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**A Biblical Reflection on Ecology and Its Application
to Contemporary African Church**

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Abstract

Throughout history, Africa environment has encountered different and difficult environmental mess such as climate change, biodiversity, over-population, pollution, deforestation, accumulated refuse, clean water shortage, e.t.c. and there has been questions about whether man has any right to take care of his ecology. Should people continue with

the destruction of the ecology they are supposed to cherish, care for, keep and develop modalities for a better environment? The role of the church towards environmental maintenance has also been questioned. The aim of this paper therefore, is to examine from the Scriptures the theological basis for caring for creation and how they could be applied in Nigeria, in Africa and the world at large, knowing that the world's ecology is in a mess. The paper will also proffer suggestions, solutions or measures to be taken in order to avoid further destruction of the ecology in Nigeria and indeed African.

Introduction

There has been an advancement in science and technology, which seems to make the vision of the future more optimistic. As this is the case of technological development, it seems as if the mastery of the environment sees man exhibiting his dominion over all the earth (Elsdon, 1981, p.9). We see man living in an -uneasiness relationship with his environment; wild animals, storms, floods, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes have being the order of the day in some parts of the world and are always constituting threats and uneasiness to the lives of man in his environment. These crises that are upon the earth are as a result of the ill-treatments given to earth by man through his activities such as pollution, over grazing, deforestation, etc.

Of course, man in his capacity thinks that he could handle the situation with (lie advent, advance in technological framework, but this has being proven wrong as the UNESCO's Biosphere Conference of 1968 reports that, "Natural science and technology alone are inadequate for modern solutions to resource management problem" (Cited in Elsdon, 1981, p. 10). Furthermore, it has been observed that throughout history, our (Africa) environment has encountered different and difficult environmental mess such as climate change, biodiversity, over-population, pollution, deforestation, accumulated refuse, clean water shortage, etc. and there has being questions about whether man has any right to take care of his ecology. Has he not been given the right to have dominium over the creation? How can he be

going hungry, still gazing at the creation, which supposes to be food to him? Could it be because the government has not been able to meet the needs of our environment that people are treating creation the way they like? What impact has the chaotic situation of our ecology has over our environment?

The situation is not different in Nigeria and Africa at large. Our environmental degradation of today is quite alarming and disheartening. People are living in delusion of things getting better, forgetting that the nation and the continent are losing their rich, biological and ecological resources, which are supposed to boost the social, economical, and political potentials of the nation and continent.

This delusion that we had a balanced ecology was asserted by Kashope Ijatuyi- Morphe (2004) when she states in her thesis that:

When the twentieth century began, neither human technology, nor human numbers were powerful enough to alter planetary life systems... Soil erosion was not exceeding soil formation...Species extinction was not exceeding species evolution.

Carbon emissions were not exceeding carbon fixation. Fish catches were not exceeding fish reproduction. Forest destruction was exceeding forest regeneration. Fresh water use was not exceeding aquifer replenishment... nature was still resilient and forgiving.

Ecology in African has undergone series of debates and arguments regarding the way people handle the earth that God himself created. Instead of being stewards of God's creation, we have become destroyers of God's creations. Some have said that the issue of ecology is not their responsibility and that it does not matter the way one behaves towards creation; after all, we are called to 'have dominion over the earth', why disturb ourselves with the issue of ecology.

In Africa, forests are destroyed for fuel or kerosene; timbers are cut down for export, poles, furniture, etc without replacement. More so, our wild life is hunted as meat or food or for money. This is a distorting and destruction of the creation of God, leaving us with nothing but sorrow for the loss of some of these beauties of nature and creation.

However, the big question remains, where is the problem coming from? How come this balance has degraded? Is it that God has changed or that human beings have changed? The writers feel it is human beings that have changed. In fact, some have blamed the Christians for this quantum of ecological problems facing humanity. Is this assertion true? What is the Christians response to the issue of ecology? Has religion any part or effect on environmental crisis? These and many more questions we will try to explore in this essay.

Should people continue with the destruction of the ecology they are supposed to cherish, care for, keep and develop modalities for a better environment? Unfortunately, the Church too, which is supposed to agitate for the stewardship of our creation, have neglected this duty. Instead of shining the light for the world to see as Jesus declared to his disciples that "You are the salt of the earth... (and) the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden...(So) let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"(Matt 5: 13-16 NIV).

