

**JEAN MARC-ÉLA AND COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES:
AN AFRICAN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON ECO-THEOLOGY**

JOEL MPALANYI MUSAASIZI

M21M05/003

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO BISHOP TUCKER SCHOOL OF DIVINITY AND
THEOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF DIVINITY OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

August, 2024



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

DECLARATION

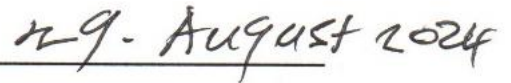
I, Musaasizi Joel Mpalanyi, hereby declare that this research is my own work and that it has not been submitted to any institution of higher learning for the award of a Master's degree in Divinity.

Signature: _____



MUSAASIZI JOEL MPALANYI

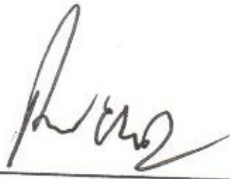
Date: _____



APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled “Jean Marc-Éla and Common Property Resources: An African Christian Perspective on Eco-Theology” has been done under my supervision and guidance and has been submitted for examination with my approval.

Signed: _____



Date: _____

29/8/2024

REV. CAN. PROF. CHRISTOPHER BYARUHANGA

SUPERVISOR

DEDICATION

To the memory of my fathers, Rev. Can. Samwiri Mpalanyi and Rt. Rev. Livingstone Mpalanyi Nkoyoyo. To my mothers, Mrs. Gladys Nabakooza Mpalanyi and Mrs. Ruth Mpalanyi Nkoyoyo for their support throughout my studies. To Robinah Edith Nakitende my beloved wife and to our dear children Mpalanyi, Ntongo and Kakumba. God bless each one of you abundantly.

Also dedicated to Zerubaberi Bwambale, Ivan Sebulime, Martin Ndawula, Phillip Mugume Baitwa, Jacques Bihozagara, Nelson Patrick Barasa, Bainomugisha Felex, Sandra Musenero, Robinah Kunihira, Simon Peter Omaid, Ezekiel Etatai and Earnest Mpagi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge all the persons who in one way or the other assisted me in the completion of this study. Special appreciation goes to my supervisor Rev. Can. Prof. Christopher Byaruhanga for encouraging this work and inspiring me to study Systematic Theology.

I wish to thank my Bishop, Rt. Rev. Michael Lubowa and the Diocese of Central Buganda for the opportunity to pursue theological education at Uganda Christian University. I also thank Rt. Rev. Samuel Balagadde Ssekadde, Rt. Rev. Katumba Tamala and The Very Rev. Can. Benon Kityo for supporting my formation into a minister in God's Church.

I am indebted to Rev. Can. Dr. Amos Kasibante and the Uganda Church Association, together with Mr. Ian Madden and the Crosslinks Foundation for the financial support I have received to undertake theological education at Uganda Christian University. I am eternally grateful.

I thank all my teachers at the Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology, in their different capacities, for the support and corporation extended to me. I am grateful for the donation of Jean-Marc Éla's book; "My Faith as an African" on which this dissertation is based.

Not much would have been achieved without the understanding and encouragement of my family; my wife who held forte for three years while I was at UCU, my sisters Naome, Mirembe, Nassiwa, Ssanyu and Mwebaza who encouraged me with their generosity in order that I would concentrate on this work. Special thanks to my brothers Mwesigwa-Nkoyoyo and Kakumba for their generosity and to my friends Rev. Edward Stephen Kabanda, John Musoke Ssekibaala and Dunstan Maxwell Mukalazi for their support and companionship.

Above all, I thank the Almighty God for delivering us from the COVID-19 pandemic and for giving me sufficient grace day by day to complete the study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	<i>i</i>
APPROVAL	<i>ii</i>
DEDICATION	<i>iii</i>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	<i>iv</i>
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	<i>vii</i>
ABSTRACT	<i>viii</i>
CHAPTER ONE	1
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY	1
1.0. Introduction	1
1.1. Background of the Study	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem	2
1.3. Purpose of the Study	3
1.3.1. Objectives of the Study	3
1.3.2. Research Questions	4
1.4. Scope of the Study	4
1.4.1. Geographical scope	4
1.4.2. Content scope	5
1.4.3. Time scope	5
1.5. Justification and Significance of the Study	5
1.5.1. Significance of the Study	6
1.6. Methodology	6
1.7. Conclusion	7
CHAPTER TWO	9
ASSESSMENT OF THE ECOLOGICAL PROBLEM IN UGANDA	9
2.0 Introduction	9
2.1 The State of the Environment in Uganda	9
2.1.1 Forest Ecosystems	9
2.1.2 Wetlands	11
2.1.3 Wildlife	12
2.1.4 Fisheries:	14
2.2 The drivers for Uganda’s Ecological crisis	16
2.2.1 Rapid Population Growth	16
2.2.2 Agricultural expansion and poor land management	17
2.2.3 Reliance on Firewood and Charcoal for Energy	17
2.2.4 Climate change	18
2.2.5 Infrastructure Development in the Oil and Gas Sector	19
2.2.6 Ineffective natural resource governance	19
2.2.7 Plastic pollution:	20
2.3 Conclusion:	20
CHAPTER THREE	21
THE ECO-THEOLOGY OF JEAN-MARC ÉLA	21
3.0 Introduction	21

3.1	The Theology of Jean-Marc Éla	21
3.3.1	Biography	21
3.1.2	The Theology of Éla in “My Faith as an African”	23
3.2	Eco-Theology – A Christian Conversation	29
3.2.1	Types of eco-theology:	32
3.2.2	Eco-theology and Christian Doctrine:	35
3.2.3	Eco-theology in African Christian Theology	39
3.3	The Eco-theology of Jean-Marc Éla	41
3.4	Conclusion	45
CHAPTER FOUR		48
ÉLA’S UNDERSTANDING OF COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES		48
4.0	Introduction	48
4.1	Common Property Resources	49
4.2	Managing Common Property Resources	52
4.3	Faith and Common Property Resources	56
4.4	Éla’s Ministry of the Granary: Faith Based Participation in Managing the Commons	60
4.5	Conclusion	62
CHAPTER FIVE		65
THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH OF UGANDA ON COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES		65
5.0	Introduction	65
5.1	The Church, Eco-theology and Reality	66
5.2	Jean-Marc Éla’s Shade Tree Theology	68
5.3	The Church of Uganda’s teaching for addressing the Ecological Problem	71
5.4	Conclusion:	76
CHAPTER SIX		78
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		78
6.1	Summary	78
6.1.1	How serious is the ecological problem in Uganda?	78
6.1.2	What is Jean-Marc Éla’s eco-theology and what are its propositions?	79
6.1.3	How does Jean-Marc Éla’s eco-theology address the tragedy of the commons?	80
6.1.4	What is the teaching of the COU on common property resources?	80
6.2	Conclusion	81
6.3	Recommendations	82
BIBLIOGRAPHY		84
Appendix 1: Similarity Report		90
Appendix 2: Anti-Plagiarism Certificate		91

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COU	Church of Uganda
CPR	Common Property Resource
NSOER	National State of the Environment Report
UCU	Uganda Christian University

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores an African eco-theology that encourages African Christians to work to promote ecological balance in their surroundings in order to fairly distribute the resources that are available. Uganda is home to a variety of ecosystems, including lakes, rivers, wetlands, forests, and rangelands. She is a significant country for the preservation of biodiversity worldwide as well as in Africa. However, a variety of factors, such as the conversion of natural habitats to agricultural land and infrastructure development, are contributing to the loss of biodiversity and irreversible degradation of the environment.

Christians, those belonging to the Church of the Province of Uganda, are looking for ways in which their faith may provide constructive answers and practical ways forward. Jean-Marc Éla stands as a relevant and insightful resource for Christians asking these kinds of questions. The attitude towards nature advocated by Éla is liberational in its thrust, but also rooted in the traditions of the African peoples. The imported Judeo-Christian rationalism with which we approach ecological issues, should be cleansed with “a wash in the pond of Siloam” which is the culture of the African people.

Peasants across the country who are excluded from benefiting from common property resources are prisoners of a system developed elsewhere for the interest of others. Their situation challenges our faith as Africans and the church can no longer pass by as people are threatened by the clutches of famine whose very appearance strangles the whole of life. We must rethink our Christianity if we are to respond adequately to the situation. Environmental action and eco-mission follows the stewardship motive but Éla proposes a liberative and prophetic motive that rejects any system which produces empty granaries.

The study recommends that: the Church of the Province of Uganda rethinks her approach to ecological mission with a view to adopting Jean-marc Éla's framework in environmental protection activity; that the COU environmental office intentionally works at developing robust eco-theological frameworks that recognize the need for the African Christian to write an alternative history to the past; and, that the Provincial environmental office and the Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology collaborate to establish a Ugandan platform that engages with important apologetic issues, holds periodic conversations on beneficial eco-theology work, and constructively profiles through case studies the actions, experiences, and motivations of Christians involved in Ugandan nature conservation and eco-mission projects.

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.0. Introduction

This dissertation is about an African eco-theology that calls upon African Christians to make efforts towards the promotion of ecological balance in their environment with an aim of sharing the available resources equitably. Uganda is blessed with a wealth of natural resources, but the careless management of the environment and unequitable natural resource usage have resulted in environmental destruction causing the extinction of species, the dysfunction of ecosystems and the exacerbation of poverty. A study was proposed to engage the work of the Cameroonian Catholic missionary and theologian Jean-Marc Éla, to articulate a systematic way through which the “people of God”¹ in the Church of the province of Uganda may live out their witness, in the face of the impending ecological crisis and the marginalization “the least of our brothers and sisters”² face amidst the exploitation of our common heritage.

1.1. Background of the Study

The common natural resources in Uganda are physically and legally accessible to several resource users competing with one another for a greater share of the resource. The array of these resources includes forests, rivers, grasslands, fisheries, wildlife, crude oil,

¹ Used in reference to the Church, applying to all members of the Church of the Province of Uganda without distinguishing between laity and clergy.

² Adapted from Matthew 25: 40.

natural gas, solar energy, and minerals. These common property resources provide a range of services that underpin the country's economy and the well-being of her people. If the competition over these common property resources is unregulated, it leads to resource depletion, pollution, poverty amongst resource users and a host of other social ills. When the competition over the resources has been regulated, either through government control or concessional private usage, the people at the margins of society who depend on the resources for their livelihoods are disenfranchised. This is called the tragedy of the commons.³

Uganda now faces an ecological crisis. Uganda's natural resources are declining at an alarming rate. In some instances, the rate of loss of our natural capital is faster than the natural systems can restore themselves.⁴ Biodiversity loss, pollution and climate change provide a challenge to the country.⁵ The impending ecological crisis will worsen inequality and marginalization because natural resources are essential in Uganda's fight against hunger and poverty.⁶ Regulation of access to common property resources using coercive means and the adoption of market based strategies not only lock out the poorest of the poor, they also exacerbate the threats to ecosystems and the integrity of creation.⁷

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Uganda is endowed with diverse common property resources that have not been exploited efficiently and as a result the environment has not been protected. This state of affairs should be addressed by the mission efforts of the Church of the Province of

³ Jean-Marie Baland and Jean-Philippe Platteau, p25-35.

⁴ WWF – Uganda Strategic Plan 2021-2025, p17.

⁵ Uganda is estimated to be losing its forest cover at the rate of 80,000 hectares per year.

⁶ USAID, 2015.

⁷ Jean-Marie Baland and Jean-Philippe Platteau, p49-78.

Uganda (COU), which has not remained indifferent. The COU has been an independent province for slightly over sixty years. She has traditionally been involved in evangelism, education, healthcare and agricultural work. However, over the past ten years, the COU has made sporadic attempts at environmental management projects. Despite these attempts, the COU has not articulated a systematic theological response for a period of combined livelihood insecurity and ecological trauma such as the one we face in the looming ecological crisis. The Church of the Province Uganda must within the present realities of the impending ecological crisis, articulate how equitable use of common property resources may be achieved for the good management of our common heritage.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to highlight the theology of Jean-Marc Éla and determine whether it may be considered as a resource for Christians in the Church of the Province of Uganda seeking to engage in the management of our common property resources theologically. Specifically, the study endeavors to analyse and evaluate Éla's theology in order to suggest a criteria for an African eco-theology based on the witness of the Church of the province of Uganda.

1.3.1. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To assess the ecological problem in Uganda.
2. To describe Jean-Marc Éla's eco-theology in light of the ecological problem in Uganda.
3. Analyse Jean Marc-Éla's understanding of common property resources.

4. To analyse the Church of the Province of Uganda's teaching about common property resources.

1.3.2. Research Questions

In order to answer the problem of the study and meet the main objectives, the researcher used several questions which helped in the analysis of Jean-Marc Éla's work, and the relevant information collected from the COU and other sources for the study. The questions included the following;

- a) How serious is the ecological problem in Uganda?
- b) What is Jean-Marc Éla's eco-theology and what are its propositions?
- c) How do Jean-Marc Éla's theological propositions address the tragedy of common property resources?
- d) What is the teaching of the Church of the Province of Uganda on common property resources?
- e) How can members of the COU living in close proximity of common property resources live out the values of the Kingdom of God?

1.4. Scope of the Study

1.4.1. Geographical scope

The focus of this research were the common property resources in the republic of Uganda and the threats and issues that concern them. The study was also concerned with the ecological work of the church within the Province of the Church of Uganda.

1.4.2. Content scope

This was a study in the area of systematic theology and was thus biased towards that particular field. It was specifically concerned with ecological theology especially within an African context. The study was concerned with retrieving elements in the theological thinking of Jean-Marc Éla to establish whether his theology has elements that may assist in managing common property resources and alleviating the environmental crisis. The study was non-empirical by nature; the efficacy of Jean-Marc Éla's theological system in managing common property resources would need to be tested at the church level.

1.4.3. Time scope

The study considered the work of Jean-Marc Éla originally produced in 1988 as “Ma foi d’Africain” and translated into English in 1998 as “My Faith as an African”. The researcher also considered the Church of Uganda strategic plan of 2016-2025, and several strategy papers and reports of the Province of the Church of Uganda since 2016.

1.5. Justification and Significance of the Study

This study was an attempt at defining a systematic way to African Christian stewardship of the environment and specifically, common property resources in Uganda. The teaching of the Church on creation has tended to push people to the apex of creation. The presumption resulting from this teaching is that man is at the center of the universe, all other creatures exist for the benefit of humankind. The exploitation and abuse of common property resources encouraged partly by this attitude has brought us to the present predicament of a rapidly looming ecological crisis. The dilemma we face is a theological issue, it requires us to critically examine the realities and identify ways in which God is revealing Himself in order to address the present threatening conditions for the better. It

is necessary to examine our calling as “the people of God” in the Province of the Church of Uganda in a deeper and new way that upholds the equality and dignity of all things.

1.5.1. Significance of the Study

The study findings will be used to inspire fresh theological reflection on the value of the environment and natural resources in the Church of the Province of Uganda. In relation to this reflection, this study will contribute to articulating the teaching of the Church of the Province of Uganda in general on issues regarding the exploitation and governance of the diverse common property resources Uganda is endowed with. As well, the findings will be used to evaluate the importance attached to natural resources in the Province in order to fully incorporate Éla’s theological propositions in the mission activities of the COU. The results of this study will also be used to improve the current environmental conservation efforts, climate action programs and environmental activism of the Province of the Church of Uganda.

1.6. Methodology

To address the key research objectives, this research used purely qualitative methods. The problem of the earth and her ecology in crisis is approached from many different angles by ecological theologies. Jürgen Moltmann, for instance, uses a pneumatological-eschatological understanding of the creation concept to address ecological issues by emphasizing God as Creator.⁸ Ernst Conradie identifies three approaches to ecological theology: eschatological (transformation of ecological vision towards the future), sacramental (exploration of the inter-relatedness of nature and humanity), and apologetic

⁸ Moltman, J. 1993. pXiii.

(relation of a more harmonious relationship between nature and humanity with Biblical tradition and Christian history).⁹ This research did not follow either of these theologians' approaches, but rather leaned toward exploration of the interrelatedness of nature and humanity within Jean-Marc Éla's proposal of African Christianity.

