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**A MESSAGE OF HOPE FROM PAUL FOR OUR
CHRISTIAN JOURNEY (Rom 8:18-30)
The Impact of Paul's Message on Our Christian Attitude
Towards Nature**

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A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

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“The future belongs to those who give the next generation reasons to hope”

Teilhard de Chardin

“The whole world and all creatures will be to you nothing else than an open book and a living Bible, in which you may study, without any previous instruction, the science of God and from which you may learn God’s will.”

Sebastian Frank

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay (thesis) is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

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This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

One of the hot issues in our time that draws the attention of world leaders is the ecological crisis. It is an urgent problem that needs the attention of everyone because the place where we live in common is threatened. If we ignore it we might leave an uncertain future for the coming generation. The widespread extent of the ecological crisis is caused by the barbaric attitude which leads human beings to exploit nature and land resources for their own self-interests. The degradation of land resources and disfigurement of nature at large continue to tell us of the greed and selfishness of human beings and their attitude of being lords over God's creation.

This long essay is the result of my own personal motivation to know more about environmental problems, their causes and their consequences. I am aware of the continuing threat to the global village where we live. Paul's message (Rom 8:18-30) gives me much inspiration and I have come to realize that I am part of the 'large body;' nature, as Michael Dowd describes it in his book Earthspirit. Nature is in great pain and is in a critical situation. As future ministers of the Church we are called to be 'healers and agents' of the Good News to the peoples whom we are

going to meet which also extends to the entire cosmos. The same desire motivates me to reflect on Paul's message (Rom 8:18-30) in this long essay.

In the first chapter I present the historical background of Paul's use of Jewish teaching and thought to develop his own theology. It is important to know that Paul was very much in the framework of his culture and knew the needs of the people of his own time.

In the second chapter, I portray Paul's message of hope (Rom 8:19-30) and show the paradox of Christian life. In Christ and through Christ the whole cosmos is redeemed and yet still waits for future fulfilment. In Christ the whole cosmos holds together and moves to its perfection. Our duty is to involve ourselves in solidarity with the suffering cosmos in order to transform it. It is only in the Christ event that we can grasp fully the meaning of suffering in our present situation and transform it into hope and salvation.

In the third chapter I raise the special issue of the ecological crisis in Mozambique as one of the most severe cases among the countries around the world. The birth pangs of creation that Paul portrays in Romans (8:23) are still relevant in our situation today. The natural disasters and the long civil war that affected Mozambique have left the country economically unstable and lacking in the necessary human resources to develop that country. The Church, as a sign of hope and the presence of God's love, has an important role of proclaiming the Good News to all creatures and inspiring every person of good will to become involved in saving the whole cosmos from its destruction.

In the last chapter I point out some of the important elements of how Paul's message inspires our Christian life and our mission. The Church is challenged by

many aspects of the modern world. One particular challenge is that most of the environmental issues and problems of exploitation are related to political issues. Many times the Church has to face the risk of following the example of Christ's suffering and death. Without losing hope it continues to be a strong pillar through its moral teachings by defending human life and resolving ecological problems. The Church, without ceasing, calls Christians and all people of good will to renew their commitment to be stewards and companions of God's creation. Paul's message opens a new horizon on our Christian journey: we are united with the whole of creation on a journey together towards our redemption. It encourages us to look at nature in a different way. Paul reminds us that nature is not primarily a property to be possessed, but a gift from God to be received with admiration and gratitude.

Chapter I

The Cultural Background

1. Introduction

In this section I wish to elaborate upon some reasons why Paul used the Jewish tradition to develop his theology and his teaching on the Christ event. In fact, Paul is very much within the framework of his Jewish cultural background. Indeed he is an heir of the Jewish heritage, because he was brought up in the Jewish culture and learned the tradition under the guidance of Rabbi Gamaliel, with 'limitless enthusiasm' (cf. Gal 1:14).

Certainly, Paul had direct contact with Jews and most of his addressees were Jews who were familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures. He had extensive knowledge of the Old Testament and he refers to it often as in the letter to the Romans. This chapter includes the main ideas and the Jewish understanding of creation: how the Jews look at creation and how their admiration for it transformed itself into prayer to and adoration of the Creator of the universe. For the Jews creation is the unwritten Bible (cf. Job 12:7-8) through which they read the marvellous deeds of the mighty power of God in creation.

2. Paul the Jew and the Apostle

Paul, a Jew born in Tarsus, studied the Jewish tradition under the guidance of Rabbi Gamaliel in Jerusalem (Acts 5:35-37). He was a persecutor of the followers of Jesus Christ, but on one occasion while travelling to Damascus, a light from heaven

suddenly shone round him. Falling on the ground, he heard a voice, 'Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me?' (Acts 9:3-5). Here Paul experienced his first encounter with the Risen Lord, which was the turning point in his life. A personal encounter with the One whom he was persecuting changed him from a persecutor of Christ into an apostle of Christ.

In our Christian tradition, Paul, known as an apostle of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:1), also identifies himself as an Israelite, the seed of Abraham from the tribe of Benjamin (Rom 11:1). He speaks of the Jewish people as my brothers, my kinsman by descent (Rom 9:3), acknowledging his relationship with God's chosen.¹ As a Christian writing to Christians, Paul recognised that he wrote not only as a Christian of Jewish background but also as one who is conscious of his non-Jewish heritage. Because of his Jewish background Paul has great knowledge of the Scripture which he displays in his letter to the Romans. Because he is part of the Diaspora and open to the Gentiles he has knowledge of the Greek writers.² According to Wolfgang Wiefel the Christian community in Rome, at the time of the letter to the Romans, was made up of purely Jewish Christians.³ However, after several periods of persecution and expelled by the Roman emperors, the Christian community consisted of both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians.⁴

When Paul speaks of 'you brothers' (Rom 1:13-15; 9:3ff; 11:13,24,28, 31; 15:14-16) he is addressing the people who knew the Law.⁵ Some of these passages

¹ J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, New York 1993, 40.

² J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 41 and also see W. WIEFEL, *The Jews*, In K.P. DONFRIED, ed., *The Romans Debate*, Edinburgh 1991, 93. In Jewish congregations Greek was used as the daily language, the same language in which Paul wrote his letter to the Romans.

³ K.P. DONFRIED, *Romans Debate*, 85.

⁴ J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 46.

⁵ T. ENGBERG - PEDERSEN, *Paul and the Stoics*, Edinburgh 2000, 185.

(Rom 2:17f, 8:2, 9:19) clearly refer to the Jews and Pauline scholars presume that Paul had direct contact with the Jews within the Christian community in Rome. In the community to which Paul is writing the letter, some Jews probably could have heard about his preaching and believed in Christ (cf. Rom 1:15). There are some basic messages that Paul wants to convey. First, he wants to remind his Gentile addressees that they have a share in God's righteousness on the same footing with the Jews through the Christ event and through faith in Christ (cf. Rom 15:15). Second he warns his Gentile addressees that their present state of shared righteousness must show itself by respect for the Jews outside the Christian community (cf. Rom 9:1-11:36) and by unity (cf. Rom 14:1-15:6) among themselves (Rom 12:1-13:14). He also admonishes his addressees to display their new state by the actual practices that make up their lives before the final fulfilment.⁶ Here, Paul gives them spiritual support in order to give them strength in times of suffering and tribulation.

3. The Jewish Understanding of Creation

For Jews, the contemplation of the majesty of the heavens and of the myriad of creatures on earth, was a reminder of the wondrous ways of the Creator rather than a starting point for physical speculation.⁷ Creation was a means through which they could contemplate the wonderful deeds of the Creator (cf. Ps 104:24). Throughout the history of salvation the Israelites came to know God through their own experience of suffering and hardship in the desert. They came to the knowledge of God, the Creator, after a period of reflection on nature. For the Jews, creation is

⁶ T. ENGBERG – PEDERSEN, *Paul and the Stoics*, 187

⁷ *Encyclopaedia Judaica Jerusalem*. XII, 888.

a 'mystery of faith.'⁸ They were fascinated by nature as the reflection of God's perfection and by his infinite love as expressed in creation. The people of Israel lacked words to express what they perceived through creation and through the wonder and the fascination of nature. It caught the attention of Jewish writers who transformed their perception of wonder into prayer and adoration to the almighty power, to the one who creates all of wonderful nature. Through the prophets they also came to know the author of creation who has power and knows what he is doing.

3.1 Pentateuch: Genesis

In the book of Genesis, especially in the priestly account, God creates everything and then he rests on the seventh day. God created the world and its inhabitants within six days. The only continuity between God and his work is the Word.⁹ Creation is the miracle of God where through 'his creative word of command' he has set everything in order and every living being receives the power of procreation directly from the earth.¹⁰

On the sixth day God created human beings in his image and likeness (Gen 1:26). They were God's representatives to maintain and enforce God's claim to dominion over the earth. They also received God's blessing (cf. Gen 1:28) to enable them to propagate and increase. In the end God saw everything was 'good' and 'very good' (Gen 1:31). God was satisfied that the world he had evoked in love was attuned to his purpose. The blessed world is indeed the world that God intended.¹¹

⁸ M. TROPHIME, *The Creation*, New York 1962, 31.

⁹ G. VON RAD, *Genesis: A Commentary*, OTL, London 1991, 54.

¹⁰ W. BRUEGGEMANN, *Genesis: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, Atlanta 1982, 24.

¹¹ W. BRUEGGEMANN, *Genesis*. 37.

Creation was filled with peace and harmony and all living beings were related. God entrusted the whole of creation to the man and woman. He called them to share in the divine plan and to full participation in his fellowship.

