

**THE ECO-THEOLOGIES OF THOMAS BERRY AND JOHN ZIZIOULAS:
INTIMATIONS FOR ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE**

by

Idara Otu

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Theology of Regis College and
the Theological Department of the Toronto School of Theology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degrees of
Master of Theology and Licentiate in Sacred Theology
awarded by the Toronto School of Theology

© Copyright by Idara Otu 2012

THE ECO-THEOLOGIES OF THOMAS BERRY AND JOHN ZIZIOULAS: INTIMATIONS FOR ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

Idara Otu, MSP
Master of Theology/Licentiate in Sacred Theology
Regis College, Toronto School of Theology
2012

Abstract

The contemporary ecological crisis is the most inexhaustive anthropogenic catastrophe in human civilization yet, with its adverse waves sweeping across the globe, even to generations unborn. The earth crisis has prompted theological discourses from diverse faith traditions on the religious responsibility to preserve ecological integrity. This exigency to protect and care for creation is increasingly inevitable and religion has an indispensable responsibility in unison with societal institutions to foster a collaborative dialogue towards an authentic resolution. Within Christendom, there is a dire need for a continuous and mutual engagement of eco-theological paradigms, at the level of both orthodoxy and orthopraxis, for the enhancement of an ongoing renewal of Christian ecological responsibility.

Accordingly, given the Christian responsibility of protecting and caring for creation as a common patrimony of all humanity, this thesis will compare and contrast the functional cosmology of Thomas Berry with the creation theology of John Zizioulas in order to draw seminal theological insights suitable for the ecological justice mission of the Church. This academic research will argue that amidst the vicissitudes of human-induced ecological devastations, the eco-theological motifs of Berry and Zizioulas are significant in the ongoing search for renewing the theological dynamics of the Church's mission for ecological justice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Introduction	1
Chapter One: The Functional Cosmology of Thomas Berry	
1.1 Introduction	13
1.2 The Early Life of Thomas Berry	14
1.2.1 Major Intellectual Influences on Thomas Berry	15
1.3 The Provenance of a New Cosmology	21
1.3.1 The Cosmogenetic Principles	25
1.3.2 Creation as Divine Revelation	29
1.4 Humanity as the Universe Consciousness	32
1.5 The Functional Spirituality	37
1.6 Conclusion	40
Chapter Two: The Creation Theology of John Zizioulas	
2.1 Introduction	41
2.2 John Zizioulas: The Ecological Bishop	42
2.2.1 Major Intellectual Influences on John Zizioulas	43
2.3 The Provenance of Zizioulian Cosmology	48
2.3.1 Creatio Ex Nihilo	54
2.3.2 Creation and Communion	56
2.4 Humanity as Priest of Creation	60
2.5 The Liturgical and Ascetical Praxis	62
2.6 Conclusion	66

Chapter Three: The Eco-Theological Motifs of Berry and Zizioulas

3.1	Introduction -----	67
3.2	Creation as Sacred -----	68
3.3	Humanity: Microcosm and Mediator of Creation -----	72
3.4	Eco-Spirituality: Human-Earth Community -----	76
3.5	Conclusion -----	79

Chapter Four: Ecological Justice and the Mission of the Church

4.1	Introduction -----	80
4.2	The Church and Integrity of Creation-----	81
	4.2.1 Biblical Foundation for the Care of Creation -----	85
	4.2.2 Christian Ecological Responsibility -----	88
4.3	Eco-Justice: The Significance of Berry and Zizioulas -----	92
	4.3.1 Motivation for Ecological Conversion -----	93
	4.3.2 Transformative Ecological Anthropology -----	96
	4.3.3 Integral Ecological Spirituality -----	99
4.4	The Future of Christian Ecological Justice -----	102
4.5	Conclusion -----	108
	General Conclusion -----	109
	Bibliography -----	111

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my past religious superior, Most Rev. Dr. Anselm Umoren, MSP, and the Missionary Society of St. Paul, for offering me the opportunity to undertake theological studies at the Toronto School of Theology. I sincerely acknowledge with gratitude the central leadership of the Scarboro Foreign Mission Society, most especially, Revs. Jack Lynch, Brian Swords, Mike Traher and John Carten, for granting me full scholarship to complete this program of study. Equally, I am grateful to all the members and staff of Scarboro Missions for providing me with a conducive environment for study.

My special thanks go to Professor Jaroslav Skira, my thesis director, for the inspiration and intellectual guidance he offered me towards the successful completion of this academic research. I sincerely thank the members of my thesis committee, Professor Dennis Patrick O'Hara and Professor John Dadosky, for their comments, which have enriched this research. My thanks go also to the director of the Advance Degree Program at Regis College, Professor Gill Goulding, for her wise counsel throughout my studies.

The early development of this research was made possible by the insights and support of Rev. Justine Vettukallel, Sr. Noreen Allossery-Walsh, and Paul McKenna. Most importantly, I sincerely thank Rev. Ronald MacDonell, SFM, for reading through the initial draft of this thesis and for making remarkable suggestions. In the course of this academic program, I have enjoyed the support and encouragement of Most Rev. Dr. Camillus Umoh, Fabian Otu, Francis Ezenezi, Shawn Daley, Luis Lopez, Jacob Mado, Youngmin Song, Fabian Ihunegbo, Godwin Nduaguide, and Francis Choy – Sɔsɔŋɔ. To God, who is the Alpha and the Omega of existence, and to the Blessed Mary, Mother of Our Creator, I give thanks and praise for the grace to contemplate creation.

ABBREVIATIONS

CA – Centesimus Annus (Encyclical Letter, Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum)

GS – Gaudium et Spes (Vatican II Pastoral Constitution, The Church in the Modern World)

LG – Lumen Gentium (Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution, The Light of the World)

JW – Justice in the World (Document of the Synod of Bishops 1971)

RM – Redemptoris Missio (Encyclical Letter, The Mission of Christ the Redeemer)

SRS – Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (Encyclical Letter, Concern for Social Order)

ed. Editor

eds. Editors

trans. Translator

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change, desertification, the deterioration and loss of productivity in vast agricultural areas, the pollution of rivers and aquifers, the loss of biodiversity, the increase of natural catastrophes and the deforestation of equatorial and tropical regions?¹

The contemporary ecological crisis is a visible sign of the times that the Roman Catholic Church is called to understand, interpret and respond to. The Church² considers the ecological crisis to be a moral problem as well as an issue of Christian faith, and thus it calls for ecological responsibility. The Church's clarion call for ecological conversion and consciousness involves a genuine effort to re-articulate a proper human self-understanding within creation. In the last decade of the twenty-first century, through scientific studies, it has become increasingly evident that humans are a determining factor in the threat to the future well-being of the earth. This is discernible mostly in the misuse of science and technology, and the prevailing modes of production and consumption that adversely impact the universe. The severe deterioration of life through human predatory activities and the despoliation of the earth are contributing to a fundamental alienation of the interdependence between humans and creation. Consequently, human self-understanding in relation to creation becomes the *terminus ad quo* of a truly authentic Christian response to the ecological crisis. However, there are diverse and distinct theological trajectories to the ongoing search for the primary cause of and the ultimate response to the ecological crisis.

¹ Benedict XVI, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation* (January 1, 2010), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091208_xliii-world-day-peace_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012), #4.

² In this thesis, the term 'Church' will refer to the Catholic Church as described in the Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*. Cf. *LG* (1964). http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_council/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen- (accessed May 12, 2012), #8.

At the level of theological study there is consistent effort by theologians to reflect on the different faith traditions working towards the promotion of planetary well-being. Within the Christian tradition, there are plausible eco-theological approaches that inform and motivate commitment towards ecological responsibility.³ Correspondingly, within creation-centered theological discourses, there are diverse interpretative ecological models.⁴ In view of the aforementioned eco-theological investigations, I consider the functional cosmology of Berry and the creation theology of Zizioulas to be promising inspirations for the transformation of the Christian imagination and motivation for the practice of ecological justice.⁵ This thesis proposes that the eco-theological paradigms of Berry and Zizioulas are significant for the ecological justice mission of the Church.

³ John F. Haught underlines three approaches. First, the “Apologetic” approach which draws mainly from Christian tradition and scripture, and the Church’s ecological teaching as theological basis for ecological responsibility. Second is the “Sacramental,” which is based on the premise that creation is a revelation of the divine. Third, the “Eschatological,” which draws from Christian hope in divine promise of creation’s coming into fulfillment through Jesus Christ. John F. Haught, *The Promise of Nature: Ecology and Cosmic Purpose* (New Jersey, New York: Paulist Press, 1993). See also, Noreen Allossery-Walsh, *Christian Ecological Responsibility: Intimations of Prophetic Witness for the Church in the New Millennium* (Chicago: Catholic Theological Union, 2009), 18-33. Stephen Scharper also identifies three approaches: the Apologetic, which draws from Christianity’s traditions on creation; the Constructive, which formulates theological foundations/models from Christian tradition; and the Listening approach, represented by Matthew Fox and Thomas Berry who advocate for the inclusion of new scientific insights and wisdom from other religious traditions in responding to the ecological crisis. Stephen Bede Sharper, *Redeeming the Time: A Political Theology of the Environment* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 23-25.

⁴ Dorothy McDougall identifies two principal emerging interpretative models: the stewardship and the ecological-egalitarian models. The stewardship model is based on the Genesis creation narratives, which are often interpreted as humans having dominion over and above the rest of creation. Zizioulas’ creation theology falls within this model, but it is distinct in its historical and systematic approach of retrieving from the Christian tradition a dynamic and relational understanding of creation. The ecological-egalitarian model is based on the interconnectedness of all parts of creation and grounded in the postmodern scientific cosmology. Metaphors such as kinship, web of life and community are used to express the interrelatedness of creation. See Dorothy C. McDougall, *The Cosmos as the Primary Sacrament: The Horizon for an Ecological Sacramental Theology* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 43-73.

⁵ Some theologians have adopted Berry’s functional cosmology as an ecological context. They include: Leonardo Boff and Sallie MacFague. See Mark Hathaway and Leonardo Boff, *The Tao of Liberation: Exploring the Ecology of Transformation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010); Sallie MacFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 105-107. In the same vein, Dennis Edwards and Celia Deane-Drummond have acknowledged and elaborated on the importance and significance of the eco-theological motif of Zizioulas in responding to the ecological crisis.

From a scientific cultural-historical perspective, Thomas Berry attributes the primary reason for the ecological crisis to a lack of functional cosmology which would articulate a mutual relationship between humans and the universe.⁶ He observes that the threat of mass extinctions is a potential occurrence in the course of this ecological age.⁷ Certainly, Berry's assertion is noticeable in numerous ecological contexts across the globe.⁸ This destruction of ecosystems and life forms are continuously exacerbated by humanity. Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme note that humans are probably extinguishing some ten thousand species each year.⁹ As a result of this dysfunctional

See Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 99-115; Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 2008), 56-68.

⁶ Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988), 87. Equally, Brian Swimme agrees with Berry that given the ecological devastation, what is missing is a functional cosmology that will enable the human community to organize itself in a way aimed at planetary health. Cf. Brian Swimme, "Science: A Partner in Creating the Vision," in *Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology*, eds. Anne Lonergan and Caroline Richards (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publication, 1987), 82.

⁷ According to Berry: "Extinction is a difficult concept to grasp. It is an external concept. It's not at all like the killing of individual lifeforms that can be renewed through normal processes of reproduction. Nor is it simply diminishing numbers. It is rather an absolute and final act for which there is no remedy on earth or in heaven. A species once extinct is gone forever." See Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 9.

⁸ For instance, in Nigeria, the Niger Delta tropical rainforest has been destroyed due to gas flaring and oil spillage. The Niger Delta spans a wetland of about 70,000 square kilometers and spreads over several ecological zones. The Niger Delta is interspersed with a network of creeks and tributaries that drain the River Niger into the Atlantic Ocean along the Gulf of Guinea. The Delta region is habitat to more unique species of plants, animals and aquatic life than any other coastal systems in West Africa. Today, this region accommodates more than 100 gas flaring sites and has recorded over 4,000 oil spills resulting in climate change, species extinctions and the destruction of the ecosystem. Cf. Augustine A. Ikein, *The Impact of Oil on a Developing Country: The Case of Nigeria* (New York, Prager, 1990); Tunde Obadina, "Harnessing Abundant Gas Reserves," *Africa Recovery* 13, no.1 (June 1999): 16; Kenneth Omeje, *High Stakes and Stakeholders: Oil Conflict and Security in Nigeria* (England: Ashgate, 2006), 58.

⁹ Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era – a Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 247. These extinctions mirror the termination of life-forms during the Paleozoic and Mesozoic Era in earth history. The Paleozoic ended about 245 million years ago and the Mesozoic about 67 million years ago. Humans are in the terminal phase of the Cenozoic. These terms designate the functioning pattern of the ecosystem, characterized by species extinctions. Cf. Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 118; Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, "The Ecozoic Era," *Anima* 20, no.2 (March 1994): 106.

relationship between humanity and the natural world, Berry concludes that there is a need for a new cosmology that will educate, heal, guide and discipline humanity.¹⁰

Etymologically, the word ‘cosmology’ is a derivative of the Greek *kósmos* (world) and *lógos* (word) meaning literally the science of the world.¹¹ In modern scientific usage, ‘cosmology’ specifies that discipline which concerns itself with theories pertaining to the origin and structure of the universe.¹² Nonetheless, Berry uses the term ‘cosmology’ to designate not only the structure of the universe but to express a set of meanings and values, especially with regard to human self-understanding in the universe.¹³ In scientific parlance, Berry argues that because the term ‘cosmology’ expresses more than the physical nature of the universe; he prefers the metaphor ‘New Story’ or ‘Universe Story,’ since they indicate the integral reality of the universe.¹⁴ The New Story “is a numinous revelatory story that could evoke not only the vision but also the energies needed for bringing ourselves and the entire planet into a new order of

¹⁰ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 124.

¹¹ V. Burns, “Cosmology,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol. 4 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 364. Christian Wolf introduced the word cosmology for the first time in 1730 and designated it as a special branch of metaphysics.

¹² *Ibid*; Allossery-Walsh, *Christian Ecological Responsibility*, 104.

¹³ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 26. Berry and Swimme observe that a cosmology aims at articulating the story of the universe so that humans can enter fruitfully into the webs of relationship within the universe. Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 23; Anne Maria Dalton, *A Theology for the Earth: The Contributions of Thomas Berry and Bernard Lonergan* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1999), 10.

¹⁴ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 90. The ‘New Story’ refers to the present, scientific understanding of the cosmos as developing and interconnected by origin. While science developed an empirical meaning of the New Story, Berry presents it as a sacred story of the universe and of the total human venture. Thomas Berry and Thomas Clarke, in *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation Between Humans and the Earth*, eds. Stephen Dunn and Anne Lonergan (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991), 7,150. Berry and Swimme describes the Universe Story tracing it from the original flaring forth through the shaping of galaxies, the elements, the earth, its living forms, the human mode of being, and on through the course of human affairs during the past centuries. Cf. Berry and Swimme, “The Ecozoic Era,” 105.

survival.”¹⁵ Considering the species extinctions that characterized previous ecological eras, Berry’s cosmological vision is imperative for humanity’s entry into the emerging Ecozoic Era.¹⁶

The ‘Ecozoic’ indicates the period when humans will be present to the planet as participating members of the comprehensive Earth community.¹⁷ In this fourth geological era, humans and nonhumans will coexist and fulfill their role in the universal order of beings.¹⁸ According to Berry, “[T]hat the universe is a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects is the central commitment of the Ecozoic. Existence itself is derived from and sustained by this intimacy of each being with every other being of the universe.”¹⁹ In order to overcome the ecological crisis, the re-establishment of a mutual human-earth relationship becomes an imperative. Thus, functional cosmology is a “cosmology that will provide the mystique needed for this integral earth-human presence.”²⁰ Such a functional cosmology will inform the norms of life and the ethical values of humans, revealing the sacredness of creation. The ‘Great Work,’ for Berry, is to carry out the transition from an era of human-induced devastation of the Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner.²¹ Berry

¹⁵ Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* (New York: Bell Tower, 1999), 71.

¹⁶ Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 118, 242.

¹⁷ Berry, *The Great work*, 8; Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 149.

¹⁸ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 200.

¹⁹ Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 243.

²⁰ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 66. The functional cosmology is founded on twelve principles. The second principle states: “The universe is a unity, and interacting and genetically related community of beings bound together in an inseparable relationship in space and time. The unity of the planet earth is especially clear; each being of the planet is profoundly implicated in the existence and functioning of every other being in the universe.” See Thomas Berry, “Twelve Principles for Reflecting on the Universe and the Role of the Human in the Universe Process,” *Cross Currents* 37, no. 2-3 (1987): 176.

²¹ Berry, *The Great Work*, 3.

succinctly describes the realization of this transition from the Cenozoic to the Ecozoic as ‘metareligious,’ because it involves all human institutional systems (political, economic, intellectual and religious), as well as the entire geo-biological planet.²²

Moreover, from the Eastern Orthodox tradition, John Zizioulas, a theologian and the Metropolitan of Pergamon, argues that the ecological crisis arose from the cultural consciousness of a dualistic cosmological worldview, in which humans were at odds with the rest of creation. Zizioulas considers the ecological problem to be a spiritual one and a crisis of culture, which has to do with the loss of the *sacrality* of nature.²³ He asserts that what we need is “not an ethic, but an *ethos*. Not a programme, but an attitude and a mentality. Not a legislation, but a culture.”²⁴ Here Zizioulas argues for an ecological ethos that is liturgically centered and principally ethical. According to him “we stand in need of a new culture in which the *liturgical dimension* would occupy the central place, and perhaps determine the ethical principle. If I were to give an overall title to this effort... this would probably be that of *Man as the Priest of Creation*.”²⁵ As Priest of Creation, the human person lifts up creation in thanksgiving to God and with the responsibility of mediating between God and creation. The ethical dimension would be

²² Berry, *The Great Work*, 72, 85.

²³ John Zizioulas, “Ecological Asceticism: A Cultural Revolution,” *Sourozh*, 67 (February 1997): 25; John Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation (III),” *King’s Theological Review* 13 (1990): 5.

²⁴ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 13:5. Although Zizioulas does not explicitly offer a definition of ‘culture,’ it is important to note that there is no universally agreed-upon definition. However, there are three dimensions of culture: ideational, performance and material. See Robert J. Schreier, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 29. An interpretation of Zizioulas indicates that the ideational dimension is what he emphasizes. For instance, when he observes, “our culture stands in need of a revival of the consciousness that the superiority of the human being as compared with the rest of creation consists not in the reason it possesses but in its ability to *relate* in such a way as to create events of communion,” in John Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation: Three Lectures on Theology and Ecology (I),” *King’s Theological Review* 12 (1989): 2.

²⁵ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 12:2.

fulfilled through humanity's expression of communion with creation and God.²⁶ This eco-theological proposition arises from the dysfunctional relationship between humans and the rest of creation. Humans are living at a time when communion with the 'other' (God, humans and creation) is becoming extremely difficult. Zizioulas observes that the ecological problem "is due to a crisis between the human being and the otherness of the rest of creation. Man does not respect the otherness of what is not human; he tends to absorb it into himself. This is the cause of the ecological problem."²⁷ Viewed in this way, Zizioulas emphasizes that an authentic Christian response to the ecological crisis must recognize the 'other' which humans are called to bring into communion with themselves, affirming creation as 'very good' through personal creativity and communion. The contextualization of this eco-theological presupposition can be realized in the cultural creativity of the Christian community. Instead of enforcing an ethics-oriented legislation to care for creation, the Christian ethos of communion will be established with creation.

In comparison, the cosmologies of Berry and Zizioulas reveal two distinct eco-theological motifs with great significance for Christianity. Berry's functional cosmology integrates scientific revelations and religious insights to expound upon the interrelatedness and interdependence in the universe, as well as the intrinsic value of every being for the integral functioning and well-being of the earth. On the other hand, the creation theology of Zizioulas, drawn from the Eastern Orthodox tradition, is rooted in the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, sacramentality and asceticism. Both Berry and Zizioulas underscore the sacred character of creation, the ecological responsibility of the

²⁶ Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," 12:5.

²⁷ John Zizioulas, "Communion and Otherness," *Sobornost* 16/1 (1994): 18.

human person and the promotion of human-earth relationship. These seminal insights from both theologians have the capacity to further deepen the ecological justice mission of the Church.²⁸

The term ‘eco-justice’ or ecological justice is a relatively emerging concept. Ecological justice refers to constructive human responses that concentrate on the link between ecological health and social justice.²⁹ Ecological justice therefore seeks to attend to the well-being of human-earth community as well as promote human dignity and ecological integrity. This ethical responsibility, as Leonardo Boff observes, is grounded in the existence and uniqueness of every being who has the right to be accepted and respected in their otherness. Boff argues that this “right produces a corresponding duty in human beings to preserve and defend the existence of every being in creation. Today we call this the dignity of the earth (*dignitas terrae*), seen as a whole.”³⁰ Since humanity is an integral part of creation, social justice goes hand-in-hand with ecological justice.³¹ In this thesis, ecological justice will be considered as a unified approach towards promoting justice for the human and earth community.

Consequently, this academic research presents the eco-theologies of Berry and Zizioulas as important dialogue partners for the eco-justice mission of the Church. Drawing from the comparative analysis of both theologians, this thesis will demonstrate

²⁸ In this thesis, I will often refer to the ‘Functional Cosmology’ of Berry and the ‘Creation Theology’ of Zizioulas as ‘Eco-Theologies.’ This will allow for clarity and to avoid unnecessary contraction in syntax and literary style of this research.

²⁹ Dieter T. Hessel, “Introduction: Why This Field Guide?” in *Theology for Earth Community: A Field Guide* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 12.

³⁰ Leonardo Boff, *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995), 87.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

each theologian's significance in responding to the existential question of why humans should care for creation. Particularly, the dialogical conversation between Berry and Zizioulas will be guided by the following questions: How do they understand the sacred nature of creation? What is the place and role of the human person in their cosmological visions? Can the eco-spiritualities of Berry and Zizioulas promote justice for human and earth communities? These ecological questions *ipso facto* capture the eco-theological motifs of Berry and Zizioulas – which this thesis identifies as important for eco-justice. The relevance of these horizons will appraise the need for renewal of the Church's call to ecological conversion, ecological anthropology, as well as its commitment to social and ecological justice. The above delineated theological dynamics are promising inspirations for a transformation towards the practice of ecological justice.

The complexities of the ecological crisis demand an ecological reformation for the Church. Such eco-reformation, according to Mary Evelyn Tucker, requires the retrieval, expansion and reframing of resources within Christian tradition.³² In this research, I will argue that the new cosmology as presented by Thomas Berry and the creation theology of John Zizioulas offer seminal insights for the Church's ecological mission. Moreover, the eco-theological motifs of both authors offer possibilities towards a contextualized theological foundation that can provide new direction for Christian ecological action within diverse cultural communities. In summation, this thesis is a modest attempt to propose a synthetic integration of the eco-theological perspectives of Berry and Zizioulas for the eco-justice mission of the Church.

³² See Mary Evelyn Tucker, "Globalization and the Environment," in *Globalization and Catholic Social Thought: Present Crisis, Future Hope*, eds. John A. Coleman and William F. Ryan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2005), 99-100.

PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY

In this thesis, I will undertake a systematic study of the eco-theologies of Berry and Zizioulas. I shall correlate select theological dynamics arising from the eco-theological motifs of both theologians in order to demonstrate their distinctiveness and relevancy towards the practice of ecological justice. Suffice it to emphasize that this is not an effort to read either theologian into the work of the other – since Berry and Zizioulas remain independent personalities emerging from different Christian traditions and with complex eco-theological perspectives. Nevertheless, the aim is to present the basic eco-theological arguments of Berry and Zizioulas that are significant for the Church's mission of ecological justice. This thesis will be divided into four chapters.

The functional cosmology of Thomas Berry will be the focus of the first chapter. I shall present an intellectual background of Berry highlighting the historical, cultural and religious influences on his cosmological vision. I will explore Berry's understanding of an emergent evolutionary universe, which is characterized by the cosmogenetic principles of differentiation, subjectivity and communion. The examination of these cosmological dynamics will show how cosmogenesis informs both the genetic coding and cultural coding of humans. The entire exposition will provide the cosmological foundation for a deeper understanding of creation as a revelation of the divine and the role of humans in promoting mutually-enhancing human-earth relationships. Most, importantly, I will examine the functional spirituality of Berry, which is closely related to his functional cosmology. This thesis will not explore all of Berry's arguments for the need for a functional cosmology and a functional spirituality that are summarized in his twelve

principles. However, I will present Berry's cosmological vision in order to draw insights that can further strengthen the ecological justice mission of the Church.

The second chapter will explore the creation theology of John Zizioulas. I will present both an intellectual biography of Zizioulas and the major theologians that influenced his theology and methodological approach. This chapter will be limited only to Zizioulas' theological foundations as it essentially relates to the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. From this exposé, the mediating role of the human person as Priest of Creation will be explored concurrently with the liturgical and ascetical praxis of ecological responsibility. This chapter aims at presenting Zizioulas's creation theology in two dimensions of systematic progression – beginning from the *creatio ex nihilo* up to the role of humans in creation.

