

**Stewards of Sustainability: A Theological Analysis of the
Relationship Between the Anglican Church of Canada, The Climate
Change Crisis, and Sustainability**

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Abstract

Stewards of Sustainability: A Theological Analysis of the Relationship Between the Anglican Church of Canada, The Climate Change Crisis, and Sustainability

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The purpose of this thesis is to help the discussion of the Anglican Church of Canada and the climate change crisis evolve into a practical plan of climate action within a theological hermeneutic. This thesis uses Gordon D. Kaufman's constructive theological method to showcase different ecological theologies and hermeneutics from a variety of different experts like Michael S. Northcott, Denis Edwards, Willis Jenkins, and Wendell Berry. In examining numerous avenues, the research proposes that the Anglican Church of Canada should join the Green Churches Network in a massive scale project. This community-oriented project would lead to expediting climate action through processes like tree planting, building alternative energy infrastructure, and updating current structures towards more efficient models. This massive project would be held together by theological reasoning, belief, community effort, and the goal of sustaining and protecting creation under the movement of ecological conversion.

KEY WORDS: Climate change, Climate change crisis, Greenhouse gases (GHGs), Coping range, Vector-borne diseases, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Ecological Conversion, Humanocentric, Theocentric, Ecocentric, Ecojustice, Christian Stewardship, Creation Spirituality, Fruitful Resistance, Community, Atonement, Wholeness, Constructive theological method, Christomorphic, Historicism, Pragmatism, The Green Churches Network

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Dedication

To my late Father, Martial Leblanc,
who was a man of faith and that faith taught me
to always have hope, especially in hard times

And

To every living creature on Earth, for your existence is the beacon
of hope for this entire thesis. Your life breathes hope for a
better future, a greener future.

You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending. -C.S. Lewis

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Stewards of Sustainability: A Theological Analysis of the Relationship Between the Anglican Church of Canada, The Climate Change Crisis, and Sustainability

Introduction

Climate change is the largest threat not only to humanity, but to the entire planet. This single threat is harmful to every ecosystem that exists on the planet. All living things will be influenced by the impact of climate change and action must be taken now to preserve the world for future generations. There are many reasons to study climate change, but the most important reason is because it requires humanity's immediate attention. It is a problem that has been getting worse and cannot wait any longer.

This subject is closely related to theological studies because at the core of the Christian faith is the obligation to steward creation, which indicates a responsibility that Christians must further sustainable practices within the world. This thesis is an attempt at bridging the gap between theological obligations and practical action by the Anglican Church of Canada.

This subject is important to me because I am an environmentalist, as well as an Anglican, who lives in Canada. I have been engrossed in the subject for years and have followed a strict vegetarian diet in protest to factory farming as a means of minimizing my own carbon footprint. I strongly advocate for the Anglican Church in Canada to be more involved in sustainable initiatives and this thesis is a means of showing possible directions for that. I would like to help push the discussion of church bodies and creation into the forefront of theological discussion because as mentioned earlier the world is in crisis and Christians are theologically obligated to take part in addressing this crisis.

I would like to begin by setting up parameters of this thesis. First of all, because it is a Master's thesis I am limited in resources, therefore I am narrowing the scope of this research to just the Anglican Church of Canada. In addition, I will not be able to cover every single Anglican church in Canada that falls under the denomination but will attempt to give a general survey of who and what these organized bodies are and what their current model is in relation to the subject of this thesis.

Therefore, when referring to the Church throughout this thesis, the Church is representing the general populace of Anglican churches throughout Canada. In addition, other denominations and locations will be discussed in terms of theological significance, but the core of the thesis will focus on the Anglican denomination within Canada. It would be possible to expand this scope within a Doctoral thesis, but for the purposes of this context we will use these boundaries.

Furthermore, this thesis recognises that the Anglican Church of Canada has engaged in discussion on the climate change crisis and has released several documents in support of climate action. However, the thesis takes that discussion further and outlines a practical plan of execution. The goal is to offer possible plans of action that could aid the Anglican Church of Canada and their positioning within the climate change crisis.

In addition, my sources are mainly made up of American, Australian, and British authors, the majority of whom are male. This should be indicated because it allows for a certain perspective to be taken, and as it would be more beneficial to use sources outside of these demographics, it is not feasible once again given the context of a Master's thesis. It is purposefully specific in sources used and criteria presented because the aim is to present a

theological framework with as few indirect variables as possible. Again, in a Doctoral thesis, these parameters could be expanded for a richer body of work, but for this context these restraints are ideal.

The main question that the thesis is asking is whether the Anglican Church of Canada is theologically responsible for stewarding creation in the face of the climate change crisis? If so, what are the ecological hermeneutics that would help expediate that theological responsibility towards Christian led sustainability?

The thesis will use Gordon D. Kaufman's constructive theological method. Kaufman's method prioritises historicism and pragmatism. According to Kaufman historical context is crucially important and gives space for constant revision as new approaches emerge. In addition, Kaufman believed that theology must always be practical, which creates a method that constantly looks to apply its theories. This method will be explained in greater detail in Chapter 3. The structure of this thesis will be separated into three parts. Chapter 1 will look at climate change: what it is, and what causes it. In addition, this chapter will identify proposed solutions on how to combat the harmful impacts of climate change. Also, it will look at the context of climate change within Canada specifically because that is the targeted region for this study. Furthermore, this chapter will focus on the role of the individual within the climate change crisis. Chapter 2 will examine theological frameworks through the lens of a variety of authors, specifically ecological theologies. These frameworks will have different hermeneutics when considering creation, the environment, and ecology on a whole and how these subjects have a relationship with Christian theology. The authors that will be focused on are Michael S. Northcott, Dennis Edwards, and Willis Jenkins. Chapter 3 will look at the Anglican Church of Canada, the history of the church, the infrastructure, and the current context. This chapter will also look at the size of these church networks and what efforts are already in place for sustainable efforts. In addition, the relationship between the Anglican Church of Canada and creation will be examined through the practical solutions for the Anglican Church of Canada to take towards action against climate change. These practical solutions will be explained through the framework lens of Michael S. Northcott, Gordon Kaufman, and Wendell Berry. Moreover, a prognosis for the Anglican Church of Canada would consist of a possible collaboration with the Green Churches Network. Lastly, the thesis will be summarized in the conclusion section and the recommendations section will offer some points for future discussion and research.

The hope of this thesis is to offer a theological bridge between the Anglican Church of Canada and climate action that strives for sustainable practices that will prolong the livelihood of our ecosystems for humanity now and for generations to come. In no way is this thesis designed to create offense towards the Anglican Church of Canada, but more precisely is designed to demonstrate possible theological solutions that the Anglican Church of Canada could use or reflect on in future sustainable initiatives given their influence, power, and resources.

Chapter 1: Climate Change

1.1 Introduction

Climate change is the single most important threat in our modern world. This chapter will investigate the science behind climate change, how it occurs, what causes it, and what are possible solutions to mitigating its harmful impact. This will be done through unpacking mainly the work of Mark Maslin. It will also consider contributions to the topic by Joseph Romm, and Rodney White. In addition, it will analyze Canada's context within the climate change crisis. Today's world is in a constant state of change and certain changes can alter the reality of the world completely. It is also important to note that change can be abrupt and can leave humanity ill prepared in the face of it. This introductory chapter will focus on two major concepts that will act as background for the chapters that follow. These concepts are "climate change" and "the impact of climate change". It is especially important to understand the science behind climate change, to grasp how it can negatively impact the world, what kind of solutions are available, and, of these, which need to be developed.

Chapter 1 will be laid out through several sections including: Science Behind Climate Change, Dangers of Climate Change, Possible Solutions, Climate Change in Canada, Climate Change in the Lives of Individuals. The methodology is aimed at showing climate change from a global, national, and individual perspective. This methodology hopes to show an encompassing view of Canada's position in the crisis of climate change by having comparative information (i.e. global and individual information). In addition, these sections will look at the science of climate change, the possible negative impacts it has, and possible solutions that have been identified in helping resolve climate change.

