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SOLIDARITY IN CREATION:
TOWARD AN ECOLOGICAL ETHIC FOR CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

A Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
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THESIS INTRODUCTION

The world is facing a serious ecological crisis. In Vietnam, nature has been abused and the environment has been left unprotected. The consequences of this ecological crisis fall on the people and the poor have to suffer the most. On the one hand, the polluted environment has caused serious health problems. On the other hand, future generations will be left without any natural resources. According to an article issued by the Radio Free Asia (RFA), thousands of cases of death have been confirmed by health authorities "as having been caused by atmospheric pollution with carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, benzene, and fine particulates (dust)."[1] It is estimated that "an average of 16,000 deaths a year in Vietnam are now caused by air pollution, with thousands of people now confirmed to be suffering from pulmonary disease."[2] This reality calls for a serious human commitment to protect the environment.

The Vietnamese government has taken some measures to deal with the ecological issues. At the end of 1993 the congress passed the Environment Law. This was considered a significant step in its ecological efforts. The Environment Law was followed by other policies related to environmental management. However, that law and its subsequent policies have proved ineffective due to a lack of public awareness for the need for environmental protection.

> Conservation should begin at home, but in many areas, the people's day-to-day activities unintentionally serve to destroy their natural environment. Rural Vietnamese life is autonomous and village-oriented. Families rely on the principle of "self-sufficiency" to augment needs. So while the government may encourage home gardens and other green initiatives, most people continue to employ many environmentally harmful practices in order to meet their economic needs.
> … [Furthermore] there is a lack of appropriate environmental standards, coordination and consistency in the implementation of Vietnam's various legal provisions on the environment. This is due to a shortage of necessary facilities for monitoring environmental policy implementation and a shortage of human resources in environmental control units.[3]

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[1] "Vietnam Pollution Threatens Health," Radio Free Asia, available online at http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/pollution-04012009110733.html. Accessed May 17, 2017.

[2] *Ibid*.

[3] "The Real Cost of Developing Vietnam," Asia Society, available online at http://asiasociety.org/real-cost-developing-vietnam. Accessed May 7, 2017.

Some recent social, political, and ecological occurrences have raised people's awareness, on both individual and institutional levels, and have motivated them to stand up for justice. The strongest voice so far has been the Christian communities. Yet, even their fight is a passive one. They react only when injustice is done to them personally. They fight mostly for personal benefits and not for the society at large nor for the environment itself. When their personal demands are met, they stop fighting. For the movement to ecological justice to be sustained and to be successful, deep spiritual and ethical roots are required.

The Australian theologian and environmentalist Denis Edwards insists that ecological commitment constitutes part of what it means to follow Jesus. But others, like Lynn White,[4] charge the Christian Bible as being responsible for the massive devastation of the environment. They blame Christian creation theology and anthropology, especially its understanding of the relationship between human beings/creatures and nonhuman beings/creatures.[5] Christians have supposedly encouraged an aggressive exploitation of nature, which has inevitably led to the ecological crisis we face today.

I maintain that such a conclusion is very premature. The biblical creation accounts charge humans with the responsibility to care for nature rather than giving them the license to exploit it. An accurate understanding of the Bible, therefore, should lead people to protecting rather than destroying the environment. Christians ground their faith in the Bible. The creation stories present a biblical demand for ecological commitment. Only through understanding God's design in creation, can one realize that it is a fundamental dimension of Christian discipleship to live in

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[4] See Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," in R J. Berry, *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action* (Leicester England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 31-42.

[5] Since this paper discusses the relationship of beings within the web of God's creation, hereafter, the terms "human beings" and "human creatures" as well as "nonhuman beings" and "nonhuman creatures" will be used interchangeably and will mean the same thing. When "human beings/creatures" is used in plural form, it means the many individual human persons. When it is used in singular form – human being/creature – it means the whole human race. In essence, the meaning remains. The terms "human creation" and "nonhuman creation" are confusing. Some have used them to mean human and nonhuman beings. They will not be used in that sense in this paper. When they are used, they mean the creation of human beings or that of nonhuman beings.

solidarity with and to protect both human and non-human creatures. Ecological commitment is an ethical obligation for all humans, but especially that of all Christians.

Touched by the ecological conditions of both the world and my own country Vietnam, I write this thesis as a way of contributing my humble effort to the great ecological endeavors that many people and organizations of good heart have been carrying out. Though I have mentioned the ecological condition in Vietnam, it only serves as an indication of my motivation. Although I wish this work would be implemented in and bring some benefit to Vietnam, I do not mean to narrow my audiences to the people of Vietnam. Our Christian discipleship is a universal call. It is the same in Vietnam as it is elsewhere. Therefore, since I am arguing for ecological responsibility from a Christian perspective, and since ecological issues have a universal character; this thesis is applicable to all Christian communities. It is necessary to note from the start that neither is ecological responsibility restricted to Christians. It is the responsibility of all human beings on the planet. The thesis is addressed mainly to the Christian audiences simply because it is fundamentally based on Christian theology. My hope is that this thesis would be a source for Christians to reflect on their responsibility as Jesus' disciples and hence move them to ecological commitment and action.

This thesis includes four chapters. Since a proper understanding of the will of God for creation is crucial in this thesis, Chapter One begins by drawing on recent biblical scholarship to explore the relationship of humans and non-human creatures established by God at creation. I am convinced that contemporary biblical scholarship can give us a nuanced understanding of the biblical creation accounts. It sets the foundation for subsequent ecological theological discussions.

In Chapter Two, I will turn to contemporary papal teachings on the environment. More specifically, I will take a closer look at the teachings of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. Chapter Three explores the ecological theology of two systematic theologians, Denis Edwards and Sallie McFague. My choices have some significance. I choose two figures who are primary teachers of the faith in the Church and two from the academic world. Of the two popes, one is considered by some as traditional, the other is considered progressive. Of the two theologians, one is a Catholic and the other a Protestant. What I try to say by making these choices is that, regardless of what stance they take or what conviction they hold on other issues, they all share the same conviction and commitment with regard to ecological issues. The objective of these two chapters is to explore further the relationship between human beings and the environment, especially to see what role human beings play amidst the ecological crisis. At the same time, it aims at providing a theological and spiritual grounding for envisioning a lifestyle that human beings adopt in order to enable and empower creation to flourish.

Finally, in Chapter Four, I will construct a practical eco-theological ethic that maintains that living in solidarity with all of creation is fundamental to the Christian vocation. Here I will sketch out some proposals for the praxis of Christian discipleship.

CHAPTER ONE
BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR ECOLOGICAL ETHICS

The most quoted biblical texts in the discussions of environmental ethics or ecological theology are the two creation accounts of Genesis (Gen 1:1-2:3 and Gen 2:4-25). While these accounts contain the basic texts of the creation stories and present the origin of the human race and the world, the whole story of creation is by no means confined to them. The full meaning of the creation story can only be grasped when these texts are studied together with the other creation accounts found in the Bible. Thus, while these two creation stories in Genesis will be studied extensively, the others must not be overlooked. However, the limit of this section does not allow a detailed study of every creation account in the Bible. Only crucial texts will be examined. A precise investigation of these texts should suffice.

A. Creation in the Old Testament

1. Genesis 1:1 – 2:3

Gen 1:1-2:3 narrates the process of creation within seven days. This text has been recognized as the work of the Priestly source, "a source that has among its interests Israel's distinctive public worship and the chronology of events in the story of the human race and of Israel."[6] It is dated to the sixth century B.C., the time when the Israelites were in exile in Babylon. Furthermore, this creation story is considered to be the preface of the unified text Genesis 1-11, and the preamble of the whole Pentateuch, which "reworks many preexilic traditions and presents them in a new synthesis for an exilic audience."[7] Thus, it functions to provide "an interpretive lens for Israelites reading Genesis 2-11 in the exilic situation."[8]

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[6] Richard J. Clifford, "Election in Genesis 1," in *The Call of Abraham: Essays on the Election of Israel in Honor of Jon D. Levenson - 2013 Edition* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 7 (Hereafter: Clifford, "Election").

[7] Clifford, "Election," 10.

[8] Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible. The Catholic Biblical Quarterly. Monograph Series*, vol. 26, (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1994), 138 (Hereafter: Clifford, *Creations Accounts*).

According to Richard J. Clifford, "exilic" refers both to those who suffer the exile physically and those who suffer the crisis of meaning as its consequence. They have lost their faith and the sense of hope. They face the crisis of identity. Such audiences need to be reassured of "God's *sovereign power* and free commitment to 'heaven and earth,' the *extraordinary worth of human beings*, the divine intent that the species of 'man' continue in existence through progeny and *through possessing land to sustain itself*…"[9] (emphasis mine). The first creation story is written for that purpose. It aims at making known the fact that the whole universe is entirely God's making and that it comes from "a free and powerful action of a personal and caring God."[10] The text focuses on the sovereign power of God rather than that of humans and on the humans' relation to God rather than on that of humans to other creatures. It helps to answer the "pressing exilic questions about national existence and possession of land."[11]

This context provides a good background for understanding some key terms and phrases environmentalists have found difficult and even hostile to nature. God says in Gen 1:26-27, "Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness … [So] God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them." Commenting on these verses, William P. Brown says, "The creation of humanity is unique. Nowhere else in Genesis 1 does God command the divine assembly, and nowhere else is the term 'image' used. Human beings alone, according to the text, bear an iconic relation to the divine […] Cast in God's image, women and men reflect and refract God's presence in the world."[12] Tradition has seen such a unique mode of creation of humans and the subsequent divine commands as an implication of humans' supremacy over the

[9] Clifford, "Election," 10-11.
[10] José Morales, *Creation Theology* (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2001), 16 (Hereafter: Morales, *Creation Theology*).
[11] Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 140.
[12] William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 42 (Hereafter: Brown, *Seven Pillars*).

rest of creation. Though such views are apparently valid, contemporary biblical scholarship shows they are not what the text means to convey.

Biblical scholars have long noticed the connection between Genesis 1 and the Mesopotamian creation accounts. Clifford, for example, recognizes the language used in this text ("image" and "likeness") has characteristics of the royal language used in Mesopotamian inscriptions. Mesopotamian cosmogonies, he says, depict humans as slaves created for the service of the gods, both to work to maintain the universe in place of the rebel gods and to offer them food in the temple.[13] Kings in some cosmogonies are created separately from the human race, presumably to ensure that humans serve the gods properly. By using such royal language, Clifford asserts, Genesis 1 means to portray humans with royal traits, whose task is much "broader than temple maintenance."[14] God has servants in both the heavenly world (heavenly beings, angels) and the earthly world (humans). Human beings are the image of God because they resemble heavenly beings who are the image of God. This is what Gen 1:26-27 is saying. In Gen 1:26, the assembly of the heavenly beings,[15] presided over by Yhwh (the LORD), asserts: Let us make humankind in *our* image," and in 1:27, the narrator states, "God created humankind in *his* image." Brown suggests, "The *imago* reflects something of humanity's role and place in creation. […] humankind is created not to serve but to embody the *imago*, to reflect God in the world."[16]

What is it that human beings as God's image are to reflect? Bernhard W. Anderson answers the question when he says, "Those who have supposed that the *imago Dei* entitles human beings to exploit and destroy the animals overlook the fact that the *dominium terrae* is a

[13] For a detailed explanation of the Mesopotamian cosmogonies, see Clifford, *Creations Accounts*, 54-98.
[14] *Ibid*., 143; Richard J. Clifford, "The Bible and the Environment," in Kevin W. Irwin and Edmund D. Pellegrino, *Preserving the Creation: Environmental Theology and Ethics*, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1994), 4 (Hereafter: Clifford, "The Bible").
[15] See E. Theodore Mullen, "Divine Assembly," ABD 2, 214-217.
[16] Brown, *Seven Pillars,* 42-43.

call to responsibility. Made in the image of God, human beings are God's representatives, entitled to manage the Creator's earthly estate."[17]

Jürgen Moltmann notices the two different Greek words used to describe human beings: *selem* and *demuth* which are traditionally translated as "image" and "similitude or likeness." These words, he says, express the outward representation and the inward relationship respectively. Placing this text in the background of the ancient Eastern tradition, which holds the statue of the Pharaoh as his actual presence in any provinces of his empire, Moltmann insists that to be in God's image means to be "'the emblem of God's sovereignty' set upon the earth. […] As his image, human beings represent God on earth; as his similitude, they reflect him. […] the image is also inherently a divine 'mode of appearance'. […] The human being is God's indirect manifestation on earth."[18] He notes, "Peoples, races and nations which set themselves up to be masters of the world by no means become God's image in the process, or his representative, or 'God present [sic] on earth'. They become at most a monster."[19] For him, the best way to be in God's image is to be in the image of Christ, because "[Christ] 'is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation' (Col 1:15) […] God appears in his perfect image, God rules through his image, God reconciles and redeems through his image on earth." Therefore, to truly become the image of God, human beings are to imitate Christ. What about Christ in relation to nonhuman creatures? How we should imitate or reflect God's image will be discuss later in this chapter.

The creation of human beings in God's image is followed by the divine commissions, "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth" (Gen 1:28). These verses are

[17] Bernhard W. Anderson, ed., *Creation in the Old Testament. Issues in Religion and Theology*, vol. 6, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 163 (Hereafter: Anderson, *Creation*).
[18] Jurgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, (San Francisco: Harpersanfrancisco, 1991), 219 (Hereafter: Moltmann, *God in Creation*).
[19] Moltmann, *God in Creation,* 224-225.

problematic for modern readers, especially those who approach the text with an ecojustice eye. Clifford asks whether they give humans the permission to manipulate and exploit nature? His investigation shows that these commissions do not give humans such permission. He explains that "Be fertile and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it" simply means that God wills that humans continue in existence through progeny and that they acquire the land promised them by God. God does not give that commission to man as an individual but to man collectively, as a nation. As such, Gen 1:28 means that God "commands each nation to continue through progeny and to take territory on which they are to live."[20]

Clifford notices the violent language of the term *kābaš* for "subdue." He also notices that this term is used later to refer to Israel's taking of the land of Canaan. He points out that God gives each nation its own land. He gives Canaan to the Israel. Israel must subdue the land and take possession of it as God's given gift. But since Canaan was already occupied, Israel had to use military force to invade and subdue it. This only took place later at the conquest of Canaan. "After they finished the conquest, 'the land was subdued before Yahweh.' That is, ready to be inhabited and built on."[21] Therefore, Clifford suggests that the object of *kābaš* (*eres*) in Gen 1:28 should be read as "territory," not "earth."[22] This implies that violence is used against human enemies for the taking of land, it is not used against the earth or nature at large. "To subdue the earth", therefore, means, "to take and inhabit the land that God gives. It does not mean to exploit it but rather to receive it as a gift and live on it."[23]

A common but less likely interpretation is made by Richard Bauckham. He states that when "subdue" has humans as its object, it means "to take by force" or "to make subject"; but

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[20] Clifford, "Election," 19.
[21] Richard J. Clifford, "Genesis 1-3: Permission to Exploit Nature?", in *The Bible Today*, (May 1988), 136 (Hereafter: Clifford, "Genesis 1-3").
[22] Clifford, "Election," 20.
[23] Clifford, "Genesis 1-3", 136.

when it has "land" as its object, it means "to occupy" or "to take possession." The action, he says, "requires defeating the enemies who previously occupied the land, but the land itself has only to be possessed. It is not itself an enemy to be forcibly subjugated."[24] Bauckham further suggests: "'subduing' the land here refers to agriculture, since the only way humans are able to fill the land is to cultivate it and so to make it yield more food than it would of its own accord."[25] Yet, he notices that God also gives the land to all the land animals. As such, God very unlikely intends that human "fill the land" at the expense of other animals. Furthermore, God grants "every green plant" to both humans and nonhuman animals as food. Therefore, he insists, "humans should not grow food for themselves (and so fill the land) to an extent that competes with the livelihood of other living creatures. Humans and other creatures are to share the land, and humans are responsible for seeing that their own use of the land does not negate this sharing."[26]

The language of dominion in Gen 1:28 also seems problematic. But Clifford points out that elsewhere in the Bible, "to have dominion" simply means "to rule or shepherd in a neutral sense."[27] Though he admits such statement gives humans dominion over nonhuman animals, he denies that it gives humans the right to kill them for food since the only food permitted them at that time are plants. As Brown says, "The language of dominion lacks all sense of exploitation (1:26, 28)."[28] And he notices, "Only after the Flood (Gen 9:1-4) is permission granted to human beings to eat flesh, but with certain restraints."[29]

[24] Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 16-17 (Hereafter: Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology*).
[25] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology,* 17.
[26] *Ibid*., 17-18.
[27] Clifford, "Genesis 1-3", 134.
[28] Brown, *Seven Pillars,* 47.
[29] *Ibid*.

Relating Gen 1:28 to the Flood story, Clifford insists that having dominion over the animals means "seeing to their survival […] caring for them as creatures of God's beautiful cosmos."[30] The human race, he says, "was to keep other forms of animal life in existence, to save them from destruction."[31] He notes that though in Genesis 9 God gives humans permission to kill animals for food, the blood, which signifies the life of each creature, belongs to God. This means that only God is the author of life. Human beings have no right of their own to claim the life of the animals. Clifford asserts, "The change in the original blessing is [only] necessitated by sin […] Human violence to animals was not part of the original pre-flood plan, nor will it characterize the end time, since the harmony of Genesis 1 is what God intends and will ultimately bring about."[32]

Clifford calls attention to the fact that in Gen 9:9-11 God makes a single covenant to both humans and animals. Similarly, Anderson says, "God's covenant with Noah […] embraces all human beings, animals, and birds, and the whole natural order."[33] Hence, "humans and animals are covenant partners."[34] This indicates the intrinsic value of nonhuman creatures.

Connecting human dominion to his creation in God's image, Bauckham asserts that to image God means to participate in "God's caring rule over his creatures."[35] He maintains,

> Creation in the image of God does not make them demi-gods. They are unequivocally creatures. They are land animals who must live from the land as all land animals must. They participate in the ordered interdependence of the creatures as Genesis 1 portrays them. The dominion God gives them is over fellow-creatures and it reflects God's rule in a necessarily creaturely way. It is to be exercised within the created order that God has established and must serve that order.[36]
> … Our creation in the image of God and the unique dominion given to us do not abolish our fundamental community with other creatures."[37]

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[30] Clifford, "Genesis 1-3", 135.
[31] Clifford, "The Bible", 6.
[32] Clifford, "Genesis 1-3", 135.
[33] Anderson, *Creation,* 166.
[34] Clifford, "Genesis 1-3", 135.
[35] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology,* 19.
[36] *Ibid*.
[37] *Ibid*., 31.

Bauckham further notes, the fact that humans are created in the image of God and have unique dominion over God's creation does not mean that other nonhuman creatures do not in any way reflect their Creator. It simply means that humans have a particular broad participation in God's governance of creation. Therefore, human beings need to reflect God's care for his creation. "The Bible's portrayal of God's rule should be the model for humanity's."[38]

2. Genesis 2:4 – 25

It is not uncommon that Gen 2:4-25 is read with a focus on Adam's naming of the animals. At times, this naming has been taken to mean humans' dominance over animals and hence the right to do with them as they will. Lynn White, for example, says,

> Man named all the animals, thus establishing his dominance over them. God planned all this explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes. … [Christianity] not only established a dualism of man and nature, but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends.[39]

White's interpretation, I maintain, is not sufficiently critical for two reasons: first, simply by naming them, the biblical text does not imply humans' dominance over nonhuman animals. Second, as Clifford says, the naming is just one part of the story and not even the most important one; the text has much more to say than just the naming.

According to Clifford, "The name is the way a being presents itself; it establishes a relationship to the other."[40] Bauckham similarly says, "Naming is fundamentally about recognition. Adam acknowledges the animals' place in the world. He takes an interest in them and distinguishes each from others, recognizing the similarities and differences that belong to them by virtue of their creation by God… [Adam] classifying the species and giving them names."[41] Therefore, in naming the animals, the man, as the representative of God, does not

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[38] *Ibid*.
[39] Clifford, "Genesis 1-3", 133; See also, White, "Historical Roots" 37-38.
[40] Clifford, "Genesis 1-3", 137.
[41] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology,* 130.

establish his domination over animals but rather gives them their own identity. As such, he recognizes them as "fellow-creatures with whom he shares the world."[42] Or, as Mark G. Brett would say, he celebrates the goodness and beauty of diversity.[43] Adam recognizes the "otherness" of the animals – an "otherness" that is good – and acknowledges that these animals have value in themselves. At the same time, both Clifford and Bauckham maintain, by giving the animals their names, Adam establishes a social relationship with them. In the same way as the man forms the "basic unit of human society" when he calls his human partner "woman," by giving the animals their proper names, he sets "the bond between them, not the domination of one by the other."[44] His investigation of the text allows Clifford to conclude: "The biblical texts examined here do not provide us with a license to dominate each other or the rest of creation."[45] It rather implies an "appropriate authority, affinity, and care."[46]

A serious study of the text cannot overlook the creation of human and nonhuman beings in this account. Scholars notice that both human and nonhuman animals are created out of the ground. Brett says, "The vocabulary in Gen 2:19, where the animals are created, is the same as in Gen 2:7 where the human is created."[47] And Bauckham asserts, "Nothing in their created constitution differentiates humans from other animals, according to this account."[48] This indicates that human and nonhuman animals belong to the same kinship group. Bauckham goes further as he identifies humans' kinship with not only animals but also with the earth itself and all earthly creatures, that is, both plants and animals. He also recognizes that as an earthly creature, whose existence is generated from the ground, the human belongs to the earth more

[42] *Ibid*., 23.
[43] See Mark G. Brett, "Earthing the Human in Genesis 1-3," in Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst, eds., *The Earth Story in Genesis. The Earth Bible*, vol. 2, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 81 (Hereafter: Brett, "Earthing").
[44] Clifford, "Genesis 1-3", 137.
[45] *Ibid*.
[46] Clifford, "The Bible", 8.
[47] Brett, "Earthing", 81.
[48] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology,* 21.

than the earth belongs to them. And as a part of the web of earthly creatures, the human is dependent on the natural systems of life. Similarly, José Morales recognizes, "Here man does not come from the Word but this world of ours: the hands of God shape him from the earth itself […] the writer wants to […] make clear that the parts of the human body all belong to this world of ours."[49] As such, human beings necessarily stand in solidarity with the rest of creation.

The role of human beings in this account is also helpful for our discussion. Gen 2:15 says, "The Lord God then took the man and settle him in the garden of Eden, *to cultivate and care for it*" (Emphasis mine). In some translations, this verse is read "… to till and to keep it." In either case the meaning remains that God commissions the humans to work in and take care of the garden of God. This garden of God, however, should not be restricted to the specific garden of Eden. Since "Eden" signifies the natural system of lives, the human's task should be understood as applied to all of God's creation. As Clifford says, "the man is created to be a gardener whose work is required for the earth to bloom."[50]

Bauckham relates humans' task of tilling the soil to the commission to "subdue the land." Yet he recognizes a stronger sense of humans' close relationship with the soil in the language of Gen 1:15. There is a sense of interconnectedness, interdependence, and a reciprocal relationship between human creatures and nonhuman creatures: "the soil needs Adam's work and he needs the soil's produce."[51] "In a sense, the garden and Adam are made for each other. The garden is there to delight and nourish Adam, and he is there to cultivate and to care for it."[52]

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[49] Morales, *Creation Theology,* 21.
[50] Clifford, "The Bible", 7.
[51] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology,* 22.
[52] *Ibid.,* 106.

3. Job 38:1 – 42:6

God's answer to Job in chapters 38-41 has much to teach us about biblical wisdom with regard to the place of humans in creation and their relation to nonhuman creatures. Job, a just and innocent man, suffers greatly. His three friends come to console him. But instead of bringing him inner peace, they cause him into more confusion and discontent. As he suffers physically and emotionally the loss of wealth, health and loved ones, Job also suffers mentally the fundamental question why these bad things happen to him, a good person. Confronting such an ironic reality, he jumps to the conclusion that God is not just. He accuses God of letting bad things happen to him. He complains and demands that God respond to him.

The divine speech, according to Clifford, on the one hand, affirms design and justice in the world, and, on the other hand, makes manifest that "human beings are not the goal or purpose of creation, and their knowledge is decidedly limited (chapter 28) … [they] cannot fathom the world God has created.[53]

In his examination of this text, Bauckham recognizes first of all that the text emphasizes the authorship of God in creation. It is God and no one else who is the cosmic architect and builder of the world (Job 38:4-7). He also recognizes that the text is a de-anthropocentric vision of the cosmos. Thus, he insists that there is a need for a cosmic humility on the part of humans to recognize that they are but creatures within creation. Humans need the humility to recognize their proper place in the web of creation and return God to his rightful place, as the Creator and God of the universe. Humans also need the cosmic humility to recognize the "'*otherness'* of the cosmos, precisely that it is not a human world."[54] Nonhuman creatures, as the text implies, also have an important place in their Creator. God cares and provides for nonhuman creatures as he

[53] Clifford, "The Bible", 18, 23.
[54] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology,* 45.

does for human creatures (Job 38:25-27). The wild animals described in Job 38:39-39:30 is an indication that it is a part of God's design for creation that nonhuman creatures have their own lives that "can be fulfilled only in independence of humans." [55] These animals live their own lives. They neither serve humans or need to be provided for by humans because God takes care of them. "Their divine designer and provider is also proud of their independence, delights in their wildness and rejoices in the unique value of each. Job [and thus all humans] is invited to join God in this delight."[56]

Similar to Clifford, Bauckham points out the limit of human beings as expressed in the text. Not only does Job not know or comprehend God's design for creation, he cannot control it as God does. While in chapter 38-39 God reminds Job that he cannot control the created order – the cosmos, the sun, the stars, the weather, etc. – in chapters 40-41 he makes clear that Job is not able to control wild animals either. The land monster Behemoth and the sea monster Leviathan are beyond Job's hope of control. Bauckham sees these monsters as the forces of destruction in creation. Thus, he concludes that Job can neither control the created order nor the destructive force of that order. There is only one who can both control the created order and contain the force of its destruction and that is God. Job at the end knows that God has them all under his control.