We have heard series of talks on how our ecology has been and being messed up by man whom God took time to create in His own image. In fact, the writers feel that why people treat the ecology the way they like is because they do not think well about their environment, feeling that they have nothing to do with the ecology; not to talk of giving something to the ecology. Confirming this, Berry (2000) commented that. "... What (people) do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them. (And that) Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny...."

The United Nations went further to talk about how our ecology is being destroyed. Commenting on this, in one of their meetings, it was stated that:

Even since the age of Enlightenment, we have had an almost boundless faith in our own intelligence and in the benign consequences of our actions. Whatever the discoveries of science, whatever the rate at which we multiply as species, whatever the rate at which we destroy other species, whatever the changes we make to our seas and landscape, we have believed that the world would stay much the same in all its fundamentals. We now know that this is no longer true. This perception could have consequences for national action and international diplomacy as far-reaching as those which resulted from the splitting of the atom... Increasingly we understand that the ways we multiply, produce energy, use natural resources and produce waste threaten to change fundamentally the balance of our global environment. We may not be seeing the end of Nature, but Nature is certainly under threat (In Berry, 2000, pp 13-14).

In fact, United Nations went to the extent of setting aside a day for reflections on our environment, which of course, is known as *World Environmental Day*. It is obvious that the chemicals released into the environment have varieties of adverse ecological effects, ranging from fish and wildlife kills to forest decline.

Ecological effects can be long-term or short-term, leaving changes in the normal functioning of an ecosystem; which results in economic, social, and aesthetic losses. These potential adverse effects are important reasons for regulation of pesticides, toxic substances, and other sources of pollution in the opinion of the writers of this paper.

Having considered the way African ecosystem has been exploited, mal-handled and destroyed under much thinking. It calls for serious

intervention from the church as people of God, The church has to declare or respond to the issue under study and, "...if creation care is a divine mandate laid on all humankind, and 'all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven' (Col 1: 20), then neglecting creation care is a sin (Berry, 2000, p. 5)"

Where does the church come? Of course, the church has talked about a lot of theological issues like Christology, ecclesiology, theology, and all the logics we can think of but less emphasis has been given to ecological issues.

The Objectives of this Paper

In this paper, an attempt is made to discuss issues affecting our ecology as Africans and Nigerians in particular, and how it could be revitalized. The paper will examine from the Scriptures the theological basis for caring for creation and how they could be applied in Nigeria, in Africa and the world at large, knowing that the world's ecology is in a mess. The paper will also proffer suggestions, solutions or measures to be taken in order to avoid further destruction of the ecology in Nigeria and indeed African.

It is the writers' hope that the insight gained in this paper would go a long way in changing our perception about ecology in Africa and beyond. More to that, applying the knowledge in our lives first as we seek the biblical truth to this contemporary and challenging issue.

Creation View on Ecology

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... and God saw everything that he made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:1a. 3a). Ecology from creation account is where God proved himself to be the landlord of the world land because He was the one that created it and left it in good position- uncorrupted, therefore, the whole **earth** and all within it are God's tenants. There is need for us to go back to the Bible and derive the biblical principles for taking care of our ecology, from Genesis down to Revelation.

Old Testament View of Creation

In the Old Testament, we see God as the **Divine owner** of creation. The earth has beginning, designed and constructed out of nothing (Genesis, 1: 1-2). Denoting from this is that God is the owner of the earth. The Psalmist went further to say that, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Psalms 21:1). In fact, God pointed this out to Job that, "everything under heaven belongs to me (Him)" (Job 41:11). God went further to talk to the Israelites to take care of the land because it came out of God. From these passages, it is clear that the earth belongs to God; therefore, it needs to be managed and handled with care by man. It is not just that God owns the earth, but also, the earth is a **Divine** gift to man.

Moreso, God used the issue of land to invite the people of the earth to witness how He cherishes the Land and demands that we take care of it (The theory of creation Triangle-God, humanity and the Earth).

New Testament View of Creation

Having considered the Old Testament's view of creation, it will be good for us to look into the New Testament. The New Testament is not silent about creation or ecology. God proves to be the sustainer of all things and that He cares for His creation. In Matthew, God pointed out that he feeds the birds of the air, etc as Matthew mentioned. "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them... clothes the grass of the field..." (Matt. 6: 26-30). Of course, God had the intention of putting the corrupt nature of the world into its proper place - for its distorted nature will not be permanent (Rom 8:21). The Bible also mentions that human begins need or should look at nature and see God. Of which, if man is sensitive to, will understand that he is in the image of God- the triune God; he needs to be a *steward* of God's creation not a *destroyer* (2 Cor 5:5; 1 Thess 5:23).

