

# *Theological Reflections on Natural Resource Governance:*

**PROMOTING STEWARDSHIP,  
SUSTAINABILITY AND SOLIDARITY**



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# Empowering Churches for National Transformation

Luke 4:18-19



*Theological Reflections on  
Natural Resource Governance:*  
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SUSTAINABILITY AND SOLIDARITY**



**Zimbabwe Council of Churches**  
27 St. Patricks Road, Hatfield, Harare, Zimbabwe  
+263 04 755 745/572122/573073 | opa@zcc-eco.org | www.zcc-eco.org

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## *Foreword from the General Secretary*

Natural resources governance is deeply a theological issue. It has to do with four theological dimensions, stewardship, human dignity, justice and peace. First, stewardship is the responsibility human beings were given at creation. In Genesis Chapter 1, God created human beings and gave them a responsibility to make use and take care of the creation. The human being was tasked to ensure that the creation was made use of in service of the well-being of all people. The human being was also given the responsibility to nurture or take care of the created world so as to allow it to be self-replenishing and self-sustaining. Use of the earth was meant to be done in such moderation as to allow it to give life from generation to generation. Excessive and accumulation is inherently rejected in this theology of stewardship as can be demonstrated by how those who hoarded the manna found it with maggots the following day (Exodus 16<sup>vs20</sup>). Human beings were given an obligation to leave the earth as good as they had found it at creation. Every day of the creation narrative concluded that “all things were good”. Maintenance of this goodness of the earth must inform human stewardship in the use of the earth and its resources.

Secondly, natural resources were given to the human beings to enhance their dignity. Human beings are created in the image of God with equal dignity. In this understanding, resources are meant to clothe human beings so that none goes necked, hungry or without a shelter. Scriptures, show that once greed shape attitudes towards resources of nature, this contradicts what God has ordained for humanity. In Isaiah 5<sup>vs8</sup> there is a warning against accumulation “Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land.” Rather, what is encouraged is a different kind of religious practice that restores the dignity of those in need. Isaiah 58 says “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?” The scriptures are clear about their view against an accumulative and greedy approach to natural resources. Thus, natural resource governance addresses dignity in that lives of all are improved where natural resources are properly taken care of all human beings.

Thirdly, the governance of natural resources enhances justice in that there is no one who gets at the expense of others. It addresses issues of equitable access, the laws put in place allow all people to have access to these goods without them being deprived for whatever reason. God is a God of justice. The concept of justice in the Old Testament comes from the idea of “*tsedhaqah*” which refers to both justice and righteousness. Our righteous stand before God is determined and closely related to our right relationship



with one another. We cannot have right standing before God where we are depriving other human beings of equitable access to the gifts God has given to us all. In this light, natural resources governance is a deeply justice theological agenda.

The fourth perspective is one which recognizes natural resources governance as a theological agenda for peace. Where resources are not properly governed, chaos ensues from violent conflicts resulting from people fighting for access. In Africa this has been evident wherever there is a discovery of natural resources in the absence of robust governance—blood has been shed and lives, especially of the weak and vulnerable, have been lost. Where there is no proper governance of natural resources, societies break down into chaos. Many wars have been fought over natural resources even some being sponsored by developed countries. A Christian responsibility in the governance of natural resources is meant to prevent any such conflicts over control and access to the resources. Society fragmentation can be prevented through ensuring that everyone has equal access to these resources and they feel being part and parcel of the nation. Equitable access can greatly increase social cohesion. It is God’s desire that people live in harmony (Psalms 133) and for this reason, our duty as faith community is to ensure that governance of our resources contribute to peace.

The short theological reflections in this small volume are meant to contribute to the way we think about natural resource governance from a theological perspective. If natural resources are governed well, the environment will be taken care of, human life will be dignified, there will be just and equitable relationships and we will enjoy peace: the shalom that comes from God!

Enjoy reading the reflections.

Thank You.

**Reverend Dr. Kenneth Mtata**

**General Secretary**

*Zimbabwe Council of Churches*



## *About the Zimbabwe Council of Churches*

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) is a fellowship of churches that seek to contribute towards the achievement of a united, peaceful, just and prosperous Zimbabwe. It was formed in June 1964 in the then colonial Rhodesia as a protest movement drawing on biblical theological resources to speak out and stand against the subjugation of one race by another and has remained a true Christian witness for over 50 years. The Council contributed to the early establishment of a robust health and education system; participated during the Lancaster House negotiations that paved the way for Zimbabwe's Independence after a protracted war; contributed to the post-war reconstruction processes after 1980; built leadership and other critical capacities of clergy and civic leaders; catalysed the development of key civic platforms such as the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) among others. In so doing, the ZCC contributed to nation building in pre and post independent Zimbabwe.

In the last 20 years, the ZCC has had to address numerous challenges such as the fragmentation of society caused by unresolved violent conflicts and hurts from the past, the general sense of mistrust prevalent in society, divisions within the church, the breakdown of the family structure and the inability of the church to speak with one voice. The church has also had to contend with the growing apathy and disconnection from national processes; the failure of the entrenchment of Constitutionalism and the general public ignorance of citizen rights and responsibilities and lastly the inability of the church to integrate citizenship in their religious routines.



### Vision

The ZCC envisions a united, peaceful, just and prosperous nation in which all Zimbabweans live under holistic salvation as according to John 10<sup>vs 10</sup> "I came that they may have life in its abundance".

### Mission

As a membership organisation the mission of the ZCC is 'to empower member churches to have an effective and sustainable Christian presence in Zimbabwe.' Empowerment of member churches takes the form of membership that has capabilities to read its own context, identify challenges and opportunities, and deploy critical and theologically informed responses for lasting solutions.

### Values

We value Unity, Peace, Justice and Prosperity.



The ZCC has also had to address the deprivation of young people of basic life necessities and employment opportunities resulting from the breakdown of the national economy caused by amongst other things rampant corruption, lack of transparency in the extractive industry, absence of a clear national economic vision and the wrong prioritisation of allocation of national resources. Related to this was the church's failure to interpret these challenges and give adequate responses in light of its theological resources.



## *Preface*

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### **God saw all that he had made, and it was very good...**

Genesis 1 vs 31.

The Theological Reflections on Natural Resource Governance is an exciting project coordinated by Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in partnership with the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC). It contains contributions from various individuals and partner institutions across the Southern African Development Countries (SADC) region. It builds onto and strengthens the work that NCA and partners working on resource governance have been doing over the years and brings in stronger faith lenses to the work.

NCA's Resource Governance programme is being implemented under the current Global Strategy "**Faith in Action**", 2016 to 2019. Faith underpins the core of our work as we work together with religious leaders and faith actors and their constituencies to address the root causes of poverty, violence and injustices in our society.

These theological reflections are an initiative to strengthen the Prophetic voice of faith actors and our collective stewardship mandate in the work that we do. It is the moral duty of faith actors to speak out against injustices in the governance of natural resources and other socio-economic ills befalling our society today. Faith plays a central role in most of our societies and especially in the SADC region. It is estimated that more than 80% of the citizens belong to one faith group or another, thus faith leaders have regular access to and influence on the majority of citizens in the region.

The Church and the Mosque remain key trusted institutions ahead of national governments, politicians and other public institutions. They are the first point of call for citizens in good and bad times and they accompany communities especially in difficult times. Thus, faith and faith leaders become central in preaching the natural resources stewardship Gospel. More than any other actor, faith leaders have the constituency, moral voice, respect and the legitimacy to mobilise society including mining affected communities and policymakers and in advocating for sustainable use of national and natural resources including minerals.

The story of creation in Genesis is a strong reminder of our role and mandate as stewards of natural resources. When God created the earth and all that is in it, it was good. Yet generations of humankind activity have distorted and destroyed the goodness of natural resources as created by good. As humankind seeks to fulfil economic needs, it destroys they destroy the earth and what is in it. The earth was created with enough for everybody's needs but not for everybody's greed.



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## **“To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it”**

Deuteronomy 10vs14.

It is therefore our biblical role and mandate to be stewards of God’s natural resources and use them in a sustainable manner, they are God’s and not ours.

The mining industry with its current model of extractivism is responsible for the destruction of natural resources as vast pieces of land are cleared to make way for mining activities which result in land degradation, pollution of fresh water sources, pollution of agricultural land, air and many other natural resources in mining areas. Communities are displaced, livelihoods and traditions destroyed to fulfil economic development needs at the expense of dignified life for citizens. These theological reflections on natural resource governance therefore make a strong call for just extraction, use and distribution of natural resources to address poverty and inequality which are rampant not just in Southern Africa but in the African continent and across the globe.

Corruption, elitism, mismanagement and poor governance of resources play their part in denying the people a dignified life. Beyond the just and sustainable extraction of natural resources, the theological reflections also make a strong call for fair trading of the mineral resources on the global markets to enable resource rich countries to earn a fair share. They also call for international corporates to pay a fair share of taxes for the resources they extract and for the national governments to use and redistribute the proceeds from the natural resources in a responsible and just manner that addresses poverty and inequality.

In these reflections, holy scriptures and in particular the Bible and the Quran are referred to and it is humbling to note that both the Bible and the Quran make the same strong calls for humanity to take care of natural resources and to exercise their stewardship role.

These reflections are going to be used as a capacity building, awareness raising, learning and advocacy tool not just in the confines of Church pulpits and Mosques but at various strategic national regional, continental and international advocacy platforms as we seek justice in natural resource governance and especially for those most affected by the activities of the extractive industries across the globe.



It is our hope that these reflections will encourage conversations that lead to better understanding of the close link between natural resources and theology and action for just and equitable resource governance and also, how as stewards of God's creation, we can take better care of natural resources so that they can benefit Gods people as is God's will for humanity to live a dignified life.

Enjoy the reading and reflecting.

**Moreblessings Chidaushe**

**Regional Advocacy & Country Manager**

*Norwegian Church Aid, Southern Africa Office in Pretoria*



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People today value money resource more than human resource. We see this as a complete departure from God's original intent when he created the world

Bishop Naison Shava

”

As logic has it, a subordinate role of females would only follow if God functioned in a subordinate role when helping Israel

Reverend Tariro Zhou

”

Many of the problems we face in Africa-diseases, poverty, hunger-are not punishments from good loving God but rather come from our failure to utilise the resources that good loving God has given us

Bishop Erick Ruona, Zimbabwe

”

Quite often, (people's) Christian values or faith are very shallow, based on a God who must be feared, a God who will punish in hail of fire and brimstone, rather than a God who is loving and compassionate

Bishop Erick Ruwona, Zimbabwe

”

Applied understanding of being a good shepherd is the role and responsibility of a good leader, where the position of power is used not for self-benefit but to service the people as steward with good judgement

Reverend Dr Felicidade Chirinda, Mozambique.