4. Psalms 8, 65, 104

Psalm 8 is a canticle that praises God's majesty reflected in creation. The psalmist, marveling at the wonder of creation, praises the Lord with the same sentence both at the beginning and the end of the psalm: "O Lord, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth!" (vv.1, 10). Scholars have made connection between Psalm 8 and Genesis 1 with

[55] *Ibid.,* 51.
[56] *Ibid*.

regard to the dignity of the humans. Psalm 8, according to Anderson, indicates that humans have been elevated to a high rank, just "a little lower than divine beings" (v.6) [57] Hence, they are given dominion over the works of God's hands. Yet, he maintains that this dominion is a call to responsibility rather than the right to exploit nature. Thus, he insists, humans are to rule wisely and benevolently. He also makes an important observation about the sort of dominion humans have. According to Psalm 8, human dominion is not over all of nature but only over "the nonhuman living creatures: the animals, birds, and fish."[58]

Clifford similarly points out that the psalm assumes a two-tier universe, heaven and earth, each with its servants. '*Elohim* (divine beings or divine servants) serve in heaven and humans serve on earth. "The rule of humans," he says, "is depicted with royal language. They are endowed with glory and honor like the king in 21:5: 'His *glory* is great through your help; / *splendor* and majesty you bestow on him.' Humans have dominion over the three spheres of earthly life: land, air, and sea (vv. 7-8)."[59] While recognizing God's special attention to humans, he asserts that it is simply God's choice to do so.

Although the dignity of humans occupies most of the psalm, it is nonetheless an expression of the psalmist's joy at creation as a whole. As Morales notices, "The psalmist contemplates the greatness of creation and focuses especially on the dignity of man, who as God's representative directs creation [...] But this reflection on man [sic] only serves to reinforce the evidence of God's majesty."[60] The depiction of humans and their role expresses the splendors

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[57] *The New American Bible Revised Edition* translates the term '*elohim* as "god," or "a god," hence the phrase "little less than a god." Clifford, however, insists that it is better to follow the majority of translators in rendering '*elohim* as "divine beings." Hence, he suggests that the phrase should be translated as "a little lower than divine beings." He says that this is a well-attested meaning in the Bible. I find Clifford's explanation convincing. See Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 1-72*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 69 (Hereafter: Clifford, *Psalm 1-72*).
[58] Anderson, *Creation,* 162.
[59] Clifford, *Psalm 1-72*, 69-70.
[60] Morales, *Creation Theology,* 23.

of creation and how God, as a loving and caring Creator, faithfully continues to look after his creation. The psalm, as Clifford says, "invites people to wonder at this work of God."[61]

Psalm 65 provides a good supplement to psalm 8. While Psalm 8 praises God's majesty with a special focus on the dignity of humans, Psalm 65 praises God with a special focus on God's relation to the earth. The psalmist, after a brief confession of human wicked deeds, moves to express how God cares for the earth and how the earth responds to God. As Howard N. Wallace points out, the psalmist makes clear that "God is the source of Earth's life and abundance."[62] God is the one who sets up the mountains and tills the seas and the peoples (vv. 7-8). God is the one who places the cosmos in order. God and the earth in this psalm are depicted as having a deep personal relationship: "You [God] *visit* the earth and water it, make it abundantly fertile" (v. 10) (emphasis mine). God cares for the earth as a dedicated gardener. Wallace says, "God provides, tends and waters Earth, and blesses the growth. The harvest […] comes as the result of God's goodness (Ps 65: 11)."[63] The earth is described as "a living entity capable of giving praise to God."[64] Enriched by God's gift of abundant fertility, the earth, in response, breaks forth into joyful praise (vv.12-13). The earth's produce itself is also its response to God. Psalm 65, therefore, according to Wallace, "both challenges and encourages us to see our relationship with Earth, and its relationship with God, in ways different to those we have inherited."[65]

Psalm 104 is another canticle of praise of God's majesty in all the wonders of his creation. Dianne Bergant summarizes it as follows:

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[61] Clifford, *Psalm 1-72*, 71.
[62] Howard N. Wallace, "*Jubilate Deo omnis terra*: God and Earth in Psalm 65," in Norman C. Habel, ed., *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets. The Earth Bible*, vol. 4, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 57 (Hereafter: Wallace, *Jubilate*).
[63] Wallace, *Jubilate*, 58.
[64] *Ibid.,* 62.
[65] *Ibid.,* 62.

> It beings (vv. 1-2a) and ends with an extended exclamation of praise (vv. 31-35). In the body of the psalm, the psalmist celebrates the creation of the world (vv. 2b-9), the blessings of live-giving water (vv. 10-18), the creation and governance of the moon and the sun, of the sea and everything that lives in it (vv. 19-26), and God's exclusive and universal rule (vv. 27-30).[66]

She recognizes that the emphasis of the psalm is on the intrinsic value of all creatures. Nonhuman creatures have their own lives and values independent of humans. They have their own role to play in creation. Especially, they are valuable to God and have a deep connection with him. Thus, she insists, "The heavens, the waters, the clouds, the winds, fire, and flame are not only constitutive elements of creation, they are the substance of God's dwelling, God's means of transportation, and the ministers of God's will. God lives within and rules from this cosmic realm."[67]

This psalm, as Bergant notices, also expresses a sense of God's ongoing care of creation. She says God did not create the universe then leave it alone. As both creator and sustainer of the world, God continues to care and provide for his creation. As Clifford says, "God sends rain for domestic animals and crops, human beings, and the birds and animals of the forest (vv. 16-17)."[68] Furthermore, Bergant points out the ecological interdependence among creatures as expressed in the psalm: "Springs gush forth, and they supply water for living things. The earth produces vegetation which provides food and resting places for animals. The mountains, too, offer refuse."[69]

Both Bergant and Clifford recognize the total dependence of all creatures on God for their lives. According to their study of the text, only God is the source and author of life. Apart from God, there is no life. Clifford says, "All creatures of land and sea depend directly on God

[66] Dianne Bergant, *The Earth Is the Lord's: The Bible, Ecology, and Worship*, American Essays in Liturgy (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 32-33 (Hereafter: Bergant, *The Earth is the Lord's*).
[67] *Ibid*., 33.
[68] Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73-150*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 149 (Hereafter: Clifford, *Psalms 73-150*).
[69] Bergant, *The Earth is the Lord's*, 33.

for sustenance. "Breath" and "spirit" translate the Hebrew word, *rûah* ("air in motion"). When God takes it away, people [and nonhuman beings] die. When God breathes upon them, they live."[70] Similarly, Bergant says, "God both gives food to creatures and withholds it from them. God takes away the breath of life, and God also regenerates by giving new spirit."[71] They both also notice the psalm's focus on the interrelatedness among creatures. Bergant asserts, "what serves their own individual designs also enhances the existence of other creatures."[72] And Clifford states, "God made the world harmonious and capable of supporting every form of life, of which human beings are only one variety."[73]

Though Bergant and Clifford do not make it explicit, their reflections imply a de-anthropocentricized vision of Psalm 104. This vision, however, is spelled out by Bauckham in his study of the psalm. Making connection between Psalm 104 and Job 38-39, he asserts that both texts deny humans a place of supremacy. He argues that though human creatures receive a little more attention than nonhuman creatures (vv. 14-15, 23, 26), there is no evidence of human supremacy over the nonhuman creatures. Both human and nonhuman creatures are fellow-creatures of each other. They all have their own place in creation. God provides and sustain nonhuman creatures as well as human creatures. He concludes, this psalm is primarily theocentric

> and that its picture of an ecological creation belongs within its theocentric praise of God for his creation. 'With no stain of human dominion, this Psalm plays out joy in God and nature both.' […] What gives wholeness to this psalm's reading of the world is not human mastery over it or the value humans set on it, not (in contemporary term) globalization, but the value of all created things for God. This is a theocentric, not anthropocentric world. God's own rejoicing in his works (v 31) funds the psalmist's rejoicing (v 34), as he praises God, not merely for human life and creations' benefits for humans, but for God's glory seen in the whole creation. In a different way from Job, the psalmist is taken out of himself, lifted out of the limited human preoccupations that dominate most of our lives, by his contemplation of the rest of God's creation. This is the kind of

[70] Clifford, *Psalms 73-150,* 150.
[71] Bergant, *The Earth is the Lord's*, 34.
[72] *Ibid*.
[73] Clifford, *Psalms 73-150,* 151.

> appreciation of God's creation, sharing in God's appreciation of it, that can enable us to live rightly within it, to join with other creatures in living for the praise of his glory.[74]

5. Isaiah 40 – 45

Isaiah 40-50 is known as Second Isaiah. It is presumably addressed to an audience in desolation towards the end of the Babylonian exile. Such an audience needed to be comforted and reassured of a bright future when Israel as a nation is restored. Second Isaiah therefore begins with God's words of comfort (Is. 40:1; 51:3). It projects a vision of reestablished Israel. For those desolate Israelites, Brown comments, "comfort is about God's ongoing, renewing work in creation, the 'new thing' that 'sprouts forth' (Is. 42:9 and Is. 43:19)."[75] The term "sprouting", according to Brown, signals the growth of new creation. As such, creation is seen not as a single event in the past but an ongoing creative activity in the present as well. It is God's creative work in progress.

As the author of Second Isaiah envisions a reestablished Israel, he is looking forwards to the future when Israel is liberated and redeemed. In his study of these chapters, Morales notices the salvific perspective of the text. He says, the works of creation and redemption which are

> proclaimed seem not just to be connected to each other but very closely linked in the context of a single divine plan. […] Not only is creation recognized as the initial event of salvation, but the history of Israel is described as an ongoing creative action of God. The book of Isaiah also depicts creation as an eschatological event, which extends from the making of the world, to its continuation in the present, and going on to its ultimate fulfilment.[76]

Similarly, Clifford says, "the prophet uses language of creation and language of redemption complementarily: God leads the people through the wilderness in a new exodus and a new land-taking: God destroys the 'chaos' of the wilderness, reshaping it so the people can march through it to Zion."[77] A good example of such use of language is found in Is. 43:16-21:

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[74] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology,* 70-72.
[75] Brown, *Seven Pillars,* 207.
[76] Morales, *Creation Theology,* 22.
[77] Clifford, "The Bible", 12.

[16]Thus says the LORD,
the one who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the Mighty Waters,
[17]the one who musters chariots and horse,
all the mighty army;
they lie prostrate, no more to rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick.
[18]Recall no more the former things,
the ancient events bring no longer to mind.
[19]I am now doing something new,
now it springs forth, do you not recognize it?
I am making a way in the wilderness,
paths in the desert.
[20]The wild beasts will honor me,
jackals and ostriches.
For I have placed waters in the wilderness
rivers in the desert.
to give drink to my chosen people,
[21]the people whom I formed for myself,
to narrate my praiseworthy deeds.

Clifford explains, the Lord is depicted in this scenario (vv. 16-17) as "the conqueror of Sea (cosmogonic language) and Pharaoh's troops (historical or redemption language)."[78] But that was the past event. Vv. 18-21 move from God's redemptive act of the past to one that is in present. The Lord is "now doing something new" (v.19), though in the same pattern. "The new event repeats the old act:" Clifford continues, a way in the Sea parallels a way in the wilderness;

> a path in the Mighty Waters parallels paths in the desert. This time it is not the sea but the impassable desert that keeps the people from their land. The problem the desert poses to the people is not its lifelessness per se but its interposing itself between Israel and the land; it blocks the people from entering their land. The highway over which the Lord will lead the people will be so safe for humans that the exotic desert animals will join in worship and there will be abundant water for "the people you have formed for yourself."[79]

In that sense, as God carries out the work of redemption for Israel, God also creates the universe anew. The act of redemption and the act of renewing creation are but one single act. Both human and nonhuman creatures benefit from God's redemptive act. As Clifford points out, the wild animals are so attracted by the highway the Lord made in the desert that they join in

[78] *Ibid*., 13.
[79] *Ibid*.

worship and abundant living. The safe path for human beings is also the safe path for other animals, and for the whole of creation. Exploring texts beyond Second Isaiah (Is 11:1-9; 35:1, 5-7) he points out that the healing of the desert parallels the healing of restored humanity. He insists, "The people of Israel are so much a part of their environment that their healing means healing for nature too."[80]

Is 49 is another example where we find salvation of Israel is linked to the renewal of creation. Interestingly, the good news of salvation in this chapter is proclaimed to both the land and the people with the land precedes in sequence. "Hear me, coastlands, listen, distant peoples…" (v.1), or "Sing out, heavens, and rejoice, earth, break forth into song, you mountains" (v.13). And it describes Israel's liberation as when the Lord "restore the land and allot the devastated heritages" (v. 8); "Along the roadways they shall find pasture" (v. 9) Or when the Lord "guides them besides springs of water" and "turn all mountains into roadway, and make highway level" (vv.10-11).

Redemption is also seen as a future event when God renews and recreates all things. Though salvation is seen as a future event when God passes his judgment, this judgment is not seen as taken place in another world. It is right in this world. It comes with the restore and renewal of creation. Clifford recognizes that the bond between the city Zion and the people of Israel is so close that "the city suffers in God's purifying judgment […] and like the people, comes through it renewed and recreated."[81] Chapter 54 is an example.

[11] O afflicted one, storm-battered and unconsoled,
I lay your pavements in carnelians,
your foundations in sapphires;
[12] I will make your battlements of rubies,
your gates of jewels,
and all your walls of precious stones.
[13] All your children shall be taught by the LORD;

[80] *Ibid*., 14.
[81] *Ibid*.

great shall be the peace of your children.
[14] In justice shall you be established,
far from oppression, you shall not fear,
from destruction, it cannot come near.
[15] If there be an attack, it is not my doing;
whoever attacks shall fall before you (Is. 54:11-15).

A more explicit example, according to Clifford, is chapter 65 where the restoration after judgment is called a new creation.[82]

[17] For I am about to create new heavens
and a new earth;
the former things shall not be remembered
or come to mind…
[19] I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and delight in my people;
No more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it,
or the cry of distress…
[20] No more shall there be in it
an infant that lives but a few days,
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime…
[25] The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
but the serpent – its food shall be dust!
They shall not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
says the LORD. (Is 65: 17, 19, 20, 25).

Clifford explains that in this chapter, hope "is not otherworldly" because "Belief in the resurrection and an afterlife in the Bible come long after this text." Hence, "This hope is down to earth in good biblical fashion: long life with good health, children, health, a secure household, honor from the community. The environment here is both natural and made. […] God creates a new city, transforming the faithful people *including* their buildings and habitat."[83]

The eschatological perspective of creation in Second Isaiah is important because our understandings of eschatology, according to Clifford, "bear directly on human responsibility for the environment."[84] We have seen that creation as Second Isaiah portrays it is not a single act in

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[82] *Ibid*.
[83] *Ibid.,* 15.
[84] *Ibid*.

the past. Rather, it is an event that has a threefold characteristic: past, present, and future. Redemption is the continuing renewal of creation. Hence the process of creation itself is the history of redemption.

According to Clifford, Second Isaiah accepts the biblical assumption that creation in the Bible issues principally in a *human society*, unlike our modern conception in which creation is usually thought to issue in the planetary and astral world. Ancient cosmogonies often narrated how the gods made humans as slaves, gave them the alphabet, a king, culture and crafts. In Isaiah 40-55, God creates (Heb. *bara'*) and redeems. The concepts, and sometimes the verbs, are placed in parallel to show the verbs are two different ways of saying the same thing. The Lord is once again creating/redeeming a people. Isa 43:16-21 is one of the clearest statements of this interpretation. In Isaiah 35 (often thought to be by the author of 40-55, "nature" (wilderness and dry land) and humans (the blind, lame, etc.)) are healed by the same act. Putting things a little differently, humans are so closely embedded in their physical world that any healing or redeeming of humans will also involve the healing of their natural environment.[85]

B. Creation in the New Testament

1. Mt 6:25-34; Lk 12:13-34; Mk 1-5, 13

As I said earlier, we find in Jesus the best answer to the question how humans image God. With regard to care for the environment and respect for God's creation, Jesus has set up for us a model to follow. In this regard, Sean McDonagh rightly says, a Christian theology of

> creation has much to learn from the attitude of respect which Jesus displayed towards the natural world. […] Jesus shows an intimacy and familiarity with a variety of God's creatures and the processes of nature. […] he displays an appreciative and contemplative attitude towards creation […] the gospels tell us that nature played an important role in Jesus' life.[86]

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[85] Personal communication of Prof. Clifford.

[86] See David G. Horrell, *The Bible and the Environment: Towards a Critical Ecological Biblical Theology* (London: Equinox Publishing, 2010), 63 (Hereafter: Horrell, *The Bible*).

This section presents some texts from the synoptic gospels in order to see how Jesus related to creation in his earthly life. Texts such as Mt 6:25-34; Lk 12:13-34; Mk 1-5, 13 show God's care for creation as well as Jesus' intimate association with nature, his passion and care for nonhuman creatures, and his knowledge of the natural world. Adrian M. Leske sees in Mt 6:25-34 a picture of the Earth community where both humans and nonhuman creatures live together and are provided for by God. As part of the Sermon on the Mount about the Kingdom of God, Mt 6:25-34 serves to ease human anxiety about providing for daily life and depicts Jesus encouraging his audience to seek first the kingdom of God. Similarly, in Lk 12:13-34 Jesus urges his followers to depend on God for their basic need, to trust in God's loving care for their lives, and to seek first God's kingdom. Once they accept God's kingdom, everything else will follows naturally. But while assuring humans of God's provision for them, both passages make clear that God cares and provides for nonhuman creatures as well: God feeds the birds of the air (Mt 6: 26; Lk 12: 24) and adorns the flowers and the grass of the field beautifully (Mt 6: 28; Lk 12: 27-28). As members of the earth community, human creatures and nonhuman creatures share with each other the same kinship. "All share in common judgment and blessings. The one God is God of all, who cares for *all* creation, and regards it *all* as very good. […] every aspect of the Earth community – be it human, animal, or plant life – has its purpose in God's design, and thus is of intrinsic worth."[87]

Similarly, Bauckham sees creation in Mt 6:25-33 as "a common home for living creatures, in which God provides for all their needs."[88] However, he focuses his study more on the call to depend on God for our lives. He proposes that human anxiety might be rooted in the

[87] Adrian M. Leske, "Matthew 6:25-34: Human Anxiety and the Natural World," in Vicky Balabanski and Norman C. Habel, eds., *The Earth Story in the New Testament*. *The Earth Story in the New Testament: Volume 5* (Sheffield: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2002), 26.
[88] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology,* 73.

thought that it is up to us to provide for our need. In our society, he states, human anxiety about having enough to survive is driven all the more by the "ever-increasing affluence and an obsessive anxiety to maintain an ever-rising standard of living."[89] This obsessive consumption, he asserts, is "depleting and destroying the resources of nature and depriving both other species and many humans of the means even of mere subsistence."[90] Thus, he concludes, Jesus in this passage challenges us to trust that God-given resources of creation are sufficient for the reasonable needs of all God's creatures. This would exclude any kind of excessive use of resources. Hence, he calls for an ecological concern that learns to share God-given resources in a reasonable and responsible manner in the common home of creation. He says, "God's provision is sufficient if equitably shared. [Thus,] living from God's provision means also living within limits. […] the ecological limits require of us concern not only our personal consumption but also the broad economic assumptions and goals that drive our consumer society and its globalization."[91]

To focus only on a few selected texts, however, causes some concern for David G. Horrell, who thinks it runs the risk of "making Jesus in our image." First of all, he says, focusing on the few texts implies that there is little account of explicit ecological relevance in the Gospels. Secondly, on the one hand, in these texts "Jesus does not talk, at least not directly, about humanity's role in relation to creation or about any responsibilities we might have towards animals, plants, or the earth in general."[92] On the other hand, such a focus overlooks the texts that show Jesus' subduing of the storm (Mk 4:35-41), or his treatment of the Gerasene swine

[89] *Ibid.,* 74.
[90] *Ibid*.
[91] *Ibid.,* 75-76.
[92] Horrell, *The Bible,* 64.

(Mk 5:11-13; Lk 8:32-33) and the fig tree (Mk 11:12-14, 20-21; Mt 21:18-20), both of which show Jesus' domination of nature. Moreover, Horrell insists thirdly that Jesus fills his teaching

> with references to animals, plants, and the earth, does not necessarily mean that Jesus thereby conveys or promotes a care and respect for creation. […] he never draws any implication from all his nature imagery that his disciples should therefore treasure and preserve the flowers and birds which they see around them. […] the fact that Jesus makes reference to the earth as the place where he has come does not necessarily imply any particular valuation of it.[93]

Furthermore, in referring to Mt 6:25-30 and Lk 12:22-28, Horrell says, while these texts show God's providential care for the whole of creation, they nonetheless serve to stress that humans are far greater valuable than nonhuman creatures.[94]

These critical observations are not surprising. The arguments Horrell makes are logically valid. The points he makes, however, can be looked at differently. To the claim that there are only a few accounts of explicit ecological relevance in the Gospels, I would say that a few accounts are enough. Jesus includes in his teaching many aspects of Christian life. He cannot keep elaborating on one topic all the time. Also, his teaching is nearly always contextually relevant. He teaches when the opportunity presents itself and he talks about topics that are needed in and relevant to each situation. So, the fact that there are only few accounts of ecological relevance does not necessarily mean that the matter is not important. Rather, I would argue that the many times Jesus makes reference to the animals, the flowers, and the earth speak loudly enough his association with them.

To Horrell's second concern that Jesus does not talk (directly) about humanity's role in or responsibilities to creation, two points might be considered. First, Jesus not only teaches by his words but also, and more powerfully, by his actions. Through the things that Jesus did in his earthly life he sets an example for his disciples to follow. His command to "learn from me" (Mt

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[93] *Ibid.,* 65-66.
[94] *Ibid.,* 64-66.

11:29) stresses more about learning from his life – his actions – than from his words. Thus, the lessons are by no means insignificant or less powerful and urgent just because he does not say it directly or explicitly. Second, Jesus' lessons need to be understood in their contexts. The focus of the story of the fig tree (Mk 11:12-14, 20-21; Mt 21:18-20) is not to depict how God treats nonhuman creatures. Rather, it serves to emphasize the need for Jesus' followers to produce fruits of good works. If they do not produce good fruits, they will meet with the same fate as the barren fig tree. An important implication that can be drawn from this story is that both human and nonhuman creatures are equally judged by God. The common fate (and future) of human and nonhuman creatures is expressed more clearly in Paul's theology of creation, which will be discussed shortly.

Similarly, the lesson Jesus tries to get across in his subduing the storm and the treatment of the Gerasene swine is not about the human and nonhuman creatures' relationship but about the power of God and Jesus' own identity. Performing these actions he means, first, to reveal his divine nature and, second, to show that only God has power over nature, and therefore as a divine person Jesus has the power to do what he did. Reading Mk 4:35-41 against the mythological background of the Old Testament period, Bauckham identifies the water of the stormy sea with the primeval waters of chaos, the destructive powers of nature. Thus, Jesus' subduing the storm is seen as "God's final elimination of chaos from the natural world. […] and God will finally establish the harmony of his creation."[95] In the context of Jesus' inauguration of the Kingdom of God, according to Bauckham, the passage functions as a promise that though the destructive powers of the forces of chaos are still active in the natural world against living creatures, in the end they will be pacified by God. What is important for us to note in this picture

[95] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology,* 169.

is that God "does not meet the destructive violence of nature with destructive violence of his own. He pacifies, he brings peace to a disordered world."[96]

These accounts, therefore, far from being harmful to creatures, teach us an important lesson: humans cannot ultimately control natural forces. Only God, who is the Creator of all, has such power and as such he has evil force in creation under control. As Bauckham notices, "this sort of control over the forces of nature is intrinsically divine and not human." Speaking from an evangelical perspective, he asserts,

> The great scientific-technological project of the modern world went wrong to the extent that it over-reached itself and imagined that modern humanity could accomplish what belongs only to the omnipotence of God. The project of attempting to harness and control nature, as though we could grasp the Creator's tools and remodel creation to our own design, achieved much, but often at the price of unexpected consequences that have proved increasingly disastrous for the rest of creation as well as ourselves. […] The story of Jesus' pacification of the storm reminds us that control of nature is godlike and humans may rightly participate in it only as creatures, dependent on God, not making themselves gods. Its limits in the givenness of the world as God's creation must be respected. Insofar as the project of modern civilization has sought for humans divine omnipotence to recreate the world at will, it has been a usurpation of divinity, fired by greed and the will to power, inevitably producing the opposite of true divine creativity: chaos, not cosmos. In order to exercise such control of nature as we have in such a way as to restrain chaos and to promote harmony of God's creation, the pacification of the human heart, the recognition of our creatureliness in the community of creation, is first required.[97]

The third point Horrell makes, that Jesus' references to nature does not necessarily mean that Jesus thereby show his love, care, and respect for creation, has been partially responded to previously. An important point to be added is that even though Jesus does not explicitly draw any eco-justice implications, what is clear from his teaching and is helpful for our discussion is the intrinsic value of nonhuman creatures. Moreover, (to Horrell's fourth concern that Mt 6:25-30 and Lk 12:22-28, might serve to stress that humans are far greater valuable than nonhuman creatures) while it is true that Mt 6:25-30 and Lk 12:22-28 express the superiority in value of human beings over nonhuman beings, they nonetheless show that nonhuman beings are

[96] *Ibid.,* 170.
[97] *Ibid.,* 170-171.

important in the eyes of God. God cares and provides for them. Thus, if humans are to image God, they ought to do the same.