Conceptual Clarifications

What is Ecosystem/Ecology?

An ecosystem follows a certain sequence of processes and events through the days, seasons, and years. The processes include not only the birth, growth, reproduction, and death of biota in that particular ecosystem, but also the interactions between species and physical characteristics of the geological environment. From these processes the ecosystem gains a recognizable structure and function, and matter and energy are cycled and flow through the system. Over time, better-adapted species come to dominate; entirely new species may change, perhaps in a new or altered ecosystem.

The basic level of ecological organization is with the individual, a single plant, insect or bird. The definition of ecology is based on the interactions of organisms with their environment. In the case of an individual, it would entail the relationships between that individual and numerous physical (rain, sun, wind, temperature, nutrients, etc.) and biological (other plants, insects, diseases, animals, etc.) factors. The next level of organization is the population. Populations are no more than a collection of individuals of the same species within an area or region. We can see populations of humans, birch trees, or sunfish in a pond. Population ecology is concerned with the interaction of the individuals with each other and with their environment (Extension Toxicology Network Report).

Community: The next, more complex, level of organization is the community. Communities are made up of different populations of interacting plants, animals, and microorganisms also within some defined geographic area. Different populations within a community interact more among themselves than with populations of the same species in other communities, therefore, there are often genetic

differences between members of two different communities. The populations in a community have evolved together, so that members of that community provide resources (nutrition, shelter) for each other.

Ecosystem: The next level of organization is the ecosystem. An ecosystem consists of different communities of organisms associated within a physically defined space. For example, a forest ecosystem consists of animal and plant communities in the soil, forest floor, and forest canopy, along the stream bank and bottom, and in the stream. A stream bottom community, for example, will have various fungi and bacteria living on dead leaves and animal wastes, protozoans and microscopic invertebrates feeding on these microbes, and larger invertebrates (worms, crayfish) and vertebrates (turtles, catfish). Each community functions somewhat separately, but is also linked to the others by the forest, rainfall, and other interactions. For example, the stream community is heavily dependent upon leaves produced in the surrounding trees falling into the stream, feeding the microbes and other invertebrates. For another example, the rainfall and groundwater flow in a surrounding forest community greatly affects the amount and quality of water entering the stream or lake system.

Terrestrial ecosystems can be grouped into units of similar nature, termed biomes (such as a "deciduous forest," "grassland," "coniferous forest." etc.) or into a geographic unit, termed landscapes, containing several different types of ecosystems. Aquatic ecosystems are commonly categorized on the basis of whether the water is moving (streams, river basins) or still (ponds, lakes, large lakes) and whether the water is fresh, salty (oceans), or brackish (estuaries). Landscapes and biomes (and large lakes, river basins, and oceans) are subject to global threats of pollution (acid deposition, stratospheric ozone depletion, air pollution, the greenhouse effect) and human activities (soil erosion, deforestation).

Adverse Effects on Ecosystems

While many natural forces - drought, fire, flood, frost or species migration, etc -can affect it, an ecosystem will usually continue to

function in a recognizable way. For instance, a pond ecosystem may go through flood or drought but continues to be a pond. This natural resilience of ecosystems enables them to resist change and recover quickly from disruption. On the other hand, toxic pollutants and other non-natural phenomena can overwhelm the natural stability of an ecosystem and result in irreversible changes and serious losses, as illustrated by the following examples:

- Decline of forests, due to air pollution and acid deposition;
- Loss of fish production in a stream, due to death of invertebrates from copper pollution;
- Loss of timber growth, due to nutrient losses caused by mercury poisoning of microbes and soil insects;
- Decline and shift in age of eagle and hawk (and other top predator) populations, due to the effects of DDT in their food supply on egg survival;
- Losses of numbers of species (diversity) in ship channels subjected to repeated oil spills;
- Loss of commercially valuable salmon and endangered species (bald eagle, osprey) from forest applications of DDT.
- Increase in death rate as a result of the pollution. This was cited by Prof. Hilary Inyang -An Environmentalist during an NTA program "Our Environment Program" on the 7th of September 2005, it was reported that about seven persons died as a result of the inhaling of smoke that was produced by a generator. This supposed to be an instrument that we should enjoy but it has turned out to affect our livelihood.
- It has also brought about the great increase in Ozone layer depletion due to the ODS chemicals that are generated by the so-called comfort instruments. And we in this part of the world received them as "TOKUNBOS", Therefore, there is need for these kinds of instruments to be band or for its components to be checked before introducing into the market.