1.2 Science Behind Climate Change

It is very important to understand that the Earth, to a certain degree, works like a greenhouse.¹ The balance of energy from the Sun and the amount of energy loss back into space determines the temperature of the Earth.² Nearly all of Earth's short-wave radiation, which is mainly ultraviolet (UV) and "visible light", passes through the atmosphere without interference.³ The only exception to this is the ozone layer, which absorbs energy in the high-energy UV band, which restricts how much reaches the surface of the Earth as it is damaging to cells and DNA.⁴ Both the land and the ocean absorb the remaining energy.⁵ This absorption process warms up the land and the ocean and they then radiate this acquired warmth as long-wave infrared or "heat" radiation.⁶ Humanity needs this greenhouse effect because without it the Earth would be on average 35° Celsius colder.⁷ Since the industrial revolution, humanity has been burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) that were deposited in the Earth hundreds of millions of years ago.

¹ Mark Maslin, *Climate Change: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1.

² Maslin, *Climate Change*, 1.

³ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 1.

⁴ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 2.

⁵ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 2.

⁶ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 2.

⁷ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 2.

These fossil fuels are being released back into the atmosphere, which is elevating the temperature of the Earth.⁸ Humanity is essentially burning fossilized sunlight.⁹

According to Mark Maslin, climate change is a global pollution problem.¹⁰ In other words, climate change results from an increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and these emissions are related to humanity's consumption, production, and waste management. Mark Maslin is a Professor of Physical Geography at University College London and is the former Director of the UCL Environment Institute and Head of the Department of Geography. Maslin explains that climate change is caused by a dramatic increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) and scientific research has shown that this increase has grown significantly in the last one hundred years.¹¹ In order to put this increase into perspective, ice-core evidence shows that over the last 800,000 years the natural change of atmospheric CO₂ has been between 180 parts per million by volume (ppmv) to 300 ppmv.¹² However, in the last 100 years there has been an increase from 280 ppmv to over 400 ppmv and this rate is increasing every year.¹³ Humanity has caused more pollution in the last 100 years than what has naturally occurred over thousands of years.¹⁴

The basic science behind climate change has been explained, but what specific processes are causing this increase in GHG emissions and who is monitoring this data? Maslin explains that the United Nations Environmental Panel and the World Meteorological Organization established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 to address concerns about global warming.¹⁵ The purpose of the IPCC is the continued assessment of the state of knowledge on the various aspects of climate change, including scientific, environmental, and socioeconomic impacts and response strategies.¹⁶ The IPCC does not publish any research independently, but instead brings together all key research published in the world and produces a consensus.¹⁷ There have been five main IPCC reports in 1990, 1996, 2001, 2007, and 2013-2014. The IPCC is recognized as the most authoritative scientific and technical voice on climate change and its assessments have had a profound influence on the negotiators of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).¹⁸

According to the IPCC the first major source of CO₂ emissions are derived from the burning of fossil fuels, since 80% of the world's CO₂ emissions come from energy production, industrial processes, and transport.¹⁹ In addition, North America, Europe, and Asia produce 90% of the global industrially produced CO₂, which demonstrates how uneven the distribution of GHG emissions is globally.²⁰

⁸ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 2.

⁹ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 2.

¹⁰ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 11.

¹¹ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 11.

¹² Maslin, *Climate Change*, 11.

¹³ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 11.

¹⁴ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 7.

¹⁵ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 9.

¹⁶ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 10.

¹⁷ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 10.

¹⁸ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 10.

¹⁹ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 6.

²⁰ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 7.

The second major source of CO₂ emissions is from land use.²¹ For example, when large areas of rain forests are cut down for the purposes of agriculture, roads, or urbanization the land turns into less productive grassland with considerably reduced capability to store CO₂.²² Interestingly, South America, Asia, and Africa are responsible for 90% of present-day land use change emissions. However, it should be highlighted that developed nations caused similar land use changes around a century ago, and therefore developed nations are most responsible for a half trillion tonnes of CO₂ put into the atmosphere from 1750 to 2015.²³ According to International Energy Authority projections between 2015 and 2044 the world will put another half trillion tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere.²⁴ This projection is heavily correlated to the increase in GHG emissions amongst developing nations like China, India, South Africa, and Brazil.²⁵ It seems that the more energy a nation produces the more their economic development improves.²⁶ This correlation is troubling because this means that in a direct way nations are incentivized to produce more energy in order to establish better economic wellbeing.

Thus far, this chapter has established what the science is behind climate change, what causes climate change, and who monitors climate change on a global scale. It is crucial that people understand these fundamentals, but what is truly notable about climate change is its influence. Climate change is the single most impactful issue of the twenty-first century because it influences the land, nations, regions, communities, families, and the daily lives of individuals. Therefore, the negative effects of climate change must be studied and researched because in many ways the survival of humanity is dependent on it.

It is important to understand the dangers of climate change because this helps highlight how severe the affects can be and indicates how important research on this subject is. This section will investigate the different ways climate change presents harmful consequences to the world and what future issues will look like.

1.3 Dangers of Climate Change

According to Maslin, the dangers of climate change depend on where you live. If you are located on a small island nation the increase in sea levels can be considered dangerous because of the loss of land.²⁷ However, it is important to disclaim that this section strictly focuses on the scientific evidence around the impacts of climate change, and political aspects will be discussed in later chapters. The IPCC has come to the consensus that the estimated global temperature should not exceed a two-degree Celsius increase. If that were to happen a plethora of environmental issues would start to occur because of it,²⁸ like water shortages, hunger, malaria, and flooding. These calamities are predicted to affect hundreds of millions of people by 2080. It is important to note that current scientific evidence indicates that if humanity does not change or

²¹ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 8.

²² Maslin, *Climate Change*, 8.

²³ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 9.

²⁴ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 9.

²⁵ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 9.

²⁶ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 9.

²⁷ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 68.

²⁸ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 69.

intervene drastically, the world will reach a 1.1-1.5-degree Celsius increase in temperature by the year 2035.

Maslin explains an especially important variable when it comes to the impact of climate change, and that is “coping range”.²⁹ Different regions in the world have different coping ranges for specific environmental issues. For instance, the state of Florida in the United States is prepared for hurricanes because they occur every year and at a specific time of year. In the same vein, the province of Quebec in Canada is well equipped for a blizzard. These regions are both equipped for certain cases of extreme weather because historically they are considered normal occurrences. However, the negative effects of climate change create abnormal weather patterns and extreme weather conditions that are difficult to predict, and as a result, difficult to prepare for.³⁰ Coping range in each region of the world is equipped for the environments they are in and it is easy to see how certain regions would become incredibly crippled by extreme weather they had yet to experience in their specific region.

As previously mentioned, the dangers of climate change depend on where one is situated in the world. For example, in developed nations like the United States, coastal regions have taken precautions against sea levels rising by increasing the height of their sea walls.³¹ Increasing the height of sea walls work as a buffer against flooding. However, the expansion to sea walls comes at the cost of land, which creates another problem. As a result, the building of sea walls is not a sustainable solution. An extreme example of potential flooding effects is in the Maldives in the Indian Ocean or the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean because if the sea level rises just one-meter it would lead to flooding of 75% of their dry land making these islands uninhabitable.³²

Furthermore, Maslin explains that another factor that threatens human health is the transmission of diseases.³³ Climate change will particularly influence vector-borne diseases, which are diseases that are carried by another organism.³⁴ For example, malaria is a vector-borne disease because it is carried by mosquitos and can be transmitted to humans.³⁵ Infective agents and vector organisms are sensitive to factors such as temperature, surface-water temperature, humidity, wind, soil moisture, and changes in forest distribution.³⁶ Therefore, it is predicted by climate scientists that climate change and altered weather patterns will affect the range, intensity, and seasonality of many vector-borne and other infectious diseases.³⁷ In general, the increased warmth and moisture caused by climate change will enhance the transmission of diseases.³⁸

In addition, Maslin outlines that there has been a massive loss of biodiversity in the world due to certain human activities, such as: deforestation, agriculture, urbanization, and mineral exploitation.³⁹ Maslin explains that the extinction rates of species are 100-1000 times higher than

²⁹ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 71.

