, his storytelling was masterful. However, he also referred to the simple joy of playing, singing, and dancing (Matt. 11:16–17), and even as he faced the cross, he sang a hymn (Matt. 26:30)."[368] Revealed in the mission of Jesus was his witness to creation: "Jesus' mission was surrounded with God's beautiful creation; the dove at his baptism, with animals caring for him in his temptation, in his entry to Jerusalem he rode a young colt, allowed breaking the rules to save an animal and freed caged animals at the Temple."[369] In his very being Jesus is faithful to his mission and creation compliments his preaching, teaching, and healing ministry.

Nevertheless, how do we envision beauty in the context of Christ's death and resurrection? In an image shown in the Gospels of natural elements and the weather sharing in the Cross, the creation takes part in the most significant event in history, because through the suffering, the act of something repulsive became beautiful for the benefit of others: "As the heavens were awakened and split asunder at Jesus' baptism, so

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[366] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus,* 216.

[367] DuBose, 89.

[368] Ibid.

[369] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 217.

the Earth awakened and split asunder at His crucifixion. All of creation, human and nonhuman, awaits the redemption of the body and will be delivered from corruption."[370] The beauty of Easter's resurrection brings with it inspiration and hope.

The journey with Jesus on this eco-theological road has an evangelical message, a banner flying high in full rainbow colors: "Do not be Anxious!"[371] On the journey, the church has received treasures of a wondrous gift of life. An ongoing journey will "require diverging sources of inspiration."[372] A developed theocentric stance based on loving covenantal obligations can be defended and justified. Entering this expedition and knowing the destination helps the church know needed activism and why. Ernst Conradie suggests Christianity's sacred texts, liturgical tradition, reasonableness, and contextual experience as sources to help in the journey to new apprehension and interpretation.[373] These tools and skills are helpful, and the modern church utilizes specific traits and attributes in symbols, artifacts, and stories.[374]

A handmade stool, *ekicholong*, indigenous to the Turkana tribe of Northwest Kenya, can supply a symbol of the eco-theology journey. Through its deep combination of artisan work, history, form, function, and culture, it can symbolically bridge the journey metaphor and can aid in visualizing the conversation. The Turkana are a seminomadic tribe that is reflective of several similar tribes in East Africa. The handmade stool is typical in many seminomadic or nomadic tribes. Each person's hand carves their

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[370] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus*, 217.

[371] Matthew 6:25 and Philippians 3:6–7

[372] Jenkins, Tucker, and Grim, 77.

[373] Ibid., 77.

[374] Douglas J. Moo and Jonathan A. Moo*, Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World*, Biblical Theology for Life (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 187.

stool. Each one is unique, made of different timber, in different shapes and sizes. The *ekicholong* serves many different functions and is always present with people. It acts as a headrest when the traveler is weary and needs to rest and a stool when the traveler is being social, eating at a goat roast, or making essential community decisions.

Figure 1. A Three-Legged Stool of the Turkana People of Northwest Kenya

The three-legged *ekicholong* is representative of the triadic explanations of *hesed* and the incarnation of God. Within the seminomadic culture, the Turkana people are always on a journey of sorts, as is the whole of humanity in truth. A journey requires rest, socialization, and storytelling, along with serious decision-making. The stool is an integral part of their lives and it is a commonality shared with other culturally diverse tribes who share geography. The symbolism is profound, as each stool shape and design are dependent on its locality. The Turkana stool symbolizes, through culture and history,

a journey leading to an acute perception of what God is doing through his covenant of *hesed*.

The idea of the *ekicholong* demonstrates how modern Christianity needs to address the ecological crisis of its time. There will be times on this journey when the labor is intensive, and the work seems to move at a slow pace, and the needed rest must come in order to pick up again and continue the journey. Other times, there is a need for active dialogue, argument, and sharing of narratives. At this time, the stool functions as a tool on which to sit in a circle and hear from the wisdom of sacred texts, tradition, reason, and experience as together, the church engages with the current crisis to creatively seek solutions. Within the culture, people will become creative conceivers and artisans empowered by God to create new symbols, metaphors, and themes in the journey. Breathing in his resurrection life, "there is a breathlessness to it all, as we are always catching up to Jesus. He is always ahead of us. He always goes before us."[375]

Conclusion

The integration of a triadic understanding of *hesed*—following through on commitments, mercy, and keeping promises—in covenantal living opens a pathway to discover God's activity. The essence of living in a loving covenantal relationship with God, other humans, and nonhumans provides an ethic along this journey to address ecological concerns in the 21st century. A coherent stance assists people to know what they are doing and implement action toward earthkeeping. The metaphor of trusteeship enhances patterns of life and living under the lordship of the ultimate trustee, the Second Adam; churches find the wisdom to start a journey of ecological thought engaging

[375] Sweet and Viola, *Jesus,* 274.

disparity between desires for a flourishing life and the need to be responsible to the environment both individually and corporately. Through a loving covenantal obligation as seen through the life of the Second Adam, "we have a moral obligation to ourselves, our cultures and the future, we have a corresponding duty not to destroy the ecological groundwork of our lives."[376] Changing from an arrogant and restless attitude toward God and his creation, the church can lead in an attitude of humility and service. It can recognize the limits of the environment and creatively look to the future with hope and expectation. By following the example of the Second Adam, the church will develop wisdom and the resiliency necessary for change.

Through entering the story of Jesus, the church can rediscover the creation story and reform some of the flaws in her theology, traditions, and liturgy. Hasidic living through revisiting the origin stories, both the creation and the story of the rebirth after the flood. Hasidic traits are living within the wisdom of moral responsibility and the sharing of relationships and compassion for future generations (Deut. 5:9–10). There will always be a creative tension between the need to make reasonable decisions and the compassion needed to live within the Anthropocene. Hope is found not in programs or projections but in the fact that God became human and joined humanity to demonstrate his faithfulness, mutuality, and endless mercy. It is from this platform that the church can adjust to relevantly embrace our responsibility for the environmental issues that face us.

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[376] Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda, 27.

SECTION FOUR:

ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

The artifact is a Discovery Discipleship Camp (DDC or the Camp). This Christian Camp will include twelve acres of open land purchased to create an environmentally friendly outdoor school. This Camp will help Kenyan children understand the problematic realities of the current ecological crisis while providing hopefulness to address these problems through a biblically-based curriculum and a hands-on experiential education. Students who participate in this camp will learn how God has given the land for humanity to care for it. This creation-awareness will be emphasized through worship and experiential education.

The participating students are from the most disadvantaged communities throughout Kenya. Their communities are already affected by the environmental crisis. They will come to a deep understanding that it is to their best interest to be equipped to engage in long-term developmental solutions. Relevant cultural insights will be an intentional part of the curriculum, and the youth will engage in their indigenous understanding of their relationship to the land.