2. Rom 8: 19-23; Col 1:15-20; Ephesians 1

Central to Paul's theology of creation are Christ's role in creation, the redemption of the whole creation, and his idea of new heaven and new earth. In Rom 8:19-23 he teaches that not only human beings but the whole of creation is in need of redemption. He says, "For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God" (v.19). Creation so longs for redemption because it was made "subject to futility" (v.20). According to Horrell, Cherryl Hunt, and Christopher Southgate, creation's subjection to futility is made by God, not something willed by creation itself. However, they point out, this was, right from the start, a subjection "in hope" (v.20). This is an important point Paul tries to make in Romams 8. Horrell, Hunt and Southgate see it as a suggestion that "creation's futility was, in the divine economy, the *prelude to liberation* from bondage to decay."[98] The point Paul wants to make here is that, "Just as the suffering Christians at Rome hope for their final redemption, so the creation was subjected in hope, anticipating its final deliverance."[99] Hence in his examination of this text, Clifford states, "Paul places nature and human beings in parallel as they respond to divine acts. Nature here waits for deliverance as eagerly as any human being, for it too has been damaged by the sins of the human race."[100]

Accordingly, scholars consider the groaning of creation in v. 22 the same as the groaning of humanity in v. 23. As much as human and nonhuman creatures share the same hope of redemption, they also share a "common fate." Thus, they groan together as they eagerly await

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[98] David G. Horrell, Cherryl Hunt, and Christopher Southgate, *Greening Paul: Rereading the Apostle in a Time of Ecological Crisis* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 74 (Hereafter: Horrel et al. *Greening Paul*).
[99] Horrell, *The Bible,* 76.
[100] Clifford, "The Bible", 22.

their redemption. Putting v. 22 and v. 23 together with v. 26, Horrell, Hunt and Southgate suggest that here Paul "depicts the creation as also bound up with humanity and the Spirit in a solidarity of shared groaning, and similarly, a shared hope. This hope, for creation, is focused on the moment of the revelation of the sons of God."[101] Similarly, Stanilaus Lyonnet asserted that in this passage,

> the destiny of the material universe is closely linked to the destiny of the human being; man dragged the world into his sin and he will cause it to share in his liberation; that is why creation is said to desire eagerly 'the revealing [or manifestation] of the sons of God', who are men made new by grace. The redemption of the universe is intrinsically linked to the 'redemption of our bodies', that is, a direct and simultaneous consequence of the resurrection of the flesh […] this redemption of the universe relates to the entire universe and not just to a saved humanity.[102]

The second text that expresses Paul's theology of creation is Col 1:15-20.[103] In this hymn, Paul speaks of Christ as the beginning and the end of creation. Christ is "the firstborn of all creation" (v.15). He is the one in, through, and for whom "all things in heaven and on earth" were created (v.16). Being the firstborn of all creation, Morales explains, does not mean that Christ was created as the first creature. The phrase "firstborn of all creation" rather means to accentuate Christ's "ontological and cosmological superiority" over all creation. He is the firstborn of all creation because "he is superior and antecedent to all created things […] he is the divine mediator of creation, with an originating causality equal to that of the Father."[104] Moreover, Morales further points out, in this passage Christ is "the *exemplary cause* of creation because he is an archetype and uncreated model, and its final cause because in Christ, the Creator

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[101] Horrel et al. *Greening Paul,* 82.

[102] Stanilaus Lyonnet, see "La Rédemption de l'Universe," *Lumière et Vie* 9 (1960) no. 48, 43-62, as cited in Morales, *Creation Theology,* 37.

[103] Paul's authorship of Colossians has been a subject of debate. According to *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, most modern scholars are persuaded that Paul did not write this letter. Those who defend the authenticity of the letter describe it as Pauline but admit that it was heavily edited. Col. 1:15-20 is an example. This hymn is considered to be composed by a different writer but adapted by author of the letter to serve its instructional purpose. There is also idea holding that Colossians as a whole is the product of a Pauline school tradition. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* proposes that it is Deutero-Pauline, written by someone who knew the Pauline tradition very well. For this reason, Col. 1:15-20 is included here as part of Paul's theology. See Raymond E. Brown et al., eds., *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 876-879.

[104] Morales, *Creation Theology,* 34.

and Savior, the created universe is united in origin and destiny."[105] As Bauckham also states, "Because Christ is the creator of all things, the destiny of all things is bound up with his. [And] because all things were made 'for him', he will ensure that they reach that goal."[106] Humans' negative interference to the nature prevents it from reaching its destiny, thus interferes Christ's creative work.

The repetition of the phrase "all things" is significant. Clifford notices that this phrase is repeated six times in the passage. It conveys various meanings, all of which are important for our topic. When used with the phrase "heaven and earth," which, according to Clifford, means the world, it serves to emphasize that "Christ's resurrection raises up the *whole world, not just the human race*"[107] (emphasis mine). This expresses the equal dignity of nonhuman creatures with human creatures. A similar point is made by Horrell et al. when they place the Colossian hymn in connection with Gn. 1. According to their interpretation, "all things as the work of the one (good) creator, in and through Christ, implies the intrinsic goodness of all created entities, including the nonhuman elements."[108]

Another important point is made by Morales when he interprets v. 16 is that "All things were created through him and for him". These words, he says, refers to Christ as the "*goal* of all creation."[109] This is very different from the commonly-held idea that the earth and its inhabitants are created for the purpose of human creatures. In this picture, Christ is portrayed as the center of creation. In him, through him, and *for* him all things were created. He holds up all things in himself (v.17) and reconciles them all to himself (v.20).

[105] Morales, *Creation Theology,* 34.
[106] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology,* 155.
[107] Clifford, "The Bible", 20.
[108] Horrel et al. *Greening Paul,* 104.
[109] Morales, *Creation Theology,* 35.

That thought is also expressed by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians. In Eph 1:10 Paul stresses that Christ will "gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." All things, both in heaven and on earth, meaning the whole of creation, "whose harmony has been disrupted by the violence of those who are alienated from their Creator, is brought into a state of peace by the reconciliation of those creatures."[110] Bauckham insists that none of the powers in the world are independent of Christ. Since all were created by him, "all have been 'reconciled' by and to him."[111] And since Christ is the center of creation "in which all things cohere and hold together, Christ is vested with great power."[112] Yet, Thomas Bushlack contents, "this is not the power that he uses to dominate or 'lord it over them' (Mt 20:25)."[113] Referring to Christ's *kenosis* expressed in Philippians 2:6-7, he says, "despite being one with and equal to God, Jesus did not seek to dominate creation; his model was one of service, self-sacrificing love, and gentle care and concern for all of humanity and creation."[114]

Elmer Flor shares a similar reflection on Ephesians 1. He says that while Westerners understand headship as hierarchical, the headship of Christ as expressed in the text is one of

> interconnectedness with his believers and […] with all 'things in heaven and on Earth'. […] Christ restores an original interconnectedness of creation. God's power works in and through Christ and equalizes/neutralizes all (unjust and undue) power and dominion, all rule and authority (Eph. 1:21). [Therefore,] Putting 'all things under his feet' and making him 'the head over all things' need not be read in terms of earthly or colonial oppressive power.[115]

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[110] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology,* 156.
[111] *Ibid.,* 155.
[112] Thomas Bushlack, "A New Heaven and a New Earth: Creation in the New Testament," in Tobias L. Winright, *Green Discipleship: Catholic Theological Ethics and the Environment* (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2011), 100 (Hereafter: Bushlack, *Catholic Ethics*).
[113] Bushlack, *Catholic Ethics,* 100.
[114] *Ibid*.
[115] Elmer Flor, "The Cosmic Christ and Ecojustice in the New Cosmos (Ephesians 1)," in Vicky Balabanski and Norman C. Habel, eds., *The Earth Story in the New Testament*. *The Earth Story in the New Testament: Volume 5* (Sheffield: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2002), 140.

As it has been said previously, we find in Christ the best example how to image God and to have dominion over nonhuman creatures. This is the model of power and dominion Christ' followers are to exercise if Gn. 1 and 2 at all warrant them rule and dominion over God's creation.

3. Jn 9:1-11

John 9:1-11 describes Jesus' healing of the man born blind. This healing miracle of Jesus is very different from most of his other ones. Most of Jesus' miracles recorded in the Bible are done simply through Jesus' words or as he wills it. This one, however, involves Jesus' action and the use of elements taken from nature/creation. There are three elements or, as Oyeronke Olajubu calls them, agents of healing involved in this miracle: "the person of Jesus, the saliva-mud formula and water."[116] Reading this passage against her Yoruba cosmic experience Olajubu maintains that the use of water as a healing element recognizes the intrinsic worth of water as "an integral element of all living things on Earth."[117]

In the Yoruba cosmic experience, water is recognized as the primal element of the universe. It existed before anything else. This tradition also considers water as "a basic element on which all life depends… [and] one of the three prime elements by which humans are sustained… [therefore it is assumed as having] intrinsic as well as utilitarian worth."[118] For the Yoruba, "healing is an inherent value of water."[119] It is regarded as "possessing essential healing qualities, which could eliminate any disease or misfortune."[120] At the same time, water is also valued for its utilitarian qualities, such as its social and ritual use. In these cases, however, water is used with the assumption of its intrinsic worth. Olajubu asserts that the Yoruba's protection of

[116] Oyeronke Olajubu, "Reconnecting with the Waters: John 9:1-11," in Vicky Balabanski and Norman C. Habel, eds., *The Earth Story in the Newtestament. The Earth Story in the New Testament: Volume 5* (Sheffield: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2002), 109.
[117] *Ibid.,* 108.
[118] *Ibid.,* 110.
[119] *Ibid.*
[120] *Ibid.,* 113.

water from contamination and pollution is "informed by their perception of water as being sacred and imbued with 'power'."[121]

When used in Jn 9:1-11, therefore, water carries a Christological meaning. We are told elsewhere in this gospel that Jesus is the "living water" (Jn 4:10). Hence, Olajubu proposes, the "restoring of sight" miracle in this passage is "portray of Jesus as the 'living water' and the one 'sent' […] This symbolic dimension points to Jesus as the agent of healing."[122] But in this story, two other agents also added for the miracle to be accomplished, namely, the saliva-mud formula and the water. In her reflection, Olajubu places a favorable emphasis on the water, proposing that water is "the final – and perhaps key – agent of healing"[123] in this narrative. For her, the pool of Siloam is both a bathing pool and a healing pool. She maintains that water remains integral to the act of healing and sees this as an affirmation of the intrinsic worth of water.

While I agree with Olajubu on the intrinsic worth of the water and its importance in the healing of the blind man, a favorable emphasis on the water, I am afraid, she seems to overlook the significance of the other agent of the healing, namely, the mud. The role of Christ as a healing agent is of course not questionable. But the role of the mud in this miracle is no less significant than that of the water. Both the water and the mud are equally important treatments of the blind man. They are only different in sequence. Thus, if one recognizes the intrinsic worth of the water through this miracle, one also necessarily recognizes the intrinsic worth of the mud, that is to say, the earth, which, no less than the water, nourishes and sustains all living creatures. An integral way to look at this miracle is perhaps to see both the water and the mud/earth as an indication of nature. As such, one can concludes that while Jn 9:1-11 means to show Christ' healing power, it also shows the intrinsic goodness of nature. Hence Olajubu rightly states,

[121] *Ibid.,* 114.
[122] *Ibid.,* 115.
[123] *Ibid.,* 116.

"embedded in this healing event is the notion of an intertwined link between humans and nature: both are a part of a whole and both are involved in the healing process."[124]

In summary, in this chapter we have investigated the biblical creation accounts with the support of contemporary biblical scholarship. This investigation showed us first of all that the stories of creation are not limited to the two Genesis creation accounts. The stories of creation can be found throughout the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. Hence the meaning of creation is not confined to what the two Genesis accounts tell us. Though these two accounts are the foundation, they can only be understood properly in light of subsequent creation accounts.

Second, the contemporary creation theology has made clear that creation is not a single act in the past, but it is an ongoing act of recreating and renewing of all creation. It also established the link between creation and redemption. Redemption here is seen as an integral part of creation. It is not limited to humanity but extends to embrace the whole of creation. In the person of Jesus Christ, God embraces all creation and brings salvation to every creature on earth.

Third, and most importantly, contemporary biblical scholarship has shed a new light to our understanding of human relationship to nonhuman creatures. A much more nuanced interpretation of the creation accounts has enabled to see our relationship with nature as intimately interconnected and dependent. It is a loving, responsible relationship, not an exploitive one as many tend to see. Human beings and nonhuman beings are even seen as covenant partners.

Fourth, the relationship between human beings and nonhuman beings implies a responsibility on our part. The gift of nature is given to us to be protected and cared for, not to be abused. God loves and cares for nature. He enfleshes in nature through the Incarnation of the Word. Jesus, the Word Incarnate, in his life and ministry demonstrates his love and compassion

[124] *Ibid.,* 117.

for nonhuman creatures. He invites us to reflect on natural images to find meaning for our lives. As such, he sets an example for us to follow. Hence our commitment to the following of Jesus necessarily entails a commitment to care and protect God’s creation.

CHAPTER TWO
CONTEMPORARY PAPAL TEACHINGS

Since the ecological crisis is a social issue, it is a concern of the Church. From the beginning of its emergence the field of ecology has been an important part of the Church's social teachings. Pope Benedict XVI (hereafter Pope Benedict) has incorporated the ecological issues into his various writings and spoken of them on many different occasions. Pope Francis, though he might have written less frequently about these issues than Pope Benedict, has dedicated a major encyclical (*Laudato Sí*) to the ecological efforts. The two popes have shown great concern for the environmental problems and called us to an ecological conversion that aims at protecting both the natural environment and humanity. In this chapter, we will focus on their teachings on these issues.

A. Pope Benedict XVI

Pope Benedict has surprised the world with his large volume of teaching on the environment and personal efforts to protect the planet. When Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was elected the two-hundred-sixty-fifth pope, the world had little expectation that this scholarly German theologian would be attentive to and show concern for the natural environment. But reality has proved otherwise. The depth and extent of his reflections on ecological matters have earned him the title "the green pope." The message that this green pope has passionately tried to get across to the whole world is clear: humanity needs to stand in solidarity to save the planet because it is a precious gift from God.

The pope's messages "consistently keeps the *human* within nature (not opposed or neglected)"[125] Building on the concept of "human ecology" introduced by his predecessor, Pope

[125] Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, "Introduction," in Pope Benedict XVI, *The Environment*, ed. Jacquelyn Lindsey (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, 2012), 10 (Hereafter: Pope Benedict, *The Environment*).

Saint John Paul II, he develops the links between natural ecology (respect for nature) and human ecology (respect for human nature). As much as there is a need to save the environment, there is also a need to "*safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic 'human ecology'*."[126] The two have a mutual relationship and must be dealt with together. To save the planet is to save humanity itself. Protecting the planet means specially to stand in solidarity with the poor and future generations. Similarly, destroying the planet will bring destruction to humanity itself and shows further disregard for the poor and the next generations. Finally, disrespect for humanity, especially a lack of concern for the poor and future generations, will have a negative effect on the environment. Thus, human solidarity requires one to stand in solidarity with all of creation.

In his ecological speeches, Pope Benedict makes clear that the planet is a precious gift given to humanity by God, the good and loving Creator, to be used wisely with respect and protection, not to be manipulated. Placing it in the context of the Eucharistic celebration, he points out that the Church's liturgy itself helps us to recognize the planet as God's creation which provides everything we need for our sustenance. Thus, he insists, we are not to see the planet with indifference, as if it was disconnected from us, or raw material that can be used any way we think will benefit us. Rather, we need to see the planet as part of God's good plan.[127]

Pope Benedict's own experience of the planet, viewed from the air on his flight to Australia for the 2008 World Youth Day, led him to a profound sense of awe. Observing the wonders of creation from the perspective of an airplane led him to reflect that "The beauty of creation is one of the sources where we can truly touch God's beauty, [where] we can see that the Creator exists and is good, which is true as Sacred Scripture says in the Creation

[126] John Paull II, *Centesimus Annus*, No. 38. See Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 10.
[127] Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, February 22, 2007, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 32.

Narrative."[128] Thus he sees nature as an expression of a "design of love and truth." It is prior to us and has been given to us as the gift of love. The pope asserts, "Nature speaks to us of the Creator (cf. Rom. 1:19-20) and his love for humanity."[129] He recognizes nature as having its own "vocation,"[130] which has its own value apart from its usefulness to humanity. "It is a wondrous work of the Creator containing a 'grammar' which sets forth ends and criteria for its wise use, not its reckless exploitation."[131] Finally, Benedict insists that creation is good; thus, it must be defended, not for its usefulness to humanity, but for its own sake.[132]

In his recognition of the goodness of creation, though not neglecting other parts of the ecological system, the Holy Father particularly calls our attention to the intrinsic worth and symbolic meaning of *water* for our lives. He invites us to see water "as a source of life whose availability is essential for the vital cycles of the earth and fundamental for a fully human existence."[133] For him, water clearly plays a central role in the process to promote "integral human development." It is an essential element for life, a common good to be protected and shared by all members of the human family. "Without water, life is threatened."[134] The right to water, for Benedict, is one of the most basic human rights. It is the right to life itself. Therefore, "the sustainable management of water becomes a social, economic, environmental, and ethical challenge that involves not only institutions but the whole of society." Water, he insists, "cannot

[128] See Pope Benedict XVI and Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, *Ten Commandments for the Environment: Pope Benedict Xvi Speaks Out for Creation and Justice* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 2009), 136.
[129] Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, No. 48. See Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 105.
[130] *Ibid*.
[131] *Ibid*.
[132] Pope Benedict XVI, Address, December 21, 2007, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 54.
[133] Message of Pope Benedict XVI, Signed by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone to the Director of FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization] on the Occasion of the Celebration of World Water Day, March 22, 2007, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 33.
[134] *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, No. 485. See Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 34.

be treated as just another commodity among many, and it must be used rationally and in solidarity with others."[135]

The term *ecology* has its root in the Greek *oikos*, which means "home or household." In modern scientific studies it has become customary to speak about the Earth as our "home." Consequently, Pope Benedict powerfully affirms this significance of the Earth. He states, "The family needs a home, a fit environment in which to develop its proper relationships. *For the human family, this home is the earth*, the environment that God the Creator has given us to inhabit with creativity and responsibility."[136] He even goes so far as to consider humanity as "the peoples of the earth" who are destined by God to live on the face of the Earth. Therefore, human beings need to stand in solidarity with the Earth and care for it. The Earth, the pope insists, is the environment God has entrusted to humanity "to be protected and cultivated with responsible freedom, with the good of all as a constant guiding criterion."[137] It is a precious gift of God, given to us as stewards of God's creation. This common home of ours, however, is now in danger of environmental degradation and natural disasters, which are mostly caused by human activities. There is, therefore, an urgent need to respect nature, to recover and appreciate a "correct relationship with the environment in everyday life."[138] Yet, the concern for and protection of the environment cannot be separated from the effort for integral human development. Our common responsibility for creation goes hand in hand with the protection of humankind from self-destruction. "Every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment, just as environmental deterioration in turn upsets relations in society."[139]

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[135] Message of Pope Benedict XVI, Signed by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone to the Director of FAO on the Occasion of the Celebration of World Water Day, March 22, 2007, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 34.

[136] Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2008, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 57.

[137] *Ibid*.

[138] Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, August 26, 2009, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 114.

[139] Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, No. 51. See Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 109.

Conversely, "When 'human ecology' is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits."[140]

The relationship between the ecology of the human person and the ecology of nature has been a central theme of Pope Benedict's, for whom "*disregard for the environment always harms human coexistence*, and vice versa."[141] The pope constantly calls attention to this vital relationship and stresses that humanity needs to work together to safeguard the gifts of nature and to promote responsible stewardship. He asserts, "The ecological system is based on respect for a plan that affects both the health of society and its good relationship with nature… [And] *the decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society*." It is contradictory then, the pope says,

> to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves. The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment, but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties toward the environment are linked to our duties toward the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other.[142]

For Pope Benedict, the relationship between humanity and the environment has an ethical implication because it stems from humanity's relationship with God. Restating Pope St. John Paull II's *Message for the 1990 World Day of Peace*, he says, when "man turns his back on the Creator's plan, he provokes a disorder which has inevitable repercussions on the rest of the created order."[143] Because disregard for the environment always harms human coexistence, and thus betrays human dignity and violates the rights of citizens who desire to live in a safe environment, its consequences are not limited to any sectors of society. Therefore, protecting the environment, he argues, becomes an ethical imperative for the whole society. We all must take seriously the responsibility that falls to each and every one of us to preserve nature.

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[140] See Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, August 26, 2009, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 114.

[141] Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2007, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 28.

[142] Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, No. 51. See Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 109-110.

[143] See Pope Benedict XVI, Letter to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople on the Occasion of the Seventh Symposium of the Religion, Science and the Environment Movement, September 1, 2007, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 41.

The pope considers concerns for nonviolence, sustainable development, justice and peace, and care for our environment of vital importance for humanity. However, he insists that these issues cannot be separated from respect for the innate dignity of the human person. The environmental crisis we face is, for him, a moral crisis.[144] Today more than ever,

> it has become clear that respect for the environment cannot leave aside the recognition of the value of the human person and its inviolability at every stage and in every condition of life. Respect for the human being and respect for nature are one, but both can grow and find their right measure if we respect in the human being and in nature the Creator and his creation.[145]

According to Pope Benedict, the order of creation is important for safeguarding order and peace in the world. He thus maintains, "there is an inseparable link between peace with creation and peace among men."[146] Therefore, humanity needs to be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology and human ecology if it truly desires peace. For Benedict, the way we treat the environment has consequences for order and peace in the world and reflects our ideas about human development. The destruction of the environment, its improper or selfish use

> and the violent hoarding of the earth's resources cause grievances, conflicts, and wars, precisely because they are the consequences of an inhumane concept of development. Indeed, if development were limited to the technical-economic aspect, obscuring the moral-religious dimension, it would not be an integral human development, but a one-sided distortion which would end up by unleashing man's destructive capacities.[147]

In his 2010 World Day of Peace message, Pope Benedict recalled John Paul II's message sent to the world on the occasion of the 1990 World Day of Peace, saying, "there is a growing awareness that world peace is threatened … also by a lack of *due respect for nature*."[148] Thus, if

[144] See Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the Celebration of the World day of Peace, January 1, 2010, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 124.
[145] Pope Benedict XVI, Message to Students Participating in *Sorella Natura*, November 28, 2011, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 174.
[146] Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2007, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 28.
[147] *Ibid*., 29.
[148] See Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2010, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 122.

one is “to cultivate peace, one must protect creation.”[149] He went on to challenge the human community to respect the order of creation and to work responsibly for the protection of nature

> [by] safeguarding Creation. The future of the planet is entrusted to the new generations, in which there are evident signs of a development that has not always been able to protect the delicate balances of nature. Before it is too late, it is necessary to make courageous decisions that can recreate a strong alliance between humankind and the earth.[150]

For Pope Benedict, *solidarity* is key to safeguarding creation. To protect creation is to stand in solidarity with the poor and future generations. He insists that the goods of creation are destined for *all*. Ecological responsibility rightly extends to future generations because they also have the right to reap benefits from the Earth and to exercise toward nature the same “responsible freedom” we claim for ourselves.[151] Furthermore, “projects for integral human development cannot ignore coming generations, but need to be *marked by solidarity and inter-generational justice*.”[152] Likewise, the poor have the right to access the fruits of nature so as to live with dignity. The ethical requirement to feed the hungry thus requires a wise use of natural resources. “The environment is God’s gift to everyone and in our use of it we have a responsibility toward the poor, toward future generations, and toward humanity as a whole.”[153] Thus, it follows that the “objective of eradicating hunger, and at the same time of being able to provide healthy and sufficient food, also demands specific methods and actions that mean a wise use of resources that respect Creation’s patrimony.”[154]

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[149] *Ibid*., 121ff; Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps for the Traditional Exchange of New Year Greetings, January 11, 2010, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 138.
[150] Pope Benedict XVI and Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, *Ten Commandments for the Environment: Pope Benedict Xvi Speaks Out for Creation and Justice* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 2009), 60-61.
[151] Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2008, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 57-58.
[152] Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, No. 48. See Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 106.
[153] *Ibid*., 104.
[154] Pope Benedict XVI, Message to the General Director of the FAO of the United Nations, October 4, 2007, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 44.