3.2 *The Prophets (Isa 40:12-31)*

The prophets were the mouthpiece of God and spoke in the name of God concerning the message of conversion and of hope to the people. Deutero-Isaiah convinced his audience that the world was created by Yahweh and through creation revealed Yahweh's true character as a unique and supreme God in contrast with Babylonian polytheism.¹² Creation was seen as the unaided work of the one God (Isa 40:13-14), Yahweh was the only God from the beginning. Therefore Deutero-Isaiah reaches right back to creation itself to find the basis for his message about the future. The God who was the first will also be the last (cf. Isa 44:6). Yahweh is the only one who has created the whole universe and all it contains, without assistance from other gods. The universe, including everything that inhabits it, is merely a tiny product in Yahweh's hands. God the Creator is so great that everything he has created he has also numbered and called by name (cf. Isa 40:26). God will not abandon what he has created and he will show concern for them because he has absolute power over the whole universe. Therefore, Yahweh as the everlasting God (Isa 40:28), means that Yahweh's controlling activity extends through time, past, present and future.¹³ Through creation Isaiah draws the attention of his audience to the *incomprehensibility and incomparability*¹⁴ of God the Creator and Lord of all.

¹² R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40 – 60*, NCBC, London 1987, 36

¹³ R.N. WHYBRAY, *Isaiah 40 – 60*, 59

¹⁴ These two words are used by C. WESTERMANN to describe the absolute mystery of God and his uniqueness in creating the universe and all who inhabit it. See C. WESTERMANN, *Isaiah: 40 – 66*, OTL, London 1991, 61.

3.3 *Wisdom Literature*

In the psalms, the psalmist wants to lead his audience to praise the Creator of the universe. In Psalm 8 the psalmist begins and ends with praise of God's glory in creation and in the vastness of the universe. He felt like a tiny being in the middle of creation, and he asked himself 'Lord what is man that you care for him?' (Ps 8:4). Everything that God created gives witness to his marvellous works united with all living things. Human beings, whom God considers tiny beings, are close to the divine. Creation, seen as the miracle of God,¹⁵ is not in order to reveal God, but in order to praise and exalt God whose existence and activity is presupposed as the most real of realities.¹⁶ According to Claus Westermann, God is so real and so powerful to the people of the Old Testament and to those who pray these psalms, that creation must have been conceived of as participating in praising God's glory. All wonder and amazement, contemplation and description of nature grew from the praise of the Creator.¹⁷ It is clear that the power of God over creation is traced back to his being a creator and creation shows that God is the living God.¹⁸

4. Sin and Corruption of the World.

4.1 *Sin is Seen in the Creation Account*

Human beings were created by God and God put them in the garden to coexist with other creatures. The garden was a peaceful place where human beings could discover and marvel at the beauty of God's creation. It was the place where

¹⁵ M. TROHPIME, *Creation*, 53.

¹⁶ C. WESTERMANN, *The Psalms: Structure, Content and Message*, Minneapolis 1980, 94.

¹⁷ J.S. KSELMAN – M. BARRE, *Psalms*, NJBC, 1990, 526.

¹⁸ W. FOERSTER, *κτιζω*, TDNT, G. KITTEL, ed., Michigan 1968, 1008.

human beings experienced and observed God's creation. No evil was laid upon the world by God's hand. God created the world perfect, and gave human beings the capacity for knowledge and the independence that enables them to decide for themselves what will help them or hinder them. As a result, human beings abandoned the protection of divine providence. God gave human beings what was good and gave them complete security. But then they denied God's authority and so paradise was irretrievably lost. What is left for human beings is a life of trouble in the shadow of a crushing riddle and the unavoidable subject of the majesty of death.¹⁹

4.2 Sin in the Rabbinic Literature

In the Rabbinic literature, sin was disobedience to and failure to follow the commandments of God. Whether the disobedience is intentional or inadvertent, failure to obey what God commanded constitutes sin.²⁰

It is important to note that Rabbinic literature did not have a doctrine of original sin comparable to the Christian understanding. It is a matter of observation that all human beings are sinners. Apparently, human beings have an inner force towards rebellion and disobedience.²¹ Sin comes only when human beings actually disobey, because they are always free to obey and disobey. Therefore human beings will cut be off from their relationship with God the Creator.²² According to the rabbis, the souls of human beings shall be utterly cut off if they disobey God's command. In Tannaitic literature the 'reward and punishment' are carried out in this

¹⁹ G. VON RAD, *Genesis*, 102.

²⁰ E.P. SANDERS, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, Great Britain 1987, 112.

²¹ E.P. SANDERS, *Paul*, 114.

²² S. SANDMEL, *The Genius of Paul: A Study in History*, New York 1970, 179.

world.²³ One who obeys the commandments will have a long life and will inherit the land. The final goal of God's history with his people, Israel, is that he will be their God and that the state of creation will then correspond to his will. (cf. Ezek 36:26f).

5. Jewish Expectation of the World to Come

Palestinian Judaism's view about future, especially as found in Rabbinic literature, is a belief in the resurrection and the world to come. Most Jews in Palestine during the Roman period longed for 'freedom.' They worshiped God and lived by the law, yet they continued to hope for something more than that, that God would do something to change the situation.²⁴ They also hoped that the Davidic Messiah would enter Jerusalem and establish the new Jerusalem with the tribes reassembled as an ideal kingdom.²⁵ They believed that the righteous would be rewarded and the wicked punished in the world to come. According to the Rabbinic view of God's justice, God appropriately rewards and punishes for obedience and disobedience²⁶ and according to Jewish understanding, all Israelites have a share in the world to come, but only upon the condition of repentance. Therefore repentance is a disposition which indicates that one intends to remain in the covenant. It is the maintenance of a right attitude toward God, 'You will return to the Lord your God' (Deut 4:30).

5.1 In the Apocalyptic Writings

A basic Jewish principle is that the world was created for the righteous and the reason for creation, then, is to provide a setting for doing God's will. The world and its temporality are created in order that human beings may know their time,

²³ The reward is not Salvation but something that is appropriate for what has been done in this world. (cf. SANDERS, *Paul*, 125).

²⁴ E.P. SANDERS, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE - 66CE*, London 1989, 280.

²⁵ E.P. SANDERS, *Judaism*, 289.

²⁶ E.P. SANDERS, *Paul*, 147

make account of their life and consider their life and their sins.²⁷ Therefore the time of salvation would come if Israel would repent of her sins. According to the rabbis, the fall of Adam is always associated with a rebellious attitude against the Creator.²⁸ Therefore, this world is condemned and is a place of evil seed which cannot sustain the promises given to the coming eon.²⁹ There will be a new and more righteous creation in the world to come by God's creative act of the renewing human beings and creation.

5.2 In the Wisdom Literature and in the Prophets

The Jewish authors convey the message of salvation to the people by referring to the future promised by God where there will be a new heaven and a new earth. The prophets, in their role as the mouthpieces of God, proclaim the message of hope that is salvation in the world to come (Isa 66:22-24). The prophet Jeremiah draws the attention of his audience to the new covenant that God is writing on human hearts (Jer 31:33). This new covenant extends to the entire people. The expression frequently used by Jeremiah, 'the days are coming' (Jer 7:32; 9:25), urges the people to get ready and to prepare for the days that are coming as God has promised.³⁰

In Jewish understanding the 'heart' is the place of thinking and loving, therefore the novelty of the new covenant has to be situated on the side of humankind itself and the new spirit (Ezek 36:26) is the power to fulfil God's plan to create a new people.³¹ Again, in (Hos 2:18), 'on that day' is not strictly

²⁷ E.P. SANDERS, *Paul*, 120.

²⁸ W. FOERSTER, *κτιζω*, TDNT, 1022

²⁹ W. FOERSTER, 1024.

³⁰ G.P. COUTURIER, *Jeremiah*, NJBC, 289.

³¹ L. BOADT, *Ezekiel*, NJBC, 325.

eschatological but expresses confidence in the future restoration of Israel, where Israel responds to that by conversion with renewal of hearts.³²

6. Why Paul used Jewish Tradition

In this section I will describe why Paul used Jewish tradition and ideas to develop his theology and his teaching. In most of his letters, Paul very often refers to Jewish tradition and quotes a number verses from the Torah. Paul did not violate the law but, by using the Jewish way of thinking, recognized the people of his own heritage and developed a theology of history which gave them an important place at the end of Salvation history.³³ It is important to note that Paul did not simply wrap the Jewish tradition with the Christ event. It was his own personal experience with the Risen Lord whom he encountered on the road to Damascus that impacted his life. He therefore committed himself preaching the Risen Christ to his own people (cf. Rom 9:3-4) and to the Gentiles. There are several reasons according to Pauline Scholars.

6.1 Paul is a Jew

Paul was preaching nothing else than the surest and truest version of Judaism.³⁴ For Paul the death and resurrection of Christ was the fulfilment of God's promise of salvation for his people as told by the prophets. Paul makes it clear to the Jews and to the Gentiles, in the light of Christ event (cf. Rom 10:1-4ff), that Christ is the promise of God and everyone who believes will be righteous. Paul is indeed a Jew. In his own way he is loyal to the Jewish scriptures and laws. For the rabbis,

³² D. J. MacCarthy -- R.E. Murphy, *Hosea*, NJBC, 221.

³³ W. WIEFEL, *The Jewish*, K.P. DONFRIED, ed. *The Roman Debate*, Edinburgh 1991, 100.

³⁴ S. SANDMEL, *The Genius*, 36.

God's greatest revelation in the past obligates the Israelites to observe the laws. But for Paul, Christ was the end of the law (Rom 10:4) and he makes it clear by referring to the words of the prophets (cf. Rom 9:25-26; 10:20-21) that the law is no longer binding. Paul recognizes himself as a Jewish heir and he believes that those who have come along with him are the authentic Jews.³⁵ From his standpoint he has remained completely within Judaism. Paul himself was fully within the frame of reference of his inherited Hellenistic – Jewish theology.

6.2 Paul after his Conversion

Paul's conversion was not a change of affiliation but a personal experience of God. His encounter with Jesus, the Risen Lord, was the turning point, where he understood fully the Torah or Law. It was only in the Christ event that Paul grasped the full meaning of the Torah.