This study was conducted using the desk research method to collect information from various secondary sources. The study focused on already published material in books, articles and reports. The major books studied for this work include Jean-Marc Éla's "My Faith as an African" and "Eco-theology: A Christian Conversation" by Kiara Jorgenson and Alan Padgett. The other major documents studied include the National State of the Environment Report (NSOER) 2018-2019, the Church of the Province of Uganda's Vision 2025 and the Church of Uganda Environmental Protection and Climate Change Management Policy. Other secondary data sources regarding eco-theology, common property resources, African Christian Theology and ecclesiology were obtained from literature. On all these issues, credible journals, books, various articles, periodicals, conferences, magazines, newsletters, newspapers, websites, and other sources were taken into consideration.

1.7. Conclusion

This study, sought to articulate an eco-theology for the Church of the Province of Uganda, and to analyse the implications of rapidly approaching ecological crisis through the lenses of Jean-Marc Éla. The study describes Éla's eco-theology, appraises the understanding of common property resources from the point of view of his project and

⁹ Conradie, 2000. p1-5

analyses the teaching of the COU on natural resources. The study highlights Éla's theology as a source for an African eco-theology based on the witness of the Church of the Province of Uganda.

CHAPTER TWO

ASSESSMENT OF THE ECOLOGICAL PROBLEM IN UGANDA

2.0 Introduction

Uganda is home to a variety of ecosystems, including lakes, rivers, wetlands, forests, and rangelands. She is a significant country for the preservation of biodiversity worldwide as well as in Africa. Despite its small size, Uganda has one of the highest biodiversity levels in Africa. It is home to at least 3,662 plant species and 1,742 terrestrial vertebrate species, including almost half of Africa's bird species. However, a variety of factors, such as the conversion of natural habitats—which are home to the majority of species—to agricultural land and infrastructure, are contributing to the loss of biodiversity. Information about Uganda's ecological problem is provided in this chapter, along with an explanation of its causes.

2.1 The State of the Environment in Uganda

This section provides information on the status and trends of biodiversity with a focus on forests, wetlands, fish, wildlife and the protection of plant species outside of protected areas.

2.1.1 Forest Ecosystems

In Uganda, there are four main types of forests: community forests, private forests, central forest reserves, and local forest reserves.¹⁰ In addition to providing habitat for

¹⁰ National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003

forest biodiversity, forests are significant catchment areas that guarantee the supply of water for agricultural development. In addition to providing the people of Uganda with forest products like timber, trees also absorb significant amounts of carbon dioxide, which helps to purify the air and atmosphere. From about five million hectares in 1990 to roughly two million hectares in 2019, Uganda's forest cover has been decreasing. Over the previous few decades, there has been a decrease in natural forests, although plantation forests have seen an increase between 2010 and 2017. The need for building materials and fuelwood by refugees and land-use change are some of the leading sources of pressure on forests.¹¹

With more than one million, two hundred thousand refugees three years ago, Uganda ranks third in the world among countries that welcome refugees openly. Fuelwood, obtained from felling trees in forests or on private land, is the main energy source used in cooking by the refugees.¹² As a result, there are no trees or forest cover left in any of the areas surrounding refugee camps. In the refugee settlements of Rwamwanja in Kamwenge district, Bidi Bidi in Obongi district, and Kyangwali in Kikuube district, this has already happened. The Isingiro district's Oruchinga refugee camp has experienced the same predicament.¹³

Due to deforestation and forest degradation, primarily from conversion to agriculture, large areas of Uganda's forest cover have disappeared and the country's forest land has deteriorated. Private forests, whose owners have profited more from converting them to farms than from retaining them as forests, are among the worst affected areas. A large

¹¹ NEMA, 2019.

¹² NSOER, 2018-2019; p16.

¹³ Ibid

number of woods in the central region, Masindi, and Hoima districts have been converted to agricultural land because of their supposedly rich soils and the allure of substantial returns on agricultural investments.¹⁴

2.1.2 Wetlands

Eleven percent of Uganda's land area is made up of wetlands, of which eight percent are seasonal, three percent are permanent, and less than one percent is swamp forest.¹⁵

Wetlands are significant because of the various ecological and socioeconomic roles they play. Prevention of erosion, regulating excessive water flow, sediment trapping, climate modification, soil formation, upholding water tables, and serving as hubs for biodiversity and wildlife habitat are just a few examples of the ecological and regulatory services that they provide. Food, medication, water supply, fisheries, livestock grazing during the dry season, nutrient and toxin retention, tourism, and other services are the examples of socio-economic services they provide.

Wetland coverage of the total land area for the country has reduced from sixteen percent thirty years ago to thirteen percent based on an assessment conducted seven years ago.¹⁶ It was estimated then, that nine percent was still intact and four percent was degraded. Uganda has therefore lost forty two percent of its wetlands over the last 20 years, that is, from 37346.3 Km² to 21526.3 km². This means that each year Uganda has on average been losing 791 km² of wetlands (two percent per year). With this trend, it is projected that Uganda will lose all her wetlands, a quarter of century from now if no stringent measures and enforcement is made to conserve and manage wetlands.¹⁷

¹⁴ NEMA, 2019.

¹⁵ NEMA, 2016

¹⁶ NSOER, 2018-2019; p24

¹⁷ NEMA, 2019

The major threat to wetlands especially in the areas surrounding the lake regions is the ever increasing demand for land for urbanization. The biggest degradation pressure in urban centers is the establishment of housing settlements, illegal industries and public infrastructural developments. Pollution pressure is due to indiscriminate waste disposal and discharge of effluent. The other pressure is the degradation or is by in-filling wetlands with soil or dumping with solid waste and debris.¹⁸

2.1.3 Wildlife

Wildlife in Uganda defined as “any wild plant or animal species or their derivative products that are indigenous, migrated to or introduced in Uganda”.¹⁹ The country is endowed with a variety of landscapes and geographic features including forests, savannahs, dry lands, and wetlands. These coupled with wide climatic variation and different soil types provide an exceptional range of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. A variety of habitats are offered by the various ecosystems, allowing a wide range of plants and fauna to flourish. More than half of all mountain gorillas in the world, eleven percent of all bird species worldwide, eight percent of all mammalian species, nineteen percent of all amphibians in Africa, and fourteen percent of all reptiles in Africa live in Uganda, thanks to the country’s diverse ecosystems and varied climate.²⁰

Wildlife numbers are increasing in protected areas. Certain species have seen population increases. For example, the number of mountain gorillas increased from 2,922 in 1995 to over 4,100 in 2017, the number of elephants more than doubled, rising from roughly

¹⁸ NEMA, 2019.

¹⁹ Uganda Wildlife Act of 2019

²⁰ Plumptre et al., 2007, 2017

2,000 in 1995 to 5,800 in 2017, the number of buffaloes increased from approximately 18,000 in 1995 to 37,000 in 2017, the number of giraffes increased from 250 in 1995 to 880 in 2017, and the number of chimpanzees increased from 3,300 in 1997 to 4,950 in 2003.²¹ Also, the gorilla population census that was conducted in 2018 in the Bwindi-Sarambwe area estimates Gorillas to be 496.²²

Particular species, such as Grant's gazelle, have seen a fall in population from 100 in 1995 to 57 in 2017. Lord Derby's Eland, Eastern Black Rhino, Northern White Rhino, and Beisa Oryx populations have all declined to extinction in the wild. On a positive note, the number of black rhinos in captivity has increased substantially, from eight twenty years ago to twenty two seven years ago. However, wildlife outside protected areas are threatened by the alteration of existing habitat for cultivation and grazing, illicit hunting, and illegal wildlife trade.²³

Increased human population has led to people settling near protected areas, resulting in crop raiding, the spread of zoonotic illnesses such as anthrax in the Queen Elizabeth Protected Area, property loss, and attacks on human populations by wildlife. The number of reported occurrences of conflicts between people and wildlife has risen over time, with Murchison Falls Conservation Area having the highest number. Elephants, lions, hippopotamus, baboons, and monkeys are commonly connected with these conflicts. In revenge, humans poison, and kill wildlife. These conflicts have negative impacts on wildlife distribution and accelerate the extinction of species.²⁴

²¹ NEMA, 2019.

²² Hickey et al., 2018

²³ NEMA, 2019.

²⁴ Ibid

The nation's wildlife protected areas are under threat from a variety of sources, including diseases, poaching, trade in wildlife, population growth, and economic advancements. Increased human population and development pressures are changing land use, leading to the conversion, clearing, and other degradation of numerous previously undisturbed habitats in Uganda, both on private and protected territory. Among the stresses on wildlife outside of protected areas include the killing of wild animals for meat and the overharvesting of wild vegetation, particularly for commercial use. Invasive species alter the distribution of wildlife, decrease the amount of foraging area in protected areas, turn grasslands into thicket-dominated forests, make vegetation more susceptible to fire, and occasionally intensify habitat use. This in the long run may result in population decrease of wildlife.²⁵

2.1.4 Fisheries:

The fisheries subsector in Uganda in the pre-colonial period that was characterized by a few fisher folk communities living by the lakesides. During the pre-colonial times, generally the fish and fish products were market limited and thus the fisher folk communities traded their catch through barter. Prior to 1910, *Oreochromis esculentus* and *Oreochromis variabilis*, two native tilapine species found in Lake Victoria, dominated the Ugandan fisheries. However, these vital species are virtually extinct from the Lake Victoria basin as a consequence of many factors including; overfishing, competition from the non-native species and hybridization. In Uganda, fresh water capture fisheries continue to be the most important source of fish.²⁶

²⁵ NEMA, 2019

²⁶ NEMA, 2019.

Overexploitation and illegal fishing practices remain a challenge to the fisheries sub-sector in Uganda. Since the 1920s, the fishing effort on water bodies has been increasing and exacerbated by the increasing population pressure. For instance, on Lake Victoria, the number of boats using outboard engines increased by a factor of approximately 1.7 while the rate of motorization increased from ten percent to thirty percent over the last decade.²⁷ This suggests a general escalated fishing effort which might be detrimental to the fisheries resources overtime. Other emerging pressures include plastic pollution in Lake Victoria.²⁸ The mass plastic production and consumption have led to the accumulation of plastic debris on land and aquatic environment where they degrade into smaller particles known as micro plastics.

Many Ugandan water bodies are still plagued by the aquatic plants known as Kariba and water hyacinth. For example, the Kariba weed (*Salvinia molesta*) has spread further along the Lake Kyoga complex, the River Nile, and Lake Albert. Water weeds were introduced to Uganda and have since spread throughout the aquatic ecosystems, resulting in their presence in Ugandan water bodies. This is mostly linked to human activity, especially in regards to careless and uncontrolled farming practices and effluents that affect the entry of macronutrients like phosphates, which encourage the growth of aquatic weeds.²⁹

The cover and spread of Kariba weed has reached critical levels continuously affecting fish breeding and nursery grounds, water quality and quantity that in turn affect the drinking water supply, hydroelectric power generation, tourism, as well as water transport. Despite the weed initially being introduced in the Lake Kyoga complex, the

²⁷ Mkuna and Baiyegunhi 2019

²⁸ FAO, 2017.

²⁹ Andama et al 2017

aquatic plant has of recent traversed other virgin places like Lake Victoria basin (Lake Kimira in Bugiri District), some fish ponds, Port Bell in Luzira as well as other sheltered areas.³⁰

The expansion of farmlands with conversion of forests and wetlands is one of the greatest challenges affecting aquatic ecosystems through enhancing loading of sediment, pollutants, and nutrients. Farmlands are also associated with constraints such as the use of agro-chemicals and pesticides and diversion of river courses. In Uganda, excessive nutrient loads are responsible for eutrophication in aquatic ecosystems which can be detrimental to fish growth and health. Crop lands are expected to expand and if not properly planned could damage the aquatic resources.³¹

2.2 The drivers for Uganda's Ecological crisis

Like the rest of the globe, Uganda has seen a rapid loss and degradation of its natural capital over the past sixty years, despite the importance of natural resources to the country's economy and people's means of subsistence. Certain natural systems, like wetlands and forests, are losing their natural components more quickly than they can rebuild. Here are some of the factors that have contributed to Uganda's ecological disaster.

2.2.1 Rapid Population Growth

Uganda boasts one of the world's fastest rates of population increase. Uganda's population has increased at a rate of about three percent per annum over the past twenty

³⁰ EASE, 2019.

³¹ NEMA, 2019.

years, and it is predicted to double over the next ten years to reach sixty four million people within the next six years. The high rural population density, reliance on natural resources, and fast growth rate are all contributing to Uganda's natural resource and ecosystem depletion leading to the clearing of land for agriculture, habitation, and the access of wood supplies for building and electricity, resulting in deforestation and the loss of wetlands.³²

2.2.2 Agricultural expansion and poor land management

More than ninety percent of Uganda's farmers cultivate an average of 2 hectares of rain-fed land. Low agricultural output and irresponsible land management methods are prevalent. Between 1990 and 2015, agricultural growth, particularly on marginal land, was the leading cause of land use change and deforestation. As more land is cleared for agriculture, buffer zones between human settlements and protected areas are disappearing, and protected areas are being encroached upon for timber, firewood, and charcoal. This contributes to more deforestation and increases habitat loss and biodiversity. Unsustainable land management methods also contribute to river pollution, poor water quality, flooding, and premature dam siltation.³³

2.2.3 Reliance on Firewood and Charcoal for Energy

Biomass accounts for 90% of Uganda's overall energy requirements. Total charcoal demand in 2019 was 2.09 million tons, with a 6% annual increase. This need is being driven by rising rates of urbanization, an increasing population, limited availability to electricity, and the high expense of cooking with it. In rural areas, firewood is utilized for cooking, however in urban areas, charcoal is preferred. Although improved cook

³² WWF, 2021.

³³ Ibid

stoves are available, fewer than 10% of Ugandan homes use them. The charcoal business employs over 200,000 people, although production is generally conducted without sufficient regulation and utilizing wasteful technologies. This has a detrimental effect on forest resources and contributes to Uganda's greenhouse gas emissions. Charcoal and firewood account for 60 percent of the annual forest cover loss (72,000 hectares). The usage of biomass also presents socioeconomic and health challenges. The time spent collecting fuel wood, which is primarily done by women and children, has an impact on the amount of time available for studying and earning money.³⁴

2.2.4 Climate change

Uganda has begun to experience the impacts of climate change. This includes a significant rise in temperature (0.52°C per decade), shifting hydrological regimes, a higher incidence and severity of severe weather events (droughts and floods), glacier retreat on Mount Rwenzori, and, in the long run, potential changes in habitat and ranges of sensitive species. These challenges make ecosystems and biodiversity more vulnerable to deterioration, as well as the livelihoods of those that rely on them. Certain regions are experiencing lower yield due to climate change, so farmers who practice rain-fed agriculture are making up for it by encroaching on wetlands and forests. In the long run, protected areas may continue to encroach due to the effects of climate change and the growing demand for food, energy, and land.³⁵ Increased frequency of floods and landslides during periods of heavy rainfall is caused by the loss of forest cover, soil erosion, and siltation of streams, all of which amplify the effects of climate change.

³⁴ National Charcoal Survey for Uganda, 2016. Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development.

³⁵ WWF, 2021.