Pope Benedict reminds us that a "harmonious development is possible if the economic and political choices take into account and put into practice those fundamental principles[155] which make it accessible to all."[156] Created in God's image, human beings are charged to keep and administer the immense resources of creation. They have the responsibility to make all of the Earth's goods fruitful. They must commit themselves to use these goods to satisfy the multiple needs of each and every member of the human family. They must put these goods at the disposition of *all*. The process of globalization therefore must not only focus on economic and commercial interests, "but also [on] the expectations of solidarity, with respect for and valuing the contribution of each component of society."[157]

Pope Benedict sees a "pressing moral need for renewed solidarity," not only between countries – that is, between developing countries and those that are highly industrialized – but also among individuals, "since the natural environment is given by God to everyone, and our use of it entails a personal responsibility toward humanity as a whole, and in particular toward the poor and towards future generations."[158] Benedict contends that not only do the highly industrialized countries have responsibilities with regard to creation, but the developing countries share these responsibilities as well. He says, "*The ecological crisis shows the urgency of a solidarity which embraces time and space.*" Such solidarity is both intergenerational and "intragenerational."[159] It is the key to eradicating the ecological crisis, as the pope says,

> The "new solidarity" for which John Paull II called in his *Message for the 1990 World Day of Peace* (cf. No. 9) and the "global solidarity" for which I myself appealed in my *Message for the 2009 World Day of Peace* (cf. No. 8) are essential attitudes in shaping our efforts to protect creation through a better internationally coordinated management of the earth's resources,

[155] He is here referring to the Church's principles of subsidiarity and solidarity.
[156] Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Members of the *"Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice"* Foundation, May 31, 2008, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 71.
[157] *Ibid*., 72.
[158] Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, No. 48, in Pope Benedict, The *Environment*, 104; Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, August 26, 2009, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 114.
[159] See Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2010, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 127.

> particularly today, when there is an increasingly clear link between combating environmental degradation and promoting an integral human development. These two realities are inseparable, since "the integral development of individuals necessarily entails a joint effort for the development of humanity as a whole."[160]

True solidarity demands a change in lifestyles "of individuals and communities, in habits of consumption, and in perceptions of what is genuinely needed."[161] Benedict insists that we "cannot remain indifferent to what is happening around us, for the deterioration of any one part of the planet affects us all. Relationships, […] like those between human beings and the environment must be marked by respect and 'charity in truth.'"[162] He also forcefully reminds us of the moral duty to rediscover "the authentic image of creation"[163] and "the bond of communion that unites the human person and creation"[164] inviting us to examine our lifestyles and the prevailing models of consumption and production, urging us to strive toward a "real change of outlook" that results in the adoption of "*new lifestyles*, 'in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness, and communion with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings, and investments.'"[165]

The pope maintains that modern technology by itself is not sufficient to solve the problems we are facing. Science and religion, he insists, must work together "to safeguard the gifts of nature and to promote responsible stewardship."[166] The global community also must work together "to administer the fruit of Creation according to justice, placing it at the

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[160] Paull VI, *Populorum Progressio*, No. 43. See Pope Benedict XVI, "Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2010, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 128.

[161] Pope Benedict XVI, Address to FAO on Occasion of the World Summit on Food Security, November 16, 2009, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 119.

[162] Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2010, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 130-131.

[163] Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Meeting with the Members of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization, New York, April 18, 2008, Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 66.

[164] Pope Benedict XVI, Address to FAO on Occasion of the World Summit on Food Security, November 16, 2009, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 119.

[165] Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, No. 51, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 108-109; Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2010, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 130.

[166] Pope Benedict XVI, Letter to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople on the Occasion of the Seventh Symposium of the Religion, Science and the Environment Movement, September 1, 2007, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 40.

disposition of all generations."[167] To do this, he says, we need to re-plan our journey, to set new rules and to discover new forms of commitment.[168] Modern technology is only helpful if it is used with respect for the environment and concern for the needs of the most deprived peoples. Development and protection of the environment must go together. "Protection of the environment," the pope says, "challenges the modern world to guarantee a harmonious form of development, respectful of the design of God the creator, and therefore capable of safeguarding the planet."[169]

The pope criticizes those who misunderstand the meaning of God's command and thus exploit creation because of a desire to have absolute dominion over it.[170] He insists that the true meaning of God's original command "was not a simple conferral of authority, but rather a summons to responsibility."[171] However, while criticizing the mentality of total technical dominion over nature and calling the human community to protect the natural environment, the pope also cautions us to avoid the tendency to consider nature as an "untouchable taboo," seeing it as "something more important than the human person."[172] Neither of these ways of looking at the relationship between human beings and nature is healthy. Only the stewardship model, according the pope, rightly expresses that relationship.

In Pope Benedict's estimation, the charge to "fill the earth" and to "have dominion over" it (cf. Gn. 1:28) is a charge to be "stewards" of God's creation. Nature, he says, is a gift of the Creator entrusted to our stewardship to make good use of it and "to till and keep it" (Gn. 2:15).

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[167] Pope Benedict XVI, Message to Participants Attending the "High Level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy," Organized by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, June 2, 2008, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 78.
[168] See Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, No. 21, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 95.
[169] Pope Benedict XVI, Address to FAO on Occasion of the World Summit on Food Security, November 16, 2009, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 119.
[170] Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2010, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 125.
[171] *Ibid*.
[172] Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, No. 48, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 105.

"The Earth is indeed a precious gift of the Creator who, in designing its intrinsic order, has given us bearings that guide us as stewards of his creation."[173] The human family must accept that

> [creation] is entrusted to our responsibility, and though we are able to analyze it and transform it we cannot consider ourselves creation's absolute master. We are called, rather, to exercise responsible stewardship of creation, in order to protect it, to enjoy its fruits, and to cultivate it, finding the resources necessary for everyone to live with dignity. Through the help of nature itself and through hard work and creativity, humanity is indeed capable of carrying out its grave duty to hand on the earth to future generations so that they too, in turn, will be able to inhabit it worthily and continue to cultivate it.[174]

The Christian community in particular, according to Pope Benedict, has an important role in the joint effort to protect creation. The Church has a responsibility towards creation and must exercise that responsibility in public life.[175] Deeply rooted in faith and love, Christian communities can and must "offer to the world a credible witness of their sense of responsibility for the safeguard of creation."[176] This responsibility especially falls on religious leaders, since it is part of their pastoral duty "to encourage and to support all efforts made to protect God's creation, and to bequeath to future generations a world in which they will be able to live."[177]

The pope is aware that young people cannot be asked to respect the environment if they are not taught to respect themselves. The Church, therefore, has a responsibility to support and help families and individuals in this regard. Education becomes crucial in this effort. For Benedict, there will be no good future for humanity on earth "if we do not educate everyone to a more responsible way of life for creation."[178] He thus exhorts the global community to invest in education, one that has as one of its objectives a "broader and deeper 'ecological responsibility,'

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[173] Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, August 26, 2009, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 114.

[174] Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, No. 50, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 115.

[175] Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, No. 51, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 109; Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2010, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 131.

[176] Pope Benedict XVI, Letter to Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch on the Occasion of the Sixth Symposium on "Religion, Science, and the Environment" Focusing on the Amazon River, July 6, 2006, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 21.

[177] Pope Benedict XVI and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, Common Declaration, Apostolic Journey to Turkey, November 30, 2006, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 27.

[178] Pope Benedict XVI, Message to Students Participating in *Sorella Natura*, November 28, 2011, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 174.

based on respect for human beings and their fundamental rights and duties."[179] Such an educational approach must aim at "promoting an effective change of thinking and at creating new lifestyles."[180]

Finally, Pope Benedict says, "The denial of God distorts the freedom of the human person, yet it also devastates creation. It follows that the protection of creation is not principally a response to an aesthetic need, but much more to a moral need, in as much as nature expresses a plan of love and truth which is prior to us and which comes from God."[181] Education in faith, therefore, becomes important in this regard. For the pope, efforts to protect creation must be accompanied by the proclamation of the Word. Only when the Word is accepted and takes root in human hearts can our ecological endeavors bear fruit. Echoing the statement of the synod fathers,[182] the pope asserts,

> "Accepting the word of God […] gives rise to a new way of seeing things, promotes an authentic ecology which has its deepest roots in the obedience of faith … [and] develops a renewed theological sensitivity to the goodness of all things which are created in Christ" (*Propositio* 54). We need to be re-educated in wonder and in the ability to recognize the beauty made manifest in created realities.[183]

In summary, Pope Benedict sees the planet as our home and a precious gift from God. But he realizes that our home is being damaged. Establishing the link between natural ecology and human ecology, the pope argues that any harm done to the environment is a harm to humanity. Protecting the planet is crucial to integral human development. According to the pope, the responsibility we have towards the environment stems from our responsibility towards the poor and the next generations. Solidarity thus becomes the key in responding to the environmental issues. To protect the planet is to stand in solidarity with the poor, with the next

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[179] Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, January 1, 2010, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 135.
[180] Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps for the Traditional Exchange of New Year Greetings, January 11, 2010, in Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 140.
[181] *Ibid*., 137.
[182] Pope Benedict is here referring to the Twelfth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the Word of God, 2010
[183] *Propositio* # 54. See Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation Verbum Domini, September 30, 2010, in *Ibid*., 146.

generations, and with all creation. Hence, identifying the current irresponsible lifestyles as a cause of ecological degradation, Pope Benedict calls for an ecological conversion that starts with a change in lifestyle. This conversion needs to be supported by the Church with sound (theological) education. These ideas will be developed further by Pope Francis in what follows.

B. Pope Francis

In this section I focus attention on Pope Francis' teachings on environmental issues primarily in *Laudato Sí*.[184] Such a focus, however, is not meant to exclude his other utterances on this topic, but indicates that this encyclical letter thoroughly and precisely presents the pope's thinking on this issue. *Laudato Sí* is widely considered *the* "must-read" document of our time. It contributes greatly to modern Catholic social teaching.[185]

When Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected the 226th bishop of Rome, he chose to be called Francis. That marked the first time the name "Francis" was chosen by a pope. When he pronounced his choice, the world wondered which Francis he was referring to? St. Francis of Assisi or St. Francis Xavier, a saint of his own religious order? It quickly became clear, not only by his own clarification shortly after his election, but also exemplified in his own life, that he meant St. Francis of Assisi would be the model of his pontificate.

That choice of his name is most timely, given that today the gap between the poor and the rich, both on individual level and national level, grows ever greater each day. At the same time, this development indicates quite an aggressive attitude towards creation. It not only increases the marginalization of the poor, but it also causes nature to suffer the same fate. St. Francis set forth

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[184] Quotations and references made in this section come from Sean McDonagh, *On Care for Our Common Home, Laudato Sí: the Encyclical of Pope Francis On the Environment with Commentary by Sean McDonagh* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2016). This work consists of two parts: Part I is McDonagh's commentary on the "Catholic Teaching and the Environment" with a particular attention to the encyclical *Laudato Sí*; part II contains the text of *Laudato Sí.* Hereafter, references to the encyclical itself will be in-text cited with paragraph number.

[185] Tony Magliano, "'Laudato *Sí*'' is Inspiration for those Who Want to Be Part of the Solution," National Catholic Reporter, June 22, 2015. Available online at https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/making-difference/laudato-si-inspiration-those-who-want-be-part-solution. Accessed May 14, 2017.

a model of care both for the poor and creation. Pope Francis, both in his personal life and in his ministry, also has shown his great compassion for the poor and passionate care for creation. In essence the pope argues, concern for the poor and care for creation are one and the same thing. Disregard for the poor inevitably leads to the neglect of creation. And similarly, exploitation of nature always brings negative effects on humans. Either way the poor suffer the most.

Pope Francis' compassion for the poor and care for creation are reflected most precisely in his encyclical on the environment *Laudato Si'*. Though he might have written less frequently about the ecological issues than Pope Benedict XVI, his great concern for the environment is apparent, given that it became the subject of a major encyclical. It is also worth noting that shortly after the release of *Laudato Sí,* Francis launched the "World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation," a day to be observed annually on September 1st. In his letter announcing the establishment of this day, Pope Francis reminds us of our vocation to be protectors of God's creation. Care for creation is not optional. Thus, establishing a World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation is meant to serve as a constant reminder to individual believers and communities of their personal vocation to be stewards of creation and to offer them a "fitting opportunity" to reaffirm that vocation.[186]

The pope begins *Laudato Sí* by recognizing that the Earth, our common home, is as dear to us as a sister and a mother (#1). The encyclical invites us to see nature as a magnificent book "whose letters are the multitude of created things," "a constant source of wonder and awe," and a "continuing revelation of the divine" (#85). Throughout this book, "God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness" (#12). Each creature carries a divine message. To contemplate creation, therefore, is to "hear a message" and to receive "a divine

[186] Pope Francis, "Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis for the establishment of the 'World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation'", August 6, 2015. Available online at: https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150806_lettera-giornata-cura-creato.html. Accessed May 14, 2017.

manifestation." In the book of nature, "we learn to see ourselves in relation to all other creatures" (#85).

Yet, the pope cautions us that our common home, our sister and mother, is now in danger of deterioration "due to an ill-considered exploitation of nature" (#4). He especially calls attention to some of the more obvious environmental realities, such as air and water pollution, climate change, and the loss of biodiversity. He says, air pollution, caused by the "throwaway culture" which generates hundreds of millions of tons of waste each year, "produces a broad spectrum of health hazards, especially for the poor, and causes millions of premature deaths" (#20). Similarly, water pollution "results in many deaths and the spread of water-related deceases" (#29). While "access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right" (#30), reality shows that, besides water being threatened by pollution due to human activities, it is being wasted in many places, both in developed countries and in developing ones. This poses the problem of providing safe water for the poor, especially those living in Africa where access to safe drinking water is very limited.

According to the pope climate change, "is due to the great concentration of greenhouse gases […] released mainly as a result of human activity" (#23). Global warming, he says, gravely affects natural lives. It reduces "the availability of essential resources like drinking water, energy and agricultural production in warmer regions…leading to the extinction of part of the planet's biodiversity" (#24). This phenomenon causes a great crisis for humanity, with the poor being the ones who are affected the most.

Our planet's loss of biodiversity, Francis maintains, is due to "short-sighted approaches to the economy, commerce and production." This has led to "the loss of forests and woodlands" which "entails the loss of species which may constitute extremely important resources in the

future, not only for food but also for curing disease and other uses" (#32). However, he insists, it is not enough "to think of different species merely as potential 'resources' to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves" (#33). We humans are responsible for the loss of thousands of species and the pope stresses that "we have no such right" to do this (#33).

Like his predecessor, Pope Francis considers global environmental deterioration as "'a tragic consequence' of unchecked human activity" (#4). After stating that "the natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behavior" (#6), Francis goes on to delineate the human roots of the ecological crisis. First, while recognizing the important contribution and goodness of techno-science to social progress, the pope notes that techno-science has only served a small part of humanity, namely, those who have "the knowledge, and especially the economic resources to use them." Such concentration of power, is extremely dangerous when "contemporary man has not been trained to use power well." "Our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience." (#104-105)

Secondly, Pope Francis sees the globalization of the technocratic paradigm as another factor that causes environmental damage. What is dangerous, he asserts, is that humanity

> has taken up technology and its development *according to an undifferentiated and one-dimensional paradigm.* This paradigm exalts the concept of a subject who, using logical and rational procedures, progressively approaches and gains control over an external object. This subject makes every effort to establish the scientific and experimental method, which in itself is already a technique of possession, mastery and transformation" (#106).

Human beings thus are led to the false conclusion that the Earth's goods are an infinite supply, and proceed to extract everything possible from created things. As a consequence, the planet is "squeezed dry beyond every limit" and results in a broken relationship between human beings

and nature. “Human beings and material objects no longer extend a friendly hand to one another; the relationship has become confrontational” (# 106).

Third, modern anthropocentrism, which ends up in “prizing technical thought over reality” compromises the “intrinsic dignity of the world.” Here the pope acknowledges that an inadequate presentation of Christian anthropology has led to a wrong understanding of humans’ relationship to the world. The biblical language of “dominion” is understood in terms of a “Promethean vision of mastery over the world” instead of “responsible stewardship.” Such misguided anthropocentrism in turn leads to a “misguided lifestyle,” which places human beings at the center of the world and sees everything else as relative (#115-116).

The critique of modern anthropocentrism need not be replaced necessarily with “biocentrism,”[187] according to Pope Francis. Doing so would involve adding yet another imbalance in the relationship between humanity and the rest of creation. “Human beings cannot be expected to feel responsibility for the world unless, at the same time, their unique capacities of knowledge, will, freedom and responsibility are recognized and valued” In other words, biblical wisdom invites us to recognize the uniqueness of human beings within the web of creation. It should not be denied that human beings have been uniquely created and endowed with special capacities that other creatures do not possess. The uniqueness of human beings, however, consists in having responsibility for the created world. The pope therefore denies two extreme approaches towards environmental degradation and its solutions. At one extreme are those who uphold “the myth of progress.” They consider the application of new technology to be

[187] Biocentrism is “a theory proposed in 2007 by American scientist Robert Lanza, which sees biology as the central driving science in the universe, and an understanding of the other sciences as reliant on a deeper understanding of biology. Lanza believes that life and biology are central to being, reality, and the cosmos—consciousness creates the universe rather than the other way around. While physics is considered fundamental to the study of the universe, and chemistry fundamental to the study of life, Lanza claims that scientists will need to place biology before the other sciences to produce a ‘theory of everything’”. See Robert Lanza, “Biocentrism,” online at http://www.robertlanzabiocentrism.com/biocentrism-wikipedia/. Accessed May 14, 2017.

the absolutely necessary solution to ecological issues "without any need for ethical considerations or deep change." At the other extreme, those who see human beings and their interventions as a great threat think that "the presence of human beings on the planet should be reduced and all forms of intervention prohibited" (#60). However, neither of these approaches, according to the pope, is right.

Pope Francis realizes that by destroying creation, human beings risk becoming victims of their own activities. Echoing Blessed Pope Paul VI's statement in *Octogesima Adveniens*, he says, "Due to an ill-considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming in turn a victim of this degradation" (#4). Therefore, Francis warns, "we cannot fail to consider the effects on people's lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture" (#43).

The pope connects environmental ecology with social ecology and reminds us that human beings, are creatures of this world. Everything is connected:

> Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. […] We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental" (#139).

Any harm to the environment is thus a threat to human existence, and it is vulnerable people who suffer the most.

There is, according to the pope, an intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet (#16), which in our context entails an inseparable bond between "concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace" (#10). Therefore, he insists, "we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation" (#48). "A true ecological approach," he maintains,

“*always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*” (# 49).

Hence, what Pope Francis calls “an integral ecology,” cannot be separated from the notion of the common good. This common good calls for a respect of the human persons, a concern for the welfare of society with particular attention to the development of families and for social peace, which entails a concern for distributive justice. At heart of concern for the common good is a summons “to solidarity and preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters” (#158). Furthermore, the pope’s understanding of the common good also extends to future generations: “We can no longer speak of sustainable development apart from intergenerational solidarity” (#159). This intergenerational solidarity, he insists, “is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us” (#159). Accordingly, an integral ecology calls for human solidarity not only with creation but also with the poor and the next generations.

The pope also recognizes the inseparable links between the healing of nature and the healing of human relationships, and between peace, justice and the preservation of creation. He insists, there can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of

> humanity itself. There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology. We cannot presume to heal our relationship with nature and the environment without healing all fundamental human relationships […] Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God. A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings […] concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society (#91, #118-119).

While pointing to the need to protect the natural ecology, *Laudato Sí* also stresses the need to protect the cultural ecology in which human beings are nourished and shaped. He observes that a consumerist vision of human beings has caused damage to our cultures. It has diminished the “immense variety which is the heritage of humanity” (#144). Each local

community, the pope points out, necessarily has its own unique cultural, historical, and social structures. The consumerist mentality, however, does away with them. It encourages instead a universal dependence on "uniform regulations or technical interventions" to solve all problems. Such a mentality risks overlooking the "complexities of local problems" which can only be resolved with specific attention to the cultural context as well as with the active participation of all members of the community. This way of thinking also encourages an environmental exploitation that results in the exhaustion of resources which "provide local communities with their livelihood," and undoes "the social structures which, for a long time, shaped cultural identity and their sense of the meaning of life and community" (#145). Thus, the pope calls for a recognition of and respect for the rights of peoples and their proper cultures. A special care, he says, should be given to minority indigenous communities.

The encyclical emphasizes the importance of the "ecology of daily life" for authentic human development. A concern for the ecology of life requires attentive care to improve the settings where people live their lives. These include, but are not limited to, "our rooms, our homes, our workplaces and neighborhoods." Because these settings "influence the way we think, feel and act […] we use our environment as a way of expressing our identity" (#147). Besides, concern for the ecology of daily life also means "to protect those common areas, visual landmarks and urban landscapes which increase our sense of belonging, of rootedness, of 'feeling at home' within a city which includes us and brings us together" (#219). In the inner city, there is a need to improve the system of transport. Good public transportation systems will encourage more people to use it, resulting in the reduction of pollution and the use of non-renewable energy. In the rural communities, efforts should be made to provide essential services so that the people in these communities might live a more dignified life.

Furthermore, integral human development calls our attention to the relationship between human life and the moral law. The pope especially stresses the significance of our bodies. Gender difference, for him, is good and necessary. He believes there is a dynamic relation between the acceptance of our bodies and how we treat the environment and fellow human beings. For him, the body itself establishes us in a direct relationship with the environment

> and with other living beings. The acceptance of our bodies as God's gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology. Also, valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment. It is not a healthy attitude which would seek "to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it" (#155).

Pope Francis challenges the global community to work together for a "sustainable and integral development." He appeals for a "new and universal solidarity" (#14) that aims at the protection of our planet. To that end, there is an urgent need for an ecological conversion. The pope is conscious that certain lifestyles and models of production and consumption have caused negative effects on both humanity and environment. Therefore, similar to his predecessor, he stresses that a true ecological conversion must entail a change of lifestyles. In other words, to eradicate environmental deterioration, a "radical change in the conduct of humanity" is needed. Advances in techno-science, he insists, are only good when accompanied by "authentic social and moral progress" (#4). Therefore, on the one hand, the pope calls for dialogues in the global community to seek "a global consensus" in dealing with the environmental issues. On the other hand, he encourages investment in ecological education and spirituality.

The pope says, "A global consensus is essential for confronting the deeper problems, which cannot be resolved by unilateral actions on the part of individual countries" (#164).

Among the most urgent issues that require a global consensus in order to deal with them, he names the need to immediately replace any technology that is based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels. Greenhouse gasses must be reduced. With regard to this issue, the pope realizes that it requires "honesty, courage and responsibility, above all on the part of those countries which are more powerful and pollute the most" (#169). Special efforts, must be dedicated to eliminating extreme poverty and to promoting the social development of the people in poor countries. In this respect, he especially cautions the "scandalous level" of consumption among the more privileged people (#172).

Alongside dialogues within the global community, Pope Francis also stresses the need for dialogues between religions and science. He maintains that science cannot provide complete solutions to all problems the world is facing. Religious faith, however, can contribute greatly to the overall ecological movement. In the case of Christian believers, their faith convictions can motivate them to care for nature and for their most vulnerable brothers and sisters. Christian ethical and spiritual traditions also prove meaningful. Faithful Christians "realize that their responsibility with creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are essential part of their faith" (#64). Therefore, the pope encourages dialogues, not only between religions and science, but also within different religious communities and within different sciences.

In other words, a "new and universal solidarity" (#14) means to live in harmony, to make sacrifices and to treat others well; it means to live in accordance with our faith, opening ourselves to God's grace; to live in a way consonant with our deepest convictions about love, justice and peace; to avoid mistaken understanding of ourselves and creation that leads us "to justify mistreating nature, to exercise tyranny over creation, to engage in war, injustice and acts of violence" (#200). A new and universal solidarity demands that religions engage in dialogues

among themselves “for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor, and building networks of respect and fraternity.” It calls for various sciences to work together for the common good. It challenges various ecological movements to dialogue with each other so as to avoid conflicts. Finally, a new and universal solidarity demands that “we all look to the common good, embarking on a path of dialogue which demands patience, self-discipline and generosity, always keeping in mind that ‘realities are greater than ideas’” (#201).

Pope Francis notices that postmodern humanity has been misled by the techno-economic paradigm. This paradigm promotes extreme consumerism and leads people to a false belief that “they are free as long as they have the supposed freedom to consume” while in reality only the few who “wield economic and financial power” are really free. It creates “a feeling of instability and uncertainty” and turns people into “collective selfishness.” Caught up in this paradigm, people indulge themselves in “needless buying and spending.” The pope asserts, “When people become self-centered and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person’s heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume.” In such a context, he says, “a genuine sense of the common good also disappears. […] social norms are respected only to the extent that they do not clash with personal needs” (#204). Therefore, he presses, “our concern cannot be limited merely to the threat of extreme weather events, but must also extend to the catastrophic consequences of social unrest.” Because “obsession with a consumerist lifestyle […] can only leads to violence and mutual destruction” (#203-204).

Nevertheless, the pope also presents reasons for hope. “All is not lost,” the Pope assures us. “Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning. We are able to […] embark on new paths to authentic freedom.” Pope Francis is

here referring to the necessity for a change in lifestyle which, he believes "could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power." Not only would such a change help overturn the consumerist lifestyle the techno-economic paradigm has imposed on the people; but a change in lifestyle would instill "a sense of social responsibility on the part of consumers" leading them to see that "purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act" (#206).

Therefore, in *Laudato Sí* above all, the pope is challenging us to examine our lifestyle. Unless we go out of ourselves towards others, "other creatures will not be recognized for their true worth; we are unconcerned about caring for things for the sake of others; we fail to set limits on ourselves in order to avoid the suffering of others or the deterioration of our surroundings." Integral development demands that we become aware of "the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us." Only when we overcome individualism can we "develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society" (#208). To that end, good education is needed because only "education can bring about real changes in lifestyle" (# 211).