It is in the Christ event that Paul re-interpreted and gave new meaning to Jewish celebrations, began a new relationship with God, and brought people to salvation that is perfection. In most of his letters, his theology and his teaching is a new interpretation of the Old Testament and Paul opens a new way of relating to God through Christ. Creation is an integral part of salvation in which everything will be united in Christ.

7. Conclusion

For the Jews, creation is the unwritten Bible through which they can read the marvelous deeds of God and His perfection. They contemplate the love for human beings that God expressed in creation. In response, human beings recognize their

³⁵ S. SANDMEL, *The Genius*, 70.

smallness before God and transform their admiration and wonder into prayer to the almighty God, the Creator. Creation indeed is a gift of God to human beings which God entrusted to our care. However, God also gives freedom of dominion over the creation. In fact, this privilege of dominion made human beings lords of creation.

Creation later was corrupted and lost its beauty and perfection through our parents' disobedience to God. They had to struggle with the power of evil, which ended up in death. Creation lost its harmony and peace; human beings lost protection and, as a consequence of their disobedience to God, they had to work and struggle in their lives.

Thus a new horizon opens for the restoration in the future or world to come. Through the prophets a message of hope is conveyed that there will be a new heaven and a new earth (Ps 66:24), that is, the promise of salvation will come if Israel repents of its sins. Paul, in the Christ event, made it clear that the law and the promise of salvation of the Old Testament is taking place and is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Everything will be united in Christ (cf. Col 1:17) and therefore creation eagerly awaits the coming of the future glory (Rom 8:30). All creation now shares a state of righteousness that is also distinctively forward-looking as characterized by hope in the future fulfilment.

Chapter II

The Pauline Message of Hope and Glory

1. Introduction

In delivering his message, Paul used apocalyptic language to convey a message of hope for the people of his time. His message is a challenging one and presents the situation that Christians will experience in the future. Also in the passage Rom 8:19-30, Paul shows us the paradox of our Christian life and its implications. The Christian life has a goal: we are constantly on the way or on a pilgrimage towards our Promised Land and future glory. Since Adam's fall, the world lacks nothing more than eschatological freedom or salvation for all creation. Paul understood eschatological freedom as salvation in a cosmic dimension, 'all things work together for the good of those who love God' (Rom 8:29). It is only in the Christ event that Christ opens a new way for everything to be glorified through Him. Paul affirmed that those who believe in Christ are formed as new beings in the image of Christ in their constant journey towards future glory. Only Christ is exalted, his disciples are still stigmatized by his cross and must occupy the place in the world that he has left. Therefore the 'groaning of creation' (Rom 8:19-22) and "our own groaning" (Rom 8:23-25), and the 'groaning of the Spirit' (Rom 8:26-27) are the witnesses to the sonship, through which the fellowship of suffering points to Christ as the coming Lord of the world.

2. The Context of the Passage

When Paul wrote this letter he was an authentic Jew and very much a part of his cultural background, Judaism. In the letter to the Romans, which he addressed to the Jewish community in Rome,³⁶ one of his main concerns was to bring them some spiritual gift in order to make them strong (Rom 1:11). As Joseph Fitzmyer comments, the Jewish Christian community in Rome had several times experienced persecution and, in spite of their sufferings, remained faithful to the Risen Lord and united in prayer and love³⁷. In Romans (3:1–8:1-11) Paul traced the Exodus story where he wants to draw the attention of his addressees to the fact that God has fulfilled his promise in Christ. The power of the Spirit will result in God's renewed people receiving as their inheritance, not merely one piece of territory but the whole restored cosmos³⁸. In Romans chapters 3 to 8 Paul retells the story of Israel. In Exodus, Israel was given the law and they were led to the Promised Land, where they were not faithful, and did not fulfil it. In Romans chapter 8, concerning the future hope of Christians, Paul reworks the theme of inheritance in the Exodus style and gives it full weight and new meaning. He assured the Christians that 'the life of the coming age' was to be enjoyed not in heaven, as opposed to earth but in the renewed, redeemed creation; the creation that has itself shared the Exodus experience of the people of God.³⁹ According to Paul, once we were liberated as member of God's true people, God sets before us the inheritance to which we make our way in the presence of God and guided by the Spirit on our journey.

³⁶ T. ENGBERG – PEDERSEN, *Paul and the Stoics*, 185.

³⁷ J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 56.

³⁸ N.T. WRIGHT, *New Exodus, New Inheritance: The Narrative Structure of Roman 3 – 8*. In S. SODERLUND – N.T. WRIGHT, eds., *Romans and the People of God*, 31.

³⁹ N.T. WRIGHT, *New Exodus*, 35.

3. An Exegesis on this Passage (Rom 8:19-30)

Paul wants to share with the Jewish Christian Community in Rome, (Rom 8:11) and those who believed in Christ some spiritual gift (χαρισμα πνευματικον) so that they may be fortified.⁴⁰ According to Paul, Jews and Gentiles are alike under sin (Rom 3:9-19:23), no one is able to be declared righteous by observing the law (Rom 3:20) and Christ is the end of the law ‘τελοζ νομου.’⁴¹ It is in Christ Jesus that God has created from among the Jews and Gentiles one people for himself apart from the Torah. In Romans chapter 4, Paul emphasizes that in Christ, God has fulfilled the covenant promises made to Abraham, that those who believe in Christ should inherit the whole restored cosmos.

4. Creation is an Integral Part of Salvation and Redemption

In Romans chapter 8, Paul emphasized the ‘cosmic liturgy’⁴² theme, which was prominent in apocalyptic and Old Testament prophecy and highlighted the solidarity between creation and humanity. Creation suffers under human beings’ sin and accuses them by appealing to God against their wrongdoing. Therefore human beings and the whole of creation are bound together. Here, Paul underlined the solidarity of human beings with the rest of the creation of Adam, with the ‘Adamah,’ from which Adam was made⁴³. Therefore we are part of the cosmos and never realize that ‘the cosmos is our larger body.’⁴⁴ Also, creation is subjected to humankind’s futility and will share in humankind’s liberation from the slavery of

⁴⁰ R.N. LONGENECKER, *The Focus of Romans: The Central Role of 5:1-8:39 in the Argument of the Letter*, In SVEN – WRIGHT, *Romans and the People of God*, 49.

⁴¹ J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 134.

⁴² R.N. LONGENECKER, *The Focus of Romans*, 52.

⁴³ J.D.G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Edinburgh 1998, 101.

⁴⁴ M. DOWD, *Earthspirit: A Handbook for Nurturing an Ecological Christianity*, Mystic Connecticut 1992, 36.

corruption and sin. Creation suffers under the pain of humankind's fall and creation eagerly awaits its own release in the redemption of the Son of God. The liberation of the sons and daughters of God is under 'Christ's sovereignty'⁴⁵ through whom God's redemption is accomplished in creation. Creation conceives God to be the source (ἐξ) and goal (εἰς) and Christ to be the mediator (διὰ)⁴⁶. It is in the extensive sovereignty of Christ that creation will share the liberation of the sons and daughters of God in future glory.

4.1 All Creation is longing for Deliverance (Rom 8:19-22)

These four verses, Rom 8:19-22, all contain the word 'creation' (κτίσις), but with different emphasis. According to Pauline scholars there are several distinctions.⁴⁷ From κτίσις (creation) to πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις (all creation) the creation distinct from human beings and creation refers to the entire non-human world because it was subjected to vanity; οὐχ ἐξουσία not of its own will while human beings become subjected to sin and death. Here, Paul affirmed the solidarity of the non-human world with humanity in the redemption that Christ has brought.

V19 creation itself is waiting with anxious expectation for the revelation of the children of God. Paul used apocalyptic language to represent all creation as a person waiting for a momentous occasion. Paul revealed his view of the created world wherein its chaotic situation manifests its cosmic struggle and strives toward the goal set for human beings. Paul sees it sharing in the destiny of humanity and the

⁴⁵ J.G. GIBBS, *Pauline Cosmic Christology and Ecological Crisis*, JBL, 90, No. IV, 1971, 472.

⁴⁶ J.G. GIBBS, *Pauline Cosmic Christology*, 470.

⁴⁷ M.J. RAMSEY, *The Redemption of Our Body: The Riddle of Romans 8:19-22*, S. SODERLUND – N.T. WRIGHT, *Romans and the People*, 105. Also see B. BYRNE, *Romans*, Daniel Harrington, ed. *Sacra Pagina*, Minnesota 1996, 255.

revelation of the children of God. And the revelation of the children of God refers to the glorified Christians, the coheirs of the risen Christ (cf. Rom 5:10). Again, Paul presupposes a Jewish tradition where the non-human, created world is intimately bound up with the fate of human beings' progress. Creation and humankind share a common fate and interrelate with each other. Creation progresses when human beings progress, it suffers a fall when human beings fall.

V20 creation has been subjected to frustration by him who subjected it. This verse raises several questions. Who is the subject of υποταξαντα (the one who made it subject): Adam? God? or Satan? 'By him' refers neither to Satan nor to Adam but to God. According to Paul 'though God cursed the ground because of Adam's sin He still gave the hope of sharing in human redemption and liberation, because our first parents did not lose their freedom.'⁴⁸ The earth was cursed and as a consequence, yields its fruit only grudgingly, requiring toil and sweat,⁴⁹ (cf. Gen 3:17-19). The human body is part of creation, and as Adam was reminded; 'out of the dust you were taken, you are dust and to dust you shall return' (cf. Gen 3:19). Therefore the human body, no less than the ground from which it was taken, is a created thing and is part of the created order (cf. Gen 2:7 NRSV).⁵⁰ And yet God did not leave frustrated creation in a hopeless situation but allowed it to share in humanity's triumphant glory and freedom when the children of God are finally revealed in glory. Therefore the eager longing of creation, 'αποκαραδοκια,' reflects the excitement of looking forward to the revelation of children of God. The common

⁴⁸ J.A. FITZMYER, *The Letter to the Romans*, NJBC, 854.

⁴⁹ B. BYRNE, *Romans*, 258.