In chapter three, I will present a comparative analysis of the foundational principles arising from the study of the eco-theologies of Berry and Zizioulas. This will not be an attempt at a fusion of horizons between the two theologians but rather a correlation of eco-theological themes in order to draw complimentary insights appropriate for eco-justice. Precisely, three composites of eco-theological foundations shall be explored in this dialogical analysis of the work of both theologians. Firstly, I will examine how Berry and Zizioulas understand the presence of God in creation. Secondly, I shall focus on the theological anthropologies of Berry and Zizioulas, which articulate human self-understanding in relation to the rest of creation. Thirdly, I shall explore the dynamics of their eco-spiritualities in terms of responding to human and earth concerns. The correlation of these three themes is to guide a complimentary praxis that will provide the dynamics for demonstrating the significance of Berry and Zizioulas.

The fourth chapter will demonstrate the importance of the eco-theologies of Berry and Zizioulas for the practice of Christian ecological justice. I shall present an overview of the Church's ecological teaching in order to create a context for examining the contributions of Berry and Zizioulas. I will draw from the African ecological context to buttress the significance of both theologians. The relevance of these two theologians to the Church's eco-justice mission will be assessed regarding their capability to evoke ecological conversion, the viability of re-reconnecting humans with creation, and the motivation to inspire actions on behalf of social and ecological justice. This chapter will be followed by a general conclusion iterating the main points discussed in this thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

THE FUNCTIONAL COSMOLOGY OF THOMAS BERRY

1.1 Introduction

The New Story is a seminal cosmological vision that has signaled a paradigm shift for eco-theological presuppositions and a hermeneutical lens with reference to creation. The universe, once conceived as a static cosmos, is now to be contemplated as unfolding cosmogenesis. As an emerging cosmology, the New Story accentuates the human as the universe's self-reflective consciousness and a being in communion with the entire planetary system. This cosmological shift has generated important trajectories for human self-understanding in an emergent evolving universe.

In this chapter, I will explore the functional cosmology of Thomas Berry. I shall present Berry's argument about why humanity needs a renewed sense of cosmology, as well as the cosmogenetic principles and how they are related to one another. These are foundational to the understanding of creation as divine revelation. Since Berry's functional cosmology is intimately related to his functional spirituality, I shall present an overview of the components that form the basis of this spirituality. This examination will demonstrate the role of humans in the realization of a new ecological age. In order to lay the ground for proper appreciation of the functional cosmology, a biographical overview on Berry will be presented to highlight his intellectual background, as well as cultural and religious influences which inspired his ecological vision and dedication to eco-theological discourse.

1.2 The Early Life of Thomas Berry

Thomas Berry, a Roman Catholic priest, geologist, cultural historian, and scholar of Asian religions, was born on November 9, 1914, in Greensboro, North Carolina.¹ He joined the Passionist Order and was ordained a priest on May 30, 1942. As a Passionist monk, Berry was deeply fascinated with the writings of the church fathers, the Christian tradition, Western cultural history and languages. Some of the languages included: Latin, Greek and Chinese. Between 1943 and 1947, while doing his graduate studies at the Catholic University of America, Berry came in contact with anthropologist John Cooper, whose field works with Algonquin-speaking Native Americans interested Berry, as well as Frederick Engle-Janosi, who exposed Berry to the work of Giambattista Vico (1668-1744). Berry completed his doctoral studies with a research thesis on Giambattista Vico's philosophy of history, which he published in 1951.² Berry's passion for Asian languages and religions led him to China with the sole intention of studying both Chinese language and philosophy in Beijing. In China, he met with Theodore de Bary, a Fulbright Scholar of Chinese Studies. Their stay in China was short-lived because of the Mao's Communist victory in 1949. On their return from China, Berry and de Bary worked together to establish the Asian Thought and Religion Seminar at Columbia university.³

¹ In this subsection, I will depend on the biographical studies on Thomas Berry by: Mary Evelyn Tucker, "Editor's Afterword: An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry," in *Evening Thoughts: Reflecting on the Earth as a Sacred Community* (San Francisco, Sierra Club Books, 2006), 149-171; Anne Marie Dalton, *A Theology for the Earth: The Contributions of Thomas Berry and Bernard Lonergan* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1999); Stephen Bede Scharper, *Redeeming the Time: A Political Theology of the Environment* (New York, Continuum, 1997), 113-114.

² Giambattista Vico is considered a humanist in the Renaissance tradition. For more on Berry's doctoral thesis on Giambattista Vico's Philosophy of History, see Thomas Berry, *The Historical Theory of Giambattista Vico* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1949).

³ According to Mary Tucker, the friendship between Berry and de Bary lasted nearly 45 years. Cf. Tucker "Editor's Afterword: An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry," 156-157.

Berry began his teaching of Asian Religions at Seton Hall (1956-1960) and St. John's University (1960-1966), and eventually moved to Fordham University (1966-1979) as the coordinator of the History of Religions Program. He was also a visiting professor at Columbia, Drew and the University of San Diego. More importantly, Berry's interest in the ecological crisis came to the fore in early 1960. Ten years later, Berry founded the Riverdale Center for Religious Research in the Bronx, where he spent time studying the role of humans within an evolving universe. During the entire period of his academic career, Berry remained committed to teaching, writing and speaking about the ecological crisis confronting both the earth and human communities. Berry is often referred to as the principal theological proponent of the New Cosmology. Thomas Berry died in Greensboro on June 1, 2009.

1.2.1 Major Intellectual Influences on Thomas Berry

The cosmological vision of Berry arose from a combination of multi-related circumstances, which includes his early childhood experiences, the study of history, religions, Asian traditions, modern sciences, and the indigenous people especially those of North America and Africa.

Foremost, Berry's childhood affinity with nature left a memorable imprint on his mind. His earliest recollection is of moving with his family to live at the edge of a town in an unfinished house, situated on a slight incline above a creek. Across the creek was a meadow, in which Berry became enthralled by a scene of the white lilies. Berry narrates: "[A] magic moment, this experience gave to my life something that seems to explain my thinking at a more profound level than almost any other experience I can remember. It

was not only the lilies. It was the singing of the crickets and woodlands in the distance and clouds in a clear sky.”⁴ This cognitive epiphany had a noticeable impression on Berry’s conception of the concurrent interrelationships that exist between the human person and nature. In light of this, he came to the conclusion that whatever preserves the meadow in the natural cycle is good, and whatever negates it is not good. This experience of nature, for Berry, became normative throughout the entire range of his thinking.⁵

Berry’s felt affinity with nature can be described as the initial foundation for his studies on cultural history, which was greatly influenced by Giambattista Vico’s method and interpretation of history.⁶ Although Berry identifies controversies in Vico’s analysis of primeval history, the imprint of Vichian philosophy on him is discernible, mainly in Berry’s historical methodology and strand of tradition.⁷ More precisely, this is evident in Berry’s periodization of history, his notion of the barbarism of reflection, and the poetic wisdom and creative imagination needed to sustain civilizations.⁸ Berry’s categorization of human history includes the tribal-shamanic, the religious-cultural, the scientific-technological, and the Ecozoic Era.⁹ In this last era, Berry asserts that humans are

⁴ Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* (New York: Bell Tower, 1999), 12.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶ See John Grim, “Time, History, Historians in Thomas Berry’s Vision,” *Cross Currents* XXXVII: 2-3 (Summer/Fall 1987): 225-239.

⁷ Dalton, *A Theology for the Earth*, 17.

⁸ Tucker, “Editor’s Afterword: An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry,” 154.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-3. Berry’s classification of history mirrors Vico’s thoughts. In the tribal-shamanic period, humans had a deeper sense of the sacredness of the earth, which was translated into visible expressions. The religious-cultural phase was characterized by spiritual orientations demonstrated in the great traditional civilizations. In the scientific-technological age, a new capacity for understating and controlling the dynamics of the earth emerged, contributing to the destruction of life systems on the earth. In the twenty-first century, humans are entering into the Ecozoic Era, which demand humanity’s presence to the earth in a mutually enhancing manner. See Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Books, 1988), 30, 39-41, 54.

currently transiting from a period of cultural pathology (technozoic) caused by a dysfunctional relationship with the universe into a new ecological age – the Ecozoic era. This unfolding ecological age demands a transformation in human psychic power, such that humans can reintegrate historical consciousness with cosmic consciousness.¹⁰ Thus, influenced by Vico, Berry developed an historical perspective in periodization and an understanding of the depths of contemporary barbarism, as well as the need for a new mythic wisdom that will allow us to extract ourselves from our cultural pathology.¹¹

The interpretation of historicity, in Berry's cosmological vision, was further influenced by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955).¹² The publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, according to Berry, changed the perception of the universe as being a static cosmos to an unfolding cosmogenesis.¹³ Equally for Teilhard, the

¹⁰ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 42. According to Mary Tucker, Berry compares this period of severe technological assault of the earth to Vico's metaphor: 'barbarism of reflection.' Tucker, "Editor's Afterword: An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry," 154; Giambattista Vico, *The New Science*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1961).

¹¹ Tucker, "Editor's Afterword: An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry," 156. Another historian who influenced Berry was Erich Vogelin (1901-1985). Vogelin biblical hermeneutics was helpful to Berry with his previous studies in scriptures. Vogelin presented Berry with the historical concept of the 'second Exodus.' Vogelin argued that prophetic consciousness in Israel was aimed at an insight he terms 'metastasis.' Metastasis signified the radical change in being beyond the limits of existing social conditions needed to conform to covenantal obligations. This metastatic experience involved an enduring tension between historical realities and cosmological beliefs. Vogelin's insight finds expression in Berry's call for the 'reinvention of the human.' Cf. John Grim, "Time, History, Historians in Thomas Berry's Vision," *Cross Current* 37, no. 2-3 (Summer/Fall 1987): 230-233.

¹² Teilhard de Chardin was a French Jesuit, theologian and paleontologist. He was concerned with the gap between the scientific world and the Christian religious world. He worked to demonstrate that these two worlds were related. Cf. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965), 43. For Teilhard's influence on Berry, see Dalton, *A Theology for the Earth*, 61-75.

¹³ Tucker, "Editor's Afterword: An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry," 155-156. Brian Swimme articulates the shift in developmental-time of the universe as follows: in our new vision, time's dynamics reveal themselves in an ongoing creativity. Eventually it was recognized that species were not set from the beginning, but were created throughout time. Again it was realized that the earth had not simply been here from the beginning, but was involved in a vast development stretching back billions of years. The awareness completed itself when physicists discovered that the universe as a whole was a self-emergent dynamic, a one-time energy event caught up in its own inner developments through time. See Brian Swimme, "Berry's Cosmology," *Cross Currents* no.1-2 (Summer/Fall 1987): 222.

perspective of evolution was a condition of all experience, which changes human self-understanding in the universe.¹⁴ Given this concept of developmental time, Berry understands the universe as a continuous irreversible time-developmental process through which every aspect of the earth functions as a unity and is affected by other components. In other words, the universe is in an emergent integrated *process of becoming*.

Furthermore, Berry describes Teilhard's influence on his thought as follows:

I have learned from him three things of special import. The universe has a psychic-spiritual as well as a physical-material dimension from the beginning; the universe story and the human story are two aspects of a single story; and there is need to move from an excessive concern for redemptive processes to a new concern for creation processes.¹⁵

Teilhard's understanding of the universe as having a psychic-spiritual dimension as well as a physical-material dimension contributed to Berry's appreciation of the psychic-spiritual and material-spiritual character of an unfolding universe. This implies that if the human is a conscious being, and if humans have evolved from the earth, then from the beginning some form of consciousness is present in the process of evolution.¹⁶ However, Berry criticizes Teilhard's notion of progress and human dominance through technology, which has devastated the natural world. He explains that "Teilhard could not take seriously the destruction of the natural world. Once, when someone pointed out to him

¹⁴ See Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Science and Christ* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968); Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper, 1959), 193; Tucker, "Editor's Afterword: An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry," 156.

¹⁵ Thomas Berry, "Foreword," in *A Theology for the Earth*, vi-vii. Teilhard's awareness of the emergent universe, led Berry to consider him more important than Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947). According to Berry, Whitehead understood the universe as an organism, as holistic, as integral, as interacting, as a process, but did not have it going anywhere. The story is missing in Whitehead. Cf. Thomas Berry and Thomas Clarke, in *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation Between Humans and the Earth*, eds. Stephen Dunn and Anne Lonergan (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991), 28.

¹⁶ Tucker, "Editor's Afterword: An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry," 163-164.

the destruction of the natural world, Teilhard said that science would discover other forms of life.”¹⁷

Moreover, Berry was influenced by Thomas Aquinas (1224?-1247). The entire corpus of Aquinas, but most especially, the *Summa Theologica* and *Summa Contra Gentiles*, were significant treatises for Berry. This is apparent in Berry’s arguments for the ultimate reason in the diversity of beings in the universe and in his notion of creation as a manifestation of the divine. Berry regards diversity in creation as a divine design:

the reason there are so many different things in the world is because God cannot create another deity. God cannot communicate God’s self totally to any one being, and so creates this array of beings so that the perfection lacking in one would be supplied by the other, and the total universe of things would manifest and participate in the divine more than any single being.¹⁸

The universe, then, is a sacred absolute unity, in which every component is universe-referent and all the components are inter-referent among themselves.¹⁹ In other words, God, from the beginning of creation, intended integrity and harmony as a constituent dynamic of an evolving universe. By extension, Berry draws a parallel between diversity in creation and cultural diversity, which he sees as the greatest splendor of the Earth. He notes that human culture is enhanced by the distinctive qualities of other cultures, and the need for peace with the Earth if there is to be peace among the peoples of the earth.²⁰

In addition, Berry is indebted to spiritual insights from the great religious traditions of the world. As a Christian, Berry admits the valuable insights from tradition

¹⁷ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 25. For more details, see Thomas Berry, *Teilhard in the Ecological Age* (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1982).

¹⁸ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 17, referring to *Summa Theologica* Prima Pars Question 47, Article 1.

¹⁹ Thomas Berry, “Christianity and Ecology,” in *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, eds., Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 65.

²⁰ Thomas Berry, “The Wisdom of the Cross,” in *ibid.*, 94.

in the interpretation of God's revelation through history; he understands the universe as similar to the sacred universe presented in the scriptures. However, he emphasizes the double estrangement of Christians not only from the biblical universe, but also from the universe as known through empirical observation and scientific revelation.²¹ Berry's studies of Asian cultures and religions revealed a wealth of wisdom within the scope of nature and human relations. Commenting on Neo-Confucianism, Berry explains that

Confucian thought originates in the experience of an all-embracing harmony of the cosmic and human orders of reality. This intimate relationship between the cosmic and the human is expressed and perfected in an elaborate order of ritual and etiquette, which in a certain manner contains and harmonizes both the cosmic and the human.²²

The Asian religious traditions awakened Berry's sense of the sacredness of creation, as well as the intimate relationship and harmony between humans and creation.

Drawing from indigenous religious traditions, Berry came to a deeper awareness of their mythic, symbolic and ritual life. According to him, the North American natives have much to teach humans about the right relationship with the earth and how to live in a mutually flourishing mode.²³ Similarly, referring to the text of Laurens Van Der Post, Berry observes that the Bushmen of Africa experienced the natural world not so much as many objects to be simply exploited, but as a community of subjects.²⁴ Berry's encounter

²¹ Berry, "Christianity and Ecology," 64.

²² Thomas Berry, *Five Oriental Philosophies* (Albany: Magi Books, 1968), 21. For other examples of Berry's allusion to Asian traditions, Cf. Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 77. See also Berry, *The Great Work*, 1-2; Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 17.

²³ Cf. Berry, *The Great Work*, 36. Berry's appreciation for native traditions was enhanced by his reading of the works of Carl Jung and Mircea Eliade. Berry was influenced by Jung's reflections on the power of archetypal symbols and his sensitivity to religious processes. Similarly, Eliade's interpretation of meaning embedded in cultural symbols and rituals were useful to Berry. See Tucker, "Editor's Afterword: An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry," 161.

²⁴ Thomas Berry, *Ethics and Ecology* (April 1996), <http://ecoethics.net/ops/eth&ecol.htm>. (accessed May 12, 2012).

with indigenous traditions deepened his appreciation of the intrinsic bond in creation that exists between humans and the earth. With his experience of the indigenous peoples, Berry retrieved spiritual wisdom and gained insights required for ecological healing.

The cosmological vision of Berry was greatly enhanced by the mathematical cosmologist, Brian Swimme.²⁵ In 1983, Berry came in contact with Swimme and the dialogical conversation that ensued developed into a worthwhile partnership and mutual reflection on diverse perspectives on evolutionary history, world history and religions. The dividends of a decade-long intense collaboration, including research, lectures and conferences, resulted in the masterpiece on cosmology, *The Universe Story*.²⁶

1.3 The Provenance of a New Cosmology

A cosmology features the unfolding story of the beginning, as well as the development and destiny of the universe, with an aim of assisting humans to understand their role and destiny.²⁷ Accordingly, for Berry, the cosmological enterprise aims at an understanding of the universe and role of the human in the universe.²⁸ In early 1970, Berry's ideological glimmering of the New Story occurred during his studies of the

²⁵ Stephen Scharper describes Brian Swimme as the principal progenitor of the new cosmology, who focuses more on the scientific and empirical data of the unfolding universe. Scharper, *Redeeming the Time*, 120; Brian Swimme, *The Universe is a Green Dragon: A Cosmic Creation Story* (Santa Fe: Bear and Company, 1985); Brian Swimme, *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos: Humanity and the New Story* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996).

²⁶ Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, "Introduction," in *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), xxvi; Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era –A Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).

²⁷ See Thomas Gilby, *St. Thomas Aquinas: Theological Texts* (Durham, England: Labyrinth Press, 1982), 76; Judy Cannato, *Radical Amazement: Contemplative Lessons from Black Holes, Supernovas, and other Wonders of the Universe* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Sorin Books, 2006), 19.

²⁸ Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 23.

magnitude of social, economic, political and ecological concerns facing the earth and human community.²⁹ Prior to making the ecological crisis his prime focus, Berry's initial inspiration concerning the significance of myth and religious stories in culture was influenced by Saint Augustine's *City of God* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.³⁰ "The need for a New Story, or a functional cosmology, then, arose not as an abstract idea, but as a response to sufferings of humans in a universe where they saw themselves as deeply alienated."³¹ This alienation, which was a residue of a growing industrial revolution and technological entrancement, is very much true of contemporary global society. In the New Story, Berry does not seek to demonstrate the compatibility of science and religion, or to translate the universe into a theological and scriptural mode.³² To the contrary, for Berry, the new cosmology "is the primary narrative of any people, for this is the story that gives to a people their sense of the universe. It explains how things came to be in the beginning and how they came to be the way they are."³³

²⁹ Tucker, "Editor's Afterword: An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry," 165. Berry first shared his cosmological vision as part of the inaugural *Teilhard Studies Series* in 1978. Cf. Thomas Berry, *The New Story, Teilhard Studies no. 1* (Chambersburg, Pennsylvania: Anima Books, 1978).

³⁰ Cf. Caroline Richards, "The New Cosmology: What It Really Means," in *Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology*, eds. Anne Lonergan and Caroline Richards (Mystics, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988), 100. The writings of St. Augustine (254-430) helped create the spiritual energy for the medieval world through his metaphorical two cities: the City of God and the City of the Earth. See Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1884). Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), an Italian literary writer and philosopher, wrote an allegorical epic of afterlife in relation to the medieval worldview. Cf. Dante Alighieri, *Divine Comedy*, trans. Henry Francis Cary (New York: International Collectors Library, 1946).

³¹ Tucker, "Editor's Afterword: An Intellectual Biography of Thomas Berry," 165.

³² Interpreting the intent of Berry's argument for a new cosmology, Brian Swimme observes that firstly, Berry does not set out to prove that religion and science are compatible. Secondly, Berry is not interested in adjusting the world of the sacred to fit scientific categories of thought. Thirdly, Berry does not translate the universe into theological or scriptural modes of thought. Rather, Berry wonders over the revelations of the universe and humans. See Swimme "Berry's Cosmology," 219.

³³ Thomas Berry, *Evening Thoughts: Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2006), 59.

Berry and Swimme explain that the universe itself can only be presented in a story with a mythic as well as scientific aspect.³⁴ Thus, the ‘New Story’ appropriates revelations through religious myth and the empirical proficiency of science. Berry envisions a New Story, which will reconcile the mythic dimension in the traditional creation story with the empirical dimension of contemporary science.

Generally, a cosmological narrative attempts to articulate the origin, evolution, destiny and purpose of the universe.³⁵ The prominent cosmologists of the classical Greek era were Aristotle (382-322) and Ptolemy of Alexandria (127-151). They were more concerned with the relationship between heaven and earth. In this cosmology the orbital paths of the sun, moon, planets and stars formed perfect concentric circles around the earth.³⁶ This was the definitive model of the cosmos until the Middle Ages when new studies by Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543), Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) and Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) emerged. The scientific discoveries of these cosmologists were primary to the understanding of the universe as sun-centric cosmos.³⁷

In 1687, the English scientist and mathematician, Isaac Newton (1642-1727), in

³⁴ Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 199.

³⁵ Mark Hathaway and Leonardo Boff, *The Tao of Liberation: Exploring the Ecology of Transformation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 130.

³⁶ Cannato, *Radical Amazement*, 21.

³⁷ Cf. Cannato, *Radical Amazement*, 22-23. Nicholas Copernicus’ heliocentric cosmology, which indicates that the sun and not the earth is the center of the solar system, was considered a significant discovery in cosmological and astronomical studies. Cf. Nicolaus Copernicus, *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1976). Johannes Kepler gave verifiable evidence to the discovery of Copernicus by providing a mathematical theory based on three laws of planetary motion. Cf. Sheldrake Rupert, *The Presence of the Past: Morphic Resonance and the Habits of Nature* (New York: Times Book, 1988). With the use of the telescope to view the stars and planet, Galileo Galilei supported the theories of Copernicus and Kepler. He postulated that the cosmic order was governed by immutable laws that nature never transgresses. The cosmological vision of Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo was at odds with the Aristotelian-Thomistic cosmogony of scholastic philosophy. For an overview of the contributions of these three scientists, see Hathaway and Boff, *The Tao of Liberation*, 145-147.

his monumental work, '*Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica*,' published his discoveries on the laws of motion and universal gravitation. Newton's discovery revealed gravitation as that governing principle of the universe. The cosmos was conceived as mechanistic and life on earth was described as having identifiable patterns.³⁸ Albert Einstein (1879-1955) further developed Newton's principles and discovered that the universe was not fixed, but rather expanding. Einstein was startled that the universe had expanded from a primal singularity within a finite period of time. In order to reach its level of complexity, it meant that the universe required more than just a random chance. This indicated an intentionality of the universe. Einstein's discovery was an abysmal revelation for science and he thought of it as erroneous. Consequently, he developed a field equation with a "cosmological constant" to provide for a static solution.³⁹

In 1924, Edwin Hubble (1889-1953), an American astronomer, substantiated Einstein's undisclosed principle of an expanding universe. This theory of an expanding universe was further studied by the Belgian Physicist, Georges Lemaître (1894-1966), and subsequently formed the empirical foundation for the 'Big Bang Theory.'⁴⁰ This theory explains the emergence of the universe with a big bang of fireball about 13.7 billion years ago, as well as links together matter, space and time as evolving into the present cosmic order.⁴¹

³⁸ See Cannato, *Radical Amazement*, 24-25; Hathaway and Boff, *The Tao of Liberation*, 148.

³⁹ Cf. Hathaway and Boff, *The Tao of Liberation*, 156-157.

⁴⁰ Cannato, *Radical Amazement*, 30. For a brief narrative of cosmological theories as discussed in this section see Noreen Allossery-Walsh, *Christian Ecological Responsibility: Intimations of Prophetic Witness for the Church in the New Millennium* (Chicago: Catholic Theological Union, 2009), 106-108.

⁴¹ Cf. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 40-47. For a comprehensive narrative of the different cosmological theories see Hathaway and Boff, *The Tao of Liberation*, 141-167; Cannato, *Radical Amazement*, 19-27.

1.3.1 The Cosmogenetic Principles

The Big Bang theory, as espoused by Berry, can be understood as a flaring forth of creative energy from which the universe emerged into existence.⁴² Berry explains the flaring forth as the beginning of the story of the universe as well as a story of each particular being in existence. This is captured in Berry's statement:

The flaring forth of the primordial energy carried within itself all that would ever happen in the long series of transformations that would bring the universe into its present mode of being. The primordial emergence was the beginning of the Earth story, as well as the beginning of the personal story of each of us, since the story of the universe is the story of each individual being in the universe.⁴³

Viewed in this way, Berry rightly proclaims that “the universe itself is now experienced as an irreversible time-developmental process, not simply as an abiding season-renewing universe. Not so much cosmos as cosmogenesis.”⁴⁴ Cosmogenesis describes the universe not as static but as a continuing process of creativity characterized by three cosmogenetic principles: differentiation, subjectivity and communion. These governing principles of the universe, which manifest the ultimate divine mystery that brought the universe into being, refer to the nature of the universe in reality and value.⁴⁵ Cosmogenesis reveals the evolution of the universe as characterized by differentiation, autopoiesis, and communion through-out time and space and at every level of reality. These three principles refer to the governing themes and the basal intentionality of all existence, and thus are beyond

⁴² For Hugh Ross, there are various interpretations of the Big Bang theory but with three common implications: firstly that the universe began at a finite time; secondly that the universe is continuously expanding; thirdly, the universe is cooling from its hot initial state. Cf. Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos: How the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God* (Colorado, NavPress: 2001).

⁴³ Berry, *The Great Work*, 27. Swimme and Berry have captured the unfolding story of the universe in four major stories in relation to the whole emergence of existence: the galactic story, the earth story, the life story, and the human story. See Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 1-142.