³⁰ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 71.

³¹ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 73.

³² Maslin, *Climate Change*, 73.

³³ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 85.

³⁴ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 85.

³⁵ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 85.

³⁶ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 85.

³⁷ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 85.

³⁸ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 85.

³⁹ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 86.

the background natural rate and climate change will exacerbate this decline.⁴⁰ According to Maslin, one example of an ecosystem being threatened by climate change is the coral reefs.⁴¹ Maslin explains that coral reefs are valuable economic resources for fisheries, recreation, tourism, and coastal protection.⁴²

Maslin explains that ocean acidification occurs because of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that dissolves in the water of the surface ocean.⁴³ This process is controlled by two factors: the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and the temperature of the ocean.⁴⁴ Maslin argues that acidification not only negatively affects the health of certain marine life, but also alters the cycling of nutrients and many other elements and compounds in the ocean.⁴⁵

1.4 Possible Solutions

In response to these many issues that climate change causes, Maslin offers some support in finding a solution to this modern problem. For example, Maslin explains that adaptation is needed because climate change has already started to have negative effects like severe weather, therefore nations need to adapt. Different forms of adaptation exist, and the three main ways Maslin endorses adaptation are through the following: mitigation, alternative energy sources, and carbon capture.⁴⁶

Firstly, mitigation is a means of mitigating the global carbon footprint, therefore this is a chance for government bodies to enact laws and policies that protect the environment by taxing companies and persons for exceeding an allowed amount of consumption and pollution of certain pollutants. Therefore, this will slow down the process of global warming and hold off the terrible impacts of climate change. However, the issue with this route is that it is not aggressive enough in its approach and will take decades to make a substantial change. In addition, the current fines for non-cooperating entities (i.e. corporations) are so insignificant in amount to these entities that it is virtually non-existent, which does not hinder polluting operations. Therefore, mitigation is currently a weak option for the current state of the world and the rapid trajectory for it to worsen.⁴⁷

Secondly, alternative energy sources can be renewable or clean on their production and use. The current petrol-based energy is the traditional energy source that is currently powering most of the developed world and has been for around a century. However, there are alternatives, and they are as follows: solar, biofuels, wind, wave/tidal, hydro, geothermal, nuclear fission, and nuclear fusion.⁴⁸ Each of these alternatives have their benefits and setbacks, but they offer real access to more sustainable modes of energy sourcing compared to current petrol-based energy sourcing. Hydro, wind, and solar are particularly good energy sources because there is an abundance of these natural resources in Canada, which gives increased accessibility to them. As

⁴⁰ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 86-87.

⁴¹ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 87.

⁴² Maslin, *Climate Change*, 87.

⁴³ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 93.

⁴⁴ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 93.

⁴⁵ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 94.

⁴⁶ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 136-149.

⁴⁷ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 141-143.

⁴⁸ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 144-149.

a result, one could argue that these are more accessible to the Anglican Church of Canada than the other sources mentioned, and these could be more viable for sustainable measures.

Thirdly, carbon capture technology is one of the newer forms of adaptation that has seen mainstream attention and is essentially self-explanatory in that it is technology that captures carbon from the air. However, a major downfall to this technology is that carbon dioxide is a hazardous and dangerous gas to store, therefore after the carbon dioxide has been captured it is difficult to maintain that storage process in a safe manner.⁴⁹ However, there is another form of carbon capture and storage technology that is much older, and they are known as trees. Trees work as carbon capture technologies and produce oxygen for humanity to breathe. Therefore, protecting forests and tree planting are so important for the fate of the planet.

Overall, Maslin explains an accessible understanding of what climate change is, what is the science behind it, and what kind of impacts it has on the ecosystems in our world. In addition, Maslin offers some views on solutions to the issue of climate change, which will be unpacked in a practical sense in chapter three of this thesis. Although Maslin is a reputable expert in their field, it is important to understand other climate scholars in regard to their thoughts about humanity's approach to the climate change crisis.

1.5 Climate Change in Canada

Maslin provides an overview of climate change on a world scale, which is important to understand because it enables the reader to have a better view of Canada's position in the climate crisis in comparison. According to Rodney White, climate change in Canada is happening at a rapid pace. The process of climate change is littered with negative consequences for humanity as Maslin outlined, and White indicates that Canada is largely vulnerable to these consequences.⁵⁰ Similar to Maslin, White explains that two of the main drivers for the acceleration of climate change are the emission of green house gases (GHG) and the management of land use, especially deforestation.⁵¹ The main GHG being carbon dioxide (CO₂), which is emitted by fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas.

For instance, White explains that Canada cannot afford to ignore climate change. Specifically, the most rapid warming of the atmosphere will occur in high latitudes, which is near the poles. This has major implications for the traditional economy and culture of Canada's Indigenous people. These effects are apparent in changing animal habits (including fish) and transportation. The Indigenous population is already marginalized in the Canadian economy and climate change will make things worse.⁵² For example, certain Indigenous populations in northern Canada practice a traditional lifestyle based on hunting and fishing and these areas have seen a rapid heating, which has resulted in biodiversity loss, directly impacting their livelihoods.⁵³ In addition, they are marginalized from two sides. The Canadian government would develop their land for the gain of fossil fuel energies, which cripples their traditional lifestyles. In contrast, Indigenous people who would benefit from these same fossil fuel

⁴⁹ Maslin, *Climate Change*, 149-151.

⁵⁰ Rodney White, *Climate Change in Canada*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 1.

⁵¹ White, *Climate Change in Canada*, 2.

⁵² White, *Climate Change in Canada*, 3.

⁵³ White, *Climate Change in Canada*, 34.

developments because it would help increase their standard of living cannot because there are non-governmental organizations that interfere with developments relating to fossil fuel development of any kind. This leaves many Indigenous populations in Canada with only the negative effects of climate change without any of the benefits from developing fossil fuels.⁵⁴

Another example of how Canada will be vulnerable to climate change consequences is in the rapid reduction of sea ice. If sea ice is reduced in the Arctic, this means that mining and fracking for oil and gas will be easier to exploit in the Arctic regions. This will of course increase an already rapid emission of GHGs, which will cause huge issues in the environment. In addition, the sovereignty of the Arctic will be up for debate and feud because Canada, the United States, and Russia all hold some stake in exploiting this land for fossil fuels.⁵⁵ Currently, interests in petroleum in the Arctic have not yet taken major precedence, but only because current technology is not very accessible. However, as technology develops there may be a boom in activity by all three of these countries and possibly more countries would become involved.

A third major issue within Canada, is the development of the oil sands in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Harvesting fossil fuels from these oil sands requires huge amounts of energy and water, which is why Canada's GHG emission have increased so much since 1990. In addition, there have been developments in offshore oilfields in Newfoundland and Labrador, which have similar affects to that of the oil sands. The issue of harvesting these fossil fuels is that they contribute greatly to GHG emissions and therefore increase the negative effects of climate change in Canada. Unfortunately, these fossil fuel developments are encouraged because they help meet Canada's current energy demands in regard to Canadian national consumption. In addition, these developments allow for Canada to retain their position as a key petrol supplier to the United States. Both reasons are economically tied, and therefore the issue of climate change in Canada is also intrinsically tied with how Canada's economic infrastructure is built.⁵⁶

White explains that the issue of climate change should be top priority for Canada. How Canada decides to act in the face of climate change is a decision that not only affects today's world but affects the world for future generations. Climate change puts Canadians in a position to decide to better the environment ensuring future sustainability or ignore the problem and ultimately doom future generations. Similarly, to Maslin, White expressed the need for a more monitored carbon economy, where countries have caps on carbon emissions, and policy makers enforce penalties for uncooperative parties. In addition, White makes it clear that because climate change is a global problem, it requires a global solution, therefore all countries, poor and rich, need to change their perspective towards sustainable technology and lower emissions.⁵⁷ White argues that there is a sense of urgency needed to fight climate change and shows that there will be terrible consequences for Canadians if things do not change quickly. Another author who suggests that climate change will bring dramatic impact to the lives of many people is Joseph Romm.