2.2.5 Infrastructure Development in the Oil and Gas Sector

As part of the Lake Albert development, the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) and an oil refinery and industrial park are being built near Hoima. EACOP, which will extend 1,443 km from Lake Albert in Uganda to the port of Tanga in Tanzania, will travel through a number of sensitive and environmentally significant locations. The probable loss of biodiversity along the pipeline Right of Way was not acknowledged in the environmental and social impact assessment that was conducted in 2019. Despite the pipeline's passage through common-good ecosystems such wetlands, forests, wells, and streams, the study found no substantial effects from it.³⁶

2.2.6 Ineffective natural resource governance

Comprehensive legislative and legal frameworks for the preservation and sustainable management of these resources exist for forestry, wildlife, and water resource management. The difficulty lies in implementation and enforcement due to the lack of institutional, financial, and human resources. The policy environment is dynamic and the legislative and policy frameworks in the energy and extractive industries are changing quickly. When policies are in place, they are frequently insufficient, contradictory, and not always suitable for the situation. Environmental Civil Society Organisations usually have limited ability to hold duty bearers responsible and fight for better policies at the local level. This is made worse by the fact that civil society's ability to engage with and impact policy makers, especially in the area of human rights, is steadily declining.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ WWF, 2021

2.2.7 Plastic pollution:

In Uganda, plastic pollution is becoming a bigger environmental problem. Uganda produces about 600 tons of plastic garbage every day. Nowadays, less than 5% of material gets recycled; the majority ends up burned, illegally disposed of, or disposed of in landfills, releasing poisons and deadly carcinogens into the atmosphere that endanger both human health and the environment. Plastic garbage is clogging sewers in towns, which frequently leads to flooding and the spread of illness. Additionally, plastic is getting into Uganda's lakes and rivers. This is believed to be a factor in the decrease of fish species and soil productivity in Lake Victoria. Plastic pollution is a long-term problem because it takes polymers 450 years on average to break down.³⁸

2.3 Conclusion:

Natural resources play a vital role in the lives of Ugandans, especially the poor in rural communities. Our society is deeply connected to ecological processes and healthy ecosystems that produce the requirements for life. Uganda's natural capital is declining at an alarming rate, despite the fact that the bulk of the population depends on it for survival. As it is with the rest of the globe, natural resources are vital to Uganda's economy and people's means of subsistence, yet throughout the past sixty years, the country has seen a sharp decline in its natural capital. There are some instances, for example forests and wetlands, where the rate of loss is greater than the rate at which these natural systems can regenerate themselves.

³⁸ Ibid

CHAPTER THREE

THE ECO-THEOLOGY OF JEAN-MARC ÉLA

3.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to highlight what of the elements of Jean-Marc Éla's "*My Faith as an African*" may actually be described as eco-theology. In order to highlight how Jean-Marc Éla's theology may be applied to address the challenge of common property resources in Uganda, it is important to first reposition that theology in relation to ecology. I analyse Éla's work in "*My Faith as an African*", define eco-theology, look at how it is framed within African Christian theology and point out those elements in "*My Faith as an African*" that may be described as eco-theology and may be applied to the theological understanding of the tragedy of the commons and the ecological crisis Uganda faces.

3.1 The Theology of Jean-Marc Éla

3.3.1 Biography

Jean-Marc Éla was born in Ebolowa, Southern Cameroon on 27th September 1936.³⁹ He came from a middle class background. Both his parents were Roman Catholics who encouraged the persistent reading of scripture in addition to attending the religious ceremonies of the Church. He earned a doctorate in theology from Strasbourg after training for the priesthood. After his ordination to the priesthood in 1964, Éla became a teacher at the major seminary of the diocese of Yaoundé, from where he became a prolific author of theological and sociological articles.⁴⁰

³⁹ Heijke, Jan. 2000. p61.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Feeling discontent with his job as a seminary lecturer, he relocated to Tokombere in northern Cameroon to work with Baba Simon Mpecke, a revered priest among the Kirdi community. He subsequently served as a missionary in northern Cameroon for sixteen years, from 1971 to 1985.⁴¹ In between, he earned another doctorate in social and cultural anthropology from the Paris based University of Sorbonne. During his missionary work, he formed the opinion that, “theology must address the continuous pauperization of the common people by a ruthless and greedy ruling elite and their international collaborators.”⁴²

Éla was a prolific writer but he is chiefly remembered for two works that stamp his name among contemporary African theologians. While in northern Cameroon he wrote several articles on the experiences of the Kirdis and in 1980 produced his first theological volume – “African Cry”.⁴³ In the subsequent years, he wrote many other articles and produced his second volume “My Faith as an African” in 1988. In these two works, Éla revealed himself as a priest who was attentive to the practical and social demands of the Christian faith, as a pastor prophetically implementing the pastoral mission of the church, and as a theologian.⁴⁴

As a Catholic theologian, he unusually questioned the status quo, not only in his embrace of social science, but also in his knack for testing the boundaries of the Catholic Church. In this work, Éla shared his pastoral experiences and came across as a priest who exposes

⁴¹ Ngong T. David, 2010; p419.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Heijke, 2000.

⁴⁴ Iheanacho, U. V. 2021. <https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/SHE/index>.

criminal structures with suggestions of what can possibly be done about them.⁴⁵ He was much loved by the community and was popular with students, but his views brought him into conflict with the Cameroonian regime. Following the persecution of several critics of the Biya regime, particularly the murder of Rev. Father Engelbert Mwing (a partner with Éla against the autocracy of the Cameroonian regime), Éla fled to Canada where he taught at several universities such as the University of Quebec, Boston University (USA) and Laval University. He died on December 26, 2008.⁴⁶

3.1.2 The Theology of Éla in “My Faith as an African”

“*My faith as an African*” is a collection of theological reflections on a long pastoral experience among the Kirdis.⁴⁷ Éla found himself confronted by a situation that forced him to rethink what it means to be a Christian and a rural peasant in Africa.⁴⁸ It was written to present the challenge placed upon Christianity by the unique African context of those rejected by history.⁴⁹

Éla found that the people amongst whom he worked were desperately poor and asked how they could be brought to a wholesome faith, a faith that assents to dogma and also permeates the whole being. He questioned the role of the pastor and theologian in such a setting. His reflections include inculturation and liberation paradigms, because according to him, cultural, socio-economic and political factors contrive to alienate people from themselves, their environment and their faith as Christians.⁵⁰ He therefore represents a

⁴⁵ Heijke, 2000.

⁴⁶ Ngong, 2010.

⁴⁷ Kalilombe P. 1990. p 487.

⁴⁸ Ngong, D. T. 2002. p 386-387.

⁴⁹ Noss, Phillip A. 1990. p 193-194.

⁵⁰ Ibid

brand of theological reflections that is fundamentally liberational but steeped in the culture and traditions of the African people.⁵¹

For Éla, the concept of culture includes the present day marginalised communities in the rural areas struggling under the attempts at modernisation often exploited and taken advantage of.⁵² He espouses and advocates African symbolisms in liturgy and sanctions baptism by immersion as being more meaningful in the African context. He wrestles with the condition of the ordinary African person, a condition of poverty, want and inescapable unhappiness in a situation where Jesus Christ is preached as the Lord of life and the church dogmas have no real bearing on the lives of the of frustrated young people who feel that the church is irrelevant to their real world needs.⁵³ Éla's core argument is that at a time when Africans like other peoples are experiencing the shock of technological and cultural modernity, emancipation of the oppressed must be the primary condition of any authentic inculturation of the Christian message.⁵⁴ He presents his reflections in three major parts that are analysed below.

(I) Reawakening the Wellsprings:

Christianity in poor Africa can look like a decaying faith. It is constantly faced with the question of how the gospel can be most directly accessible and meaningful for the people. Amongst the rural poor and those for whom the Kingdom of God is expressed in indigenous civilisations, living out the Christian faith and creating a desire for the living God demands a radical change in the practice of mission. Christianity ought to accept, with discernment, all the signs of an existing culture. If the past does not shed light on

⁵¹ Kalilombe, 1990.

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Ngong, 2002.

⁵⁴ Kalilombe, 1990.

the present, we need to rethink the Christian message today; otherwise it will become a disturbing influence because it will be viewed as a force of conquest. Practically, the relationship between Christianity and African heritage must be taken seriously, otherwise, Christianity for many, continues to be viewed as mere transfer of dogmas, rites, rules and customs formed overseas. The Christian faith may be lived out in a way that it does not discredit our African heritage in several ways.⁵⁵

Veneration of the ancestors is very important and takes many forms according to each different African society. Initiation ceremonies, burial places and natural African art are important symbols that reflect the power of the ancestors. Belief in ancestors is inseparable from the overall vision of human beings and society. The veneration of ancestors lies within the context of kinship which organises individuals into a coordinated network of mutual actions and reactions. Ancestors are remembered at crucial moments in the life of a person or the community. Birth, circumcision or marriage are integrated through the coherence of the traditional society where human beings are in communion with the powers of nature and are defined by their relationship to God and to the ancestors.⁵⁶

Conversion to Christianity does not break our relationship with the ancestors and it is possible for Christians to live a life in Jesus Christ and maintain a relationship between the living and the dead. Contrary to typical Christian notions, a relationship with the ancestors consists of the belief that the intimate communion developed among members of the family is not broken by death, but is maintained despite and beyond death.

⁵⁵ See "My Faith as an Africa, p 1-64.

⁵⁶ On African Symbolism, p14-18.

Sacrifice and diviners are present in African heritage, but true religion is obedience to God. Belief in the ancestors to contribute to the natural order of things does not overshadow coherent monotheism. God remains the Lord of heaven and earth. The elders turn to God in prayer when seeking the fruits of creation. God never yields before the power of the ancestors, they do not replace his divinity and God is always closer to human reality than he was in the past. Sacrifice therefore is not idolatrous, instead, it is communion with the ancestors and a recognition of their contribution to the order of the world. A Christian must always consider the others who do not always read the Word of God, and in particular, must always respect the bonds of the clan. To fully experience communion with Christ in an African way is to incorporate our living relationship with the ancestors as a dimension of our total faith.⁵⁷

(II) The Empty Granary:

Millions of African peasants are asking for an opportunity to live. They are prisoners of a system devised elsewhere for the interests of others. The peasants across sub-Saharan Africa experience the coercive apparatus of multinational companies involved in the over exploitation of human labour and natural resources. There is a spectre of hunger and death prowling over the continent, but African governments, still support a development model for African villages that is based on exploitation. The result has been rising unemployment, malnutrition and social insecurity. A situation prevails where, poverty and disillusionment surround a few islands of affluence.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ On sacrifices, the role of diviners and transformation in African society; p21-28

⁵⁸ Africa is Strangled; p88-90.

Millions of people have been uprooted from their backgrounds while millions are internally displaced in their own countries. The reality seems to be that decades of independence have produced under development. The situation is more serious when the state is the agent of repression as is often the case.⁵⁹ In the same way, the African society is sick with corruption and injustice; it is consumed by bitterness and threatened by the clutches of famine which has the potential to strangle the whole of life. The church can no longer be able to pass “the man who fell among robbers.”⁶⁰

The system of domination that forces peasants to grow crops they do not feed on, in a culture based on the granary disrupts agriculture, and causes misery in the countryside and the outlying urban areas. The question of food is central to daily living, but in the scriptures, God desires that humanity be fed (Gen. 42: 1-2, 43: 1-2), and God identifies with the hungry (Matt. 25: 35-42). The God of the gospel is the God of life; therefore, our faith requires to reject any system that produces empty granaries – which are the signs of famine and death. “The message and the work of Jesus denounce exploitation of peasants, and demand new forms of relationships where people can organise themselves so that no one is deprived of the needed ration of millet.”⁶¹

It is difficult to speak of the Lord of life when the elderly in the villages are near death because of famine and children are suffering from malnutrition. Addressing these concerns following the example of Jesus demands a clear understanding of the place of the granary in traditional village life and the importance of land. In the northern Cameroon highlands where Éla had made his natural habitat, “he could notice the empty

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ The Confrontation of Cultures and Irruption of the Poor; p92.

⁶¹ A ministry of the Granary; p93.

granary and ask if the question of food and sufficiency was not essential to the practice of Christianity.⁶²

(III) God is not Neutral:

Recovery is possible. “Communities controlled by hunger and slavery can recover their true dignity through a peasant-reading of the Bible. It can lead them to a path of liberation that will show each of them the secret of their existence and a reason for living.”⁶³ The spirit is always at work to build a community of faith from the experience of peasants. God speaks to peasants when they gather to read the Scriptures and He reveals Himself through a community that is at work to emancipate themselves through evangelization. The comprehension of God’s revelation raises a need for the church to re-examine the practice of faith in dealing with the problems that arise in the villages and the slums. This radical demand is that “we live our faith in solidarity with the poor and the exploited in our societies.”⁶⁴ The inequalities of every sort that we encounter in everyday life challenge the African Christian to follow the crucified one of Golgotha who confronted everything that did not conform to God’s plan.

Every manifestation of our faith today, takes place in a world of domination and injustice. The implication of this is that we can no longer think of ourselves simply as people who have experienced a personal conversion and therefore live like foreigners, trying to convert others and therefore lift them out of this sinful world. Our faith should no longer be described simply and exclusively in terms of the settings of foreigners. In addition to conversion, African Christians have other concerns, preoccupations and objectives; to

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Ministry of the Granary; p94.

⁶⁴ Popular Resistance and Creativity; p98.

see people free themselves from oppression, from poverty and hunger. This commitment emanates from the realization that God transforms us while transforming the world, through the provocative power of the gospel. The fundamental aspect of our faith is that we discover in Jesus Christ, the God who frees and transforms life. This God speaks to us and summons the faith community through the facts of injustice and by every situation of misery. Faith, then, is at work among the poor in every place, when beginning with our own cross, we are called to confess Jesus crucified.⁶⁵

3.2 Eco-Theology – A Christian Conversation

Christianity has comprehended the marvel of creation in light of God, who creates, sustains and endows creation with freedom and autonomy.⁶⁶ However, modern societies are damaging the beauty, integrity, and functionality of God's creation culminating in a global ecological crisis. This ecological crisis necessitates concerted and serious action everywhere. There is a need to engage in actions that offer healing to the earth and limit the damage that modern life and civilisation have brought upon the planet.⁶⁷

Eco-theology is a form of contextual theology that is critical to Christianity, providing a study of various existing theologies as well as a reinterpretation of biblical passages. It also presents a Christian perspective on the global ecological crisis emphasising that the natural world is God's creation and is good.⁶⁸ Eco-theology, examines the interconnectedness of all things in creation as well as what it means to be human. It

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Louk & Tomren, 2019. p18.

⁶⁷ Padgett, A.G. & Jorgenson K. A. 2020.

⁶⁸ Mukaria, R.A. 2021. p17952-17958.

emphasises the importance of beliefs, concepts and axioms as well as the crucial function of praxis.⁶⁹

The purpose of ecological theology is twofold. On the one hand, it is a method to learn about ecology from Christian traditions in order to respond to today's environmental crisis. On the other hand, because theology is not static, it is an endeavor to renew and rethink established theological perspectives in light of the current environmental situation.⁷⁰ The two aims of eco-theology are therefore interrelated, one of the aims always also has implications for the other.

Eco-theology has been shaped by both historical and contemporary contexts.⁷¹ Christian eco-theology has been shaped by diverse theological and philosophical understandings of nature in the western world view.⁷² Contemporary Christian eco-theology arose in response to Lynn White Jr.'s article on "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," published in 1967 in which he held that "Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt" for the devastation of nature, that the current ecological crisis is imperatively rooted in the western understanding of Judeo-Christian theology which encourages human kind to subdue the earth and have dominion over it.⁷³ White's critique invited people of faith to interrogate their scriptures and Christian doctrines and to retrieve ecological insights from their religious sources to inspire their adherents to engage in creation care ministries.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Conradie, E.M. 2006.

⁷¹ Kearns Laurel, 2004. The Context of Eco-theology. p466.

⁷² Ibid, p467.

⁷³ Lynn White as quoted by; Sabada, L.M. 2021. Pp36-45.

⁷⁴ Mendoza, S. L. & Zachariah, G. 2022. Decolonizing Eco-Theology. p21.