⁴⁴ Thomas Berry, “The Cosmology of Religions” (1997) <http://www.silcom.com/~origin/sbcr/sbcr> 201 (accessed March 12, 2012), 1; See also, Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 17-29.

⁴⁵ Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 73.

any simple one-line definition.⁴⁶ The cosmogenetic principles are unique and mutually characteristic of each other in the functioning of the universe.

Were there no differentiation, the universe would collapse into a homogeneous smudge; were there no subjectivity, the universe would collapse into inert, dead extension; were there no communion, the universe would collapse into isolated singularities of being.⁴⁷

These three principles form the underlining ordering dynamics of an emergent evolving universe. They describe the universe as evolving with the complexity of each being and the deepening of each entity, while maintaining communion with each individual subject.

The first principle of cosmogenesis is differentiation. According to Berry, “[D]ifferentiation is the primordial expression of the universe.”⁴⁸ The self-manifestation of the universe exhibits uniqueness and variety in every being. Thus, “in the universe, to be is to be different. To be is to be a unique manifestation of existence.”⁴⁹ This cosmic drive towards differentiation is an indubitable reality in the universe. For instance, no two carrots, nor two dolphins, not even two twins are truly identical. The law of complexity, as Berry posits, “is to produce variety in all things from the atomic structures of the living world of plant and animal forms to the appearance of human beings, who differ from each other more extensively than in any other realm of known reality.”⁵⁰ Consequently, each particular being in existence is non-repeatable and distinct by its nature. The principle of differentiation accounts for the bio-diversity of life-forms in creation.

⁴⁶ Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 71.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴⁸ Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Books, 1988), 45. Some other words for differentiation include: diversity, complexity, variation, multiform nature, heterogeneity, articulation and disparity. See Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 71-72.

⁴⁹ Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 74.

⁵⁰ Thomas Berry, “The New Story: Comments on the Origin, Identification and Transmission of Values,” *Cross Currents* 37 2-3 (Summer/Fall 1987):196.

The second principle of cosmogenesis is subjectivity. This principle refers to the interior numinous of every being and the power to participate directly in the cosmos-creating endeavor.⁵¹ Subjectivity as a governing principle,

points to the interior dimension of things. Even the simplest atom cannot be understood by considering only its physical structure or the outer world of external relationships with other things. Things emerge with an inner capacity of self-manifestation. Even an atom possesses a quantum of radical spontaneity.⁵²

Subjectivity manifests itself not only within ecosystems, but also in the galaxy. For example, “[T]he star organizes hydrogen and helium and produces elements and light. This ordering is the central activity of the star itself. That is, the star has a functioning self, a dynamic of organization centered within itself.”⁵³ Indeed, for Berry, every being has its own interior, its self, its mystery, and its numinous aspect.⁵⁴ Hence, the numinous quality of the universe permeates the identity of every being in existence. This numinous dimension of the earth reveals the divine; so too, subjectivity equally reveals the sacred character of each being in the universe. Berry contends that, “[T]o deprive any being of this sacred quality is to disrupt the total order of the universe. Reverence will be total or it will not be at all.”⁵⁵ Thus, humanity has a duty to treat nonhumans as subjects and with reverence, because each being has its dignity and carries the presence of the divine.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Other terms for subjectivity include: autopoiesis, self-manifestation, sentience, interiority, identity, self-organization, presence, dynamic center of experience, and inner principle of being and voice. See Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 72, 75; Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 160.

⁵² Berry and Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 75-76.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁵⁴ Berry, “The New Story,” 196.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*; see also, Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 134.

⁵⁶ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 23; See also, Thomas Berry, “The Role of the Church in the Twenty-First Century,” in *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 54.

The third principle of cosmogenesis is communion.⁵⁷ Communion refers to the inextricable web of relationship that exists throughout existence from the beginning of the creation and continues as the universe evolves. Berry emphatically states:

every reality of the universe is intimately present to every other reality of the universe and finds its fulfillment in this mutual presence. The entire evolutionary process depends on communion. Without this fulfillment that each being finds in beings outside itself, nothing would ever happen in the entire world.⁵⁸

Communion is the bond of each reality of the universe with every other reality. The reality of this essential connectedness is evident through the innate experience of breathing. Swimme explains that “we figure out how many molecules there are in a single breath of air. When you take a breath you are sharing in the breath of every creature that has breathed throughout history.”⁵⁹ This norm relates to other planetary laws: the gravitational bond unites all the galaxies; the electromagnetic interaction binds all the molecules; the genetic coding connects all the generations of the ancestral tree of life.⁶⁰ Berry, however, notes that “a supreme mode of communion exists within the individual, within the human community, within the earth-human complex.”⁶¹ This sense of communion ought to guide human-earth and human-human relationships.

Cosmogenesis characterized by the universal norms of differentiation, subjectivity and communion reveals humanity’s inextricable relatedness with the earth from the primeval beginning, and manifests divine presence in creation.

⁵⁷ Other words for communion include: interrelatedness, interdependence, complementarity, reciprocity, interconnectivity, affiliation, kinship and mutuality.

⁵⁸ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 106.

⁵⁹ Brian Swimme, *Canticle to the Cosmos* (SF: True Audio, 1990), 14 quoted in Allossery-Walsh, *Christian Ecological Responsibility*, 133. Cosmogenetic principles interact with other laws of the universe.

⁶⁰ Swimme, “Berry’s Cosmology,” 224. On the cosmogenetic principles see also, Hathaway and Boff, *The Tao of Liberation*, 282-289; Allossery-Walsh, *Christian Ecological Responsibility*, 130-133.

⁶¹ Berry, “The New Story,” 197.

1.3.2 Creation as Divine Revelation

In Berry's functional cosmology, the universe is no longer conceived as a cyclical cosmos; instead it is seen as an irreversible cosmogenesis. The process of cosmogenesis is neither random nor determined, but rather creative and it is guided by the numinous mystery.⁶² Berry asserts that this mystery of existence can be given the name 'divine,' or it can be called 'God.'⁶³ Cosmogenesis, hitherto considered to be a scientific revelation, now embodies and reveals the divine presence in an emergent universe. As Berry notes,

This primary emergence of the universe and the long sequence of its transformation until the present, as we now know them, constitute a new revelatory experience of that numinous source whence all things came to be in the beginning, its power and its grandeur, but especially of that comprehensive embrace whereby the divine holds all things in unity.⁶⁴

This numinous mystery, Berry maintains, is synonymous with the *logos* (word), which John the Evangelist wrote about in the scriptures (John 1: 1- 4). Berry notes that "Saint John tells us that in the beginning all things took their shape through the word. The word was seen as psychic and personal. This was the numinous reality through which all things were made and without which was made nothing that has been made."⁶⁵ With this understanding, God, as the numinous mystery, is the source of creation, and the entire creation reveals the divine. In fact, Berry argues that associating creation with the divine essentially implies that "there is no God without creation and there is no creation without God."⁶⁶

⁶² Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 199.

⁶³ According to Berry, "[T]he term 'God' refers to the ultimate mystery of things, something beyond that which we can understand adequately." Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 11, 19.

⁶⁴ Berry, "The Role of the Church in the Twenty-First Century," 54.

⁶⁵ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 196.

⁶⁶ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 10.

Accordingly, Berry proclaims that “the universe itself can be understood as the primary revelation of the divine.”⁶⁷ Creation as divine revelation describes the awakening in the depth of human psychic awareness of a sense of ultimate mystery and how ultimate mystery communicates itself.⁶⁸ Further, by ‘revelation,’ Berry means the conception of the universe as a divine revelatory experience through a rational and analytical process.⁶⁹ In this cosmic-theophany, God is revealed from the primeval beginning throughout the continuous irreversible unfolding of the universe, up to the emergence of the human being as a self-reflective being of the universe. Further, drawing from Aquinas, Berry argues that creation is an intention and a revelation of the divine:

because the divine goodness ‘could not be adequately represented by one creature alone, [God] produced many and diverse creatures, that what was wanting to one in the representation of the divine goodness might be supplied by another. For goodness, which in god is simple and uniform, in creatures is manifold and divided; and hence the whole universe together participates the divine goodness more perfectly, and represents it better than any single creature whatever.’ From this we could argue that the community of all the components of the planet Earth is primary in the divine intention.⁷⁰

In other words, the diversity within creation is a manifestation of God’s intention to communicate God’s self to every subject so that the total universe of beings manifests and participates in the divine.⁷¹ Berry reinforces his argument with the Epistle of St. Paul, that from the beginning of the world humans have come to know the invisible nature of God through the things that have been made, which reveal the numinous presence of the

⁶⁷ Thomas Berry, “Christian Cosmology,” in *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 31.

⁶⁸ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 16-17.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁰ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 79.

⁷¹ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 17.

divine.⁷² Berry's theological presupposition gives credence to the philosophical dictum *Quidquid recipitur secundum modum recipientis recipitur* (whatever is received is received according to the mode of the receiver). In this light, the human agency comes to the perception of God through unlimited revelatory experiences, of which creation is primary. Therefore, Berry concludes "[E]very existence is a mode of divine presence."⁷³ Here, Berry does not refer to paganism, but rather he believes there is a pervasive divine presence in the varied modes of expressions in existence.⁷⁴ This divine presence in the phenomenal world accounts for the sacred character of the earth. Unequivocally, Berry asserts: "[T]he earth is a very special sacred community. Humans become sacred by participating in this larger sacred community."⁷⁵

In the past centuries, Berry argues that the sense of divine presence in the cosmological order was deemphasized by Western Christian civilization in favor of historical events.⁷⁶ This disregard for the cosmos has contributed considerably to the destruction of the earth and human self-alienation from the earth. Berry believes that the role of the Church in the twenty-first century, then, is to speak more directly concerning the universe itself as the primordial revelation of the divine.⁷⁷

⁷² Quoting St. Paul, Berry seems to refer to Romans 1: 19-20: "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made." For these reasons, Berry asserts that if a resplendent world gives us an exalted idea of God, a degraded world gives us a degraded idea of God. Berry, "Christian Cosmology," 32.

⁷³ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 19.

⁷⁴ For Berry the divine always appears in some embodiment and no one ever worshipped matter. Whatever is worshipped is seen as a mode of divine presence. Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 19.

⁷⁵ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 43.

⁷⁶ Thomas Berry, "The Universe as Cosmic Liturgy," in *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 103.

⁷⁷ Berry, "The Role of the Church in the Twenty-First Century," 57.

Berry's understanding of the earth as a sacred community is consistent with modern scientific description of the earth as single organism and community of biodiversity. Accordingly, Berry observes "we can recognize ourselves not simply as a human community, but as genetically related to the entire community of living beings, since all species are descended from a single origin."⁷⁸ Since every being in existence has a common beginning and is a mode of the divine presence, the human person is a constitutive member of the sacred community. On this point, Berry maintains that "[T]he natural world is the larger sacred community to which we belong. To be alienated from this community is to become destitute in all that makes us human. To damage this community is to diminish our own existence."⁷⁹ The transition into the Ecozoic demands an awakening and a reorientation of human self-understanding in an emergent universe.

1.4 Humanity as the Universe Consciousness

Berry's description of creation as a revelation of the divine has implications for human self-understanding in the universe. According to Berry, "[T]he human emerges not only as an earthling, but also as a worldling. We bear the universe in our beings as the universe bears us in its being. The two have a total presence to each other and to that deeper mystery out of which both the universe and ourselves have emerged."⁸⁰ In this non-transcendent vision, the cosmogenetic principles as expounded by Berry envision the human person as an integral part of the universe, birthed into existence through a

⁷⁸ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 21.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 132.

continuous, irreversible and self-determining evolutionary process meant to bring about conscious life. The human person as a constituent part of this dynamical cosmic process bears the universe in its being. The human person Berry proclaims, is “that being in whom the universe celebrates itself and its numinous origins in a special mode of conscious self-awareness.”⁸¹ In summary, Berry observes that “in this context, we can say that the human is ‘the heart of the universe.’ Yet another way to translate *hsin* is to say that we are ‘the consciousness of the universe’ or ‘the psyche of the universe.’”⁸² This understanding of the human person underscores that the universe has a psychic-spiritual as well as a physical-material reality from the primeval beginning.⁸³ Thus, Berry notes that “the human activates the most profound dimension of the universe itself, its capacity to reflect on and celebrate itself in conscious self-awareness.”⁸⁴ In other words, through a purposeful process of cosmogenesis, emerges a conscious being (the human) through which the universe is able to celebrate, thinks *itself*, in us and through us.⁸⁵ Thus the human person is integral with the universe as well as the being that establishes communion with the rest of creation.

Furthermore, the processes of cosmogenesis through which the universe and the human person came into being are continuously acting on humanity. Cosmogenesis

⁸¹ Berry, *The Great Work*, 19.

⁸² The Chinese defines the human as *hsin* of heaven and earth. Thomas Berry, “The Spirituality of the Earth” in *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century*, ed., Mary Evelyn Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 74.

⁸³ Berry, *The Great Work*, 49.

⁸⁴ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 132. For Berry, “Consciousness can be regarded as the capacity for intimate presence of things to one another through knowledge and sensitive identity.” Cf. Thomas Berry, “The Ecozoic Era,” October 1991, Eleventh Annual E. F. Schumacher Lectures, Great Barrington, MA, 2. <http://ecoziocstudies.org/EcozoicEra.pdf> (accessed May 12, 2012).

⁸⁵ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 21.

informs the genetic coding of humans. Berry defines genetic coding as “the process through which the world of the living articulates itself in its being and its activities.”⁸⁶

Genetic coding determines human identity at birth and is manifested through the spontaneities within humanity.⁸⁷ Berry argues that genetic coding is integral to each individual being in existence, as well as connecting humans with other creatures and the entire universe. In effect, it is akin to the biological umbilical cord that links the baby in the womb to the mother. Genetic coding links every life-form with the rest of the biotic community, and equally, enables each being to function in unity as well as maintain its uniqueness. Berry succinctly notes that “[O]ur bonding with the larger dimensions of the universe comes about primarily through our genetic coding.”⁸⁸ However, nonhuman species remain viable within the verge of their genetic coding, but for humans, their genetic coding is ordered towards a further transgenetic cultural coding.⁸⁹ Expounding on the further transgenetic mutation of the human coding, Berry explains:

The species coding of the human carries within itself all those deeper physical and spiritual spontaneities that are consciously activated into cultural patterns by the genius of human intellect, imagination, and emotion. These cultural patterns are handed down as traditions, which form the substance of the initiation rituals, educational systems, and lifestyles of the various civilizations.⁹⁰

The ineptitude of the human person to recognize the genetic interrelatedness between each creature and creation has contributed to an anti-ecological age. The civilization of

⁸⁶ Thomas Berry, “Twelve Principles for Reflecting on the Universe and the Role of the Human in the Universe Process,” *Cross Currents*, 37 no. 2-3 (1987): 217.

⁸⁷ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 194-196. Genetic coding provides guidance and organic functioning, which manifests itself in human thoughts, imagination, sense functions and emotional life, and in the capacity for transforming food into energy. Genetic coding establishes the context of human relation with the divine. All these are carried out by the spontaneities within the human person.

⁸⁸ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 196.

⁸⁹ Berry, *The Great Work*, 91.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

humanity is skewed against the fundamental psychic and physical nature of personhood, which is connatural with the integral functioning of the universe. Berry contends that, in this case, “our cultural coding has set itself deliberately against our genetic coding and the instinctive tendencies of our genetic endowment are systematically negated. Such is the origin of our present situation.”⁹¹ In the midst of a global ecological crisis, Berry is affirming that humanity’s unity with creation is a *sine qua non* cosmological panacea as the human person enters into the Ecozoic era. Therefore, creation ought to be conceived in its true reality - the maternal source of humans, providing nourishment of physical, emotional, aesthetic, moral and religious existence.⁹²

This calls for an ecological *metanoia* from comprehending creation as a treasure-trove to contemplating the human person as integral with creation. Thus, the natural world becomes both subject and object. From the foregoing, it becomes imperative to understand the human story and the universe story as singular interwoven story. In other words, the ultimate mystery present at the primeval flare radiates its divinity throughout creation as manifested through the cosmogenetic principle, and bonds all creatures into a single, existential reality within space and time. With such a dynamic view, Berry asserts:

These qualities that we identify with the human are also qualities that we observe throughout the natural world. Even at the level of the elements we observe self-organizing capacities, also the capacity for intimate relationships.... Above all we discover that every being has its own spontaneities that arise from the depths of its own being. These spontaneities express the inner value of each being in such a manner that we must say of the universe that it is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.⁹³

⁹¹ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 202.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 81.

⁹³ Berry, *The Great Work*, 82; See also Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 87-88.

Berry's non-dualistic cosmological presuppositions present the human person as a non-transcendent being. The human person is integral with other beings and the universe. The psychic-spiritual and physical-material identity of humans is derived from the universe.

Since humanity is at the terminal phase of the Cenozoic and transiting into a new ecological age – the Ecozoic era – Berry calls for a reinvention of the human being as our way into the future. The ethical imperative of our time, according to Berry is “to reinvent the human at the species level, with critical reflection, within the community of life systems, in a time-developmental context, by means of story and shared dream experience.”⁹⁴ The anthropological shift, through the reinvention of the human, is to awaken human consciousness to the psychic-spiritual and the physical-material reality of the earth, in order that human civilization may align with the cosmogenic dynamics and functioning of the entire universe. In effect, the human person does not create a curvature or become an exterminator in the unfolding self-emergent universe. The viability of all life-forms and the florescence of the entire creation demand that humans comprehend the earth as a self-governing, self-educating and self-healing community within which all the components of the earth function in unity. The inauguration of the Ecozoic era is predicated on the interrelatedness that exists between all creatures in creation and most especially, with human self-understanding as a macrocosm of the universe. Hence, the vitality of the earth is imperative if humans are to realize their destiny. As Berry consistently affirms, “human destiny is integral with the destiny of the earth.”⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Berry, *The Great Work*, 159. See Thomas Berry, “Reinventing the Human at Species Level,” in *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, eds., Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 117-123.

⁹⁵ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, xiv.

1.5 The Functional Spirituality

The functional cosmology of Berry, which reveals the presence of the divine and the place of the human in a self-emergent universe, is intimately connected with his functional spirituality. Generally, cosmology and spirituality are interrelated; but, there are myriad perspectives to the notion of spirituality in relation to creation. Leonardo Boff and Mark Hathaway observes that one way of thinking of spirituality would be to understand it as the concrete way in which humans embody a cosmology in in daily living.⁹⁶ However, for Berry, “spirituality is a mode of being in which not only the divine and the human commune with each other but through which we discover ourselves in the universe and the universe discovers itself in us.”⁹⁷ Since the human person and the earth are completely implicated each in the other, Berry argues that humans need to experience the universe as having an intrinsic spiritual quality from the primeval beginning. As Berry explains, “[T]his spirit dimension of the universe and of the planet Earth needs to be established if we are to have a functional spirituality.”⁹⁸ The experience of the spiritual quality of the earth will reawaken in humanity the sense of the sacredness of creation as well as foster an integral relationship between humans and the earth. Consequently, fundamental to Berry’s functional spirituality is the psychic-spiritual and physical-quality of the earth, which carries the norm of every spiritual and physical activity within it.⁹⁹ This implies that the psychic-spiritual quality of the universe is integral since the unfolding of the universe through the emergence of the human person

⁹⁶ Hathaway and Boff, *The Tao of Liberation*, 310.

⁹⁷ Berry, “The Spirituality of the Earth,” 74.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁹⁹ Berry, *The Great Work*, 49.

and other particular beings. According to Berry “the human psychic structure and our spirituality have been taking shape over all these billions of years, beginning with the primordial atomic particles which held within themselves the destinies of all that has followed, even the spiritual shaping of the human.”¹⁰⁰ Berry’s assertion gives credence to the fact that the story of the universe cannot be told in its physical aspect while neglecting its psychic aspect. On the other hand, the human story is intimately connected with the story of the universe. As such, humans as the consciousness of the universe “depend on the natural world for every aspect of their intellectual insight, spiritual development, imaginative creativity, and emotional sensitivity.”¹⁰¹

In addition, Berry maintains that although the universe has had a psychic-spiritual quality from the primeval origins, does not mean that every being has the capacity for self-reflective consciousness as the human. However, Berry contends that the levels of consciousness differ in degree according to the modes of each being. Berry explains:

Consciousness is certainly not limited to humans. Every living being has its own mode of consciousness. But obviously the consciousness of a plant and a consciousness of an animal are qualitatively different, as are the consciousness of insects and the consciousness of the birds or fish.¹⁰²

Since every being has a spiritual capacity, Berry contends that these capacities have existed as dimensions of the universe from its primeval origins. Thus Berry’s functional spirituality recognizes the “quality of the Earth itself, not a human spirituality with special reference to the planet Earth. Earth is the maternal principle out of which we are

¹⁰⁰ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 117.

¹⁰¹ Thomas Berry, “Christian Cosmology,” in *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 30.

¹⁰² Berry, “The Ecozoic Era,” 2.

born and from which we derive all that we are and all that we have.”¹⁰³ Therefore, all modes of beings, including the human, are universe-referent in their existence.

In order to realize a functional spirituality, Berry emphasizes that humans need to rediscover the earth as a single sacred community. This is because the “natural world is subject as well as object. The natural world is the maternal source of our being as earthlings and the life-giving nourishment of our physical, emotional, aesthetic, moral, and religious existence.”¹⁰⁴ Since the earth is integral to the unity of its functioning, every aspect of the earth is affected by what happens to any member of the earth community. Berry argues that if the pathology that led to the ecological crisis is the radical discontinuity established between the humans and nonhumans, then the remedy must be based on the continuity that exists between the earth and humanity as a single community.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, Berry strongly asserts:

We need to move from a spirituality of alienation from the natural world to spirituality of intimacy with the natural world.... The sacred community must now be considered the integral community of the entire universe and, more immediately, the integral community of the planet Earth.¹⁰⁶

This notion of the sacred community as the integral community of the entire planetary universe, with an intimate integral relationship between the human and nonhuman, is the basis for ecological transformation in the emerging Ecozoic era. Berry’s functional spirituality is consistently *ad rem* with his cosmological vision and seeks to reintegrate humanity into the natural world. The Great Work now, as we move into a new ecological

¹⁰³ Berry, “The Spirituality of the Earth,” 69.

¹⁰⁴ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 81; See Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 20.

¹⁰⁵ Berry, *The Great Work*, 80.

¹⁰⁶ Berry, “An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality,” in *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century*, ed., Mary Evelyn Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 133.

age, is to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of the earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner.¹⁰⁷

1.6 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter has been to explore the functional cosmology of Thomas Berry and to examine the place and role of humans in a continuously unfolding self-emergent universe. In this exposé, it was shown that Berry strongly holds that the universe has both a psychic-spiritual and physical-material aspect, which is implicated in the foundation of his theological presupposition of creation as divine revelation. Berry's cosmological vision highlights the fundamental shift in the understanding of the universe from cosmos to cosmogenesis and identifies the universe process as the maternal birth of the human person. The human person is the universe self-reflective consciousness; it has a unique responsibility to intimately participate in the fulfillment of the unfolding of earth existence. The awakening of human consciousness to its cosmocentric identity and destiny becomes the seedbed for a functional spirituality. Berry's functional spirituality, which envisions a mutually enhancing human-earth relationship, is the Great Work, positing humanity's transit into a new ecological age, and it has consequences for the ecological justice mission of the Church. Berry's cosmological vision contains a new direction and seminal insights for the Church in responding to the present-day ecological peril. Moreover, his eco-theological motif is significant for deepening the discourse on Christian ecological responsibility, when it is put in dialogical conversation with the creation theology of John Zizioulas, which is the thrust of the next chapter.

¹⁰⁷ Berry, *The Great Work*, 3.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CREATION THEOLOGY OF JOHN ZIZIOULAS

2.1 Introduction

In the early Christian tradition, the conceptualization of creation had a pride of place in the historical development of doctrines for the Church Fathers. Protological theories, prevalent within the early centuries of the Church, were attempts by philosophers and theologians to probe beyond the visible universe to the mystery that underlies the genesis of creation. The ensuing theological debates contributed to the declaration by the Church of the doctrine *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing). This doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is at the core of the creation theology of John Zizioulas.

The goal of this chapter is to examine the creation theology of Zizioulas. I shall present the historical context and theological foundations that comprise his creation theology. Since Zizioulas' creation theology arises within the context of the cosmological controversies in the early Church, I will present a brief summary of Gnosticism and Platonism. I will explore Zizioulas' theological interpretation of *creatio ex nihilo* and its implications for the human person. This exposé will form the basis for examining the role of the human person as Priest of Creation, which is grounded in Zizioulas' theologies of personhood and communion. As well, the liturgical and ascetical dimensions of the human as a mediator in creation will be examined. I shall present an intellectual biographical note of Zizioulas and the principal personalities that influenced his creation theology.