If environmental deterioration, therefore, poses an "educational challenge" and if good ecological education is needed to reverse the current ecological situation. It must involve more than simply "providing information." Such an approach "fails to instill good habits" (#210). Therefore, the pope proposes:

> Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care…. Only by cultivating sound virtues will people be able to make a selfless ecological commitment" (#210-211).

The kind of ecological education the pope is suggesting can take places in different settings, such as schools (of various levels), in family structures, as well as in the media and in catechesis.

However, the family is the most important context, because this is "the place in which life – the gift of God – can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth" (#213). But, families need to be supported by local communities and the larger society. Therefore, Christian communities need to support families in this regard. He insists, "All Christian communities have an important role to play in ecological education." The pope hopes that seminaries and houses of formation will provide an education that guides people to a "concern for the needs of the poor and the protection of the environment" (#214). He encourages a deepening of ecological spirituality that is grounded in the convictions of Christian faith and motivates people to "a more passionate concern for the protection of our world" (#216). "Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork [he insists] is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience" (#217). Hence, he asks that "We do not understand our superiority as a reason for personal glory or irresponsible dominion, but rather as a different capacity which, in its turn, entails a serious responsibility stemming from our faith" (#220).

In summary, in this chapter we have discussed the papal teachings ecological issues. In their teachings, Pope Benedict and Pope Francis acknowledge the beautiful creation as the gift of God. They realize that human beings and nature are interdependent. They also recognize that this gift of God has not been used and cared for properly. Human irresponsible behaviors have caused the environmental degradation. The environmental degradation in turn has negative effect on human life. The ecological crisis we are facing is the most alarming social issue of our time. We are called to take action to fight with this issue if we want to continue living in peace and prosperity.

Both Pope Benedict and Pope Francis similarly stress the inseparable connection between the care for creation and the care for the integral development of human beings. Most importantly, they press on the need to care for the poor as a way to care for creation, and vice versa. Future generation is also taken into consideration. Our responsibility to the future generations demands that we use natural resources wisely and responsibly. To stand in solidarity with creation is therefore to stand in solidarity with the poor and the next generations. The popes call on the global community to take responsibility and work together to fight the two related crises of our time. They charge the moral responsibility of every person in the issue of ecological crises and call for a conversion. Good education, both secular and faith education, they insist, is needed for this conversion.

CHAPTER THREE

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC APPROACHES: DENIS EDWARDS AND SALLIE MCFAGUE

The investigation of the biblical creation accounts in Chapter One and the contemporary papal teachings with a focus on Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis in Chapter Two provide a good ground to see the tri-dimensional relation between God, humanity, and all other creatures. This foundation also enables us to see our role in and responsibility towards creation. The popes showed us that we are not carrying out our responsibility well. On the contrary, our irresponsible behaviors have brought damage to creation. In destroying the environment, we have become the victims of our own "unchecked activities."

Pope Benedict and Pope Francis reinforced our responsibility towards creation and called for an ecological conversion that aims at protecting ourselves and the environment. In other words, we are called to live a life of love and care for other humans and all creatures. The two popes have offered help to envision such a life, but they have only provided the basis. In this chapter, we will engage deeper into the conversation and explore further possibilities that would enable us to live what I would like to call an "environmentally-attentive lifestyle." To that end, we will focus on the systematic theological and economic approaches to creation offered by Denis Edwards and Sallie McFague.

A. Denis Edwards

Denis Edwards, an Australian Catholic theologian and ecologist, makes an enormous contribution to the developing field of eco-theology. A study of his work will advance the goals set out for this thesis. However, to study all of his works in this limited section, no matter how briefly, is too ambitious. For the purposes of this thesis, two major themes that he most passionately and substantially discusses will be elaborated here. I will start with his discussion of

two related and important areas of theology which are fundamental to formulating an ecological theology: Christology and Trinitarian theology. Then I will turn to his discussion of ecological conversion.

1. Christological Approach

Edwards develops a Christological approach to ecology based on his conviction that Jesus Christ is the Wisdom of God. This then leads him to adopt the idea of "deep incarnation" as a way of seeing God's relationship to and presence in the natural world. According to Edwards, scripture speaks of God's self-communication in and through the work of creation in female terms as the *Wisdom Woman*.[188] The Wisdom Woman, he says, has two central characteristics: "*she is intimately involved with the whole of creation*" and "*she comes to dwell in our midst*."[189] He points out that Wisdom is present with God at creation as a skilled co-worker (Prv 8:30; Wis 7:22; 8:6).

> She "pervades and penetrates all things" (Wis 7:24); she "renews all things" (Wis 7:27); and "she reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well" (Wis. 8:1). She is present in all of creation, as the divine power of continuous creation.[190]
> It is by her that God founds the earth, establishes the heavens, breaks open the deep, and enables the clouds to drop down their dew as refreshing, life-giving rain (Prv 3:9-20).[191]

The presence and action of the divine Wisdom are abundantly revealed in creation, but human beings, blinded by sin, fail to see them. However, though humanity's capacity to see is damaged by sin, Edwards maintains, God's love for creation is not defeated. Out of divine generosity, the Wisdom of God "now comes to be with creatures in a radical way, in the flesh. The presence of Wisdom reaches an unforeseeable culmination in bodily incarnation."[192] He

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[188] Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006), 53 (Hereafter: Edwards, *Ecology*); Denis Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology*, Ecology and Justice (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995), 70 (Hereafter: Edwards, *Wisdom of God*).
[189] Edwards, *Ecology*, 53.
[190] Edwards, *Wisdom of God*, 70.
[191] Edwards, *Ecology*, 53.
[192] Denis Edwards, *Partaking of God: Trinity, Evolution, and Ecology* (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2014), 55 (Hereafter: Edwards, *Partaking of God*).

points out that this is attested to by the early Christian communities. They recognized Jesus as the Wisdom of God. They were aware of Jesus' humanity. They have experienced his life, death, and resurrection. But they are also convinced that what was with them in the Christ-event was nothing less than God. They believed that the Wisdom of God, in whom all things are created, now comes to dwell among us in the person of Jesus.[193]

For Edwards, the incarnation does not come as a result of human sin, but rather from God's free love for creatures. This love knows no limit. It is expressed most powerfully in Jesus through his cross. This love, he maintains, is the same loving Wisdom that is at work in creation. Drawing on Paul's teaching in his first letter to the Corinthians, Edwards states, "Since the world did not recognize Wisdom revealed in the works in creation, God went much further, revealing God's self in […] the incomprehensible foolishness of the cross."[194] But "the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength" (1Cor. 1:25). God uses what appears to be foolish to confound all worldly wisdom. Therefore, he insists, the foolishness of the cross is simply "the revelation of the nature of divine love."[195] Jesus' suffering on the cross is thus the expression of God's passion for human beings and for all of creation. The divine Wisdom at work in creation is revealed in the vulnerable love expressed in the crucified One. "This vulnerable and foolish love," he asserts, "identifies with suffering creation in order to bring liberation and healing. The cross of Jesus is not only the foolishness of divine love but also the 'power' of that love at work, filled with liberating resurrection life, with the promise of justice for the poor of the Earth and the transformation of all creatures."[196]

[193] Edwards, *Ecology*, 53-54; Edwards, *Wisdom of God*, 70.
[194] Edwards, *Wisdom of God*, 73-74.
[195] *Ibid*., 74.
[196] *Ibid*., 77.

This leads Edwards to the notion of "deep incarnation," an idea introduced by the Danish theologian Niels Gregersen, who writes, "the incarnation of God in Christ can be understood as a radical or 'deep' incarnation, that is, an incarnation into the very tissue of biological existence, and system of nature."[197] Building on Gregersen's proposal, Edwards says, "In Christ, God is with all forms of life in their suffering limitation. The cross of Christ reveals God's identification with creation in all its complexity, struggle, and pain. Gregersen finds in the cross a microcosm of God's redemptive presence to all creatures that face suffering and death."[198] For Edwards, too, the meaning of the incarnation is not restricted just to humanity. In becoming flesh, he insists, the Wisdom of God did not only embrace humanity, but also embraces the whole interconnected world of fleshly life and the whole universe. Because, utilizing Duncan Reid's position,[199] he argues, "Flesh points beyond the humanity of Jesus and beyond the human community embraced by God in the incarnation to the biological world of living creatures." Therefore, God's embrace of humanity in the incarnation needs to be understood "in the context of the wider claim that the Word has become flesh." In other words, "In becoming flesh, God has embraced all creatures in the interconnected web of life."[200]

This notion of "deep incarnation," Edwards maintains, is faithful to the Christian tradition that acknowledges the cosmic meaning of Christ. The cosmic meaning of Christ was discussed in depth earlier, in Chapter One in the subsection on "Creation in the New Testament." It is sufficient to say here that for Edwards the crucified Jesus is the Wisdom of God who had been God's agent in creation from the beginning of time. He is the "image of the invisible God" and the "firstborn of all creation" (Col. 1:15). He is the one who "orders all things well" (Wis. 8:1).

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[197] Niels Henrik Gregersen, "The Cross of Christ in an Evolutionary World," Dialog: A Journal of Theology 40 (2001), 205. See Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 58.
[198] Edwards, *Ecology*, 59. See also Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 58.
[199] Duncan Reid, "Enfleshing the Human," in *Earth Revealing – Earth Healing: Ecology and Christian Theology*, ed. Denis Edwards (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001), 69-83. See Edwards, *Ecology*, 58.
[200] Edwards, *Ecology*, 58.

"All things in heaven and on earth were created" "in," "through," and "for" him (cf. Col. 1:16). He is the one who transforms and reconciles the world, not just humanity, to God. Through him "God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of the cross" (Col. 1:20).[201] Therefore, Edwards concludes, "In Jesus of Nazareth, in his life, death, and resurrection, the Wisdom of God is interiorly present to creaturely humanity, bringing forgiveness, healing, and liberation, overcoming death and transforming creature existence from within."[202] And "In Jesus Christ, Wisdom herself takes flesh in our midst to secure the deification of human beings and with them, the fulfillment of the rest of creation in God."[203]

The life and ministry of Jesus also reveal God's compassion for all creation. Edwards sees Jesus as a wisdom teacher and a gifted "parabler," who communicates the deepest things

> of God in stories and images from the natural world and from the cultural world of human communities. His images come from the whole of life: the beauty of wildflowers, the growth of trees from tiny seeds, crops of grain, bread rising, a woman sweeping a floor looking for what was lost, children playing games, the relationship between a shepherd and the sheep, the birds of the air, foxes and their lairs, rain falling, and the generosity of a parent to a wayward child.[204]

Edwards sees Jesus' parables as reflections based upon a close observation of and delight in the natural world. They reveal Jesus' recognition of an "inward affinity between the natural order and the spiritual order."[205] They also express Jesus' perception of the natural world as the gift of God, the place of divine presence where he can encounter the living God, and the place of divine communion where he finds communion with the God he proclaims. Through those

[201] Edwards, *Ecology*, 59; Edwards, *Wisdom of God*, 80-81.
[202] Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 55.
[203] *Ibid*., 57.
[204] Edwards, *Ecology*, 50-51.
[205] C.H.Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (Glasgow: Collins, 1961), 20-21. See Edwards, *Ecology*, 51.

parables, Jesus reveals God's compassion for nonhuman creatures. "The God of Jesus is a God who is radically a God for human beings but also a God for all [other] creatures."[206]

In his development of this "wisdom Christology," Edwards has established the connection between the living memory of Jesus with ecological commitment. He insists that Jesus embodies in his person, words, and actions, the compassion of God for all creation. As the Wisdom of God, Jesus is the one "in" "through" and "for" whom all things are created and finally reconciled. In the incarnation of the Word, God radically embraces the whole interconnected world of biological life. In his life and ministry, Jesus reveals God's continuing presence in creation and demonstrates God's profound love and care for all creatures. Such a connection, according to Edwards, is an invitation and a challenge to all Christian believers to shape their ecological commitment and action. From a wisdom Christology perspective, ecological commitment and action are seen "not only as ethically responsible but also as radically Christian, as the faithful praxis of Christian discipleship."[207] Hence Edwards maintains, "the following of Jesus in the twenty-first century necessarily involves ecological commitment."[208]

2. Trinitarian Approach

Building on Athanasius of Alexandria's Trinitarian theology of creation, Edwards develops a Trinitarian approach to ecology. He starts with Athanasius' conviction that the Word of the incarnation and cross is the same Word through whom God creates all things. For Athanasius, "Word of God" and "Wisdom of God" refer to the same divine reality, that is, the second person of the Trinity.[209]

[206] Edwards, *Ecology*, 52.
[207] *Ibid*., 48.
[208] *Ibid*., 64.
[209] See Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 20.

Athanasius holds a robust view of Christian theology of creation out of nothing. For him creatures have absolutely no reason in themselves for their existence. They exist only because of divine goodness and benevolence by which God creates all creatures through the Word.[210] Divine generosity, therefore, characterizes God's relations with creatures. Participation in the Word of God is vital to the existence of all creatures. For Athanasius, though creatures are fragile in themselves, they are also sublime because of their participation in the Word of God. He emphasizes that creatures participate in the Word not only in original creation but also in the continuing creation. Edwards captures Athanasius' creation theology as follows:

> Every creature exists because it continually receives its existence from the Word of God. It exists by partaking of the Word. It is not just that creation is originally brought into existence through the Word but also that each creature continues to exist at every moment only by this continuous participation in the Word. […] Participation in the Word enables each creature to exist and the whole creation to remain firm and to flourish in one community of creation. […] the Word is "present in all things" and "gives life and protection to everything, everywhere, to each individually and to all together."[211]

According to Edwards, Athanasius sees the interrelationship and cooperation of the diverse entities of the universe as the result of the work of divine Wisdom. The Wisdom of God works to bring "all the diverse creatures into balance and beautiful harmony." She brings the various elements of the universe together "in cooperation, in a kind of kinship of creation."[212] Edwards insists, a commitment to this cooperation and a sense of kinship with other creatures are required for human beings "to respond to the crisis of our planet and to protect its diversity of life"[213]

While maintaining that the Word is intrinsic to the very being of the Father, Athanasius also recognizes that "the Holy Spirit is proper to and belongs to both the Father and the Word by

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[210] Athanasius of Alexandria, "Against the Greeks", 2 in *Athanasius*: Contra Gentes *and* De Incarnatione, trans. Robert Thomson (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1971), 7. See Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 21.

[211] Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 22-23. See also Athanasius of Alexandria, "Against the Greeks", 41 in *Athanasius*: Contra Gentes *and* De Incarnatione, trans. Robert Thomson (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1971), 15.

[212] Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 23.

[213] *Ibid*., 24.

nature."[214] Similar to the Word, the Holy Spirit has his own role in the work of creation. Athanasius maintains that the Holy Spirit indwells in creatures as "the one who binds creation to the Word."[215] The Holy Spirit is thus seen in Athanasius' view as "the bond of communion, the divine connectivity, uniting creatures to the Word, and through the Word, to the Father." Accordingly, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is seen as "the enabling, empowering presence of God in creatures."[216] The Holy Spirit, according to Athanasius, can enable creatures to participate in the Trinitarian life through the relationships of creation and grace.[217] Therefore, "the relationship of continuous creation can be seen as a fully trinitarian act by which God enables a world of creatures to partake of the Word in the Spirit."[218] "Both creation and new creation, then, occur through this structure of partaking of the Word in the Spirit. God 'creates and renews all things' through the Word and in the Holy Spirit."[219]

Creatures' participation in Trinitarian life and God's loving presence that empowers their existence indicating that "God the Trinity is fully and immediately present"[220] to all creatures. Athanasius rejects the idea that there must be some kind of "created intermediary" between God and the world of creatures. Those who hold that idea state that "divine dignity and holy otherness of God" are so great that "there can be no direct relation between God and creatures."[221] However, while admitting that God engages with creation through the Word, Athanasius insists that "the Word is not a creature." He maintains that the Word "possesses fully the Father's very essence and, precisely as fully divine, bridges the gap between Creator and creatures in loving

[214] See *Ibid*.
[215] Athanasius of Alexandria, *Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit*, 1.25, in Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius* (London: Routledge, 2004), 225. See Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 24.
[216] Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 24.
[217] See *Ibid*., 25.
[218] *Ibid*., 24-25.
[219] *Ibid*., 26. See also Athanasius of Alexandria, *Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit*, 1.24, in Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius* (London: Routledge, 2004), 224.
[220] Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 31.
[221] *Ibid*., 33.

condescension." "Because Word and Spirit are one with the Father's essence," he further argues, "the Word's mediation in the Spirit means, of course, that the Father, the Source of All, is also immediately present to each creature."[222] Therefore, he concludes, "Created entities participate immediately in trinitarian life. They do not possess the divine nature, but participate only by the gracious act of divine generosity and love by which God bridges the ontological gap between the infinitely other God and a world of finite creatures."[223]

Edward's introduction of Athanasius' Trinitarian theology of creation tells us that God, in his boundless generosity, creates all creatures of the universe "through the Word in the Spirit." All creatures have their existence due to their participation in the Trinitarian life. This participation is immediate. God is lovingly and immediately present to each creature, empowering them to exist and act within the community of creation. This then, according to Edwards, suggests "an attitude of deep respect for other species and for individual creatures" and have "consequences for ecological ethics and action."[224]

Other aspects of Trinitarian theology of creation have also been explored by Edwards. In *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, he dedicates one chapter (chapter 5) to investigate the relationship between the diversity of life and the Trinity. He starts with the experience of the early Christian believers who see both Jesus and the Holy Spirit as coming from God to bring salvation. The early Christians believed that God saves us through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Gradually, they had to face with the question of the inner life of God. Drawing on different Christian traditions, Edwards points out that the Word, the Holy Spirit, and God – the Source of All – are radically relational. They are always "Persons-in-relationship." "God's being is being-in-mutual-

[222] *Ibid*., 34. See also Athanasius of Alexandria, *Orations against the Arians*, 2.64, in Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 157-158, and Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought*, 113.
[223] Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 35. See also Athanasius of Alexandria, *Orations against the Arians*, 3.14 in William Bright, *The Orations of Athanasius against the Arians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884), 169.
[224] Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 33.

relations."[225] He sees the Trinitarian Persons as "with each other in a unity in which there is no subordinationism. They are with each other in profound communion."[226]

The unity of divine Persons, therefore, can be seen as a unity of mutual love. This radical unity, or profound communion, according to Edwards, is possible because there is in the Trinity an "infinite self-giving and infinite reception of love."[227] This enables the Trinitarian Persons to give of themselves infinitely "without fear of losing themselves or of being rejected by the other."[228] In such a supreme form of love there is no "subordination or hierarchy, but completely communal mutuality."[229]

While Edwards sees the three Trinitarian Persons as "truly distinct," he also recognizes that they are at the same time "inseparably united in the deepest communion."[230] This radical communion, he maintains, does not "diminish or obscure what is distinctive and proper to the three Persons."[231] This leads to the concept of "unity in diversity," a concept that has its origin the in Greek term *perichoresis*. According to Edwards, this word refers to "a communion in which diversity and unity are not opposed but enable each other to exist."[232] Adopting this concept to talk about the inner life of God, it expresses "the intimate presence of one divine Person to the others, the being-in-one-another in supreme distinctiveness and freedom. In this type of unity, the individual Person is enabled to flourish precisely by being in communion with the other."[233]

From this perspective of Trinitarian theology, Edwards suggests that the diversity of creatures can be seen as the self-expression of the Trinity. He says, "The abundance of life spring

[225] Edwards, *Ecology*, 69.
[226] *Ibid*., 68.
[227] Edwards, *Wisdom of God*, 96.
[228] *Ibid*.
[229] *Ibid*., 98.
[230] Edwards, *Ecology*, 69.
[231] *Ibid*.
[232] *Ibid*., 73.
[233] *Ibid*.

ultimately from the abundance of the divine communion. It expresses the ecstatic nature of divine life."[234] In *Partaking of God*, Edwards explores Athanasius' teaching on the fecundity of God and points out that Athanasius sees the generativity of Trinitarian life as the ground and the source of all the fruitfulness of creaturely life. Interpreting Athanasius' thought, he says, "God is fruitful by nature." Therefore, "the fruitfulness of the natural world […] are all grounded in the dynamic generativity and fruitfulness of God the Trinity."[235] The current ecological crisis has led to the loss of biodiversity. We are called, therefore, to a commitment to biodiversity and do what we can to save the diversity of life.

Drawing on the thought of Bonaventure, Edwards further insists, "all creatures must be understood as revelatory signs of God. […] They are the work of art produced by divine Wisdom."[236] He points out that for Bonaventure the universe is like "a book *reflecting*, *representing* and *describing* its Maker, the Trinity."[237] Thomas Aquinas perhaps best captures the idea being made:

> For God brought many things into being in order that his goodness might be communicated to creatures and represented in them; and because this goodness could not be adequately represented by one creature alone, God produced many and diverse creatures, so that what was wanting to one in the representation of divine goodness might be supplied by another. For goodness which in God is simple and uniform, in creatures is manifold and diverse. Hence the whole universe together participates in the divine goodness more perfectly, and represents it better than any single creature whatever.[238]

Building on this statement, Edwards maintains, "No one creature, not even the human, can image God by itself. Only the diversity of life […] can give expression to the radical diversity and otherness of the trinitarian God."[239]

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[234] *Ibid*., 77.
[235] Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 30.
[236] Edwards, *Wisdom of God*, 105.
[237] *Breviloquium*, 2.12. Trans. Jose de Vinck, *The Works of Bonaventure II: The Breviloquium* (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild, 1963), 104. See Edwards, *Wisdom of God*, 106. Emphasis was added by Edwards.
[238] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae I*, q. 47, a.1. See Edwards, *Ecology*, 78.
[239] Edwards, *Ecology*, 78.

Creation is also considered God's self-expression for its relational character. It has been discussed earlier that the Trinity is relational by nature. This insight provides a basis for a vision that sees creatures of the universe as relational. A radically relational nature of the Creator, Edwards proposes, should suggest something about the nature of created reality, namely, a "relational ontology." Organisms and species, therefore, are never seen in isolation but always seen as part of an interrelated world. Not only human persons, he insists, "but also all other creatures, in their highly differentiated ways, are seen as radically interrelational and interdependent."[240] The existence of all creatures is sustained at every moment "by a God who is Persons-in-communion. Our interrelated universe, with all its diverse creatures, emerges from the embrace of the divine communion in love."[241] This reality, Edwards says, "gives unthinkable depth to the importance of ecological interrelationships."[242]

The Trinitarian theology of creation developed by Edwards has important implications for the current ecological endeavors. It leads to a nuanced view of human beings in relation to the universe and all its creatures. A theological view of the human person, he insists, necessarily stems from the inner life of the Trinitarian God. This God, he argues, is understood as "Persons-In-Mutual-Communion." This suggests that human beings, made in God's image, "are to be understood as persons-in-mutual-relationship rather than as disengaged subjects."[243] This understanding is supported by scripture, which sees human beings as "fundamentally relational and constituted by relationships."[244] However, Edwards maintains, "Human beings are

[240] *Ibid*., 80.
[241] *Ibid*., 81.
[242] *Ibid*.
[243] Edwards, *Wisdom of God*, 135.
[244] *Ibid*.

interrelated not only with each other but also, in differentiated ways, with all other creatures and with the trinitarian God."[245]

While recognizing that human beings share in a common story of creation and have a communal heritage with all other creatures, which suggests a radical interrelationship or a kinship between human beings and nonhuman creatures, he insists that human beings have been uniquely created and have a particular place in cosmic system. Accordingly, he proposes two basic principles for a contemporary anthropology: "1) the human person is profoundly and intrinsically interconnected with every other creature as a child of Earth and a child of the universe; and 2) the human person has the particular dignity and responsibility which come from being one in whom the universe has come to self-awareness."[246] While humans' kinship with other creatures comes from their sharing in a common origin in God's creative action, their particular dignity and responsibility come from the conviction that they are made in the image of God.

Being made in God's image, Edwards says, human beings are called into relationship with the Trinitarian God and to love other creatures as they are loved by God. He realizes that in our time, "human beings have the power and the freedom to decide between life and death for themselves and for other species on Earth." Therefore, they are called to "the awesome task of being God's partners in creation." And he asserts, "We cannot avoid this role. We help to bring life, or we will bring death. We depend thoroughly on our biological history and the life-systems of the planet."[247] Hence Edwards calls for an ecological conversion, to which we now turn.

[245] *Ibid*., 137.
[246] *Ibid*., 143.
[247] *Ibid*., 144.

3. Ecological Conversion

Edwards begins his discussion of ecological conversion with a brief review of the Church ecological teaching in which he focuses on the thoughts of Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Francis. According to Edwards, Pope St. John Paul II emphasized the moral character of the ecological crisis and pressed a need to defend together the values of respect for life and the integrity of creation: "Respect for life and the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation."[248] In the context of environmental catastrophe, Pope St. John Paul II insists upon the urgency to support and encourage "ecological conversion."[249] The meaning of this conversion is spelled out in the 2002 *Common Declaration on Environmental Ethics* of Pope St. John Paull II and the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I as follows:

> What is required is an act of repentance on our part and a renewed attempt to view ourselves, one another, and the world around us within the perspective of the divine design for creation. The problem is not simply economic and technological; it is moral and spiritual. A solution at the economic and technological level can be found only if we undergo, in the most radical way, an inner change of heart, which can lead to a change in lifestyle and of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. A genuine *conversion* in Christ will enable us to change the way we think and act.[250]

Central to the ecological conversion, according to their joint statement, is "an act of repentance" which suggests "the most radical inner change of heart," which leads to "a change in lifestyle and of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production."

