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DEVELOPING ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS THROUGH WORSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The Bible describes the earth and everything as holy and sacred (Ex. 3:5, Jos. 15, Acts 7:33). The earth and everything in creation is also described as good or perfect (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 25, and 31). This is the Garden of Eden where God placed man to work and take good care of (Gen. 2:15). The church cannot afford to do less in deeds and words by developing ecological awareness through worship. Environmental protection and management as well as sustainable development, which are canvassed by environmentalists and scientists, are equally or even more so, ordained by God himself and expressly stated in a number of God's laws, especially those connected with the creation of mankind in God's own image. Also, the earth has been grossly misused and polluted by people and even by the church who is expected to behave better when it comes to keeping God's commandments. There is a very close relationship between God and the physical world He created. The earth by its intricate designs and perfection reflect the invisible all – knowing qualities of God (Rom. 1:30) and declares His glory (Psa. 19:1).

The essay is arranged into five different chapters in order to deal systematically, coherently and adequately with the materials. Chapter one focuses on the general introduction which deals with the statement of the problem, purpose of study, significance of study, methodology and definitions of terms. A general concept in ecology, ecological problems and lack of awareness on church worship and causes of ecological problems. All these are presented in chapter two. Chapter three focuses on

the theological and biblical concept on ecological and nature care. Chapter four is basically concerned on responses of Christians in worship. The last chapter focuses on the summary, conclusion and recommendation.

5.2

Conclusion

From the readings and physical environmental occurrences. There should be no controversy on the active need to confront ecological crisis. The problems have been identified as people are living witnesses of the negative reactions of nature to people. These problems are not hidden ones because they reflect on man's well being. This is contradicting the purpose of God for His creation. He created nature for man and man to take care of the nature so as to make the earth habitable for man. For this purpose God made humans self-sufficient and well equipped with physical resources, as they derive guidance, wisdom and instructions from God as to

how to sustainably use the resources. He indeed gives humans high status that humans are considered taking charge of the productivity of the earth but with responsibility.

Humans are to comply with God. The purpose of God should be fulfilled in all His creation not only in man but in other things created by God. This is the call to be responsible and honour the creation as he reveals His glory in all His creation.

What we, the Christian community, have to do is to refuse men right to ravish our land, just as we refuse them the right to ravish our own personal property; to insist that somebody accepts a little less profit by not exploiting nature. And the first step is exhibiting the fact that as individual Christians and as Christian communities we ourselves do not ravish our environment for the sake of greed in one form or another.

5.3 Recommendations

The researcher present some recommendations that are necessary to make the nature habitable for human beings. These are:

1. There is need for humans to change their attitude regarding all acts of recklessness in the use of natural resources and utter disregard for the integrity, stability and viability of the principle of nature, which is God's model of the ideal environment. Human generally and the church in particular should cultivate a responsible attitude towards and be concerned with environmental issues, through imbibing of positive behavior with context of the love of God, for His creation.
2. This will be greatly helped by the church leading the campaign by teaching /preaching a new holistic theology that focuses on environmental concern and

redemption, just as it does for human soul. Connections with other churches and church bodies can be effective in providing environmental leadership in the wider church to lead the campaign against destruction of nature.

3. There should be seminars, conferences and discussions on creation and environment at all levels where people can be involved in school, home, community, business, politics, and to provide pictures, symbols, materials on classroom walls, bulletin boards, and walls that indicate the dimensions involved in thinking about the creation and environmental issues.
4. Care for the Creation Task Force can be established both in small and large settlements to write a policy statement that can be become the basis for actions individually and collectively. This task force can be useful in dealing with the abandon vehicles parked on streets and the like.
5. The church should always involve itself and promoting programmes, crusades, and worship services that lay much emphasis on ecological awareness.