”

We recognise that the negative effects of the extractive industry on the environment and its link to climate change, poverty and loss of land through forced removals are not merely an economic or technical problem but rather at its core is a moral, social, spiritual and cultural problem that requires people of faith to face it head on

Reverend Mosweru Simane, Botswana.

”

“...The New International Version does not use the word “dominion over” but “rule over” which denotes “looking after” or “stewardship” which must be our responsibility towards everything that God created. The New Living Translation uses the phrase “reign over”. Those who reign or rule do not destroy their “subjects....”

Bishop Ishmael Mukuwanda, Zimbabwe

# Stewardship And Natural Resources Management

Bishop Ishmael Mukuwanda, Zimbabwe Council of Churches

Job 28<sup>1-12</sup>. *“There is a mine for silver and a place where gold is refined. Iron is taken from the earth, and copper is smelted from the ore. Man puts an end to the darkness; he searches the farthest recesses for ore in the blackest darkness. Far from where people dwell, he cuts a shaft, in places forgotten by the foot of a man; far from men he dangles and sways. The earth, from which food comes, is transformed below as by fire; Sapphires come from its rocks, and its dust contains nuggets of gold. No bird of prey knows that hidden path, no falcon’s eye has seen it. Proud beasts do not set foot on it, and no lion prowls there. Man’s hand assaults the flinty rock and lays bare the roots of the mountains 10. He tunnels through the rock; his eyes see all its treasures. He searches the sources of the rivers and brings hidden things to light 12. But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? 13. Man does not comprehend its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living....”*

The above Chapter goes on to mention other minerals and precious stones such as onyx, coral, jasper and topaz among others. Those who know a little bit about mining would understand the language used in this passage: the thought of chain ladders in raises and shaft, the darkness and the dangers involved, all in search for the treasure that God hid underground; the alluvial gold that we extract from the rivers, damaging the rivers in the process. We lay bare the roots of the mountains not even thinking of the future generations.

The argument which continues to rage on and wars fought in some parts of this world including our own, is what was created for who? Were resources created for our plunder or for our livelihood? Which part of creation is important in the eyes of God? Due to greed, we always think that we are more important because we were created in the eyes of God and we use the phrase **“dominion over”** in Genesis 1:28 in a destructive sense. The New International Version does not use the word “dominion over” but **“rule over”** which denotes **“looking after”** or **“stewardship”** which must be our responsibility towards everything that God created. The New Living Translation uses the phrase “reign over”. Those who reign or rule do not destroy their “subjects”. The Good News Bible says, **“I am putting you in charge of ....”** If it is for our plunder, then we have a very serious problem and perhaps this is why we always meet as community members to discuss these matters.

Our major problem is that we do not have the wisdom to know what is important to us. As God says in Job 28:13 **“Man does not comprehend its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living....”** When God created the universe and all that is in it, He looked back and said “it was good”. It is good to Him now as it was to Him during creation; if it was not for us who continue to destroy the created world and plunder its resources, sometimes for selfish gain. God is very possessive about what He created, hence;





### Words of warning:

- Jer. 17:<sup>1</sup>“*The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond, it is engraved on a tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars .....*”
- Micah 4:<sup>2</sup>“*Let us go to the mountain of the Lord*”.
- Haggai 2:<sup>8</sup>“*The silver is mine and the gold is mine*”, declares the God Almighty.

As a measure of faith and obedience:

- Zechariah 13:<sup>9</sup>“*I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them ....*”
- 1 Peter 1:<sup>7</sup>“*These have come so that your faith - of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire - may be proved genuine ....*”

### For Healing:

Ezekiel 47:<sup>7-12</sup>“*When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river”. He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes into the Arabah where it enters the sea. When it enters into the Sea, the water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river...*”

Ezekiel 47:<sup>vs11</sup>“*But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh, they will be left for salt*”.

We have built on most of our wetlands, and most of our rivers no longer flow due to stream-bank cultivation and the search for alluvial gold. We are destroying our future and that of our children in the process for short term gain.

When we look after our environment, the benefits are many and varied. Ezekiel 47.12 goes on to say, “**Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both sides of the banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing**”.

The need for precautionary measures during mining and extraction processes cannot be overemphasized. People’s focus is usually on the benefit and they forget to avoid the health risks involved in most of the extraction processes such as drilling, blasting, crushing, hoisting/ conveying, milling and dumping.

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## He cuts channels of rocks, and his eye sees every precious thing

(Job 28.10).

However, the extraction process produces harmful dust. The inhalation of such dust causes pneumoconiosis which is a group of lung diseases. This includes asbestosis from asbestos dust, silicosis from silica dust and black lung disease from



coal dust. The tragedy with small scale mining is that very little attention is given to protect workers from pneumoconiosis which usually results in death if not detected early.

Therefore, when we abuse what God has created, we abuse God Himself as creation is close to His heart, and in the process, we destroy ourselves. Our main task is to look after the resources not just for our benefit, but for our children who will need to utilize the same in generations to come. Let us do our part as stewards, for the sake of our Lord. Natural resources management is everyone's responsibility.



**Our main task is  
to look after the  
resources not just  
for our benefit, but  
for our children**

# *The Role Of The Church In Natural Resource Governance In Zimbabwe*

Reverend Samuel V. Sifelani, *Zimbabwe Council of Churches*

Zimbabwe is one of the countries that are blessed with a variety of natural resources that include diverse mineral deposits, wildlife, farm lands, forests, and surface and groundwater systems. It is however disheartening, to note that the vast riches that the country possesses have not benefited the general populace in general, nor the local communities where these resources are being exploited in particular. This has created a wide gap between the haves and the have nots. Trans-national corporations have extracted and exploited natural resources across the country, leaving only massive degradation and poisoned water sources for the local communities.

Zimbabwe is said to have eighty (80) percent of its population as adherents of the Christian faith. At the centre of the Christian faith are such principles as justice, equality, freedom and the common good. A preferential option for the poor cuts across the teaching of Jesus Christ, and as such the Church is expected to fight in the corner of the underdog and the downtrodden. There exist inequalities in the area of the exploitation of natural resources across the board. The Church ought to stand, erect and unwavering, as the voice of the disenfranchised and a conscience of a sector that is driven by greed and profit, at the expense of the common good. Like the prophets of old, the Church ought to be the moral compass and voice of reason.

There are hundreds of scripture passages that talk about economic justice; about lifting the poor and oppressed, and about reining in the excesses of the rich. In fact, there probably is nothing God talks about more in the Bible than this topic. God spoke through virtually all of the prophets of the Old Testament about selfishness and economic inequality. For instance, the prophet Amos said:

**But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!**

(Amos 5:24)

The book of Amos is about a society similar to our own in which the profits produced by the work of the people were going, not back to the people who created them, but rather to the rich landowners. Amos called for economic justice and righteousness. One of the few verses in the bible repeated verbatim is this one:

**“I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy.”**

(Psalm 140:12 and Proverbs 13:23)

When Jesus began his public ministry, he said:



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**“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”**

Luke 4:18-19 (quoting from Isaiah 61)

Christians must honestly ask themselves which view best reflects Christian (i.e. gospel) values: individual wealth creation (selfishness) or promotion of the common good (sharing)? No matter how we look at it, if we really believe the gospel, then we will believe in the things Jesus believed in. We will live Jesus’ values. Yes, even in our politics. Those values are all about loving God; loving (and treating) one’s neighbour (and enemy) as ourselves; sharing what we have with others; and generally promoting a better, more just, righteous, and unselfish world -- for all of God’s children.

Religious institutions in general, and churches in particular, have been involved in advocacy in various sectors of society.

They did and are still doing so for the sake of strengthening the voices of the ordinary people. The Church has become the voice of the voiceless. Recently, areas which have been on focus are natural resources at large but mainly started with the extractive industry, environmental issues, land issues, and tax system.

John 10<sup>vs10</sup> captures one of the most poignant statements uttered by Jesus. He states that the thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy, while his mandate is to give life, and life in abundance. The same mandate of bringing life to nations and communities is what should pre-occupy the mission of the Church.

The Church and other faith institutions clearly have an important role to play in ensuring sustainable natural resource governance. As holders of moral authority within communities, the Church can support efforts by communities to defend their rights and protect their livelihoods. The Church can help communities engage effectively in dialogue and negotiations with mining companies to ensure communities receive appropriate benefits. Using its influence, it can hold companies and governments accountable when things go wrong. Churches should take up this responsibility in partnership with their communities.

God gave us natural resources to use to make our lives better, but He also gave us





the ability to exercise wisdom in our use of these resources. The Bible warns against the misuse of those resources or exploiting them in the wrong or greedy way. How we use (or misuse) our resources affects other people as well as ourselves. If we waste the earth's resources today, we will be harming our children and grandchildren. Jesus said,

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**'In everything, do to others what you would have wanted them do to you'**

(Matthew 7:12).

This can be applied to the way we treat our earth and its resources as well as our ordinary relationships." Christians have been commissioned by the Lord Jesus to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." (Matthew 5<sup>vs13-14</sup>). We are to preserve the earth from decay by the message of truth and redemption which we possess.

It is the role of the Church to progressively rethink and realign theological premises that have contributed, directly or indirectly, to the wanton destruction and exploitation of natural resources. For example, the commonly-held assertion that human beings were given total dominion over the earth and all its resources (Genesis 1<sup>vs28</sup>). Dominion cannot be understood purely as domination: control, authority, absolute power

with unlimited freedom to do as one likes". God has specifically established the fact that He is the owner and true ruler of the earth (Exodus 9<sup>vs29</sup>, 19<sup>vs9</sup>; Is. 45<sup>vs12</sup>). Everything comes from God, so He is the ultimate owner. Yet, as Psalm 115<sup>vs16</sup> states, **"the earth [God] has given to man"**. Because God has given humans nature and the earth, they should honour God with their use of it. Man is obviously to subdue and till the earth, but he is also to care for it. Clearly, man is the steward of God's resources, and this stewardship requires a two-fold response: *using and caring*.

As Christians we are constantly challenged by the Gospel to cooperate with the Spirit of God who makes all things new, in order to remedy the disorder within our own personal lives, to rectify the injustice within the human society, and to reverse the ecological devastation of our world. As true stewards of God's household, we must take responsibility for what happens to present and future generations of human beings and to the entire creation by advocating for a new environmental ethic and politics in our individual societies, and across the world.