⁵⁴ White, *Climate Change in Canada*, 35.

⁵⁵ White, *Climate Change in Canada*, 3.

⁵⁶ White, *Climate Change in Canada*, 20.

⁵⁷ White, *Climate Change in Canada*, 128.

1.6 Climate Change in the Lives of Individuals

Joseph Romm speaks about how climate change will bring more transformation in the daily lives of people and their families than the Internet has in the last couple of decades.⁵⁸ Romm is an American author, blogger, editor, physicist, and climate expert, who advocates reducing greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming and increasing energy security through energy efficiency, green energy technologies, and green transportation technologies. Romm, a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, believes that the foremost defining story of the twenty-first century is a race between the increasing impacts of our cumulative carbon emissions versus how quickly and critically we adapt as a species towards carbon-free energy.⁵⁹

In his book *Climate Change: What Everyone Needs to Know*, which explains how individuals can move towards lowering their carbon footprint, Romm writes that the four biggest contributors to one's carbon emissions are one's home, transportation, material objects and diet.⁶⁰ Simple modifications to lifestyle and environment can significantly help a person live a low-carbon life. For example, attaching solar panels to the roof of one's home as a means of using renewable clean energy, while lowering energy expenses is an ideal route⁶¹. Romm also offers the idea of using mass transit, cycling, or driving an electric, hybrid, or low emission vehicle as a means of cutting back carbon output.⁶²

In addition, basically everything one owns has a carbon footprint, but an important motto to follow is "small is beautiful".⁶³ This phrase is based on current manufacturing processes. For example, the more materials something is made from and the more money it costs to make, typically means it produced a higher carbon emission through different processes of manufacturing and transporting the item⁶⁴. An additional step in lowering one's carbon footprint can be through limiting dairy and meat consumption; it has been found that this can lower one's emissions by 34-64%.⁶⁵ Therefore, in becoming vegetarian (which is the absence of meat products) or vegan (which is the absence of all animal products) in one's diet, one lowers their participation in high carbon pollution.

These small adjustments to lives can make a difference to the environment, but the real question is why do it? Is lowering your carbon footprint simply a means of mitigating climate change for future generations, or is it deeper? By lowering one's carbon footprint is one taking steps toward a framework of ecological theology? The understanding of humanity's relationship with creation through ecological theologies will be discussed in detail in chapter two; and seeing those ecological theologies applied to the practical problem of climate change will be analyzed in chapter three.

⁵⁸ Joseph Romm, *Climate Change: What Everyone Needs to Know*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 251.

⁵⁹ Romm, *Climate Change*, 251.

⁶⁰ Romm, *Climate Change*, 251.

⁶¹ Romm, *Climate Change*, 251.

⁶² Romm, *Climate Change*, 252.

⁶³ Romm, *Climate Change*, 262.

⁶⁴ Romm, *Climate Change*, 262.

⁶⁵ Romm, *Climate Change*, 262.

1.7 Summary

In summary, this chapter has broken down the science about what is climate change, what causes it, what kind of impact it has, and what some solutions are for it. Maslin surveyed a wide variety of scientific data, and macro problem solving through mitigation, alternative energy, and carbon capture. In moving from a global scale to national scale, White offered suggestions for Canada to take to help with current climate change contributors, such as using fewer fossil fuels and addressing alternatives to land use. In addition, White suggested that urgency could be considered for making decisions on sustainability in Canada. Lastly, in moving from a national perspective to the perspective of the individual, Romm offered solutions on the micro level through the lives of individuals in how they can lower their carbon footprints. In all these levels of society there are clear issues and clear solutions. However, the real core of this thesis is not about the secular relationship humanity has with the planet but focuses on the theological relationship that exists. As a result, chapter two will excavate deeper into different ecological theologies that will help explain why the Anglican Church of Canada might increase, expediate, and prioritise climate change initiatives.

Chapter 2: Ecological Theologies

2.1 Introduction

There are many perspectives theologians take when looking at humanity's relationship with creation, and this chapter will cover some of the most crucial frameworks that will help clarify the theological responsibilities within Christian doctrine towards sustainability. This chapter will look at the work of Dennis Edwards, Michael S. Northcott, and Willis Jenkins. All three of these theologians take unique approaches when tackling the subject of sustaining ecological systems through theological interpretation.

2.2 Dennis Edwards and Ecological Conversion

All Christians must be attuned in understanding how humanity fits in the realm of ecology with regards to the rest of creation. According to Dennis Edwards, this is possible through a process called ecological conversion.⁶⁶ Ecological conversion is a movement of different people from different backgrounds that hold a common aim, which is to find alternative and sustainable ways forward within the climate change issue.⁶⁷ Edwards argues that religion has an important part to play in ecological conversion because it can give meaning and motivation in building an ecological ethos. More specifically, the Church has an important role to play in the movement of ecological conversion because it is tasked with being a witness to the God of Jesus Christ, and to this God's love for all Earth's creatures.⁶⁸ Edwards argues that the Church itself must commit to ecology in such a way that ecology becomes central in Christian self-understanding. Edwards explains that aiding suffering creation should be given the same importance as helping the poor or oppressed.⁶⁹ Christians can join the movement by simply being Christian believers and standing alongside other members of the ecological conversion movement.

2.3 Science and Theology

To create a successful ecological theology, one must underline the interconnection between human beings and other creatures. Edwards proposes that understanding modern science and using Christian traditional theology are a powerful combination that was not readily available for theologians of the past. For example, Christian faith tells us that everything was created by God but does not tell us how. Science explains how the universe came to be through the Big Bang theory, and it is here where Christian tradition needs to listen to modern science.⁷⁰ The Big Bang theory traces the birth of the universe to about 14 billion years ago. Cosmologists argue that normal physics breakdown between time 0 and the first second, and therefore we are only able to understand starting from one second into the life of the universe. However, by one

⁶⁶ Edwards, Dennis. *Ecology at the Heart of Faith: The Change of Heart that Leads to a New Way of Living on Earth* (New York, Orbis Books Press, 2006), 2.

⁶⁷ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 2.

⁶⁸ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 3.

⁶⁹ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 3.

⁷⁰ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 8.

second into the creation of the universe, protons, electrons, and neutrons were formed and therefore allowed for simple elements to form, like hydrogen. Hydrogen was the first element formed and continues to be the dominant element in the universe. After the first three minutes into the creation of the universe, the universe was a fireball filled with hydrogen and helium.⁷¹ It is interesting to think humans and all living creatures on planet Earth are descendants of this fireball from 14 billion years ago. Hydrogen is the fundamental element in the structure of the cells of all living things and when combined with oxygen, it forms water that sustains all life.⁷² Edwards believes that it is characteristic of God to create in an emergent and evolutionary way. God creates human beings as emergent creatures.

In addition, human beings are not just made of hydrogen, but of a combination of elements such as: carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and small amounts of other elements.⁷³ These heavier elements are the result of large stars exploding in a super nova explosion and this seeds the nearby universe with elements to form further stars and planets. As a result, these heavier elements go on to develop planets in nearby galaxies, and Earth would be one of these planets. Given modern scientific understanding, Earth was given certain conditions to engender life. Therefore, with the help of evolution, human beings are the result of stardust. Each carbon atom in your blood flowing in your veins and the neurons firing in your brain comes from a star. All of this helps highlight the interrelationship humanity has between the universe, its galaxies, and stars.⁷⁴

2.4 The Four Models of Relationship with Creation

Edwards seeks to clarify what kind of relationship is ideal between humanity and other creatures in order to form a more ecologically based theology. Essentially, human beings are a part of God's creation, interrelated with all other creatures. However, human beings are also tasked with acting responsibly before God within Creation. Edwards explains that this approach is God-centred (theocentric), as opposed to human-centred (anthropocentric), which he argues is the appropriate framework for further development of an ecological theology of humans in relationship with other creatures. To emphasize the validity of this approach, Edwards reviews four models of kinship with creation: domination of nature, ecological egalitarianism, kinship with creation, and cultivation of creation.⁷⁵

The first model, domination of creation is the idea that nature is there for humans to exploit. Large corporations and government bodies have used this approach in modern industrialized history. There have been some efforts to become more sustainable in this approach, but for the most part these industrialized processes have shown no real sign of slowing down in their exploitative practices and so their ecological relationship is one of dominance time and time again.⁷⁶ Edwards argues that the model of domination is destructive and false and that it must be absolutely rejected in an ecological theology of human beings in relation to other creatures. It does not respect the biblical heritage of the goodness of creation, the community of

⁷¹ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 8.