The Discovery Discipleship Camp experience will encourage the campers to be change agents and tap into their most profound symbols, archetypes, and value systems. The Camp and its curriculum assume that the cultural, spiritual, and moral transformation needed to address the ecological crisis will come about through these value systems. It is through engaging with them from this platform that there can be changed hearts and minds. Another assumption of earthkeeping is that the change that is needed to address the issues in Kenya will be slow work. The success of the Discovery Discipleship Camp

will be seen in lasting commitments to responsible living ecologically, alongside lifelong commitment to the Creator. Life change will be addressed through several means:

- A variety of chapel speakers, devotions for God encounters, corporate and personal prayer focus, and personal evangelistic commitments;
- Open microphone poetry reading, creative dance art and skits;
- Field trips and a service project with local Christian conservation efforts;
- Skill-building in renewable resources (solar, wind and gardening); and
- Outdoor worship experiences, star gazing, and reflective opportunities.

This sacred place will help the campers recognize the presence of God and provide them with a vision of the new earth so to encourage them to care for this earth. Eschatologically, these practical considerations are relevant to how to live a life in the Anthropocene with hope and expectation. The camp will provide a conducive environment for learning and expecting God to show up with personal knowledge of himself. The students will come to view themselves as members of God's earthly household, and this awareness will provide Christian spiritual practices to each child for hope-filled creation care in their local contexts.

SECTION FIVE:

ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION

An ecological emergency is upon us. Living in the Anthropocene verifies how difficult it is. Disciples of Christ are wrestling with this current issue and are asking relevant questions: Can there be any imaginative ecological possibilities socially, ethically, spiritually? How does one address our real needs in the Anthropocene? We need decent communities, meaningful work to do, caring relationships, strong families and ways to beat our egocentric and anthropocentric selfishness. The need is really the needs of the Spirit—love, faith, hope, joy—but our imaginations, dreams, and creativity are uncontrollably engulfed toward materialism.

To address the ecological crisis and begin a movement that puts the needs of the God-given environment above the needs of the desire for more things, it is necessary to intentionally teach, within a community, in an experiential way that effectively brings about heart-change within the individual. The Discovery Discipleship Camp provides a challenge to the arrogant anthropocentrism and will address the hidden pride that reveres human domination of nature. The Discovery Discipleship Camp offers an avenue of healing between humanity and her habitat. The Camp offers freedom and love within the context of discovering lifetime commitments that will change loyalties, affections, and convictions, from unchecked selfishness to choosing the Triune God of life in abundance (Deut. 30; John 10). Participants will focus on five markers:

1. *Hesed*: Empirical knowledge joined with personal knowledge such as aesthetic appreciation, loyalty, friendship, sentiment, charity and love

2. Wisdom: Practical wisdom in discerning between life and death and choosing life by participating with Christ in his creation
3. Covenantal Obligations: Focus on the differences between individualism and personal rights with corporate membership and responsibilities within God's covenantal church
4. Technology: Incorporation of technology and a consciousness of the fact that uncontrolled technology must be checked. Integrated renewable resources through appropriate technologies like solar power, windmills, and water harvesting.
5. Tangible Ecological Education: Reintegration of experience[377]

Each week, spiritual Christian practices will help develop a disciple's life toward these markers of *hesed*, wisdom, covenant living, technological skills and tangible ecological education. These five markers build a foundation of God's gifts of life, mercy, and the earth. They invite students to make a life-long commitment to embrace God, care for creation, and responsibly relate to their community.

Mission

The Discovery Discipleship Camp exists to provide an experiential opportunity with Jesus that leads students to a lifetime commitment to live in alignment with God, others, themselves, and creation. Offering extended time within nature, Bible study, and worship, every sixth grade and tenth grade student of Missions of Hope International will have the opportunity to experience Jesus and expand their imaginations about how they can use their lives to make the world a better place. An emphasis is made on increasing

[377] For example, the camper will know the ocean or river. They will smell it, taste it, swim in it, feel it, talk with others who know it and see it in different lights.

creative and critical thinking skills so that the students feel empowered to move beyond their situations and increase their affections, loyalties and responsibilities toward God, others, themselves and creation.

Goals and Strategies

Choosing the Land

Twelve acres have been chosen and are being purchased in Kilifi, Kenya. The location has many advantageous features for meeting the goals of the camp:

1. The land is close to A Rocha Kenya, a Christian Conservancy project that hosts students to do various small conservancy works, like beach clean-ups and tagging birds, which is helpful in studying growth rates and migration patterns of birds.
2. The land is close to the Arabuko Sokoke Forest where the students can go on long hikes and see indigenous trees, endemic species, waterfalls and lakes. It also has an incredible story of one Kenyan man, David Ngala, who led the fight against greed and corruption to save the forest. His story will empower students to see that their voice can make a difference in Kenya.
3. The land is close to Mida Creek, a protected mangrove, which will provide the campers with opportunities to explore different eco-systems.
4. The land is close to the Indian Ocean. The students can see the vastness of creation first hand. This will open their minds to how the ocean connects all of humanity. They will have ample opportunity to play and swim in the water.
5. The students will ride a new high-speed train that goes from Nairobi to Mombasa called the Standard Gage Railway. They will experience a transportation method

that is better on the environment than the automobiles or airplane options, giving them context to discuss the ecological impact of transportation.

6. Although the Missions of Hope students live in Kenya, they have never experienced the wildlife and beauty of Kenya. En route to Mombasa, the train passes through Tsavo National Park. Students will see giraffes, elephants, gazelles, zebras and other animals from the large windows as they pass through the park. This experience of the wildlife in their own country will be an opening for discussing wildlife conservation.
7. There is enough land to develop some farming, wind power, and solar power projects to be used as a teaching tool to expand students' understanding of renewable energies.
8. There is easy-access lodging in Kilifi for visiting church teams to volunteer at the Discovery Discipleship Camp in various capacities.

This land is seemingly perfect for the desired goals of the camp. There is ample adjacent open land that can be purchased at a later date to expand as the vision for the camp continues to unfold. With proper development, this will be a great blessing to many children.

Developing the Land:

To most effectively utilize the land careful development is needed. An architect has been hired and has developed a preliminary map of the camp (see Appendix D). The map includes structures and dedicated areas of land.

Structures

1. Fifteen tents: Safari-style (see Appendix E)
2. Chapel: open-air with makuti (palm leaves) and wood roof
3. Kitchen: permanent structure of limited concrete and tile with wood roofing
4. Library/Study Hall: permanent wooden structure
5. Art/Music/Drama Hall: wooden structure
6. Small dispensary: wooden structure
7. Camp Office: wooden structure
8. Staff Lounge: open-air with makuti and wood roof
9. Staff Housing: local materials of mud and waddle with makuti roof.