2.2 John Zizioulas: The Ecological Bishop

Yves Congar described Zizioulas as one of the most original and profound theologians of our age.¹ In particular, Jaroslav Skira proclaims Zizioulas an “ecological ecumenist” as well as the “ecological bishop.”² The Greek Orthodox Metropolitan John Zizioulas was born in Kozanis, Greece, in 1931. He began his initial theological studies at the universities of Thessalonika and Athens (1950-1954).³ In preparation for his graduate studies, Zizioulas attended the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey in Geneva. Zizioulas’ studies at Bossey were foundational to his future interest in ecumenism. In 1955, Zizioulas commenced his graduate studies at Harvard University, where he came in contact with two prominent theologians: Georges Florovsky (1893-1979) and Paul Tillich (1886-1965). Along with his doctoral research at Harvard, which he never completed, Zizioulas simultaneously carried out other doctoral research at the University of Thessalonika. At the former, his studies focused on the Christology of Maximus the Confessor under the direction of Florovsky, and at the latter, he researched the unity of the Church, the bishop and the Eucharist during the first three centuries of the Church, under the supervision of A.G. Williams.⁴ On completion of his doctoral studies, Zizioulas devoted his time to theological scholarship and ecumenical dialogue. To some extent, this

¹ Yves Congar, “Bulletin d’ ecclésiologie,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 66 (1982): 88.

² Jaroslav Skira, “The Ecological Bishop: John Zizioulas’ Theology of Creation,” *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 19/2 (Fall 2003): 202.

³ In this subsection, I will rely on Gaëtan Baillargeon and Patricia Fox for the intellectual biography of John Zizioulas. See Gaëtan Baillargeon, *Perspectives Orthodoxes sur l’Église-communion: L’ Oeuvre de Jean Zizioulas* (Montréal: Editions Paulines, 1989), 27-29; Patricia Fox, *God as Communion: John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson, and the Retrieval of the Symbol of the Triune God* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2001), 3-10.

⁴ Zizioulas’ doctoral thesis was published in Greek in 1965 and later in French in 1993. See Métropolite Jean de Pergame, *L’ Eucharistie, l’ évêque et l’ église durant les trois premiers siècles*, trans. Jean-Louis Parlierne (Paris: Theophanie, Desclée de Brouwer, 1994).

explains why Zizioulas took professorial appointments at different theological institutions as well as serving in various ecclesiastical organizations.⁵ In 1986, Zizioulas was called from the laity to ordination as bishop of Pergamon, later becoming a metropolitan. In this leadership role, Zizioulas continues to serve the Church, with commitment to ecumenism and ecological justice.

2.2.1 Major Intellectual Influences on John Zizioulas

The creation theology of Zizioulas is a derivative of the mystical and apophatic tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy. Consequently, his principal theological interlocutors are from the Eastern tradition, in general the church Fathers and other Christian theologians.

Zizioulas was greatly influenced by the works of the Cappadocians: Gregory of Nyssa (330-395), Basil of Caesarea (330-379) and Gregory Nazianzen (329-389).⁶ The emergence of the metaphor ‘person’ as an ontological category in the Church was the result of theological dialogue at the Council of Nicea (325), in which the distinction between the meaning of the Greek terms *ousia hypostasis* and *prosōpon* contributed to

⁵ Zizioulas was appointed to lecture at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary in New York, and there he met Jean Meyendorff and Alexander Schmemmann. In 1965, Zizioulas became an Assistant Professor of Church History at the University of Athens. In 1970, Zizioulas was invited to lecture at the University of Edinburgh and three years later, he took a teaching appointment as Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Glasgow. He held a visiting professorship at the University of Geneva, King’s College London, and the Gregorian University, Rome. His dedication to ecumenism contributed to his involvement with international Church groups, commissions and organizations. For example, he was a member of the working groups on the “Eucharist” and on the “Developments of Conciliar Structures” for the faith and order commission of the World Council of Churches. In 1972, Zizioulas worked as the secretary of the Faith and Order at the World Council of Churches in Geneva. In 1979, he became the founding member International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and the co-chairman of the International Anglican-Orthodox dialogue.

⁶ The Cappadocians Fathers were theologians who contributed to the Church’s theological lexicon, defining the Trinity as professed in the Nicene-Constantinople Creed. See Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993).

the Church's teaching about the Trinity.⁷ There were diverse theological nuances and interpretation of these two terms for the Fathers.⁸ The Cappadocians designated the word *hypostasis* to mean 'full being' and identified it with 'person.' The implication of this was that God as Trinity is conceived as three *hypostases*, three full beings.⁹ This axiom of the Cappadocian ontology of personhood is echoed in Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology, which is foundational to his creation theology. Specifically, Zizioulas draws from the Cappadocian's the foundations for his ontology of personhood as having both an *ecstatic* and *hypostatic* dimensions. He conceives personhood as personal and relational.¹⁰

The theological anthropology of Irenaeus of Lyons (135-202) and Maximus the Confessor (580-662) are pivotal in Zizioulas theological presupposition on the mortality of creation and the Fall.¹¹ Irenaeus argues that the human person is made up of flesh, soul

⁷ One of the main questions raised at Nicea was: What does it mean to say that God is the Father, Son, and Spirit without ceasing to be *one* God? The Fathers discovered that Greek categories were limited in conveying the Christian experience of God as Triune. At the Council of Nicea the words *hypostasis* and *ousia* were used synonymously in the language for God. There was also the influence of Sabellius, a third century priest and theological proponent of Modalism. He taught that God was a monad and the Son and the Spirit were both understood as Persons in the sense of a role or mask. See John Zizioulas, "The Contribution of Cappadocia to Christian Thought," *Sinasos in Cappadocia*, eds. Frosso Pimenides and Stelios Roïdes (London: Agra Publications, 1986), 25; Fox, *God as Communion*, 37-38.

⁸ *Hypostasis* originally meant nature, being or substance, while *prosōpon* had an anatomical meaning, referring to the specifically the part of the head that is below the cranium. On the other hand, *prosōpon* referred to the way something relates to other beings. The cognate word *prosōpeion* was used in indicate the mask worn by the actor on the Greek stage. In Roman culture, the word *persona* meant the social role that inescapably circumscribed one's freedom. See John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 31-36. Cf. John Zizioulas, "The Teaching of the 2nd Ecumenical Council on the Holy Spirit in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective," in *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum*, ed., J.S. Martins (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983), 36.

⁹ Basil of Caesarea was the first to make a clear distinction between *hypostasis* and *ousia*. Thereafter, Gregory Nazianzen identified hypostasis with the word *prosōpon*. Finally, Gregory of Nyssa reinforced the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* and coined the Trinitarian formula *mia ousia-treis hypostaseis*. Cf. Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 142-144; Fox, *God as Communion*, 38.

¹⁰ See John Zizioulas, "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1975): 407-408. Zizioulas notes that the term *ek-stasis* was mainly from the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Fox, *God as Communion*, 41-42.

¹¹ John Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," *King's Theological Review* 13 (1990): 4.

and spirit. The flesh is formed of the earth, and as such humanity was created as part of the corruptible and mortal natural world. Hence, the Fall of Adam and Eve is not the cause of death; the Fall merely meant that now, despite being made *in the image* of God, persons were called to grow *into the likeness* of God, and hence to strive for holiness and eternal life.¹² Similarly, Maximus the Confessor conceived the human being as composed of two immutable dimensions – soul and body: “[T]he human being is composed of soul and body, for soul and body are indissolubly understood to be parts of the whole human species.”¹³ Maximus understood the human as a personality of the cosmos and recognized divine immanence in creation. The union of creation with the human person does not consume the uniqueness of each being; it is a union that is hypostatic. This hypostatic union means that all created beings find their expression in the human person.¹⁴ Maximus asserts that the vocation of the human person is to act as a microcosm and mediator of creation.¹⁵ Maximus interprets the Fall of Adam as a failure to act as microcosm and mediator.¹⁶ These two theological anthropologies contribute to Zizioulas’ understanding of the human person as Priest of Creation.

¹² Irenaeus, “Against Heresies,” Book V, 9:1 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 530-534; Irenaeus, “Against Heresies,” Book IV, 37:1, 7, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 518, 520.

¹³ Maximus the Confessor, “Ambiguum 7,” in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), 73-74.

¹⁴ Cf. Alexei V. Nesteruk, *Light From the East: Theology, Science and the Eastern Orthodox Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 213.

¹⁵ Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, ed. A. M. Allchin (Chicago, Illinois: Open Court, 1995), 137-140.

¹⁶ Maximus the Confessor, “Ambiguum 7,” in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor*, 60. According to Maximus, Christ’s incarnation mediates the five divisions. See Maximus the Confessor, “Abiguum 91,” in *Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspective on the Nature of the Human Person*, ed., Panayiotis Nellas (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1987), 214-215. For Maximus, the vocation of the human person as mediator includes five divisions: uncreated and created, intelligible and sensible, heaven and earth, paradise and the inhabited

Georges Florovsky, an acclaimed spiritual Father of the ‘neo-patristic synthesis’ had a remarkable influence on Zizioulas.¹⁷ In his Patristic discourse, Florovsky emphasizes the ascent to the Church Fathers, which is more than mere recapitulation of maxims but rather, an acquisition of the ‘mind’ of the Fathers. As Florovsky explains “[I]t is utterly misleading to single out certain propositions, dogmatic or doctrinal, and to abstract them from the total perspective in which they are only meaningful and valid. ‘To follow the Fathers’ does not simply mean to quote their sentences. It means to *acquire their mind, their frônêma*.”¹⁸ Equally, Zizioulas is very critical of theological methods and hermeneutics that simply seek to reiterate the Church Fathers without appealing to the particular contexts and needs of the various respective religious communities.¹⁹ In his theological corpus, Zizioulas strives to reclaim the mind of the Fathers in light of modern theology. In addition, Florovsky’s discourse on personality may have contributed to Zizioulas’ concept of personhood. Even though Florovsky’s notion of personhood is not elaborately developed, Zizioulas has often attributed his understanding of freedom to Florovsky. Zizioulas traces this influence to Florovsky’s concept of *podvig* (ascetical

world, male and female. See Adam G. Cooper, *The Body in St Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified, The Oxford Early Christian Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 104.

¹⁷ Nicholas Loudovikos, “Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness: John Zizioulas’ Final Theological Position,” *The Heythrop Journal* 52, no. 4 (July 2011): 684-685. Florovsky was a prominent Russian Orthodox Priest and Theologian from Odessa, Ukraine. The neo-patristic synthesis is a theological stream in orthodoxy that postulates the recovery of the Greek Patristic tradition. In the dedication page Zizioulas wrote of Florovsky: “the great Orthodox theologian of the last century was my teacher and exercised a profound influence on my thought.” See John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, ed. Paul McPartlan (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), xiv.

¹⁸ George Florovsky, “Patristic Theology and the Ethos of the Orthodox Church,” in *Aspects of Church History*, in The collected works of Georges Florovsky (Belmont: Nordland; Vaduz: Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1972-1989), 4:18 quoted in Jaroslav Skira, “Destined Before the Foundation of the World: Creation and Incarnation in Georges Florovsky and John Zizioulas,” *AΘHNA* (2011): 206.

¹⁹ Skira, “Destined Before the Foundation of the World,” 207.

achievement).²⁰ Florovsky and Zizioulas are two important theological authors in the creative development of neo-patristic synthesis in Orthodox theology.

Paul Tillich, who aimed *par excellence* at the adaptation of theological thought to ontological quest, had an influence on Zizioulas. Tillich held that ontology was important in elucidating the theoretical exposition of the Christian message. Given this view, Tillich strove to explore the relationship between ‘biblical religion’ and ‘philosophy,’ thereby attempting to construct a ‘biblical personalism’ in response to the questions raised by its confrontation with ontology.²¹ He asserted that “[T]he Bible is a document both of the divine self-manifestation and of the way in which human beings have received it.”²² Tillich noted that the dialectical character of biblical religion makes it imperative for dialogue between biblical religion and philosophy in the ontological search for ultimate reality. Tillich argues that “there can be no doubt that the philosophical question is as genuine and as inescapable as the religious question and that the confrontation of ontology and biblical religion is a necessary task.”²³ Tillich further argues that biblical personalism “comes to its fulfillment in the message that the divine word was incarnate in a personal life, in the life of Jesus, who for this reason is called the Christ.”²⁴ In effect, Tillich identifies the event of Christian salvation with the fulfillment of the ontological quest. Similarly, Zizioulas constructs a theology of creation from a neo-patristic

²⁰ Loudovikos, “Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness,” 685.

²¹ See Paul Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 5, 21; Loudovikos, “Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness,” 68.

²² Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, 14, 35-36. According to biblical religion all divine revelations are manifestations through the word while ontology speaks of being-itself as the ground of everything that is as well as the one substance of which all finite beings are made.

²⁴ Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, 37.

synthesis, seeking to accomplish Tillich's project by using Patristic rather than Biblical material.²⁵ Thus, for Zizioulas, the early patristic period is the starting point of his creation theology.

2.3 The Provenance of Zizioulian Cosmology

In 1989, Zizioulas enunciated his creation theology in a series of lectures given at King's College, London. Zizioulas contextualized his cosmology within the controversies in the early Church, especially within Gnosticism and Platonism of the second century.²⁶

Gnosticism was a complex intellectual and religious movement which raised critical questions for the Christian tradition. One fundamental tenet of early Gnosticism was that the earth and everything in it is evil. Such Gnostics speculated that the presence of evil in the world negates the possibility of a transcendent God as the sole creator of the world. "Instead, the world was the creation of another being, which it called not 'God' but simply the 'Creator', the lowest of the eons that made up a long hierarchy that separated

²⁵ Loudovikos, "Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness," 685.

²⁶ Zizioulas John, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Douglas H. Knight (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 83. Gnosticism comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, which means 'knowledge.' Gnosticism was an early influential Greek religious movement in the second century of the Church. The Gnostics held that they gained a special kind of spiritual enlightenment, through which they had attained a higher level of knowledge not available to the uninitiated. They also believed in a dualistic world, emphasizing the spiritual realm over material as well as the tension between good and evil. The teachings of Gnosticism found a place in the writings of Basilides and Valentinian whose theology and cosmology conceived God as existing in eternal solitude and that, before time in the proper sense, God had produced the Demiurge, who at the beginning had an immanent union with the Father. The three main characteristics of Gnostic approach to nature include: firstly, God transcends the world of nature, secondly, humans as carriers of divine spark are lost and imprisoned in the darkest part of nature. Third, nature in itself is a prison. Gnosticism was the first theory of creation which the Church had to respond. Cf. José Morales, *Creation Theology* (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2001), 76; H. Paul Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), 34; Craig A. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006), 246-247; Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* trans. Robert McLachlan Wilson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983); Pheme Perkins, *The Gnostic Dialogue: The Early Church and the Crisis of Gnosticism* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980).

God from the world.”²⁷ The Gnostics’ intent was to preserve God’s transcendence and to prevent the attribution of any responsibility for evil in the world to God. At the first Council at Nicaea, the Church rejected Gnosticism and declared that God is the creator of all things (*universorum creatorum*), and that creation is not intrinsically evil. The teaching of the Council was expressed in the Church’s creed that God, the Father, the Almighty, is creator of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.²⁸ Zizioulas understands this doctrinal teaching to mean that “the relationship that God has with the world is direct and immediate.”²⁹

In contrast to Gnosticism, some early philosophers taught that the world was created by a *demiourgos* (creator), who, acting out of his own goodness, creates the world through eternal formless matter.³⁰ Plato insisted that “[F]or God desiring that all things should be good, and that, so far as this might be, there should be nought evil, having received all that is visible, brought it from its disorder into order, thinking that this was in all ways better than the other.”³¹ Plato’s cosmology was characterized by opposites: matter and form, being and non-being, rational and irrational. Zizioulas summarizes Plato’s notion of the material world as “good and beautiful, yet only insofar as it partakes of the absolute goodness and beauty which is to be found outside this material world, in

²⁷ Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 83.

²⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Ottawa, Ontario: Publication Service, 1994), #279; Morales, *Creation Theology*, 76.

²⁹ Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 83.

³⁰ See Plato, *The Timaeus of Plato*, trans. Richard Dacre Archer-Hind (London: Macmillan, 1888), #48E-51B. Platonism emerged as a philosophical system from Plato (384-322 BC). Plato was a student of Socrates and well known for his theories of ideas and forms. Plato taught that the world was created by a transcendent being that he referred to as the *demiourgos*, or *God* or *Father*. Plato is not using ‘God’ in the sense of the Judeo-Christian meaning. Cf. Plato, *The Timaeus of Plato*, #30B, 30D, 32B, 55C, 36C, 69C.

³¹ Plato, *The Timaeus of Plato*, #30A.

the world of ideas to which we can ascend through contemplation and intellectual *katharsis*, moving from the sensible to the spiritual, to the ideal world.”³² With regards to the world being created by the *demiourgos*, Zizioulas understands this to mean that “God created in the sense that an artist creates. He has ideas and, with the materials available to him, he portrays the form he has in mind. Thus the God of the *Timeaus* creates out of elements already in existence.”³³ Zizioulas interprets the Platonic view of the world as touching on the question of whether the world had a *beginning* or not.³⁴ Although Platonism postulated a beginning in the act of creation, Zizioulas observes that, for the ancient Greeks, the idea of a beginning was not absolute, but rather presupposes ‘something’ (matter, ideas or space) from which the world was created. For the Greeks, creation was beginningless and the world taken as a whole had no beginning.³⁵ However, the cosmological question for Platonism was: what is the origin of matter and ideas?

In response to the above question, Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE-40 CE), a philosopher, attempted to harmonize Plato’s cosmology with the Genesis creation story (Genesis 1:1 -2:4a -3:24). He transformed Plato’s schema of principles (demiurge, ideas, matter) into the biblical cosmology. Philo identifies the *demiourgos* with the Judeo-Christian God, who creates *matter*, which in turn is used by God to create the world.³⁶ In addition, *ideas* were thoughts within the mind (*nous*) of God. The synthesis by Philo was a rejection of the fact that *matter* was uncreated and *ideas* existed independently of God.

³² John Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation: Three Lectures on Theology and Ecology,” *Kings Theological Review* 12 (1989): 42.

³³ Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 84.

³⁴ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 12:42.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ See Morales, *Creation Theology*, 44-45.

Philo, according to Zizioulas, “decided that the entire world, inclusive of all the ideas, and the purposes of things, had its existence and stability within the mind of God.”³⁷

This notion of the world as an expression of the thoughts of God continued to develop among theologians and philosophers during the second and third centuries.

Accordingly, Origen Adamantios (185-254) conceived the beginning of the world in a Trinitarian framework. He interpreted allegorically the term ‘beginning,’ as used in the Genesis creation narratives, to mean that created things came into being through the *logos*.³⁸ Origen, as Zizioulas interprets, linked *logoi* (ideas), with which the world was created (according to Platonism), to thoughts in the mind of God, in order to answer the theological question: “How could God be almighty eternally, if he had no world on which to exercise His Power?”³⁹ In response to this question, Origen argued that,

As no one can be a father without having a son, nor a master without possessing a servant, so even God cannot be called omnipotent unless there exist those over whom He may exercise His power; and therefore, that God may be shown to be almighty, it is necessary that all things should exist. But if there never was a time when He was not omnipotent, of necessity those things by which He receives that title must also exist....⁴⁰

Origen believed that there were two forms of creation, the eternal and the material.

Zizioulas explains these two creations as follows: firstly, the eternal creation is where God eternally thought of the world; his thoughts were the *logoi* of those beings, which came together in the one *logos*, who is the Son. With the *logos* of all beings and the *logos*

³⁷ Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 85.

³⁸ Cf. Origen, “On First Principles,” Book I, 2, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IV (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994). Morales, *Creation Theology*, 47. Origen argues that the material world is a reflection of the eternal world created by God’s benevolence. He held that the *Logos* is eternally generated from God and subordinate to God. Cf. Origen, *De Principiis*, Book 1, 2, trans. Frederick Crombie (1885) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04121.htm> (accessed May 12, 2012).

³⁹ Origen, *De Principiis*, Book 1, 2:10.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

of the Son, God created the world at the level of eternity. Secondly, within the course of time, the material world came into being, which was the falling away from the perfection of the eternal creation.⁴¹ The ambiguity in Origen's cosmology was how to clearly differentiate the generation of the *logos* and the existence of the world. The theological implication of Origen's position meant that God was a creator by necessity and not by free will. On this point Zizioulas agrees with Florovsky: "Origen's doctrine of creation implied that besides God there was always, eternally, a non-ego, a non-God, which meant that God was a creator by necessity and not freely. Unless He created the world God would remain unfulfilled, He would not be God."⁴²

Contrarily, Maximus understood the creation of the world as eternally willed by God, but did not infer that God instantaneously brought creation into existence. Rejecting Origen's cosmology, Maximus distinguished between 'will' and 'existence.' Interpreting Maximus, Zizioulas observes that "God may have willed the existence of the world eternally, but when the world was created, that act of creation was no necessary extension of God's eternal will. This eternal will did not make creation inevitable."⁴³ Maximus refers to the *logoi* as the will of God.⁴⁴ He contends that the *logoi* pre-exist in God, in

⁴¹ Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 86.

⁴² Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," 12:43. Florovsky observes the weakness in Origen's cosmology in his indistinct explanation of generation and creation by God the Father. Florovsky describes Origen's position as affirmation that God is always creator and Lord, which implies an eternal actualization of the world. It means that all things are eternal and everything coexists with God. Therefore both generation and creation are part of the immutable divine being. Cf. Skira, "Destined Before the Foundation of the World," 210-211; Georges Florovsky, "The Basic Features of Theology in the Fourth Century," in *the Eastern Fathers of the Fourth Century* in *The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* (Belmont: Nordland, Vaduz, Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1987), 7:19.

⁴³ Zizioulas, *Lectures in Dogmatics*, 87. Zizioulas observes that Maximus gave a philosophical account of what had until then been merely an intuitive knowledge. Earlier, Athanasius had proposed a radical distinction between essence and will in the being of God. This distinction was meant to show the existence of creation as dependent for its existence on God. Cf. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 83.

accordance with which all things are and have become and abide, ever drawing near through natural motion to their purposed *logoi*.⁴⁵ The divine *Logos* held together the *logoi* before they came to be.⁴⁶ Therefore it is the *logoi*, which subsist as potencies in God from eternity, that received concrete existence at creation.

Given the context of the cosmological theories of Gnosticism and Platonism, the Church declared the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo non de deo, sed ex nihilo* — “creation not from God, but out of nothing.”⁴⁷ *Creatio ex nihilo* implies that God created freely and *ab initio* God is not conditioned by anything which could limit God’s freedom. The doctrine of creation negates a dualistic cosmology and asserts that nothing exists independently of God. Creation ‘out of nothing’ articulates the Church’s teaching that the world had an absolute beginning and was created by God, as well as that the universe is neither self-originating nor necessary. Doctrinally, the Christian doctrine of creation understands the divine creative act as being free, as creation out of nothing and as taking place within time.⁴⁸ The Church’s teaching on creation articulates the creative act of God

⁴⁴ According to Adam Cooper, for Maximus the *logoi* are God’s original ideas or intentions for creation: the unifying, ordering, determinative and defining principles in accordance with which God institutes created natures. A thing’s being—what it is—is determined by its logos, by what God intends it to be. As constitutive of relation and definition, the *logoi* define the essential qualities and purpose of creaturely being and at the same time disclose the divine Word and Wisdom operative within the cosmic economy. Adam G. Cooper, *The Body in St Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified, The Oxford Early Christian Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 93.

⁴⁵ Maximus the Confessor “Ambiguum 42,” in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor*, 60.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁷ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #296, 317-318, 338; Morales, *Creation Theology*, 89-119.

⁴⁸ These three properties of the divine creative fiat have extensive theological implications for Christian tradition. Foremost, the existence of creation is a free act of God, and indicates that God was not constrained or predetermined to create. There is nothing outside God or within God that obliges him to create. Secondly, that God created *ex nihilo* indicates that created being is made by God in its entirety without pre-existent matter being used: *Non de Deo non ex material* (God was not limited by the

through which everything exists, and the relationship between God and the world. Within this context, Zizioulas' existential re-reading and interpretation of the early Fathers in light of the ecological crisis is the fundamental starting point of his eco-theological motif.

2.3.1 Creation *Ex Nihilo*

The term 'creation' is a derivative of the Hebrew word *bārā*, which designates God's action of creating. It expresses the mode in which the world and everything in it have their origin, ground of being and final goal in God.⁴⁹ However, Zizioulas associates 'creation' with the Greek term *demiourgia*, which expresses a worldview. Thus creation, for Zizioulas, "is a term which indicates the world as we know it is a work or a product of someone, the result of a certain personal cause."⁵⁰ Zizioulas considers the "idea that the world had an absolute beginning could only be expressed through the formula that the world was created 'out of nothing,' *ex nihilo*."⁵¹

The doctrinal metaphor *creatio ex nihilo* has deeper theological *cum* existential trajectories for Zizioulas. Firstly, the expression *ex nihilo* indicates "that nothing at all existed previously to creation, no factor whatsoever apart from God's free will was at

characteristics of matter to bring creation into existence). Finally, the existence of the world within time expresses that the world had a beginning and does not exist from all eternity. In other words, God created *ab initio temporis* (from the very beginning of time). Cf. Morales, *Creation Theology*, 103-119.

⁴⁹ See E. A. Weis "Creation," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol. 4, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 418-419; J. Njuoroge Wa Ngugi, *Creation in "The Catechism of the Catholic Church: A Basis for Catechesis in Post-Colonial Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2002), 139.

⁵⁰ Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," 12:41. Zizioulas observes that the early Christian writers preferred the term *ktisis* – a word that brings to mind images of craftsmanship, or rather of building and raising an edifice. He observes that the Christian idea that God created the world was not so much meant to insist on this idea as to offer an interpretation of it.