⁵⁰ M.J. RAMSEY, *The Redemption of Our Body*, 110. It is important to note that the KJ translators in favor of 'creation' in verses 19,20,21 but the whole creation in verse 22 shift from η κτίσις to πασα η κτίσις which focus from a single created things to the whole created order; human and non human. Also see *Rom 8:19-22*, In Greek NT, UBS, Stuttgart 1983, 550.

where language fails.⁵⁵ The Spirit groans with those Christians who have expected and longed for the glory of the 'new life.'⁵⁶ The Holy Spirit is within us, with us and for us. It is only through the intercession of the Holy Spirit that Christians grasp and understand what they long for and in the light of the Spirit they fully know what is God's intention for them. The Spirit makes intercession for believers according to the will of God⁵⁷ and the Christians understand the 'groaning of the Spirit', as God. God is the searcher of hearts who alone understands the aspirations and desired expectations of human beings. It was part of God's plan of salvation that the Spirit should play such an important role in Christian prayers and their longing for glory.

4.4 Those Who Love God and God Foreknew Them (Rom 8:28-29)

In these two verses Paul wants to assure the Christians that they are God's elect and they are called in accord with the divine plan of salvation. In reality Christ died once and for all (τα παντα) to bring the divine plan of salvation to its fulfillment and it is the Christian that God called to the purpose of his plan.

V28 those who love God, to them all things work together for good. 'All things,' according to some scholars,⁵⁸ may refer to sufferings, but also includes the destiny in glory, the groaning of creation, the Christian's hope and the groaning of the Spirit. It brings Christians life, harmony and peace because they are in the divine plan. Paul assured the Christians that all that happens to them would work for their good. It is not in them but it is in the initiative of God for the salvation of all. God cooperates in all things (τα παντα) and realizes his salvific plan on behalf of those who love

⁵⁵ DUNN, *Spirit Speech: Reflection on Romans 8:12-27*, In SVEN – WRIGHT, *Romans and the People of God*, 90.

⁵⁶ J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 517.

⁵⁷ J.MURRAY, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 313.

⁵⁸ J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 522 and also see BYRNE, *Romans*, 271.

him. Here, we must notice that human love for God is due to God's initial loving call and his prior choice of Christians to be followers of Christ his Son. So, love of God is the unobservable place where the consummation of all things has already been completed in Christ Jesus.⁵⁹ Therefore the good that everything together works for is the very love of God towards the human being who stands before him. The good is the 'beholding of the redeemer and of redemption';⁶⁰ it is the 'full realization of God's eternal plan'⁶¹, that is salvation for Christians. It is the love God manifests in the creation of the cosmos. Those who love him, he called according to his purpose to bear witness to the love, death and resurrection of Christ, his Son, and it is the Spirit who strengthens and supports Christians to do so.

V29 those He foreknew he also predestined. "Foreknew" (προγινωσκειν) refers to God's prior knowledge of human beings and even to his eternal knowledge, before they existed, of his entire plan for them. It is according to his glorious design that they fulfill their task. In God's plan of salvation Christians are destined to reproduce in themselves the image of Christ by a progressive sharing in his risen life.⁶² Christians are not just adopted children (Rom 8:15) they are being continually transformed in the image and likeness of the Son of God. Their life, led by the Spirit (8:14), creates the divine sonship of humankind. Their participation in the divine sonship, making present the "inner reality," reveals the identity of Christ as Son of God.⁶³ Paul speaks of the risen Christ as true icon of God and those whom he foreknew also being transformed into that same image. He also has in mind that God

⁵⁹ K. BARTH, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New York 1993, 320.

⁶⁰ K. BARTH, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 320.

⁶¹ B. BYRNE, *Romans*, 267.

⁶² A.J. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 525.

⁶³ B. BYRNE, *Romans*, 268.

has not only chosen people individually, but has given the privilege of election to the Christian community, which is made up of Jews and Gentiles. It is the glory of the risen Christ that makes them like Christ and shapes them as members of the same body of Christ, the Church. The reason is that Christians share in being ‘firstborn’ (πρωτοτοκος), in the divine sonship of Christ.

4.5 The Assurance of the Future Glory (Rom 8:30)

V30 those whom he called he justified and those he justified he also glorified. Here, Paul assured all of the ‘call’ to belief in the Gospel and to baptism in Christ. Once the call to love God is assured in the Spirit, in truth, then Christians possess the assurance of the mercy of God and of citizenship in the kingdom of God. They are assured of the fact that God takes sinners to himself.⁶⁴ Again Paul, with his Jewish background, used the word ‘calling’ which implies an act of ‘creation’⁶⁵ or calling into being of a people for himself (cf. Hos 11:1), a new Christian community (cf. 1 Cor 1:26-28; Rom 9:25-26).

Overall, Paul wants to point out that only in Christ, has God reached out into the desperation of human sinfulness and created out of Jews and Gentiles, a just and sanctified people destined to inherit the future glory. It is in the name of Jesus and of the Spirit of God that Christians have been washed, sanctified and justified (cf. Rom 3:25; 5:1,9; 1 Cor 6:11). Here what Paul means is the guarantee of the Christians’ journey and their participation in the divine plan of salvation.

⁶⁴ K. BARTH, *The Epistle*, 325.

⁶⁵ B. BYRNE, *Romans*, 269.

5. Conclusion

The paradox of our Christian life, as Paul shows in the passage, Rom 8:19-30, is a new way, which leads Christians to share the divine sonship of Jesus and his future glory. Christians are called to be followers of Jesus the Risen Lord and to continue to bear Christ's suffering in their life in the present age. By sharing Christ's suffering, Christians are being continually transformed and shaped in the image or icon of Christ. It is in the image of his Son that all things are transfigured. It is because the Spirit of God is groaning within them and through them that Christians can proclaim the death of Jesus and are able to rejoice in tribulation as well as in glory and salvation. Paul has in mind that the sufferings of the present time form the context for Christian hope. A Christian's hope, like that of Abraham, (Rom 4:18-21) involves an unseeing, enduring expectation in the present, suffering situation. Paul assures Christians about salvation and the future glory of the Son of God in which they are going to participate. For the suffering of Christians in itself does not make sense and has no meaning except when it is united with that of Christ and provides a hope that leads towards a goal. The participation of Christians in Christ's suffering is based on their love for God, which is constantly strengthened in their groaning for future glory. Since love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things (cf. 1 Cor 13:7) it goes beyond human past, present and future and is, as such, already the eternal future. Therefore love is the existential recognition of God, for it is God's recognition of human beings.

Chapter III

Today's Groaning Creation Awaits for Deliverance

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I draw our attention to the present ecological crisis in Mozambique. As far as the ecological crisis is concerned, human attitudes are the main cause of the problem. What are the types of ecological crises? I choose only a few cases that are more sensitive and very urgent, which need our attention. Mozambique is a big country and its vastness makes it difficult to control its environmental problems and to regulate its exploitation of its natural resources. There are many reasons such as political, economic, and sociological for the ecological crises, but above all it is human greed and selfishness and the desire to control nature and exploit it for our own self-interest.

2. The Background of the Natural Resources Crisis in Mozambique

Before speaking of its natural resources, I will present some figures on the country of Mozambique. Its land area is 799,400 sq. km, and it has a population of 18,641,469.⁶⁶ It is located in Southern Africa, between South Africa and Tanzania bordering the Mozambique Channel. Mozambique is surrounded by its neighbouring countries, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland.⁶⁷ It has a variety of natural resources which can be classified into three categories.

⁶⁶ R. WATERHOUSE, *Mozambique Rising from the Ashes*, UK – Ireland 1996, 62.

⁶⁷ *Mozambique*, In <<http://www.theodora.com/index.html>>, 1.R. WATERHOUSE, *Mozambique*, 26.

- a. Agriculture and forestry: sugar cane, cashew, tea, coconut and cotton.⁶⁸
- b. Sea Resources: fish and prawns are the largest export commodity during the past years.
- c. Mineral resources: coal, natural gas, rare earth minerals, gold and titanium. The aluminium industry is one of the biggest for the past three years. Mozambique has great resources to sustain and to improve the living standard of its people. However, for many reasons such as economic problems and a lack of internal policy, there are few foreign companies that are willing to invest in Mozambique's natural resources. Therefore many of the natural resources are not yet utilized.

3. The Present Economic Situation in the Country

When speaking in terms of development, the living standard of most of the population is still below the poverty line. Above all, it is the result of internal disorder, the civil war of the 1980's, a lack of government and administrative control and a growing foreign debt. The consequence is that the development of the country is very slow and agriculture is at only 78% of maximum productive level. Many basic items must be imported. Industry operates at only 20% - 40% of its potential capacity, and the economy depends heavily on foreign assistance to keep it afloat.⁶⁹ After the peace accord signed in October 1992, there were improved chances of foreign investment supported by the IMF⁷⁰ for economic reform and for national recovery. Also, the elections held in 1994⁷¹ diverted the government's attention from

⁶⁸ D. TSCHIRLEY – R. BENFICA, *Smallholder Agriculture Wage and Rural Poverty Alleviation in Land-abundant Areas of Africa: Evidence from Mozambique*, *JMAS*, 29, New York 2001, 338.

⁶⁹ *Mozambique*, <<http://www.theodora.com/index.html>>, 3.

⁷⁰ D. TSCHIRLEY – R. BENFICA, *Smallholder*, 334.

⁷¹ R. WATERHOUSE, *Mozambique*, 16.

its economy and resulted in slippage and delays in the economic reform program.

The following are some of the country's economic statistics.

National production per capita: U.S.\$610

Inflation Rate: 50%

Unemployment Rate: 50%

Exports U.S.\$150 million

Commodities: shrimp 40%, cashews, cotton, sugar, copra, citrus, petroleum.

Electricity Capacity: 2,360,000 kw; Production 1.7 billion kwh and consumption per capita, 58 kwh.

Industries: food, beverages, chemicals (fertilizer, soap, paints), textiles, non-metallic mineral production and tobacco.