Each of these pollutant-caused losses has altered ecosystem processes and components and thus affected aesthetic and commercial value of an ecosystem. Usually, adverse ecological effects take place over long period of time or even at some distance from the point of release of a chemical.

For example, DDT though banned from use in the United States for over twenty years, is still entering the Great Lakes ecosystem through rainfall and dust from sources halfway around the world. The long-term effects and overall impacts of new and existing chemicals on ecosystems can only be partially evaluated by current laboratory testing procedures. Nevertheless, through field studies and careful monitoring of chemical use and biological outcome, it is possible to evaluate the short-term and long-term effects of pesticides and other chemicals (Extension Toxicology Network, 3)

- Divine ownership (Ps 24:1)
- Divine gift to humanity (Ps 115:16)
- Ecological Dimension of the O.T.

According to Wright (2004) "Ecological concern is obviously high on our contemporary ethical agenda, faced as we are with the terrible effects of massive pollution, ozone depletion, carbon emissive of global warming habitat and species destruction, deforestation and soil erosion, and all the other ghastly effects of human depredation of our natural environment (p. 103)."

Another, issues that we need to wrestle with is the issue of seeing ECOLOGY in light of the Old Testament. Some believed that we are just reading meaning into the Old Testament about ecology; just as Rodd (2004) mentioned that:

Nearly all these studies ... have attempted to turn the Old Testament writes into late twentieth- century environment. They were not. (Stating that) it needs to be asserting as forcefully as possible that the question

of safeguarding the environment did not enter into their thinking... claiming ... that there is no explicit demand to care for the environment, because it didn't occur to anyone in Ancient Israel to make such a plea' such a demand may be impact in the creation narratives and the 'cosmic comment', but hardly ever (if at all) in the O.T. are human beings urged to take active measures to conserve nature (pp. 103-104).”

The researchers view this assumption as erroneous in the sense that from the creation account (Gen. 1 & 2) there were issues of subduing the earth and keeping it. So, if there were statement as such, how would Rodd think that the Ancient Israelites lacked knowledge of keeping the earth?

Views on African Ecology

Nature is not outside of African sense. Kashope Morphe (2004) in her thesis pointed out that "Nature ... implies a mystical yet utilitarian outlook... instead of an externalized appreciation of it in forms like fine landscapes, beautiful flowers.... (p. 29)." Of course, Africans believe that supreme begins inhabits the forms of nature. O'Donovan (1996), in his book, confirmed that African life is rich with an awareness of supreme begin, and this is deeply rooted in their practices and beliefs in which God is recognized as the sustainer and creator of life.

The African Initiative Churches (AIC) have suggested that since independent, our nation Africa is yet to be liberated from the exploitation of our ecosystem of which the Holy Spirit is seen as the only liberator as far as this is concerned. More so, they pointed out that:

We need ... to move from a predominantly anthropocentric and therefore exploitive soteriology towards a more universal, cosmic, and, by implication, altruistic approach which proclaims and

promotes justice, peace and salvation for all of creation. Such a broadened soteriology would entail a perception of the Holy Spirit as Earth keeper and translate into a church praxis of ecological reform (Daneel, 2001, p.41).

Divine Ownership

Proper view of God gives us the proper view of ecology as being God's belonging- for He is the creator, sustainer, and the owner of the creation. The scripture says that, "To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it" (Deut 10: 14). The Psalmist went further to state that, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who lives in it"(Ps 21:1). The above-mentioned passages confirmed that God is the owner of the whole universe not just the creator or the owner of Israel as a nation (Ps 24: 1; Job 41: 1) and the preceding passage also affirmed that it is so because God made it. However, one is not ignorant of the fact that some do not believe in the existence of God, but the Scripture states that it is only a "...fool that says in his heart there is no God" (Ps 14:1; 10:3-4; 53:1). Of course, it is possible that it is because of their wickedness of heart and the desire to negate the truth of God's word- for it has being stated that God has revealed himself in nature (Ps 19:1-2; Rom 1:18-32). Of course, not just that God created the heavens and the earth; he also declared that it was good. The goodness of His creation in Gen 1 & 2 indicates that He is the chief chef of the earth just like a chef who licks his or her finger because the meal he or she prepared was good. As the Lord presented the delicacy of His creation from the creation workshop, He indeed, kissed His fingers in appreciation of His handwork of creation. In fact, it was not just good but 'very good' and the goodness of course, came from a good hand that is skilful and ever ready to give the best.