⁵¹ Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," 12:43.

work or contributed in any way towards the creation of the world.”⁵² Secondly, the doctrine of *ex nihilo* shows “that it is imperative to be able to refer to God without implicitly or explicitly referring at the same time to the world.”⁵³ Thirdly, *ex nihilo* captures time and space as categories, which come into being together with creation.⁵⁴ Time and space determine the existence of creation. These two categories constitute the underlining distinction between the creator and finite beings. As Zizioulas explains:

There is no way, therefore, for the world to escape from space and time or from the pre-condition of beginning which lies behind its being. Created being by definition is subject to these conditions, which not only mark the difference between God and the world, created and uncreated being, but also determine the world existentially.⁵⁵

The significance of this assertion, according to Skira, is that being ‘unlimited’ or ‘finite’ implies an end; thus creation came from nothing and creation will eventually return to nothing (that is, unless there exists a possibility for its transfiguration).⁵⁶ Fourthly, Zizioulas postulates that since nothing which is created is eternal, thus creation which has a beginning will also have an end. He writes: “[T]he universe is not eternal either in terms of its beginning or in terms of its end; it is mortal, and mortality in this case is as absolute as the use of the term ‘nothing’ – it signifies total extinction.”⁵⁷ On this point, Zizioulas concludes that the world, having come out of nothing and being penetrated by

⁵² Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 12:43.

⁵³ John Zizioulas, “The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today: Suggestions for an Ecumenical Study,” in *The Forgotten Trinity*, ed. Alasdir I. C. Heron (London: BCC/CCBI, 1989), 23-24.

⁵⁴ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 12:43.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 12:43.

⁵⁶ Skira, “The Ecological Bishop,” 202.

⁵⁷ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 12:43. Also on this fourth interpretation, Zizioulas observes that “Both logically and existentially the doctrine of the creation of the world out of nothing implies that the world *can* be extinguished, for it has no natural capacity for survival.” See Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s creation,” 13:1.

death, does not possess any means in its nature to overcome nothingness.⁵⁸ Any natural means to the world's survival eternally, without transcending its own limitations, would require a *Deus ex machina* intervention. Zizioulas argues that in order for creation to transcend nothingness, "God and the world have to be in communion, and the means chosen for this communion is mankind."⁵⁹ This signifies hope in the midst of global eco-crisis and demands a responsibility for humanity as a mediator of communion.

2.3.2 Creation and Communion

The theological concept of *koinonia* stems from faith in the Trinitarian God who is communion. Zizioulas notes that "*koinonia* derives not from sociological experience, nor from ethics but from faith. We are called to *koinonia* not because it is 'good' for us and for the Church, but because we believe in a God who is in His very being *koinonia*."⁶⁰ In Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology, the divine persons can only be conceived of in relation to the other. Zizioulas asserts that "the being of God could be known only through personal relationships and personal love. Being means life, and life means *communion*."⁶¹ Consequently, Zizioulas draws his anthropological foundation from the Trinity, which demonstrates that freedom is constitutive of personhood. The foundational premise of Zizioulas' notion of personhood is that no person can be understood apart from being in relation with the *other*. In other words, the human is essentially a relational

⁵⁸ Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," 12:43.

⁵⁹ Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, 89.

⁶⁰ John Zizioulas, "The Church as Communion," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38 (1994): 6.

⁶¹ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 16.

being – a being in relationship with God, with other humans and with the rest of creation.

Accordingly, Zizioulas conceives the human person as one being in communion and whose identity emerges through relationships. Zizioulas maintains that the person “is an ‘I’ that can exist only as long as it relates to a ‘thou’, which affirms its existence and its otherness. If we isolate the ‘I’ from the ‘thou’, we lose not only its otherness but also its very being; it simply cannot be without the other.”⁶² Therefore, ‘to be’ means to be in a relationship, and isolation negates the very fact of human identity and existence.⁶³

Furthermore, Zizioulas distinguishes between an individual and a person as follows: “An individual is a single entity which can be conceived of in itself without reference to other entities. A person is a unique entity which cannot be conceived of without relation to other entities, not only to other humans but to nature as a whole.”⁶⁴ Zizioulas’ notion of personhood is intimately connected to his notion of human freedom. Skira observes that for Zizioulas, “freedom is not simply in the sense of choosing between two possibilities, which is a limited use of freedom – but freedom to determine oneself.”⁶⁵ The freedom of the human person arises from the Triune God who created man and woman in his own likeness and image. Zizioulas emphatically states:

Freedom was given to man [sic] as a dimension of personhood, in order that the essential or natural difference between God and creation would not become distance and division (*diairesis*), but, on the contrary, *a realisation of communion* between the two. In creating man as a person God had in mind communion, and freedom was the only way to this.⁶⁶

⁶² Zizioulas, “Communion and Otherness,” 17.

⁶³ See Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 49-65.

⁶⁴ John Zizioulas, “Orthodoxy and Ecological Problems: A Theological Approach,” in *The Environment and Religious Education: Presentations and Reports, Summer Session on Halki 1994*, ed. Deuteron Tarasios (Militos Editions, 1997), 28 as quoted in Fox, *God as Communion*, 57.

⁶⁵ Skira, “The Ecological Bishop,” 203.

⁶⁶ Zizioulas, “Human Capacity and Human Incapacity,” 429.

Personhood implies the freedom to be oneself; it means the freedom of being the ‘other’ and the freedom to live in communion with the ‘other.’ Zizioulas posits “this freedom is not freedom *from* the other but freedom *for* the other. Freedom in this case becomes identical with love. God is love because he is Trinity. We can love only if we are persons, that is if we allow the other to be truly other, and yet be in communion with us.”⁶⁷

The exercise of human freedom is obstructed by ‘tragedy.’ ‘Tragedy’ applies to human existence and is integral to the notion of personhood. According to Zizioulas, “[T]ragedy is the impasse created by a freedom driving towards its fulfillment and being unable to reach it. The tragic applies only to the human condition, it is not applicable either to God or to the rest of creation.”⁶⁸ By tragic element, Zizioulas is referring to the desire of humans to attain absolute freedom as possessed by God in order to reach self-realization and self-determination. The Fall (Genesis 1-3), Zizioulas notes, was a failure of the humans to act as a mediator of communion between God and creation. Precisely, it was a misuse of freedom implicit in the *imago Dei* – to act as if man and woman were God.⁶⁹ However, Zizioulas rejects the understanding of the Fall as a direct cause of mortality inherent in creation. Such a theological assumption, Zizioulas argues, since it is

⁶⁷ Zizioulas, “Communion and Otherness,” 17.

⁶⁸ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 13:2.

⁶⁹ See Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 13:4; Zizioulas, *Lectures in Dogmatics*, 102. In modern Orthodox theology, there are two basic principles of the creation of the human person. First, man and woman were made for communion with God. Second, man and woman have failed in this communion (Genesis 1:26). This informs the theological understanding of the Fall and Original Sin. However, there are diverse hermeneutical lenses of interpretations, which include: literal-historical, typological, poetic, and symbolic narrative. See Maximos Aghiorgoussis, “Sin in Orthodox Dogmatics,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 21/4 (1997):179-190; Christos Yannaras, *Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, trans. Keith Schram (Edinburgh: T&T Clark: 1991), 75-79; John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University, 1983), 143. Jaroslav Skira, “Garments of Skin? Creation and Sin in Modern Eastern Orthodox Theology,” *Leuven Encounters in Systematic Theology* VII (Forthcoming): 1-11.

absurd – that the Creator should punish all creatures for the actions of only one being, Adam.⁷⁰

Transcending Irenaeus' philanthropic view of Adam, Zizioulas interprets the Fall as a question of applying absolute freedom in the wrong way. Adam, as he writes,

was created to bring the created into union with the uncreated, man decided to exercise his freedom by saying 'no' to this relationship, and setting out to unite the created, not to the uncreated, but to himself. Adam succumbed to the temptation to declare himself 'God' and set out to redirect creation from the uncreated God, to his own, created self.⁷¹

The application of absolute freedom can be realized through a personal approach to creation and not an individualistic one. Zizioulas observes that the personal approach to creation would elevate the material world to the level of human existence. He maintains that this involves *hypostatisation* and *catholicity*. According to Zizioulas:

If man acts as a person rather than an individual in treating creation, he not only lifts it up to the level of the human, but he sees it as a totality, as a catholicity of interrelated entities. Creation is thus able to fulfill the unity which, as natural science observes today, is inherent in its very nature.⁷²

Humanity's relationship to creation as person (*hypostasis*) recognizes the mysterious reality of the cosmic order. Zizioulas maintains that "*hypostasis* is an identity which embodies and expresses in itself the totality of nature."⁷³ In acting in a personal approach towards creation, the human person will liberate creation from its limitation and it will be

⁷⁰ Zizioulas argues that "It would mean that God himself introduced this horrible evil which He then tried through His Son to remove. Also, it would seem to apply that before the arrival of Man in creation, there was no death at all...and would also make it cruel and absurd on the part of the Creator to punish all creatures for what one of them did." Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," 13:4.

⁷¹ Zizioulas, *Lectures in Dogmatics*, 98.

⁷² Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," 13:4. Zizioulas appreciates the contributions of Darwinism as a blessing in disguise for having acted as anti-bodies by resituating the human person as an integral part of organic nature. Similarly, he commends the intellectual prowess of Albert Einstein (1879-1955) for ending the dichotomy between substance and event. These developments within the fields of science indicate that humans are integral with creation. Cf. Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," 12.4.

⁷³ Zizioulas, "Preserving God's Creation," 13:4; Skira, "The Ecological Bishop," 204.

humanized.⁷⁴ “This will become immediately evident in culture: the way man [humans] eats or is dressed or builds his houses would involve a close relationship with what is not human, with what is significantly called ‘the environment.’”⁷⁵ Zizioulas conceives humanity’s personal relationship with creation as a divine design. He writes:

when God created the world finite, and therefore subject by nature to death and mortality, he wanted this world to live forever and to be united with him – that is, to be in communion with him. It is precisely for this reason that God created the human being. This underlines the significance of [human] as the priest of creation, who would unite the world and relate it to God so that it may live forever.⁷⁶

The human person is created to become a mediator and vehicle of communion between God and creation. This role demands that the human act as the Priest of Creation.

2.4 Humanity as Priest of Creation

The human person as ‘Priest of Creation’ is a necessary prerequisite because without this reference of creation to God, the whole created universe will perish. The created order is susceptible to extinction as a result of its finite nature. Zizioulas argues that “the only way to protect the world from its finitude which is inherent in its nature, is to bring it into relation with God. . . .”⁷⁷ This underscores the significance of the human as the priest of creation, who would unite creation and relate it to God. Zizioulas understands this priestly responsibility not as a cultic act but rather as an existential

⁷⁴ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 13:4; Skira, “The Ecological Bishop,” 204.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ John Zizioulas, “Proprietors or Priests of Creation,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* ed. Luke Ben Tallon (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011), 138.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 137-138.

attitude encompassing all human activities that involves a conscious or even unconscious manifestation of two aspects of personhood: the *hypo-static* and the *ecstatic*.⁷⁸

Accordingly, for Zizioulas, it is through these aspects that the human person fulfills his role as ‘Priest of Creation’: “its *hypostatic* aspect, through which the world is integrated and embodied into a unified reality” as well as “its *ecstatic* aspect by virtue of which the world by being referred to God and offered to Him as ‘His own’ reaches itself to infinite possibilities.”⁷⁹ Zizioulas summarizes these two aspects of personhood thus: “[B]y taking the world into his hands and creatively integrating it and by referring it to God, [the human] liberates creation from its limitations and lets it truly be.”⁸⁰ Comparatively, the role of humanity as ‘Priest of creation’ *vis-à-vis* humans as ‘steward of creation’ is insightful for eco-theology. The human person, as priest of creation, has a responsibility that is neither conservationist nor managerial. Contrary to stewardship, the human person as priest of creation is related to creation not functionally but ontologically. Zizioulas notes that “by being the steward of creation the human being relates to nature by what he [sic] *does*, whereas by being the priest of creation he relates to nature by what he *is*.”⁸¹ In addition, in the stewardship model, if humans destroy nature they have disobeyed a moral law, which makes them immoral and unethical. In the case of the priesthood model, in destroying nature, humans cease to be fully human, and the consequences of ecological sin are thus not simply moral but existential.⁸²

⁷⁸ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 13:5.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 13:5; Zizioulas, “Communion and Otherness,” 18.

⁸⁰ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 13:5.

⁸¹ Zizioulas, “Proprietors or Priests of Creation,” 139.

⁸² *Ibid.*

The human person as Priest of Creation is modeled after Christ – the Priest *par excellence*. The mortality of creation was to be overcome through Adam, but due to the Fall this was not fulfilled. In Christ, Zizioulas sees the accomplishment of Adam’s role.

We regard Christ as the embodiment or *anakephalaiosis* of all creation and, therefore, as the Man *par excellence* and the savior of the world. We regard Him, because of this, as the true ‘image of God’ and we associate Him with the final fate of the world. We, therefore, believe that in the person of Christ the world possesses its Priest of Creation, the model of Man’s proper relation to the natural world.⁸³

In Christ’s self-giving (*kenosis*) through the paschal mystery, the whole created order was offered to the Father. Equally, the human person as Priest of Creation participates in Christ’s self-offering through the offering of creation to God. This vocation demands that humans live in a fully personal way with God, with fellow humans and with creation. The human person as Priest of Creation is called to mediate communion in creation through its relations to all finite beings. This requires that the human becomes a liturgical being.

2.5 The Liturgical and Ascetical Praxis

The human person as Priest of Creation exercises its role in the liturgy. Zizioulas emphatically states that “[the Human] has to become a liturgical being before he [sic] can hope to overcome his ecological crisis.”⁸⁴ At the celebration of the Eucharist, the natural elements of creation are lifted up to God in thanksgiving, and blessings are invoked to transform them into the body and blood of Christ. By this liturgical action, Zizioulas believes that “creation is brought into relation with God and not only is it treated with the

⁸³ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 13:5.

⁸⁴ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 12:2.

reverence that befits what belongs to God, but it is also liberated from its natural limitations and is transformed into a bearer of life.”⁸⁵ In receiving the fruits of creation after the *anaphora* (lifting up), creation acquires a sacredness which is not inherent in its nature but acquired in and through the human free exercise of his personhood.⁸⁶

The ‘lifting up’ of creation at the liturgy is meant to be lived out by humans in personal relations with creation, characterized by a sense of the sacred and a respect for ecological integrity. The *anaphora* is a significant aspect of the priesthood. However, Zizioulas is not referring to the priesthood of the ordained, but rather to the priesthood that is exercised by every baptized Christian. According to Zizioulas:

The notion of ‘priesthood’ must be freed from its pejorative connotations and be seen as carrying with it the characteristic of ‘offering’, in the sense of opening up particular beings to a transcending relatedness with the ‘other’ – an idea more or less corresponding to that of *love* in its deepest sense.⁸⁷

The liturgical offering of creation to God the creator is meant to be translated into concrete actions by each individual person. In this way, every human person is initiating a priestly action whereby creation, having been offered to God, can be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit and be brought to fullness beyond its natural capacities.⁸⁸ Thus, the Eucharistic community becomes a profound means for an ecological conversion and for promoting an ecological ethos. By offering to God the gifts of the earth, the Eucharistic community acknowledges its unity and identity with creation.

⁸⁵ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 13:5.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 12:2.

⁸⁸ Patricia A. Fox, “God’s Shattering Otherness: The Trinity and Earth’s Healing,” in *Earth Revealing Earth Healing*, ed. Denis Edwards (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 100.

Zizioulas incorporates an ascetical praxis to humanity's role as Priest of Creation in what he calls – 'ecological asceticism.' Ecological asceticism is a religious witness motivated by the love of creation. This is an exception to asceticism associated with a devaluation of matter for the sake of a spiritual goal or *fuga mundi* (flight from the world) spirituality.⁸⁹ Ecological asceticism, according to Zizioulas,

always begins with deep respect for the material creation, including the human body, and builds upon the view that we are not masters and possessors of this creation, but are called to turn it into a vehicle of communion, always taking into account and respecting its possibilities as well as its limitations.⁹⁰

Here Zizioulas warns against a human-centered relationship with creation, which has contributed to the present-day ecological crisis. In this form of asceticism, Zizioulas is calling for a change in priorities, life-styles, modes of production and consumerism; above all, he is calling for an ecological conversion. Zizioulas' ecological asceticism gives an ethical and spiritual praxis to the role of humans as Priests of Creation and provides a socio-cultural dimension in responding to the ecological crisis. The spirit of ecological asceticism amounts to a cultural revolution that will lead to a formation of a new cultural ethos in the face of the ecological crisis. Zizioulas explains that "[H]uman beings must realize that natural resources are not unlimited. Creation as a whole is finite and so are resources that nature can provide for our needs."⁹¹ This implies restriction and a just use of natural resources. Therefore, creation must not be understood as a 'servant of

⁸⁹ Zizioulas, "Ecological Asceticism," 25.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 24.

humanity's self-interest and happiness.'⁹² Rather, the human person as a Priest of Creation must respect creation as a "sacred gift from God which is meant to foster and promote communion with God and with others."⁹³ Zizioulas argues that such a liturgical relation with nature will create a culture which is deeply respectful of creation.

Furthermore, Zizioulas calls for a drastic revision of sin. Zizioulas observes that sin has been understood in anthropological and sociological categories. The harm committed against nature is not captured in the concept of sin. Zizioulas explains that the destruction of the earth is a failure of humans to operate as a vehicle of communion between God and nature. On the other hand, he holds that a degradable nature becomes incapable of mediating communion between humans and God. Thus, Zizioulas argues that that human individualistic approach towards nature, which expresses itself in human self-interest, is sinful. Zizioulas asserts: "[S]in against nature, therefore, is serious not only because it involves disrespect towards a divine gift, but also – and mainly – because it renders the human being incapable of fulfilling its relational nature."⁹⁴

The liturgical and ascetical dimensions of the human as Priest of Creation call for a change in attitude and transformation of cultural ethos. This demands that the human person must truly relate with creation as a mediator and vehicle of communion.

⁹² Zizioulas, "Ecological Asceticism," 25.

⁹³ Ibid., 23.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 24.

2.6 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter has been to examine the creation theology of John Zizioulas, which emerges from the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. This examination reviewed the major cosmologies of the early Church and Zizioulas' interpretation of them in light of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. Zizioulas conceives creation as an act of God with an absolute beginning. God, in creating the human person, seeks to be in communion with the whole of creation. Thus, the human person as a relational being has a responsibility of mediating communion between God and creation. As a vehicle of communion, the human person is called to become a Priest of Creation modeled after Christ. The human person exercises this role in freedom and through the liturgy, in a thanksgiving of communion with creation. In this way, the human person is able to truly become a liturgical being, which is demonstrated by adopting a spirit of asceticism and by a change of attitude towards creation.

Zizioulas' creation theology holds possibilities for an authentic response to the contemporary ecological crisis. In particular, Zizioulas' ecological vision is significant for the ecological justice mission of the Church. The creation theology of John Zizioulas and the functional cosmology of Thomas Berry, when put in dialogical conversation are capable of bringing about a complimentary ecological praxis. The outcome of such dialogical conversation can provide overarching theological dynamics for eco-justice. In this light, in the chapter that follows, I will undertake a comparative theological analysis of Berry's and Zizioulas' thought based on the first two chapters of this research.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ECO-THEOLOGICAL MOTIFS OF BERRY AND ZIZIOULAS

3.1 Introduction

The functional cosmology of Thomas Berry and the creation theology of John Zizioulas, though distinct in their foundations and cosmic visions, are significant for Christian ecological responsibility. The preceding two chapters have demonstrated that human self-understanding within creation is of vital necessity in the integral functioning and survival of the cosmos. The functional cosmology of Berry comprehensively captures the emergence of the universe, where humans have come from and where humans are going amidst an anti-ecological culture. Similarly, the creation theology of Zizioulas involves retrieval from Patristic thought of salient presuppositions that are fundamental to the divine creative fiat and to human responsibility within creation.

This chapter highlights three interrelated theological themes perceived to be essential to the Christian praxis of eco-justice derived from the eco-theologies of Berry and Zizioulas. These themes are: (1) creation as sacred; (2) humanity as microcosm and mediator in creation; (3) eco-spirituality for human-earth community. Suffice it to note that these three themes do not exhaust all the potentials of Berry and Zizioulas in light of the ecological justice. I will explore these select themes in order to distinctly present the insights from Berry and Zizioulas. This is not meant to be a criticism of each theologian, but rather a complementary analysis that will foster renewal for the ecological justice mission of the Church.

3.2 Creation as Sacred

Creation, as a theological concept, presupposes the notion of a divine creative act and the ground of all finite beings in God.¹ Although, Berry and Zizioulas emphasize the sacred character of creation, they differ in their theological presuppositions. Berry understands the phenomenal universe through the process of cosmogenesis as dependent on a numinous mystery – on God. According to him, “[W]hen we explain the universe as we now know the universe in its originating moments and its long sequence of transformations, we are explaining the manner in which the Creator has brought the universe into being.”² The universe as a self-emergent process is the primary revelation of the divine. Each being and indeed the earth is the primary mode of divine presence. Berry contends that the universe is the primary sacred community and the primary religious reality.³ In order to overcome the ecological crisis, humanity must profoundly experience the universe as a psychic-spiritual and physical-material reality. Accordingly, for Berry creation is sacred because the universe reveals the numinous mystery whence all things came into being. Since every being is an integral part of the process of cosmogenesis, every being embodies the presence of the divine. Berry argues that humanity has little awareness of the revelatory presence of the divine in the universe. He identifies the loss of creation’s sacrality as a contributing factor in the ecological crisis.

¹ See John W. McCarthy, *The Re-enchantment of Nature as the Word and Beauty of God: The Nash Memorial Lecture, 2011* (Regina: Champion College at the University of Regina, 2011), 7.

² Thomas Berry, “Christianity and Ecology,” in *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 2009), 64.

³ Thomas Berry and Thomas Clarke, *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation Between Humans and the Earth*, eds. Stephen Dunn and Anne Lonergan (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publication, 1991), 16.

Berry maintains that if the earth is inhospitable toward human presence, it is primarily because humans have lost their willingness to recognize the sacred character of the habitat and have lost a capacity for appreciating the numinous quality of every earthly reality.⁴ Primarily, Berry traces the loss of the sacredness of creation to transcendental religious orientations.⁵ However, Berry believes that Christianity has a role to catechize humanity about creation as the primary revelation of the divine.

Accordingly, Berry emphasizes that humans must recognize themselves not simply as a separate community, but as genetically related to the entire community of living beings, since all species are descended from a single origin.⁶ The universe seen as a single sacred community eliminates the dichotomy between humans and creation, and thus, re-establishes a human-earth community. The sacred character of creation involves, then, both the human and earth communities. Berry notes that humans become sacred by participating in the larger sacred community and vice versa.⁷ Human rediscovery of creation as sacred is an imperative. As Berry observes, “the human community and the natural world will go into the future as a single sacred community or we will both perish in the desert.”⁸ The New Story is Berry’s hope of reversing the alienation that led to the loss of reverence for creation. Humanity must experience creation as sacred with its psychic-spiritual and physical-material dimension.

⁴ Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Books, 1988), 2.

⁵ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 115.

⁶ Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era – a Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 243.

⁷ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 43.

⁸ *Ibid.*

In similar line of thought, Zizioulas describes the ecological crisis as a crisis that has to do with the loss of sacrality of nature in culture.⁹ Zizioulas observes that the influence of Western culture with its particular emphasis on the ‘subject’ created a tension between the thinking, conscious subject and non-thinking, non-conscious nature.¹⁰ This mental sensibility has persisted and has contributed to the de-sacralization of life and has undermined the fact that the human person is primarily a liturgical being with the responsibility to treat creation as sacred.¹¹ In order to rediscover the sacred character of creation in culture, Zizioulas identifies Christianity as a moral force.

In retrieving the doctrine of *ex nihilo*, Zizioulas reclaims the Christian teaching that creation is the act of a divine creator and reveals the goodness of God, and thus, that creation is sacred. Zizioulas maintains that the world is sacred because it stands in dialectical relationship with God; and the human person is the only possible link between God and creation.¹² In the offering of creation to God, the human person brings creation into communion with God. The sacredness of creation is meant to be preserved by the human person as a Priest of Creation. This implies that humanity move from a culture of domination over nature to an ethos that brings creation in communion with God. Zizioulas argues that the assertion of human dominion over creation by science contributed to the loss of sacrality.¹³ Zizioulas recognizes the role of Christianity in reawakening humanity to the nature of the universe as “both a spiritual and a material

⁹ John Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” *King’s Theological Review* 13 (1990):5.

¹⁰ See John Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation: Three Lectures on the Theology and Ecology,” *King’s Theological Review* 12 (1989):23-24.

¹¹ John Zizioulas, “Proprietors or Priests of Creation,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, ed. Luke Ben Tallon (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011), 139-140.

¹² Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 13:5.

¹³ See John Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 12:4.

reality.”¹⁴ This important role of religion involves collaboration with science as a body of knowledge, which has a distinct contribution to make in resolving the ecological crisis. In fact Zizioulas asserts that the cooperation between religion and science must accept that “every revelation of reality, whether religious or scientific, can only make sense if the world is respected in its mysterious wholeness.”¹⁵ The theological interpretation of the ecological crisis by Zizioulas awakens humanity to relate with creation as a sacred reality and transform its civilization from a culture of domination over nature to an ethos that brings humanity and creation into communion with God. Zizioulas believes that this is an essential aspect in responding to the ecological crisis.