# “Dress It, Keep It”: A Theological Reflection On Resource Governance In Zimbabwe

Reverend Rudorwashe R. Shumba, *Zimbabwe Council of Churches*

## Introduction

This brief is based on Genesis 2<sup>vs6-15</sup>. The first two chapters of the bible narrate the creation stories. It is in these narratives that we derive meaning and sense of all creation and ultimately the creator. Indeed, creation tells a story! If we look at how the universe has been arranged, we realize that it is a mystery that points to the greatness of the creator (God).

The first chapter tends to be brief whilst the second chapter delves into much detail, particularly in reference to the creation of Humanity. In this regard, we want to reflect on the words that are used in the passage so that they inform our positions within the discourse on resource governance.

## Origin of Humanity

Renato (2013) in *Love Lost in Translation*, argues that the word *Adam* is not a personal name for the first being, but rather a noun that is descriptive of the origin of humanity. The word ‘Adam’ then is an etymological development of the Hebrew word ‘*h’adama*’ which means ground or the earth. When Adam is viewed from a collective sense to mean humanity and not a personal name, we discover that ‘*Adam*’ is gender nonspecific. Other progressive theologians prefer to use ‘neutral in gender’. The implication this has on interpretation is that when God created the first being,

there was no gender. However, there is an important aspect that we need to pick up that humanity was created from the earth, hence the attachment to the earth. Battles have been set and staged in order to either preserve or conquer the earth. In Zimbabwe, *Chimurenga I, II*, and particularly the *Third Chimurenga*, were fought in pursuit of owning and controlling the earth (land).

The importance of land as a resource to humanity cannot be underestimated. In as much as we have had wars fought over air and marine spaces, these combined cannot account for a fifth of the wars fought in history. It is critical to note that I am not undermining the importance of water and air as critical resources, but I give emphasis to land because of the great affinity of man and the ground. We also need to note that this land attachment has pushed this resource to be one of the central movers of global economies including Zimbabwe (cf 1 Kings 21).

## Development of Resources

According to Strong’s Concordance (1991), the word that is translated ‘dress it’ in Genesis 2<sup>vs15</sup> is derived from the Hebrew word *abad* which means “to work, to till, cultivate, take up from the ground”. This means that the first words of God to humanity is a grant on entitlement to the resources in the environment. Humanity was supposed to benefit not directly from



God but from God through “cultivating” the land. God endowed the environment to be sufficient for humanity.

Zimbabwe is said to be one of the richest nations on earth, based on untapped natural resources per capita. With over forty exploitable minerals and potentially the largest diamond reserves, we need to realize that if these resources are governed well, we have more than enough. Unfortunately, as at December 2016, Zimbabwe sat at number 9 in the list of the 30 poorest countries on the globe with a GDP per capita of \$1,053 (Business Insider UK: 2017).

### Resources Preservation

Genesis 2<sup>vs15</sup> brings about an important dimension particularly to our resource governance discourse. The text uses the phrase ‘... keep it’ to postulate that humanity was not created just to be consumers of the resources that were given to them but to keep them. The Hebrew word *shamar* (meaning to keep, manage, gatekeeper, preserve) in the text designates humanity not as Lords over the rest of creation, but brings an understanding that humanity are stewards. Stewardship of resources is one of the motifs of the Bible, particularly in the Pentateuch.

It is important to note that the Zimbabwean crises is not a sum total of the unavailability of resources. It can squarely be attributed to poor resource governance strategies, hence the need to move into a progressive system that will enable ‘dressing and keeping’ the garden.



# Transparency And Accountability In The Governance Of Mineral Resources

Bishop Emeritus N. Shava, Zimbabwe Council of Churches

This paper is presented with the assumption that the audience acknowledges that there is God who created the universe. Heaven and earth which contain resources are divided as material and human. All creation, be it human or material, is created by God which means that they belong to God. Therefore, God is, first and foremost, the owner of every resource in heaven and on earth Gen 1<sup>vs1-31</sup>.

Within the creation, God chose to create a creature called a human being. He created the human being, male and female, as elaborated in the creation stories of Genesis 1<sup>vs26-27</sup> and Genesis 2<sup>vs1-2</sup> where it is written, “Then God said: Let us make human-kind in our image according to our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, birds of the air, over the cattle and over all the animal of the earth and every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created human kind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female. He created them.” Further,

**“When God created human-kind, He made them in the likeness of God, male and female, He created them and He blessed them and named them human kind when they were created”.**

He created them in His likeness or rather in His image so that He would delegate the responsibility to manage other resources, having dominion and authority over them and yet at the same time, having accountability for them as it is written, “God blessed them and God said to them be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and have dominion over every creeping thing that moves upon the earth”.

After creating the human being, God appointed the human being to be the steward of all other creation even of their fellow human beings so He gave them the land to look after. In this land, there were minerals of all kinds and other resources like water, fruits trees and plants as mentioned in the creation narrative. The precious stones are also mentioned as part of the land that was handed over to the human being.

Thus, the human being was instructed to till it, plough it and cultivate it for greater production. Gen. 2<sup>vs15</sup>, has it that

**“The Lord God took the human being and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it and further instructed the human being to feed on the produce of the land”**

(Gen. 2vs.16)



God did not give the human being stewardship of the earth without capacitating him/her. By being created in the image of God, the human being is already capacitated with the ability to create out of creation, by being given the creative mind. Through free-will, the human being was given the freedom to choose. The human being was given decision making powers and the skills to manufacture and convert natural resources towards the betterment of human beings. What is clear from the beginning is that the human being was to depend on nature, while nature looked up to the human being for its conservation. Natural resources were to provide life to the human being and the human being was to conserve nature.

Starting with the union of man and woman, humans were told to multiply and fill the earth. This means that in addition to the stewardship of nature, there was another major component of stewardship of other fellow human beings. This question by God to Cain, “where is your brother?” implies that indeed, Cain had the responsibility over his brother and his response,

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**“Am I my brother’s  
keeper”, implies guilty  
conscience over his deadly  
act”**

(Gen 4vs8-9)

The underlying factor is that the human being should share both life and resources with other human beings. The fact that the human being was given responsibility over both other human beings and nature, it follows therefore that the human being is accountable for the sharing of life with other beings and the use of natural resources. In the beginning, the people were not many and they believed the area around them was the whole world. If we recall, they resolved that they should spread but rather build a tower that goes into the sky because they spoke one language and they were of one accord. It is at that time that they were separated by tongues and languages. From then onwards, people spread to all over the world. As they moved, they discovered new virgin land and made claims. When a clan or a tribe occupied a territory, they would call it theirs “their land, their property”. When other clans interfered with that land claimed, wars would be waged. The strong ones would drive away the weaker ones.

Africa was partitioned by colonial powers who would even claim that they ‘found their land’ and would rule over those who claimed that they found the land at its virgin stage. Some people claim that the land they occupy was given to them by God himself like the case with endless Jewish/ Palestine wars. This is the background of the land ownership laws. The remaining part of our conscience is that a human being has a right to live anywhere in the world. This makes all people world citizens.



It is our view that God intended that all natural resources, which include land and all the wealth in it, must be shared equitably by all the citizens of this world. Whilst the world is our home and is home to all of us, it remains paramount that each of us has a right to own a piece or pieces of land which contains natural resources like minerals and water.

Even within such rights, individuals are limited because a person's land is linked to other people's land or to the government land at any level. It looks like when it comes to mining and minerals, anybody has a right to make a claim under someone's land. The Mines and Minerals Act of 1961 empowers the government for instance to displace community members where a mineral is discovered. As mining takes place, there are areas where the effects of such undertaking are negative to the people around the area. Although in Zimbabwe we have policies to protect the environment, violation of such laws seems inevitable.

It is common understanding and it remains a fact that the change of climate today is mainly caused by bad stewardship of natural resources. People today value financial gain more than the wellbeing of the human resource. We see this as a complete departure from God's original plan when he created the world. It is mentioned above that when God introduced the human being to nature, he already informed the human being that

natural resources must be taken care off so that it continues to provide life for human beings in return.

It is God's intervention that the consciousness to preserve and conserve nature is there in both the Church and state institutions. The question whether the Church or government is doing enough to conserve nature in the manner God originally intended remains to be answered. However, it is our view that all resources over or under the earth are meant to benefit all of us, poor or rich. Therefore, the state or government should put laws which govern and ensure that there is fair distribution of major resources of the land.

One understands that legitimate taxation is meant to facilitate sharing of resources. If administered properly, national taxes reach out to benefit every member of our society directly or indirectly through social services, including security.

It can therefore be concluded that God created everything. He owns everything both human and material but delegated stewardship of all creation to the human being, who He created in His image. The human being is accountable for the manner in which he manages and relates to other beings and natural resources. Careless stewardship of natural resources leads to far reaching consequences and threaten both human life and other organisms. Adherence to God's laws of nature will reward human beings with a





conducive world to live in and an excellent inheritance for future generations.

It is our proposal that areas of potential conflicts be addressed. This would be through fair accessibility to natural resources, fair distribution of returns from extracted resources. We should ensure environmental protection by both national citizens and international investors, protection to vulnerable groups particularly with reference to ownership of both moveable and non-movable resources (1 Kings 8<sup>vs1-6</sup>). Adequate compensation to those whose land is taken to be used for the benefit of the greater part of society should be granted, and abandoned mines should be attended to by beneficiaries, to avoid danger to both animals and humans. We cannot overemphasise the importance of having fair shareholding between investors, locals and producers at all levels of industry.



**Adequate  
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greater part of society**



# Women And Gender Inequality In The Mining Industry

Reverend Tariro Zhou, Zimbabwe Council of Churches

The Bible, exclusively the Old Testament, seems to portray men as superior to women, hence men feel justified by religion to subjugate women, whether in religion, politics or in economics. Sexuality, the main division between genders is said to be rooted in religion, for example Gen 2<sup>vs18</sup>, and this becomes the root of women subordination in all sectors of human life. Relationships that are typically rooted in sexuality (marriage and motherhood) place women in roles that are subordinate in accordance with society's patriarchal norms. There is therefore gender inequality in many societies today.

This inequality seemed not to pose visible threat to women in the past decades because of political and economic stability. The wives were dependant on their husbands for their livelihood. Today, serious economic circumstances have left both men and women with no choice but to work for their families for sustainable livelihoods. If our societies however, continue to uphold patriarchal conceptions about the status of women, their economic participation remains limited, and women remain marginalized and poor.

It is unfortunate that the Bible has been written, translated and interpreted for centuries by men in cultures that are patriarchal. Both the story of Jephthah's daughter (Judges 11<sup>vs29-40</sup>) and that of

Lot's daughters (Genesis 19<sup>vs4-8</sup>) illustrate the extent to which the authority of a father could go. In terms of economic responsibility, most men tend to hold a complementarian view. This is a view that holds that, differing, often overlapping roles between men and women, manifested in marriage, church leadership, economic opportunities and elsewhere, are biblically required.