White's critical writings about anthropocentrism, the transcendence of God, dualism, and a misplaced Christian attitude of human domination over creation greatly substantially impacted and shaped how Christians have approached the topic of ecological theology: "Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen. Man shares, in great measure, God's transcendence of nature. Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia's religions not only establishes a dualism of man and nature but insisted that it is God's will that man exploits nature for his proper ends".⁷⁵ White believed that the Christian faithful should "find a new religion or rethink our old one". He argued that our current environmental crisis is the result, not simply of our technological ability to impact and degrade the environment, but also our western worldview. The ecological crisis is fundamentally philosophical or ideological in nature; people's actions towards the environment are influenced by what they think about themselves in relation to things around them.⁷⁶

In response to Lynn White's challenge, eco-theologians have used various biblical reading techniques and methodologies to re-evaluate the human-nature relationship. African hermeneutics, liberation hermeneutics, feminist hermeneutics, and ecological hermeneutics are a few of the theoretical stances that hermeneutics adopt in theological studies.⁷⁷ Eco-theological hermeneutics is employed in eco-theology. Here, the meaning of the text is sought, found, and then connected to and applied to ecological and environmental challenges. The goal of eco-theological hermeneutics is to apply biblical knowledge, wisdom, and instruction to address the ecological crisis. It has a three

⁷⁵ Sabada quoting Lynn White, p38.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Osmer. R. R. 2008.

dimensions approach; reinvestigate, rediscover, and renew Christian traditions in the light of Bible and ecological crisis.⁷⁸ The re-evaluation has developed six principles of eco-theology. These are; affirmation (1 Tim. 4: 1-5), interconnectedness (Gen. 4), voice (Numbers 22: 21-35), purpose (Romans 8: 18-22), mutual custodianship (Psalms 8), and resistance (Jer. 12: 9).⁷⁹

3.2.1 Types of eco-theology:

Lynn White's blame of the Judaeo-Christian tradition for many of the ecological problems of the planet was premised on the argument that Genesis 1:26-28 had been crucial for the Christian understanding of creation. The idea that the Bible grants humans dominion over other creatures has resulted in a dualistic theology that pits man against nature in an effort to better human existence.⁸⁰ As a result natural theology supported actions and technology aimed at controlling and subduing the planet. While there is no denying the benefits of the dominion worldview, there have also been unexpectedly harmful side effects. Biblical scholarship has sought to recover more ecologically affirming models of Genesis 1: 26-28 and the scriptures in general.⁸¹

Stewardship:

The most prominent of these is the stewardship model, which holds that God has entrusted humans with the duty of taking care of the planet. Nowadays, a lot of Christians would argue that Genesis 1:26-28 is an appointment for stewardship rather than a directive for exploitation.⁸² Keeping the creation as God keeps us entails that the land as

⁷⁸ Mukaria, 2021.

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ This notion is attributed to Francis Bacon of the Renaissance period who understood subduing the earth and ruling over creatures a goal for which science and technology were a means. The task of science was to restore human dominion over the earth.

⁸¹ Orr, Andrew. 2019.

⁸² Baukham Richard, 2020. pp30-110.

much as humanity has its “Sabbath” (Exodus 23:10-12), that we may enjoy, but not destroy God’s good creation (e.g. Deut. 20:19, 22:6.⁸³ Put another way, the human role in relation to other creatures is one of care and service, exercised on behalf of God and with accountability to God. Christians are to treat creation with care because it has intrinsic value not merely for our use but also for itself and for God.⁸⁴

The stewardship model has got several limitations. Creation is made up of intricate ecosystems that are beyond human comprehension or ability to predict. It also assumes a hierarchical connection in which God rules over humans, who in turn are rule over the rest of creation.⁸⁵ Stewardship presupposes the need for wild nature to be restrained, corrected, and improved. It requires human intervention to provide order to develop its otherwise unrealised potential.⁸⁶ When the creation account in Genesis is looked at another way, human beings are primarily a component of creation. The dominion we are bestowed with does not elevate us beyond and above creation, but rather assigns us a specific function within it. We are creations of God, just like the other creatures in creation, related horizontally to them.⁸⁷

Eco-justice:

The liberative and revolutionary movements of the 1960s and the 1970s had significant influence on Christian theology. For eco-theology, a significant contribution was made

⁸³ Larry Rasmussen, 2006. pp174-184

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Orr, quoting James Lovelock’s “The Fallible Concept of Stewardship of the Earth”

⁸⁶ Baukham in *Being Human in the Community of Creation*.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p45.

by feminist thinkers and Latin American liberation theologians.⁸⁸ The eco-feminists⁸⁹ believe that the devastation of the planet and the oppression of women are two forms of violence perpetrated by males. Some argue that nature connects more and means more to women than to men, therefore, addressing the ecological crisis entails a social reordering to bring about justice and loving interrelationships between men and women, between classes and nations and between humans and the earth. The imperative is to heal the earth.⁹⁰ Liberation theologians especially Leonardo Boff integrated the ethics of ecology and justice, arguing that liberation theology and ecological discourse have something in common. They stem from a context of poverty and wretchedness, the tearing of the social fabric of millions of people and the destruction of the equilibrium of the planet.⁹¹

Eco-theology then is a form of liberation theology. It has in various ways and with many voices developed a cry for justice; for humans and for the planet itself. This is grounded in the right to live and to flourish for both human beings and for the whole community of creation. The model of eco-justice that results from the intersectional understanding of human oppression and ecological pollution means that there is an obligation on people to cease damaging living things and natural systems, and an obligation to heal and care for those places we are so actively damaging as a species. Our quest for full liberation includes a quest for justice for all creation.⁹²

⁸⁸ Padgett, A. G. & Jorgenson K. A. 2020. "For the Love of the World: A Dialogue on Ecotheology" in Jorgenson & Padgett. Eds. ECOTHEOLOGY: A Christian Conversation (William Eedermans Publishing), p29.

⁸⁹ According to Case Winters (2007), the eco-feminists included women such as Susan Griffin, Carolyn Merchant, the Colectivo Conspirando, Vandana Shiva, Sallie McFague, and Rosemary Radford Ruether.

⁹⁰ Mukaria, 2021.

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Padgett and Jorgenson, 2020.

3.2.2 Eco-theology and Christian Doctrine:

Eco-Christology:

Eco-Christology attempts to articulate the meaning and message of Jesus Christ in light of the current ecological crisis. A Christian approach to ecology involves both creation and salvation in Christ.⁹³ For Celia Deane-Drummond, if Christianity is to engage radically with the ecological crisis, it must do it with reference to Christ.⁹⁴ That Christology is key to the theology of nature was first mooted by Joseph Sittler in 1954. Later on, Edward P. Echlín in his book, “The Cosmic Circle: Jesus and Ecology” applied human ecological insights into Christology and pointed out that nature in Jesus’ surroundings had affected his teaching and life. When God incarnate came to us, he did so in a specific natural environment and used images of the natural world in his teaching. In Jesus’ time, the basic life support system of land, water, vegetation and animals had much to do with the practice of their faith and religion, and, Jesus articulated the message of God’s Kingdom using images from the natural environment. He used imagery such as; the sun and the rain (Mt. 5:45); the scorching heat and the south wind (Lk. 12:55); the clouds and the showers (Lk. 12:54); the earth and the sky (Lk. 12:56); the flashing of light (Mt. 24:27); the rock and the sand (Mt. 7:24-27); and the lamp (Mt 5:15); the salt of the world (Mt 5:13).

The link between Christology and creation theology may be understood from the incarnation. “The Word became flesh” is better understood if the purpose is to show that Jesus was a part of the ecological system. When Jesus Christ became man, he was as much human as any of us is, except for sin. Yet, the incarnation is not limited to a

⁹³ Edwards Denis, 2018. *Key Issues in Ecological Theology: Incarnation, Evolution, Communion*; p 66.

⁹⁴ Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008), 99. See also, Celia Deane-Drummond, *A Primer in Eco-theology: Theology for a Fragile Earth* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Companions Book, 2018).

narrative about God and humans. It is also a narrative about God and God's creation. The celebration of Christ's birth, thus has the potential to become a celebration of God's solidarity with all living beings.⁹⁵ The incarnation, viewed in light of the present crisis of life on our planet then, provides a deeper meaning of "God-with-us" in Christ, because it means that God is with all living things.

The theme of creation recurs throughout the Scriptures presenting Jesus Christ as the incarnation of God's wisdom. The Goal of God's mission in Christ is to bring about shalom to the entire created order.⁹⁶ According to Echlin, "texts from Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and parts of the Psalms, reflect the expectation that a descendant of David will bring justice, order, and peace. In Isaiah particularly, we find prophecies of a coming kingdom of peace which will encompass all humanity and other living species. The vision of a kingdom of peace encompasses both animals and humans. In fact, biblical shalom is inclusive; in the coming Kingdom, lions, humanity, snakes and other species will live in perfect harmony (Is 11:6-9; cf. 65: 25). The period of peace sets in when the Messiah (Christ) comes" and, like any other biblical theme, the consummation of shalom carries strong ecological implications.⁹⁷

The Pauline concept of reconciliation also envisions a proper human-environment interaction, one that is integral to Christ's redeeming mission. Paul argues that since God was making peace with the world via Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19), everything is included

⁹⁵ Tomren, S.T. 202. "What Would Jesus Do? – Incarnation and Soteriology in the Light of Ecology" in Louk, A., Tomren S.T. ET. Al. Eds. Contemporary Ecotheology, Climate Justice and Environmental Stewardship in World Religions. *Ecothee Volume 6*. Orthodox Academy of Crete Publication, World Council of Churches. p.73

⁹⁶ Baluci Claudette & Berry, J. A., 2021. The Christological Ecology of Joseph Ratzinger. *Melita Theologica: Journal of the Faculty of theology, University of Malta*, 71/2 (2021): 241-261

⁹⁷ Tomren 2021, p 74.

in Christ's reconciling effort. The terms "new creation" and "all things" in 2Corinthians 5:17 and 5:18, respectively, suggest that Paul may have meant to refer to the entire creation that has been made right with God through Christ.⁹⁸ While it is true that Paul focuses much of his attention in 2Corinthians 5:17–21 on humanity as the target of reconciliation, the fact that Paul also mentions other species as benefactors of reconciliation indicates that Paul believed that Christ's work had an ecological influence.

Eco-soteriology:

Jesus' incarnation has implications for our understanding of the cross, the resurrection and the ascension. Seeing the incarnation in ecological terms produces an understanding of the hope that lies in salvation of the world. The condition of sin, normally understood as forced on the earth by the fall of Adam and Eve, is healed through Jesus.⁹⁹ The description of Jesus' death in the Gospel according to Matthew implies that everything on earth is affected by the crucifixion; while for Paul in Colossians 1:19-20, the cross becomes the remedy that heals the wounds of the earth. When this perspective is applied to the resurrection narrative, the resurrection of Christ in flesh signals new life for the whole biosphere. It signals a new era for creation where the corrupted condition becomes transformed. Pain, suffering, murder and struggle are replaced with communion and harmony.¹⁰⁰

The Christian hope of a new heaven is the same expectation for nature of a new condition, a re-establishment or a renewal in relation to the salvific work of Jesus Christ. From the point of view of ecology, incarnation is the bridge between the cross and resurrection on

⁹⁸ Van Leeuwen, R. C. 2020. 'Christ's Resurrection and the Creation's Vindication', in DeWitt (ed.), *The Environment*, 67-68.

⁹⁹ Tomren, 2021, p. 76

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

one hand and the renewal of creation in the Kingdom of God on the other. Soteriology has been understood in three principle ways; from the change of the human mind through the death of Jesus, based on the atonement – where God is legally compensated by Jesus’ death and from the defeat of evil spirits and the devil. Soteriology from the perspective of ecology is about God identifying with God’s fallen creation.¹⁰¹

Eco-eschatology:

The second coming of Christ, guarantees eternal life for his people, and the hope that Christ will return as a guarantee for his people is the hope of the Christian faith. Isaiah prophesies of the creation of new heavens and a new earth in which God’s people will be so happy that they will not remember the sorrows of the former heavens and earth (Is. 65:17-25).¹⁰² Similarly, John’s vision in Revelation 21, a new heaven and new earth are the places where God and his redeemed people dwell, above which God is enthroned.¹⁰³ The conditions of the new heavens and earth described in both texts show that they will not only be enjoyed by humans, but also by other living things. It can also be seen that the new heavens and earth do not only deal with life after death. The eschatology of the new heaven and earth will always deal with the current state of the earth.

The dream that everything might live in harmony in the world to come, viewed against the current suffering of the ecosystem, makes Christian eschatology ecological utopia. In the view of ecology, eschatology is not just about life after death, but also about the future of the earth the human beings inhabit as their common home. Life after death therefore is inseparable from how humans preserve and protect the natural environment today.

¹⁰¹ Tomren 2020, p.102-103

¹⁰² Keriapy, F. 2023. The Significance of Eco-Theology in the Perspective of Christian Eschatology: As an Attempt to Embody the New Heavens and earth. *Tumou Tou Jurnal Ilmiah*, 10 (2), 148-157.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Jesus' proclamation of the coming reign of God and the promises that accompany it now extends beyond the individual to include all creation. The ancient biblical promise of salvation has not been fully realized for all creation.¹⁰⁴

3.2.3 Eco-theology in African Christian Theology

Eco-theology within Africa Christian theology has arisen as a result of the consciousness of the African context. In the precolonial world view, the human person and the environment enjoyed a symbiotic relationship. This relationship extended to the animate and inanimate worlds of the human person in which the human person is seen as inseparable from nature. Nature in this world view is understood as a system through which God is disclosed to the human person, through visible animals, plants, spiritual beings, heavenly beings and earthly objects.¹⁰⁵ Exploitation of the environment had consequences for the present and the future. It was understood that the happiness of the human person depended on his ability to maintain a balance with the symbiotic realities.¹⁰⁶

The natural environment then, is both a physical home and a spiritual realm. There is a unity with the creator through nature, humanity and nature exist on the same plane. According to Kroesbergen, Benezet Bujo argued that, "Africans regard themselves in close relationship with the entire cosmos. Total realisation of self is impossible without peaceful coexistence with minerals, plants and animals." If humanity and nature are one, then nature is not something that we should conquer and cultivate, nor should we revere

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ See Mbiti (1970), *Concepts of God in Africa*. SPCK: East Africa.

¹⁰⁶ Kanu, I. Anthony (Ed.), 2021. *African Eco-theology: Meaning, Forms, and Expressions*. The Association for the Promotion of African Studies. pX.

and idealise it. It is simply what is, and we are a part – a natural part – of it.¹⁰⁷ As such, the African understands life as sacramental; daily existence within the environment points to something deeper than can be seen. Nature is the locus through which God reveals Himself to His people. African eco-theology then is social responsibility with a view to saving the modes of divine presence.¹⁰⁸

Doing eco-theology from the perspective of the African cultural context focuses on the interrelationship of the African experience with nature in light of the current ecological crisis. It emphasizes the need for the African Christian to see pleasing God as incomplete without loving fellow human beings and nature. Jesus' ministry amongst the Jewish people, using categories that they could understand and the witness of the church over the millennia have driven the need for a contextualized eco-theology for Africa.¹⁰⁹ African eco-theology emanates in Scripture as its principal source. Its other sources include, the historical experience of the African people, African proverbs, African mythologies, African totems and African taboos.¹¹⁰ Mukaria argues that eco-theological discourse and practice in Africa has to take its position within indigenous ecological ethics, indigenous knowledge and values.¹¹¹

Within African Christian theology, eco-theology can be viewed from six different angles.¹¹² The first is the westernization and colonization of Africa, which is manifested in the erasure and deterioration of traditional knowledge. The second is cultural, as seen

¹⁰⁷ Kroesbergen, H. & Kroesbergen-Kamps, J., 2021, 'The non-romantic idea of nature in African theology', HTS Theologiese Studies/ Theological Studies 77(3), a6624. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i3.6624>

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ Kanu, 2021

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Mukaria Andrew Ratanya., 2021. "The emergence of 20th Century eco-theology, its main figures, and key contributions. International Journal of Current Research, 13, (06), 17952-17958.

¹¹² Ibid

by the way that organic cosmic relationships are undermined by the deterioration of cultural understanding. The third is social; it is understood in light of problems like poverty, the growing wealth gap, and the collapse of capitalism, diseases like AIDS, and other forms of stigma. The fourth is political and deals with terrorism, insecurity, corruption, and ethno-politics. The fifth addresses gender, taking into account topics such as patriarchy and the effects of ecological degradation on women. The sixth discusses nature and how the severe deterioration of the environment calls attention to biblical narratives and Christian doctrine.¹¹³

3.3 The Eco-theology of Jean-Marc Éla

In “My faith as an African”, Éla’s theological reflections focused largely on how human actions had an effect on the life and the interests of the rural Kirdi population in Northern Cameroon. His thinking about the human problem is expressed in reflection, on God’s action amongst people struggling with traditional beliefs amidst the strain of modern life, on the relationship of the gospel to crucial aspects of the people’s religious culture, and, on the possible place of Christianity in modern Africa. Ecological insight is not the mainstay of his reflection, he does not position his thinking in terms of the significance of the land or the mountains, neither does he use the term “eco-theology” in his writing, but the theology of nature is by no means peripheral in his thought. In fact, what I identify as his interest in ecology within his theological reflections, was developed in conversation and observations of rural and marginalized people eking a living off the land. The attitude towards nature advocated by Éla is liberational in its thrust, but also rooted in the traditions of the African peoples.