Dedicated Areas of Land

1. Prayer garden with labyrinth, spanning two acres with ten benches
2. Bonfire pit with benches to fit 100 people
3. Open star gazing area: 1/4 acre
4. Solar farm: 1/4 acre
5. Raised garden beds: 1/2 acre
6. Windmill farm: 1/8 acre
7. Nursery tree farm: 1/8 acre
8. Fruit tree farm: 1/2 acre
9. Space for Boar hole with a 10,000 liter water tank
10. Soccer (futball) field: standard size
11. Storage building: 20 ft x 6 ft

12. Volleyball court made of sand, standard size

The development of the land will begin in the fall of 2020. Some of the items will require time to grow to full maturation. The spaces and structures will ultimately lend to an environment that is conducive to maximal experiences for the campers.

Developing the Content:

There is a different theme for each of the five days of camp. The themes are developed to draw students into a commitment to Jesus and his creation. The curriculum and notebooks will revolve around making these themes understandable and accessible to the students. The notebooks will be user friendly for the two age groups. They will include devotional stories, journal prompts, scripture responses and personal reflective and prayer space. Culturally, creating poetry is valued and loved. The students will have space in their notebooks to be poetically creative, which will lend itself to greater learning and impact for them.

Five-Day Curriculum

Day One: The Origin Story of Mud and Breath

Genesis 1:1– 2:25

1. God is the Creator of all things.
    a. Everything is a result of God's creative Word and energizing Spirit.
    b. Where are we? We are in a God-shaped world!
2. God shares partnership.

a. The earth, vegetation, animals and water are commanded to "bring forth," which involves a sharing of creative agency.
b. Creatures and creation can respond and reproduce.
c. Where are we? In n approachable and sensitive world!

3. Creation is good and wonderous. Where are we? In a wonderful world of beauty and peace!
4. Creation is a home for all creatures and provides a Sabbath rest. Where are we? In a place shared by many other creatures and things. Creation is simply a gift.

Day Two: Noah and a Re-Creation—With Whom Does God Make a Covenant?

Genesis 6–9

1. The centrality of the story is not Noah but rather God and remembering.
2. The covenant is made by God and entered in to with all humans, non-humans, and the earth. It is an everlasting covenant.
3. God remembered Noah and all the animals of the earth. There was a covenant renewal of the Eden scene with Noah as a type of Second Adam.

Day Three: In Christ—A New Creation

Romans 8:19–25; 2 Corinthians 5:17–20; and Colossians 3:10

Metaphor: Being born from the womb of the old creation comes forth a new creation!

1. Jesus made all creation sacramental and gave God a human voice.
2. As new creations in Christ we learn how to be the kind of humans God created us to be, and to bring us back into a garden relationship with God.

3. What kind of life? Human life is living by divine life. The Creator's original thought for human beings was that they would live by God's divine, eternal, uncreated life. God wanted Adam and Eve to live by the Tree of Life. Now in Christ, as fresh start for humanity is possible. This possibility comes about through proclaiming the good news of being renewed.

Day Four: Participating with Christ in His Creation

Colossians 1:15–20

Gleaning Ecological Wisdom from the Text

1. The Redeemer is our Creator.
2. Creation and redemption are two acts of one great screenplay.
3. Redemption is the restoration of Creation!
    a. Salvation is earth-affirming.
    b. Salvation and peace-making was for restoration and wholeness.
    c. Grace restores nature.
4. Christ is Lord. He is Lord of all.
5. Redemption has begun. Jesus has inaugurated his rule.

Day Five: What Now?

Revelation 11:18–21; 22:5

What does God's Future Look Like?

1. The future is earthly. New means quality in contrast to what is old. God will make something again from his pledge to the original creation/covenant in Eden and with Noah.

2. God, himself, will have his residence with us and all of our creaturely kin, emphasizing the Incarnation (John 1:14). The metaphor for this passage is a marriage of heaven and earth.
3. Separation between heaven and earth are moved to a relational connection through the metaphor of marriage.
4. Jesus Christ is the omega point of creation. The world will be transformed. Joy to the world!
5. The new Jerusalem will be a gardened city. Trees will be representing the Tree of Life (Gen. 2). These trees will provide fruit year around and their leaves a healing balm for the nations.

Schedule

A schedule has been developed for the camp. The full schedule can be found in Appendix A. Below is an expanded schedule of one day of camp:

Thursday Schedule

Theme: Participating with Christ in His Creation

Colossians 1:15–20

6:45 Rise and Shine

- Counselors wake up each tent with a worship song.
- Students get up, get dressed, brush their teeth, and wash their faces.

7:15 Breakfast

- Students line up by tent group and each counselor accounts for every child in his group.
- Corporate prayer, outside of the dining area, before going in to breakfast.
- Each line individually released to the dining area to dish up their breakfast.

8:00 Morning Worship

- Read Psalm 104
- Staff worship team leads worship.
- Campers get involved in leading worship throughout the week.
- Local instruments are utilized, without electricity.

8:30 Quiet Time Devotional

- Each student uses their own camp notebook.
- The notebook will have a focused Bible reading and meditation for the student.
- Each student reads Colossians 1:15–20. It will be printed in the notebook.
- Each student focuses on the images, symbolism, and phrases in the notebook.
- Each student rewrites Colossians 1:15–20 in his or her own words.
- Each student considers these questions:
    - Who is Jesus in this text?
    - How is He related to the material created world?
    - What is the impact of His death and resurrection for creation?
    - Are you reconciled to creation?

9:00 Small Groups: Focus on the theme of the day

- The small group leaders read the poetry of Psalm 104 and Colossians 1:15–20 to their groups.

- The group leaders discuss how Jesus asks us to participate with Him. In these verses it mentions six times “all things,” which is reflective of the extensive variety of ways that we can participate with Jesus.
- Each group creates their own poem to Jesus about how He is the sustainer, the Creator, the restorer and God’s will and purpose in creation. They will have an opportunity to share their poems on Friday evening.

10:15 Board the Bus to Arobuka Sokoke Forest

- Students line up by tent groups. Each counselor accounts for every child in his group.

11:00 Go for a hike/bird walk in the forest

- Students break into pre-arranged groupings of ten campers and two counselors.
- Naturalists are assigned to every group, either provided by the forest rangers or pretrained by our staff.

1:00 Picnic Lunch

- Students line up by their groupings of ten to pick up lunch and sit together at the picnic tables near the entrance to the forest.
- Each group’s two counselors account for every child in their group.

1:30 Small Group Discussion

- Counselors co-lead discussion utilizing a prepared discussion plan, including questions such as
    - How do we participate with Christ in caring for His creation?
    - What does the Bible say about our ability in Christ?
    - How are we going to live in response to this?