Similarly, when Pope Francis stresses the need for ecological conversion, he speaks of the Christian vocation as "'protecting,' or being custodians of creation."[251] For him, the protection of human beings and the protection of creation go together as one vocation. Both then

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[248] John Paul II, "Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1 January 1990," available online at https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html. Accessed April 29, 2017. See Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 148.

[249] John Paul II, "General Audience Address, January 17, 2001." Available online at https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20010117.html. Accessed April 29, 2017. See Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 148

[250] John Paul II and Bartholomew I, "Common Declaration on Environmental Ethics: Common Declaration of John Paull II and the Ecumenical Patriarch His Holiness Bartholomew I, Monday, 10 John 2002." Available online at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020610_venice-declaration.html. Accessed April 29, 2017. See Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 148-149.

[251] See Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 149.

"are interconnected with protecting Christ."[252] However, he also insists that the protection of creation is not restricted to Christians. It is a universal call to all human beings. Thus, he says,

> the vocation of being a "protector", however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children themselves, in time, protect their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts![253]

While recognizing that the whole human community is called to ecological conversion, Pope Francis insists that for Christians, "ecological conversion is deeply connected to their relationship with Christ.

Edwards builds on the papal ecological teaching to develop his own vision of ecological conversion. For him, ecological conversion means a "transformation of humanity." For Christians, he says, it "necessarily involves the heart of their faith commitment."[254] This conversion begins with a new sense of planetary spirituality. His experience of the beautiful Villunga Hills close to his house in Australia, enables Edwards to see nature as a source of spirituality. He realizes that the surrounding nature leads him towards stillness and offers him liberation from busyness of life. He finds in nature a source of healing and peace and sees it as a gift. Hence, he states, "human beings experience grace, the wonder and mystery of God, in the encounter with the world around us, in mountains and deserts, seas and farmlands, in the gardens and parks, in birds and animals."[255]

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[252] See *Ibid*., 150.
[253] Pope Francis, "Homily of Pope Francis, Saint Peter's Square, Tuesday, March 19, 2013, Solemnity of Saint Joseph." Available online at https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130319_omelia-inizio-pontificato.pdf. Accessed April 29, 2017. See Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 150.
[254] Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 152.
[255] *Ibid*., 153.

This experience of nature, for Edwards, is global and thus we all are invited "into a new form of planetary spirituality." Such a spirituality, he insists, "involves a solidarity that challenges our deep-seated tendencies to make 'outsiders' into scapegoats and enemies and to engage in ruthless exploitation of other creatures and their habitats."[256] While recognizing that the planetary spirituality is global, he stresses that it must also be local, that is, it points to the specific time and space, the particular context where we find ourselves in. An authentic planetary spirituality, for Edwards, means recognition of "the otherness of different species, and that stands in awe before the uncontrollable and the unknown in the natural world." An authentic planetary spirituality needs to be "a robust spirituality, capable of recognizing the cost of the evolution that has produced the wonderful variety of species of our planet. These costs include the cycles of life and death, the seeming wasteful abundance of some life-forms, the constant competition, the predation, and the extinctions."[257] At heart of the planetary spirituality, Edwards maintains,

> is the sense that the natural world comes to us as a gift. It is not simply at our disposal, to be abused or squandered at will. […] This kind of planetary spirituality involves a growing knowledge of our belonging with, and our interdependence with, other spieces, and with the atmosphere, the seas, and the land. It can result in an enduring commitment to the well-being of the planetary community.[258]

Ecological conversion then, for Edwards, is a conversion to Christ. He argues that "we cannot love God without loving God's beloved creatures. We cannot follow Jesus, the Word made flesh, without embracing the matter and flesh embraced in his incarnation." Therefore, "conversion to Christ involves conversion to love of the neighbor; it involves breaking all barriers of insiders and outsiders in love of the enemy; it involves a love for this Earth and all its creatures, in ecological conversion."[259]

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[256] *Ibid*., 154.
[257] *Ibid*., 155.
[258] *Ibid*.
[259] *Ibid*., 163.

In his ecological efforts, the theologian, Thomas Berry, argues that to save the Earth, "exploitative anthropocentrism" needs to be replaced by a "participative biocentrism."[260] However, while acknowledging that human arrogance has done damage to the environment, Edwards thinks that moving from an anthropocentric approach to a biocentric one is not the answer to the problem. A more nuanced approach, for him, is an explicitly theocentric one. He maintains that there is no need to minimize the uniqueness of human beings in order to avoid extreme anthropocentrism. Rather, he says, based upon all scientific, ethical, and theological perspectives, it is clear that there is something unique in human beings. This uniqueness of human beings comes from the fact that human beings are made in the image of God. Being made in God's image for Edwards means that human beings are "creatures with whom God can speak (Gen. 1:28-30), creatures to whom God relates interpersonally."[261] While God relates to all creatures in terms of their own proper nature and dignity, he says, God relates to human beings in terms of their interpersonal nature. According to Edwards, this has significant meaning for ecological endeavor because being made in the divine image, human beings "are called to share in the divine love and respect for other creatures. They are to relate to them as God does, with something like God's feeling for them. Humans, in the divine image, have a responsibility for creation as humble servants of God."[262]

Therefore, what is needed in the ecological movement is not to replace anthropocentrism with biocentrism, nor should we attempt to minimize the uniqueness of human beings. A more e effective approach rather, is to call humanity to an authentic ecological conversion and to empower them in their environmental commitment. To bring people to such a conversion, in

[260] Thomas Berry, The Dream of the Earth (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988), 21, 30, 165-166, 202-210. See Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 166.
[261] Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 168.
[262] *Ibid*.

Edwards' estimation, means calling people to a genuine cosmic humility. Pointing to Psalm 104 and the book of Job, he reminds human beings of their place within the one community of creation and thus to bring them a sense of cosmic humility. He says, "Human beings are fellow creatures with other animals before God. All are related among the 'manifold works' of God. All are made in divine Wisdom. God breathes into each the breath of life (Ps. 104:30)."[263] Human beings, therefore, "are invited into a deeper respect for other species in their distinctive difference from our own, as having their own direct relationship to God their Creator, and as having their own God-given integrity."[264]

To reach authentic ecological conversion, according to Edwards, human beings need a new way of thinking, a new way of seeing, a new way of feeling, a new way of acting, and a new way of living. To have a new way of thinking is to turn from "dangerously anthropocentric way of thought: one that sees other creatures as existing only for human use and exploitation, that understands human beings in individualistic terms, that exults the spirit at the expense of matter and the body, and that sees salvation as being taken out of creation" to a way of thinking and acting "with regard to our fragile planet and all its inhabitants," and a way of thinking that recognizes "the uniqueness and dignity of other species, as words of the Word [and as] fellow creatures before God."[265]

A new way of seeing is also important since the way we see and the way we think are mutually related. They mutually determine each other. And together they determine out stance before the reality around us. To see aright therefore become important. It involves "discipline and virtue."[266] To see aright is to see with what Sallie McFague calls the "loving eye."[267] To see

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[263] *Ibid*., 171.
[264] *Ibid*., 172.
[265] *Ibid*., 174-175.
[266] *Ibid*., 176.

with loving eye is to "really see the other rather than simply the projection of one's self or one's own needs."[268] This applies to both human relationships and the way we see the natural world.

Ecological conversion also requires a new way of feeling. It requires "a deepening of our feeling for the natural world of which we are part, and a deepening of the feeling of belonging to the wider community of life on earth [...] a continuing deepening in the capacity to feel with other creatures, for empathy with them […] for the pain of other creatures, and for the frustration of their nature […] a feeling that can then five rise to ethical conviction and action."[269]

Edwards says that thinking, seeing, and feeling shape our action, and vice versa. He maintains that "Action is intrinsic to ecological conversion." And he suggests, it "can begin in very small changes in the way we act in the home, workplace, school, church, local neighborhood, or in political arena."[270] These actions, he believes, can be transformative and lead to further actions and "deeper conversion and involvement with others in common projects and political action."[271] However, he insists, "Ecological conversion involves not only particular actions but also the action that is one's whole life […] It is a matter of being called to a lifelong commitment to the good of the Earth community, in and through all that makes up the reality of my daily life, and seeing this as the way of following Jesus the Wisdom of God in this time."[272]

In summary, together with the investigation of the biblical creation accounts, Edwards' Christological and Trinitarian approaches to creation enabled us to see the interrelationship between human beings and nonhuman beings in the web of creation. This relationship entails our responsibly towards nonhuman creatures. For Edwards, ecological commitment is crucial to our

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[267] Sallie McFague, *Super, Natural Christians: How We Should Love Nature* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 30-36. See Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 176.
[268] Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 176.
[269] *Ibid*., 177.
[270] *Ibid*., 178.
[271] *Ibid*.
[272] *Ibid*., 179.

commitment to the following of Jesus. In our ecological context, this commitment demands an ecological conversion. He called this ecological conversion the "transformation of humanity." To make such a conversion possible, we need a new way of thinking, a new way of seeing, a new way of feeling, a new way of acting, and a new way of living. In other words, we need to live differently than the way we are living now. In the following section, Sallie McFague will help us discern how we are to live differently from an economic perspective.

B. Sallie McFague

Pope Benedict, Pope Francis and Edwards offered help to envision an "environmentally-attentive lifestyle." As we have shown, they have identified humans' consumerist lifestyle, shaped by free market capitalism, as the main cause to environmental degradation, but they have only touched briefly on a systematic discussion of an economic system that would be healthy for the environment. This gap is filled by Sallie McFague who helps us envision further that lifestyle from an economic perspective.

McFague is an American feminist Christian eco-theologian. She is well known for her analysis of metaphors in God language. She has applied it particularly to the field of ecology, showing how different models of God would be used to approach ecological issues. While proposing various models of God, she finds the "Body of God" model as most satisfactory. She sees the world as the Body of God and insists that we need to care for the world as if it were God's Body.

McFague covers a wide range of ecological topics. But for our purpose, her discussion of the two economic systems (that is, neo-classical economics and ecological economics) and their corresponding worldviews are most important. But to uphold an economic system or a lifestyle that one determines to be healthy for the environment, one must go through a spiritual

conversion. In this section, therefore, I will first focus on McFague's discussion of two economic systems. Then I will turn to her proposal of what is necessary for the process of spiritual conversion.

1. Neo-classical Economics and Its Worldview

One might ask, if the goal of this thesis is to study the Christian stance on the ecological issues then why it is concerned with the economic systems? Put another way, what do economic systems have to do with Christianity? A response that is offered by theologian Sallie McFague is that economics is about life and death, as well as the quality of life. Economics is a justice issue, so why would Christianity not be concerned with it?

In McFague's understanding, the issues of well-being and justice are not limited to human beings, but extended to embrace the entire planet. She points out, "the well-being of people and the well-being of the planet are increasingly seen to be inextricably related."[273] Therefore, economics needs to be attentive to the ecological reality.

McFague starts her development of economic models with the conviction that "Since 'economics is the study of how scarce resources are allocated among competing uses,' a worldview of planetary living is necessarily economic."[274] She notices that the Greek world for "house" (*oikos*) is also the root of "economics," "ecology," and "ecumenicity." For her, this is not an accident. She is convinced that there is a close connection between the household (the Earth), economics, and ecology. Therefore, she insists, "in order for the whole household of the planet to flourish, the earth's resources must be distributed justly among all its inhabitants,

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[273] Sallie McFague, *A New Climate for Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 82 (Hereafter: McFague, *New Climate*).
[274] Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 72 (Hereafter: McFague, *Life Abundant*).

human and earth others, on a sustainable basis. This involves economics, for the distribution of scarce resources among needy users is the essence of economics."[275]

Assessing the environmental situation, she realizes that the current economics is not contributing to a just, sustainable planet. Rather it "supports insatiable greed on the part of individuals, regardless of its consequences to other people or to the planet."[276] What we need is an economics that is attentive to both the need of the people and the planet. For this reason, McFague develops a systematic discussion of two economic models: neo-classical economics and ecological economics. The former is what is currently practiced. The latter is what needed for our time.

Neo-classical economics, according to McFague, means market capitalism, which is defined as "a giant machine operated by numerous investors, whose motives are neither vicious nor benign, who merely seek to maximize their returns."[277] Its key feature "is the allocation of scarce resources by means of decentralized markets: 'system-wide resources allocation occurs as consequence of many individual market transactions each of which is guided by self-interest.'"[278] Neo-classical economics sees human beings as "individuals motivated by self-interest." Its goal is "the fulfillment of the self-interest of human beings." It assumes that "everyone will act to maximize their own interest and by doing so all will eventually benefit."[279]

While theorists of neo-classical economics hold that economics is "objective," that is, it does not contain values, McFague maintains that neo-classical economics is not value-free. She says, "Neo-classical economics has *one* value: the monetary fulfillment of individuals provided

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[275] McFague, *New Climate*, 83.
[276] *Ibid*.
[277] Nathan Keyfitz, "Consumption and Population," in David A. Crocker and Toby Linden, eds, *Ethics of Consumption: The Good Life, Justice and Global Stewardship* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefild, 1998), 485. As cited in McFague, *Life Abundant*, 76.
[278] McFague, *Life Abundant*, 76.
[279] *Ibid*.

that they compete successfully for the resources."[280] Other values, such as the just distribution of profits from the earth's resources and the ability of the planet to sustain our use of its resources, are considered "externalities." Neo-classical economics does not consider them intrinsic to economic theory. In neo-classical economic theory, these matters are dealt with by the government and science.[281]

The basic assumption of neo-classical economics is that "human beings are self-interested individuals who, acting on this basis, will create a syndicate or machine, even a global one, capable of benefiting all eventually."[282] According to McFague, this anthropology comes as a result of the Protestant Reformation and the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. While the Enlightenment emphasized the importance of the individual, the Protestant Reformation encouraged "the right of individuals to approach God directly, free of the mediation of clergy and church."[283] Both of these led to the mentality that upholds "the right of every individual to choose what he or she wants and finds fulfilling."[284]

Neo-classical economics is not value-free because it also aims at growth. McFague insists that growth "is in fact a value."[285] Seeing it from the perspective of struggling countries, the value of growth, she says, is problematic because it serves mainly the privileged-class people. "It is the means whereby we individuals with appetites for more and more scarce goods have been satisfied."[286] In addition, if this goal continues to be pursued, it will inevitably exhaust the earth's

[280] *Ibid*., 77.
[281] *Ibid*.
[282] *Ibid*.
[283] *Ibid*., 78.
[284] *Ibid*.
[285] *Ibid*., 79.
[286] *Ibid*.

resources. As she says, "For all the earth's people to enjoy a Western middle-class lifestyle, four more planets the size of the earth would be necessary as the resource base."[287]

Two values, therefore, are predominant in the neo-classical economic worldview: the individual and growth. These values are interrelated. In fact, McFague suggests that they might be seen as one value: "the satisfaction of the desires of individuals through the means of constant growth."[288] From both anthropological and ecological perspectives, this worldview is unhealthy because it pictures humans as separate from one another and isolated from the earth;

> that is, they are only externally related to both, entering into contracts with other human beings for mutual financial benefit, and vying for the possession of scarce natural resources, which, whether "animal, vegetable, or mineral," are seen as objects for our use. Moreover, this worldview recognizes no limits, neither for individuals nor the planet's resources.[289]

Consequently, the powerful communal bonds fostered by early biblical and civic republican traditions are lost. According to McFague, biblical and civic traditions once helped to create "a powerful sense of community with responsibility for others."[290] In that context, there is a balance between individual's rights and responsibilities for larger goods. This sense of the "individual in community," however, is lost in the neo-classical economic society. "Our assumptions about human life, its rights and responsibilities, no longer begin with a strong sense of solidarity towards others."[291] Though people live in communities, she insists, "the image we have of human life is not fundamentally relational: that is, our primary sense of ourselves is not that 'we live and move and have our being' in community. Rather, it is what [Robert] Bellah identifies as 'utilitarian individualism' from the eighteenth century and its present-day modification: 'expressive individualism.'"[292]

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[287] *Ibid*., 80.
[288] *Ibid*., 81.
[289] *Ibid*.
[290] *Ibid*., 83.
[291] *Ibid*., 82.
[292] *Ibid*.

In the neo-classical economic society, true religions lose their force. A new form of religion is created, namely, *consumerism*. McFague says, "The supremacy of the neo-classical economic worldview has led some to describe it as a religion – 'consumerism' – the civic religion that we all share, regardless of other faith commitments we have."[293] This religion has quickly become the "most successful religion of all time, winning more converts more quickly than any previous belief system or value system in human history."[294] The goal of this religion, as McFague points out, is personal happiness which depends on ownership of things and money-spending related activities. Rephrasing social economist, Neva R. Goodwin, she says, "The consumer society promotes the belief that ownership of things and activities that require spending money – and the spending of money itself – are the primary means of happiness. A subtext in such a society is the assumption that happiness is the single real goal of life."[295] Neo-classical economic society thus leads people to a false sense of happiness. They fall into a trap set up by the system and end up in spending more and more money. Because its real goal is "to create customers for products."[296]

Assessing the consumer society, McFague realizes that it neither brings humans happiness, nor is it a good life for all human beings, nor is it good for the planet. First, while it claims that buying and owning of many possessions will bring happiness, she says, empirical studies "have concluded that money has little effect on happiness except for poor people. […] Material goods appear to make little difference in psychological or physical well-being, *after* basic needs are met."[297] Second, "The neo-classical economic anthropology includes only those who can make it on their own, and it entails whatever luxuries these people can afford. Issues of

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[293] *Ibid*., 83.
[294] Joerg Rieger, "Dveloping a Common Interest Theology from the Underside," in Joerg Rieger, ed., *Liberating the Future: God, Mammon, and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 7. As cited in McFague, *Life Abundant*, 84.
[295] McFague, *Life Abundant*, 84.
[296] *Ibid*., 85.
[297] *Ibid*., 86.

justice, fairness, and obligation, however, hover beneath the surface as well as other possible definitions of the good life."[298] This means the poor are left out, uncared for. "These are the people who do not have enough to eat, often not adequate shelter, medical care, or education."[299] As such, there is no good life for them if having a good life means buying and possessing more material goods, which is the projection of the neo-classical economic society.

Third, McFague says, "Since the earth is considered an 'externality' by neo-classical economics, then 'good for the planet' can only mean good for human beings to use."[300] If this is the case then the issue becomes whether or not there will be enough materials to satisfy human needs and desires. The phenomenon of global warming, for example, is a warning that if the current consumer society continues its way, humanity will end up in destruction. McFague realizes that the result of global warming is devastating: "desertification of the chief grain-producing lands, scarcity of fresh water, loss of trees, flooding of coastal areas and islands, the spread of tropical diseases, violent weather evens, shortage of food, and so on."[301] Thus she asserts, "Global warming reveals the failure of market capitalism as presently practiced by most countries to deliver the good life to all and for the planet." And she further insists, "unless we change our ways and learn to live all together and sustainably on the planet, the future will belong to the grim reaper."[302]

McFague concludes that the neo-classical economic worldview has two main problems: "its individualistic anthropology and its isolation of the economy from the planet's well-being."[303] With regard to its anthropology, she considers it to be out-of-date. She sees it as standing "in direct contradiction to the twenty-first-century market capitalism's mantra of

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[298] *Ibid*., 89.
[299] *Ibid*., 86.
[300] *Ibid*., 89.
[301] *Ibid*., 92.
[302] *Ibid*., 93.
[303] *Ibid*., 94.

'globalization."[304] Because, she argues, while the world it inhabits is one of globalization, of interrelationship and interdependence, neo-classical economics itself projects an eighteenth-century view of humans as individuals who are externally related to others through their own free choice. Neo-classical economics, therefore, contradicts "*on its own terms*" because "a globalized market implies a radically interrelated and interdependent human population."[305]

With regard to the planet, McFague insists that the phenomenon of globalization demands that the planet's resources, well-being, health, and sustainability be included in the picture. Economy, she argues, cannot keep growing indefinitely when its resource base, which is the Earth, is finite. "But neo-classical economics does not acknowledge the limits of the planet: growth with no end is the goal for all economies, regardless of how degraded water, air, forest, oceans, and fertile land become."[306] Therefore she states, "we would call neo-classical economics and its consumer society to account on the basis of its own twenty-first-century goal of globalization: neither its eighteenth-century individualism nor its neglect of the planet's sustainability supports such goal."[307]

2. Ecological Economics and Its Worldview

Since the neo-classical economic model fails to bring a good life to people and to care for the planet, and since it is even injurious to both, McFague insists that we need an alternative model. She proposes ecological economics. McFague defines ecological economics as "the allocation of scarce resources so as to keep [the] community working indefinitely."[308] This model focuses on the well-being not only of human beings, but rather on the well-being of the whole Earth community. Its conviction is that human beings benefit when the entire system is

[304] *Ibid*.
[305] *Ibid*.
[306] *Ibid*., 95.
[307] *Ibid*.
[308] *Ibid*., 99.

healthy. While neo-classical economic worldview focuses on human greed, ecological economic worldview focuses on human need. According to this model, we do not benefit through "amassing wealth for ourselves" ("exchange value") but rather through "sharing in the basics of a good life" ("use value").

Unlike neo-classical economics which begins with the unconstrained allocation of resources among competing individuals, ecological economics begins with sustainability and with a strong notion of distributive justice.[309] This kind of economics is thus called "economics for community" or "the management of the household so as to increase its use value to all members of the household over the long run."[310] Key concerns of this model, according to McFague, are "household," "all members," and "the long run." In other words, it is concerned with "community, justice, and sustainability."[311] It claims that "we cannot survive (or even to be greedy) unless we acknowledge our profound dependence on one another and on the earth."[312]

According to McFague, ecological economics does not pretend to be value-free because its goals are obvious: "the well-being and sustainability of our household, the planet Earth."[313] This model sees economics as "the management of a community that works for the benefit of all." Therefore, it is seen as "a human enterprise that seeks to maximize the optimal functioning of the planet's gifts and services for all."[314] It projects a vision of how we "*ought to live* on planet Earth in light of perceived reality of *where and how we live*. We live in, with, and from the earth."[315]

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[309] *Ibid*., 100.
[310] *Ibid*., 99.
[311] *Ibid*.
[312] *Ibid*.
[313] *Ibid*., 100.
[314] *Ibid*.
[315] *Ibid*.

Since the ecological economic worldview recognizes that human beings live in, with, and from the Earth, its economic system rests on the presupposition of "our inalienable membership in the earth community." This is fundamentally different from the neo-classical economic worldview which assumes "the unquestionable importance of the individual and his or her desires."[316] Accordingly, while the neo-classical economic paradigm supports a self-interested view, the ecological economic paradigm projects an extended view of the self. The former stresses "individualism to the point of libertarian anarchy," whereas the latter promotes a "complete communitarianism."[317] If "[our] goal is to balance individual freedom with the community's integrity"[318] as McFague says, then neo-classical economics fails in this regard because it focuses "on individual desire alone apart from issues of distributive justice and sustainability."[319]

Assessing both models, McFague concludes that neither one of them fits us perfectly. Yet she maintains that the ecological model is an attractive, interesting one for us to consider as we try to understand who we are in the world. It is so because it stresses equally individuality and community. And it recognizes that these two are interrelated, we cannot have one without the other. Therefore, "sustainability of the community, of the whole, is a preeminent necessity, but this cannot occur except through the health and well-being of individuals; hence, the just distribution of common resources must take place."[320] While the ecological economic model is concerned with individuals as is the neo-classical economic view, the former departs from the latter in that it insists on the inseparable relationship between the satisfaction of individuals and the well-being of the community: "individuals cannot thrive apart from the well-being of the

[316] *Ibid*., 103.
[317] *Ibid*.
[318] *Ibid*.
[319] *Ibid*., 104.
[320] *Ibid*., 105.

whole – and the whole will not thrive unless the individuals are provided for."[321] This shows the centrality of the issues of sustainability and distributive justice in an ecological economic society. McFague insists that these two must precede the allocation of resources. "The allocation of resources," she says, "is a decision made on the basis of what it takes to achieve a just and sustainable society."[322]

With regard to sustainability, McFague says, "Ecological economics begins with *sustainability* as the preeminent and irreplaceable *sine qua non*."[323] What then is sustainability? Why is it so important? According to McFague, sustainability is a "'social vision' – it is 'a community's control and prudent use of all forms of capital.' In other words, the community makes the basic decisions concerning how to maintain the good of the community; economic decisions are for corporate good, not for individual benefit."[324] Sustainability is the principle that grounds the good life – one that "sees our good as within the good of the planet."[325] It demands that "*all* forms of capital" be considered in "the notion of the good life."