Complementarianism is the belief that men are created for the leadership role and women were created for the support role. Basing on misinterpretations of many passages of scripture, men subject women and girls to all forms of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. The victimization of women in mining industry today, for example, is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women. It shows a misguided interpretation of the Bible.

Christians today might call this "*ezer effect*", that is, misinterpretation of the creation account in Genesis 2<sup>vs18</sup>;

**“Then the Lord God said,  
“it is not good that man  
should be alone, I will  
make him a helper fit for  
him”**

(Genesis 2 verse 18)



The word *ezer* is the Hebrew word that God used to describe the strong help females provide. Freedom (1962) explains that *ezer* arises from two Hebrew roots that mean, “to rescue, to save” and “to be strong” as in Psalm 121<sup>vs1-2</sup> when God is pictured as helper of Israel; “I lifted up my eyes to the hills. From whence does my help come? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.”

Thus, in Genesis 2<sup>vs18</sup> as in Psalms 121<sup>vs1-12</sup>, women’s help is not passive or complementary but a strong one. As logic has it, a subordinate role of females to males would only follow if God functioned in a subordinate role when helping Israel. However that was far from being the case. Women should not be seen as providers of secondary support, they should be seen as key players with lots of knowledge, experience and commitment. If women are compared and seen as equals with men, they can positively participate in the indigenization process of Zimbabwe, including mining, which happens to be the key extractive sector in our economy at the moment.

Many abusers of women today have justified their actions under the banner of male leadership, because at its core, complementarian theology is one of inequality and hierarchy. Indeed, inequality breeds abuse and power imbalances till the ground for one partner to abuse the other. Faced by the socio-economic

crisis in Zimbabwe, a woman taking up a traditionally ‘male’ occupation ‘loses’ her femininity, and is viewed as less than a woman, a monstrous Virgo. In the end some women who venture into mining and other male-dominated ventures become frustrated and quit, while others avoid venturing into such male prescribed domains.

Against this negative perception of women, however, Christian egalitarianist interpretation of scriptures and spiritual convictions bring them to the conclusion that the manner and teaching of Jesus abolished discrimination against women and other marginalized groups of people. Egalitarianists believe that the bible teaches the fundamental equality of believers of all racial, ethnic and economic groups and classes. They consider overarching principles of the bible to be that men and women are equally responsible for sin, equally redeemed by Christ, and equally gifted by God’s spirit for service and held responsible for using their God-given gifts. Ultimately, Christian egalitarianism holds that all people are equal in fundamental worth and moral status. A significant source of this trend of thought is the Christian notion that humankind is created in the living image of God (*Imago Dei*) (Genesis 1<sup>vs26-27</sup>). The etymology of the word “Adam” used for “humanity” in Genesis 1<sup>vs26</sup> is ‘*h’ Adam’*, which means ground. The word is gender-neutral, implying that the first



human being has no gender, hence the sexual divisions do not gender, which come at a later development, is important than the other.

It was probably one of the reasons that God decided to descend to humanity in the form of the incarnated person of Jesus so as to "... to set at liberty those who are oppressed..." (Luke 4<sup>vs18</sup>), including women. Jesus Christ did not conform to patriarchy, but reached out to those on the margins and sought to remedy inequalities based on sexual differences. All three synoptic Gospels record Jesus saying,

**You know that the rulers of the Gentiles Lord it over them and their high officials exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you**

(Mathew 20vs25-26a, Mark 10vs42 and Luke 22vs25).

According to Clive Marsh and Steve Moyise, while "Lord it, over", implies abusive leadership, Jesus' words "exercising authority" have no connotation of abuse of authority. Hence one of the major egalitarian organizations, wrote;

*We believe in the equality and essential*

*dignity of men and women of all ethnicities, ages and classes. We recognize that all persons are made in the image of God and are to reflect that image in the community of believers, in the home and in society. We believe that men and women are to diligently develop and use their God-given gifts for the good of the home, church and society.*

The equality of men and women is rooted in Christ, as Paul reveals in Galatians 3<sup>vs27-28</sup>,

*"As many of you have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are one in Christ."*

Paul, out of his profound experience, as a man freed for the service of others on account of the Gospel, wrote to his fellow Christians in Corinth saying, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." (1 Corinthians 9<sup>vs19-23</sup>). Paul's freedom in Christ enables him to cross the boundaries of culture, race, religion, ideology and even politics. The implications of this text to Christians today is to allow freedom for others and accept them as equals, on their own terms, whether male or female.

Important to note at this juncture is the fact that today many women are breadwinners both in families with both parents

or in single-headed families. Despite the deeply patriarchal setting in which women are dealt with as inferiors, the contribution of women's work is made visible in texts like Proverbs 31<sup>vs10-29</sup>. While the woman in the text is defined in patriarchal relations, her work from early morning until late in the night is affirmed. She is the source of her husband's property, provides food and also organizes the productive activity of the household by attending to the fields and vineyards. She also does the production and marketing of garments. The labours of a woman, as in Revelations 12, in the work of her hands will be redeemed by breaking down the patriarchal conditions.

## Conclusion

As Christians and humans, we cannot overlook these kinds of ungodly attitudes and behaviours of inequality practiced by men for they hinder development. Christians need to oppose gender inequality and violence against women. Gender equality must be restored rather than introduced. This restoration, if realized, will also lead to political and socio-economic reformation. Gender inequality is a form of injustice. Isaiah 1<sup>vs17</sup> calls us to fight for justice. This therefore leaves no room for devaluating anyone based on gender. Similarly, if this is done in the mining sector, many women will realize their potential and through their God-given gifts to work hard to improve their living standards and improve society.



Christians need  
to oppose gender  
inequality and violence  
against women

# Stewardship of Creation

Bishop Erick Ruwona, Zimbabwe Council of Churches

## Definition of common terms

There is need for us to first explain some of the concepts that are key in this discussion. These are:

- **Oikos** is earth as a single household of life, a space that includes and supports life in unity. In Judaeo-Christian understanding the earth is a place of God's dwelling.
- **Oikoumene** is the whole inhabited world, or globe, where humankind and other-kind are inseparable. Thus, the integrity (or one-ness and integration) of creation is the focus of our ecumenical action, helping life to thrive together indefinitely, ensuring a sustainable relationship.
- **Economy** has as its root *oikos*. It consists of *eco* (habitat or household) + *nomos* (the rules). Economics therefore means the rules for the way the household works in order to sustain the life and well-being of its inhabitants.
- **Ecology** also has as its root *oikos*: *eco* (household) + *logos* (logic or reasoning). Ecology therefore means the reasoning behind the systems that sustain life in the household.
- **Oikonomos** is usually translated in English as "steward", the one who knows the household rules and cares for the life of household members.

These words and concepts are hinged on the discussion on stewardship. Stewardship means trusteeship, the holding of a sacred trust given by the owner to whom the steward is faithful and obedient. The steward understands both "economics" and "ecology" in the sense described above and manages the household or the *oikos*, understanding and upholding both the rules of life and the logic of relationship between the components. The steward must also guard faithfully the limitations of each component, and understand his/her own limits

## The Church's Role

The Church has played an important role in the history of economic and human development. Examples include Bishops who opposed colonialism and racism in the then Rhodesia. The Catholic Bishop Donal Lamont was deported in the end for supporting the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. The United Methodist John White (alongside his friend Cripps) mounted sustained protest against repressive political and land measures, while the Anglican Bishop of Matabeleland, Kenneth Skelton, vigorously opposed the Rhodesia Front regime. Many claimed (such as Bishop of Mashonaland, Paul Burrough) to be neutral and an Anglican cleric Fr. Michael Lapsley (exiled ANC based in Mbare then) questioned whether they were neutral or co-opted. It takes good people to do nothing for evil to prevail. In Marange, Zimbabwe, we



hear billions of dollars were lost during the rush for Diamonds, but where was the Church? Were the miners not our members? Is the Church clean?

## Common Good

A key concept in social justice is what is called the “common good”. After diamonds were discovered in Marange, locals went into the fields and the face of Manicaland (Mutare) changed. The local provincial economy boomed and the people benefitted, as evidenced by the cars bought, and houses built. The Government then intervened to formalise diamond mining and put structures for the ‘common good’, specifically, the good of the nation. That is the last time the people of Manicaland benefitted from the diamonds deposits. A few years later, the former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, announced that the country had lost approximately US\$15 billion. One key role of the Church of God is to transform unjust structures that terrorise and impoverish people.

## The Earth as Home.

This concept, of earth as home, ‘implies that there is homelessness, isolation from the home whether by force or choice. Home in the sense of earth, and home in the sense of local community of belonging. World Council of Churches’ focus on ‘*integrity of creation*’ from the Vancouver General Assembly of 1983 states that to turn to God is also to turn to God’s

beloved world. “The *integrity of creation* refers to the value of all creatures in themselves, for one another and for God, and their interconnectedness in a diverse whole that has unique value for God.” An understanding of things in their integrity, knowing them the way they are with all else, accounting for them in ways true to where they are tending, is elementary for an ethic.

## Wangari Maathai

Wangari Maathai born in 1940, in Nyeri, Kenya, was the founder of The Green Belt Movement and named the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Winner. Maathai argued that, in 1977, when the Green Belt Movement started, it was partly responding to needs identified by rural women, namely lack of firewood, clean drinking water, balanced diets, shelter and income. Throughout Africa, women are the primary caretakers, holding significant responsibility for tilling the land and feeding their families. As a result, they are often the first to become aware of environmental damage as resources become scarce and incapable of sustaining their families. Wangari, states that, “I have understood the importance of the environment in our lives and the importance of other species to our own survival, the more I have gone to the Bible to get a message I could share...”

Quite often, (people’s) Christian beliefs or faith are very shallow, based on a God who must be feared, a God who will punish in a hail of fire and brimstone, rather than





a God who is loving, compassionate. God has given us a wonderful planet with all the essential things we need, a God in whom we should be rejoicing. Thus, Wangari tried to show them that God is indeed a good God; a loving God, not a punishing God. Many of the problems we face in Africa - diseases, poverty, hunger - are not punishments from that good, loving God, but rather come from our failure to utilize the resources that the good, loving God has given us. Some countries and regions endowed with the most precious mineral resources in Africa are the most troubled and poor.