Wright (2004) pointed out that:

This sets the Hebrew account of creation in contrast to other ancient Near Eastern accounts where powers

and goals of the natural world portrayed in various degrees of malevolence, and where some aspects of the natural order are explained as the outcome of that malevolence (p. 106).

The goodness of God was what made Adam and Eve. God saw all these and affirmed before man His divine approval not the approval of men but Himself; of which made Him to value the creation so much (c.f Gen 1:4,13,18,21,25). Of course, the goodness of God was in line with His plan- showing the stupendous art and craftsmanship of God. Confirming this statement, Wright also mentioned that, "something is good when it works according to plan, when it dynamically operates as it was designed to (p. 107)." Therefore, the goodness of the creation should not be envisaged as some kind of original timeless or changeless perfection because time and change are built and structured in God's creation. Adding to the prior comment by Wright, he said that:

... the ecosphere (indeed, the universe) is by the source of value in all its moral ambiguity- including the predation and prodigality that the inherent parts of the dynamics of evolution and ecology, including the inseparable intertwining of beauty and ugliness, including the combinations of destruction and construction in floods and quakes... (More so) the ordered chaos in the structure of ecosystems and including the 'purposive randomness' with elements of creative chance structured into generally predictable process. But God has mysterious purpose, and God values the creation in its ambiguous state because it contributes to that purpose (p. 108).

God created the earth and everything in it affirmed that He is the Creator and everything else is created by him- bringing to bear the indisprovable ontogical view of God. So, God did not create the world and feel unconcerned about it. Again, creation is not independent or

co-eternal with God who is the creator because He is actively and unceasingly sustaining its existence and its functions (c.f Ps 33:6-9; 65: 9-13; 104). This of course, was a prevalent issue in the cultural and religious environment of Israel.

Biblical Perspective of Environment

The issue of ecology is not silent in the Scripture. The question is if the earth belongs to man or God? The answer could be in two forms. In the Book of Psalm the Bible says that. "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it..." Also in Psalm 115:16, the Bible records that. "The highest heaven belongs to the Lord, but the earth he has given to man." From the above-mentioned passages, Stott (1999, p. 130) suggests that the earth belongs to God and man; to God because He is the creator, and to man-because He has given it to him. He further pointed out that not that as completely as to retain the rights and control over it, but that He has given to man to rule on His behalf. However, I would like to add that God has not, to some extent, given man the earth to rule on His behalf rather He has made us stewards of His creation-to take care of it; of course, He alone remains the owner, landlord, and the Lord of all the land.

Most scholars and theologians have also looked at Psalm 115:16 as if we are co-rulers with God and the writers of this paper feel that this concept could be gotten from Gen.1:26-28 where the phrase "rule...over all the earth" and "subdue it" are mentioned. But the writers will like to suggest that it does not mean ruling or to be a landlord over the earth but just to be a caretaker. As a caretaker, that means we are accountable to the Landlord who is God on how we have handled the land or property or the earth. Accepting this view, Stott (1999) said that. "... we are not the landowners, but the bailiffs who mangle and farm it on the owners behalf; God makes us in the most literal sense, 'caretakers' of his property" (p. 134).

Responsibility of Man over Creation

The responsibility that God has bestowed on our shoulders in terms of taking care of the creation is quite frightening. He has put much into

the hands of men and women that He has created to take care and not to destroy. Of course, even when we are cultivating the land we should know that we are handling something that does not belong to us but has been entrusted to us to take care of on behalf of the Creator. This concept is STEWARDSHIP. Stewardship is needed virtually in all aspects of life: in managing money, time, and possessions.

This thought is not far from the experience in the book of 1 Kings 6:5, where the servant of Elisha had to cry out for the borrowed axe-head that fell into the water because he knew that as a borrowed axe, responsibility was bestowed on him to take care of the axe. So it is with the creation, which God has giving us as good stewards. God desired that we take care of the creation so that the creation will be just as He created it from the beginning-for what He made was good till the fall of man (Genesis 3). Therefore, the control of soil erosion, deforestation, controls of both water and air pollution, etc are not just man-made thought but it is God's deep concern for creation to be good because all are His. "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it" (Psalms 24:1).

Agreeing with the above, Batchelor (1993) affirmed that, "Greedy exploitation and the abuse of nature are sinful. (For) the environment belongs to God, not us. It is true that we have to learn to control what God has created, but we must do so with deep respect in the knowledge that we are ultimately responsible to God..." (p. 38).