⁷² Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 9.

⁷³ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 10.

⁷⁴ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 11.

⁷⁵ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 19.

⁷⁶ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 19.

all creatures before God, the call to humans to act as images of God, or the divine command to care and cultivate creation.⁷⁷ According to Christian social teaching, human beings have moral duties toward the natural world. They do not have absolute rights over nature. In a God-centered perspective, other forms of life have their own God-given value. Other creatures have intrinsic value in themselves, a value that human beings are called to respect.⁷⁸

Clearly, domination over nature is a highly anthropocentric view of nature, while at the other end of the spectrum lies a more biocentric (life-centered) view. The approach of ecological egalitarianism serves as a democratic model of viewing humans and other creatures. People who take this approach rightly oppose the human exploitation that is bringing death and extinction to other species.⁷⁹ This view supports the intrinsic value in other creatures to the point of total equality between humans and other creatures. This view does not recognise the uniqueness in humanity, specially that humanity has a unique social responsibility for other creatures. Therefore, if the unique moral component of human responsibility is discounted, then it gives way to a problem in going forward with social justice causes for the ecological movement. In other words, if humanity is not given the unique status of being morally responsible for other creatures, humanity loses its agency in helping other creatures. Therefore, if one subscribes to this perspective, the imperative that humanity does not lose its agency in being held responsible for other creatures needs to be emphasized.⁸⁰

The third perspective is Kinship with Creation, and this perspective is based on the biblical notion that there is one God who continually creates all the diverse things that exist, delighting in their goodness, and embracing them in covenantal love (Gen1:31, Gen 9:12-16). In the Christian tradition, this idea is expressed in the spirituality of Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology. Francis saw God's creatures as interconnected in one family. Theologically, Edwards proposes that this kinship model brings into play the image of God in the human (Genesis 2:15), the personal. It involves humans as persons, personally connecting with other creatures and respecting and loving them in all their differences.⁸¹ This perspective does not make other creatures into human persons but allows for engagement with other creatures as they are. This kinship model offers a mutuality component, where humans become more relational to other creatures without domination over the other, nor discounting human uniqueness, but rather focusing on a relational bond. Building on Franciscan tradition, mutuality should be a central norm for Christian environmental ethics. Human beings are radically relational and should use that in forming a reciprocal and loving relationship with other creatures before a relational God.⁸² Ultimately, this mode of theology is God-centered (theocentric) because it invites Christians to view other creatures as God views them, with the love and intrinsic value that God offers to humanity and all creatures.⁸³

The last perspective is the cultivation and caring of creation approach. Interestingly, Edwards prefers this language over stewardship, because stewardship might inflate the status of humans as being the sole intermediators between God and creation. Where cultivating creation

⁷⁷ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 21.

⁷⁸ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 21.

⁷⁹ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 21.

⁸⁰ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 22.

⁸¹ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 23-24.

⁸² Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 24.

⁸³ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 25.

allows room for the rest of creation to hold their own value and relationship with God in themselves.⁸⁴ This approach involves the creativity of humans, not just with farming, but with cooking, building, painting, teaching and basically any function where humans create the cultivation perspective can be applied.⁸⁵ It is easy to think of cultivating creation within a limited lens. For instance, cultivating creation is an approach a farmer should consider for their crops, but the truth is that cultivating creation can be used by all and in any human capacity where there is a component of creativity, which is why this perspective is remarkably interesting.

2.5 Conclusive Thoughts on Edwards

According to Edwards, the ecological crisis cannot be solved by arguments based on reason alone. The process of ecological conversion can be influenced by many different fields of study, but one aspect that is uniquely Christian, is the eucharist. Baptized Christians are called to be like Christ and in this relational perspective the eucharist is a means of being lifted up by God in offering and thanksgiving.⁸⁶ Humans are relational beings, and their purpose is to relate to God and other creatures. In the Eucharist, Christians have a profound source for an authentically ecological ethos and culture. Edwards argues that the practice of the Eucharist offers a sustainable ongoing ecological conversion that may not offer the practical solutions to the climate change crisis but does offer motivation and an authentically ecological ethos.

In summary, Edwards exhibits an ecological theology that focuses on the process of ecological conversion, which essentially is a perspective that looks towards the sustainable betterment of creation. In addition, Edwards advocates for a theocentric relationship with creation that cultivates and cares for creation in a way that allows for value in creatures themselves, but without discounting human creativity in the process. Lastly, Edwards argues that humans are relational beings and through the Eucharist are lifted in thanksgiving to God that allows for a deeper meaningful relationship with God, and therefore with the rest of creation. The climate change crisis will not be solved with reasoned argumentation alone, but with Christians building an authentically ecological ethos that is self-sustaining through the Eucharist.

2.6 Michael S. Northcott and The Three Stances

According to Michael S. Northcott, the Christian response to the climate change crisis has been positioned in three broad stances of ecotheology: humanocentric, theocentric, and ecocentric.⁸⁷ Northcott gives an overview of the literature by examining the positions of Teilhard de Chardin, Francis Schaeffer, Jurgen Moltmann, James Nash, John Cobb, and Jay B. McDaniel.

⁸⁴ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 25.

⁸⁵ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 26.

⁸⁶ Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 100.

⁸⁷ Northcott, Michael S. *The Environment and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), 124.

2.7 Humanocentric Stance

Northcott references Teilhard de Chardin as being a Catholic theologian who champions the first stance, which is the humanocentric ecological theology. Teilhard argues that humanity is the highest form of the evolution of life in the universe and that the unfolding of life is crowned by the emergence of this supremely conscious being.⁸⁸ In addition, Teilhard claims that it is humanity's destiny to turn the universe and nature into a more conscious and humanly beneficent place, and to reorder the natural world. Teilhard called this process self-totalization of human consciousness and through science, technology, and research it will encapsulate the whole world and influence all subsequent life on earth.⁸⁹ Northcott explains that Teilhard is completely aware that humanity is changing the face of the earth and of nature, but he celebrates this as the maximisation of human consciousness over the physical and biological forms of the cosmos.⁹⁰ Undoubtedly, this view came under great criticism, one scholar who strongly disagreed was Francis Schaeffer.

Schaeffer argues that there is no real justification for humans to be able to change the course of evolution and life on the planet. Schaeffer recognises that humans hold a uniqueness because they are made in the image of God, and therefore are personal, like God.⁹¹ However, this distinction does not suggest that humanity use this uniqueness to dominate over other creatures, but to use the covenant sense of dominion, where humans respect other creatures as having value in themselves. Schaeffer argues that Christians are called to redemption from the fallen world, and therefore have a responsibility to heal the world from sin through acts of love and care for one another and the non-human world.⁹² A similar perspective will be looked at later in this chapter by Willis Jenkins.

2.8 Theocentric Stance

The second stance is the theocentric approach to the environment. Northcott refers to Jurgen Moltmann as being the pioneer for this stance because his work in *God in Creation* and *The Spirit of Life* contained theocentric themes. Specifically, Moltmann examines the hermeneutic of God as Spirit. A Spirit that resides in creation and in the world of matter and ecosystems.⁹³ Moltmann clarifies that God is not entirely identified by creation alone, but that through the Trinity, God is related to creation through Son and Spirit and is distinguished from creation as Father.⁹⁴ The Spirit can work through matter and create new possibilities of being, and at the same time is the holistic principle which creates and harmonises the interactions of life forms into a community of life.⁹⁵ This theological perspective is interesting in trying to

⁸⁸ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, Eng. Trans. (London, Collins, 1964), 231.