### Read the book of Genesis.

- When God created the Earth, he would daily look back at what he had made and would say, “that it was good.” But, looking at the decimation and degradation in Chiyadzwa, Penhalonga (PaNyaronga), would God look at that and say, ‘It is good?’ If God were to look at the silted rivers and the disappearing topsoil, would he say, ‘This is good?’”
- Wangari, suggested that Easter Monday could be a very good day for the entire Christendom to plant trees. If we could make that Monday a day of regeneration, revival, of being reborn, of finding salvation by restoring the Earth, it would be a great celebration of Christ’s resurrection. After all, Christ was

crucified on the cross. Indeed, somebody had to go into the forest, cut a tree, and chop it up for Jesus to be crucified.

- What a great celebration of his conquering [death] it would be if we were to plant trees on Easter Monday in thanksgiving.

### Laudato Si

Pope Francis’s Second Encyclical was on the stewardship of creation. *Laudato Si* is the Latin name for a canticle by St Francis of Assisi meaning “Praise to my Lord”. He reminds us that our Common Home (the earth) is like a sister with whom we share our life and beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. Praise be to you, my Lord through our Sister and Mother earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

He argues that this sister now cries out to us because of the harm inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods which God has endowed her with. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the manner we deal with the soil, water, air and all forms of life. Therefore, the earth herself is now burdened and laid waste, among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor. We have forgotten that we are all dust from the earth





(Gen 2:7) and our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.

In 1971 Pope Paul VI made reference to an ecological concern as a tragic consequence of unchecked human activity. Due to ill-considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming in turn a victim of this degradation. The Holy Father quotes Saint John Paul II's first Encyclical in which he warned that human beings frequently seem to see no other meaning in their natural resources than what serves for immediate use and consumption. He therefore calls for an ecological conversion of Christians. He states that the destruction of the human environment is extremely serious, not only because God has entrusted the world to humanity but because human life is a gift from which must be defended from various forms of debasement.

Authentic human development has a moral character. It presumes full respect for the human person, but it must also be concerned for the world around us and consider the nature of each being and of mutual connection in an ordered system. Pope Francis also quotes Patriarch Bartholomew who spoke about the need for each of us to repent from the ways in which we have harmed the planet. For "inasmuch as we all generate small ecological damage" we are called to

acknowledge "our contribution smaller or greater, to the disfigurement and destruction of creation. He has challenged us to acknowledge our sins against creation. These statements of the Popes echo a reflection of numerous scientists, philosophers and civic groups, all of which have enriched the Church's thinking on these questions.

Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si* ("Praise be to you") is a worldwide wake up call to help humanity understand the destruction that man is rendering to the environment and his fellow man. While addressing the environment directly, the Encyclical looks at not only man's effect on the environment, but also the many philosophical, theological, and cultural causes that threaten the relationships of man to nature and man to each other in various circumstances. This document is in many ways the epitome of Pope Francis. It is an unexpected topic. It presents Gospel truths. And, it provides a challenge for every believer (and non-believers too).

From the outset, Pope Francis states the goal of the document: "In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home". Normally, papal documents are addressed to the bishops of the Church or the lay faithful. But, like Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris*, Pope Francis addresses his message to all people. He urgently appeals for a new dialogue about how we



are shaping the future of our planet. He posits that we need a conversation that includes everyone, since the environment challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concerns and affects us all". The above is at the heart of the document, but Pope Francis also has a very striking call to conversion for those in the Church as well.

"The ecological crisis is also a summon to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So, what they all need is an 'ecological conversion', whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ becomes evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience"

## Our Calling

What then is our calling in light of the challenges we face? The problems facing our natural world are increasingly evident as global temperatures, sea levels and the list of species facing extinction are all rising – and so too is the realisation that our actions (or inaction) are largely to blame. Yet the Bible tells us that humans have a God-given mandate to care for

the world. The Church has not always displayed a high regard for the world around us, despite knowing God as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. "Why bother to care for the environment when heaven is really our home and the earth is going to be destroyed anyway?" goes much of Christian thinking on the environment. However, Christians are increasingly aware that we are called to be good stewards of creation. We need to look after it responsibly and carefully, in a way that benefits the whole of creation, and not exploit its resources to the advantage of the wealthy few. Like the parable of the talents, God will want to know what we have done with the amazing gift of creation that he has entrusted to our care. Care for the environment is not an optional extra for a few concerned Christians on the fringes of the church, it is an integral part of our mission as God's people, as captured in the fifth (5th) mark of Anglican Mission.

## The Four Principles: Safeguard, Conserve, fruitfulness and stewardship

The safe-guarding or earth keeping principle teaches that we should safe-guard the Lord's creation as the Lord safe-guards us. In our reflection on Genesis 2<sup>vs15</sup> in five translations above, we find that we are to conserve the garden, guard and keep it. We find the Hebrew word, *shamar*, which means to "take care of," "guard," and "keep". The same word



is also in the blessing of Aaron: “The Lord bless you and shamar you.” As we expect God to keep us, God expects us to keep the garden. It is a wonderfully dynamic way of keeping, the kind of keeping given to long-distance runners that are not kept in padded cells but put through their paces.

The conservation or ‘con-servancy’ principle (Gen 2<sup>vs15</sup>) implies that we ought not take from creation without returning service out of respect, for we are con-servers (servers with). We should return the service of creation to us with service of our own. We can call this “never taking from creation without returning service of our own” the ‘con-servancy’ principle. Our love of God our Creator, God’s love of the creation, our imaging this love of God—join together to commission us as con-servers of creation. As con-servers we become followers of the second Adam, Jesus Christ. As such we come to recognize ourselves as children of Man, children of God, for whose coming the whole creation awaits with eager longing and eager expectation (Rom 8<sup>vs19</sup>).

The fruitfulness principle implies the need for us to enjoy the fruit of creation but not destroy its fruitfulness. Being a fruitful expression of God’s love for the world, the garden bears good fruit. Celebrating God’s earth capacity to produce abundantly as grounds for respect and reason does safeguarding. So do the birds, the fish, and human

beings (Genesis 1<sup>vs20, 22, 28</sup>). When the prophet Ezekiel asks, is it not enough for you to feed on the green pastures? Must you also trample them with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink the pure water? Must you also muddy it with your feet? (Ezek. 34<sup>vs18</sup>), he is speaking to this principle by saying that the creation’s gifts must be enjoyed, but not destroyed. Highly expressive of this is Noah, who with obedience and great effort safe-guarded animal lineages, saving them on the Ark. From the Torah, we learn, “When you lay siege to a city, you must not destroy the fruit trees” (Deut.19<sup>vs19-20</sup>)—a basis for the Jewish teaching of *bal-taschit*—“do not destroy.” We must preserve creation’s fruitfulness.

Much as we strive to be stewards of the garden, we also strive to be stewards of God’s creation. As our plan reflects the garden’s economy, so God’s plan reflects Creation’s Economy. Creation belongs to God (We were born with nothing, even the land that we fight for). The earth (*‘eretz*) is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world (*tebel*), and they that dwell therein (Psalm 24<sup>vs1</sup> KJV). The earth (*ge*) is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof; the world (*oikoumene*), and all that dwell in it (Psalm 24<sup>vs1</sup>). Creation belongs to God. We are called to be stewards (managers). We use the owner’s rules to manage the earth. Unfortunately, there has been a growing human tendency to privatise what God owns.



## Sabbath, Contentment, Praxis and Sacrament

The Sabbath principle (Ex 23<sup>vs10-12</sup>) upholds the notion that productivity has a cycle which includes rest, without which we (collectively with the earth) cannot survive. We should therefore not utilise the earth to extinction, but with moderation. It is to be given rest so that other creatures depending on it can get a breather. More important is the contentment principle (Isaiah 5<sup>vs8</sup>, Hebrews 13<sup>vs5</sup>). All that we use for ourselves is derived from what creation gives us, so we should be content with our needs being met and ensure that all the rest of creation gains as needed. The praxis principle (Luke 6<sup>vs46</sup>) informs the need to be consistent in our actions with what we believe and know to be right. Creation should be viewed as a sacrament. Thus, the life-creating, sustaining and redeeming presence and promise of God throughout creation. Earth is therefore a sacrament, a disclosure of God's presence by visible and tangible signs.

## Integrity of Creation: Community/Family

Creation is a community/family: All of creation is community, and biblically it is clear that God relates to creation inclusively. This challenges the anthropocentrism of most post-industrial Western and modern ethics. Viewing humans as

an ecologically segregated and superior species. It artificially divides us and turns the rest of creation into a commodity for human possession and service: the master-slave relationship, seeing ourselves as the trustee who represents God on earth.

The inherent value of nature is replaced by the utilitarian and market value of "natural resources". This mindset and consequent behaviour destroys not only the environment but also our theology, filtering and limiting our experience of God. When nature is lost to the senses, God is 'lost' as well. So is people's sense of identity and direction, as well as moral-spiritual energy for the journey. No heaven without earth. It's that simple. And again. We moderns have been autistic in our relation to the rest of nature. We can no longer listen to the earth or think like a mountain (feel for others). We talk instead to ourselves. We have broken the great conversation. There must be urgency to reclaim our sense of "family" and Earth Community.

WCC's Justice, peace and integrity of creation statement says "Now is the time for the ecumenical movement to articulate its vision of all people living on earth and caring for creation as a family... (creation as family). (It is) a spiritual vision expressed in concrete action... building a culture that can live in harmony with creation's integrity. According to Wangari Maathai: "In the course of history



there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and, in the process, heal our own... This will happen if we see the need to revive our sense of belonging to a larger family of life. God's grace-filled invitation to participate in the process of renewal. Human dignity is embedded in this work of contributing to God's renewal of creation.

Pope John Paul II called it "... the nobility of the human vocation to participate responsibly in God's creative action". The integral relationship between social justice and protection of the environment provides us with a framework for moral behaviour. When environmental destruction is super-imposed on existing structural disparities in society (class, gender, etc) the inequalities are aggravated and poverty is deepened. According to Pope Francis, "Our indifference or cruelty towards fellow creatures of this world sooner or later affects the treatment we mete out to other human beings... Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes."

## Conclusion

The earth is our OIKOS (household and God's dwelling) and we are called to be good OIKONOMOS (stewards). God's

creation has integrity and has value in its own right (it was good from day 1, at creation). Wangari says, God's creation is so important in our lives that we require other species for us to survive (we need bees more than they need us because they can survive without us, but most creation would be extinct). The Sister and Mother earth has been abused by family members who now have to convert, and whose obedience to Jesus must be seen in the way we steward God's creation. The earth is our common home and we share it with all creation. We are called to be good stewards and deal with degradation and abuse of creation by way of safeguarding, conserving, fruitfulness, stewardship, sabbath, contentment and praxis principles. After all creation is an outward sign of God and we are part of God's inclusive community/family.