Unlike what was projected by the first model, the good life in an ecological economic society is not "dependent only on human capital and its products, but more fundamentally on nature's capital."[326] McFague insists that nature's capital must be the first on the list. "Human-made capital," she maintains, "cannot substitute for nature's capital" regardless what we want and how clever our technology.[327] The good life the ecological economic society promotes, she points out, goes beyond a decent basic standard of living and a democratic government. It includes "opportunities for cultural, technological, educational, social, and spiritual

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[321] *Ibid*.
[322] *Ibid*.
[323] *Ibid*.
[324] *Ibid*., 107.
[325] *Ibid*., 108.
[326] *Ibid*., 107.
[327] *Ibid*.

development." It is "not limited to economic efficiency in the narrow sense of economic security, but includes as well social, emotional, and creative growth both for ourselves and for future generations."[328]

Distributive justice is another critical component in the ecological economic society. Since the goal of ecological economics is sustainability, it sees "the sharing of material goods (nature's resources) as a necessity; it is the principle means to sustainability."[329] McFague maintains, "To have a sustainable economy, there must be limits to inequality in terms of minimum and maximum incomes and also in terms of how much of nature's wealth we use now versus hold available for future generations."[330] She further notes that distributive justice does not mean that all people have the same income. It means rather that all have the basic needs to survive and flourish. In this regard, the ecological economic anthropology opposes both communist anthropology and individualistic anthropology extremes. One promotes "absolute parity in material goods"; the other "resists all forms of limits to inequality." Ecological economic anthropology proposes a midway. It holds that "the best way for individuals and the community to thrive […] is to assure that all have the basics to survive and flourish. [Because] Sustainability is not possible if people devastate nature either through excessive wealth or excessive poverty. Nor is the good life possible if some have too much and others too little."[331]

We now come to McFague's three essential questions to assess the ecological economic society: is ecological society is a good life? Is it a good life for all? Is it a good life for the planet? To answer these questions, we need to define a "good life" as it is understood in an ecological society. McFague depicts the image of a good life in an ecological society as follows:

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[328] *Ibid*.
[329] *Ibid*., 109.
[330] *Ibid*.
[331] *Ibid*., 109-110.

> In the ecological society the good life is defined not by the individual accumulation of money, but by the use of money to help people have decent, fulfilling lives. The good life is not having "more and more," but "enough." "Enough" of what? Not money as such but what money can give people: adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care, creative and spiritual opportunities, fellowship and leisure time and space. Money is here being redefined in terms of its *use* value to the well-being of the whole community, all human beings, and the planet itself.[332]

That description tells us that money in an ecological society is not considered the end but a means to an end – the healthy development of the whole community, both human beings and the planet. McFague notes that development in this sense does not mean "progress" but rather fostering or nurturing. She then points out that if in the ecological society money is a means to an end then we all are *consumers*. However, she maintains that consumption is not a problem in itself. What is problematic is the "excessive consumption of luxuries by some while others (and the planet) deteriorate for want of basics."[333] Referring to the statement on the necessity and purpose of consumption made by the United Nations in its *1998 Human Development Report,*[334] McFague offers a new perspective on consumption. Its meaning is very different from what we have been accustomed to. She says, "[consumption] is an inclusive notion for planetary well-being; it is not the right of privileged human beings to amass luxury goods."[335]

While leaving it up to everyone to make informed judgement whether the ecological society can give him or her a good life, McFague expresses her satisfaction in this model. Though following the ecological paradigm might mean consuming less, she finds it attractive, because for her "the possibility of living on the planet with the knowledge that most other people are also living decent lives and that the planet itself is doing well is deeply satisfying."[336]

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[332] *Ibid*., 111.
[333] *Ibid*., 112.
[334] *The Human Development Report 1998* states, "Consumption clearly contributes to human development when it enlarges the capabilities of people without adversely affecting the well-being of others, when it is as fair to future generations as to the present ones, when it respects the carrying capacity of the planet and when it encourages the emergence of lively and creative communities." United Nations, *Human Development Report 1998* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 38. As cited in McFague, *Life Abundant*, 112.
[335] McFague, *Life Abundant*, 112.
[336] *Ibid*., 114.

The ecological model brings us to a different notion of the good life. It "suggests a different way of being in the world that finds pleasure from something other than consumer goods and sees obligation as mutual responsibility. [It] claims human happiness does not derive principally from possession of things (beyond the basics), but from community, nature, friendship, love, and dedication to higher purposes."[337] This picture of the good life is very different from that of the consumer society. And McFague asserts, "It is more realistic than the consumer model in facing squarely the planet's limits on both population and lifestyle, and it issues a special call to us, the privileged, to live with a sense of restraint, of frugality."[338]

As such, ecological society indeed brings people a good life. But "what is good for us is also good for the planet and vice versa."[339] McFague insists, "the good life for all human beings and for the planet is a whole – it is one good thing. It is intertwined (like the recycle symbol): the well-being of humans is dependent on the health of the earth's ecosystem, but these ecosystems depend on us preserving them."[340] Hence she perceives that we have become "the keepers of our own life-support systems."[341] While pressing that we live in, with, and from the earth, she acknowledges that we have gained some distance from it as "self-reflexive beings." She asserts, "Our peculiar ability for symbolization and thus language (and all that follows – the entire human enterprise) gives us some control over nature."[342] We have become the dominant species on the planet. Therefore, "Ironically, the very air, water, trees, soil, forests on which we depend now depend on us to manage them *economically*, that is, for the long-term well-being of the whole household of planet Earth."[343] For McFague, this implies a responsibility on our part to

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[337] *Ibid*., 115.
[338] *Ibid*., 117.
[339] *Ibid*.
[340] *Ibid*., 118.
[341] *Ibid*.
[342] *Ibid*., 103.
[343] *Ibid*.

care for the rest of nature "in order to continue as a species, in order to survive ourselves."[344] Thus we become responsible for the "foundations of our society." She presses further, "The ecological model does not support either/or thinking: *either* my good or yours, *either* our food or nature's. The good life for nature – a resilient, complex nature – is what we must have for our good life, but our good life rests on our care for nature's well-being."[345]

McFague maintains that there is "an intrinsic connection between the ecological economic model and Christianity."[346] She sees the goals of ecological economics, distributive justice and sustainability, as the reflections of what Jesus teaches about the kingdom of God. In this kingdom, "*everyone* being is invited to the table. *The kingdom is known by radical equality at the level of bodily needs*." "It demolishes all of our carefully constructed boundaries between the worthy and the unworthy and does so at the most physical, bodily level."[347] While recognizing that the vision of God's will for the world does not specifically mention just, sustainable planetary living, McFague insists that it is "more in line with that worldview than with the worldview based on the satisfaction of individual consumer desires."[348] But how could one change from the currently-practiced consumer economic model to embrace the ecological one? This requires a deep spiritual conversion. McFague offers a helpful discussion of this spiritual conversion.

3. **Process of Spiritual Conversion**

In *Blessed Are the Consumers*, McFague studies the lives of three saintly people, (John Woolman, Simone Weil, and Dorothy Day)[349] to see what are the underpinning motivations or

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[344] *Ibid*.
[345] *Ibid*., 118.
[346] McFague, *New Climate*, 92.
[347] *Ibid*., 92-93.
[348] *Ibid*., 93.
[349] Sallie McFague calls these people saints. But her notion of a saint is broader than the Catholic understanding. While the Catholic Church recognizes the saintly lives of many people who are either alive or dead and considers those who are in heaven

practices that move them from "desires of the narrow, consumer self to attentiveness to the basic needs of the universal self, the self that includes all others and says, 'The world is my body.'"[350] In other words, "What are the practices that moved them along their journey from the ordinary, self-absorbed people they were at the outset to where they arrived at the end of their lives?"[351] The move from desires of the narrow, consumer self to the universal self that includes all others, or the turn from the ordinary, self-absorbed people to be saintly people is the same as a change from the consumer economic practice to embrace the ecological one. It reflects a change from a selfish, harmful, and even destructive lifestyle to one that is attentive to the needs of others, both human and nonhuman. Her study of the life stories of those saintly people enabled McFague to propose four practices that have been key to the "turning-point" of their lives: voluntary poverty, paying attention to others, embracing universal selves, and practicing kenosis. Since these are spiritual practices, I call the change enabled by these practices "spiritual conversion." Though the life stories of those saintly people would be helpful for reflections, they are not the focus of this discussion. Setting aside the biographies of these individuals, I will discuss how those practices work in the process of spiritual conversion. In what follows I will follow the progression McFague lays out.

a. Voluntary Poverty in Order to Pay Attention to Material Needs of Others

McFague says that we begin to change because something wakes us up. "Some disorienting even, story, or experience allows us to step outside the conventions of our culture, the egocentric, consumer, individualistic model that results in personal despair as well as public

as saints, the use of the term "saint" is strictly reserved to those who have been officially canonized by the Church. John Woolman, Simone Weil, and Dorothy Day have not yet been canonized. Therefore, to avoid confusion, I will call them "saintly people."

[350] Sallie McFague, *Blessed Are the Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 81 (Hereafter: McFague, *Consumers*).

[351] *Ibid*., 83.

deterioration and injustice."[352] She calls this waking up "wild space." This wild space, she is convinced, allows us "to *see differently*, to imagine other possibilities, to pay attention to others. It is often associated with moments of beauty or suffering, moments that 'take us out of ourselves' and open our eyes to others – something, someone, valuable in itself apart from its utilitarian importance."[353]

According to McFague, this wild space is the beginning "of a long process of discipline, patience, and self-emptying that allows us to recognize that something outside of ourselves is real and has needs."[354] But for this wild space to work a change in us we need to seize and use it. The moment of disorienting experience must be seized, not avoided. If seized and used, those disorienting experiences will enable us to pay attention to the needs of others, which then results in "acknowledging at the simplest level the material needs of others, their right to the basics of existence and, as a partner insight, their intrinsic merit or right to self-esteem."[355]

Examining the lives of these saintly people, McFague finds out that the wild space that begins the process of their conversion is "voluntary poverty." She defines poverty as "the lack of basic human needs, such as clean water, nutrition, health care, education, clothing and shelter, because of the inability to afford them. This is also referred to as absolute poverty or destitution."[356] This kind of poverty, she says, is not what religious traditions encourage. As a matter of fact, world religions are making all efforts possible to fight this kind of poverty. What religions support is voluntary poverty because it entails various virtues. Hence, she says, "'voluntary poverty' is a very different matter from 'destitution.'"[357] It is not the inability to afford basic human needs but rather the voluntary embrace of poverty, limiting oneself from

[352] *Ibid*., 85.
[353] *Ibid*.
[354] *Ibid*., 86.
[355] *Ibid*.
[356] *Ibid*.
[357] *Ibid*.

accessing and possessing unnecessary luxurious material goods. McFague realizes that in the lives of Woolman, Weil, and Day, voluntary poverty "is almost the sine qua non that allowed all the rest to happen. It was indeed wild space for all three."[358] She summarizes what voluntary poverty means for us as follows:

> Hence, for us middle-class people, focusing our attention not on acquiring more consumer goods but rather on using our expertise, gifts, and assets to change the paradigm within which we understand ourselves and act on the planet is the call we need to answer. "Voluntary poverty" for us means giving up our exceptionalism, our status, our separation from those who will suffer the most from climate change: "ego-lessness, propertylessness [sic], and nonviolence belong together." Hence, since the way we experience the trinity of ego, money, and violence in our culture is the perpetuation of a limitless consumer, high-energy lifestyle, we need to use all our considerable power and influence (and our possession) to change both the model within which we live and the ways in which we live in it. this will entail serious limitations in our personal lives, new energy-efficient methods of practice within our professions, and radical restraint and sacrifice at the public and systemic levels. it is not sufficient for us to fast in solidarity with the poor; rather, we need to change our way of live "with the poor" in every dimension of our lives.[359]

b. Embracing the Universal Self

As in the case of neo-classical economics, the "model of the self" the world is currently embracing is rooted in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment's emphasis on the absolute importance of the individual. McFague maintains that there are many things wrong with this model, among which three stand out as most dangerous. First, this model treats others as objects. The basic epistemology in this model is "subject-object." There world, therefore, "is seen from the perspective of the one subject (myself), with all other human beings, creatures, and realities as objects that are either 'for' or 'against' me."[360] This worldview, according to McFague, is harmful because it does not support "the flourishing of other life-forms or the health of the planet itself, since from the human subject's point of view, these are either assets or obstacles to one's

[358] *Ibid*., 87.
[359] *Ibid*., 87-88.
[360] *Ibid*., 113.

own goals."[361] An opposing epistemology, for her, is one that sees all entities as subjects (though at times objects). This kind of epistemology supports the model of the universal self.

Second, this model of the self "fails to differentiate between and among human individuals."[362] In this regard, it has both advantage and disadvantage. Its advantage is that it serves to support structural changes with regard to hierarchies and various kinds of discrimination that control ordinary people from flourishing. Its disadvantage is that it fails to distinguish "between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the vulnerable, the fortunate and the unfortunate, the healthy and the sick, male and female, white and colored [sic], and so forth."[363] Its consequence is the indifference and lack of social responsibility on the part of the privileged people. Third, this model emphasizes on the personal rather than on the public dimension. Its consequence is obvious, an emphasis on the absolute importance of the individual even at the expense of the community's well-being.

McFague discerns that the current model of the self is inadequate for the problem we face. She insists on an alternative epistemological model that works on both the personal and communal levels. She identifies this model as the "universal self." She sees the universal self as "the sense of the self as composed of, embodied in, dependent on, other beings, both human and nonhuman."[364] While recognizing that this model is not "nature" to us, she insists that "our goal is to accept or assume it to be 'the way things are' and to practice it in daily, mundane, and lifelong ways."[365] According to McFague, this model is supported by modern science and religions and attested to by the lives of our three saintly people.[366]

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[361] *Ibid*.
[362] *Ibid*.
[363] *Ibid*., 114.
[364] *Ibid*., 121.
[365] *Ibid*.
[366] See further *Ibid*., 115-129.

c. Kenosis as a Way to Live

The two economic paradigms we discussed earlier upholds two very different worldviews. While the consumer paradigm assumes that "reality is structured around self-centered individuals," the ecological paradigm assumes "a communal base."[367] In a consumer society, "one sees the world as a playing filed where each one wants to be the winner and the winner takes all." Whereas in the communal society one recognizes "the necessity not only of restraint but, more profoundly, of sacrifice, and – horrors of horrors – even death." In fact, McFague presses further, "the communal model acknowledges that only through restraint, sacrifice, and death can the system function, and that the individual, all individuals, are willy-nilly part of the system."[368] As such, this communal model promotes a way of living that is similar to the notion of *kenosis*.

In a broad-based sense, kenosis is not "*an esoteric, ancient religions practice of self-negation.*"[369] It is rather "the recognition that restraint, openness, humility, respect for otherness, and even sacrifice (diminishment and death) are part of life *if* one assumes that individual well-being takes place within political and cosmic well-being. […] It is an attitude that respects and pays attention to 'otherness.'"[370] Kenosis, according to McFague, is an attitude that is very different from the model of radical individualism. While this model promotes certainty, absolutism, imperialism, and violence, kenosis does not know but asks questions, beginning

> from a stance of appreciation and awe for the wonder of being a wide-awake human being, conscious that we did not create ourselves, and that we must discover who we are. It claims that "another way is possible," from either passive acceptance or violent aggression; it claims that at various levels and by various forms of self-emptying (limiting the ego's selfish desires), space is given for others to flourish, flourishing that not only is good for them but, in a strange way, is good for oneself as well.[371]

[367] *Ibid*., 143.
[368] *Ibid*.
[369] *Ibid*., 145.
[370] *Ibid*., 144.
[371] *Ibid*., 144-145.

While noticing, from a scientific perspective, that creatures continue to sacrifice themselves to contribute to lives beyond their own, McFague insists that only at the human level is this conscious. "While all must suffer for others," she says, "it is also in humans the basis for *empathy*." This means, "we can decide to extend our moral vision beyond our own well-being to include not only other human beings but also nonhuman others – other species, and even ecosystems."[372] Hence, McFague consider kenosis to be at the "center of a truly moral human life, one that is willing to practice restraint, sharing, limits, and even sacrifice and death for the good of others, even all others."[373]

From a Christian perspective, kenosis is "a particular understanding of the self, or more accurately, of the self in the world."[374] Different from the Enlightenment worldview, which sees the self as constituted by its inner, individual experience, the Christian view of the self "is not 'something' in itself, but is constituted by its response to an external call […] this self is totally dependent on others, both for its biological and its spiritual reality, finding its sustenance only through the gift from others as well as its response to the need of others."[375]

The full meaning and highest form of Christian kenosis are revealed in the person of Jesus Christ who "though he was in the form of God," "emptied himself, taking the form of a slave," and who "humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8). McFague points out that Paul uses this admonition to exhort his fellow Christians to reflect on the self-emptying of Christ in order to "look not to your own interests, but to the interest of others."[376] An invitation to this way of life is often repeated in Jesus' preaching. It is central to his sermon on the mountain, the Beatitude. It is his invitation to anyone who want to

[372] *Ibid*., 149.
[373] *Ibid*.
[374] *Ibid*., 153.
[375] *Ibid*.
[376] *Ibid*., 158.

follow him (all of us Christians) to "let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it" (Luke 9:23-24). The list could go on but the culmination of Jesus' kenotic life is his death on the cross.

Since McFague's conviction is that Jesus is the "face of God," she sees in Jesus "the model par excellence of the process where by human beings become 'deified.'"[377] In his self-emptying, even to the point of death on the cross, Jesus gives us a perfect example how to image God. As McFague states, "In the life and death of Jesus, we see the intimate union of the divine and the human in such a way that the finite can be true image of God."[378] Hence, we become who we are meant to be, the image of God, by "allowing God to take over our lives, so that as Paul says, 'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me' (Gal. 2:19-20)."[379]

McFague concludes that the pattern of dying for new life in nature and in Jesus becomes the model of all life. She says, this process of giving up and giving over, of sacrificing and dying,

> of allowing space and resources to others, is not a fluke, an anomaly, an aberration in the nature of things, be as close as we human beings are likely to get to the 'mystery' of both human life and the workings of the universe. Thus discipleship or the implication for followers of this way of being in the world is similar: it is realizing our beginnings in creation as creatures made for abundant life in, through, and for others (for God and neighbor), who in salvation are invited into a deepening of the self-emptying model be responding to the call to relinquish the old (egotistic) self for the new (loving) self through the gift of God's own self-emptying love.[380]

One might ask if this life is possible. McFague's answer is "yes," but not without condition. The classic example she often returns to in order to show us that such a radical life is possible is the story of the Good Samaritan. She is aware of those who would respond "But I am not a Good Samaritan." Thus, she gives a nuanced interpretation of the story. She invites us to

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[377] *Ibid*.
[378] *Ibid*., 159.
[379] *Ibid*., 158.
[380] *Ibid*., 159-160.

look at the story from another angle, seeing God as the Good Samaritan and us as the wounded man. Approaching the story this way enables us to realize that the announcement of the "good news" is "God *loves us*." Hence "we too can love."[381] We empty ourselves so God can take over our lives. We become the channels of God's love. Reflecting on the lives of the three saintly people from this perspective, McFague realizes that they never suppose the love they give to others to be of their own doing. Rather, "they saw themselves as the most needy of all creature, only able to be channels of divine love, not their own, and only able to do even that to the extent that they emptied themselves and allowed God to take over their lives."[382]

The implication is that if we want to follow the kenotic way of life, we must first recognize our poverty and admit our neediness. "We are not commanded to deny our own need; on the contrary, to serve the needy neighbor we must admit that '*we too stand in essential poverty* just as much as any victim we try to help.'"[383] "We are not being called to be perfect givers; rather, we are being told that we must be total receivers, instead of being the powerful ones, the ones who can give and give and give, first we must dispossess ourselves of everything that constitutes control over our lives."[384] Only when we do so might the power of radical love begin to function in our lives. "This is not 'our' love but the love that comes to us when we give up control to the point of accepting our own death. Hence, it is God's love that helps the man in the gutter, who is, first of all, ourselves, before we can become channels for this power, the power of love that rules the universe."[385]

In summary, I have taken a different approach in this chapter. I come to Edwards and McFague looking for more systematically theological and economic discussions that would help

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[381] *Ibid*., 163.
[382] *Ibid*.
[383] *Ibid*.
[384] *Ibid*., 164.
[385] *Ibid*., 165.

envision a future for the planet. Edwards offers two important theological approaches to ecology, namely, Christology and Trinitarian theology. Both approaches show that God cares for creation and has immediate relationship with all creatures. Human beings are place in the web of relationship between God, human, and creatures. Those approaches indicate that our faith conviction must necessarily lead us to actions that aim at protecting God's creation. Edwards also offers a good discussion of ecological conversion. For him ecological conversion mean a transformation of humanity. He proposes planetary spirituality as a way to achieve that conversion.

McFague helps envision further a form of life that is attentive to both "the cry of the poor and the cry of creation" from an economic perspective. Her systematic analysis and critical assessment of both neo-classical economics and ecological economics provide us a good foundation to reflect on what kind of economic society we want to embrace. It is obvious from her discussion that an ecological economic society is favorable. Knowing that to uphold that model of society is difficult, she offers us a way to reach it. The process to turn from a damaging lifestyle to one that is healthy for the planet she proposes is what I call "spiritual conversion." At heart of this process is the following Jesus' kenotic life. As such, we can say that to live an environmentally-attentive lifestyle one must follow the way of Jesus and vice versa. Following the way of Jesus leads one to an environmentally-attentive lifestyle.

CHAPTER FOUR

LIVING IN SOLIDARITY WITH ALL CREATION: SOME PROPOSALS FOR CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

A. Creational Solidarity: Some Further Reflections

The investigation of biblical creation accounts and the discussions of contemporary papal teachings and modern theological reflections show a unique relationship between human beings and the rest of creation. At the same time, they envision the kind of life we must live in accordance with that relationship. That relationship and the lifestyle it entails is expressed precisely in the concept of solidarity. In *Environmental Solidarity*, Pablo Martínez de Anguita speaks of solidarity as the "greatest possible paradigm."

Denis Edwards insists that a healthy approach to ecological issues is neither an anthropocentric nor a biocentric one; but rather, a theocentric approach. Similarly, Martínez is convinced that a theocentric environmental solidarity would recover the best of anthropocentrism and biocentrism. For him theocentric environmental solidarity can give a much more complete answer to the issues than either of those. He defines solidarity as "together moving forward a common destiny that requires everyone, the destiny of a single Earth and universe."[386] He identifies that common destiny as the unity of creation and its praise of God, saying, "all creatures share a common plan that gives the reason for being: The whole creation was called to be united and glorify God."[387]

Martínez maintains that solidarity is needed "to create and maintain ties of collaboration with other beings in the light of our common destiny." It "recognizes the person's singular role as the 'summit of the world of creation' (Catechism [of the Catholic Church] #343) linked to what the [Catholic] Church calls 'solidarity among all creatures' (Catechism [of the Catholic

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[386] Pablo Martínez de Anguita, *Environmental Solidarity: How Religions Can Sustain Sustainability*, Routledge Studies in Social and Political Thought (New York: Routledge, 2012), 139 (Hereafter: Anguita, *Environmental Solidarity*).
[387] *Ibid*., 146.

Church] #344), a moral obligation to preserve the Earth (Gen 2:15) based on recognizing the value of other beings rather than merely using them as a means to our own ends."[388]

For Martínez, the moral obligation that "creational solidarity"[389] entails applies to human relationships not only with other human beings, but also with nonhuman beings. He insists, "Environmental solidarity extends moral obligation to other species, and persons must care for those species and the world as they do for themselves."[390] What creational solidarity implies for our context, according to Martínez, is that "men and women must look after the rest of creation and exercise the capacity for doing so within the awareness of a common destiny." [391] Hence, he considers environmental deterioration a consequence of the moral crisis of humanity.[392]

A similar concept of creational solidarity is developed by James B. Martin-Schramm. Building on the concept of solidarity set forth by the World Council of Churches (WCC)[393], Martin-Schramm asserts, the norm of solidarity highlights the communal nature of life in

> contrast to individualism and encourages individuals and groups to join in common cause with those who are victims of discrimination, abuse, and oppression. Underscoring the reciprocal relationship of individual welfare and the common good, solidarity calls for the powerful to share the plight of the powerless, for the rich to listen to the poor, and for humanity to recognize its fundamental interdependence with the rest of nature. The virtues of humility, compassion, courage, and generosity are all marks of the norm of solidarity.[394]

In speaking of the powerless, the poor, and the victims of discrimination, abuse, and oppression, Martin-Schramm is not only referring to the marginalized human beings but also to nonhuman

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[388] *Ibid*.

[389] By "creational solidarity," I mean the solidarity of all creatures in creation. Martínez uses the term "environmental solidarity" with the same concept but I prefer "creational solidarity." While it is true that environment includes both the natural surrounding and all that live in it, both human and nonhuman, people tend to separate humans from the natural surrounding when they speak of environment. They often speak of the environment they live in and not the environment they are part of. Therefore, the term "environmental solidarity" seemingly connotes a more limited meaning than "creational solidarity." I use both terms in this section. However, when I use "environmental solidarity" I mean to refers to Martínez's use of it and when I use "creational solidarity," I refers to my own use.

[390] Anguita, *Environmental Solidarity*, 146.

[391] *Ibid*., 147.

[392] *Ibid*., 146.

[393] In its conference on "Faith, Science and the Future," in 1979, the World Council of Churches (WCC) identifies solidarity as a moral norm. See James B. Martin-Schramm, *Climate Justice: Ethics, Energy, and Public Policy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 24 (Hereafter: Martin-Schramm, *Climate Justice*).