2:00 Board the Bus for Return to Camp

- Students line up by tent group. Each counselor accounts for every child in his group.

2:30 Whole Group Game: Capture the Flag

- Students are divided into two teams by adding tent groups together
- Counselors pass out yellow bandanas to one team and red bandanas to another team.
- Counselors give the yellow team a yellow flag to place and protect and they give the red team a red flag to place and protect.
- Counselors teach the students the rules.
- Counselors do a "mock" game to show the students how the game works.
- Counselors participate with the students but take great care to not "take over" the game.

3:30 Snack: Mandazi (fried bread) served at the dining area.

4:00 Rotations

5:15 Free Time

- Counselors make soccer balls and volleyballs available.
- Two pre-assigned counselors supervise the use of canvas and paints.

6:00 Prepare Supper

- The tent group assigned to help with preparation for supper report to the cook for their assignments. The counselor reminds them and goes with them to organize them and help.
- The rest of the camp has another half hour of free time.

6:30 Suppertime

- Students line up by tent groups. Each counselor accounts for every child in his group.
- Students are released to eat by tent group based on their readiness.

7:00 Clean up: Kitchen Patrol Duty and Showers

- The two tent groups assigned to KP duty report with their counselors to the kitchen staff for their assignments.
- The remaining tent groups go back to their tents to shower and clean up.

7:40 Chapel Speaker: David Ngala[378]

8:15 Snack: A piece of fruit will be served at the entrance of the dining area.

8:45 Bonfire and Worship: The chaplain will organize the worship and utilize counselors and campers in leading worship. The focus of this time will start with exuberant praise and gradually become more quiet and focused leading to a deeper reflective time and opportunity for further commitment to Jesus.

10:00 Tent Devotions will be led by the counselor and wrap up the highlights of the day.

10:30 Lights Out

Hiring and Training of Staff

Hiring Staff

The Missions of Hope leadership has formed a committee that will be responsible for hiring the camp staff. The committee consists of Mary Kamau, Raphael Kingola,

[378] Noah Strycker, "Day 223: A Conservation Legend: Hanging Out With David Ngala, Audubon.org," August 13, 2015, https://www.audubon.org/news/day-223-conservation-legend.

Edith Wamwala, Tim Stewart, Keith Ham and Kathy Ham. The committee is representative of the staff members most involved in the formation of the camp.

There will be two different groups of counseling staff because of the gender specific camps. One counseling staff will be all female and one counseling staff will be all male. The counseling staff will alternate weeks of work at the camp and weeks of preparation and rest. A format will be developed that will optimize the time between camps for spiritual refreshment and preparation so that the counselors are prepared to be highly effective with the campers.

Preference will be given to Missions of Hope International (MOHI) graduates for the counseling staff. They understand the students and their life situations as they have shared experiences. This will be beneficial to the campers but will also provide an opportunity for our MOHI graduates to gain good job experience, which will help them on their resumes.

Kitchen staff, cleaning staff, and security will be hired from the local community. This provides a measure of good will, as well as a level of security. If the camp is providing jobs and the community is benefitting, they will protect the camp and see it as integral part of the community.

The Camp Director will be hired from within the MOHI staff if possible. Qualifications include an obvious, Spirit-led character; long-term commitment to the ministry of Missions of Hope International; managerial skills; discipleship skills and business ability. The Camp Director will live at the camp full time and oversee all of the operations of the camp.

All staff will have a thorough government background check. This is standard procedure in Kenya for people working with children. The staff will apply for a Code of Conduct report through the Criminal Investigation Department. MOHI will help facilitate this application process with any staff that is hired.

Training Staff

Experts will come from the United States and run a mock camp for the counselors. It will last a full week, so that they really see what a full week will feel like. The experts will be responsible for the whole experience of this week. We will work in conjunction with them to continue develop different ideas for the camp schedule. Eastside Christian Church, one of Missions of Hope Internationals main supporting churches, facilitate this through setting up a short-term mission trip with the goal of doing a camp for the staff in May of 2021. The church has staff members that have experience in operating Christian camps.

After the mock camp experience, the staff will embark on an intensive training time. This will be held at the camp so that there is no distractions and they can easily be reminded of the importance of the training**.** Below is the proposed internal 10-day staff training for Discovery Camp:

- Day One: Discovery

  Lay out the vision, core values, attainable goals, and the scope of the DDC. Give a bird's eye view of discovering God and His world, discipleship in all its forms, and camping. Provide overview of MoHI's story, creating an atmosphere of loving discipline.

- Days Two-Four: Discipleship

  What discipleship is and what it is not, how to disciple a child, discipleship, and evangelism, how to remove learning barriers for disciples (learners/students), activities of discipleship, intentionally guided connections within the movements, assimilation as the goal of discipleship.

- Day Five: Health and Safety

  Personal hygiene, how to share the facilities, swimming and lifeguard safety, basic first aid, and Child Safety Protection.

- Day Six: Counseling and Coaching

  How to counsel a child, basics of camp counseling, counseling skills training, build a coaching habit, coaching questions and techniques, conversational models, self-care (avoiding burn-out), roles, and responsibilities, other resources offered.

- Day Seven and Eight: Small Group Training

  Dynamics of small groups, how to lead and facilitate active small groups, the processes of groups, identifying obstacles within small groups, practical techniques to overcome the barriers, understanding student participation, how to debrief, agreeing on expectations.

- Day Nine: Team Building

  How to build a capable team, forming the values of the group, how to create the ground rules of the team, team-building exercises, how to provide the space and place for open communication.

- Day Ten: Wrap Up

Go over and agree on scheduling, feedback, and evaluation, revisit the learning philosophy, Q&A, graduation with certificates awarded.

The goal of the training is to have a staff that fully understands and owns the vision of the goals of the camp as their own. The staff needs to see their position as a ministry position and understand their work as a transformational tool to bring change to the campers and ultimately to the world, as each individual life is changed.

Securing Community Relationships

It is essential that the Discovery Discipleship Camp maintains a positive relationship to the community surrounding us. This will be done intentionally through informative forums, in the form of culturally appropriate parties which will be held on the camp property. The idea is to have community understanding of the goals and objectives of the camp and to produce good will between the camp staff and the community. As mentioned before, we will hire some of the community to work in supportive roles in the camp, producing community buy in and good will.

Formal meetings with A Rocha Christian Conservancy are being scheduled. The goal of the meetings is to provide understanding to the Discovery Discipleship Camp staff and A Rocha staff on the purpose of each ministry. The goal is to have congenial relationship with key staff members from each ministry, and to schedule beach clean ups and other participatory projects for our students.

The staff will be familiarized with the Arobuko Sokoke Forest. Trips to the forest will include the forest rangers in educating the staff. We will also help the forest rangers

be aware of the Discovery Discipleship Camp and how we will be utilizing the forest for hiking and bird watching.