⁸⁹ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 125.

⁹⁰ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 125.

⁹¹ Schaeffer, Francis with Middleman, Udo, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, new expanded edition, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1992).

⁹² Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 127.

⁹³ Moltmann, Jurgen, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, Eng. Trans. (London: SCM Press, 1985), 98 and, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, Eng. Trans. (London: SCM Press, 1992)

⁹⁴ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 141.

⁹⁵ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 142.

understand how God functions within creation, and also functions separately. However, Northcott critiques Moltmann's perspective as God as Spirit is in all creation. For example, Northcott indicates that if the Spirit is in all creation, then it is also within diseases, like smallpox. As a result, Northcott's critique essentially examines how God could be solely healing through the lens of Moltmann's perspective. Therefore, we are led to another theocentric ecological theology by James Nash.

According to James Nash, in his book *Loving Nature*, the intrinsic value of nature is established by the original and ongoing relationality to the creator God who loves all the objects of creation.⁹⁶ Nash explains that the gift of creation was not just a gift from God to humanity, but that creation acts as a locus of communion. Therefore, God and humanity commune through creation. This communion is sacred and sacramental, and centrally examines the relationality between God and humanity through love.⁹⁷ In addition, this matter of love becomes tangible and clear when God becomes a body and a person through Christ. Therefore, Nash's position answers Northcott's critique of Moltmann because it indicates that not only is God in all of creation, but God communes with humanity through creation and is guided by love. Nash further illustrates this communion by explaining the belief that God is found in the generosity and grace of divine love, therefore when humans commit loving acts, this reflects that divine love.⁹⁸

When humanity acts within an ecological ethic of love it can lead to many beneficial outcomes for society. For instance, an ecological ethic of love could lead to Christian activism to clean up the environment, and justice for human and non-human life. Nash's understanding of ecological theology is rooted in the centrality of divine love. Like Edwards, Nash identifies this understanding of ecological love and relationality as the theocentric kinship of all creation. Nash explains that in this kinship the moral and relational interdependence of all orders of life in the cosmos are affirmed.⁹⁹ Therefore, this ecological theology proposes that the earth is a sacrament of the divine, and a means of grace.¹⁰⁰

2.9 Ecocentric Stance

The third stance Northcott highlights is the ecocentric ecological theology. Northcott references John Cobb who argues, in his book *Is it Too Late?*, that humanity sees the world in a dualist fashion where there is God and nature, and humanity and nature. Cobb argues that this perspective needs revision because humanity should see themselves as an integral part of nature, based on evolutionary science and not separate from it. Human beings and current life have evolved from previous life, therefore for humans to see themselves as separate is erroneous logic.¹⁰¹ In addition, these evolutionary steps are guided by God the creator, therefore nature and God are connected and not separate. If God is connected to nature, then all things in nature are caused by God, even bad things, like cancer cells. This observation made by Northcott here is

⁹⁶ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 143.

⁹⁷ Nash, James, *Loving Nature: Ecological Integrity and Christian Responsibility* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1992), 99.

⁹⁸ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 143.

⁹⁹ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 144.

¹⁰⁰ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 145.

¹⁰¹ Cobb, John B., *Is it Too Late?: A Theology of Ecology* (Beverly Hills, CA, Bruce, 1972).

like his critique of Moltmann. A scholar that replies to this observation made by Northcott is Jay McDaniel.¹⁰²

McDaniel argues that God creates, guides, and is connected to all creation. However, God also affords a certain amount of independence to his creation.¹⁰³ Therefore, the evolutionary process is inherently creative and spontaneous. The independent matter is from that original chaos energy, that God fashioned the world from in Genesis. As a result, each individual energy event has a possibility of novelty. Therefore, humans have a sense of independence in their decision making, and McDaniel would even argue that humans are co-creators with God. However, Northcott argues that if the world is to be transformed for the better, humanity needs to become co-redeemers.¹⁰⁴ Northcott argues that this sort of theological framework is so far from Christian traditional beliefs that it is even hard to classify it as Christian belief.¹⁰⁵

2.10 Conclusive Thoughts on the Stances

Northcott explains that these three frameworks of ecological theologies have their merit and their problems alike, but do not serve a practical enough approach to the current climate change crisis. Therefore, another model must be discussed, and this model looks to the Hebrew Bible for insight. Northcott argues that there are social practices with nature found in the Hebrew Bible that will help cultivate an appropriate ecological theology. Specifically, this ecological theology uses natural law ethics to form an environmental ethic for contemporary political and economic practices. Northcott argues that there are three tendencies for an ecological theology and they are ecocentric, theocentric, and anthrocentric. Northcott outlines how all three have problems as well as merit. However, when dealing with issues like climate change, Northcott argues that a hybrid stance is needed because traditional frameworks are too limited for modern practical application.¹⁰⁶

2.11 The Hebrew Bible and a Hybrid Stance

The Hebrew Bible offers a fundamental interactive account of the relations between the human self, the social order, the natural ecological order, and the dynamic between all of these and the being of God.¹⁰⁷ Northcott explains that this account of understanding for the relationship between, nature, humans, and God offers a significant contrast with modern ethical individualism and subjectivism.¹⁰⁸ According to Northcott, the Hebrews believed that moral values and purposes were enshrined in the nature of created order.¹⁰⁹ In a similar way, the Christian doctrine of natural law consists of the belief in a moral purposiveness and relationality of the cosmos. For example, moral purposiveness can be found in the relation between the human quest for common good and the goodness of created order. In both the Christian tradition

¹⁰² Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 150.

¹⁰³ McDaniel, Jay B., *Of God and Pelicans: A Theology of Reverence of Life* (Louisville, KY, Westminster and John Knox Press, 1989) 19 and 35.

¹⁰⁴ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 151.

¹⁰⁵ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 152.

¹⁰⁶ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 163.

¹⁰⁷ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 164.

¹⁰⁸ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 164.

¹⁰⁹ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 165.

of natural law and the Hebrew concept of created order, the order and goodness of creation is affirmed as reflecting the being of God. Therefore, there is a moral significance relating to the moral purposiveness and good of human life.¹¹⁰

2.12 Creation Myth and Cosmic Covenant

The standard Christian exegesis of the Hebrew Bible interprets the covenant as being mainly between God and humans, while the creation myth can be viewed as the covenant being a means of enabling humanity's dominion over creation. However, Northcott argues against this interpretation of the creation myth narrative, and in contrast defends the stance that the Hebrew Bible depicts humanity as having a primal relationship with creation, but modern western anthropological narratives dilute this view. Furthermore, Northcott explains that the Hebrew Bible's interpretation of the relationship between the God of justice and the goodness of the land is rich in fundamental theological and ecological truth. In addition, this relationship includes the wisdom and justice of human society and their engagement with both God and land. The truth of the creation myth tells us that human life and society are in an entangled bond with the life and community of ecosystems and the biosphere.¹¹¹ Specifically, for the Hebrews, the created order represents a transhistorical and transcultural source of moral and aesthetic value, and of ecological balance and harmony.¹¹²

2.13 The Role of Land

The Hebrew Bible provides a few views that one can connect to ecological theology. One of them is the idea of the land of Israel itself being an important part of the cosmic covenant between humanity and God. The relationship between Yahweh's ownership of and gifting of the land and the calling of the Hebrews is a theme which runs throughout the Torah from the Exodus to the formation of Israel in the wilderness, to the arrangements for land-use in the post-exilic record of the law tradition.¹¹³ For example, the Hebrews understood that the gift of land from Yahweh was an honour and that tending to the land showed an ethic of love towards the Lord. More significantly, the indication of the moral status of the land was a requirement of the Sabbath of the land. The creator rested on the Sabbath from work of creation, therefore humans were given the Sabbath to rest, as well as the land itself rested.¹¹⁴ The laws of the Hebrew indicated that the land needed to rest to recover its strength, not just weekly, but even every seven years the land needed rest. The Sabbath of the land has immense ecological value, particularly for the fragile lands the Hebrews were farming.¹¹⁵ In addition, this framework of giving sabbath to the land is a biblical reference to sustainable farming. Leviticus warned the Hebrews to not over till or overcrop because that would cause erosion and desertification, which

¹¹⁰ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 165.