[394] Martin-Schramm, *Climate Justice*, 35.

creatures. Therefore, he insists, "Human have an obligation to speak out for *other* forms of life that cannot defend themselves."[395]

Martin-Schramm's concept of solidarity is based on the foundation of the two creation accounts in Genesis. According to Martin-Schramm, these accounts emphasize the profound relationality of all of God's creation and point to the fundamental social and ecological context of existence. He insists, "Humanity was created for community. This is the foundation of solidarity. While all forms of creation are unique, they are all related to each other as part of God's creation."[396] This is especially implied by the *imago Dei* tradition. For Martin-Schramm, to be created in God's image does not mean human beings are placed "in a position over or apart from creation but rather in the same loving relationship of God with creation. Just as God breathes life into the world (Genesis 7), humanity is given the special responsibility as God's stewards to nurture and sustain life."[397]

In that sense, God's relation to creation is seen as the norm for human relationship with the rest of nature. But according to Christianity, Jesus is the "image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). Hence, Jesus' life and ministry become the clearest example and norm of creational solidarity. Martin-Schramm points out: "Jesus shows solidarity with the poor and oppressed; he eats with sinners, drinks from the cup of a Gentile woman, meets with outcasts, heals lepers, and consistently speaks truth to power [and he speaks of nonhuman creatures with knowledge and tenderness]."[398] The highest character of solidarity then is found in the death of Jesus on the cross. Martin-Schramm says Jesus' death on the cross "upsets normal ways of conceiving power." "It points to a God who works in the world not in terms of power *over* but power *in,*

[395] *Ibid*. Emphasis is mine.
[396] *Ibid*.
[397] *Ibid*., 36.
[398] *Ibid*.

with, and under." It shows that "God suffers with all living things that groan in travail (Romans 8)."[399]

For that reason, "Paul used the metaphor of the body of Christ to emphasize the continuation of this solidarity within the Christian community." He stresses that "by virtue of their baptisms, they are all one 'in Christ.' Thus if one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together (1Cor 12:26)."[400] Martin-Schramm considers this the best metaphor to describe the character of compassionate solidarity. What this implies, according to Martin-Schramm, is that "Christians are called to suffer with each other and the rest of the creation, to change their ways, and to enter a new life of solidarity and action to preserve and protect the entire creation."[401] What lifestyle we should embrace and what actions we should take as we stand in solidarity with all creation? In other words, what does a life of creational solidarity look like? Following are some proposals for our ecological praxis within the context of the Christian community.

B. Christian Ecological Praxis

1. Christian Community as Ecological Community

In *A New Climate for Theology*, Sallie McFague points out that "catholicity" is one of the classic marks of the Church. She then argues, since catholicity means universality, or as the Oxford English Dictionary defines it "as a whole" or "entire, without exception," this mark "calls for the inclusion of *the world*."[402] She further insists, "If salvation means the well-being of all creation – and not just some human beings who are saved for life in another world – then the catholicity of the Church demands that 'creation not be left out' and that 'Jesus be loved as a

[399] *Ibid*.
[400] *Ibid*.
[401] *Ibid*.
[402] McFague, *New Climate*, 33.

world.'"[403] Therefore, she proposes that for the Church to be called Catholic, she must be ecological. "Ecologically catholic," she says, must be a mark of the Church.

A similar argument is made by Denis Edwards. In *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, Edwards argues that in his life and ministry, Jesus shows his close connection to and affection for the natural world. He goes to the wilderness to find and commune with God. He uses images from the natural world to teach. He speaks of God's care for creation. He is the one in whom all things are created and reconciled. In Jesus, the Word Incarnate, God embraces the whole "interconnected world of fleshly creatures." Thus, he concludes, the following of Jesus necessary entails an ecological commitment.

In her article "An Eco-Prophetic Parish?" Paula González, S.C. asserts that the environmental crisis calls all of us "to be converted from consumerism to what I sometimes call the 'six C's' – connectedness, collaboration, creativity, community, commitment, and celebration."[404] I see these "six C's" as the best description of what it means to be a Christian parish community. In line with McFague and Edwards' arguments and inspired by González's six C's, I propose that it is necessary for the Christian community to be an ecological community. Based on González's six C's, let me sketch out the actions a Christian community must take in order to be an ecological community.

All these six C's are so connected that one cannot be talked about without the other. Together they make up the characteristic of a Christian parish that we call a *community*. A Christian community is a place of connectedness. This means it functions as a place where people come together, not just for worship services, but also to be connected with God and with one another. It is the foundation for the personal and communal relationships among its

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[403] *Ibid*.

[404] Paula González, "An Eco-Prophetic Parish?", in Albert J. LaChance and John E. Carroll, eds., *Embracing Earth: Catholic Approaches to Ecology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1994), 215 (Hereafter: González, "Eco-Prophetic Parish").

members. Only when they are connected by a common ground can collaboration be possible. So, the Christian community becomes the ground that enables believers to become connected to one another and fosters a sense of collaboration.

What then is the purpose of that collaboration? It aims at carrying out the common mission that their faith conviction entails, namely, the proclamation of the Good News and the transformation of the world. In our context, as we have discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis, we are not only called to be connected with each other, but also with the rest of creation. The Good News of salvation is not only proclaimed to human beings, but to the whole creation. The transformation Christians are called to bring is not limited to the transformation of humanity but involves the transformation of the whole world. Christ Jesus commissions his disciples to "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to *every creature*" (Mk 16:15, emphasis is mine).

Hence, the Christian community becomes the ground for people to be connected, with each other, with God, and with every other creature. It is the "locus" that fosters a sense of connectedness in the web of creation. It promotes collaboration in order to bring the good news of salvation to all creatures and to transform all forms of life on the planet. In other words, the Christian community must be the place where its members come together and collaborate with each other for the common mission, to bring the Good News to *all creation*. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon that many people see the church (building) as simply a place they need to go to for an hour a week to fulfill the Sunday obligation. While they are at the church, they hold the space to themselves, keeping a distance from others. Their minds may wander elsewhere. Their fellow Christians may be considered simply as those they "happen to see." They do not feel connected, let alone share a sense of collaboration.

González sees the Christian community as "a potentially potent social locus wherein we can be *schooled* in a new consciousness of our status as children of God and the cosmos."[405] To foster a spirit of connectedness and collaboration, the Christian community needs to reexamine the way it works. It needs to make its "potentially potent social locus" become the "actually potent social locus." Furthermore, for faithful Christians to be aware of the responsibility towards creation and to carry out their mission, they need to be educated and supported by the Church concerning the ecological issues. The Christian community needs to have activities that bring the environmental issues to its members' attention, as well as activities that engage them in ecological works. These tasks fall especially on the ministerial leaders of the community. As in their "Common Declaration," Pope Benedict XVI and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I recognize that one of their duties as religious leaders is "to encourage and support all efforts made to protect God's creation, and to bequeath to future generations a world in which they will be able to live."[406] This duty requires creativity to make good ecological pastoral plan.

The most important component of the ecological pastoral plan is education, both theological and ecological. In *Laudato Sí,* Pope Francis realizes that environmental issues pose a great educational challenge. Hence, he stresses the need for environmental education. While recognizing the improvement environmental education has made, he also observes that at times it has been "limited to providing information, and fails to instill good habits." He insists, "Only by cultivating sound virtues will people able made a selfless ecological commitment. […] there is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle" (*Laudato Sí*, #211). Therefore, he suggests, "Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which

[405] *Ibid*. Emphasis is mine.
[406] Pope Benedict XVI and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, Common Declaration, Apostolic Journey to Turkey, November 30, 2006. See Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 27.

gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care" (*Laudato Sí*, #210).

Similarly, Pope Benedict emphasized the important of education in the field of ecology on various occasions. On one occasion, recognizing that the causes of the environmental crisis are of "moral order," the pope insists that the problem must be faced "within the framework of a great program of education aimed at promoting an effective change of thinking and at creating new lifestyles."[407] Hence, on another occasion, he makes an appeal "to invest in education, proposing as an objective, in addition to the necessary transmission of technical and scientific notions, a broader and deeper 'ecological responsibility,' based on respect for human beings and their fundamental rights and duties." He believes that "Only in this way can the commitment to the environment truly become an education in peace and in building peace."[408]

In the Christian community, therefore, more creativity is needed to create programs of education that aim at fostering a deep sense of ecological responsibility among the believers and moving them to action. Recognizing the important role of all Christian communities in ecological education and the need to have educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, Pope Francis expresses his hope that "our seminaries and houses of formation will provide an education in responsible simplicity of life, in grateful contemplation of God's world, and in concern for the needs of the poor and the protection of the environment" (*Laudato Sí*, #214). For local communities, he suggests that "Ecological education can take place in variety of settings: at school, in families, in media, in catechesis and elsewhere" (*Laudato Sí*, #213).

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[407] Pope Benedict XVI, "Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps for the Traditional Exchange of New Year Greetings,"January 11, 2010. See Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 140.
[408] Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, January 1, 2010. See Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 134-135.

Those are the ideal settings to implement ecological educational programs. In countries where Christian intervention to schools and media is restricted, catechesis becomes one of the few means of education. Catechetical programs, therefore, should be creatively planned out in ways that weave together theological, catechetical and ecological contents. Solid education in the faith is no less important to the ecological endeavors than ecological education itself. As Pope Benedict points out, "The denial of God distorts the freedom of the human person, yet it also devastates creation."[409] For him, an irresponsible use of creation often "begins precisely where God is marginalized or even denied."[410]

Adult faith formation also presents a good opportunity for ecological education. It is sad to admit, however, that Confirmation is often seen as a license or diploma that marks the end of Christian formation. This results in Christians being insufficiently equipped to meet their daily life challenges. Adult faith formation should be reinstituted or otherwise reinvigorated to run in ways that provide Christians with adequate, adult faith formation that instills in them a deep sense of ecological responsibility. Since adult Christians have the responsibility to educate their children, and the Christian community has the responsibility to support them in this regard, adult faith formation is a good tool to provide such support. Only when adult Christians are properly formed in faith and drawn to the ecological commitment can they in turn teach their children and be a witness to the world as well.

The homily is also an opportunity to deepen people's ecological commitment. In places where Sunday Mass is the predominant connection of a person to the life and prayer of the community, the homily becomes one of very few opportunities to provide Christians with ecological education. Our homilies, however, do not often encompass a broader invitation that

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[409] Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps for the Traditional Exchange of New Year Greetings, January 11, 2010. See Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 137.
[410] Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, August 26, 2009. See Pope Benedict, *The Environment*, 115.

calls us to evaluate our faith outside of issues that relate to Gospel teaching about personal faith, human relations and our responsibility to God and to one another. Ecological concerns and our responsibility to creation are seldom heard. If an ecological commitment is "at heart of faith," then ecological responsibility should be a regular topic of our liturgical homilies.

Related to the homilies are Christian sacramental, liturgical and other celebration and worship services. These present good opportunities to present at least some sensitivity to ecological education. The celebration of Baptism, for example, would be a good opportunity to talk about the importance and symbolic meaning of water. Ash Wednesday liturgy or the Christian funeral is also an appropriate time to talk about how intimately we are connected to the Earth. Pope Francis has designated September 1st to be the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, giving Christians an opportunity to reflect on the mystery of creation and show their concern and care for it.

In his article "Liturgy at the Heart of Creation: Towards an Ecological Consciousness in Prayer," Richard N. Fragomeni argues that cosmological symbolism and creation should be integrated into Christian liturgical prayer. He especially points us to "the ever-present and central reality of knowing gratitude for creation in the blessing of bread and wine at the Eucharistic table." He says, "In these great cosmic symbols of food and drink, earth, sky, God, and mortals are drawn into communion, and the heart of the liturgy reveals itself as the heart of the galaxies, all for the glory of God."[411]

Similarly, Denis Edwards points to the cosmic meaning of the Eucharist as "lifting up of all creation." He says, in order for us to change spirituality and our life-styles [sic], "we will need a different *culture* and a different *ethos*." Referencing John Zizioulas, he insists "what is needed

[411] Richard N. Fragomeni, "Liturgy at the Heart of Creation: Towards an Ecological Consciousness in Prayer," in Dianne Bergant, *The Ecological Challenge: Ethical, Liturgical, and Spiritual Responses* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1994), 81.

above all is *liturgical* ethos." And he believes that the Christian community possesses "a unique foundation for a radically ecological ethos in its Eucharistic spiritualty." Hence, he says, "When humans come to the Eucharist, they bring the fruits of creation, and in some way the whole creation, to the Eucharistic table. In the Eucharist, creation is *lifted up* to God in offering and thanksgiving." [412]

Therefore, on the one hand, Christian liturgies should be celebrated with an ecological consciousness. On the other hand, workshops should be held to explain the ecological significance of the liturgy, especially of the Eucharistic liturgy. Many people go to Mass but do not get anything out of it. This is partly because of the lack of knowledge of the celebration. Such workshops are therefore helpful in this regard.

Besides, workshops on ecological issues, possible solutions should also be provided by the Christian community. González suggests workshops, such as those on composting, "could bring folks from the parish together to begin this new adventure with a built-in support group. This could become the nucleus of outreach for a small Christian community. Members will be further enriched by sharing and celebrating the deep spiritual truths they can learn from their efforts to reconnect experientially with earth's secrets."[413] Furthermore, social, personal, and theological reflections on the environment should also be encouraged. These could be done via the workshop, speeches, or in community retreat settings.

Christian ecological education must go beyond formal educational settings. There needs to be concrete activities that, on the one hand, deepen people's ecological knowledge and commitment and, on the other hand, provide them opportunities to practice their commitment. In other words, the Christian community needs to provide its members with concrete opportunities

[412] Edwards, *Ecology*, 100.
[413] González, "Eco-Prophetic Parish", 223.

to really be connected with creation. This can be done by activities such as holding community picnics and youth camps or retreats in the woods. Masses can be offered in those settings also. Furthermore, local parishes can encourage events like recycling-week, which, one the one hand, helps people develop the habit of recycling and, on the other hand, raises money for the parish. Activities such as reforesting the local communities or "adopt-a-highway" would also be helpful. In planning new church construction, sensitivity to green spaces and garden spaces might be envisioned.

In summary, Christian ecological educational efforts should be made to provide the faithful with necessary information about ecological issues and cultivate in them a sense of responsibility and commitment. Ecological activities should be held in the Christian community to help its members connect with one another and with the nature. These meaningful ecological activities would give people opportunities to collaborate with each other for their common commitment. Coming together in that spirit they build up the community. As such, the Christian community truly becomes the ecological community.

2. Christian Families as Ecological Families

In *Family Ethics*, Julie Hanlon Rubio proposes the practice of eating for the praxis of Christian discipleship. She is convinced that this practice is a way of sustaining love, justice, and mercy. One of the important aspects of this practice, according to Rubio, is making just food choices. She maintains, "Christian families have an obligation to think about where the food they eat comes from in order to make their eating practice coherent with their beliefs in justice and solidarity."[414] Making just food choices concerns the discernment to buy some food rather than others. In particular, she insists, "choices to buy more whole foods, eat less meat, buy more

[414] Julie Hanlon Rubio, *Family Ethics: Practices for Christians* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 146.

organic produce, and buy more local produce in season seem warranted."[415] In doing so together, the family members strengthen their bond and work for justice.

I find Rubio's proposal meaningful for our discussion. If done properly, the practice of eating can contribute significantly to ecological sustainability and distributive justice. At the same time, it can be an effective way for parents to teach their children about a Christian ecological commitment. Hence, with Rubio, I propose the practice of eating as a way of ecological living. In addition to Rubio's suggestions for making just food choices, I suggest that we buy more food from areas where people depend solely on agricultural products for a living. Buying food this way, will contribute to distributive justice.

Besides making just food choices, cooking and eating are also important. The rapid development of the fitness industry, while showing an increase in people's concern for their physical well-being, also points to the reality of an increasing number of people who are over-weight, due partly to over eating. Our throwaway culture has been one of the major causes of environmental deterioration. Making and eating an appropriate amount of food can help protect oneself and the environment. It shows our solidarity with both the poor and the planet. Might not these issues find some expression in the way we keep Lenten meals simple, or in the way we practice seasonal abstinence, as well as in the ways we celebrate our feasts with food?

There are also other practices in the home that are coherent with ecological commitment. For example, we might manage the household in such a way that requires less electric light; use energy-saving light bulbs and electronic devices; turning off unnecessary lights; adjusting AC and heat properly to save energy; reusing or recycling papers, aluminum or plastic cans and bottles. Pope Francis says, "There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions" (*Laudato Sí*, #211). He suggests that we use less heat and wear warmer clothes

[415] *Ibid*.

> … avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or carpooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity (*Laudato Sí*, #211).

McFague sees the way we travel as a moral issue. Hence, she insists, "We must reduce the number, length, and speed of all forms of travel, using other technology, such as the Internet, to communicate globally. While not suggesting that we go back to our lives fifty years ago or longer, she recognizes that "walking, bicycles, horses, ships, and trains resulted in considerably less carbon dioxide emissions than when linked to cars and planes."[416] With Pope Francis and McFague, I suggest we should travel on foot or bicycle for short distance. Effort and investment should be given to public transportation and to encouraging more people to use it.

There is another practice that I see as extremely important. I call it the "practice of shopping." We have identified the consumer culture as the gravest cause of the ecological crisis. All of the authors discussed in this thesis—Pope Benedict, Pope Francis, Denis Edwards, and Sallie McFague—maintain that we need to change our consumer lifestyle to what I call an environmentally-attentive lifestyle. I suggest that a good practice of shopping will eventually lead to that change.

McFague insists, "Consumption is not the problem: excessive consumption of luxuries by some while others (and the planet) deteriorate for want of basics is the issue."[417] Hence moderation is needed. All religious perspectives on consumption that McFague investigates suggest moderation.[418] Moderation is what the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) calls "temperance." It is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides

416 McFague, *New Climate*, 19.
417 McFague, *Life Abundant*, 112.
418 See McFague, *Consumers*, 33-35.

> balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable. The temperate person directs the sensitive appetites toward what is good and maintains a healthy discretion: "Do not follow your inclination and strength, walking according to the desires of your heart." Temperance is often praised in the Old Testament: "Do not follow your base desires, but restrain your appetites." In the New Testament, it is called "moderation" or "sobriety." We ought "to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world" (CCC. # 1809).

Hence, moderation requires that we listen to the voice of our conscience and not that of our endless desire. It encourages us to buy what is necessary and healthy for our integral development rather than what is pleasing to our eyes and/or ears. It also calls us to pay loving attention to the needy and the environment.

In addition to moderation, good practices of shopping require one to take into consideration the products they purchase and where they come from. An awareness should be cultivated to buy products that are made of natural and plant materials and to avoid products that are made of materials which require animal sacrifice, such as fur or leather. Efforts should also be made to buy dissolvable, recyclable and compostable products rather than those that can have an adverse effect on the planet. Similarly, while balancing a call to "shop locally," we should also support products from third world countries in order to give people opportunities for jobs and to improve their living conditions. When we do so, we strengthen their dignity and stand in solidarity not only with the poor but also with the environment.

In summary, in this chapter I have reflected on practical aspects of our lives as disciples of Jesus and argued that creational solidarity is central to Christian discipleship. If we are faithful to our Christian vocation, if we are truly committed to our faith, we must also commit ourselves to ecological endeavors. I propose that the Christian community must be an ecological community and that Christian families must be ecological families. I have also examined some of the ways and practices which the Christian community and families might adopt in order to carry out a Christian ecological commitment. What is important for the Christian community in

its ecological efforts is to create ecological educational programs that deepen its members a sense of ecological responsibility and commitment. Christian families then carry out their commitment in their own contexts with a focus on the practice of eating, of managing their households, and the practices of shopping that are attentive to both “the cry of the poor and the cry of the planet.”

THESIS CONCLUSION

Alister E. McGrath begins his article "The Stewardship of the Creation: An Evangelical Affirmation" with this conviction: "The biblical notion of creation is enormously rich and complex, and offers a number of insights of determinative importance in relation to the issue of the care of creation."[419] This conviction has been the backbone of this thesis. It is both its starting point and its end (goal), the motivation and also what the thesis tries to get across. Chapter One's investigation of the biblical creation accounts under the light of recent scholarship have shown how those creation narratives "can function as the basis of a rigorously grounded approach to ecology."[420]

Against Lynn White's charge that Christianity was to blame for the current ecological crisis on account of "its using the concept of the 'image of God', found in the Genesis creation account (Gn. 1:26-27), as a pretext for justifying human exploitation of the world's resources," McGrath argues:

> A closer reading of the Genesis text showed that such theme as 'humanity as the steward of creation' and 'humanity as the partner of God' are indicated by the text, rather than that of 'humanity as the lord of creation' (Barr 1968; Preuss 1995: 2:114-117). Furthermore, a careful study of the reception of this text within the Judeo-Christian tradition makes it clear that While's interpretation simply cannot be sustained (Cohen 1989). Far from being the enemy of ecology, the doctrine of creation affirms the importance of human responsibility towards the environment. […] creation is not the possession of humanity; it is something which is to be seen as entrusted to humanity, who is responsible for its safekeeping and tending.[421]

This argument captures precisely what Chapter One attempted to show. We began with the two creation accounts in Genesis as the basis for our understanding of creation theology. Then we expanded this examination to include other biblical accounts found in both the Old and New Testaments. These subsequent creation accounts enabled us to understand better the will of

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[419] Alister E. McGrath, "The Stewardship of the Creation: An Evangelical Affirmation," in R J. Berry, *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action* (Leicester England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 86.
[420] *Ibid*., 87.
[421] *Ibid*., 87-88.

God regarding creation and hence, our relationship with the rest of creatures. We learned from this chapter that creation is a beautiful gift given to humanity to be protected and tended, not to be abused. Human beings and nonhuman beings alike are intimately connected. We depend on each other for our survival. Evidence was presented that God meant for us to enter into a loving and caring relationship with nonhuman creatures, not into an exploitive one. We are even called by God to a covenant partnership with the rest of creation.

Connection was also established between the commitment to follow Jesus and commitment to protect the environment. In light of Christian creation theology, Christ is understood to be the cosmic center of all things. He is the beginning and the end of all creation. But more importantly, he is the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). Hence, in the Word made flesh, God enters into, embrace, and dwell among fleshly beings, which is all of creation. Moreover, the center of creation in which all things cohere and hold together,

> Christ is vested with great power. Yet this is not the kind of power that he uses to dominate or "lord it over them" (Mt. 20:25). [On the contrary] Christ "did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited [sic], / but emptied himself, / taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness" (Phil. 2:6-7). This is what is referred to as Christ's *kenosis*, which in Greek means "self-emptying." Thus, despite being one with and equal to God, Jesus did not seek to dominate creation; his model was one of service, self-sacrificing love, and gentle care and concern for all of humanity and creation.[422]

Hence, if we are to be true disciples of Jesus, it is necessary that we, too, empty ourselves so as to be at service for others and for creation. In other words, Christian discipleship demands that we commit ourselves to protecting and caring for God's creation.

We entered Chapter Two with that conviction. The object of Chapter Two was to reflect further on our role in creation and to envision how to live our Christian ecological commitment. Drawing on contemporary papal teaching we showed the connection between the well-being of the environment and the integral development of humanity. Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis

[422] Thomas Bushlack, "A New Heaven and a New Earth: Creation in the New Testament," in Tobias L. Winright, *Green Discipleship: Catholic Theological Ethics and the Environment* (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2011), 100.

provide convincing arguments that the ecological issue is also a social, economic, political, educational, ethical, and theological issue. Hence current environmental degradation creates concerns for both the "natural ecology" and "human ecology." Convinced that the environmental degradation has negative impact on humanity, especially the poor and the future generations, the popes maintained that we need to carry out our ecological responsibility as a way of standing in solidarity with the poor and the next generations.

In Chapter Three, we considered the theological and economic approaches to ecology offered by Denis Edwards and Sallie McFague. Edwards provided convincing evidences that our commitment to the following of Jesus entails an ecological commitment. McFague showed us how our injurious behaviors and lifestyles, shaped by free-market capitalism, are the main causes to the ecological degradation. Together, they call us to an ecological conversion, which then requires a change in lifestyle. The lifestyle that they encouraged us to adopt is one which I call an "environmentally-attentive lifestyle."

Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis, Denis Edwards, and Sallie McFague all have helped to provide the theological warrants for living an ecological lifestyle. Building on the foundation they set, in Chapter Four I made some proposals for the practice of Christian (ecological) discipleship. Since the following of Jesus entails an ecological commitment, I proposed that the Christian community must be an ecological community and Christian families must be ecological families. This means that ecological awareness has to be an ongoing part of the community life and family life.

With Paula González, I maintained that to be an ecological community, the Christian community has to be a place of connectedness and collaboration for common ecological efforts. More creativity is needed to create educational programs and activities that deepen people's

commitment and encourage them to adopt ecological practices. More effort must be made by religious leaders to make these programs and activities possible and to engage people in the community's common commitment.

With Julie Hanlon Rubio, I proposed the practice of eating in Christian families as a way of living in solidarity with the poor, the next generations, and with all creation. Related to the practice of eating is the management of the household. In addition, I proposed an ecological practice of shopping as an important step toward a radical change in the consumer lifestyle. Admittedly, these are small contribution toward a common effort to fight the current ecological catastrophe. I acknowledge the limitations of what I have discussed and maintain that much more can be explored in working to empower people to live their ecological commitment.

In conclusion, I would like to pose for our consideration Patriarch Bartholomew's reflection: "For human beings … to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to contaminate the earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life – these are sins."[423] While I agree with Patriarch Bartholomew, I would go still further and maintain that "if we keep silence while injustice is done to creation; if we withdraw into our own comfort zone, if we see the environment being degraded and destroyed but doing nothing; if we keep being indifferent to the cry of the poor and the cry of creation – we commit sin." This is what in the Catholic Church we call the "sin of omission."

[423] As quoted in Pope Francis, *Laudato Sí*, #8.

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