Formal meetings with the educational staff at Mida Creek are being scheduled to explore different environmental activities that the Mida Creek staff can utilize our campers to accomplish their goals. Joined collaborative efforts will assist in engagements with the campers and the local community for positive experiences. The experiences will offer the campers and community practical earthkeeping conservation and restoration of local habitats.

A formal relationship between the Discovery Discipleship Camp and David Ngala will be developed. We have not met with David for a few years, so the first thing that will be needed is to renew our friendship. David Ngala is a Kenyan national who led the fight against corruption and greed to save the Arobuko Sokoke Forest. David will be a weekly speaker at our camps. His story can motivate our students to understand their God-given ability to be change agents in their country.

The effort spent in good community relationships is fundamentally essential. As representatives of Jesus, the Discovery Camp's reputation among the community is important. As the children glean good from the community, the Camp hopes to give good back to the community.

Budget

Developing the Discovery Discipleship Camp is expensive. Many people are sacrificing to make this a reality for the disadvantaged children who will attend it. Therefore, the need to get the most value for the money on each item is essential. The

following budget will be adjusted as necessary, but will be the guide that leads the expenditure of the camp.

Cost of Initial Camp Set Up

15 Safari-Style Canvas Tents @ $1,650 each = $24,750

- Each tent holds three bunk beds
- The tents will sit on a wood deck
- Over the top of the tent will be a frame of wood poles and a makuti (palm leaves) roof

45 Bunk Beds @ $62 each = $2,790

90 Maasai Blankets @ $5 each = $450

90 Mattresses @ $37.50 each = $3,375

90 Pillows @ $10 each = $900

90 metal cups @ $2 each = $180

90 metal plates @ $2 each = $180

90 spoons @ $ 0.20 each = $18

3 Energy saving stoves @ $2,300 each = $6,900

90 Rechargeable flashlights @ $20 each = $1,800

90 Life Jackets @ $25 each = $2,250

5 Hand Washing Basins @ $2 each = $10

90 Kangas (to use as beach towels) @ $2 each = $180

25 Easels @ $55 each = $1,375

25 Water Color Sets with Brushes @ $16 each = $400

100 Art Canvases @ $5 each = $500

2 Large Water Tanks @ $750 each = $1,500

2 Refrigerators @ $520 each = $1,040

2 37-Seat Busses @ $55,200 each = $110,400

1 Matatu Staff Van @ $20,000 each = $20,000

2 goal posts for soccer field @ $53 each = $106

30 6-seat wooden benches @ $95 each = $2,850

10 wooden tables (6ftX3ft) @ $150 each = $1,500

6 Pit Latrines @ $885 each = $5,310

1 Kitchen made of makuti (palm leaves) and wood @ $2,750 = $2,750

300 Indigenous Tree starts @ $3 each = $900

15 Solar Showers @ $2,500 each = $17,500

1 Solar Electrical System for the whole camp @ $20,000 for 100 people = $20,000

1 Perimeter Fence around the 12 acres @ $10,000 = $10,000

4 Large Ice Chests @ $200 each = $800

1 set of Kitchen Pots and Pans @ $200 = $200

4 Soccer Balls @ $20 each = $80

1 Volley Ball Net @ $100 = $100

2 Volley Balls @ $20 each = $40

100 Science Kits: Creating Solar Power @ $3 each = $300

100 Science Kits: Wind Power @ $4 each = $400

100 Raised Garden Beds @ $150 each = $15,000

2 Telescopes @ $150 each = $300

1 Chapel – Open air, makuti and wood roof @ $3,000 = $3,000

1 Permanent Library-Study Hall – wooden structure @ $4,000 = $4,000

1 Art/Music/Drama Hall – wooden structure @ $4,000 = $4,000

1 Small dispensary – wooden structure @ $2,000 = $2,000

1 Camp Office – wooden structure @ $2,000 = $2,000

1 Staff Lounge – open air, makuti and wood roof @ $2,000 = $2,000

1 Staff Housing – Local materials: mud and waddle, makuti roof @ $6,000 = $6,000

1 Prayer Garden @ $1,000 = $1,000

1 Bonfire Pit with benches @ $1,500 = $1,500

1 ¼-acre Open Star Gazing Area with viewing platform @ $500 = $500

1 5 x 1500W Wind Turbine 24V 60A for 1/8 acre Windmill Farm @ $1500 = $7,500

1 1/8-acre Nursery Tree Farm @ $200 = $200

1 ½-acre Fruit Tree Farm @ $200 = $200

1 Space for Bore Hole with Tank @ $17,000 = $17,000

1 Soccer (Futball) Field @ $500 = $500

1 Storage Facility @ $300 = $300

1 Volleyball Court made of sand @ $200 = $200

Total: $308,434

Sustaining Finances

The sustaining budget is based on a per camper amount. An analysis has been done on what it typically costs Missions of Hope International to operate our boarding schools per student. The transportation, field trips, and extra staff have been added to

come up with the figure of $65 per student, per week. Much of the staff will already be MOHI staff members and will consequently be paid through existing avenues, which will cut down on the per student, per week cost of the camp.

Promotion

The following support letter was sent out in October 2019:

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the strong name of Jesus! This has been a very full season for Missions of Hope. We have seen God do some cool things this summer that has led to transformed lives. As always, we stand in awe of how Jesus changes people and their situations and we are so grateful to be a part of his plan in Kenya.

Speaking of plans…. The Discovery Discipleship Camp plans are beginning to take shape. The more we pray about this vision, the more God has affirmed it. We are excited to get moving on the vision.

We believe providing for every 6th grader and every 10th grader to have a chance to open their eyes to the greatness of God, through intentional discipleship curriculum and the beauty and wonder of God's nature, is the next step in our efforts of wholistic ministry. To take children away from their situation and give them direction and freedom to discover Jesus through His word and His world is a great privilege and challenge. We believe that God is going to make a way for this dream to be a reality.

Kenya, like most developing countries, faces the problem of widespread ecological damage. This is affecting the sustainability of the resources that will be needed for the future of our children. Teaching this generation how to use their creativity

to come up with solutions is critical. We hope to address these issues in creative ways with our MOHI students at the Discovery Discipleship Camp.

We are seriously looking at property to purchase, which means we need to seriously begin the process of asking for help. Wow! Asking for money is always weird, but when you feel as passionate about something as we feel about the Discovery Discipleship Camp it becomes a whole lot easier to ask. We just really believe that God is in this!

Would you please prayerfully consider donating to the Discovery Discipleship Camp? We are hoping to purchase the land before the end of the year.

God bless and keep you!