The eco-theologies of Berry and Zizioulas, with their emphasis on the sacredness of creation, recapitulate the existential truth of the universe as a sacred reality. In other words, creation is God’s self-communication to humanity and a book of revelation. According to Pope Benedict XVI, “[N]ature speaks to us of the creator and his love for humanity.”¹⁶ Creation as God’s revelation is sacred and humans’ relationship towards it ought to be one of reverence. The emphasis on recognizing God in creation demands that humanity preserve the integrity of creation. Since creation exists through the benevolence of God, humanity ought to relate to every creature in an appropriate manner that reflects their relations to God. The sacred character of creation has the capacity to reconnect humanity with the natural world. Above all, it brings a religious dimension that enables Christians to establish an explicit link between their faith and spirituality to eco-justice.

¹⁴ John Zizioulas, “Science and Environment: A Theological Approach,” http://www.rsesymposia.org/themedia/File/1151676874-Sc_Envrioment.pdf (accessed, May 12, 2012), 3.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009), #48.

3.3 Humanity: Microcosm and Mediator in Creation

Berry and Zizioulas emphasize the place and role of the human person in their eco-theologies. The human person as microcosm and mediator in creation implies that humanity is integral with the universe, and has a responsibility of caring for creation. In Berry's functional cosmology, the human person is a microcosm of the universe with a functional role of bringing about a new ecological age. Zizioulas, in much the same way, holds that the human person is a mediator of communion between God and creation.

In the functional cosmology of Berry, the human person is an integral part of the sacred community. Humanity is an integral part of the psychic-spiritual and physical-material dimension of the universe. Thus, the human person bears the universe in its being and the universe bears the human in its being. The human is the only being through which the universe reflects on and celebrates itself in conscious self-awareness.¹⁷ This ecological anthropology situates the human person as a being in communion with all life-forms in the universe. This disclosure of human intimacy with creation implicates human destiny with the destiny of the entire universe. The functioning of the earth depends on the relationship between humans and creation. Berry argues that the disconnection between humans and the universe is the deepest cause of the ecological crisis. As he succinctly, explains, "[T]he deepest cause of the present devastation is found in a mode of consciousness that has established a radical discontinuity between the human and other modes of being and the bestowal of all rights on the humans."¹⁸ In this regard, Berry holds that one of the fundamental principles of transitioning into the Ecozoic Era is the

¹⁷ Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 132.

¹⁸ Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* (New York: Bell Tower, 1999), 4.

reinvention of the human person. Humanity needs to rediscover its true identity in relation to the universe – that humans are integral with the universe and live not so much in a cosmos as within a cosmogenesis. The human person and non-humans are intrinsically and inescapably interrelated in the universe. Thus the functioning of the universe depends on a mutual relationship between humans and the universe. In past ecological ages, Berry observes that humans were not a determining factor in its formation. However, with the emerging Ecozoic Era, humans “are going to be involved in almost everything that happens. Not that we can control the functioning of nature, but much will *not* happen unless we accept it, protect it, and foster it.”¹⁹ This ecological task can be fulfilled only if humanity moves away from a spirituality of alienation – which led to the termination of past ecological eras – towards establishing a sense of communion. Berry’s ecological anthropology re-situates the human person in communion with creation wherein humans have a functional role of bringing mutual flourishing of the entire universe, through mutually enhancing relationship.

Complimentarily, in the creation theology of Zizioulas, the human person is a being in communion – communion with God, other humans and creation. The human being is created in the image of God with the responsibility to mediate communion between God and creation. Zizioulas notes that God did not create the world without a means of survival, and thus, he rejects the theory of *Deus ex machina*.²⁰ On the contrary, the human person is called to become Priest of Creation in order to offer creation liturgically to God. As a liturgical being, the human person is related to creation

¹⁹ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 98.

²⁰ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 13:1.

ontologically but not functionally.²¹ This distinctive identity and priestly role of humans in creation is understood in terms of rationality. Zizioulas observes that rationality can be employed in two directions. First, rationality can be used as an argument for turning creation towards humanity. In this approach, human rationality is expressed negatively through the domination of the natural world and human-centeredness, which has contributed to the ecological crisis. Zizioulas notes that such a rationalistic approach has alienated human beings from the rest of creation and has encouraged them to look down with contempt on whatever is not rational – and therefore not human.²²

Second, rationality can be used as a means of referring creation to God in a doxological attitude. This latter understanding is what Zizioulas implies in the view of humans as Priest of Creation. Zizioulas, however, criticizes the overemphasis on rationality as a distinctive characteristic of the human person in relation to other creatures. Drawing from Darwinism, he argues that the identity of the human person in relation to other creatures does not depend solely on rationality, because other beings such as animals also possess reason and consciousness to a lower degree.²³ Thus, understanding the human person merely in terms of rationality is inadequate explication of human person. Zizioulas explains that, “[A] person is an identity formed through a relationship. We are persons because our distinct identity is given by our various relationships, biological relationships with our parents, natural relationship with our environment, and a vast complex of other social and political relationships. All these

²¹ Zizioulas, “The Proprietor or Priest of Creation,” 139.

²² John Zizioulas, “Ecological Asceticism: A Cultural Revolution,” *Sourozh* 67 (February 1997): 22.

²³ Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation,” 13:1.

make us the person we are.”²⁴ The character of these relationships reflects the *imago Dei* in which the human being is created. The person as a relational being is fundamental in overcoming the ecological crisis. As a Priest of Creation, humans approaches God’s creation respectfully and accepts the intrinsic value in each created being.²⁵ Humanity then has a duty to care for creation, which is realized through an ecological asceticism. Ecological asceticism demands a life of moderation and a just use of natural resources.

Human self-understanding in creation, as expounded by Berry and Zizioulas, is closely related. However, while Berry’s functional cosmology is based on a self-emergent universe, Zizioulas re-reading of the Fathers reveals a universe without a means of self-survival. For Berry, the functional role of the human demands a transcending of the human-centered mentality to a spirituality of intimacy with creation in the emerging Ecozoic era. In the Zizioulian cosmology, the human person as a mediator requires a shift from individualism to personal relations with creation, in order to help creation overcome its limitations. Berry and Zizioulas resituate the human person as a being in communion with every finite being in creation. In constructing a theological foundation for the eco-justice mission of the Church, anthropology is a central element. According to Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder, “[W]e must pursue justice and peace in our world with a sense of the interconnectedness of all things. God’s entire creation, not the human person, is the measure of all things.”²⁶

²⁴ John Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Douglas H. Knight, (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 111.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Stephen B. Bevans and Roger Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 378.

3.4 Eco-Spirituality: Human-Earth Community

Social injustice concerns are intrinsically related to issues of eco-injustice. The welfare of the earth cannot be isolated from the needs of humanity. Given the eco-theologies of Berry and Zizioulas, it is pertinent to assess their suitability in addressing the integral needs of the earth. Berry's functional cosmology presents the universe as a finite sacred entity of interconnected beings. From this perspective, there is no separation between the human and earth communities. According to Berry, "[T]here is no such thing as 'human community' without the earth and the soil and the air and the water and all the living forms. Without these, humans do not exist. There is, therefore, no separate human community."²⁷ The inextricable interrelatedness that exists within the universe abhors the dichotomy between humans and non-humans. Berry's eco-spirituality emerges from this mutual relationship of all living forms on earth. He contends that to devastate any aspect of the natural world is to distort the sublime experiences that provides fulfillment to the human mode of being.²⁸ Humanity cannot continue to live in self-alienation or isolation from other modes of being because the universe cannot function in fragments, but rather as a community of integrated life. Consequently, each being is bestowed with an inherent right to existence. From this integral eco-spirituality, Berry calls for a "new integration of human-earth concerns in eco-justice."²⁹ Humanity must become truly aware that it lives as member of an integral community. The disconnection in humanity's relations with the other living forms in existence is a contradiction of the very nature and functioning of the universe. The survival of the human community demands an urgent realization that

²⁷ Berry and Clarke *Befriending the Earth*, 43.

²⁸ Berry, "Christianity and Ecology," 60.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

“[N]othing survives by itself. Nothing is fulfilled in itself. Nothing has existence or meaning or fulfillment except in union with the larger community of existence.”³⁰ Thus, in overcoming the ecological crisis, Berry proposes a new orientation of spirituality,

We need to move from a spirituality of alienation from the natural world to a spirituality of intimacy with it, from a spirituality of the divine as revealed in verbal revelation to a spirituality of the divine as revealed in visible world about us, from a spirituality concerned with justice simply for humans to a justice that includes the larger Earth community.³¹

In this context, each mode of being forms a community of life with an inherent right to their distinctive place and role in the universe. Each being in the universe has an intrinsic value and pride of place. The eco-spirituality of Berry aims to bring human civilization into a proper sequence with other life-forms in order to promote a creative balance.

In the same affinity, Zizioulas, through his Triadology shows that humanity and all creation are drawn into the hypostatic and ecstatic life of God. Humanity and the rest of creation participate fully in the divine life through mutual relationships. This demands that the human person fully live out his/her identity as a relational being. The responsibility of the human as Priest of Creation is to relate in a fully personal way to God, to other humans and to other creatures. This personal approach to nature demands that humanity elevate the material world to the level of human existence. In such a way the earth is *humanized* and seen as a *catholicity* of related entities. Zizioulas argues that the human person cannot become an agent of relationship and communion in isolation from nature. Zizioulas’ ‘eco-spirituality of communion’ seeks to reintegrate humanity with the rest of creation. Thus, Zizioulas calls for an ecological asceticism that will

³⁰ Thomas Berry, “Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality,” in *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 138.

³¹ Berry, “Christianity and Ecology,” 60.

enable humanity to attain a quality mode of living and not a consumerist self-interest philosophy of life, which has led to the devastation of the earth. The eco-spirituality of Zizioulas is motivated from the “love for the rest of God’s creation or a feeling of responsibility for the survival and welfare of whatever is not human on our planet.”³² Thus, humanity must desist from misusing the earth as a slave of human interest, and relate to creation as an indispensable link of communion between humans and God.

The eco-spiritualities of Berry and Zizioulas compel humans to live in ways that enhance the flourishing of each mode of being and the entire creation. Berry and Zizioulas offer ground for an eco-spirituality that responds to the needs of the earth and human community. Interpretatively, their eco-spiritualities seek to address the well-being of human and earth communities as well as to achieve social and ecological justice. This is a vital insight from both theologians in the face of ecological crisis. Leonardo Boff stresses the importance of addressing both social and ecological justice when he writes:

The wound of poverty breaks the social fabric of millions and millions of poor people around the world. The other wound, systematic assault on the Earth, breaks down the balance of the planet, which is under threat from the plundering of development as practiced by contemporary global societies.³³

The two wounds of social and ecological injustice must be addressed by the Church concurrently if authentic justice is to be attained. Berry and Zizioulas challenges the socio-ecological mission of the Church to be unified in seeking an integral approach for the well-being of the human and earth communities. The concerns of humans cannot be isolated from the needs of the entire creation and vice versa.

³² Zizioulas, “Ecological Asceticism,” 23.

³³ Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 104.

3.5 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter has been to present the eco-theological motifs of Berry and Zizioulas under three categories: the sacredness of creation, ecological anthropologies, and their ecological spiritualities. The comparative theological analysis of both theologians on these select themes has shown that their theological foundations, though apparently related, are fundamentally unique. Berry and Zizioulas interpret the sacred nature of the universe distinctly. They also differ greatly in their articulation of the role of the human person in creation, as well as their presuppositions for their eco-spiritualities. The points of convergence in the delineated eco-theological motifs of Berry and Zizioulas are important trajectories for the Christian practice of ecological justice. Berry's functional cosmology resituates humanity as an integral member of a single sacred community with a functional role in terms of the working of the earth. Zizioulas, in a similar fashion, develops a creation theology that presents the human person as Priest of Creation, with an ontological role of bringing about communion between God and creation. Zizioulas more explicitly, though, situates the practice of ecological justice within a liturgical context, offering up creation to God in the same way as the gifts of the Eucharist are offered up to the Father. Each of the above foundational paradigms is important and relevant in constructing theological foundations for the practice of ecological justice. In the chapter that follows, the theological task will be to further evaluate the significance of the three select themes in light of the eco-justice mission of the Church.

CHAPTER FOUR

ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

4.1 Introduction

The clarion call for ecological responsibility has continued to re-echo within the Christian tradition. The previous chapters examined the voices of Thomas Berry and John Zizioulas in the face of the ecological crisis. The unique voices of each theologian converge to form a harmonious rhythm concerning the care of creation. The complexities and magnitude of the present-day ecological crisis demand from the Church a theological response that can speak to humanity. The search for such a holistic eco-theological template is indicative of the ongoing process in proffering an authentic response to the contemporary ecological concerns. Given this context, the eco-justice mission of the Church stands to be enriched by the distinct contributions of Berry and Zizioulas.

Thus, this final chapter focuses on the significance of the eco-theological motifs of Berry and Zizioulas as a resource to support the eco-justice mission of the Church. I will present a non-historical overview of the Church's teaching on ecology, drawing from the Second Vatican Council, papal documents and statements from episcopal synods and conferences, as a context for evaluating the importance of Berry and Zizioulas. The relevance of both theologians shall be examined under three categories: motivation for ecological conversion, transformative ecological anthropology, and integral ecological spirituality. Additionally, I will draw from the African context to further draw parallels on the eco-theological motifs of Berry and Zizioulas for the future of eco-justice mission.

4.2 The Church and Integrity of Creation

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), in the Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church (*Ad Gentes*), affirms that “[T]he Church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit.”¹ Therefore fundamental to the Church’s existence and nature is the perpetuation of God’s mission. According to John Paul II, “[P]roclamation is the permanent priority of mission. The Church cannot elude Christ’s explicit mandate, nor deprive men and women of the ‘Good news’ about their being loved and saved by God.”² John Paul II described mission as a single but complex reality, and that it develops in a variety of ways.³ The Church’s mission is a seamless garment of witnessing the Christian faith in the world. In order to sum up the complex and dynamic nature of mission, Roger Schroeder states that “*mission is proclaiming, serving, and witnessing to God’s reign of love, salvation, and justice.*”⁴ This perspective of mission underscores the promotion of justice for the human person and the entire creation as a genuine aspect of witnessing to the reign of God. Since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, the Church has not disassociated its missionary mandate from the realities of the global context. The Church

¹ *Ad Gentes* (1965), http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012), #2.

² John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclical/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012), #44. Furthermore, John Paul II emphasized that the witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission, and such witness includes a commitment to peace, justice, human rights and human promotion. Cf. *RM*, #42.

³ *RM*, #41. Roger Schroeder delineates six components of the “single but complex reality” of mission, which includes: witness and proclamation; liturgy, prayer and contemplation; justice, peace, and the integrity of creation; interreligious dialogue and secular dialogue; inculturation and reconciliation. See Roger P. Schroeder, *What is the Mission of the Church? A Guide for Catholics* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 113-127.

⁴ Schroeder, *What is the Mission of the Church?* 3.

has continued to promote a renewed sense of the urgency of its mission, especially in cognizance of the needs and challenges of the contemporary world. The Vatican II Council, in *Gaudium et Spes*, stated that “[T]he joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”⁵ In furtherance of this mission within a global context, the synod of Bishops confirmed that

Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appears to us a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church’s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.⁶

The justice dimension of the Church’s mission is concurrently expressed in the care for creation. Pope Benedict XVI writes, “[T]he Church has a responsibility towards creation and she [sic] must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only the earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must above all protect mankind from self-destruction.”⁷ Consequently, the justice mission of the Church can be described in a very broad sense to preserve both human dignity and ecological integrity.⁸ Within this context, social and ecological justice are not discrete phenomena within the mission of the Church. Both the Church’s teaching and its response to social and ecological concerns arise from God’s love. According to Benedict XVI “[A]wareness of God’s undying love sustains us in our laborious and stimulating

⁵ *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html. (assessed July 26, 2012), #1.

⁶ The Synod of Bishops, “Justice in the World,” in *The Gospel of Peace and Justice*, ed., Joseph Gremillion (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1976), #6.

⁷ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009), #51.

⁸ See David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 410-418; Roger P. Schroeder, *What is the Mission of the Church?*, 112-127; Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 369-375.

work for justice and the development of peoples, amid successes and failures, in the ceaseless pursuit of a just ordering of human affairs.”⁹ Moreover, the love that does justice is the love that seeks the truth. Truth is the light that gives meaning and value to charity, such that without truth, charity degenerates into sentimentality.¹⁰ The mission of the Church, which embraces ecological concerns, is carried out in different contexts through diverse institutions and draws its theological and ethical principles from the Catholic social teaching.¹¹ The Catholic social teaching can be described as the normative vision contained in the writings that articulate the official position of the Church on social issues as promulgated by the magisterium.¹² The social teaching of the Church engages a plethora of social questions – including ecological concerns – in light of the scriptures, rational insights and Catholic tradition.¹³ Arguably, in modern times, the Church has made remarkable strides in engaging ecological issues in light of Christian faith.¹⁴

⁹ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, #78.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, #3.

¹¹ It is important to acknowledge the nuances in the terms: ‘Catholic social teaching’ and ‘Catholic social doctrine.’ According to Milburn Thompson, “Catholic social doctrine is the same as Catholic social teaching, although doctrine seems more formal, rigid, authoritative term that is perhaps inappropriate for the ever-changing intersection between the Christian faith and the social question.” Cf. J. Milburn Thompson, *Introducing Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 7.

¹² See Thompson, *Introducing Catholic Social Thought*, 6.

¹³ Marvin L. Krier Mich, *The Challenge and Spirituality of Catholic Social Teaching* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 7. According to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, there are seven basic concerns of Catholic Social teaching, namely: (1) The life and dignity of the human person. (2) A call to family, community, and participation. (3) Rights and responsibilities. (4) An option for the poor and vulnerable. (5) The dignity of work and the rights of worker. (6) Solidarity. (7) Care for God’s creation. See Task Force on Catholic Social Teaching and Catholic Education, “Report of the Content Subgroup,” *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching* (Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1998).

¹⁴ There are divergent views on where to historically situate the first official teaching on ecology. See Marjorie Keenan, *From Stockholm to Johannesburg: An Historical Overview of the Concern of the Holy See for the Environment 1972-2002* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2002); Sean McDongah, *The Greening of the Church* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990); Celia Deane-Drummond, “Joining in the Dance: Catholic Social Teaching and Ecology,” *New Blackfriars* 93, no 1043 (March 2012):194-195.

The Church's theological foundation for ecological justice can be traced to the Second Vatican Council. The Council fathers, in the Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, proclaimed that "creation itself will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God. The faithful, therefore, must learn the deepest meaning and the value of all creation, as well as its role in the harmonious praise of God."¹⁵ Given this understanding, the Vatican II Council further stated that

For man [sic], created to God's image, received a mandate to subject to himself the earth and all it contains, and to govern the world with justice and holiness; a mandate to relate himself and the totality of things to Him Who was to be acknowledged as the Lord and Creator of all. Thus, by the subjection of all things to man, the name of God would be wonderful in all the earth.¹⁶

The teaching of the Second Vatican Council is often referred to as the 'dominion motif,' which expresses a hard-core anthropocentricity.¹⁷ This anthropocentric vision of creation is heightened in this statement: believers and unbelievers agree almost unanimously that all things on earth should be ordained to man [sic] as to their center and summit.¹⁸

Inferably, human sovereignty and well-being over creation is upmost in understanding the Church's ecological mission, which is biblically founded on the interpretations of the two creation narratives of the book Genesis (Genesis 1: 1 – 2: 4a; 2: 4b - 3:24).¹⁹

¹⁵ *Lumen Gentium* (1964) http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_council/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, (accessed July 26, 2012), #36.

¹⁶ *GS*, #34.

¹⁷ Sean McDonagh, *The Greening of the Church* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990), 175-176). The Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops delineates three main categories of ecological anthropology to describe the understanding of the place and role of humans in creation: hard-core anthropocentricity, moderate anthropocentricity, non-anthropocentricity. See *The Environmental Crisis: The Place of the Human Being in the Cosmos* (Ottawa, Ontario: Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1995).

¹⁸ *GS*, #12.

¹⁹ Other scriptural texts are drawn upon to further elucidate the interpretation of the Genesis narratives. See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vaticana: Libreria Editrice, 2005), #451, 452, 453, 454, 455.

4.2.1 Biblical Foundation for the Care of Creation

The first creation narrative (Genesis 1:1-2) is attributed to the Priestly tradition. This story describes the beginning of the world in a succession of days by God's word.²⁰ At the end of each day, God proclaimed creation good – “And God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1: 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). Narrating the creation story, the Priestly author indicates that the proper response to creation is reverence and praise, and that humanity shares solidarity with both the inanimate and animate beings in owing existence to God.²¹ The Priestly account presents a tripartite relationship, which involves humans, non-humans and God. The human person is given a responsibility towards creation as follows:

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth’ (Genesis 1: 27-28).

The understanding of this biblical text must be read with attentiveness to the mind of the author *vis-à-vis* biblical context, history, exegesis and hermeneutics.²² In the Church's ecological teaching, the biblical phrases ‘subdue’ (*khabash*) and ‘dominion’ (*radah*) are employed to express human responsibility towards creation as God's vice-regent (Psalm

²⁰ Suffice it to mention that priestly account is in common with the structure of the creation story of the Babylonians, *Enuma Elish*. Both creation narratives have a similar succession of events: chaos at the beginning and then the creation of the firmament, dry land, the heavenly bodies, and finally humans. God's rest, which concludes God's work of creation, also corresponds to a feast of the Babylonian God. See Anne M. Clifford, “Foundations for a Catholic Ecological Theology of God,” in *And God Saw that it was Good: Catholic Theology and the Environment*, eds. Drew Christiansen and Walter Grazer (Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1996), 25; Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis Story of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 18-60.

²¹ *GS*, # 16; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. John Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 60-64.

²² For diverse exegetical studies of the creation narratives of Genesis, see Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984); David W. Cotter, *Genesis* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003); Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

72:8).²³ The Church does not use these biblical terms to indicate exploitation of creation. John Paul II observes that “it was the Creator’s will that man [sic] should communicate with nature as an intelligent and noble ‘master’ and ‘guardian’ and not as a heedless ‘exploiter’ and ‘destroyer.’”²⁴ Therefore human beings have a vocation to legitimately exercise a responsible stewardship towards nature, in order to protect it, to enjoy its fruits and to care for it.²⁵ Commenting on the Priestly account, John Paul II describes it as “a hymn to the Creator of the universe, pointing to him as the only Lord in the face of recurring temptations to divinize the world itself. At the same time, it is a hymn to the goodness of creation, all fashioned by the mighty and merciful hand of God.”²⁶

The second creation story (Genesis 2: 4b - 3:24) is ascribed to the Yahwist tradition, and predates the Priestly account. The Yahwist writer, drawing from other cultural myths, situates the history of God’s saving activity on behalf of Israel within the broader parameters of human and cosmic history.²⁷ The Yahwist account teaches that God created the human person from the earth (*adamah*): “God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and

²³ The human responsibility and relationship towards creation is akin to the ancient kings, to be the mediators of prosperity and well-being. Thus, reverential care for God’s creation is the mandate given to humans in the first creation story. John R. Donahue, “The Bible and Catholic Social Teaching: Will this Engagement Lead to Marriage?” in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretation* Kenneth R. Himes (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 16; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 51-56; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, #452.

²⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul/encyclical/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis_en.html (assessed May 12, 2012), #15.

²⁵ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, #50.

²⁶ John Paul II, *The Apostolic Letter: Dies Domini* (Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1988), 9; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, #452.

²⁷ McDonagh, *The Greening of the Church*, 121.

keep it” (Genesis 2: 7, 15).²⁸ This Genesis account continues with the creation of the woman from the ribs of man (Genesis 2:18-22). The Yahwist narrative depicts the human person as a being in relationship and as having a responsibility to care for creation. The human is placed in the garden with the duty of cultivating it, but must remain subject to God.²⁹ In the *Evangelium Vitae*, John Paul II interpreted Genesis 2:15 as follows:

As one called to till and look after the garden of the world, man [sic] has a specific responsibility towards the environment in which he lives, towards the creation which God has put at the service of his personal dignity, of his life, not only for the present but also for future generations. It is the ecological question – ranging from the preservation of the natural habitats of the different species of animals and of other forms of life to ‘human ecology’ properly speaking – which finds in the Bible clear and strong ethical direction, leading to a solution which respects the great good of life, of every life.³⁰

The aforementioned ecological hermeneutics of the Genesis creation stories indicate that creation is good as well as a gift of God entrusted to humanity to take care of and to cultivate.³¹ This theological paradigm underlines the *modus operandi* for the Church’s ecological mission. Accordingly, “[T]he Magisterium underscores human responsibility for the preservation of a sound and healthy environment for all.”³² The magnitude of the ecological crisis impels the Church’s mission to create an ecological consciousness that is translated into Christian action towards the care for creation.

²⁸ In this text of the second creation story, the Hebrew word *abad* can be translated not only as ‘to till,’ but also to ‘dress,’ or to ‘serve.’ Similarly, the variations in translation apply to the Hebrew word *shamar*, which is rendered as ‘to keep;’ it can also be translated as ‘to protect,’ ‘to take care of’ and ‘to guard.’ See Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 220-229.

²⁹ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei Socialis* (1987) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html (accessed May 2, 2012), #29.

³⁰ John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (1995) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae_en.html (accessed May 2, 2012), #42.

³¹ Thompson, *Introducing Catholic Social Thought*, 157.

³² See also Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, #456; John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei Socialis*, #34.