"Then God said, Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Genesis 1: 26). For the fact that God gave man the mandate to rule over the fish, etc. of the Land does not necessary mean to destroy or to mishandle the earth / his environment. God's intention was that we should occupy/take care of everything. The researchers would like to agree to this for the fact that God made man in his likeness is an indication that God also want man to be mindful as stewards of God's creation just as He is in control of the universe.

The fact that man was created in the image of God does not mean the destruction of our environment, "... we are called to live in peace with them, as good shepherding and humble servants. (Because)... Being in the image of God (can't be used) ... as our pretext to abuse, neglect ..." (Wright, 2004, p. 122) our environment. More so, it has the connotation of a shepherd, and a shepherd's duty is to care for the sheep, not to exploit or abuse them. The researches agreed with the statement of Wright that:

If we have dominion over God's other creatures, then we are called to live in peace with them as good shepherds and humble servants. We cannot say that we are made in the image of God and then use that as our pretext to abuse, neglect, or even belittle other species, when God does none of those things. (Therefore, we have) ... the right to exercise ... the principles of justice and mercy; but we have the parallel duty, not only to God but to... the creation to love them and protect them (p. 122).

The concept of stewardship of God's creation points out clearly that man is not the owner of the earth, rather it has been entrusted to his care by the one who is the rightful owner of the earth, God himself (Wright p. 123). As we care for the creation of God, it shows that we love God.

Cursed Earth: Human sin and ecological destruction, nature and the curse or origin of distorted Ecology

From the study of the scriptures in Gen 3, we discovered that the ecological system of the earth collapsed as a result of the fall - the disobedience and rebellion of man against God. This of course, was evident as God cursed the first man, Adam and the earth (Genesis 3: 17) and man was returned to the earth.

Perhaps that was why Bauckham in Wright's book *Old Testament Ethics for the people of God* mentioned that, "The full disturbed humanity harmonious relationship with nature, alienating us form

nature, so that we now experience nature as hostile and introducing elements, struggle and violence into our relation with nature (Genesis 3:15, 17 - 19; 9:2).

Cosmic Covenant: As we try to explore the curse of earth's distortion on the ecology, it is belittled that the cosmic connections between man's sin and indeed all human behaviour) and the rest of the natural order cannot be ruled out (Wright, 2004, p. 132). As regards the Cosmic Covenant made by God it is stated:

I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you, And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth (Genesis9:8.12, 16).

One would not be mistaken to say that God decided to change the ecological situation then which has been destroyed by sin to make new one through blood and going into covenant with human and the rest of the creatures.

Hosea was right to discover and say that the fall of man affected the earth (Hosea 4:3).

- Human factor (war) As Hosea pointed out, war is one of the strongest factor or course it destruction in ecology (Habakkuk 2: 17). During war, there is deforestation; this of course, made Wright to remember "The deforestation of vast areas of Vietnam in the course of war (between America and Vietnam) and these Iraqis ecological atrocities in the Gulf at the end of the Gulf war of 1991... (Wright p. 136).

- Restoration of Ecology: Is there hope for our ecology? Of course, yes! In the OT eschatological vision regarding creation (Isaiah 65 - 66) the Lord promised to restore the ecological nature of the world by creation new heavens and earth (Isaiah 65: 17). And as God purge the world of sin (2 Pet 3:10—13): of course, him dwelling with his people (Revelation 21: 1-4); there would be a change in our ecological view of the earth.

However, as God would be bringing about changes in the ecological situation of the earth, we too have a part to play by changing our attitude towards creation; show that we care; keep, and handle it as God's creation that needs to be cared for, as God would have us do because we are created in His image. Of course, it is only an enemy of God that would decide not to obey God in keeping and caring for His creation.

Conclusion

Having looked at the issue of ecology, the writers would want to agree with the words of Francis Bridger in Wright's book *Old Testament Ethics for the people of God* stating that:

.. .we are called to be stewards of the earth by virtue not simply of our orientation to the Edenic command of the creator but also because of our orientation, therefore, anthropocentric: they testify to the vindicating act of God in creation ... (And) The knowledge of God's world, that our efforts are not directed toward the construction of sin Ideal Utopia but that we are, under God, building bridge and to bring us to the place of ethical obedience (Wright, p.142).

God is calling us not to violate the earth because He is going to destroy those who destroy the earth (Rev. 11: 18). This gives us the impression that God will judge those who decide to use their power to

abuse the earth that God has created and also abusing their stewardship responsibility.

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