# Stewardship: Caring For God's Nature

Sheik Y. Ayami and Sheik, A. J. Phiri, *Family Development Initiative, Lusaka, Zambia*

## Introduction

The stewardship question, from the religious perspective, views people as managers of God's creation. It concerns the people's ability and capability to utilise natural resources and preserve some for future generations. This brief paper will draw much of its examples from the purpose of mankind at creation, what God intended us to exist for from the creation story (Gen 1<sup>vs26-31</sup>) and a lesson from the punishment after fall of man (Gen 3<sup>vs16-19</sup>). God created man in his likeness and gave him dominion over the universe, to rule and maintain it. Probably, it is this dominion that creates a dilemma to balance the exploitation of nature and the struggle to survive as dignified beings.

## The background of stewardship from the Bible

The creation and its beauty were designed by a Prime Designer who stands out to look at his design and appreciate its designs and sequential patterns. The sequential patterns of nature according to the creator's design do not contradict each other. For instance, the seasons follow each other in ways that do not confuse people. Some worldly events are held under preferred seasons and weather suitable for that activity. For example, there are times preferred by tourists for flora and fauna in some seasons in different parts of the world.

The Yahwist was not concerned primarily with the creation of heaven and earth, which is the subject of the Priestly creation story, but with man's earthly environment. Man is made from the soil (*adamar*, a play on the word Adam) and the good earth is the stage of human life. He is a special creature of God, whose breath (spirit) animates the dust, making it become a living being. Man is the tiller of the soil and to the soil he must return at death (The earth is a great gift from God to mankind, your work and your presence starts and finishes on earth, and beyond earth we have no work, our presence is necessary here and now). On the other hand, man was to exert dominion over animals and over all creatures. From the onset, God determined man to be a companion in nurturing nature and preserving it from generation to generation.

The relationship between God and humanity is soured by sin; otherwise both God and humankind are friends (partners) in a covenant. The primary role of Adam and Eve was to look after and be in charge of the garden that they were given. The narrator of the story (Genesis 2<sup>vs10</sup>) says that a river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The natural irrigation has been set forth for them, and if ever there was going to be labour, was to prune trees, otherwise food was always available from the garden.



It is apparent that there was plenty in the garden as God the provider had provided for him, but the man had spoiled the provision. Before temptation there was no lack, and everything was intact and pleasing according to the Lord.

The shift came when the serpent visited humankind, the scripture says that Adam was not with Eve, and lastly God was not in the garden. The serpent deceived the woman, “the Lord God has been hiding some truth from you, and if you eat the forbidden plant you will become wise like him. (3<sup>vs4-5</sup>). *You will not die, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.*

Indeed, there is no one who does not want to be like God, one way or the other. In conversation with the deceiver, the woman forgot about their responsibility in the garden, Adam too neglected his position as a manager of the garden. The verdict of failure to obey God came to man as sinful who had failed to obey the creator’s commandment. Nonetheless, God forgave them and clothed them and said that they should sweat to feed themselves. Therefore, having poisoned the moral atmosphere through our sin, we have gone on to poison our planet. What is happening in our world today is human in origin, and is both rapid and destructive.

The focus of man after the fall from the garden narrowed to self-centeredness: (exaltation, status, promotion, wealth

accumulation, self-deception). How do we move away from strife and envy?

## Are human beings real stewards of God’s Creation?

At creation, God commanded humans to have dominion over the earth and the creatures. He was ordered to be fruitful and increase in number, filling the earth and to subdue it. He was to rule over the fish in the sea, and the birds in the sky, and over every living creature that moves on the ground. The creation belonged to God, but remained our responsibility. (Psalm 24<sup>vs1</sup> states, “the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it; ...”). This is a great responsibility to humanity, and we have unfortunately failed the task entrusted to us. Humanity has pillaged and raped the planet earth, mined its resources and devoured its assets, but not just to improve our lot as a human family, but to enrich some, and by our abdication of care, leave others in poverty, fear and need (CWM, 2018).

Steve de Gruchy (2015), in talking about God’s being, says that God is a community of love, respect and equity. God is not a solitary person, but a relationship of dialogue and mutuality. He points out that if God is community, dialogue, mutuality and equity, then God should be at work in the world because our faith dictates that God cannot act contrary to who God is. The God of justice and peace is transcendent in a way that the sinful actions of people on earth cannot change his being.





It is this human greed that has brought the earth down to unstable and unfriendly weather and natural disasters. If only our actions towards exploiting the nature were conscious about saving some resources for our grand-grand children to come. There are times when we exploit our natural resources and accumulate wealth as if the world ends with us. If we were conscious of God's word that, He would give Abram the land and his descendants would live on it, cultivate it and eat its produce.

John Calvin says; "Let everyone regard himself as the steward of God in all things which he possesses. Then he will neither conduct himself dissolutely, nor corrupt by abusing those things which God requires to be preserved...?" (CWM 2018).

The negative interaction between the people and creation has had adverse effect on all circles of life. People have come to realise how their greed has cost, not only the poor who were exploited to heap wealth to the upper class, but also themselves. However, the upper class seems not ready to reduce their destruction of the environment. Although there are environmental management policies these do not really stop the land degradation.



# *Mining And Environment: A Faith Based Reflection:*

Reverend Mosweu Simane, *Botswana Council of Churches*

## God and Natural Resources Management

Religions of the world believe that the earth and all that is in it belongs to God. God is the giver and sustainer of the created world. World religions also believe that humanity has been given the stewardship role of the created world. The Holy Books of the different religions of the world contain words of wisdom on how humanity ought to take good care of the earth.

It is a given fact that our failure as humanity to be good stewards of God's creation has brought the world almost to the brink of extinction. The faith communities therefore have a huge responsibility to promote good stewardship, and to foster co-existence between humans and the created world. They should help uphold justice, peace and equitable distribution of the world's resources; against all forms of injustice; pollution, poor management of water, agricultural lands and other God-given resources.

We recognize that the extractive industry has had negative effects on the environment through climate change, poverty and loss of lands through forced removals. This is not merely an economic or technical problem, but rather at its core is a moral, social, spiritual and cultural problem that requires people of faith to face it head on.

The fundamental basis for pursuing justice and equitable distribution of our God given natural resources goes back to the fact that religions of the world believe that every human being is created in God's image and thus has intrinsic value. The Christian Faith, for example, believes that human dignity is not earned but it is inherent in every human being. In other words, human dignity is the God-given intrinsic value of being human, regardless of one's social status or condition (Genesis 1<sup>vs27</sup>).

It is therefore imperative for the Church to advocate for this without fear or favour. The following passages of Scripture from the Bible explain the issue of justice as an imperative and not an option;

- i. **Amos 5**<sup>vs.21-24</sup> : "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."
- ii. **Micah 6**<sup>vs6-8</sup>: "What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, love, kindness and walk humbly with Him."



## The Holy Books and Good Stewardship of the Environment and Communities

As noted before, World Religions believe that there is a Supreme Being who is the creator and sustainer of life. The following quotes from the Holy Books of the various faiths demonstrate this;

### Islam: God is the giver of Life

*“And it is He who sends down rain from the sky, and we produce thereby the growth of all things. We produce from it greenery from which we produce grains arranged in layers. And from the palm trees - of its emerging fruit are clusters hanging low. And we produce gardens of grapevines and olives and pomegranates, similar yet varied. Look at [each of] its fruit when it yields and its ripening. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who believe.” (Qur’an, 6:99)*

### Bahai Faith:

*“We cannot segregate the human heart from the environment outside us and say that once one of these is reformed everything will be improved. Man is organic with the world. His inner life moulds the environment and is itself also deeply affected by it. The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions.” Bahá’u’lláh*

*“Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succour in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.” Bahá’u’lláh*

### Christianity

- a. **God the Creator: Nehemiah 9<sup>vs6</sup>**  
– *“You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is in it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.”*
- b. **Jeremiah 2<sup>vs7</sup>** *“I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and you made my inheritance detestable.”*
- c. **God and Stewardship: Deuteronomy 23<sup>vs12-14</sup>**; *“You must have a designated area outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. Each of you must have a spade as part of your equipment. Whenever you relieve yourself, dig a hole with the spade and cover the excrement. The camp must be holy, for the Lord your God moves around in your camp to protect you and to defeat your enemies. He must not see any shameful thing among you, or he will turn away from you.”*



**Luke 16**<sup>vs2,10,13</sup>. “And he called him and said to him, “What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward. He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous in much. You cannot serve both God and mammon.”

- d. **The whole of creation is at the brink of extinction and cries out for help; Romans 8**<sup>vs19-22</sup>: *“For the creation is eagerly awaiting the revelation of God’s children, because the creation has become subject to futility, though not by anything it did. The one who subjected it did so in the certainty that the creation itself would also be set free from corrupting bondage in order to share the glorious freedom of God’s children. For we know that all the rest of creation has been groaning with the pains of childbirth up to the present time.”*

## Conclusion

It is very clear from the reflections above that the earth and all that is in it has been created by God. While religions of the world may use different names or titles for this Supreme Being, the fundamental truth is that they are in agreement. I therefore conclude making the following points about God and good stewardship of natural resources;

- Natural resources are fast depleting; there is massive pollution of air, water and land. The faith

communities must advocate for good stewardship.

- Everyone is affected by the ecological crisis, especially the poor and marginalized.
- There is need for a conscious and judicious rejection of extravagant, greedy and wasteful use of natural resources masquerading as development.
- The faith communities should advocate for and support any development course that empowers its people and grows its economy without compromising the integrity of the environment.
- Manipulation of God’s land: The earth (*oikoslogos*) is exploited by the rich for their economic gains with little or no care of how such resources will be replenished.
- Justice Advocacy: The poor are moved from their land to give way for ‘development’ which benefits the few. The Faith Sector must advocate for Justice, Peaceful and Equitable distribution of natural resources gains. The writer of the Proverbs says this about Advocacy;

**“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”**

(Proverbs 31:8-9)



# *Faith Based Organisations and Their Role in Combating Illicit Financial Flows in Africa:*

Reverend Dr. Felicidade Chirinda, *Christian Council of Mozambique*

The Church and Faith Based Organizations are invited by the Bible to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. This is not an easy task because it calls the Church to be a highly educated institution, a listening and a care-providing body. The reality, however, shows that literature on how one may link religion, citizenship and development is scarce, and this situation hampers the Church in its dealing with many burning social issues.

When we read through the church's writings and teachings, we find that the Care for God's Creation is one of the issues that focus on the economic, political and social concerns of humanity but, illicit financial flows from Africa are not included. The easiest justification about this absence or exclusion may be lack of vision but it is not necessarily true.