4.2.2 Christian Ecological Responsibility

Basically, the Genesis creation narratives highlight the Christian ecological responsibility with both royal and domestic images. The royal image describes the role of humans as holding an ascendancy over visible creation, in the manner of a king.³³ This exercise of kingship is that of service. On the other hand, the domestic image assigns the human person with an ecological responsibility as master of a household to whom God has confided care of all his goods (Matthew 24: 45).³⁴ The domestic and royal imagery has emerged to undergird the ecological metaphor of – stewardship. “[S]tewardship is the traditional Christian expression of the role of people in relation to the creation. Stewards, as caretakers for the things of God, are called to use wisely and distribute justly the goods of God’s earth to meet the needs of God.”³⁵ Humans as stewards of creation have a duty to participate in the divine rule, in which humans are subject to God.³⁶ John Paul II describes the role of humans thus: “Man’s lordship however is not absolute, but

³³ International Theological Commission, “Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God,” http://www.vatican_curia/congregation/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040723_communion-stewardship_en.html. (accessed May 12, 2012), #59.

³⁴ International Theological Commission, “Communion and Stewardship,” #42.

³⁵ *The Columbia River Watershed: Caring for Creation and the Common Good*, An International Pastoral Letter by the Catholic Bishops of the Watershed Region http://www3.villanova.edu/mission/CST_Tresource/ecology/columbiariver.pdf (May 12, 2012), 9. Etymologically the word stewardship is a derivative of the Greek *oikonomia* - *oikos* (house) and *nemō* (to administer or manage), which refers to the role of the steward (*oikonomos*) who exercises function over a house (Luke 12: 35-48). Cf. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapid, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 119-159. The ecological metaphor ‘stewardship’ has come under intense debate among eco-theologians because it indicates that humans are capable of managing creation and presents God as an absentee landlord. Moreover, it indicates the superiority of humans above other creatures. Cf. Sean McDonagh, *Passion for the Earth: The Christian Vocation to Promote Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 128-134.

³⁶ International Theological Commission, “Communion and Stewardship,” #61. The United States Catholic Bishops also notes that “[S]tewardship implies that we must both care for creation according to standards that are not our own making and at the same time be resourceful in finding ways to make the earth flourish. Even as we rejoice in earth’s goodness and in the beauty of nature, stewardship places upon us responsibility for the well-being of all God’s creatures.” United States Catholic Bishops, “Renewing the Earth,” in *And God Saw that it was Good: Catholic Theology and the Environment*, eds. Drew Christiansen and Walter Grazer (Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1996), 231-232.

ministerial: it is a real reflection of the unique and infinite lordship of God. Hence man must exercise it with wisdom and love, sharing in the boundless wisdom and love of God.”³⁷ The biblical cosmology, with its notion of human dominion over creation, should not be misinterpreted as a justification for the plundering of the earth. Rather, as steward of creation, the human person is created *imago Dei* with a responsibility to care and not to abuse creation.³⁸ Humans are accountable to God the creator and must learn the deepest meaning and value of creation.³⁹ The Church’s ecological teaching is chiefly expounded within this metaphor of stewardship, which calls for ecological responsibility.

In the 1990 World Day of Peace message, John Paul II noted that “*the ecological crisis is a moral issue*” and as such, is the “*responsibility of everyone*.”⁴⁰ He observed that Christians must realize that their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the creator are an essential aspect of their faith.⁴¹ Further, John Paul II notes:

*An education in ecological responsibility is urgent: responsibility for oneself, for others, and for the earth. This education cannot be rooted in mere sentiment or empty wishes. Its purpose cannot be ideological or political. It must not be based on a rejection of the modern world or a vague desire to return to some ‘paradise lost’. Instead, a true education in responsibility entails a genuine conversion in ways of thought and behavior.*⁴²

³⁷ John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, #52. The Catechism states that “[Human’s] dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation.” See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Ottawa, Ontario: Publication Service, 1994), #2415.

³⁸ See Benedict XVI, *If you want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation* (January 1, 2010) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/message/peace/documents/hf_benxvi_mes_20091208_xliii-world-day-peace_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012), #6, 13; International Theological Commission, “Communion and Stewardship,” #80.

³⁹ *LG*, #36.

⁴⁰ John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation* (January 1, 1990) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/message/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii_world-day-for-peace_en.html. (accessed May 21, 2012), #15.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, #15.

⁴² *Ibid.*, #13.

Simply put, the ecological crisis demands a fundamental change in humanity's relationship with creation. The Church's ecological mission is aimed at the ruptures humans have created with nature, with fellow humans and with God.⁴³ Thus, Benedict XVI notes that the covenant between human beings and the environment should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying.⁴⁴

Accordingly, the Church's ecological mission can be understood as seeking to imbue ecological responsibility in humans, without creating a split between the needs of the earth and other human concerns. Benedict XVI acknowledges that the present-day ecological crisis adversely impacts the exercise of human rights, such as the right to life, food, health and development.⁴⁵ In the same vein, Benedict XVI argues that world peace "is threatened not only by the arms race, regional conflicts and continued injustice among people and nations, but also by lack of due respect for nature, by the plundering of natural resources and by a progressive decline in the quality of life."⁴⁶ This excessive devastation of the earth, in some cases is caused by poverty, impacts both present and future generations.⁴⁷ Thus, the ecological mission of the Church is linked to the issues of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.⁴⁸ The Church's call for ecological responsibility integrates the Christian duties towards creation and neighbor into a single vision of human development. Benedict XVI, in the encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, observes that

⁴³ Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Our Relationship with the Environment: The Need for Conversion," (2008) http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/enviro_eng.pdf (May 12, 2012), 2.

⁴⁴ Benedict XVI, *If you want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*, #1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, #4.

⁴⁶ John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation*, #1.

⁴⁷ See Benedict XVI, *If you Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*, #10; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, #482; United States Catholic Bishops, "Renewing the Earth," 237.

⁴⁸ Schroeder, *What is the Mission of the Church?*, 118.

The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment, but also life, sexuality, marriage and family, social relations: in a word integral development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others.⁴⁹

The human being remains the subject of ecological mission, because it is contrary to authentic human development to view nature as something more important than the human person.⁵⁰ Vatican II's pastoral constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, describes the human person as *homo socialis* (a social being), created in the image of God and given dominion over all earthly creatures.⁵¹ "Hence, the social order and its development must invariably work to the benefit of the human person, since the order of things is to be subordinated to the order of persons, and not the other way round."⁵² Nevertheless, the Church calls for solidarity with future generation in the use of natural resources and the care of creation.⁵³

Summarily, the Church's eco-justice mission seeks to preserve the integrity of creation, which is characterized by the just use of natural resources, solidarity with the poor, and the common good of the present and future generations. Importantly, the Church's ecological teaching draws from other social ethical principles.⁵⁴ Amidst, the ecological crisis, the mission of the Church is consistently confronted with emerging empirical scientific revelations and other developments within eco-theological discourse. In light of this, it is important that the Church remain open towards engaging emerging theological trajectories in formulating theological foundations to promote eco-justice.

⁴⁹ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, #51.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *GS*, #12.

⁵² *GS*, #26; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine*, #132.

⁵³ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei Socialis*, #47.

⁵⁴ Some of these principles includes: the universal destiny of created goods, the common good and the option for the poor. See, Thompson, *Introducing Catholic Social Thought*, 158.

4.3 Eco-Justice: The Significance of Berry and Zizioulas

The Second Vatican Council succinctly stated that “[T]he Church guards the heritage of God's word and draws from it moral and religious principles without always having at hand the solution to particular problems.”⁵⁵ Considering the magnitude of the ecological crisis, John Paul II notes that “a new *ecological awareness* is beginning to emerge, which, rather than being downplayed, ought to be encouraged to develop into concrete programs and initiatives.”⁵⁶ These statements by extension suggest the fact that while the Church does not claim expertise on ecological concerns, it is not reluctant to propose theological paradigms that are comprehensible to humanity. The ecological crisis has evolved into a complex reality with multifaceted dimensions, which demands an integral approach and response towards an authentic resolution. Considering this context, an ecological dialogue at the level of theological discourse is paramount. As a relatively emerging paradigm of the Church’s mission, the promotion of eco-justice is in dire need of constant renewal of theological dynamics that can inspire ecological actions. In this vein, the eco-theological motifs of Berry and Zizioulas offer important trajectories for the eco-justice mission of the Church. The seminal insights of Berry and Zizioulas evoke ecological conversion, delineate the roles of humanity in creation as well as envision an ecological spirituality that responds both to social and ecological concerns. These three themes are closely interrelated such that ecological conversion leads to human self-understanding within creation, which in turn inspires the preservation of human dignity and the integrity of creation.

⁵⁵ *GS*, #33.

⁵⁶ John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation*, #1.

4.3.1 Motivation for Ecological Conversion

In 2001, John Paul II, addressing a general audience at St. Peter's Square on the ecological crisis, asserted that "[I]t is necessary therefore, to stimulate and sustain the 'ecological conversion', which over these last decades has made humanity more sensitive when facing the catastrophe towards which it is moving...."⁵⁷ Equally, Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarchate Bartholomew I declared the following:

A solution at the economic and technological level can be found only if we undergo, in the most radical way, an inner change of heart, which can lead to a change in lifestyle and of unattainable patterns of consumption and production. A genuine *conversion* in Christ will enable us to change the way we think and act.⁵⁸

Simply put, the call for ecological conversion demands a new way of seeing, thinking, understanding, judging and acting. In order for a genuine ecological *metanoia* (conversion) to be realized, it is important to recognize that reconciliation is not limited to relations between humans, but also extends to include the rest of creation (Romans 8: 19). The Canadian Catholic Bishops explain that ecological conversion "has to focus on re-establishing a relationship, that is, creating a climate of reconciliation."⁵⁹ The Church's call for ecological *metanoia* completes the circle of Christian reconciliation by linking relationships both at the micro-levels (relationship with God and neighbor) and at the macro-levels (relationship with creation). However, the seedbed for proper relationship between humans and creation lies in a cosmological vision that can reawaken human

⁵⁷ John Paul II, "Address to a General Audience" at St. Peter's Square, (January 17, 2000) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20010117_en.htm (accessed March 12, 12).

⁵⁸ John Paul II and Bartholomew I, "Common Declaration of John Paul II and the Ecumenical Patriarch, His Holiness Bartholomew I," (June 10, 2002) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2002/june/document/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020610_venice-declaration_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012).

⁵⁹ Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Our Relationship with the Environment," 2.

sensibilities and imagination. Richard Miller argues that responding to the contemporary ecological crisis requires not only a conversion of the will but also a transformation of the imagination.⁶⁰

Accordingly, Berry's cosmological vision evokes ecological conversion. The functional cosmology demonstrates that the earth is a sacred community and is a manifestation of the divine presence. Each mode of being embodies the numinous mystery. The human person is constitutive of the psychic-spiritual and physical-material reality of the universe. This implies that the human person is *adamah* of one species in creation and interconnected with the universe. Berry contends that human difficulty in relating with non-humans comes from the sense of utility as our primary way of relating to the world about us.⁶¹ This utilitarian approach has led to a non-reverential treatment of the phenomenal world. Berry observes that humans have lost the primary manifestation of the divine in its cosmological manifestation.⁶² The New Story, "as told in its galactic expansion, its Earth formation, its life emergence, and its manifestation of consciousness in the human, fulfills in our times the role of the mythic accounts of the universe that existed in earlier times when human awareness was dominated by a spatial mode of consciousness."⁶³ The functional cosmology, when used as a context for eco-justice, can reconnect humans with creation. The universe as a time-developmental process, which

⁶⁰ Richard Miller describes imagination as "the capacity to think of other possible ways of being, thinking, and acting in the world." This thought pattern is based on Paul Ricoeur's question: "Is it not because we too often and too quickly think of a will that submits and not enough of an imagination that opens itself?" See. Richard W. Miller, "Introduction," in *God, Creation, and Climate Change: A Catholic Response to the Environmental Crisis* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), vii.

⁶¹ Thomas Berry, *Evening Thoughts: Reflecting on Earth as a Sacred Community*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2006), 39.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶³ Thomas Berry, *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 121.

reveals the sacredness and interdependence within creation, is an essential foundation for eco-justice. In order to inspire ecological *metanoia*, humanity needs to be reawakened to the earth as a sacred community. Berry calls for the ‘reinvention of the human,’ which is akin to change of ways of thinking and acting. Fundamental to this ecological renewal “is to realize that the universe is a communion of subjects, and not a collection of objects.”⁶⁴

Zizioulas, on the other hand, observes that the environment is both a spiritual and material reality. Creation is sacred because it mediates between God and humanity. Creation is the *other* which humans are called to bring into communion with God. As such, the human as Priest of Creation is called to relate with creation in a personal way. This demands a genuine love and respect for God’s creation. However, when humans treat creation as *servant*, then creation is incapable of being a vehicle of communion between God and humanity. In this context, Zizioulas calls for a revision of the notion of sin, and thus, affirms that the conception of sin includes ecological sin. By destroying creation, the human person goes against the plan of God’s design for all of creation. Thus ecological sin demands an ecological *metanoia*. The consistent call for ecological conversion must move beyond attitudinal change to a complete transformation of proper relations between humans and creation. The Zizioulian concept of ecological sin *vis-à-vis* ecological conversion brings about a change of heart for Christians when appraised as a component of the Church’s eco-justice mission. The emphasis of Berry and Zizioulas on the sacred nature of creation offers a paradigm for reclaiming the immanence of God in the doctrine of creation. Unless humans truly understand their relations with creation, ecological conversion becomes a mere mental ascent without any practical orientation.

⁶⁴ Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 17.

4.3.2 Transformative Ecological Anthropology

Human self-understanding is important in any cosmological narrative. The Church's integral human development is closely linked to the obligations which flow from humanity's relationship with creation.⁶⁵ John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus* states:

At the root of senseless destruction of the natural world lies an anthropological error, which unfortunately is widespread in our day. Man [sic] who discovers its capacity to transform and in a certain sense create the world through its own work, forgets that this is always based on God's prior and original gift of the things that are.⁶⁶

Berry and Zizioulas adjudge that, if the global ecological crisis is to be overcome, it must be examined in terms of human self-understanding in creation. Both theologians identify the important role of the human person in resolving the ecological crisis. As espoused in the second chapter of this thesis, Berry emphasizes that “[T]he human is that being in whom the universe activates, reflects upon and celebrates itself in conscious self-awareness.”⁶⁷ Thus, humanity bears the universe in its being and the human person is an integral part of the process of cosmogenesis. Consequently, in the realm of living beings there is an absolute interdependence.⁶⁸ In the emerging Ecozoic era, humanity has a fundamental responsibility to bring about a period when humans will be present to the planet as members of the comprehensive earth community.⁶⁹ As Berry explains, the “future can exist only when we understand the universe as composed of subjects to be

⁶⁵ Benedict XVI, *If you want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*, #2.

⁶⁶ John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* (1991), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012), #37.

⁶⁷ Thomas Berry, “Twelve Principles for Reflecting on the Universe and the Role of the Human in the Universe Process,” *Cross Currents* 37 no. 2-3 (1987): 216.

⁶⁸ Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* (New York: Bell Tower, 1999), 148.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

communed with, not as objects to be exploited.”⁷⁰ Berry’s ecological anthropology brings to awareness the intrinsic relationship between humanity and creation. John Paul II emphasizes the importance of teaching humanity the intimate connection between environmental ecology and human ecology. Human ecology underlies the intricate relationship between humans and creation, and the preservation of humanity on earth through right ethical choices.⁷¹ In order to reinforce the eco-justice mission, humanity must be reawakened to its cosmocentric identity and cosmic role within creation.

Similarly, Zizioulas’ emphasizes the human person as a being in communion. The human person who shares corporeality with the earth is created *imago Dei* and called to be a Priest of creation. This priesthood is not restricted to the ordained but is the divine responsibility of all the baptized. As Priest of Creation, the human person is a mediator between God and creation. At the liturgy, humanity offers creation to God, who in turn blesses it. The person as a liturgical being is called to relate with creation in a personal manner, which is attained in a liturgical manner and sustained through ecological asceticism. Zizioulas’ interpretation of the Fathers challenges the Church to reclaim the priestly character of the faithful, in terms of active concern for creation, especially at the celebration of the Eucharist. During the preparation of gifts, the priest blesses creation and offers the bread saying: “[B]lessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of

⁷⁰ Berry, *The Great Work*, x-xi.

⁷¹ Stan Chu Ilo, *The Church and Development in Africa: Aid and Development from the Perspective of Catholic Social Ethics* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 263. John Paul II notes that although people are worried about human environment — “though much less than they should be — about preserving the natural habitats of the various animal species threatened with extinction, because they realize that each of these species makes its particular contribution to the balance of nature in general, too little effort is made to safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic ‘human ecology.’” John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, #38.

human hands, it will become for us the bread of life.”⁷² In a similar way, the wine is lifted up to God with these words: “[B]lessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink.”⁷³ The Eucharist is not only a memorial of Christ’s life, death and resurrection, but also a celebration of God’s gift of creation.⁷⁴

Furthermore, the ‘lifting up’ of creation to God in thanksgiving by humans, as expounded by Zizioulas, brings a liturgical motivation and implication for the eco-justice mission of the Church. The offering of creation to God is not restricted mainly to the Eucharistic celebration; rather, what is celebrated liturgically is meant to be lived out in concrete ecological actions. This involves human interactions with the rest of creation and expresses itself in an authentic love for other creatures in all their specificity, a fully human feeling for them and celebration of them in God.⁷⁵ The act of offering creation to God at the Eucharist provides a liturgical foundation for ecological justice. In this way, the eco-justice mission of the Church is not seen as a mere humanistic agenda, but rather it draws inspiration from the Eucharist – the source and summit of the Christian faith.⁷⁶ The Christian commitment to ecological justice is then leavened by the ferment of love and self-giving modeled on the paschal mystery, which is celebrated in the Eucharist. Zizioulas’ ecological anthropology presents the human person as a liturgical being with a responsibility of mediating communion between God and creation.

⁷² Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Roman Missal* (Ottawa, Ontario: Publication Service, 2011), 405.

⁷³ *Ibid.* See also Eucharistic Prayer II, III and VI.

⁷⁴ Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 102.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁷⁶ *LG*, #11.

The ecological anthropologies of Berry and Zizioulas envision an integral relationship between humans and creation. In the eco-justice mission of the Church, there is need for a paradigm shift from the anthropocentricity that manifests itself in the attitude of dominion to an understanding of the human person as an integral part of creation. On this note, Leonardo Boff opines that “we humans should advance beyond our anthropocentric viewpoint, which is deeply embedded in Western Culture and continually reaffirmed by certain type of interpretation of the Hebrew and Christian religious traditions, which see human beings as lords of creation and the universe.”⁷⁷ Consequently, an eco-justice that is premised on an ecological anthropology that views the human person as the center of the universe or the absolute norm of value is a distortion of the interconnectedness and interdependence that creation manifests. Such a concept of the human person is an injustice to the earth, which is undeniably the maternal birth place of humans. The human person must be understood as intrinsically connected and interdependent with creation, with a responsibility to preserve and care for creation.

4.3.3 Integral Ecological Spirituality

There is no gainsaying that the issues of social injustice are intrinsically related to issues of ecological injustice. In other words, the concerns of the humanity cannot be disassociated from the concerns of the earth. John Paul II argues that “the proper ecological balance will not be found *without directly addressing the structural forms of*

⁷⁷ Leonardo Boff, *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995), 85.

poverty that exist throughout the world.”⁷⁸ The cry of the earth community is inseparable from the cry of the human community and the reverse holds true too. In arguing for unified understanding of justice for all of creation, Boff explains:

Since the human race is part of the environment, social injustice goes hand-in-hand with ecological justice. We need to refine the concept of ecological justice, but without a minimum of social justice, it is impossible to make ecological justice effective. The one involves the other.⁷⁹

Consequently, Berry’s functional spirituality proposes an ecological commitment that addresses both social and ecological injustices. He applies the concept of justice as an integral ethical principle for both human and earth communities. For Berry, social and ecological justice are mutually complementary and cannot be separated from one another. This view is evident in Berry’s notion of the earth as a sacred community, comprising of humans and other life-forms. This means that the earth is primarily an interrelated biotic community. Berry contends that,

There is no such thing as ‘human community’ without the earth and the soil and the air and the water and all the living forms. Without these, humans do not exist. There is, therefore, no separate human community. Humans are woven into this larger community. The larger community is a sacred community.⁸⁰

Berry argues that every component of the earth has three rights: the right to be, the right to habitat, and the right to fulfill its role in the ever-renewing processes of the Earth community.⁸¹ These rights “are based on the intrinsic relations that the various components of the Earth have with each other. The planet Earth is a single community

⁷⁸ John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all Creation*, #11.

⁷⁹ Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, 88.

⁸⁰ Thomas Berry and Thomas Clarke, *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation Between Humans and the Earth*, ed. Stephen Dunn and Anne Lonergan (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991), 43.

⁸¹ Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 111. See also, Berry, *The Great Work*, 5.

whose members are bound together with interdependent relationships.”⁸² In Berry’s functional spirituality, each member of the earth community has an intrinsic value. This means that every being is a subject and not an object for exploitation. As Berry proclaims, “the universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.”⁸³ The web of relationship in the universe is such that nothing is completely itself without everything else.⁸⁴ This inescapable bond of interrelatedness between humans and creation becomes imperative for integral ecological spirituality.

Complimentarily, for Zizioulas, the human person as Priest of Creation indicates relationality. This means that the human person is not an isolated being, but rather a being in communion. The person as a relational being demands moderation in the use of the limited natural resources. Humans must express their love for creation by seeking a qualitative life and not a quantitative approach of acquisition.⁸⁵ This indicates that humanity must approach nature “not in order to satisfy our needs as human beings, but *because nature itself* stands in need of development through us *in order to fulfill its own being* and acquire a meaning which it would not otherwise have.”⁸⁶ Hence, for Zizioulas, the needs of the earth must not override the satisfaction of human needs. The person as a mediator of creation does not end up with the humanity’s self-interests, but by humans relating in a fully loving and personal way with creation. The human person as Priest of

⁸² Berry, *Evening Thoughts*, 111.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸⁴ Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Books, 1988), 91.

⁸⁵ John Zizioulas, “Ecological Asceticism: A Cultural Revolution,” *Sourozh* no. 67 (February 1997): 24.

⁸⁶ John Zizioulas, “Proprietors or Priest of Creation,” in *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, ed. Luke Ben Tallon (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011), 140.

Creation brings about an ecological ethos, and such “a cultural dimension of ecology implies that the protection of nature is not contrary to the *development* of nature.”⁸⁷ The Zizioulian eco-spirituality does not dichotomize between ecological and social concerns. Drawing from his theology of *koinonia*, the mission of the Church is to build equitable and sustainable community in which humans attain their self-determination and ecological integrity is preserved. The Church as *koinonia*, according to Zizioulas, demands a responsibility “to become conscious of and to proclaim in the strongest terms the fact that there is an intrinsic communion between the human being and the natural environment, a communion that must be brought into the Church’s very being in order to receive its fullness.”⁸⁸ The pursuit of ecological justice as an integral aspect of human development cannot “exclude respect for the beings which constitute the natural world, which the ancient Greeks - alluding precisely to the order which distinguishes it - called the ‘cosmos.’”⁸⁹ The eco-spiritualities of Berry and Zizioulas recognize the needs of all beings in existence as well as the links between social and ecological justice.

4.5 The Future of Christian Ecological Justice

The contemporary ecological crisis remains an integral dimension of the Christian faith. Significantly, the Church’s response to the ecological concern is expressed through exhortations articulated in statements on the care of creation, and through actions for eco-

⁸⁷ Zizioulas, “Proprietors or Priest of Creation,” 140.

⁸⁸ John Zizioulas, “The Church as Communion,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 38 (1994): 13.

⁸⁹ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei Socialis*, #34.

justice. While exhortation articulates the Church's ecological vision, the practice of ecological responsibility indicates the praxis of its ecological teachings. The Church's teaching on the care for creation has continued to develop within the call for ecological stewardship, which is evident in papal encyclicals and statements of episcopal conferences, as well as through theological reflections on socio-ecological issues.⁹⁰ On the other hand, there are many Christian faithful who are dedicated towards the preservation of ecological integrity.⁹¹

Given the complexities of the ecological crisis, the eco-justice mission of the Church as an emerging paradigm demands consistent renewal at the level of theological discourse. The challenge is how to respond creatively with a wider ecological vision that speaks to humanity. At stake for such a vision is the openness of the Church to engage in theological dialogue within Christian traditions that will shape ecological justice. This thesis is a contribution towards developing such a theological framework for ecological justice. The eco-theological motifs of Berry and Zizioulas demonstrate how the eco-justice mission can be supported with eco-theological voices within the Christian tradition. The theological insights of both theologians give impetus to the Christian responsibility of promoting ecological justice. There is an urgent necessity for ecological reformation, in constructing a theological foundation for eco-justice. In this case, the ecological mission of the Church needs to expand its resources to include scientific revelations, Patristic resources and insights from indigenous cultures. Most often, the cultural values of many traditions are complimentary to Christian teachings, scientific

⁹⁰ See Majorie Keenan, *From Stockholm to Johannesburg: An Historical Overview of the Concern of the Holy See for the Environment 1972-2002* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2002).

⁹¹ See Thompson, *Introducing Catholic Social Teaching*, 153-156.

revelations and theological insights.