Keith and Kathy

The money for the purchase of the land has been raised and the land has been purchased. A second campaign to raise money for the development of the land has started. The fund raising has been initially low-key, as many funds have been needed for Covid-19 relief and we do not want to divert any of the relief funding. That being said, the following projects are in different stages of development:

1. Kilimanjaro Fund Raising Hike: Forty people have signed up to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro in August 2020. The goal is to raise $200,000 for the development of the land for the Discovery Discipleship Camp. Most of the people are from one church body. Because of Covid-19 this hike has been rescheduled to August 2021. The climbers are still raising funds and have raised $30,000 to date.

2. Annual Funding Events: Golf tournaments, Kilimanjaro climbs, and dinner galas will be organized. We will ask different supporting churches to host these events to provide ongoing support.
3. Camper-to-Camper Sponsorships: We are requesting a Christian Camp in Oregon to add $20 as an optional gift on to their camp registration form. Campers in Oregon would co-sponsor campers in Kenya.
4. Child Sponsor Year-End Gift: Camp Scholarship will be added as an option for a Child Sponsor year-end gift. A brochure will be developed that will go out with the receipting of child sponsors in October of the calendar year, with an option of adding a gift of $65 to send a child to camp.

For a believer, fund raising is a faith journey. We believe that the value of this camp for the transformation of lives and the benefit of earth care in Kenya can not be measured in dollars. It takes dollars to build and to that end the fund raising will continue.

Action Plan

The Discovery Discipleship Camp is a seed of an idea that continues to grow and is starting to bloom. Always at the forefront of the dreaming and planning is the need to make a lasting impact on the future of humanity and the earth. As shown so clearly by Kathryn Hayhoe in her recent twitter post, most people agree that the primary hope to make lasting change in this ecological crisis is to educate the children.[379] The marginalized and vulnerable children of poverty are the most affected and the need is greatest to educate them. The motivation to have hope comes through a relationship with

[379] Katharine Hayhoe (@KHayhoe), "What Gives You Hope?" Twitter, July 13, 2019, 10:57pm, http://twitter.com/KHayhoe/status/1150132038986608640.

Jesus Christ and caring about what Jesus cares about. The students at Missions of Hope International will have an opportunity to make deep commitments to follow God and care about the things that God cares about through the ministry of the Discovery Discipleship Camp.

To develop the camp in a Kenyan context, every effort will be made to use the cultural values that are already present in the students. These values can easily be bridged to elicit change and transformation of their worldview toward God and his creation. The land will be secured and developed to facilitate the most effective atmosphere to foster life change in the students. The content of the camp will focus around a biblically-based curriculum that calls for commitment and wonder of God's world. This will happen through educational opportunities to participate in activities designed to equip the students to understand their ability to be change agents in their environments. The staff will be hired and trained to disciple the students and draw them into a deeper understanding of who Jesus is and what he cares about. The community surrounding the camp is seen as an outreach ministry and much effort is put into drawing them into the purpose of the Discovery Discipleship Camp. As disadvantaged children discover the nearness of God in creation the Holy Spirit will reveal that their lives matter, and they can make a difference in their communities.

Here is the timeline for implementation:

- September 2019: The initial fund raising began.
- December 2019: A church donated $65,000 from the sale of a property to the camp. To date, $310,000 has been raised and another $100,000 has been promised.
- February 2020: The purchased land was identified.

- May 2020: The land purchase was finalized and the title deed received.
- June 2020: A perimeter fence was completed. This is culturally significant to keep "land grabbers" from making a claim on the land.
- September 2020: The necessary landscaping will begin. The land is quite bushy, so a lot of work is going to be needed to make it functional for a camp.
- December 2020: The Hams will stay the majority of December through February in Kilifi working to develop key relationships.
- By February 2021: The agreement with A Rocha Christian Conservancy, Mida Creek and Arabuko Sokoke Forest will be signed by their representatives.
- By March 2021: Safari tents will be ordered.
- By May 2021: The safari tents will be delivered and erected.
- By April 2021: All curriculum for trainings and camp content will be completed, printed, and put into notebooks.
- By May 2021: All additional items on the costing sheet purchases will be completed.
- By April 2021: The camp staff hiring process will be completed.
- By May 2021: The bore-hole and water supply tank installations will be completed.
- By May 2021: An Economic Housing cabin will be erected for the camp director and the staff housing will be completed.
- By May 2021: Two 37-passenger busses and one 14-passenger van will be ordered.
- By May 2021: Pit latrines and solar showers will be completed.
- June 21, 2021: The staff training will take place. It will begin with the one-week mock camp. There will be a one-week break and then a regrouping to do the formal training.

- July 11, 2021: Discovery Discipleship Camp will open.

It is impossible to conclude this section without acknowledging that we believe that God is in this project. In the process of academic striving we fail sometimes to give the credit for creativity to the creator. The Discovery Discipleship Camp is more than just an academic pursuit. The transformation expected in the lives of vulnerable and marginalized children creates great motivation to make this dream a reality. The hope available from a right relationship with God and caring about what he cares about can change the world. With this as the foundational value and belief, the Discovery Discipleship Camp will come to fruition and many lives will be changed.

SECTION SIX:

POSTSCRIPT

Pastor Mwangi arrives home after a long day of preaching, praying, and counseling with his congregation. Exhausted, he falls on his couch for a nap, but before he shuts his eyes, two kids jump on the couch with him and ask for ten shillings (10 cents) to go and purchase an ice cycle to share. He tosses up two five-shilling coins as the kids grab them and run off. Mwangi begins to dose off, and he cannot help imagining what kind of world he will leave behind for his kids and their generation. Only dark thoughts of tragedy and calamity fill his mind, but just before he sleeps, he cannot stop thinking of the stories of the loyal God he has encountered through knowing and loving Jesus Christ. Jesus whispers in Pastor's ear through the Holy Spirit's voice, "Do not be nervous and do not fear, for I have given you a share in the kingdom. Rest, my son."

Creation care is difficult and slow. Pastor Mwangi is aware of the tough road ahead. Culturally he knows he can tap into the values of collective work and togetherness. Watching Pastor work in the *Mathare Valley* and serve his family, I cannot help but know we are okay and in God's loving, loyal hands.

Summary of Camp Development

This dissertation "*Hesed*: Engaging Future Generations for Earthkeeping" is a written statement and Christian Camp artifact answering the question of earthkeeping for disadvantaged children and future generations. Focus on covenantal *hesed* initiates a way through the ecological crisis by re-engaging with the biblical story of creation, reconciliation, and the future consummation. The whole process in the biblical narrative

offers hope, freedom, and love, especially to children and future generations. The Camp artifact contributes a practical framework for disadvantaged children not only to understand the current ecological crisis but also to help empower them to address problems and provide solutions.