¹¹³ Ibid

Éla, is critical of the Judeo-Christian attitude towards nature expressed in Cameroon and Africa in general, through colonialism. This imported rationalism he says, should be cleansed with “a wash in the pond of Siloam”.¹¹⁴ The cultural context and the local understanding of God’s revelation among the Kirdi was for Éla that “pond of Siloam”. Éla’s “Reawakening the Wellsprings” is reminiscent of Lyn White’s “Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis”, which can be regarded as a theological formulation of the fundamental idea of ecology, the interdependence between humankind and nature. Éla struggled to express his Christian faith, “in a culture marked by the hills and the millet”.¹¹⁵ The fruits of the earth not only provided food, but also provided narratives that unified the communities’ past, present and future.¹¹⁶ It is Éla’s general view that subsistence crops such as millet feature in cosmogonic myths that determine the relationship people have with the environment and provide a narrative framework for eco-theological ethics.

In the third essay in “Reawakening the Wellspring” that he titled “Telling the Story of God’s Revelation”, Éla gives treatment to the role the inanimate world plays in how God reveals Himself to humankind. Ecologically speaking, the grasslands and forests, the lakes, rivers and the cattle all play a key role in how God reveals himself in daily life. In his own words, “the African civilization is a civilization of symbols. In it, relationships between one human being and another and between human beings and nature, pass through the invisible, the symbolic place where all reality acquires meaning”. God

¹¹⁴ J. P. Heijke, “Thinking in the Scene of Disaster: Theology of Jean-Marc Éla from Cameroon,” *Exchange* 29.1 (January 2000): 84.

¹¹⁵ *My Faith as an African*, p5.

¹¹⁶ Adamah, Jackson Nii Sabaah, 2020. Food insecurity, Eucharist, and community: Reading Jean-Marc Éla’s “shade-tree” theology in light of Balthasar’s ecclesiology. *Review and Expositor*. Vol. 117(4) 536–546. p539.

reveals himself to humankind daily through the drama of symbols such as proverbs, water, fire, trees and wildlife. Reawakening the wellsprings means breaking the chains of western rationality. Éla invokes the experience of Jesus of Nazareth whose manner of speech echoed that of peasants and shepherds in defense of the place symbols have in the encounter with God.

In reflections on “faith at the grassroots” Éla outlines the basic vision underlying his thinking of the role of nature and faith in the liberation of the human person. He writes that “the salvation of the soul and the efforts to heal are treated as consolation within a system of oppression and domination”. For Éla, concern for the poor and the marginalized, the liberation of women and children from miseries of any kind, ought to be at the heart of Christianity in Africa.¹¹⁷ In the “empty granary”, he was concerned with the question of food and sufficiency in the practice of Christianity in Africa. He asserted that those who dine and commune with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist meal cannot be left to die in the deadly harvesting hand of famine because the granaries in their village huts were empty. In what I view as Éla’s liberation paradigm of eco-theology, my Christian faith as an African cannot in itself enable me or millions of other Africans to escape the agony over where the next meal will come from. Therefore, an active faith must translate into the rejection of any system whether political, economic, religious, cultural or social that might exacerbate the ecological crisis, which he refers to as the “empty granary – signs of famine and death”.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Iheanacho

¹¹⁸ Éla, p 93.

Éla's Christology views Jesus as the man that breaks down the frontiers of ritual that separate individuals or peoples from each other. The healing that he undertakes reintegrates the human being into the society at large.¹¹⁹ He suggests that in Jesus' salvific work, the human race is not saved independent of the universe. "The manifestation of the glory of the Risen One will cover the entire cosmos", he says.¹²⁰ All of creation will be saved and is eagerly waiting for the revelation of God. In his view, Christ's redeeming mission is the reason for the hope of all creation to be freed from the bondage of sin – ranging from slavery, to decadence and degradation of the environment. Incarnation for Éla points to the "hope of a bodily re-creation involving both the physical world and the individuals themselves in their relation to others and to themselves". He views the healings performed by Jesus as a second creation of the entire universe within our history.¹²¹

The cross of Jesus Christ is for Éla the cross of the third world, which according to him is the historic body of Christ today. In view of this, Éla writes that "the people of faith must go and rediscover Christ in the slums, in places of misery and domination, among the majority of the poor and the oppressed people". Put in ecological terms, the cross of Jesus Christ is also the cross of the richest ecosystems of the planet. The people of faith must go and rediscover Christ in the shorelines of our lakes, in the surroundings of our forests in the flooded plains of the Katonga River, amongst the displaced Batwa of Southwestern Uganda and the mountain people of Eastern Uganda. To make salvation in Christ visible, we need to take up the questions being asked from the periphery, from the margins, from the hotspots of the ecological crisis. Éla presents the view that to speak of

¹¹⁹ Éla, p 78

¹²⁰ Éla, p 79

¹²¹ Ibid

the good news of Jesus Christ afresh, Christianity needs to recognize the question being asked of God whenever the impacts of the ecological crisis (such as famine) are incompatible with God's plan for humanity and the world. To believe Christ today, is to have faith in God incarnate who places himself at the side of human beings as they struggle.

3.4 Conclusion

Jean-Marc Éla's presents the challenge placed upon Christianity by the unique African context of those rejected by history. He presents a brand of theological reflections that is fundamentally liberational but steeped in the culture and traditions of the African people. Éla's basic argument, which he presents in three major parts is that, at a time when Africans like other peoples are facing the shock of technological and cultural modernity, liberation of the oppressed must be the primary condition of any authentic inculturation of the Christian message.

The ecological crisis that we face calls for a review of some of the existing theologies and a reinterpretation of biblical passages. It also provides a Christian voice towards the ecological crisis insisting that the natural world is God's creation and is good. The aim of ecological theology is twofold. On the one hand it is a way to gain ecologic knowledge from Christian traditions in order to be able to react to the environmental crisis of our times. On the other hand, as theology is not static, it is an attempt to renew and rethink established theological perspectives that take the current environmental situation into account. Eco-theology may viewed as stewardship or eco-justice.

In relation to Christian doctrine, a Christian approach to ecology involves both creation and salvation in Christ. The Goal of God's mission in Christ is to bring about shalom to the entire created order. The cross is understood as the remedy that heals the wounds of the earth. The New heavens and new earth hoped for at the second coming of Christ, will be enjoyed by humans and other living things. Life after death therefore is inseparable from how humans preserve and protect the natural environment today. Jesus' proclamation of the coming reign of God and the promises that accompany it now extends beyond the individual to include all creation.

Within African Christianity, the natural environment, is viewed both a physical home and a spiritual realm. Nature is the locus through which God reveals Himself to His people. African eco-theology then is social responsibility with a view to saving the modes of divine presence. African eco-theology emanates from Scripture. Within African Christianity, eco-theology may deal with the deterioration of traditional knowledge; with the degradation of cultural understanding; with issues of poverty, the growing wealth gap, and the collapse of capitalism, diseases like AIDS, and other forms of stigma; with terrorism, insecurity, corruption, and ethno-politics; topics such as patriarchy and the effects of ecological degradation on women; and, with nature and how the severe deterioration of the environment calls attention to biblical narratives and Christian doctrine.

Ecological insight is not the mainstay of Éla's reflection, but the theology of nature is by no means peripheral in his thought. The attitude towards nature advocated by Éla is liberational in its thrust, but also rooted in the traditions of the African peoples. The imported Judeo-Christian rationalism with which we approach ecological issues, should

be cleansed with “a wash in the pond of Siloam” which is the culture of the African people. God reveals himself to humankind daily through the drama of symbols such as proverbs, water, fire, trees and wildlife. Those who dine and commune with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist meal cannot be left to die in the deadly harvesting hand of famine brought about by an ecological crisis that turns the granaries in their village huts empty.

Through the redemptive work of Jesus’, humanity is not saved independent of the nature. The entire cosmos will be filled with the manifestation of the glory of the Risen One. The cross of Jesus Christ is the cross of the third world. Put in ecological terms, the cross of Jesus Christ is also the cross of the richest ecosystems of the planet. The people of faith must go and rediscover Christ in the shorelines of our lakes, in the surroundings of our forests in the flooded plains of the Katonga River, amongst the displaced Batwa of Southwestern Uganda and the mountain people of Eastern Uganda.

CHAPTER FOUR

ÉLA'S UNDERSTANDING OF COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES

4.0 Introduction

This dissertation's fourth chapter examines Éla's teaching on the "empty granary." Could Jean-Marc Éla's teaching on the relationship between communities and common property resources be made clearer by the empty granary? The natural world offers both the essentials of life and locations where one might experience the presence of God. Although it hasn't always been seen as such, nature is capital in the context of human growth. The rural poor rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods, yet managing these resources is difficult because they are seen as shared property with limited access.

Éla uses the metaphor of the granary; but does it mean common property resources? It is crucial to comprehend what these resources are, their importance to the rural poor, and the complexities of their governance. While Éla's goal is to highlight how African Christians must address the causes of death in rural African communities, this chapter aims to apply his insights on the "ministry of the granary" to eco-theology more broadly and to the management of common property resources in particular. His fundamental assumptions need not and have not been altered in the service of an ecological theology.

In the process of inquiring how Jean-Marc Éla's theological propositions address the tragedy of common property resources, the core question that would structure this inquiry

would be what common property resources are from the point of view of the Christian faith, how they are managed and how this faith influences their governance. This chapter relates to the “ministry of the granary” of Éla’s reflections, which has to do with the implications of African Christianity in a situation of degradation, oppression and want.

In what follows, I begin with a detailed description of common property resources, address natural capital and the tragedy of the commons. This is followed by a discussion on the governance of common property resources and a discussion on the relationship between faith and resource governance. This is then followed by an appropriation of Éla’s ministry of the granary relating to faith-based participation in the governance of common property resources. I conclude and summarise with responses to the question as to how Éla’s theological project relates to common property resources.

4.1 Common Property Resources

Humanity receives its fundamental physical needs from creation. The natural world provides the objects we use on a daily basis. It provides us with the food we eat, the fabrics we wear, and the building materials for our homes, schools and churches. It is also a place where people experience a closeness with God through its beauty and wonder. In human development terms, the physical components of an ecosystem working together to produce something of value to people is also referred to as Natural Capital.¹²² Every human development system therefore, rests on the foundation of nature. The examples of natural capital that exist can be classified into the following categories;

¹²² T. G. O’Higgins et al. (eds.), 2020. Ecosystem-Based Management, Ecosystem Services and Aquatic Biodiversity, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45843-0_8

renewable resources¹²³, non-renewable resources¹²⁴, recoverable resources¹²⁵, and cultivated resources¹²⁶.

Nature is capital, but it has not always been viewed that way in development economics. Instead, it was viewed as a backdrop from which resources were extracted and was for a long time excluded from economic forecast.¹²⁷ Development economics neglected the role natural capital plays in economic activity and failed to recognize the importance of natural resources on the livelihoods of the rural poor. Development economic models ignored local natural resource bases and the wide variety of institutions that have evolved for managing them.¹²⁸ When the literature emerged on the economics of natural capital,¹²⁹ it was noted that natural resources are communally owned; the local natural resource base consists of capital assets that are common property, but whose access is restricted to people with specific rights.¹³⁰ These natural capital assets were referred to Common Property Resources.

Differing ideas on what defines common property have resulted from various legal systems and cultural traditions. Common property may include any area that is not owned by a single person and is part of the public domain, such as national parks, river systems, and mountain regions. The implications of this include co-ownership rights that are unalienable, divisible, and undevelopable without the approval of all owners of the

¹²³ These can be restored by natural processes at a faster rate than the consumption of living beings and are inexhaustible for example solar radiation and wind.

¹²⁴ Those natural resources of which there are limited deposits and therefore may run out, for example fossil fuels and minerals.

¹²⁵ Examples here include drinking water, fertile soils and even the Ozone layer.

¹²⁶ Includes areas and systems of agricultural and forestry production.

¹²⁷ Dasgupta, 2005.

¹²⁸ Ibid

¹²⁹ See for example, Constanza & Daly, 1992. Natural Capital and Sustainable Development. *Conservation Biology* Vol. 6, No. 1, March 1992.

¹³⁰ Dasgupta, 2005.

property. Resources of value to the planet that are shared by all and not held by any one country can also be referred to by this term. Considering all of these points of view, common property resources are public goods that are utilized concurrently by many users due to challenges in establishing or enforcing distinctive rights.¹³¹

Common property resources are broadly defined as natural resources over which several users have overlapping rights of simultaneous or sequential use, irrespective of the economic nature of the resource¹³² and of the property regime formally applicable to it.¹³³ Common property resources include, among other things, water, fisheries, forestry, wildlife, pastures, minerals, petroleum deposits and genetic resources. Land tenure and rights are important in this context because, first, land may be held or utilized in common (such as grazing lands); second, even in the event that it isn't, rights over land and rights over the "common" natural resources it contains (such as forestry) are intimately related. In reality, many commons management systems involve a combination of many property regimes, including components of common, private, and state property, as opposed to a clear division between common and private/state property.¹³⁴

A resource is common property when social systems exist to utilize it based on the principles of justice and sustainability. This involves a combination of rights and responsibilities among users, a combination of utilization and conservation, a sense of co-production with nature and sharing them among members of diverse communities.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Cedd Hesse & Pippa Trench, 2000. Who's managing the Commons? Inclusive Management for a Sustainable Future. Securing the Commons No. 1. ISSN - 1605 – 2293.

¹³² Some economic resources are common pool resources, some are not.

¹³³ Lorenzo Cotula, 2004. Land in Africa: Market Asset, or Secure Livelihood?: Securing the commons in an era of privatisation: Policy and legislative challenges. Church House, Westminster, London

¹³⁴ Ibid

¹³⁵ Vandana Shiva, DEMOCRACY OF COMMONS: BIODIVERSITY, WATER AND AIR; in Governance of Commons and Livelihood Security, Himadri Sinha & Anant Kumar (Eds.), Xavier Institute of Social Service 978 - 81 - 904110 - 2 – 8, p 17.

The users of the common property resource view their heritage in terms of possessing community and individual responsibility, as opposed to viewing it in terms of property or a good which has an owner and is used for extracting economic benefit. In rural indigenous communities, access to and utilization of common property resources might mean the difference between life and death. As such, common property resources are seen more as a network of relationships rather than a set of economic rights.¹³⁶

4.2 Managing Common Property Resources

A common property resource is available to essentially anyone, but it cannot be used or enjoyed by multiple people at the same time, at least with the same level of quality. For this reason, common property resources often face the challenge of overuse, for example, when too many people fish in the same fishery or withdraw groundwater from the same aquifer.¹³⁷ The ecologist Garrett Hardin later called that overuse “the tragedy of the commons”, insisting that “freedom in the commons brings ruin to all”.¹³⁸ Hardin tried to derive a lesson that where common property resources are involved, the rational behaviour of each individual implies the irrationality for the whole group. He did not believe in the existence of the common approach shared by people and argued the necessity of break-up of common property into either state-control or private ownership. According to Hardin, the only solution for the tragedy of the commons was restriction of access to common property resources, with restrictions legally imposed by a government and a change in morals.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ Note this footnote from Chapter 13 on tragedy of the commons

¹³⁸ Dasguptas quoting Hardin 1968

¹³⁹ Ibid

Garett Hardin's contentions were criticized by both social scientists and economists. For example, Dasgupta showed that an open access renewable resource would not be ruined if the cost of extraction was large relative to the value of the resource itself.¹⁴⁰ Tropical rainforests had been safe before the chainsaw and fisheries of the open seas not threatened until the emergence of sophisticated fishing equipment. Hardin did not globalize that local institutions evolve to forestall the tragedy of the commons.¹⁴¹ Ostrom modified Hardin's ideas and showed that common property resources can be managed by the people who use them rather than by governments or private companies. Many societies had worked out institutional arrangements for managing the commons that depended on social norms and customs rather than on the laws. Cooperative local management of common property resources is effective under certain conditions including; the involvement of resource users, accountable monitoring of the resource, functional conflict resolution mechanisms, rules for using the resource and sanctions for breaking those rules.¹⁴²

Historically, the more powerful people have used policy processes and legal systems to enable or ratify their grabbing of valuable common property resources.¹⁴³ During the rise of colonialism, land and forests were the first resources to be converted from common property resources to commodities. The destruction of the commons was undertaken to provide a supply of natural resources as raw materials to feed industrial growth and capital accumulation. Colonial governments introduced legislations that declared community forests as protected areas and in effect started the scientific management of forests; which amounted to the erosion of the rights of local people to forest produce.