¹¹¹ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 173.

¹¹² Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 174.

¹¹³ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 187.

¹¹⁴ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 188.

¹¹⁵ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 188.

would lead to the Hebrews exile, but more importantly would disgrace the gift of land that Yahweh entrusted in the Hebrews. (Leviticus 19:10)¹¹⁶

The connection between ancient Hebrews and modern Christians in this context will be discussed in Chapter 3, but for now it is important to note that this type of rest was not just for praise and worship, but for sustainability purposes as well.

Land is a central theme in the Hebrew Bible. Land is one of the most influential characters in the cosmic covenant outlined in Genesis and in the overall created order myth. Land is the source of blessing, the locus of creativity, and the provider of all that makes human life possible and fulfilling.¹¹⁷ In the Hebrew Bible, the land is given to humanity as a gift. Therefore, humans are not given dominion in the sense of absolute rule, but are God's representatives, charged by God to tend to the land, to care for it on behalf of its rightful owner, Yahweh.¹¹⁸ As a result, there is a hierarchy in creation based on this framework because humans are given the position of vice-regent over the land and answer to God. In this sense, the framework is like the concept of natural law proposed by Thomas Aquinas.

2.14 Aquinas and Natural Law

According to Aquinas, the hierarchy of goods is reflected in the natural law ethics, which affirms that the common good of the cosmos is ordered by a rational God ultimately to serve rational creatures. However, this leads to an anthropocentric view of land ethics, where an ecocentric framework would suggest limiting the amount of humans on earth for ecosystems to recover, but this would come at the cost of human lives. There is merit to Aquinas' stance of valuing human life, but it mentions little on valuing non-human life. In contrast, the Hebrew world view looks at the Land as a gift to the whole community of Israel. In addition, the distribution of this land should be just, and this justice expands not only to human creatures, but to non-human creatures as well. Therefore, the Hebrew world view takes into consideration both the lives of humanity and the livelihood of ecosystems and the rest of creation on a whole.¹¹⁹

In addition, the justice system proposed by Aquinas is essentially that everyone deserves their proportion of land, but if a person took more land in excess, that would be considered theft. Therefore, according to Aquinas, land distribution is a core principle of justice. Although, it is unclear if Aquinas would apply this justice to non-human creatures, which is why a hybrid model is needed to the original natural law ethics. Looking at the views of the Hebrews through the lens of natural law ethics enables one to see a framework that recognises that God is rational, that humans are God's representatives, but also that non-human creation has value and therefore, rights to land justice as well.¹²⁰ Therefore, the world view for the Hebrews recognises that the gift of land comes with privileges, duties, and responsibilities. Similarly, Christian tradition affirms that there is a fundamental equality of all persons through natural law ethics.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 188.

¹¹⁷ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 265.

¹¹⁸ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 266.

¹¹⁹ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 267.

¹²⁰ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 268.

¹²¹ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 175.

These two frameworks combined make for a more holistic ecological theology that views land as not just a place, but as a gift that must be shared equally.

2.15 Summary of the Hybrid Stance

Therefore, a concept like the world view for Hebrews that sees land as a gift that must be tended to and shared equally takes a theocentric positioning. In addition, the Hebrew Bible outlines that created order is important in understanding humanity's cosmic covenant. In other words, the Hebrew world view of the created order shows the importance of a relationship between humanity and creation, which shows an ecocentric theological stance. Moreover, Thomas Aquinas' natural law ethics takes an approach that views humanity as rational representatives of God that need to help maintain creation equality and justice. Therefore, if these three positions combine, they can create a holistic ecological theology that can be applied for modern practical issues like climate change.

2.16 Willis Jenkins and The Three Frameworks

Willis Jenkins argues that an ecological theology should consist of ecojustice, Christian stewardship, and creation spirituality. The following paragraphs will elaborate on these three frameworks and explain how together they form a strong ecological theology in relation to the climate change crisis.

2.17 Ecojustice

According to Jenkins, the definition of ecojustice is an ethical framework that extends traditional Christian concepts of respect to address the natural world's vulnerability. Ecojustice is important because it is a framework that organizes Christian environmental ethics around the theological status of creation.¹²² The strategy of ecojustice highlights the moral standing of nature within the Christian experience. Ecojustice informs Christian moral experience by interpreting creation as a gift from God, therefore moral respect for nature is built towards a wider theological narrative.¹²³

Ecojustice enables ecclesial bodies to integrate ecological wholeness with social and economic justice. Jenkins explains that ecojustice is an extension of the ecumenical ethos of just peace that includes making peace with the earth. As a result, the strategy of ecojustice provided a way for Christian churches to recognize nature's value and respond to ecological distress from within existing clerical commitments.¹²⁴ Jenkins explains that ecojustice is a response to God. More specifically, ecojustice focuses on the integrity of nature because creation is a gift from God and the right moral response to this gift would be to treat it responsibly. Therefore, if

¹²² Jenkins, Willis. *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 61.

¹²³ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 61.

¹²⁴ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 63.

Christians are to have a right relationship with God it should begin by having a right relationship with creation.¹²⁵

Ecojustice presents the earth as a moral assignment for humanity from God. As a result, passing this moral assignment requires humanity to look at nature as having integrity. According to Jenkins, humanity should use a framework that focuses on ecological integrity in creation. This type of framework can be used for practical applications. For ecojustice advocates becoming friends with earth restores friendship with God.¹²⁶ The key value here is the emphasis on relationship, which will inevitably lead to sustainable practice.

As previously mentioned, the practical strategy of ecojustice grounds Christian concern for environmental issues in creation's theological status.¹²⁷ For example, the Christian strategy develops nature's value based on its relationship with God. In calling nature sacred and beloved by God, nature becomes understood as holding its own integrity. As a result, nature's intrinsic value makes environmental problems morally significant and politically urgent.¹²⁸ This framework serves as a valuable tool to accelerate the process of churches responding to climate change issues in a substantial way. Therefore, ecojustice can develop strong practical responses for the protection of nature and restoration of right relations.¹²⁹

In various ways, ecojustice theologians craft a strong response based on highlighting God's relation to creation. For example, if God shows Christians through their embodied experience that God values difference, otherness, and integrity, then Christians must work to protect the vulnerable and diverse body of creation.¹³⁰ In addition, if God fulfills creation eschatologically, then that means that creation already bears intrinsic value and must be preserved. Also, if God's self-revelation comes to humanity through creation, then humans must attend to nature's voices. These types of responses help bolster sustainable action taken by church bodies because the intrinsic value of nature is based on God's relationship with creation. Therefore, if humanity is to respond in an ethical way, then humanity must protect, preserve, and restore nature to a state that God intended.¹³¹

2.18 Covenant Ecojustice

Nature holds value because it is created by God and God treats nature well because he thinks nature is good. Therefore, God affirms the value of nature through his treatment of it. Nature has both intrinsic value and divinely endowed value. Therefore, creation's value presents moral obligations for Christian moral agency.¹³² Christian moral agency is seen in how ecojustice searches for an overarching pattern of grace. Ecojustice describes how nature's integrity molds human ethics according to the way God embraces all creation. Although, another perspective resides in the biblical concept of covenant. For a covenant relationship focuses on a rightly ordered relationship that can be between people, God, and even creation itself. Therefore,

¹²⁵ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 64.

¹²⁶ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 64.

¹²⁷ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 64.

¹²⁸ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 64.

¹²⁹ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 64.

¹³⁰ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 65.

¹³¹ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 65.