Agriculture: about 9% of total exports, shrimps, cashew nuts, sugarcane, tea, cotton and tropical fruits.⁷²

Exchange Rate: 1\$USD: 22,000 Mt (Meticais)

4. Description of the Terms

In this section, I will define all the terms that I will use in section 4. It is important to know the meaning of these terms and to which situation of ecological crises these terms refer.

4.1 Ecology

The term, ecology was first used by a German, Ernst Haeckel, who applied '*oekologi*' to the relation of the to its organic environment. The term comes from the Greek word '*oikos*' which means, a household, home or place to live and '*logos*'

⁷² *Traditional Products*, <<http://www.ipexport.org/english/Mozambique/products.htm>>, 1.

meaning study or science. It deals with the organism and its environment and involves the relationship between individuals within a population and between individuals of different populations. Ecology is defined as the study of the interrelationship of organisms with their environment and each other.⁷³

4.2 Deforestation

Removal of all trees from an area that had formerly been forested, by cutting to the ground without replanting new trees, resulting in forest clearance and soil damage.⁷⁴

4.3 Extinction of Animals

The dying out or termination of a race or a species of animals from the earth. There are two different types of extinction: (a) Extinction of forms of species, which were unable to adapt to changes in their environment; (b) Extinction through the irresponsible and ignorant attitude of human beings. Some animals have been exterminated by slaughter or encroachment into their territories by human beings.

4.4 Desertification

It is a process of degradation of the soil caused by removing the vegetative covering, which transforms it into a desert as a result of adverse climatic conditions.

5 Ecological Problems and Natural Disasters in the Country

According to the statistics of 1994 land use consisted of:

Arable land; 20%

Permanent crops; 0%

⁷³ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, VI, Chicago 1979, 197.

⁷⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, III, 434 and L. ZEILER, *African Deforestation and Desertification*,

Permanent Pastures; 48%

Forest and woodland; 10%

Other; 22%⁷⁵

The natural hazards that have occurred are severe droughts and floods in the Central and Southern provinces. Those events were caused by devastating cyclones. The long civil war and recurrent drought in the hinterlands have resulted in increased migration of the population to urban and coastal areas with adverse environmental consequences, like desertification, and pollution of surface and coastal waters. The following are a few points that I selected, as current issues, which need special attention from both the government and the Church. It is our responsibility and duty to take care of the suffering and groaning of our environment and of our Mother Earth at large.

5.1 Deforestation

At the beginning of this century the open forest occupied around three-quarters of the country. Because of exploitative activities such as, the opening of new areas for agriculture, forest fires and the collection of firewood etc., today, the forest area has diminished substantially and occupies less than one-half of the country's area.⁷⁶ The area most affected by the vast destruction of the forest is the corridor from Beira, Chimoio, Changara, Tete.⁷⁷ The consequences of the civil war in 1992 have brought people from their former places to strategic places especially

<<http://www.fga.freac.fsu.edu/academy/afdefor.htm>>, 5.

⁷⁵ P. DE WIT, *Land Law Reform in Mozambique*,

<<http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/003/X8050T/x8050t04.htm>>, 2.

⁷⁶ P. ZUCULA, *Floresta: Quem as Corta e quem as Repõe?*, NM, 22, (Janeiro/Fevereiro 1998), 4.

⁷⁷ These are the provinces where the international road passes through from South Africa, Zimbabwe to go to Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania.

near the main road, which has caused environmental problems or devastation. Most of the places mentioned above were forest previously. The population opened new areas for agriculture. In order to do so they cut the trees right to the ground, burnt them and waited for the rainy season to plant their crops or plantation trees.⁷⁸ Much of the population in the rural areas uses firewood for cooking and many use charcoal, which is made from wood.⁷⁹ Since many people use charcoal for cooking, the people from the rural areas take advantage of the demand to cut large quantities of trees in order to produce charcoal. They later sell it as source of income. Another reason for deforestation is the irresponsible attitude of the people who cut the trees for their own business or interest in order to make a profit. They cut the precious woods known as 'pau preto'⁸⁰ (black wood) and iron wood and export them illegally to neighbouring countries for carving and sculptures. These trees are protected by the law because they take a long time to produce wood and are very valuable.

5.2 *A Case of Near Extinction*

Mozambique has a long coast along the Indian Ocean, inhabited by different types of birds and many other animals. There are flamingos, black birds, parrots and various types of eagles. One of the most famous animals that lives along the coast is the 'dugong.'⁸¹ According to Dr. John Hatton,⁸² based on his research, one of the

⁷⁸ A. CUCO, *A Floresta no Mundo das Ideias e (boas) Intenções*, NM, 22, 1998, 8 and P. LUIS, *O Ponta de Vista dum Madeireiro*, NM, 22, 12.

⁷⁹ A. CUCO, *Floresta*, 10.

⁸⁰ A. CUCO, *Floresta*, 9.

⁸¹ It is an aquatic herbivorous mammal of the order 'Sirenia,' allied to the manatee, but with the bilobate tail like that of a whale. The dugong inhabits the red sea, and the coast of the Indian Ocean from Eastern Africa to Northern coast of Australia. It originally came from Malaya which called 'Duyun.' See L.L. BRAM, *Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopaedia*, 21 New York 1969, 387.

⁸² He is from the Department of Biology of the University of Eduardo Mondlane (part of the National University in Mozambique) and from the *Programme of the Investigation Management of the Coastal Area*.

species that almost disappeared from the Mozambican coast is the dugong (see appendix 3). He is supported by Almeida Guisamulo, who said, 'today Mozambique has between 500 to 1000 dugongs along the whole coast, of which approximately 50% are adults. This means around 250 to 500 adult dugongs. Of these, half are females, which only produce offspring after every three years. We don't know how many will survive.' In about 10 to 20 years, the dugongs might disappear.⁸³ It has delicious meat therefore, the people like to hunt it for consumption or for sale illegally and irresponsibly.

5.3 Desertification

One of the common activities of the people after harvesting, is hunting game such as gazelle, rats and rabbits. One way of getting these animals from the bush is to set the bush on fire and wait for the animals to come out in order to kill them. This occurred in places like Beira, Changara and Tete, where the areas are plain and savannah.⁸⁴ Once the hunters set the bush on fire, it can spread very fast, even hundreds of kilometers away because of the wind and can take many days to die out. One consequence of these ignorant attitudes is the great damage to the life of the ecosystem. Fire has consumed all the trees and bushes because it happens almost every year.⁸⁵ Because of the irresponsible attitude of human beings, the bushy and grassy savannahs have been stripped naked by fire. As a result, it has been transformed into a vast desert and it is very difficult for the cattle and other animals to get their daily food. Another factor is the climate change. During the summertime,

⁸³ A. GUISAMULO, *Dugongos em Extinção no Bazaruto*, NM, 22, 1998, 37.

⁸⁴ A plain in hot countries is covered in grass and has few trees.

⁸⁵ P. ZUCULA, *Floresta*, 6.

it is very hot with maximum temperature reaching 45 degrees.⁸⁶ Then, when the rainy season comes the waters carry away all the unprotected soil.

5.4 Erosion and Flooding

The biggest natural disaster that ever occurred in the history of Mozambique was the 'Eline Cyclone' that swept the southern part of Mozambique in February and March of the year 2000.⁸⁷ Non-stop rain with strong winds that came along the coast affected almost all the provinces of the southern part of Mozambique. Maputo (capital), Gaza, Inhambane, Sofala and Manica, respectively.⁸⁸ Hundreds of thousands of families lost their homes, cattle and crops. They had to leave their places and were relocated to safer places with the help of neighbouring countries and other countries around the world. According to national meteorologists, this was the worst natural disaster that ever happened in the country; the water reached eight meters high and many houses were inundated.⁸⁹ The flood covered almost half of the country and caused much destruction. Thousands of cattle and hundreds of thousands of hectares of crops were swept away. At the same time more than 100 people lost their lives. The beautifully landscaped green valley of Limpopo was devastated.

6. What Are the Causes of the Ecological Crisis?

The main causes and authors of natural disasters and calamities are human beings. There are so many reasons, but the major one is because we are greedy and

⁸⁶ Especially in Changara until Tete; one of the middle province of Mozambique where the ecological crisis concern is very high.

⁸⁷ *Um Pais Submerso*, NM, 35, 2000, 14.

⁸⁸ The southern provinces of Mozambique where more affected by the flood in the year 2000.

⁸⁹ Especially in the provinces of Gaza and Inhambane.

exploit natural resources from Mother Earth without considering the consequences. As Mozambique is my main concern, I would like to point out some of the consequences that are caused by human attitudes towards nature. I would say there are many causes, but some of the most common and most significant ones are:

6.1 The internal disorder

A long civil war and a severe drought in the high lands, has caused a large migration to the urban and coastal areas, near to the main road. This has had the adverse environmental consequences of desertification and deforestation.

6.2 Lack of Foreign Investors

The consequences of internal disorder also prevent foreign investors from developing the country and therefore there is much unemployment. The unstable economic situation makes people struggle for life. One of the ways out is to exploit the natural resources without taking into account the consequences. Some people cut trees for firewood and to make charcoal for sale in large quantities. Others illegally export precious wood to neighbouring countries.

6.3 Lack of Human Resources

There is a lack of human resources to determine the extent of exploitation of natural resources and to regulate it for the sake of future generations. Human resources, here, refer to experts who are prepared to deal with the ecological problem. At present, in Mozambique there are many NGO's and some local organisations that are dealing with the ecological problem. The native experts are very few and the country is big so that it is very difficult to control and to solve all the environmental problems and to limit the exploitation of natural resources. In

addition, there is a lack of means of transportation and communication to reach out to the people in their respective places with information concerning environmental problems.⁹⁰ A lack of human resources also creates a lack of information to conscientize people on how to use the natural resources according to their needs.

7. The Response and Action

7.1 From the Government

Many organisations have initiated programmes, but their efforts seem like drops of water in the ocean. The national government has tried to call the local government, the civil society, and the communities to be more aware of the ecological crisis and how to use natural resources. At present there are several organisations that work in the area of environmental protection.