Analysis of the Artifact

During the process of the doctorate program, I became acutely aware of two things. Through the readings, courses, and research, there was a lack of attention to environmental impacts on future generations and disadvantaged communities. A case for the proxy representation of future generations welled up inside me. I saw potential contributions in the area of representing future generations, especially in Christian theology and practice.

As I pondered my response to what I was learning, I looked at three possible forums to make an impact on the future. I considered writing a theological book that pointed toward the concept of *hesed* and covenant-keeping related to earth care. I also considered writing a curriculum and offering adult teaching on the same topic. Nevertheless, I became most enthusiastic and persuaded of having a lasting impact when I set my eyes on experientially showing disadvantaged children what it means to walk in a faithful relationship to Jesus and how that can impact the future of their environment. Consequently, I developed a Discipleship Discovery Camp that offers experiential education, long-term solutions, and utilizes indigenous stories and symbols to promote earthkeeping practices.

Suggestions for further research remain in the area of biblical interpretation and Christian theology revolving around creation care and eschatological witness. Deep

semiotics and theological work remain in what Len Sweet calls a "theology of receiving." Concrete theological work in a theology of receiving will result in fruitful conversations using the trusteeship metaphor and liturgical practices incorporating Holy Saturday as the Christian Earth Day.

The work here reflects what God has done and is doing in my own life and the life of the mission in Kenya. As Len Sweet expressively articulates,

> The Creator evidences a beauty bias. God wants to beautify our lives. Beauty is not something that stimulates or satisfies an appetite for something else. Beauty is its own reward. It is the scent of God on the universe, a keyhole-peek of the kingdom of in the here and now and a sonogram of God's own heart. This is why art is so powerful—it can rival the God it is created to reveal.[380]

In "beautifying" my life, I want to reflect the beauty of God to others, especially with the disadvantaged Kenyan kids living in the *Mathare Valley* and to their children's children. The inheritance that they embrace from knowing who they are in Christ will change the trajectory of their young lives. I hope that this dissertation and the artifact provide a way to remain faithful to a loyal God.

[380] Leonard I. Sweet and Frank Viola, *Jesus: a Theography* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 44.

APPENDIX A:

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Sixth Grade

Monday Schedule

6:45 Rise and Shine
7:15 Breakfast
8:00 Morning Worship
8:30 Quiet Time Devotional
9:00 Small Groups – Focus on the topic of the day
10:15 Group Games
11:00 Activity of Choice – Painting, Football, Craft
12:00 Lunch
12:30 Board the bus for the beach
1:00 Swimming at the Beach
3:00 Board the bus for the return to camp
3:15 Snack Time
3:45 Group Games
4:45 Activity of Choice
5:30 Free Time
6:00 Prepare Supper
6:30 Supper Time
7:00 Clean up – KP duty and showers
7:40 Chapel Speaker
8:15 Snack Time
8:45 Bonfire and Worship
10:00 Tent Devotions
10:30 Lights Out

Tuesday Schedule

6:45 Rise and Shine
7:15 Breakfast
8:00 Morning Worship
8:30 Quiet Time Devotional
9:00 Small Groups – Focus on the topic of the day
10:15 Whole Group Game
11:00 Tent meeting – Come up with a Skit related to Earth Care
12:00 Lunch
12:30 Board the bus for A Rocha Conservancy
1:00 Bird Study at A Rocha Conservancy
2:00 Beach Clean up led by A Rocha Conservancy
3:30 Board the bus for the return to camp
4:00 Snack Time

4:15 Free Time
4:30 Tent groups to practice skits
5:00 Presentation of Earth Care skits
6:00 Prepare Supper
6:30 Supper Time
7:00 Clean up – KP duty and showers
7:40 Chapel Speaker
8:15 Snack Time
8:45 Bonfire and Worship
10:00 Tent Devotions
10:30 Lights Out

Wednesday Schedule

6:45 Rise and Shine
7:15 Breakfast
8:00 Morning Worship
8:30 Quiet Time Devotional
9:00 Small Groups – Tell the David Ngala story
10:15 Board the bus to Arobuka Sokoke Forest
11:00 Go for a hike/bird walk in the forest
1:00 Picnic Lunch
1:30 Small group Bible Studies on how we can make a difference in our world
2:00 Board the bus for the return to camp
2:30 Whole Group Game
3:30 Rotations – work in the garden, solar project, wind power project
5:00 Snack
5:15 Free Time
6:00 Prepare Supper
6:30 Supper Time
7:00 Clean up – KP duty and showers
7:40 Chapel Speaker
8:15 Snack Time
8:45 Bonfire and Worship
10:00 Tent Devotions
10:30 Lights Out

Thursday Schedule

6:45 Rise and Shine
7:15 Breakfast
8:00 Morning Worship
8:30 Quiet Time Devotional
9:00 Small Groups – Focus on the topic of the day
10:15 Whole Group Game
11:00 Rotation Choice
12:00 Lunch
12:30 Board the bus for Mida Creek Conservancy

1:00 Mida Creek Program
3:30 Board the bus for the return to camp
4:00 Snack Time
4:15 Free Time
4:30 Tent groups to practice for Talent Show
6:00 Prepare Supper
6:30 Supper Time
7:00 Clean up – KP duty and showers
7:40 Chapel Speaker
8:15 Snack Time
8:45 Bonfire and Worship
10:00 Tent Devotions
10:30 Lights Out

Friday Schedule

6:45 Rise and Shine
7:15 Breakfast
8:00 Morning Worship
8:30 Quiet Time Devotional
9:00 Small Groups – Focus on the topic of the day
10:15 Activity of Choice – Painting, Football, Craft
11:15 Tent meeting -work on the talent show
12:00 Lunch
12:30 Board the bus for the beach
1:00 Swimming at the beach
3:00 Board the bus for the return to camp
3:30 Snack Time
3:15 Rotations – work in the garden, solar project, wind project
4:45 Talent Show
6:00 Prepare Supper
6:30 Supper Time
7:00 Clean up – KP duty and showers
7:40 Chapel Speaker
8:15 Snack Time
8:45 Bonfire and Worship
10:00 Tent Devotions
10:30 Lights Out

APPENDIX B:

ANGAZA DISCOVERY CAMP LOGOS

APPENDIX C:

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

amfi CREATION CARE | MISSIONS OF HOPE INTERNATIONAL

ANGAZA DISCOVERY CAMP
Kilifi, Kenya

Missions of Hope International (MOHI) has begun work to develop the Angaza Discovery Camp in Kilifi, Kenya. Aganza means to "ignite or illuminate," and the camp will help provide a bright future to the 20,000+ children who are ministered to and empowered by a MOHI dedicated staff and who will now have the added benefit of going to camp. Eleven beautiful acres were purchased in February 2020, and the ground was consecrated and blessed in March. As we share this fantastic news, the Angaza property is currently being fenced and the land developed for a proposed grand opening in early 2021.