¹⁴⁰

¹⁴¹ Dasgupta

¹⁴² See Ostrom, 1990 – Governing the Commons

¹⁴³ Lorenzo Cotula, Securing the Commons in an era of privatisation.

The creation of forest reserves turned common property resources into commercial resources.¹⁴⁴ During the colonial period, while forests and wetlands were exploited for commercial use, the peasants were forced to grow cash crops instead of food. The effects on the peasants were the erosion of usufruct rights of access to food, fuel, and livestock grazing lands. This marginalization of communities' rights over their forests, sacred groves and wastelands has been the prime cause of impoverishment.¹⁴⁵

In the post-colonial and development era, common property resources were enclosed and community power was undermined through take over by the state. Thus, forests, rangelands, wetlands and water resources were made state property, leading to the alienation of local communities and the destruction of the resource base.¹⁴⁶ The state through centralized agencies and institutions promoted rigid protection of common property resources, citing the risks of relying on complex and “backward” communities with many different interests. These state agencies lacked resources and the transparency needed for implementing policies and enforcing regulations. Across Africa, these agencies lacked the legitimacy to negotiate with powerful interests; the commons they managed were mostly on paper. Poverty, ecological destruction and social disintegration and political disempowerment have been the result of such state driven “enclosures”.¹⁴⁷

In the era of privatization, the commons were enclosed and the power of communities was undermined by a corporate enclosure in which life itself was transformed into the private property of corporations. Economists and private capital introduced new models of managing Common Property Resources. Following economic models they posited that

¹⁴⁴ Vandana Shiva

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

¹⁴⁷ Himadri Sinha, *Multilevel Adjustments in Commons Governance*.

efficient use of the commons involves regulation, quotas and tax. The corporate enclosure happened in two ways. First, intellectual property rights systems allowed the “enclosure” of biodiversity and knowledge, thus eroding the commons and the community. Secondly, the corporation was treated as the only form of association with legal personality. The corporations also tended towards protectionism and the segregation of people from the commons.

In the globalization era, the governance of common property resources evolved to co-management and community-based conservation of the commons, founded upon the desire to connect local communities to global processes. Community-based management includes the protection of common property resources by, for, and with the local community, taking into account diverse institutional linkages at the local level and multiple levels of organisation that impact and shape institutions at the local level. There is an interplay of institutions across scale with institutional linkages and multi-level governance systems.¹⁴⁸

In the tropics, community-based management has been encouraged for decades now, but, the local level institutions involved are only one level in a multi-level system with a paucity of strong institutions. The implication of this is that community-based management of common property natural resources cannot be management that is conceived and only implemented at the local level. It is decentralized governance that starts from the ground up but involves a network of interactions at various levels.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid

Governance of common property resources in the globalized world requires institutions that link the local level to the various higher levels of social and political organisation.¹⁴⁹

4.3 Faith and Common Property Resources

The subject of the relationship between spirituality and resource management has been addressed by several fora.¹⁵⁰ It is recognised that the spiritual and non-material values of communities influence environmental outcomes. It is also established that religion can have positive outcomes for natural resource management.¹⁵¹ The function of religion in managing community property resources emanates from two important characteristics of common property resources. On the one hand, one user's consumption of the resource subtracts from what is available to others. On the other hand, the high cost of exclusion means that it is difficult to prevent non-users from consuming the resource or to otherwise impose obligations on those who use it. The common property resource community therefore have dilemmas caused by a divergence between individual and community level interests.¹⁵²

The first dilemma involves motivating people to forego excessive use of a subtractable resource. The second dilemma concerns motivating individuals to contribute to the physical and social infrastructure that makes appropriation of the common property resource equitable. In addition, it is difficult to exclude non-contributors from benefiting for free from an open resource.¹⁵³ The variables that ultimately affect a community's

¹⁴⁹ Barrett, C.B., K. Brandon, C. Gibson and H. Gjertsen (2001). Conserving tropical biodiversity amid weak institutions. *Bio science*, 51. 497-502.

¹⁵⁰ This includes the WWF Program on Faith and Conservation and the IUCN WCPA Specialist Group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas.

¹⁵¹ Cox et al

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Ibid

ability to manage common property resources are divided into three types: institutions, community attributes and resource characteristics.¹⁵⁴ Institutional features may include monitoring, sanctioning and multiple levels of organisation. Community attributes include leadership, social capital and group size. Resource attributes may include spatial extent, visibility or temporal predictability.¹⁵⁵

The value of religious beliefs in the governance of common property resources has developed from a comparison between religious beliefs and natural selection. In competitive environments, natural selection favours behaviours that lead to better survival and reproduction. In the same way that many different genotypes may lead to the same adaptive phenotype, many different beliefs can lead to the same adaptive behaviour including adaptive natural resource governance.¹⁵⁶ Religion can help implement the variables important in achieving community management of common property resources, by overcoming the problem of cooperation.¹⁵⁷

In an analysis of the governance of common property resources, Cox et al found that faith played important roles in accomplishing community level common property resource governance functions. Faith mediates the implementation of boundaries in three ways. First, it gives authority to key persons in the community to draw the lines distinguishing different user groups within the community. Second, faith can give additional significance to pre-existing group characteristics, upon which social boundaries are ultimately drawn. Religion also played a role in delineating physical boundaries, through

¹⁵⁴ See Agarwal, 2001

¹⁵⁵ Cox

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

the use of symbols such as handmade carvings, mountain tops, burial grounds, sacred streams and palaces.

Faith also plays a role in the design and enforcement of appropriation rules that prescribe the method, timing and extent of resource extraction. Appropriation rules implemented through religious authorities concern restrictions on harvesting and use of specific resources and in particular locations. Appropriation rules are most frequent in forest cases, where rules apply to sacred tree species, to specific animals and plants. Religiously mediated restrictions also include the prohibition of bathing in sacred rivers or farming in sacred forests. In fisher cases, religiously mediated rules, regulate the timing of use, where harvesting is permissible only during certain seasons that are marked by religious calendars often opened and closed the rough the celebration of religious ceremonies.

Faith has a role to play in observing the extractive activities of resource users, which is important in dissuading those members who might otherwise appropriate excessive amounts for themselves. Religious monitoring of common property resources takes a variety of forms. In some cases, religious leaders such as priests participate in patrolling the resource in question. In other cases, community members are expected to report transgressions through religious leaders. In most cases according to Cox et al, users believe that the resource in question has supernatural entities such as ancestral spirits that constantly watch for transgressions.¹⁵⁸

Faith has always played an important role in sanctioning the people who break the rules around the use of common property resources. The sanctions take several forms; in some

158

instances, religious leaders are involved in the determination of fines. In more traditional systems sacrifices to supernatural entities are paid as atonement for one's transgressions. The sanction mechanism was that the supernatural entities to which these sacrifices are made, are capable of delivering retribution to those who break the rules.¹⁵⁹ The penalties levied are graduated, with more serious transgressions being punished more severely. The consequences of the sanctions may be material such as sacrificing an animal or they may be immaterial such as being shunned socially.

Faith is important in the fulfilment of leadership functions within the governance of common property resources. The role that it plays with respect to leadership is the provision of authority to the leader who in turn accomplishes important governance tasks.¹⁶⁰ Within the governance of common property resources, the community will ascribe specific names to the religious leaders including, priests, healers, and a variety of other names that are specific to a particular belief system. The most common tasks religious leaders play in the management of common property resources include, conducting rituals and communicating on behalf of their communities with supernatural entities.

Faith then plays an important role in managing the commons. This fact reinforces the argument made in favour of the importance of local institutions and culture. When community beliefs and practices are upheld, they increase user buy-in and lower the transaction costs of managing the resource. Community faith systems are easily crowded out by external influencers, yet they still have important adaptive functions.

¹⁵⁹ See Cox

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

4.4 Éla's Ministry of the Granary: Faith Based Participation in Managing the Commons

Drought and famine were an African scourge before the current ecological crisis. The food shortages of the African continent caused numerous public appeals for food by the Food and Agricultural organisation. Christians continue to celebrate the Eucharist while the food shortages and the degradation of the commons goes on. Practice of the Christian faith continuously faces a challenge from African men and women “who agonise over where their next meal will come from” or whether access to common property resources will continue to be guaranteed. The faith community is exposed to the dangers of unbelief every time the Eucharist is celebrated in areas where people are excluded from the commons, or according to Éla, “where no one is working to create conditions that would allow hungry people to feed themselves”.¹⁶¹

Common property resource users may be prevented from “feeding their families” in several ways. For example, artisanal fishermen may be prevented from fishing through an expensive permitting system.¹⁶² Éla describes them as prisoners of a system developed elsewhere for the interests of others.¹⁶³ There are attempts everywhere at modernisation of the village that endanger the common property resources, the productive base of the society that lies in the village. At the same time, corporate interests continue to view the African economy as a source of coffee, cotton, timber, crude oil, and other raw materials. The overexploitation of common property resources is guaranteed by a coercive

¹⁶¹ The Granary is empty, p 88.

¹⁶² See Fisheries livelihood report

¹⁶³ Ibid

apparatus of multinational companies supported by the government. The result is a marginalized peasantry who feel that the government follows a model of development for African villages based on exploitation.

The center of gravity of Christianity has over the past three decades moved to Africa and the global south. The irruption of the poor and marginalized, excluded from the commons, challenges our faith as Africans. Éla argues that “the church can no longer pass by the man who fell among the robbers”.¹⁶⁴ Like this man, the user communities around our common property resources, “are threatened by the clutches of famine whose very appearance strangles the whole of life”. In order to confront the culture of exploitation and marginalization around the use and management of the commons, Éla proposes a rethink of African Christianity. In his view, the experience of Pentecost makes it clear that the gospel should be lived and translated in all languages, but, “it has failed to enter genuinely into the reality of the African peasant and root itself there”.¹⁶⁵ Our evangelization efforts must be understood with reference to the down to earth questions of our communities where the Kingdom of God is built day by day.

Éla’s empty granary is a metaphor for a set of sociological, environmental, and political conditions that breed messengers of death and in turn determine the church’s response to the tragedy of the commons. According to Éla, “friends of the gospel” must be conscious of God’s presence “in the hut of a mother whose granary is empty”. The people who dine and commune with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist meal, should not be left to die in the deadly harvesting hand of famine because the granaries in the village huts were

¹⁶⁴ Éla, *the Confrontation of Culture and Irruption of the Poor*, p 90.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*

empty.¹⁶⁶ An active faith must translate into the rejection of any system whether political, economic, religious, cultural or social that might produce “empty granaries”.

Éla’s “ministry of the granary” had the goal to shelter peasants from the weapon of food, in order that families may not be crushed by the requirements to produce pea nuts, cocoa, coffee or cotton, to feed the industries of the oppressor. It was based on the understanding that God wills that humanity should be fed (Gen. 42: 1-2, 43: 1-2), and in the end God identifies with the hungry (Matt. 25: 35-42). Because the God of the Gospel is revealed as the God who brings life, our faith requires us to denounce the exploitation of peasants and support new forms of relationships where people can organise themselves so that no one is deprived of the needed ration of millet. A “ministry of the granary” understood from the point of view of common property resources, demands a clear understanding of the importance of the commons in the existence of the people.

4.5 Conclusion

In the process of inquiring whether Éla’s theological reflections could serve as basis for addressing the tragedy of the commons, the core question that structured this inquiry was what common property resources mean from the point of view of faith. It was established that common property resources are public goods that are utilized concurrently by many users due to challenges in establishing or enforcing distinctive rights. They are natural resources over which several users have overlapping rights of simultaneous or sequential use, irrespective of the economic nature of the resource and of the property regime formally applicable to it. Common property resources include, among other things,

¹⁶⁶ Iheanacho

water, fisheries, forestry, wildlife, pastures, minerals, petroleum deposits and genetic resources.

For rural indigenous communities, access to and utilization of common property resources might mean the difference between life and death. For this reason, common property resources often face the challenge of overuse, for example, when too many people fish in the same fishery or withdraw groundwater from the same aquifer, what is called the tragedy of the commons. A solution to the tragedy of the commons might be restrictions to access imposed by a government or a change in morals. However, common property resources can be managed by the people who use them rather than by governments or private companies. Many societies had worked out institutional arrangements for managing the commons that depended on social norms and customs rather than on the laws. Governance of the commons has evolved with time, in the current globalised environment, requires institutions that link the local level to the various higher levels of social and political organisation.

It is recognised that the spiritual and non-material values of communities influence environmental outcomes, and that religion can have positive outcomes for natural resource management. The function of religion in managing community property resources emanates from two important characteristics of common property resources; subtractability and exclusion. Faith plays important roles in accomplishing community level common property resource governance functions. Éla's empty granary is a metaphor for a set of sociological, environmental, and political conditions that breed messengers of death and in turn determine the church's response to the tragedy of the

commons. An active faith must translate into the rejection of any system whether political, economic, religious, cultural or social that might produce “empty granaries”.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH OF UGANDA ON COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES

5.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the teaching of the Church of the Province of Uganda on natural resources. All the ideas discussed in the preceding chapters can be assessed with the question “what does the Church of the Province of Uganda teach about natural resources?” How can all these ideas developed in eco-theology have an impact on those who do not deal with theology on a daily basis, those who do not even know about the existence of these ideas? The ecological problem we have on our hands is unlike any other crisis of human existence. It demands urgent action and new approaches.

The Christian faith is always a communal faith where believers gather in the church. Theology is strongly related to how Christian life practically takes place. It questions the credentials of the church and reassures her by putting the community’s life in relation to its foundation and its task. This is because the church is not only a community of creed but also a community of the interpretation of the gospel.¹⁶⁷ Jean-Marc Éla provides an example of the type theological reflection grounded in, and directed to shaping, the church’s concrete practices. The eco-theological motives in the COU policies and activity reports are discussed in relation to the reality of the problem.

¹⁶⁷ Schwobel, 2005. P 273.

5.1 The Church, Eco-theology and Reality

Theological reflection in Uganda must both be grounded in, and seek to shape, the life and practice of the church community. When it achieves this, it reflects the concerns, anxieties, aspirations, hopes, and frustrations of the ordinary Christians in their everyday struggle in the world. Theological reflection is severely limited when it does not uncover the social-material challenges facing ordinary Christians, or fails to provide sufficient theological resources to help the Christian community meet these challenges. The church must be taken seriously as the social and historical embodiment of the Christian way of life, which accordingly must be at the centre of any theological reflection. This research sought to explore the possibility for a recovery of a certain type of church within the Church of Uganda.

This research has identified three biblically inspired ecclesiological visions: the Pious or Spiritual, the Pastoral and the Prophetic Church respectively.¹⁶⁸ For the pious church, spiritual and material aspects of human life are distinctly different. The Pious church is concerned with the spiritual motivations of the Christian in his or her struggle in the world. Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:22, Matthew 27:32, Luke 23:26) exemplifies the posture of the Pious Church. He never demands to know why the prisoner is condemned, or if the prisoner should be condemned. When pressed to carry the cross, this church never questions, but goes along helping the prisoner to carry the cross.

The Pastoral Church is viewed as a healer and servant of the poor. In the Bible, this church is identified with Joseph of Arimathea (Mark 25:57; Luke 23:50-53), a simple

¹⁶⁸ Katongole, 2002. P. 208.

and sincere man who walked across tradition with compassion and quiet. He appears after both the government and religion have done their damage to the body of Christ in order to treat tenderly its abuse. The work of caring for those who have been marginalized or oppressed by the system is important, but the church never sets out to question the system, or attempts to rise beyond the system.¹⁶⁹

The prophetic church can be identified through Mary of Bethany (John 12:1-8) the woman who appointed the feet of Jesus and anointed them with oil. In her actions she envisioned change and a new social order made possible by the life and story of Jesus. She typifies a church that cares for the coming reign of God and cares about her obligation to bring it about now. There is a sense of urgency in her actions, and her church is a church of jars, oil, hair and feet; which is deeply material. This church rises above the pious and spiritual salvation of souls, and above the necessary service of the pastoral church, to the everyday struggles and concerns of a community struggling to remain faithful and bear witness in a precipitous and uncertain world.