7.1.1 Educação Ambiental (Environmental Education)

John Kachamila⁹¹ proposed a programme on environmental issues and natural resources that will be implemented through education, social communication, propaganda, seminars and so on. It is an important way to educate the new generation and the people in the rural areas by teaching them basic techniques of how to manage natural resources.⁹²

7.1.2 Comunidade Ambiental de Desenvolvimento de Moçambique (CADM) The Environmental Community of Development of Mozambique.

⁹⁰ M. BAPTISTA, *Banditismo no Abate de Arvore?*, NM, 22, 1998, 14.

⁹¹ He is the Minister for the Co-ordination and Environmental Action.

⁹² J. KACHAMILA, *Educação Ambiental Faz-se Melhor Com Acções Concretas*, NM, 35, 2000, 27.

This is a new organisation that is concerned with education and environmental degradation. It has a monthly bulletin concerning the environment, which reaches out to people with information concerning the ecological crisis.⁹³

7.1.3 *Kulima*

Kulima is a national organisation, which is involved in cleaning the environment. It has programmes to protect the coastal areas and to grow seedlings for re-forestation.

7.1.4 *Propeca: Programa para Educação Cívica Ambiental (Program for the Civic Environmental Education)*

It develops projects for the re-forestation and protection of the coastal areas, which were affected by floods and erosion. The main aim and target is to conscientize the population and involve them in taking care of trees and the environment. For the future they are planning to mobilise the population to participate in the work of re-forestation.⁹⁴

7.1.5. *Environmental Law*

At the end of July 1997 the Assembly of the Republic approved an environmental law, to be implemented in the constitution, which would regulate the management of natural resources for public needs and to resolve some environmental issues.⁹⁵

There are some general principles and guidelines to follow (see the appendix 2).

⁹³ *Uma Gota de Água no Oceano*, NM, 18, 1997, 7.

⁹⁴ J. BESSA, *Project of Re-forestation*, NM, 18, 1997, 9.

⁹⁵ *A Assembleia do República Discutiu e Aprovou.*, NM, 18, 1997, 17.

7.2 From the Church

The impact of Paul's message on missionary work in Mozambique brings the Church to the front line of action in response to the ecological crisis. In Mozambique, in spite of the influence of Marxism and Leninism, the Christian faith is rooted deeply in people's lives. It is one of the strong and basic fundamental aspects for the new evangelisation and mission of the Church. And also it offers a great advantage to spread the value of the Gospel.

7.2.1 The Church as Sign of Hope

Throughout the long civil war that brought much destruction, the Church remained a sign of hope and an element of unity for dialogue and reconciliation. The local Church has the important role of promoting peace and reconciliation. It plays the mediator and bridge to bring together people from different parties and faiths. Through the tireless efforts of the community of St Egidio,⁹⁶ the Church offers a place and an opportunity for the civil and religious leaders of the country to be united in promoting peace and dialogue to develop the country for the benefit of all the citizens. Here the Church continues to act as a mother who gathers her scattered children. In the shedding of the blood of the missionaries who were killed during the civil war, the Church continues to witness the love of Christ and shows solidarity and unity with the suffering people. The shedding of the martyrs' blood prepared the soil of Mozambique for the sowing of the seeds of the Good News: love and unity, peace and reconciliation, justice and respect for life and nature.

⁹⁶ The St Egidio Community is a lay institute in the Church, which promotes peace, reconciliation and dialogue. It is a well-known community whose efforts are appreciated by many organizations in the world. One event that they organized was a prayer for peace in Assisi in 1986 in which leaders from all the major religions in the world participated.

7.2.2 *The Activity of the Church in Mozambique*

The Church in Mozambique plays an important role in the country's development. The Church is involved in the main sectors of the society such as education and health and many others. The proclamation of the Good News goes hand in hand with human promotion and development. Through education the Church promotes the values of the Good News and plants the seed of the Gospel in the hearts of the people. Education is one of the best channels which the Church uses to give information about the ecological problem to the new generation of Mozambicans. The Episcopal Conference of Mozambique stresses the importance of education in the country; it is a way to eradicate poverty and to develop the country. One of the main causes of the ecological problem is lack of educated and trained manpower to provide necessary goods and services.⁹⁷ Therefore, through education, it is good to inform the younger generation of how to treat the beauty and the richness of nature. After the flood, many schools run by institutions or religious congregations organized re-forestation activities in which many students participated.⁹⁸ It is one way to increase support for training and initiatives to build conservation skills and awareness of the value of biodiversity in the country. It is a demanding task, but as members of the Church we need to include the social teachings of the Church and other documents regarding the ecological crisis in our evangelisation.

⁹⁷ J.J. OTIM, *The Taproot of Environmental and Development Crisis in Africa*, Nairobi 1992, 49.

⁹⁸ J. KACHAMILA, *Educação Ambiental, Faz-se com Acções Concretas*, NM, 35, 27.

8. Conclusion

The attitude of being lord over creation makes human beings forget their mission as co-workers or co-creators with God in the universe. Human beings have no right to be the owners of creation. It is only through realizing the consequences of their attitudes that cause crises and problems that they finally open their eyes to see the reality. At present, creation is in deep crisis Mother Earth is being stripped by human exploitation and greed. She is suffering and groaning and eagerly waits for deliverance. It is our responsibility to protect our Mother Earth if we want to leave some of her fruits for future generations. In the case of Mozambique, the government has realised finally that something has to be done to solve the problem. However, the efforts are just a drop of water in the ocean. In addition, the Church is called to promote, along with the Good news, responsibility and respect for nature. The Good News should touch the hearts of the people so they become aware of the ecological problems that are occurring.

Chapter IV

How Paul's Message Reinforces Our Christian Attitude Towards the Ecological Crisis

1. Introduction

The worldwide ecological crisis makes us reflect on our original vocation given by God from the beginning of creation. As human beings, we have a special role in the universe. God appointed us as his co-workers or co-creators to care for creation. Facing the ecological crisis everybody has come to realise that the 'oikos' or the common household where we live is threatened. In fact, humanity is violently raping the earth and at war with 'our larger body'⁹⁹ which we did not realize previously. To prevent cosmic disfigurement and degradation of land resources requires self-commitment from all of us Christians and all people of good will. The ecological crisis is a moral issue and urgently requires a common responsibility because it is related to the human attitude of exploiting nature for self-interest. It is the duty of all children of the earth, no matter who they are what their religion is to get involved to protect our Mother Earth and promote reconciliation with our larger body. As followers of Christ, Paul encourages us and his message urges us to act and think as Christ does, (cf. Phil 2:5). In Jesus Christ, God has reconciled everything to himself (2 Cor 5:19) but salvation is not yet fulfilled. Together with

⁹⁹ This term 'our larger body' is borrowed from *Michael Dowd*, a pastor and a veteran ecologist as well as a peace and justice advocate. His book, *Earthspirit*, really inspired me and made me truly realize my being part of the whole universe where I came from.

the whole cosmos, we still await future redemption. Again, it is our duty as Christians to prepare ourselves and to make use of the social teaching of the Church regarding environmental issues through the means of the Church's mission.

2. The Christian Vocation as God's Stewards and Co-creators

Facing the current widespread destruction of the environment, we realize that there is an urgent need to reflect on our vocation as God's stewards. We need to recall the vocation that God gave us from the beginning of creation.¹⁰⁰ God created human beings in his image and likeness to have dominion over all creation. However, dominion here does not imply that human beings become lords of creation, but rather stewards and co-operators in creation.¹⁰¹ Human beings, as God's representatives, are to continue God's creative work and are responsible for ensuring that nature continues to live as God intended. It was God's will that a human being should communicate with nature as an 'intelligent and noble master and guardian, not as an exploiter and destroyer.'¹⁰² As stewards of God on the earth, human beings are profoundly related to non-human creatures because God created them like all other creatures.

We must to remember that every creature contains the image of the Creator and we are 'part of the large body, the earth.'¹⁰³ We have to understand that the universe is in us as we are in the universe.¹⁰⁴ As children of God, who wait for future glory, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:23) to love one another and respect

¹⁰⁰ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, #28.

¹⁰¹ In the Statement of Bishops of Florida. On 1 January 1991, 'Companions in Creation.' In *Catholic International: The Documentary Window on the World*, 12, No.1, (February 2001), 35.

¹⁰² JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptor Hominis*, # 15.

¹⁰³ M. DOWD, *Earthspirit*, 36.

¹⁰⁴ T. BERRY – T. CLARKE, *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation Between Humans and the Earth*, Mystic, Connecticut 1995, 58.

the beauty and the sacredness of creation. We must be integrated into the religious dimension of the earth because we are part of the large sacred community of the universe.¹⁰⁵ Christians are called to be co-creators with God, so we must act in unity with our Creator and with everyone to prevent further damage to our planet Earth and further loss of its resources. At present, Christians are challenged to be more aware of their destructive actions against nature. The ecological crisis is a critical issue which requires our deep personal conversion and our participation in the transformation of the world. Conversion demands self-commitment in order to improve our relationship with all creation. We must care for it rather than destroy or waste it. As disciples of Jesus we are moulded and shaped in his own image and likeness through baptism. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit and given a special mission to extend our love for God, to our neighbour and to the whole redeemed universe.

3. A Model for the Right Christian Attitude Towards the Ecological Crisis

As John Paul II said, 'the ecological crisis is a moral issue.'¹⁰⁶ For us Christians it is time to renew our commitment to care for the earth. Everyone is obliged to avoid any attitude that could damage the purity of the environment. In the incarnation of the Word of God, Jesus Christ, God pitched his tent among human beings on earth and God's self-communication in creation reaches its climax. As Paul states, Jesus is the wisdom of God, he is God's creative action and God's plan of salvation.¹⁰⁷ In Christ, creation is transformed because everything was created through him. In what follows, I will develop some points in which Paul emphasized

¹⁰⁵ T. BERRY – T. CLARKE, *Befriending*, 43.

¹⁰⁶ JOHN PAUL II, *Centesimus Annus*, # 15.