African future dealings concerning economics and other issues were reflected on by a prominent Kenyan Anglican theologian, Jesse Mugambi in his 1997 book ***Problems and Promises of the Church in Africa***. He said:

*"African Christian theology in the twenty-first century will be characterized by themes of social transformation and reconstruction. This will involve discerning alternative social structures, symbols, rituals, myths and interpretations of Africa's social reality by Africans*

*themselves, irrespective to what others have to say about the continent and its peoples. The resources for this re-interpretation are multi-disciplinary involving social scientists, philosophers, creative writers and physical scientists (1997:51).<sup>1</sup>*

Today, we testify that what Mugambi said then was a powerful vision that is being realized today. This was seen when faith leaders, gathered to discuss the burning issue of Illicit Financial Flows from Africa together with the Pan Africa Parliament, Southern Africa Development Community Forum, Economic Community of West African States, experts working on illicit Financial Flows, among others.

The Church feels fortunate because her reflections are fed by many reports from prominent African Leaders that affirmed that the Church and Faith Based Organizations have a diaconal mandate to be the legitimate prophetic voice of the people, especially the poor and marginalised, and to speak on socio-economic justice issues, as per the Holy Scriptures.

As it can be seen, the issue of Illicit Financial Flows is a very complex one, and only those involved in economics and financial matters hold some critical information and knowledge.

However, a meeting of religious leaders

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 1 Mugambi, JNK 1997. "The Church in Africa- Problems and Promises" AACC- Nairobi, Kenya



in Zambia, unpacked President Mbeki's Report on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa. The report allowed them to know what is really happening and damaging our continent. The fact that Africa loses more than fifty billion United States Dollars annually as a result of commercial tax evasion, trade and abusive transfer pricing is at the core of Africa's problems. The Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want Aspirations, however gives hope to continue dreaming that Africa can be:

- Prosperous, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
- An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance;
- A Continent that enjoys good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
- A peaceful and secure Continent;
- A Continent with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics;
- A Continent where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth;
- A strong, united and influential global player and partner Continent.

These aspirations will not be achieved if our governments do not adopt and imple-

ment the recommendations contained in the Mbeki report on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa. As Faith leaders, we continuously need to take responsibility for our affairs with internal accountability and transparency on institutional matters based on theological teachings. Despite being prone to illicit financial flows, the Africa's mineral sector is the key source of revenue that can effectively catalyse sustainable development of our continent. However, it has served and continues to undermine the continent's aspirations for peaceful and inclusive societies based on the prudent and sustainable use of mineral resources. The African Mining Vision, adopted by the Africa Union in 2009, aims at ensuring transparent, equitable and optimal exploration of African mineral resources to underpin broad-based sustainable growth and socioeconomic development of our continent.

The Lusaka Regional and the Nairobi Pan African Faith Leaders Conferences enabled faith leaders across the continent, to gain knowledge and critical information on how the Illicit Financial Flows are directly affecting the provision of public services such as schools, clinics, sanitation, security, water and social protection to our people. The Africa Mining Vision becomes a vocation where the applied understanding of being a good shepherd is the role and responsibility of a good leader, where the position of power is used not for self-benefit, but





to service the people as a steward with good judgement.

The Church and Faith Based Organizations, has a moral obligation of encouraging African people to be good citizens who obey the authorities and pay their taxes on due time (Rm 13<sup>vs.1, 7</sup>; I Pet 2<sup>vs.13-16</sup>). But beyond that, African Governments must, in turn, implement progressive and people-centred taxation, and legal frameworks that will enable fair redistribution of collected revenue to finance socio-economic development.

Our presence in this forum is to respond to the above call, because as Jesus' disciples and as a body of believers, the Church has the moral obligation of providing teaching, counselling and direction to the Government and to those governed (Mat 28<sup>vs18-20</sup>). The Church must know or have information on laws determined by the government concerning the payment of taxes from those who explore natural resources in Africa, so that she can influence and call for accountability on the process because: "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein" (Ps 24<sup>vs1</sup>). The earth is created, sustained and redeemed by our God. We cannot claim to love our God while abusing what belongs to Him by right of creation, redemption and inheritance.

It is important that we, people of faith, remind ourselves that God is the creator and sustainer of the Universe; this is a reminder of our role and responsibility as people of faith. We must be aware that

God bestowed the stewardship role of His creation to humankind, and as stewards of His creation, we are called upon to exercise our stewardship around issues of tax justice and social protection. We, faith leaders must be reminded that all the injustices in the world are a result of sin (structural sin), therefore we are called to denounce systems which perpetuate injustices. It is our mandate to speak against injustices and immoral issues (Prov. 31<sup>vs8-9</sup>)

We, Faith leaders, have an important role and responsibility to stop excluding ourselves from the table of discussions on illicit financial flows and tax justice. Therefore:

- We must actively participate in the tax justice initiatives at national, regional and global levels. We must challenge ourselves, as faith communities, to speak against any form of inequality and injustice being perpetuated through illicit financial flows.
- We must open our church spaces and platforms to partner with the tax justice movements to debate and loudly speak against illicit financial flows, abuse of power and all forms of injustice in Africa.
- We must use faith community platforms to promote teaching about morally upright living, just systems, love and care of fellow human beings and the environment, equal distribution of resources,



transparency and accountability;

- We must strengthen our network of Faith Leaders in Africa and beyond, to sustain engagements of Faith Communities on issues of Tax Justice and Illicit Financial Flows;
- We must exercise our moral authority to demand, not to beg for justice, to demand answers, to do the right thing and to demand equality for all;<sup>2</sup>
- We must demand an end to corruption.
- We must, have a role and responsibility in enhancing our engagement at local, national, regional and international levels to influence policies and actions towards just tax systems and equal distribution of the countries' resources to ensure that "no one is left behind" (Sustainable Development Goals).

In conclusion, Dr. Agnes Abuom, another prominent daughter of the Anglican Church in Kenya, once said (to the Church when she was reflecting on "*The quest of Justice and Human Dignity in Africa*":

"The Church is the only solid organizational structure outside government since the colonial era. Therefore, Church leaders must reclaim their place as a sanctuary of unity not just for churches but also for civic society and other instru-

ments of governance" (2005:79)<sup>3</sup>. As the Church, we must not grow weary in doing well, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart (Galatians 6<sup>vs9</sup>).



Church leaders must  
reclaim their place as  
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2 Michael A Battle on the Role and Place of Africa in the World (2012:30)

3 Otieno, N with McCullum H.2005. "In Journey of Hope – Towards a New Ecumenical Africa" WCC Publications

# Alternative Mining For Africa: A Paradigm Shift

Reverend Prof. Dr. Aidan G. Msafiri, *Climate Change Ambassador for Tanzania*

## Prayer

*“Our Mother Earth, full of natural resources, you are our home hallowed be your extractives, your social protection come. Give us this day our daily peace, hope and bread, and forgive us our postmodern destructive life styles. And lead us not into consumerist temptations, quarrels and hatred but deliver us from “hyper greed and resource injustices”. AMEN.*  
(Aidan Msafiri, 2017)

## Introduction

**Mic 6<sup>vs8</sup> reads, “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God”**

As we begin, we need to rhetorically ask ourselves the following fundamental soul wrestling questions for deep reflections and action. Despite all the quantitative blessing in mineral wealth in Africa.

- What is the purpose of the natural resources as created by God billions of years ago? Have they become a

blessing or a curse?

- What is the role of faith values in bringing new hopes? Have our governments, extractive companies, Non-Governmental Organisations and the public acted justly as far as the principles of equity and holistic justice are concerned?
- Whom does the extractive industry serve? **“Cuo vadis” extractive industry in Africa?**
- Has the extractive industry in Africa shown true solidarity and inclusivity with the poorest of the poor?
- How could our African philosophies and values of “Ubuntu”, “Umuthu”, “Utu”, “Ujamaa”, really transform the deadly cancers of the “greedy jackal syndrome”, “ignorant syndrome” and “business as usual syndrome”?
- In light of cut throat competitiveness which has thoroughly paralyzed a just and sustainable mineral industry in Africa, what does God want of mining companies, NGO’s, FBO’s, governments?
- Do mining companies operate with people without faith, love? No!
- Does the mineral revenue in Africa promote human dignity and common welfare?
- To whom do all these renewable and particularly non-renewable resources belong?



- Do we at all cherish the value-based ethos and virtues of sustainable communities and livelihoods such as sufficiency, care, compassion, inclusivity, concern etc.

Arguably, prophet Micah reminds us of three key virtues and values for a true transformation of Africa's extractive industry. First, holistic and integrated justice which necessarily includes key trajectories in the form of human resource capacity building on the extractives in Africa for sustainable livelihoods and prosperity; equal distribution of extractive benefits among all, particularly the poor and marginalized; equal treatment in the extractives not only the rich and investors; a transparent model in the extractives and global commons for Africa; restorative justice in the extractives, intergenerational justice in the extractives; a democratic and participant culture in the extractives, a sustainable model in the extractives in Africa; and a punitive model for wrong-doers in the extractive industry in Africa. These are crucial for holistic instead of arithmetic development.

Secondly, being "merciful" is important. This implies a true empathy and concern with and for the poor, the most marginalized people in Africa. And, thirdly, we need to be "humble". This co-affirms that, we need to show appreciation to God as co-creator, and responsible stewards of global commons and particularly the

extractive industry. Hence, a radical and deep change of the "status quo ante" to better attitudes, better relationship and better habits. This calls for proper fundamental values of peace, faith, Agape, solidarity, compassion, trust, wellbeing, joy, transparency, mercy, forgiveness and moderation. More importantly, we all need to strive and endeavour to bridge the "longest distance" between the mind and the heart. It is possible. What we need is to go beyond mere socio-economic and political rhetoric to real practice.

***"When good people do nothing evil increases" – Are the mining companies owned by good people?***

## **Credible Theological Way Forward: Key Requirements and Principles**

First, is the need for a true leadership and governance model in the extractives. This must necessarily be based on the theological altruism of the Great commandment of Love (Mt. 22<sup>vs37-39</sup>). ***"Jesus replied, love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first greatest commandment. And the second is like it, Love your neighbour as yourself"*** The above asserts a three-dimensional Christian world view of true love to the creator, fellow humans and the created world (***global commons***).

Second, there is need for a paradigm shift towards a stewardship culture with and for the created world and resources. This



is aptly echoed in the Gospel of St. Luke 12<sup>vs42-48</sup>. It says *“Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? .... From everyone who has been given much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked”*.

Which key African mining visions and theological values does this biblical passage suggest to us today?