The church and her practices is the locus for understanding and transforming the ecological distress of the community into a more hopeful future.¹⁷⁰ Put differently, the church through her reflection, stories, life and organisation embodies a specific vision for a better future for creation. For this vision to be realized, the church has to move beyond theological reflection and engage the distresses of the planet in her own right. It is therefore important to look at how eco-theological ideas are implemented in normal ecclesial life. When people hear the term eco-theology, they provocatively ask; “but what

¹⁶⁹ Katongole, 2002.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid

is the church actually doing?” Eco-theology can be concrete action and can have a local basis. The church can be the intermediary to bring ecological thinking to action.

5.2 Jean-Marc Éla’s Shade Tree Theology

Jean-Marc Éla provides an example of the type of theological reflection grounded in, and directed to shaping, the church’s concrete practices. In his work, the church is both the locus and object of his theological reflections. His “shade tree theology” proposes a concrete experience of church, in the face of distressing material conditions, so he calls for a “re-think of the whole question of understanding and experiencing faith”. This in other words, is a call for a new, different experience of church. Éla warns that “self-proclaimed innocence of certain church practices, risk cutting us off from the gospel acts that are signs that Christ is the word of life in our daily existence, and that he intervenes with all the power of the cross in the tragic situation of our people”.¹⁷¹ There are key elements to explain the ecclesiological vision of Éla’s work.

The church is called to confess Jesus Christ in a continent with material conditions that shock the gospel. The extreme and paralyzing poverty, the violation of basic rights, multi-national exploitation, ecological degradation as well as hunger are faced by Christians in many places. This rough ground challenges our practice of Christianity.¹⁷² This challenge requires a confrontation of the particular history in which Africa has been cast, and seeking to overcome it through an alternative history. The practice of Christianity must be placed within this context of the search for another history, another society, a new humanity, another style of living altogether.¹⁷³ This search for a new

¹⁷¹ My Faith as an African, p Xvii.

¹⁷² My Faith as an African, p 87.

¹⁷³ My Faith as an African, p 87

history is not premised on secular ideology, but initiated within the church's concrete life and ministry, which is to say the church must become that alternative history. The church has often failed to embody this alternative, so we must re-think our understanding of the church and Christian practice.

The situation of the church in Africa is a sort of Babylonian captivity. Christianity in Africa, "has been weighed down by a foreign ecclesiastical mentality, by a sociological burden of a religion of the other world, by the disguised apolitical stance of western missionaries, by irresponsibility, by the intolerable greed of some members of the clergy and the disembodied piety of some members of the indigenous lay people".¹⁷⁴ He is criticizing the forms of disembodied spirituality which the Christian churches in Africa tend to promote by focusing their mission on the salvation of souls, a situation he refers to as "distribution of visas to heaven".¹⁷⁵ From this point of view, Christianity has failed to become a way of life, but has remained captive to a particular Western history, in which the Church remains a spiritual enclave or an agent of pastoral care; there is neither creativity nor initiative.

For Christians therefore, the search for an alternative history is the search for an alternative experience of the church. "No doubt, the church has always served the defenseless population through educational, social and health related projects. If we do not want to anesthetize the consciousness of the poor and oppressed, we need to find ways to find the subversive power of the gospel. The church is therefore called to be vigilant and courageous. It is invited to abandon the beaten paths of a praxis that shuts it

¹⁷⁴ My Faith as an African, p 154

¹⁷⁵ Éla makes this reference in his other theological work "African Cry".

up in a kind of dogmatic slumber”.¹⁷⁶ Éla’s vision is of a church that is embodied in everyday practices. He links redemption and history, and argues that if the church is the body of the crucified one at Golgotha, it must be one body with all those deprived of a livelihood or reduced to silence.

What the foregoing discussion means is that the task of re-inventing our African Christianity is essentially a call for recovering the link between redemption and history, and recognizing that the community of the church in her practice is the link. That is why the search for an alternative history is the search for a different experience of church. The starting point of reality for this new experience, should not be external truths, but rather forms of commitment that actualize the way in which Jesus lived among the people of his time. Éla notes that the African church needs to find a way to live the gospel in the midst of violence and misery, knowing that God identifies with the miserable. The church must rediscover its rooting in our living conditions.¹⁷⁷

Concretely, what Éla envisions are church communities beyond the usual spiritual-material distinction. He envisions communities that bear witness to the truth of God’s revelation, who through the incarnation sets up his Kingdom in the midst of his people that “they might have life and have it more abundantly”. Such abundant life is not merely spiritual, but as material as the jars, hair, feet and tears of Mary’s prophetic witness. If the church is to be embodied of such a hope, then it must be “gestated in everyday experiences” in such a way that people’s ordinary struggles are as much a matter of concern for Christian salvation as the reading of Scriptures and the celebration of

¹⁷⁶ My Faith as an African. p 153.

¹⁷⁷ My Faith as an African p 156.

baptism. For the cross of the ecological crisis we face, our Christian faith has no meaning until the church can reflect the glory of the One who called us out of darkness into his own marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

5.3 The Church of Uganda’s teaching for addressing the Ecological Problem

I start the analysis of the COU’s eco-theological motives with the expression of her intent in the Provincial Master Strategic Plan of 2016-2025. The document, also called Vision 2025, in its socio-economic focus has a strategic objective for environmental management. The strategic objective has two intermediate results; to promote effective environmental management and to effectively mitigate the effects of climate change.¹⁷⁸ In promoting effective environmental management, the COU set out to develop environmental management policy and guidelines, train workers, form environmental management teams and teach congregations about environmental protection. In mitigating the effects of climate change, the COU intended to roll out a disaster risk reduction strategy including an action plan, form climate change teams, train workers and mainstream climate change interventions into COU work.

The COU developed and adopted an “Environmental Protection and Climate Management Policy” in 2021. The rationale for the policy is that the majority of Ugandans live in the rural areas, with their livelihoods anchored on rain-fed agriculture and are constantly exposed to the vagaries of nature. Any changes in the climate directly impact the social and economic survival of the population. Development of the policy

¹⁷⁸ Church of Uganda Vision 2025, p 63-64.

was also necessitated by an increase in the incidences of natural disasters experienced around the country. The basis for developing the policy was that COU had engaged in environmental protection activities over the past decade, with several achievements but with a lot of room for improvement. The major criticism was that the interventions had been adhoc without systematic guidance.¹⁷⁹

There are five specific policy objectives: to arouse the consciousness of the members of the Church of Uganda of the importance of environmental protection and climate change mitigation; to stimulate strategies, mechanisms and culture for the Church to effectively address issues of climate change adaptation and environmental stewardship from a Christian point of view anchored in a Biblical mandate; to enhance consistency and compliance in carrying out environmental protection and climate change mitigation programmes within COU; To strengthen COU environmental protection initiatives in order to enhance the livelihoods of the people; and to stimulate and encourage collaboration between the Church of Uganda and other institutions on environmental protection and climate change activities.¹⁸⁰

There are eleven policy statements including; appealing to the religious sentiments of the people to get them to heed to the Word of God with respect to man's responsibility for the environment; influence the necessary environmental protection and climate change management policies, decisions and actions by government and other stakeholders; promoting appropriate environmental protection and climate change mitigation practices; allocating adequate resources for environmental protection and climate change

¹⁷⁹ Church of Uganda Environmental Management Policy, 2021.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid

mitigation activities; maintaining adequate institutional and human resource capacity; maintaining effective collaboration, partnerships, networking and information sharing; effectively responding to environmental and climate change emergencies; maintaining appropriate structures, systems; establishing continuous learning mechanisms; and mobilizing appropriate resources for mainstreaming environmental protection and climate change mitigation.¹⁸¹

According to the policy document, the Church of Uganda derives its mandate on environmental protection and climate change mitigation from the account of creation where God mandated man to take charge and care of the environment, when He said, among other things: “Be masters of the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven and all living animals on the earth”, and “see, I give you all the seed-bearing plants that are upon the whole earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this shall be your food,” (Gen 1:28-29). The Church also has a Biblical mandate to translate Christ’s promise of abundant life (John 10:10); and to preach the Good News to the poor and freedom to the captives (Luke 4:18). In response to this, Church of Uganda affirms care for Creation, a just sharing of the world’s resources, and a concern for the environment as fundamental gospel commitments.

Elsewhere, the COU through a pastoral letter from Archbishop Stephen Kazimba on the first Church of Uganda environmental week (17th-24th march, 2024) and activity reports related to the events of the week states that “as the Church, we acknowledge that God gave mankind a responsibility of being a steward of His creation’ Genesis 2:15. ” The Lord God took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” In

¹⁸¹ Church of Uganda Environmental Management Policy, 2021.

this, we recognize that all creation belongs to God and that we are accountable to Him as stewards of His creation and the surrounding environment”.¹⁸²

How the Church of Uganda approaches the ecological crisis question as stated in the Vision 2025, the four year old environmental protection policy, and the recent pastoral letter from the Archbishop contains in the most part, elements of a stewardship responsibility to creation. The stewardship model is the dominant model of the Church of Uganda’s eco-theology. It is based on the idea that God has created everything, that everything on earth belongs to God and that God has tasked human beings with caring for the earth according to God’s wishes. The biblical support that has been given by the Church of Uganda is Genesis 1:28-29.

The first parameter I have used to assess whether this teaching is taken seriously and is relevant to the context is to find out how this teaching has been integrated on the liturgy of the church. The COU has not developed particular liturgy for creation care or for the environmental week. The Provincial environmental office reports that the first environmental Sunday on the 17th of March, 2024 was designated for all parishes in the Province to preach sermons on environmental conservation and climate change mitigation. The Bishop of Southwest Ankole Diocese was reported to have preached at a burial service on the importance of tree planting, encouraging mourners to grow trees and reminding them of their responsibility over creation to tender and take care of it.¹⁸³

¹⁸²See <https://anglican.ink/2023/09/02/church-of-uganda-to-hold-a-green-city-campaign/>; also Directorate of Household and Community Transformation (HCT) Environment Week Narrative Report.

¹⁸³Church of Uganda Environment Week Report, p 3.

The second parameter I have used to assess the views and teaching of the COU on the ecological problem is listening to the views of several church leaders participating in a webinar during the environmental week and messages shared to the public during the World Environment Day. The messages from leaders including the Archbishop and several senior priests ranged from calls to restoration of the integrity of creation, to tree planting and to participation in caring for the earth. There were also voices on the imperative to sustainably manage natural resources because they contribute to a robust and resilient economy. A senior church priest with ministry experience elsewhere in Africa thought that the Church of Uganda should “rethink our mandate over God’s creation and rethink the meaning of the word dominion, because we have abused it”.¹⁸⁴

The contents of policy statements, pastoral letters, the reported sermons and the discussions of senior clergy in the COU all indicate that the theological motive of first choice for participation in natural resource management initiatives is the stewardship motive. It is not clear whether this motive has been chosen consciously, but the COU policy document mentions that the COU derives her commitment to environmental protection from; the Interfaith Declaration on Climate Change, which emphasizes stewardship and reverence for creation as central tenets of all faiths on Earth, and a declaration by Anglican Bishops in 2015, which commits the bishops to specific first actions including: energy conservation measures in church buildings; more renewable energy; nurturing biodiversity on church land; supporting sustainability in water, food, agriculture and land use; reviewing churches’ investment practices including a call for

¹⁸⁴ <https://counews.org/index.php/2024/06/05/church-of-ugandas-pledge-on-world-environment-day-stewardship-and-sustainability-for-future-generations/>

divestment; and closer ecumenical and interfaith co-operation. The motivations very much reflect influences from western theology.

5.4 Conclusion:

The COU in her witness is expected to reflect the concerns, anxieties, aspirations, hopes, and frustrations of the ordinary Christians in their everyday struggle. A church in her ecclesiology may be spiritual, pastoral or prophetic. Whatever her ecclesial vision, she is expected through her reflection, teaching and practice to embody a better future for creation. For this vision to be realized, the COU has to move beyond theological reflection and engage the distresses of the planet in her own right.

Jean-Marc Éla provides an example of the type of theological reflection grounded in, and directed to shaping, the COU's concrete practices. The rough ground of our Christian experience should be placed within this context of the search for another history, another society, a new humanity, another style of living altogether. However, one often finds that the COU fails to embody this expectation because she is in a sort of Babylonian captivity. Éla envisions a courageous COU, that willing to be prophetic in the socio-material distress of the community.

The material conditions of the Christian community in Uganda are that people's livelihoods are constantly exposed to the vagaries of a rapidly degrading natural resource base. The Church of the Province of Uganda has been involved in activities to protect the environment but they have produced mixed results because they were not implemented systematically. Environmental action and teaching follows a stewardship model based on Gen 1:28-29. She also affirms a Biblical mandate to translate Christ's promise of

abundant life (John 10:10); and to preach the Good News to the poor and freedom to the captives (Luke 4:18). The study has not found much evidence that this teaching is taken seriously, but has noted that there are voices within the church calling for a rethink of the stewardship model because it has been abused.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

As the evidence of the ecological crisis and concern for the natural world continues to grow, more Christians, those belonging to the Church of the Province of Uganda, are looking for ways in which their faith may provide constructive answers and practical ways forward. Jean-Marc Éla stands as a relevant and insightful resource for Christians looking for answers. This research sought to highlight the theology of Jean-Marc Éla and determine whether it may be considered as a resource for Christians in the Church of the Province of Uganda seeking to engage in the management of our common property resources theologically and practically. I summarise the answers to the sub-questions, conclude by conceptualizing the answer to the main question and suggest recommendation as a way forward.

6.1.1 How serious is the ecological problem in Uganda?

According to the National State of Environment Report 2018-2019, wetland coverage reduced from fifteen and a half percent in 1994 to thirteen percent in 2017, and is still reducing. This has led to biodiversity and habitats destruction, deterioration of water quality, and have impeded natural drainage patterns leading frequent floods in most urban centers. In terms of wildlife; species population on private land is steadily declining as a result of conversion of existing habitat for cultivation and grazing. Overall, Uganda has witnessed a rapid loss and degradation of its natural capital. In some

instances, for example forests and wetlands, the rate of loss is faster than these natural systems can restore themselves.

Threats to biodiversity include conversion and degradation of the natural ecosystem, invasive species, excessive harvesting of flora and fauna, illegal wildlife trade, poaching, human-wildlife conflict, disease outbreaks, plastic waste and pollution of water bodies. Increase in human population has also resulted in communities settling close to areas of high wildlife populations resulting in crop raiding, spread of zoonotic diseases, loss of property and attacks on humans often resulting in retaliatory killing of wildlife.

6.1.2 What is Jean-Marc Éla's eco-theology and what are its propositions?

Ecological insight is not the mainstay of Éla's reflection, but the theology of nature is by no means peripheral in his thought. The attitude towards nature advocated by Éla is liberational in its thrust, but also rooted in the traditions of the African peoples. The imported Judeo-Christian rationalism with which we approach ecological issues, should be cleansed with "a wash in the pond of Siloam" which is the culture of the African people. God reveals himself to humankind daily through the drama of symbols such as proverbs, water, fire, trees and wildlife. Those who dine and commune with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist meal cannot be left to die in the deadly harvesting hand of famine brought about by an ecological crisis that turns the granaries in their village huts empty. Through the redemptive work of Jesus', humanity is not saved independent of the nature. The entire cosmos will be filled with the manifestation of the glory of the Risen One. The cross of Jesus Christ is the cross of the third world. Put in ecological terms, the cross of Jesus Christ is also the cross of the richest ecosystems of the planet. The people of faith must go and rediscover Christ in the shorelines of our lakes, in the

surroundings of our forests in the flooded plains of the Katonga River, amongst the displaced Batwa of Southwestern Uganda and the mountain people of Eastern Uganda.