¹⁰⁷ D. EDWARDS, *Jesus the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology*, New York 1995, 73.

the Lordship of Christ over nature and in which we all share the sonship of God. Christians are united in baptism, so we are members of the one body of Christ, the Mystical body, the Church.

3.1 *Pauline Cosmic Christology: Christ in all Things*

In his letter to the Colossians (1:16-20) Paul shows us Christ's role as both Creator and Perfecter, 'the one who by his life sanctifies all creation and through his death and resurrection brings us up together with the whole of creation to God.'¹⁰⁸ Paul emphasizes the relationship between creation and redemption in his letters to both the Colossians and the Philippians; Christ is the centre of the realization of God's creative action. Christ as the 'beloved Son' (Col 1:17), is the one in whom 'all things hold together (Col 1:13), Christ is the one in whom God sums up all things again (cf. Eph 1:10).¹⁰⁹ The final goal of the whole of creation is Christ; he is the Omega point,¹¹⁰ therefore human beings and the of whole creation are bound together under Christ's Lordship. Through the gospel writers, Jesus is portrayed as the one who can overcome the forces of chaos¹¹¹ that are threatening to disturb the natural world. In the stories of stilling the storm (Mark 4:35-41), walking on the water (Mark 6:45-52) and with the wild beasts (Mark 1:13) Jesus is showing us that God's power is present in him on earth as it was in creation. God's omnipresence in the universe is revealed to us through the incarnation¹¹² and throughout Jesus'

¹⁰⁸ I. BRADLEY, *God Is Green*, 74.

¹⁰⁹ J. GIBBS, *Pauline Cosmic Christology*, 475.

¹¹⁰ U. KING, *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*, Maryknoll, NY 1999, 93.

¹¹¹ The sea was seen as a symbol of evil and destruction (cf. The Genesis story of flood). In the NT the sea was described as the place where the evil spirit dwells. Here, the apostles show us that Jesus is Lord over the universe and overcomes the power of chaos. In him everything holds together.

¹¹² U. KING, *Teilhard de Chardin*, 84.

ministry of healing miracles and preaching. Jesus not only overcame, but also addressed, the wind and the waves and they responded by ceasing their roaring and falling silent. All these events show that Jesus was seen as the one who was in harmony with nature.¹¹³ His saving work, described as a victory, disarms negative cosmic forces, and brings them into a proper relationship.¹¹⁴ The notion of Christ as universal and cosmic saviour is also conveyed by the Greek phrase, *τα παντα* (all things), which is used six times in Colossians 1:15-20.¹¹⁵ Another Greek word that Paul used is *ανακεφαλαιωω* which means, 'gathering together under one head.' Christ is the perfecter and unifier of the disjointed cosmos. As Teilhard de Chardin said, 'the universe is physically impregnated to the very core of its matter by the influence of Christ's superhuman nature.'¹¹⁶ Therefore the forces of creation seem to be understood as the created good and as directed towards redemption and reconciliation in Christ (cf. Rom 8:19-23, Col 1:20; 2Cor 5:19). Because Christ is the one who animates and gathers up all energies developed by the universe, He is the evolver, the dynamic power that moves the whole universe to God.¹¹⁷

3.2 All Christians As One Body in Christ

Paul clearly figured out that Christians, though they have different charisms and different functions (cf. Rom 12:5-6), are bound together in Christ and form one body, the Church, the mystical body of Christ. Paul in his letters, both to the Colossians (1:18) and to the Ephesians (1:10), portrays Christ as the head of the Church. Christ's Lordship over the Church (*κεφαλη*) has cosmic implications

¹¹³ I. BRADLEY, *God Is Green*, 79.

¹¹⁴ D. EDWARDS, *Jesus the Wisdom*, 83.

¹¹⁵ D. EDWARDS, 81.

¹¹⁶ U. KING, *Teilhard de Chardin*, 97.

¹¹⁷ U. KING, *Christ in all Things*, New York 2000, 66.

(cf. Col 1:18, 2:10). The Church existence is inseparable from the rest of the universe.¹¹⁸ Christ, as the fullness of God (πληρωμα), has the power to bring all things, all creation to its goal in God's purpose. Jesus is the one sent by God to restore harmony between human beings and nature and to lift them to God.¹¹⁹ Through Christ all things should be reconciled (Col 1:20) to God. The resurrection of Christ embraces not just human beings but the whole of creation. So, Christians are united in solidarity with the rest of the universe. Their love for God and for neighbour should extend also to the whole universe for the unveiling of the redemption and glory of God's children. Human beings are profoundly and intrinsically interconnected with every other creature as children of the earth and of the universe,¹²⁰ because we share a common journey in the ongoing story of creation. Thomas Berry, who used the Exodus motif, believes that the human community and the natural world will go into the future as a single sacred community.¹²¹ As Christians we share the eternal sonship of God in Christ, therefore creation wants us to act as children of God with responsibility for preserving the work of the Creator.¹²² All types of stewardship and caring for the earth are part of our Christian responsibility.

4. A New Solidarity and a New Attitude Towards Nature

'For those who love, God cooperates in all things for good,' (Rom 8:28). Here, Paul draws our attention to the common destiny of future glory, which we ourselves, together with all of creation, are eagerly awaiting. The widespread

¹¹⁸ J. GIBBS, *Pauline Cosmic Christology*, 475.

¹¹⁹ I. BRADLEY, *God Is Green*, 81.

¹²⁰ D. EDWARDS, *Jesus the Wisdom*, 143.

¹²¹ T. BERRY – T. CLARKE, *Befriending of the Earth*, 39.

¹²² Notes from FR. A. LACOMARA, 'Pauline Literature' on Romans 8:19, 2001.

destruction of the environment has made people everywhere realize that they cannot continue to use the goods of the earth for their own self-interest. A new ecological awareness is beginning to emerge with new visions and new ways to approach the ecological crisis. The ecological problem is the common responsibility of the whole human race, and every class and religion from East and West, North and South. Our Mother Earth, in her critical situation, requests everybody's attention, to cherish and preserve her for future generations. Since ecological problems are the common responsibility and concern of everybody, a new field opens for dialogue, justice and peace, and ecumenism, which require from us a new solidarity and a new attitude towards nature.

4.1 An International Concern

The ecological crisis should alert international leaders to consider the greatest abuse of the industrialized nations of the world, which is the unjust exploitation of land resources by a few people for their own interests. In 1992 the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro focused international attention on environmental issues.¹²³ The conference addressed various environmental issues, such as the protection of the atmosphere, planning and management of land resources, deforestation, and the impact of pollution on the fragile ecosystem among others. The best solution to the environmental problem will be based on a morally coherent worldview. As Kofi Annan proclaimed, 'all of us have to share the fragile ecosystem and precious resources of the earth and we are

¹²³ Quoted by US Catholic Bishops Conference's. "Renewing the Earth" In *Catholic International: The Documentary Window on the World*, 12, no.1, 2001, 37.

called to save it by conservation.¹²⁴ Our stewardship and worldwide recognition of the common needs and the common good of the earth and its natural resources is a common heritage, the fruits of which are for the benefit of all.¹²⁵ The ecological problem is intimately connected to justice for the poor because the resources of the earth should be shared in a just way so that poor people may also benefit. The consequence of these new attitudes would be justice and peace, and respect for human rights and dignity.

4.2 Ecumenism and Peace: The Views of Other Religions

The ecological crisis is open to a worldwide view and all the great world religions should reflect on the critical situation from various angles of teaching and morality. Each religion has its own way of life and teaching and its own approach to the ecological crisis. Therefore the world's major religions should make efforts to become the moral force behind environmental preservation by persuading people to make sacrifices for the greater good and teaching them how to manage land resources for the benefit of all.¹²⁶ The threatening of the global village is an inescapable religious challenge and reminds everyone of God's call to faithful stewardship of his creation. The ecological crises should be addressed through religion because it is mainly a crisis of values.¹²⁷ Moslems in the face of the ecological crisis, are convinced that 'nature is not independently worthwhile but

¹²⁴ K. ANNAN, UN Secretary General, in his message on the occasion of the 'World Day of Environment,' 5 June 2001. In *Notícias - Moçambique*, Quarta-feira 6 Junho 2001.

¹²⁵ JOHN PAUL II, *Peace with God*, 8. And also see cf. *Gaudium et Spes* #69.

¹²⁶ J. GIBBS, *Environmental Stewardship Commission*,

<<http://www.env-steward.com/lectionary/feasts/e-pr-nt.htm>>, 1.

¹²⁷ In: <http://environmenet.harvard.edu/religion/research/html> On 21 October 1998, A gathering in NY City, The Harvard Project on Religion and Ecology, involved more than 100 scholars, clerics and activists worldwide from Christian, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, etc.

derives its value from Allah. Therefore it should not be administered and exploited irresponsibly.¹²⁸ Human beings have the duty to deal with creation as a loving and caring friend, so that they can benefit from it.¹²⁹ Hindus are trained to treat the entire universe as one family and they pray for peace in the whole of nature, which they believe is part of our body and from which our body is composed.¹³⁰ There are many other views from various religions like oriental and African traditional religions, concerning the ecological problem. The most urgent task of religion for our age is to help humanity become aware of its own true nature and destiny.

5. Evangelisation in the Era of Ecological Crisis

John Paul II called the attention of Christians to the fact that the senseless destruction of the natural environment is based on an anthropological error, which unfortunately is widespread in our day.¹³¹ What is the reaction of the Christians as individuals and as a community (Church)? We have to keep in mind that as Christians we have a special mission in the universe. It can be understood as a call to fight against our selfishness and to surrender to the reality of faith, hope and love. Also, it is a call to realize that our larger self is the entire community, past, present and future. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are united together with all creation moving towards our promised land, the future glory. Christian life has an intimate relation with Christ's life by participating daily in his paschal mystery. Christ should be incarnated in our mission as we participate in the emerging ecological age. Paul

¹²⁸ F.M. DENNY, *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust Inviting Balanced Stewardship*, <<http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/research:islamhome.htm>>, 3.