Particularly, the eco-theological motifs of Berry and Zizioulas demonstrate such complementarity with African ecological wisdom. In the traditional African context, the sacredness of creation is sacrosanct. The traditional African cosmogony conceives God as the source of creation.⁹² The common ancestral image to describe the earth is ‘mother.’ The image of *mother* implies totality of life and welfare of the entire creation.⁹³ Creation as *mother-earth* is perceived as a repository of the divine with links between the present generation and its ancestors as well as between humans and non-humans. The African worldview understands that God is present in creation and penetrates all creatures. Mbiti, writes that “to African peoples, man [sic] lives in a religious universe, so that the natural phenomena and objects are intimately associated with God. They not only originate from [God] but also bear witness to [God]. Man’s understanding of God is strongly coloured by the universe of which [humanity] is a part.”⁹⁴ In this light, the earth as *mother* is treated with reverence and protected from abusers to enable it to continually exercise its sustaining role.⁹⁵ The notion of creation as sacred is further typified in the protection of

⁹² Almost all African ethnic groups have creation narratives point to God as the creator of the world. Cf. Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 62-64.

⁹³ John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: Heineman Educational Books, 1961), 1.

⁹⁴ Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 48. Suffice it to mention that, the African creation narratives do not teach pantheism in its understanding of the sacred character of creation. Bénézet Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and Dialogue Between North and South* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1988), 215. Cf. John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: Heineman Educational Books, 1961); John Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (Praeger: London Publishers, 1970).

⁹⁵ Samson K. Gitua, *The Environmental Crisis: A Challenge for African Christian* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2000), 33.

some species of animals and the preservation of groves and streams.⁹⁶ Consequently, the human person is perceived to be deeply bonded with other people and ensconced in a complex, interrelated community of life. The interaction between the human person and the cosmos is often compared to a spider's web, which shivers in sympathy when a single strand is touched.⁹⁷ This imagery inspires Africans to respect and reinforce nature rather than destroy it. Within the African cosmology, the human person is completely dependent on the earth for its existence. The Ashanti of Ghana expresses this ecological interdependence poetically thus: "[E]arth and dust, the dependable one, I lean upon you, Earth, when I am about to die, I lean upon you. Earth, when I am alive, I depend upon you."⁹⁸ In other words, human existence is dependent on the earth and fully realized by living in harmony with the rest of creation. This intrinsic interrelationship that exists in creation situates humans as an integral part of the cosmos. In this vein, African anthropology is not conceived in isolation from creation.

The human person as a being in communion with creation is *ad rem* with the ecological anthropologies of Berry and Zizioulas. In African anthropology, the human person is not a master of creation, rather a being in communion with other life-forms. As Mbiti puts it, "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am."⁹⁹ The African anthropology is conceived within the community. The concept of community comprises

⁹⁶ For instance the Bukusu of Kenya believed that God forbid them to eat all creatures that crawls. Again among the Acholi of Uganda and Kuku of Southern Sudan vegetation and forest were preserved as revered groves. Such mythical practice enhanced the protection and maintaining of ecological balance. See Samson K. Gitau, "Environmental Crisis: A Challenge to the Church in Africa," *African Ecclesial Review* 53, 2 (June 2011): 317. Among the Igbos of eastern Nigeria, some species of snakes and birds are regarded as sacred. They are respected as divine emissaries. See Ilo, *The Church and Development in Africa*, 271.

⁹⁷ See Bénézet Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethics Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 56.

⁹⁸ Gitau, "Environmental Crisis: A Challenge to the Church in Africa," 315.

⁹⁹ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 108-109.

both the visible world (humans and non-humans), and the invisible world (deceased ancestors, yet unborn and God). Human beings live within this interdependence of relationships. The identity of the human person is derived from this relational ontology, and thus, “man [sic] is a force in the midst of and in union with other forces in the universe actively interacting with them.”¹⁰⁰ This notion of personhood indicates that there is an inter-subjective communion among the various entities that constitute the universe. Mbiti further buttresses this point when he writes, “in African traditional world view, the wellbeing of man [sic] is intimately connected with the wellbeing of the total creation. If man abuses nature or the environment, nature will abuse man.”¹⁰¹ Simply, the way humans relate to the earth will be reciprocated in the same measure to humanity. The human person and the cosmos complement each other to such an extent that they cannot exist without this interdependence.¹⁰² Therefore, the injustice committed against any being on earth is an injustice against *mother-earth* and vice versa. Berry strongly alludes to this when he observes that “[I]f the earth is not taken care of, everything else becomes irrelevant. If anything happens to the earth, religion, education, economics, the medical profession – all would become irrelevant.”¹⁰³ In much the same way, Zizioulas asserts that “not only is Man [sic] dependent on the rest of creation for his existence, but that the reverse is equally true, namely the rest of creation depends on the human being for the

¹⁰⁰ Emefie Ikanga-Metuh, *Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religions* (Onitsha, Nigeria: Imico Publishers, 1987), 181.

¹⁰¹ John Mbiti, “Christianity and African Culture,” *Journal of Theology for South Africa* 20 (1977): 31.

¹⁰² Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community*, 209; Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 16.

¹⁰³ Berry and Clarke, *Befriending the Earth*, 98.

realisation and the fulfillment of its existence.”¹⁰⁴ From the foregoing, the African ecological wisdom resonates with the eco-theological motifs of Berry and Zizioulas in complimentary ways. This further shows that the seminal insights of both theologians are capable of speaking to diverse ecological contexts. While there are diverse ecological values in many cultures, the ecological crisis is not restricted to a particular context. The present-day ecological crisis adversely impacts the entire planetary systems irrespective of culture and religion. The ecological mission of the Church must recognize the interdisciplinary, intercultural and interreligious dimensions of the ecological crisis in proffering any meaningful theological response.

Specifically, in constructing theological foundations for eco-justice, the Church needs to engage the following theological questions: What are the motivations for ecological conversion and actions on behalf of eco-justice? What is the place and role of the human person in relation to modern scientific revelation about the universe? How do other cultural and religious traditions understand the human person within creation? How can justice be attained and sustained for the entire planetary system? This thesis does not presume to proffer conclusive answers to these questions. Nonetheless, the examination of the eco-theological motif of Berry and Zizioulas offers possibilities for further eco-theological discourse. The Church has a responsibility to integrate an ecological vision that will promote the concrete exercise of ecological justice. The eco-justice mission of the Church demands an integration of theological foundations that is constitutive of the Christian tradition and is capable of being contextualized within diverse cultural contexts. This theological task will define the future of the eco-justice mission of the Church.

¹⁰⁴ John Zizioulas, “Science and the Environment: A theological Approach,” http://www.rsesymposia.org/themedia/File/1151676874-Sc_Environment.pdf (accessed May, 12, 2012), 2.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has identified select theological dynamics within the ecological justice mission of the Church that are enriched by the profound sapience of Berry and Zizioulas. The significance of Berry and Zizioulas, as argued in this chapter, reawakens and inspires humanity to ecological conversion, transformative ecological anthropology and integral ecological spirituality. The seminal insights of Berry and Zizioulas open up new trajectories for the Church's ecological mission. These horizons are not at variance with the Church's teaching on ecology, but rather are complementary. The African creation narratives further demonstrates the suitability of both theologians for promoting ecological justice in diverse cultural contexts. In order to respond holistically to the present-day ecological crisis, there is dire need for a significant shift towards integrating faith and scientific revelation, the human person and creation as well as social and ecological justice. Such integral ecological spirituality, by enabling Christians to articulate the connection between humanity and creation, will bring about ecological conversion and conviction of living in a manner that will promote the integrity of creation. The future of the ecological mission of the Church depends on such an integral approach imbued with a sense of ecological justice.

In summation, the functional cosmology of Berry and the creation theology of Zizioulas are significant in shaping the Christian response to the contemporary ecological crisis. The construction of theological foundations for the eco-justice mission of the Church demands constant renewal. Berry and Zizioulas offer Christians and indeed all humanity the much needed motivation for discovering a new way of being-with-creation.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The goal of this thesis has been to demonstrate the significance of the functional cosmology of Thomas Berry and the creation theology of John Zizioulas for the ecological justice mission of the Church. The theological analysis of both theologians reveals their distinct eco-theological motifs in light of the ecological crisis. The global ecological concern has metamorphosed into a complex reality with multifaceted dimensions and as such demands an integral response. In fact, it would be absurd to assume that only a mono-religious tradition or a mono-ecological hermeneutics can provide the needed epistemological and theological foundations for the Christian faith. The comparative study of the eco-theologies of Berry and Zizioulas is to promote such a theological cooperation within Christian traditions.

In chapter one, the functional cosmology of Thomas Berry was presented. The chapter explored the main contents of his cosmological vision, which is characterized by the cosmogenetic principles of differentiation, subjectivity and communion. This reveals the divine presence in creation as well as the human as an integral part of the psychic-spiritual and physical-material of a sacred community.

Chapter two examined the creation theology of John Zizioulas. The chapter is concerned with his interpretation of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, which emerged from the early centuries of the Church. Creation has an absolute beginning and the human person is created for communion. As a Priest of Creation, the human person is called to bring creation into communion with God both liturgically and ascetically.

The comparative theological analysis of Berry and Zizioulas was the focus of chapter three. The three theological dynamics discussed were: the sacredness of creation, humanity as microcosm and mediator of creation as well as the human and earth community. The comparative study shows that the eco-theologies of Berry and Zizioulas, though related, are distinct in their theological presuppositions. The dialogical conversation between both theologians forms a complimentary praxis relevant for the renewal of theological foundations as praxis for the eco-justice.

The aim of the chapter four was to examine the significance of Berry and Zizioulas to the ecological justice mission of the Church. Evaluating the contributions of Berry and Zizioulas within the context the Church's ecological teaching complemented the Christian practice of eco-justice. Some insights from African ecological wisdom further demonstrated the relevance of the ecological vision of Berry and Zizioulas.

Given the unprecedented global ecological crisis, Berry and Zizioulas remain significant theological voices within Christianity that reawaken humanity to the empirical, religious and existential realities of creation. The Church's call to ecological responsibility and mission of ecological justice is enriched and complimented by both theologians. In order to be relevant, the Christian commitment to eco-justice must be viewed not as a humanistic agenda; rather, it must be informed by a cosmological vision, a transformative ecological anthropology and an integral eco-spirituality. The Christian vocation to preserve ecological integrity is imperative: humans cannot remain indifferent.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Berry, Thomas. *The Historical Theory of Giambattista Vico*. Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1951.
- _____. *Five Oriental Philosophies*. Albany: Magi Books, 1968.
- _____. *The New Story, Teilhard Studies no. 1*. Chambersburg, Pennsylvania: Anima Books, 1978.
- _____. *Teilhard in the Ecological Age*. Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1982.
- _____. "Twelve Principles for Reflecting on the Universe and the Role of the Human in the Universe Process." *Cross Currents* 37, no. 2-3 (1987d): 216 -217.
- _____. "The New Story: Comments on the Origin, Identification and Transmission of Values." *Cross Currents* 37, 2-3 (Summer/Fall 1987): 187-199.
- _____. *The Dream of the Earth*. San Francisco: Sierra Books, 1988.
- _____. "The Ecozoic Era." (October 1991). Eleventh Annual E. F. Schumacher Lectures, Great Barrington.
- _____. "Ethics and Ecology." (April 1996). <http://ecoethics.net/ops/eth&ecol.htm>. (accessed May 12, 2012): 1-9.
- _____. "The Cosmology of Religions." (1997)<http://www.silcom.com/~origin/sbcr/sbcr201> (accessed March 12, 2012): 1-8.
- _____. *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*. New York: Bell Tower, 1999.
- _____. *Evening Thoughts: Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2006.
- _____. *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker. New York: Columbia Press, 2009.
- _____. *The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009.
- Berry, Thomas and Brian Swimme. "The Ecozoic Era." *Anima* no. 20, 2 (1994): 105-118.

- _____. *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era – a Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.
- Berry, Thomas and Thomas Clarke. *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation Between Humans and the Earth*, eds. Stephen Dunn and Anne Lonergan. Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publication, 1991.
- Zizioulas, John D. “Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood.” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1975): 401-477.
- _____. “The Teaching of the 2nd Ecumenical Council on the Holy Spirit in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective.” In *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum*, ed. J.S. Martins, 29-34. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983.
- _____. *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985.
- _____. “The Contribution of Cappadocia to Christian Thought.” In *Sinasos in Cappadocia*, eds. Frosso Pimenides and Stelios Roādes, 23-37. London: Agra Publications, 1986.
- _____. “Preserving God’s Creation: Three Lectures on Theology and Ecology.” *King’s Theological Review* 12 (1989): 1-5.
- _____. “Preserving God’s Creation: Three Lectures on Theology and Ecology.” *King’s Theological Review* 12 (1989): 41-45.
- _____. “Preserving God’s Creation.” *King’s Theological Review* 13 (1990): 1-5.
- _____. “The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today: Suggestions for an Ecumenical Study.” In *The Forgotten Trinity*, ed. Alasdir I. C. Heron, 19-32. London: BCC/CCBI, 1991.
- _____. “The Church as Communion.” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 38 (1994): 3-16.
- _____. *L’Eucharistie, l’évêque, et l’église durant les trois premiers siècles*, trans. Jean-Loius Perlierne. Paris, Theophanie: Desclee de Brouwer, 1994.
- _____. “Communion and Otherness.” *Sobornost* 16 no. 1 (1994): 7-19.
- _____. “Ecological Asceticism: A Cultural Revolution.” *Sourozh* no. 67 (February 1997): 22-25.
- _____. *Communion and Otherness*, ed. Paul McPartlan. New York: T&T Clark: 2006.

- _____. "Science and the Environment: A Theological Approach."
http://www.rsesymposia.org/themedia/File/1151676874-Sc_Environment.pdf
 (accessed May 12, 2012): 1-3.
- _____. *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Douglas H. Knight. New York:
 /T&T Clark, 2008.
- _____. *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, ed. Luke Ben Tallon. New York:
 T&T Clark, 2011.
- _____. "Orthodoxy and Ecological Problems: A Theological Approach." In *The
 Environment and Religious Education: Presentations and Reports, Summer
 Session on Halki 1994*, ed. Deutron Tarasios, 26-30. Militos Editions, 1997.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Documents

- Benedict XVI. *If you want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation* (January 1, 2010).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/message/peace/documents/hf_be-n-xvimes_20091208_xl-iii-world-day-peace_en.html. (accessed May 2, 2012).
- _____. *Caritas in Veritate*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Ottawa, Ontario: Publication Service, 1994.
- John Paul II. *Redemptor Hominis* (1979).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012).
- _____. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012).
- _____. *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all Creation* (January 1, 1990).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii_world-day-for-peace_en.html. (accessed May 12, 2012).
- _____. *Centisimus Annus* (1991).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john-paul_ii/encyclical/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012).
- _____. *Redemptoris Missio* (1990).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclical/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012).

- _____. *Evangelium Vitae* (1995).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012).
- _____. *The Apostolic Letter: Dies Domini*. Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1988.
- _____. “Address to a General Audience” at St. Peter’s Square (January 17, 200).
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20010117_en.htm (accessed March 12, 12).
- John Paul II, Pope and The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. “Common Declaration On Environmental Ethics.” Rome –Venice: June 10, 2002.
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2002/june/documents/hf_jp_ii_spe_20020610_venice-declaration_en.html. (accessed May 12, 2012).
- Second Vatican Council. *Lumen Gentium* (1964).
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (accessed July, 26, 2012).
- _____. *Gaudium et Spes* (1965).
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (accessed July, 26, 2012).
- _____. *Ad Gentes* (1965).
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html (accessed May 12, 2012).
- Social Affairs of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The Environmental Crisis: The Place of the Human Person in the Cosmos*. Ottawa, Ontario: Concacan Inc., 1995.
- _____. “Our Relationship with the Environment: The Need for Conversion” (2008).
http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/enviro_eng.pdf (May 12, 2012).
- USA Catholic Bishops. “Renewing the Earth.” In *And God Saw that it was Good: Catholic Theology and the Environment*, eds. Drew Christiansen and Walter Grazer, 223-243, Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1996.
- The Columbia River Watershed: Caring for Creation and the Common Good*. An International Pastoral Letter by the Catholic Bishops of the Watershed Region.
<http://www3.villanova.edu/mission/CST/Tresource/ecology/columbiariver.pdf> (May, 12, 2012).
- The Holy Bible*, New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Other Sources

- Aghiorgoussis, Maximos. "Sin in Orthodox Dogmatics." *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 21/4 (1997): 179-190.
- Alighieri, Dante. *Divine comedy*, trans. Henry Francis Cary. New York: International Collectors Library, 1946.
- Allossery-Walsh, Noreen. *Christian Ecological Responsibility: Intimations of Prophetic Witness for the Church in the New Millennium*. Chicago: Catholic Theological Union Chicago, 2009.
- Arnold, Bill T. *Genesis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Augustine. *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1884.
- Baillargeon, Gaëtan. *Perspectives Orthodoxes sur l'Église-communion: L'Oeuvre de Jean Zizioulas*. Montréal: Editions Paulines, 1989.
- Bevans, Stephen B. and Roger P. Schroeder. *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004.
- Boff, Leonardo. *Ecology & Liberation: A New Paradigm*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995.
- Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011.
- Burns, J. V. "Cosmology." In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol.4, 364. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.
- Bujo, Bénézet. *Foundations of an African Ethics Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001.
- _____. *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and Dialogue Between North and South*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1988.
- Cannato, Judy. *Radical Amazement: Contemplative Lessons from Black Holes, Supernovas, and other Wonders of the Universe*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Sorin Books, 2006.
- Clifford, Anne M. "Foundations for a Catholic Ecological Theology of God." In *And God Saw that it was Good: Catholic Theology and the Environment*, eds. Drew Christiansen and Walter Grazer, 19-46. Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1996.

- Coleman, John A. and William F. Ryan, eds. *Globalization and Catholic Social Thought: Present Crisis, Future Hope*. Ottawa: Novalis, 2005.
- Congar, Yves. "Bulletin d' ecclésiologie." *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 66 (1982): 88-89.
- Cooper, Adam G. *The Body in St Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified, The Oxford Early Christian Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Copernicus, Nicolaus. *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1976.
- Cotter, David. *Genesis*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003.
- Dalton, Anne M. *A Theology for the Earth: The Contributions of Thomas Berry and Bernard Lonergan*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1999.
- Donahue, John R. "The Bible and Catholic Social Teaching: Will this Engagement Lead to Marriage?" In *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretation*, ed. Kenneth R. Himes, 9-40. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005.
- Deane-Drummond, Celia. *Eco-Theology*. London: Darton Longman and Todd, 2008.
- _____. "Joining in the Dance: Catholic Social Teaching and Ecology." *New Blackfriars* 93, no. 1043 (March 2012): 193-212.
- Edwards, Denis. *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008.
- Evans, Craig A. *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006.
- Fox, Patricia. *God as Communion: John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson, and the Retrieval of the Symbol of the Triune God*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2001.
- _____. "God's Shattering Otherness: The Trinity and Earth's Healing." In *Earth Revealing Earth Healing*, ed. Denis Edwards, 85-104. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001.
- Gitua, Samson K. *The Environmental Crisis: A Challenge for African Christian*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2000.
- _____. "Environmental Crisis: A Challenge to the Church in Africa," *African Ecclesial Review* 53, no. 2 (June 2011): 308-332.
- Gilby, Thomas. *St. Thomas Aquinas: Theological Texts*. Durham, England: Labyrinth Press, 1982.

- Gremillion, Joseph, ed. *The Gospel of Peace and Justice*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1976.
- Grim, John. "Time, History, Historians in Thomas Berry's Vision." *Cross Currents* XXXVII: 2-3 (Summer/Fall 1987): 225-239.
- Hathaway, Mark and Leonardo Boff. *The Tao of Liberation: Exploring the Ecology of Transformation*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009.
- Haight, John F. *The Promise of Nature: Ecology and Cosmic Purpose*. New York: Paulist Press, 1993.
- Healey, Joseph, and Donald Sybertz. *Towards an African Narrative Theology*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996.
- Heidel, Alexander. *The Babylonian Genesis Story of Creation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.
- Hessel, Dieter T. *Theology for Earth Community: A Field Guide*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996.
- Ikanga-Metuh, Emefie. *Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religions*. Onitsha, Nigeria: Imico Publishers, 1987.
- Ikein, Augustine A. *The Impact of Oil on a Developing Country: The Case of Nigeria*. New York, Prager, 1990.
- Ilo, Stan Chu. *The Church and Development in Africa: Aid and Development from the Perspective of Catholic Social Ethics*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publishers, 2011.
- International Theological Commission. "Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God" (2004).
http://www.vatican_curia/congregation/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040723_communion-stewardship_en.html. (accessed May 12, 2012).
- Irenaeus. "Against Heresies." Book V, 9:1. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1 Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.
- Keenan, Marjorie. *From Stockholm to Johannesburg: An Historical Overview of the Concern of the Holy See for the Environment, 1972-2002*. Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2002.
- Kittel, Gerhard. and Gerhard Friedrich. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. G. W. Bromiley. Grand Rapid, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985.

- Loneragan, Anne and Caroline Richards, eds. *Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology*. Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1987.
- Loudovikos, Nicholas. "Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness: John Zizioulas' Final Theological Position." *The Heythrop Journal* 52 no. 4 (July 2011): 684-699.
- McCarthy, John W. *The Re-enchantment of Nature as the Word and Beauty of God: The Nash Memorial Lecture, 2011*. Regina: Campion College at the University of Regina, 2011.
- Maximus the Confessor. *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003.
- Mbiti, John. *African Religions and Philosophy*. Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books 1961.
- _____. *Concepts of God in Africa*. Praeger: London Publishers, 1970.
- _____. "Christianity and African Culture," *Journal of Theology for South Africa* 20 (September 1977): 26-31.
- Mcdougall, Dorothy. *The Cosmos as the Primary Sacrament: The Horizon for an Ecological Sacramental Theology*. New York: Peter Lang, 2003.
- McDonagh, Sean. *Passion for the Earth: The Christian Vocation to Promote Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994.
- _____. *The Greening of the Church*. New York: Orbis Books, 1990.
- Mich, Marvin L. *The Challenge and Spirituality of Catholic Social Teaching*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011.
- Miller, Richard W. *God, Creation, and Climate Change: A Catholic Response to the Environmental Crisis*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010.
- Morales, José. *Creation Theology*. Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2001.
- Nellas, Panayiotis, ed. *Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspective on the Nature of the Human Person*. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987.
- Nesteruk, Alexei V. *Light From the East: Theology, Science and the Eastern Orthodox Tradition*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.
- Ngugi, J. Njuoroge Wa. *Creation in "The Catechism of the Catholic Church:" A Basis for Catechesis in Post-Colonial Africa*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2002.

- Obadina, Tunde. "Harnessing Abundant Gas Reserves." *Africa Recovery* 13. no.1 (1999):1-16.
- Omaje, Kenneth. *High Stakes and Stakeholders: Oil Conflict and Security in Nigeria*. England: Ashgate, 2006.
- Origen. "On First Principles." Book I, 2. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. IV Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994.
- _____. *De Principiis*, Book 1, 2, trans. Frederick Crombie (1885) <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04121.htm> (accessed May 2, 2012).
- Perkins, PHEME. *The Gnostic Dialogue: The Early Church and the Crisis of Gnosticism* New York: Paulist Press, 1980.
- Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Vaticana: Libreria Editrice, 2005.
- Plato. *The Timaeus of Plato*, trans. Richard Dacre Archer-Hind. London, Macmillan: 1888.
- Ross, Hugh. *The Creator and the Cosmos: How the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God*. Colorado, NavPress: 2001.
- Rudolph, Kurt. *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* trans. Robert McLachlan Wilson. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992.
- Rupert, Sheldrake. *The Presence of the Past: Morphic Resonance and the Habits of Nature*. New York: Times Book, 1988.
- Santmire, Paul H. *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985.
- Sharper, Stephen. *Redeeming the Time: A Political Theology of the Environment*. New York: Continuum, 1997.
- Schreiter, Robert. *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004.
- Schroeder, Roger P. *What is the Mission of the Church? A Guide for Catholics*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008.

- Skira, Jaroslav. "The Ecological Bishop: John Zizioulas' Theology of Creation." *Toronto Journal of Theology* no.19, 2. (Fall 2003): 199-213.
- _____. "Destined Before the Foundation of the World: Creation and Incarnation in Georges Florovsky and John Zizioulas." *AΘHNA* (2011): 205-244.
- _____. "Garments of Skin? Creation and Sin in Modern Eastern Orthodox Theology." *Leuven Encounters in Systematic Theology VII* (Forthcoming): 1-11.
- Studer, Basil. *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993.
- Swimme, Brian. *The Universe is a Green Dragon: A Cosmic Creation Story*. Santa Fe, New York: Bear and Company, 1985.
- _____. "Berry's Cosmology." *Cross Currents* 32, 2/3 (Summer/Fall 1987): 218-225.
- _____. *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996.
- Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. *The Phenomenon of Man*. New York: Harper, 1959.
- _____. *The Divine Milieu*. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.
- _____. *Science and Christ*. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.
- Tillich, Paul. *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955.
- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation*. Westminster, Md., USA: Christian Classics, 1989.
- Thompson, Milburn J. *Introducing Catholic Social Thought*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010.
- Thunberg, Lars. *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, ed. A. M. Allchin. Chicago, Illinois: Open Court, 1995.
- Tucker, Mary Evelyn. "Thomas Berry and the New Story: An Introduction to the Work of Thomas Berry." <http://www.ecoethics.net/ops/tucker.htm>. (accessed March 2011).
- Vico, Giambattista. *The New Science*. Trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1961.
- Weis, E. A. "Creation." In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 4, 417-427. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976.
- Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984.