What is Angaza all about? Situated on the Kenyan coast, near protected forests and marine life, the MOHI kids who attend Angaza will have hands-on experiences in innovative earth-keeping. To get a feel for eco-friendly camping in Kenya, our staff visited a few eco-safari camps together in March.

TESTIMONIALS

" Wow, my eyes are open to creative ways to do camp without concrete structures and I see great ways to save on water usage, innovated uses of solar and breathe the fresh air. "

" Our kids are going to live out an authentic experience of who God is and what He desires by connecting with Him in the natural world. "

Change will come as we learn and respect this great green earth God gave us. Most of our experience in Kenya is that we see its beauty but only in a textbook or hear about it from family members who live in the countryside. Here in Mathare, what is experienced is bicycles, small motorcycles or even women carrying large white bags filled with charcoal. Along the roadside, bags and bags of guinea bags are stretched out for kilometers upon kilometers. The methods for producing charcoal are inefficient, resulting in pervasive deforestation and soil erosion. Our hearts ache as impoverished folks are faced with the dilemma of feeding their families and destroying their land.

The hope of the Angaza Camp is to provide answers to these problems and other issues facing the MOHI families in Kenya. The answers will vary and will come out of commitments to the Creator and living in awareness ecologically. The hope of the Angaza Camp is founded on a promise of a bright and hopeful future for MOHI kids.

The writer Wendell Berry reminds us, **"Making a promise binds one to someone else's future. If the promise is serious enough, one is brought to it by love and in awe and fear."** – "Moral Ground," page 389.

The journey has just begun. After the fence is erected, safari tents will be assembled and dedicated areas for stargazing, prayer and playful fun (soccer and volleyball) will be developed. Camp staff will be hired and trained this year on all topics related to camping and child safety. Pray with us as we enter this time of developing the land, camp structures and training. Pray with us to keep the dream alive, empowering future generations in earth-keeping through discipleship.

Keith Ham

APPENDIX D:

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

APPENDIX E:

SAFARI TENT EXAMPLE[381]

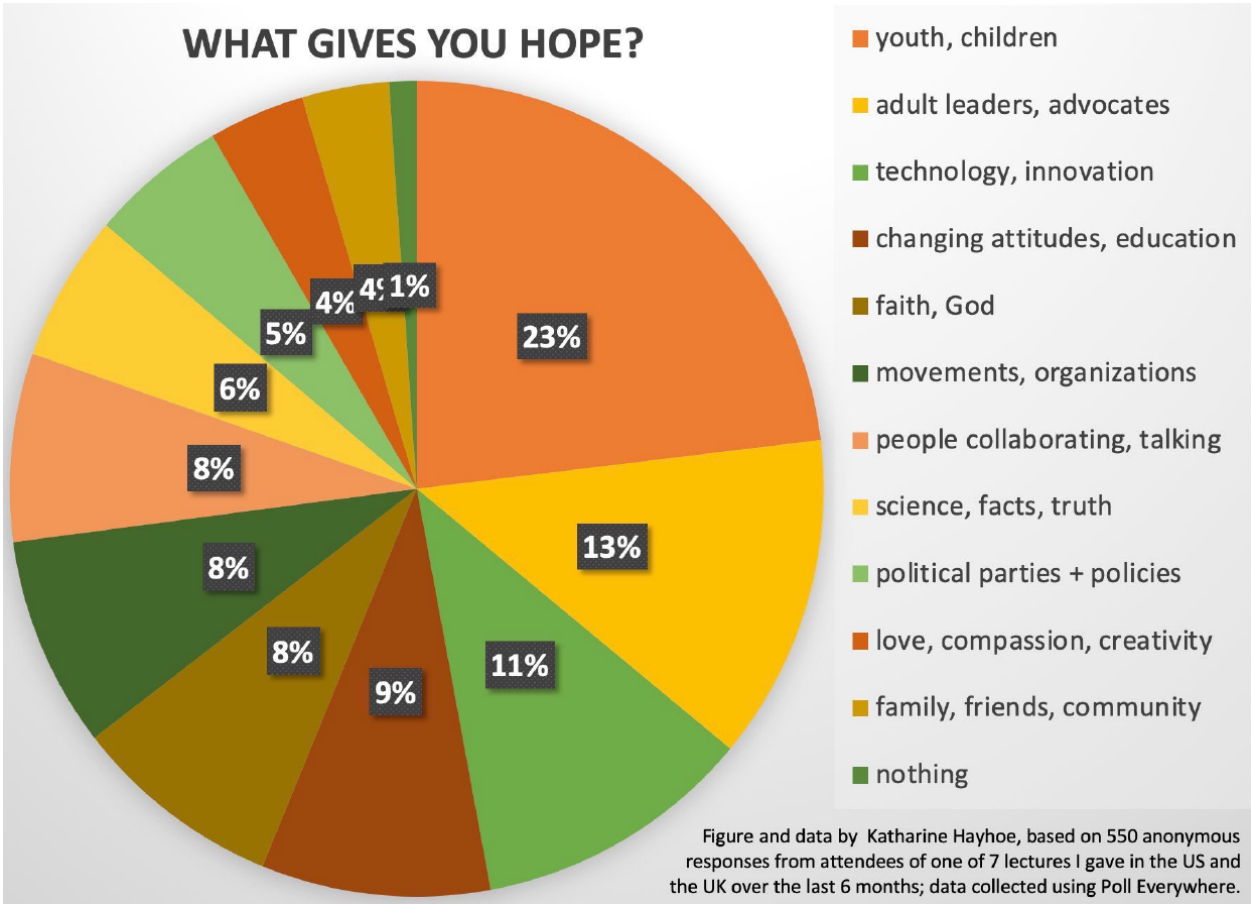
The safari tents are high-quality, durable, canvas tents that are 12 feet wide, 10 feet long, and 8 feet tall. These tents also are equipped with a canvas covering to protect them from long-term damage.

[381] "Safari in Serengeti," Stock Adobe, accessed August 25, 2020. https://stock.adobe.com/search?load_type=search&native_visual_search=&similar_content_id=&is_recent_search=&search_type=autosuggest&k=tent+safari&acp=0&aco=safari+tent&asset_id=104236260

APPENDIX F:

CLIMATE HOPE PIE CHART[382]

Dr. Katharine Hayhoe, climate scientist from Texas Tech University, collected responses during lectures in the United Kingdom and United States over a six-month period. Below are the results of the question "What Gives You Hope?"



[382] Katharine Hayhoe (@KHayhoe), "What Gives You Hope?" Twitter, July 13, 2019, 10:57 p.m., http://twitter.com/KHayhoe/status/1150132038986608640.

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