¹²⁹ I.T.H. ALHILALY, *Islam and Ecology*, <<http://www.spednet.com.au/~keysar/ecology.htm>>, 2.

¹³⁰ G.P. POKHARIYAL, *The Hindu view of God, Humanity and Mother Nature*, G. E.M. OGUTU, ed. *God, Humanity and Mother Nature*, Nairobi 1992, 170.

¹³¹ JOHN PAUL II, *Centesimus Annus* #37.

reminds us, 'let the same mind be in you that you have in Christ Jesus' (Phil 2:5). In our missionary work, we should become more aware that the ecological crisis is the primary and crucial issue of our agenda. Also we have to include Catholic social teaching and environmental ethics in our preaching and teaching. As Christ came for the poor, healed the sick, the blind and the lame, our mission has the priority to conscientize and remind humanity about the universe through the proclamation of the Good News. Our mission should be Christ-centred and Christ-like in every area of life.¹³² Our faith, love and hope should enable us to see the immanent Christ, and his hiddenness in all things.¹³³ John Paul II has called Christians to respect and protect the environment, so that through nature people can contemplate the mystery of the greatness and love of God.¹³⁴ If all Christians will live ecologically Christ-centred and Christ-like lives the future generation will be saved, and earth will continue to flourish with life and awareness.¹³⁵

6. Food for Thought and Challenge for Church Mission

Our Christian journey together with the whole of creation towards future glory is a paradox, because salvation is already complete but not yet fulfilled. It requires a new attitude and new action, where we must rely on the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love to sustain us and direct us in dealing with the ecological crises. Cosmic suffering must be seen as a mystery but also as a presence of hope and glory.¹³⁶ In the present situation, we live with war, displacement, famine,

¹³² M. DOWD, *Earthspirit*. 72.

¹³³ N.T. WRIGHT, *Christ in all Things*,

<<http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/faculty/fjust/Bible/Deutero-Pauline.htm>>, 1.

¹³⁴ Quoted by US Catholic Bishops Conference, in their *Pastoral Statement on Ecological Crises; Renewing the Earth*. In *Catholic International*. 41.

¹³⁵ M. DOWD, *Earthspirit*. 72.

¹³⁶ A.J. Fritsch, *A Theology of the Earth*, Washington DC 1972, 5-5.

poverty, violence, unemployment and corruption. It is not easy to transform such a situation into hope. We have to be realistic: to bring hope to the whole of cosmic suffering is a challenge. 'The earth is telling us that we do not have much time. Future generations cry out to us. Air, water, and soil cry out to us. The dying species cry out to us. As Jesus said, let, anyone who has ears to hear, listen.'¹³⁷ Nobody can force us to address the crisis. We must be motivated by love and faith to risk and sacrifice ourselves in order to transform the ecological crisis into future hope. It is a challenge for the Church's mission because in most cases the cause of the ecological crisis is related to political situations, economic interests, nuclear weapons, biological weapons and industrial expansion. In such situations, we need preparation and, to some extent, we have to risk our lives. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us and drive us into action for the values of the gospel. It calls for our inner conversion and the conversion of the destroyers and exploiters of land and those who disfigure nature. To be true Christians, Paul reminds us, is to live as a living sacrifice for the Lord (cf. Rom 12:1). Here, we have to die constantly to our selfishness and need to break our shell of self-interest¹³⁸ by forming and shaping our minds and hearts according to those of Christ. This requires daily and radical conversion that leads us to a new attitude and extends our love towards nature. The Church as a pilgrim Church continues to grow and expand the message of salvation to every creature. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church engages in Christ's action, whether teaching or healing, to transform human attitudes, and to hope for the future glory of the children of God.

¹³⁷ M. DOWD, *Earthspirit*, 74.

¹³⁸ A.J. FRITSCH, *A Theology*, 5-3.

7. Conclusion

The Church as body of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, should go beyond all ideologies and barriers to promote the gospel of life and justice and peace. Through its missionary activity the Church continues to be God's instrument to spread the salvific action of God and willing to see God in all cosmic activity. Cosmic redemption calls for a new attitude and new action on how to treat and look at the cosmos with the eyes of faith. Our reverence for God is increased when the cosmos is treated as a mother. Christians, as members of the pilgrim Church who share the suffering of the whole cosmos, continue to groan and struggle for its glorification. Our Christian solidarity with cosmic suffering is seen as a mystery but also as a presence of Christ's hope and glory in our life (cf. Col 1:27). Paul's message infuses our Christian lives and our witness should influence people of good will from different religions and other world organisations, concerning the ecological crisis.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The ecological crisis should draw our attention to the common responsibility of how to maintain our attitude towards nature and natural resources. The disfigurement of nature and the degradation of land resources are constantly telling us about our own condition of life, our beauty and our mortality. It is only by listening to nature that we come close to nature. The closer we come to nature the closer we touch the core of life. The flowing rivers, the growing trees and the blooming flowers all remind us of the gift and the preciousness of life. Also we become more and more aware of all the voices that surround us and grow in respect and reverence for nature.

Paul's message infuses our Christian attitude and shapes our minds so that our own personal destinies cannot be separated from that of the entire cosmic story. In our present situation the eagerness of creation groaning towards its future deliverance reminds us that nature is a promise. Therefore our Christian duty is to be aware that there is an intimate relationship between divine love and all of creation. Our awareness should be oriented by faith in the love of God through Jesus Christ and develop in us the capacity to see promise even in uncompromising situations. And so, we have to risk hoping in a cosmic future. Through hope we perceive the promise inherent in nature and we will be more motivated to care for it so that it may

come to its proper fulfilment. The depth of our faith is measured by the degree to which we are willing to let go of the present and trust in the future fulfilment of the promise.

The Church as the body of Christ continues to be a sign of hope and to proclaim the Good News to all creatures. The proclamation of the Good News should foster our Christian vocation as faithful stewards to care for God's creation. Humanity must mediate God's presence and God's care to the rest of creation. We all are called by the very act of God's creating us to be stewards of creation. Therefore how urgent it is to spread the awareness that the resources of our planet must be respected and each and everyone is obliged to avoid initiatives and action that could damage the purity of the environment.

Paul's message should impact on our way of thinking and our expectations and make us leave aside our own self-interests and to put ourselves at the service of the 'healing' ministry. As the disciples sent by Jesus to preach the Good News, we are called to cast out devils and to cure the sick and the lepers. Also, through baptism we are called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be 'healers and cleansers' of the whole of creation from corruption and destruction.

As missionaries Paul's message still challenges us and urges us to be aware of the core of our vocation and our discipleship in taking the Good News to all people and the whole of creation. I am sure that it is the opportune time for the Church to do its best to proclaim the Good News and go beyond human boundaries and embrace the whole of creation with the message of love, hope and unity.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AB : Anchor Bible
- ABD : Anchor Bible Dictionary
- CBQ : Catholic Biblical Quarterly
- GS : Gaudium et Spes
- JBL : Journal of Biblical Literature
- JMAS : Journal of Modern African Studies
- KJ : King James
- LG : Lumen Gentium
- NCBC : New Century Biblical Commentary
- NICNT: The New International Commentary on the New Testament.
- NJBC : The New Jerome Biblical Commentary
- NM : Novo MoçAmbiente
- NTA : New Testament Abstract
- NTC : New Testament Commentary
- NRSV : New Revised Standard Version
- OTA : Old Testament Abstract
- OTL : Old Testament Literature
- RH : Redemptor Hominis
- RSV : Revised Standard Version

SBL : Society of Bible Literature

TDNT : Theological Dictionary of The New Testament

UBS : United Bible Society

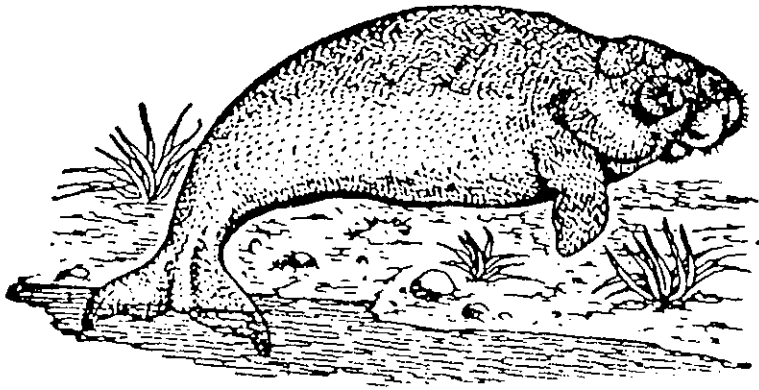
SEVEN PRINCIPLES REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW IN MOZAMBIQUE

1. A utilização gestão racionais dos componentes ambientais.
2. A prevenção de actos lesivos ao ambiente.
3. Uma visão global e integrada do ambiente.
4. A participação dos cidadãos na execução do programa Nacional de Gestão Ambiental.
5. As oportunidades iguais de acesso e uso dos recursos entre homens e mulheres.
6. A responsabilização pelos danos causados ao ambiente.
7. A cooperação internacional para a solução dos problemas ambientais.

Para promover e executar o Programa Nacional de Gestão Ambiental, é criado um Conselho do Desenvolvimento Sustentável com as seguintes competências:

- Pronunciar-se sobre políticas sectorais relacionadas com a gestão dos recursos naturais.
- Dar pareceres sobre propostas de legislação complementar à Lei-quadro do Ambiente.
- Pronunciar-se sobre as propostas de ratificação de convenções internacionais relativas ao ambiente.
- Elaborar propostas que estimulem procedimentos ambientalmente sãos na utilização dos recursos.
- Propor mecanismo que simplifiquem o licenciamento de actividades relacionadas com o uso dos recursos.
- Formular recomendações aos ministros das diversas áreas de gestão dos recursos naturais.
- Servir como foro de resolução de diferendos relativos a utilização e gestão de recursos naturais.

APPENDIX 1: DUGONG



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