- To care as credible and trustworthy stewards and earth-keepers of the extractives and our home (the world).
- To protect natural resources and human communities against all visible and invisible risks and dangers. “Who will watch the watch person?”
- To guide a true, new and rightful/dutiful “extractive conscience”, “Eco-GPS” for sustainable leadership and management of natural resources against the whims of marginalization, grand corruption, war and the pollution of land, air and water.
- To save and share in a just, transparent and equitable manner, not only the extractives, but also the profits for thousands of generations to come (Intergenerational Justice).
- To promote a new culture of AGAPE: “Alternative Globalization Addressing People and The Earth”

Third, believers need to strongly reaffirm the biblical theological altruism “God saw all is Good” (Gen 1<sup>vs31</sup>). It in time and space underscores the unique responsibility of “*Homo Africanus*” as “*Homo Sapiens*” not as “*Homo Idioticus*”. But as true “*Homo integralis*” and “*Homo futuris*” let us also reflect on African sayings for the care of creation as “I am because we are” (John S. Mbiti), “Do not light your only hut with fire” (Kikuyu proverb) etc. These sayings echo an African Theology of care, moderation, peace and solidarity. They remind us of the African life views of “being more” than “having more”, inclusivity against exclusivity, co-operation against competition and communalism against greed, particularly in our relationship with fellow humans and creation. We are all Guests here on earth!

Last but not the least; “*Homo Africanus*” is per se spiritual and religious. Consequently, we need to express gratitude (1 Thes 5<sup>vs16-18</sup>), humility (Luke 9<sup>vs6-48</sup>), love (agape) (John 15<sup>vs12-14</sup>) sufficiency (Lk. 12<sup>vs15</sup>) equity (Is. 58<sup>vs6</sup>) as well as faith, hope and peace (Hebr. 1<sup>vs1</sup>).

Truly, contemporary challenges in the extractive industry, climate change, global warming and environmental degradation have helped Christians create a common panacea or platform for a collaborative reflection and action for the care of our common home. This is central in Pope Francis Encyclical Letter





“Laudato Si” of 2015. Our Christian faith, visions and values should indeed spearhead our ethical and theological roadmap for proper education, motivation, hope and transformation and deep change—personally, communally, ecclesially, ecumenically, nationally, regionally and even globally.

Finally, the Alternative Mining Vision must be value-based, and must shift from being an Alternative Mining Vision to Alternative Mining Values. The values of care, brotherhood, sisterhood, concern, inclusivity, accountability, responsibility, togetherness and hope. Indeed, this is the ‘*Kairos*’ (opportune time) to show the world that we are true and honest stewards and co-creators. May God ever pour upon us the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. As a covenant people of God, let us unite together with one prophetic hope, one vision, one commitment, one action and one destiny. God bless Africa. Amen.







## *Alternative Mining Indaba, Church Advocacy And Theology*

Tinashe Gumbo and Admire Mutizwa, *Zimbabwe Council of Churches*

Over the years, in Zimbabwe and the region, the Church's role in the management of the respective countries' natural resources has not been clearly defined, yet the bible is clear about that role. The Church should always address issues of natural resources from a theological perspective underscoring the guiding principles of stewardship, sustainability, justice and solidarity.

There have been limited formal and sustainable engagement platforms between the Church, the civil society (CSOs), traditional leaders, host mining communities, local authorities and mining companies with regards to concerns around the mining sector. The voice of the Church is however increasingly becoming more visible, offering complementary theological narrative on the alternative policies and practices for conservation and justice in the extractive sector.

Mining companies have religiously convened Mining Indabas at international and national levels to discuss the performance of the sector from purely a capitalistic perspective. On the other hand, mining communities across the region continue to raise concerns with regards to the management of mineral resources as they feel they are not fully benefiting from their God given resources. Environmental degradation, issues of local content development (LCD), corporate social responsibility (CSR) and general

transparency and accountability matters remain topical among the community members. Resultantly, the Church has emerged as an active institution around the extractive sector. The Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) initiative became a more sustained platform for the Church to interact with other critical mining stakeholders.

In Zimbabwe, for instance, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) became part of the AMIs in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) and Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA). At regional level, the platform is coordinated through the Economic Justice Network of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA) as the secretariat. Individual countries are now able to coordinate AMIs at national level. Indeed, AMIs have become a growing movement. The AMI concept was born as a counter movement to the annually held Mining Indabas in Cape Town, South Africa by the mining companies. The realisation was that the mining indabas were only meant for the capitalists to strategize on how to maximise profits from the mining sector. Mere participation at the Mining Indaba calls for one to fork out more than one thousand United States Dollars, a figure which is beyond the reach of ordinary community members.

Thus in 2010, the CSOs in Southern



Africa, led by the Church related organisations teamed up and came up with the idea for an alternative platform for the ordinary community people to discuss issues that affect them with respect to mining activities. The AMIs have become annual events with an international one being held in Cape Town parallel to the Mining Indaba. The concept has been cascaded to national, provincial and district platforms in the case of Zimbabwe primarily because the mining sector is at the epicentre of development in the country hence the communities needed the capacity to speak on their own regarding the governance of their natural resources. The Church is involved to offer a theological narrative, not competing but complementary to existing alternative narratives on natural resource governance.

The AMIs at all levels allow experts to share their perspectives on mining, with government departments updating clarifying on critical mining policy matters, community members share their experiences with mining activities, the Church shares theological narrative and the parliamentarians unpacks the legislative frameworks. Mining companies that attend shares their policies on the various emerging issues such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Local Content Development (LCD) initiatives. District and provincial AMIs deal with specific mining issues in the respective communities and this informs the engagement

strategies in those areas. The AMIs produce resolutions which are used for advocacy initiatives in the sector.

The Church's work focuses on ensuring that natural resource use and management is cognisant to the care of creation, addresses poverty and fosters peaceful environments. Thus, the annual themes for the AMIs emphasised on the need to make mining one of the sectors that benefit all the stakeholders and encouraged dialogue and engagement. For instance, the 2016 Zimbabwe AMI theme was **'Mining Sector Reforms: A Call for Economic, Social and Environmental Justice'**. The theme was inspired by the quest to influence then ongoing legislative and policy reforms in the mining sector and ensure that there is a conducive operating environment for the sector to contribute to the national economy. Thus, such themes were clearly influenced by biblical discerning and call for justice, solidarity, development, peace and stewardship.

In 2017, the theme was **'Responsible and Accountable Governance of Minerals'**. This emphasised the need for transparency and accountability in the governance of the country's mineral resources while it also called for stakeholders to be responsible in their businesses. Therefore, the platform asserted its authority as a progressive multi stakeholder platform that facilitates discussion of the sector and proffering policy, legisla-



tive and programming interventions to promote sustainable mineral resources exploitation. Among the achievements of the AMIs is the creation of good working relations between multiple stakeholders that embrace the Church. The AMIs have allowed the Church, traditional leaders, local authorities, government officials, individual mining community members and mining companies to meet and discuss contemporary natural resource governance matters.

Theological reflections on natural resource governance focus on unpacking socially and environmentally destructive practices in the extractive sector. The reflections highlight stewardship failures by individuals, communities, nations and international bodies to utilise the God given natural resources. Theological foundation is a powerful tool and source of alternative policy propositions and policy actions. Thus, the focus of the theological reflections in this document was to articulate the relationship between religion and contemporary natural resources governance and advocacy issues. These include sustainability in the use of resources, safeguarding the interests of local community (solidarity and justice), transparency and accountability among others.

Reviewing a theological paper on natural and mineral resource governance written by Frank Turner (2014), we found that justice is the central pillar of advocacy

on natural and mineral resources. Views contained in this natural resource toolkit demonstrates the ability of the Church to read the signs and interpret them in light of Gospel. The Church is aware and understands aspirations, longings of marginal communities. She (the Church) is also aware of the dramatic features of the world of natural resource governance. Contemporary queries pertain to fairness in the extraction of natural resources, socially acceptable mining practices, consideration for future generations` and Government accountability over the natural resource generated revenues.

Distinctly, the theological articles underscore the principle of co-creation and that mineral resources are part of the earth. Bible verses from Genesis were cited in most of the articles to highlight that natural resources are part of the “created order”. Frank Tuner referred to this order as part of the continuous collation of human practices and purposes resistant to life threatening disorder. Sharing natural resources with our neighbour and using them with love is an important part of divine ordering. Indispensably, the Biblical meaning gives natural resources a human meaning which is equally if not more important to their profitable meaning.

The extraction of natural resources from the earth can be morally devastating, signalling moral and theological degradation. This include practices by companies



extracting minerals for profit but polluting water bodies and walking away while leaving the earth unfruitful and poisoned. Such sinful act further includes the unfair treatment and payment of workers, siphoning of excess profits to evade taxes and customs payments and plundering the land. Theologically, such acts are regarded as sinful as the elements of the earth are separated, corporations profit from common good yet the people are negatively impacted and reasonable care is not exercised.

Sinful acts co-exist and conflict with the power for the common good. Tuner says that, “In Christian faith, grace has an ultimacy that sin does not. As Saint Paul insists, “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (Romans, 5<sup>vs20</sup>). Just as “all have sinned,” so all may receive and mediate grace. Grace is the gift of God’s self-communication, so that all human beings may share the very life of God. Therefore, no area of human life lies outside the scope of grace.” Conflicting sin and grace are said to work in secular terms and across all human boundaries. Sinful corporations equally face those that promote socially and environmentally responsible practices.

Theological perspectives further attests that all people (local people, leaders and civil society) may perpetuate devastation of the earth. People and organizations may seek individual gain at the expense of others and can be bought off

by the corporates. Civil society organisations are tempted towards dishonesty or self-aggrandisement, lack consultation, and disempower communities. Furthermore, weak legislation and ineffective Government institutions render the natural resource sector a hive of corruption. All being sinful acts. Sinful acts are further practiced when politicians and officials consider first their own interests and power. Sinful acts are further exemplified by resisting to change that does not result in direct individual benefits yet one need to maintain unearned privileges.

Environmental disasters, sacrificing of workers (through unsafe working conditions in mining), avoidable accidents, corporate or military power over the people and employment of illegal armed groups to protect investments by corporates are sinful acts that require the power of the good (grace) in order to be rectified. Adequate response, when grace outweighs sin, will be rendered by individuals, Governments and corporations to mining communities negatively impacted by mining operations.





*Mineral Resources*



*Water Uterlisation*









*Land Use*



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**Luke 4:18-19**



**Zimbabwe Council of Churches**

27 St Patricks road. Hatfield, Harare, Zimbabwe

Call +263 4 755 745 | [social@zcc-eco.org](mailto:social@zcc-eco.org)

Facebook: [@ZimbabweCouncilofChurches](https://www.facebook.com/ZimbabweCouncilofChurches)

[www.zcc-eco.org](http://www.zcc-eco.org)