6.1.3 How does Jean-Marc Éla's eco-theology address the tragedy of the commons?

Common property resource users may be prevented from “feeding their families” in several ways. For example, artisanal fishermen may be prevented from fishing through an expensive permitting system. Éla describes them as prisoners of a system developed elsewhere for the interests of others. The irruption of the poor and marginalized, excluded from the commons, challenges our faith as Africans. Éla argues that “the church can no longer pass by the man who fell among the robbers”. Like this man, the user communities around our common property resources, “are threatened by the clutches of famine whose very appearance strangles the whole of life”.

In order to confront the culture of exploitation and marginalization around the use and management of the commons, Éla proposes a rethink of African Christianity. Éla's empty granary is a metaphor for a set of sociological, environmental, and political conditions that breed messengers of death and in turn determine the church's response to the tragedy of the commons. According to Éla, “friends of the gospel” must be conscious of God's presence “in the hut of a mother whose granary is empty”. An active faith must translate into the rejection of any system whether political, economic, religious, cultural or social that might produce “empty granaries”.

6.1.4 What is the teaching of the COU on common property resources?

The material conditions of the Christian community in Uganda are that people's livelihoods are constantly exposed to the vagaries of a rapidly degrading natural resource

base. The Church of the Province of Uganda has been involved in activities to protect the environment but they have produced mixed results because they were not implemented systematically. Environmental action and teaching follows a stewardship model based on Gen 1:28-29. She also affirms a Biblical mandate to translate Christ's promise of abundant life (John 10:10); and to preach the Good News to the poor and freedom to the captives (Luke 4:18). The study has not found much evidence that this teaching is taken seriously, but has noted that there are voices within the church calling for a rethink of the stewardship model because it has been abused.

6.2 Conclusion

Since Jean-marc Éla penned "My Faith as an African," a growing number of theologians have expressed concern about the state of Africa's people and how the Christian faith is lived out in response to these conditions. African theologians, as they have grown more and more concerned with the environment, have battled to identify and develop an ecological theology within the African Christian tradition, which highlights the significance of our concern for the natural world to the Christian faith. In order to show the importance of the church for theological reflection on the ecological problem and for practice, this study highlights the work of Jean-Marc Éla.

What this research has shown is that by locating the church at the centre of his reflections, and grounding his experience in the life of concrete communities, Éla is able to identify and expose the inconsistencies, complexity, and major obstacles that African Christians face—as well as offer a path forward via them. The difficulties stem from history, namely the specific history of marginalization and reliance that African communities have experienced. Éla also understands, quite rightly, that in light of this past, any positive

path ahead cannot be achieved only by means of individual spiritual development or the edifying pastoral care of the church, significant as these are, but also by means of the church itself providing a different history.

As such, Éla's theology contributes to a concrete vision of the Church of the Province of Uganda as a means of guaranteeing an alternative and more hopeful history for Africa in general and Uganda in particular. Therefore, Ugandan Christians will be able to benefit from African theological reflection not only with an alternative ethical theory but also with a different and firmly grounded Christian praxis provided it proceeds in the manner and direction that Éla has demonstrated. These kinds of ecclesial perspectives not only provide African Christianity a fresh outlook, but they might also be among its most enduring contributions to the globe.

6.3 Recommendations

The results of this study indicate that Jean-marc Éla provides a dynamic framework within which the Church of Uganda might approach a practical and prophetic eco-theology. The study has also found that the Church of the Province of Uganda has been involved in some environmental protection work with mixed success. One is moved to think that many Christians are involved in the conservation of nature and the sustainable management of common property resources outside of the church, and are poorly encouraged in this activity by the church. There may be significant gains to be made if members of the COU community are equipped to integrate their nature conservation activity with a stronger eco-theological framework.

After the mixed successes of the past decade and the lack of clarity around the current environmental campaigns, it is recommended that the COU environmental office intentionally works at developing robust eco-theological frameworks that recognize the need for the African Christian to write an alternative history to the past. Frameworks that recognise that Christians have failed in stewardship of the suffering creation because of sin, that work in the Spirit extends Christ's healing reconciliation to all things in word and deed, and that Christians bring the Creator glory by protecting and healing creation until the time when it will be restored to wholeness.

According to the COU policy guidelines, one of the most efficient ways to "move members of the church community effectively in a proper direction with respect to environmental concerns" is through dialogue amongst Christians. In particular, I would recommend cooperation between the Provincial Environment Office and the Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology on the establishment of a Ugandan platform that engages with important apologetic issues, holds periodic conversations on beneficial eco-theology work, and constructively profiles through case studies the actions, experiences, and motivations of Christians involved in Ugandan nature conservation and eco-mission project

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adamah, Jackson Nii Sabaah, 2020. *Food insecurity, Eucharist, and community: Reading Jean-Marc Éla's "shade-tree" theology in light of Balthasar's ecclesiology.* *Review and Expositor.* Vol. 117(4) 536–546. p539.
- Andama M, Ongom R, & Lukubye B., 2017. *Proliferation of Salvinia Molesta at Lake Kyoga Landing Sites as a Result of Anthropogenic Influences.* *Journal of Geoscience and Environment Protection* 5 (11):160-173. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4236/gep.2017.511012>
- Baluci Claudette & Berry, J. A., 2021. *The Christological Ecology of Joseph Ratzinger.* *Melita Theologica: Journal of the Faculty of theology, University of Malta,* 71/2 (2021): 241-261
- Barrett, C.B., K. Brandon, C. Gibson and H. Gjertsen, 2001. *Conserving Tropical Biodiversity amid Weak Institutions.* *Bio science,* 51. 497-502.
- Baukham Richard, 2020. "Being Human in the Community of Creation": A Biblical Perspective" in Jorgenson & Padgett. Eds. *ECOTHEOLOGY: A Christian Conversation* (William Eedermans Publishing) pp30-110.
- Cedd Hesse & Pippa Trench, 2000. *Who's managing the Commons? Inclusive Management for a Sustainable Future.* *Securing the Commons* No. 1. ISSN - 1605 – 2293.
- Celia Deane-Drummond, 2008. *Eco-Theology;* London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 99.
- Celia Deane-Drummond, 2018. *A Primer in Eco-theology: Theology for a Fragile Earth.* Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Companions Book.

- Conradie, E. M. 2000. *Hope for the earth. Vistas on a new century*. Text and Context 8. University of the Western Cape.
- Conradie, E.M. 2006. *Christianity and Ecological Theology: Resources for further research*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press.
- Constanza & Daly, 1992. *Natural Capital and Sustainable Development*. Conservation Biology Vol. 6, No. 1, March 1992.
- Edwards Denis, 2018. *Key Issues in Ecological Theology: Incarnation, Evolution, Communion*; p 66.
- EASE 2019. *East African Suswatch E-bulletin*. A monthly from the East African Sustainability Watch Network founded by Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD), Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD) and SusWatch Kenya
- FAO 2005-2020. *National Aquaculture Sector Overview*. Uganda. National Aquaculture Sector Overview Fact Sheets. Text by Mwanja, W.W. In: FAO Fisheries Division
- FAO (2017). *Microplastics in Fisheries and Aquaculture: Status of knowledge on their occurrence and implications for aquatic organisms and food safety*. Rome. Pp 1-126
 FAO (2016). *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2016. Contributing to food security and nutrition for all*. Rome.
- Heijke, Jan. 2000. *Thinking in the Scene of Disaster: Theology of Jean-Marc Éla from Cameroon*. Exchange Journal of Contemporary Christianities in Context. Vol. 29, Issue 1, p61-88
- Hickey, J.R., Uzabaho, E., Akantorana, M., Arinaitwe, J., Bakebwa, I., Bitariho, R., Eckardt, W., Gilardi, K.V., Katutu, J., Kayijamahe, C., Kierepka, E.M., Mugabukomeye, B., Musema, A., Mutabaazi, H., Robbins, M.M., Sacks, B.N., and Zikusoka, G.K. (2019). *Bwindi- Sarambwe 2018 Surveys: Monitoring Mountain*

Gorillas, other select mammals, and human activities. GVTC, IGCP & partners, Kampala, Uganda, 40p

Iheanacho, U. V. 2021. *Jean-Marc Éla's Hut and Empty Granary: Rethinking the Social Significance of Theology in Africa.* *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae.* <https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/SHE/index>. Volume 47 | Number 1 | 2021 | #8119 |

Jean-Marie Baland, & Jean-Philippe Platteau, 2000. *The Tragedy of the Commons. In Halting Degradation of natural resources: Is there a Role for Communities.* Retrieved from <https://academic.oup.com/book/9952/chapter/157298646?login=true>

Kalilombe P. 1990. *My Faith as an African by Jean-Marc Éla.* In *Missiology*, 18 no 4 October 1990, p 487.

Katongole M. Emmanuel, 2002. *A Different World Right Here, A World Being Gestated In The Deeds Of The Everyday.*" The church within African theological imagination. *Missionalia* 30:2 (August 2002) 206-234.

Kanu, I. Anthony (Ed.), 2021. *African Eco-theology: Meaning, Forms, and Expressions.* The Association for the Promotion of African Studies. pX

Kearns Laurel, 2004. *The Context of Eco-theology.* In the *Blackwell Companion to Eco-theology*, Edited by Gareth James. New York: Blackwell Publishers. P466.

Keriapy, F. 2023. *The Significance of Eco-Theology in the Perspective of Christian Eschatology: As an Attempt to Embody the New Heavens and earth.* *Tumou Tou Jurnal Ilmiah*, 10 (2), 148-157.

Kroesbergen, H. & Kroesbergen-Kamps, J., 2021, 'The non-romantic idea of nature in African theology', *HTS Theologies Studies/ Theological Studies* 77(3), a6624. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i3.6624>

- Lorenzo Cotula, 2004. *Land in Africa: Market Asset, or Secure Livelihood? Securing the commons in an era of privatisation: Policy and legislative challenges*. Church House, Westminster, London.
- Louk & Tomren, 2019. *Contemporary Eco-theology Climate Justice and Environmental Stewardship in World Religions*. World Council of Churches. P18.
- Mbiti (1970), *Concepts of God in Africa*. SPCK: East Africa.
- Mendoza, S. L. & Zachariah, G. 2022. *Decolonizing Eco-Theology: Indigenous and Subaltern Challenges. Intersectionality and Theology Series*. Pickwick Publications. p21.
- Mkuna E, & Baiyegunhi L. J., 2019. *Determinants of Nile perch (*Lates niloticus*) overfishing and its intensity in Lake Victoria, Tanzania: A double-hurdle model approach*. *Hydrobiologia* 835 (1):101-115. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10750-019-3932-9>
- Moltmann, J. 1993. *God in Creation. A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Mukaria Andrew Ratanya., 2021. “*The emergence of 20th Century eco-theology, its main figures, and key contributions*”. *International Journal of Current Research*, 13, (06), 17952-17958.
- National Charcoal Survey for Uganda, 2016. Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development.
- NEMA, 2016. *National State of the Environment Report for Uganda 2014*. National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Kampala.
- NEMA, 2021. *National State of the Environment Report for Uganda 2018-2019*. National Environmental Management Authority, Kampala.

- Ngong, D. T. 2002. *Jean-Marc Éla. My Faith as an African*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988. *American Baptist Quarterly*, 21 no 3 Sept 2002, p 386-387. AtlaSerials Religion Collection.
- Ngong T. David, 2010. *The Theologian as Missionary: The Legacy of Jean-Marc Éla*. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 136 (March 2010), p419.
- Noss, Phillip A. 1990. *Book Review: MY FAITH AS AN AFRICAN*, by Jean-Marc Éla. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988. *Word & World*, 10 no 2 Spr. 1990, p 193-194. AtlaSerials, Religion Collection
- O'Higgins T. G. et al. (eds.), 2020. *Ecosystem-Based Management, Ecosystem Services and Aquatic Biodiversity*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45843-0_8
- Orr, Andrew. 2019. *An Introduction to Eco-theology*. Search; retrieved from <https://www.ecocongregationirÉland.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/An-Introduction-to-Eco-Theology-by-Rev-Andrew-Orr.pdf>
- Osmer. R. R. 2008. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Padgett, A.G. & Jorgenson K. A. 2020. *For the Love of the World: A Dialogue on Eco-theology*. In, *Eco-Theology: A Christian Conversation*. William B. Eedermans Publishing Company.
- Plumptre, A. J., Davenport, T. R. B., Behangana, M., Kityo, R., Eilu, G., Ssegawa, P., Moyer, D. (2007). *The biodiversity of the Albertine Rift*. *Biological Conservation*, 134, 178–194
- Plumptre, A.J., Ayebare, S., Pomeroy, D., Tushabe, H., Nangendo, G., Mugabe, H., Kirunda, B., & Nampindo, S. (2017). *Conserving Uganda's Biodiversity: Identifying critical sites for threatened species and habitats*. Report to USAID and Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities.

Rasmussen Larry, 2006. “*Symbols to Live By*” in Berry, R.J. ed. *Environmental Stewardship* (London/New York T&T Clark International) pp174-184

Republic of Uganda, 2003. *National Forestry and Tree Planting Act 2003*.

Sabada, L.M. 2021. “*The God of Both Squirrels and Men – The Challenge of the White Thesis*” in Louk, A., Tomren S.T. ET. Al. Eds. *Contemporary Ecotheology, Climate Justice and Environmental Stewardship in World Religions. Ecothee Volume 6*. Orthodox Academy of Crete Publication, World Council of Churches. Pp36-45.

Tomren, S.T. 202. “*What Would Jesus Do? – Incarnation and Soteriology in the Light of Ecology*” in Louk, A., Tomren S.T. ET. Al. Eds. *Contemporary Ecotheology, Climate Justice and Environmental Stewardship in World Religions. Ecothee Volume 6*. Orthodox Academy of Crete Publication, World Council of Churches. p.73

Schwoebel, C. 1991. *Human Being as R elational Being: Twelve Theses for a Christian Anthropology*. In Schwobel, C. and Gunton, C. (eds) *Persons, Divine and Human*. Edinburgh: & T Clark. pp. 141 – 170.

USAID. (2015). *Uganda Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment*.

Van Leeuwen, R. C. 2020. '*Christ's Resurrection and the Creation's Vindication*', in DeWitt (ed.), *The Environment*, 67-68.

Vandana Shiva, *Democracy Of Commons: Biodiversity, Water And Air*; in *Governance of Commons and Livelihood Security*, Himadri Sinha & Anant Kumar (Eds.), Xavier Institute of Social Service 978 - 81 - 904110 - 2 – 8, p 17.

WWF, 2021. *Uganda Country office Strategic Plan 20121-2025*.

APPENDIX 1: SIMILARITY REPORT

Joel Mpalanyi Musaasizi

Joel Mpalanyi Musaasizi_Disertation_Fin_August 29_2024.docx

Academic Research II (Concept papers, Proposals, Theses, Dissertations)

UCU Library Turnitin Service

Uganda Christian University

Document Details

Submission ID

trn:oid::1:2992939046

Submission Date

Aug 29, 2024, 11:59 AM GMT+3

Download Date

Aug 29, 2024, 12:01 PM GMT+3

File Name

Joel_Mpalanyi_Musaasizi_Disertation_Fin_August_29_2024.docx

File Size

83.2 KB

78 Pages

20,469 Words

110,423 Characters



Page 1 of 82 - Cover Page

Submission ID trn:oid::1:2992939046



Page 2 of 82 - Integrity Overview

Submission ID trn:oid::1:2992939046

19% Overall Similarity

The combined total of all matches, including overlapping sources, for each database.

Filtered from the Report

• Bibliography

Match Groups

Top Sources

APPENDIX 2: ANTI-PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATE



Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

Submission author: Joel Mpalanyi Musaasizi
Assignment title: Academic Research II (Concept papers, Proposals, Theses, D...
Submission title: Joel Mpalanyi Musaasizi_Disertation_Fin_August 29_2024.docx
File name: Joel_Mpalanyi_Musaasizi_Disertation_Fin_August_29_2024.do...
File size: 83.25K
Page count: 78
Word count: 20,469
Character count: 110,423
Submission date: 29-Aug-2024 12:00PM (UTC+0300)
Submission ID: 2440366251