¹³² Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 65.

a covenant ecojustice refers to Hebraic laws that recognise natural orders while grounding them in God's relational intimacy with God's people. Therefore, covenant forms of ecojustice provide a Hebraic emphasis in land ethic, in which human responses to creation's integrity are formed within an encompassing and relational environment.¹³³

Covenant ecojustice accounts link integrity of creation with both social flourishing and divine order. As a result, this dual goal framework portrays a more relational social order where the pursuit of goods for humanity are rich, but at the same time the conservation of nature is still affirmed.¹³⁴ Covenant ecojustice can appeal to stewardship practices and does not risk dominionistic anthropological tendencies. This decrease in risk is because the land ethic is a result of God's command and therefore qualifies human responsibility.¹³⁵ An interactive model of covenant ecojustice can include the relations between the human self, social order, ecological order, and God. As a result, when justice conforms to this interactive model the love of God, life, and all life's diversity becomes intricately connected to justice.¹³⁶ When Christians recognise the sanctity of nature by applying intrinsic value to it, this creates a covenantal bond between humanity, God, and nature, which pushes humans morally to pursue their own ventures, while respecting the integrity of nature. In respecting that integrity, based on God's love for nature, humans are benefiting from grace divinely endowed on them because of this covenantal relationship for ecojustice.

2.19 Christian Stewardship

Jenkins focuses on a second strategy, which is Christian stewardship. Christian stewardship frames environmental issues around faithful response to God's invitation and command.¹³⁷ According to Jenkins, the biblical theme of stewardship gives concern for environmental problems that include obligatory service to God the Creator. This theme shows that God entrusted to humans measured responsibilities for creation. Specifically, this framework looks to how God invites humanity into relationship through the process of stewardship. Therefore, in this model, stewardship is a call to care for the earth within a general divine call to faithful relationship with God. Different to ecojustice, the background mechanic is not sanctification of nature, but redemption for humanity towards God through stewardship.¹³⁸ Therefore, this strategy focuses heavily on faithful practices on how to inhabit God's creation through this special relationship between God and humans.¹³⁹

Christian stewardship configures the moral significance of nature within God's command for humans to follow. For example, Christian stewardship establishes and evaluates environmental responsibilities from God's establishment and formation of human responsibilities on earth.¹⁴⁰ The climate change crisis can be seen by some Christians as a call to repentance for sins, therefore stewardship can be understood as a redemptive framework. As a result,

¹³³ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 69.

¹³⁴ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 69.

¹³⁵ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 69.

¹³⁶ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 69.

¹³⁷ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 77.

¹³⁸ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 77.

¹³⁹ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 77.

¹⁴⁰ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 78.

stewardship becomes not only a way for the church to become a part of environmental issues, such as climate change, but as a means of adding to the fundamental Christian experience.¹⁴¹ Christian stewardship contributes greatly to the Christian experience because it locates environmental problems within the pattern of redemption and outlines the practical application of environmental ethics in a new way.¹⁴²

2.20 Defining Dominion

An issue that arises from Christian stewardship is its potential to warp into anthropocentric dominion over creation. For instance, even if the intent of Christian stewards is good, it can be subject to corruption because humanity can act as local governors while God acts as a distant monarch. However, the solution to this problem is explicitly defining what is meant by dominion. If, for example, Christian stewards were to define dominion as dominance over creation, then the framework of dominion has changed. However, if dominion is defined as caring for creation under the guidance of God, then the framework changes significantly.

Jenkins argues, that in the case of Christian stewardship, dominion is shaped by respect for nature and intimacy with God. More specifically, Genesis pairs dominion with an array of action verbs oriented toward intrinsic goods of creation, and in anticipation of the work of Christ. Moreover, the story of Noah emphasizes in a dramatic sense the preservation of life in the Old Testament. In addition, the parables of Jesus frequent the use of a steward character, therefore, for Jenkins, there is a connection between the Old Testament creation mandates and the New Testament ethics of discipleship. As a result, creation care within the Gospels' invitation further characterize stewardship by the general shape of a biblically formed life. Theologically speaking one could rehabilitate dominion as being a biblical witness to the earth and seeing that stewardship explicitly expressed through the person of Jesus.¹⁴³ Therefore, dominion is understood as the incarnate way God cares for the world, through the ways God's redemptive care claims human response through Gospel invitations and New Testament discipleship. In addition, the keeping and cultivation of the earth become fundamental practices of faith, which is responsive to how God acts towards creation in Christ.¹⁴⁴ However, now that dominion has been defined as a term of faithful stewardship towards the earth within a redemptive framework toward God, the concern now focuses on free will and freedom for humanity.

2.21 Grace and God

Jenkins argues that Christian stewardship is not fueled by fear from God, nor is it motivated by pure obligation and responsibility towards God. In contrast, Jenkins claims that Christian stewardship is an act of grace, because humanity acts responsibly towards creation as a form of thankfulness for God acting in a caring fashion for humanity.¹⁴⁵ One could argue that this strategy is an exchange of care. God cares for humanity, therefore humanity cares for creation as a form of grace for God's providence. Therefore, environmental responsibilities

¹⁴¹ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 80.

¹⁴² Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 80.

¹⁴³ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 81.

¹⁴⁴ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 81.

¹⁴⁵ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 81.

matter for Christian moral experience with respect to God's giving and forgiving, that is, the grace of providence, and the grace of redemption.¹⁴⁶

Jenkins emphasizes that the strategy of Christian stewardship is intricately linked to the concept of grace. Everything comes from God as a gift; therefore, it should be administered faithfully on God's behalf. More precisely, Christian stewards must remember that the earth is the Lord's and was gifted to humanity within the economy of God's giving. Stewards are given this responsibility to manage creation, but because Christians desire to mirror God in a redemptive framework, they are prescribed the way to manage creation through the example of Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁷ Jenkins argues that the redemptive action of Jesus Christ illuminates the significance of environmental problems, like the climate change crisis, and determines the character of Christian stewardship.

Moreover, the deputyship assigned to humans may place stewards in the role of ancient Israel's sacral kings but does so through the lens of Jesus. Therefore, the covenantal role for human governors to mediate shalom (God's fulfilling peace) derives from the way Jesus brings peace to creation. For example, Christ perfects priestly and kingly vocations by fulfilling the covenant, reconciling creation to God, and opening a way for the faithful to participate in God's redemptive work. As a result, the strategy of Christian stewardship underlines that there can be no confession of Christ without care for creation, and therefore environmental stewardship, is first and finally Christian discipleship.¹⁴⁸

2.22 Creation Spirituality

The third and final strategy for Jenkins is creation spirituality. The strategy of creation spirituality aims to frame environmental problems, like the climate change crisis within theological anthropology, with emphasis on personhood. The previous two strategies of ecojustice and Christian stewardship looked at the integrity of the environment and the role of faithful stewardship respectively, and creation spirituality aims to highlight the radical relation of personhood and environment. In other words, the strategy of creation spirituality looks to focus less on the individual parts of ecological theology, and more on the relationship between those parts. More specifically, this strategy wants to capture the importance of how personhood relates to the environment and vice versa in order to illuminate divine participation and cosmic significance of personal communion.¹⁴⁹

Jenkins argues that the root of environmental problems lies in personhood. More specifically, personhood is a concept that enables humanity to feel separate from the rest of creation. However, humanity and creation are both part of a greater cosmology. Jenkins argues that the creation story and story of Jesus both hold the same sacred concept, which is that human persons are a living cosmology. There can be no anthropology without cosmology. In addition, humanity understands itself and the universe by the mode of their communion. The living

¹⁴⁶ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 81.

¹⁴⁷ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 82.

¹⁴⁸ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 82.

¹⁴⁹ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 93.

cosmology is ushered in by Jesus, the Cosmic Christ that helps humanity understand their interrelatedness with the rest of creation.¹⁵⁰

Moreover, creativity is the heart of creation spirituality. It presents a connection between human uniqueness and the rest of creation by highlighting that self-realization is the mode of their communion. Jenkins argues that personal creativity bears the promise of universal healing, and that the Cosmic Christ binds all creation together through his own healing creativity.

Human creativity realizes the meaning of the cosmos, manifests the work of the Cosmic Christ within human person themselves, and discovers humanity's responsibility for the universe.¹⁵¹

2.23 Conclusive Thoughts on the Three Frameworks

Jenkins' three strategies are all interesting and well developed. However, I would argue that his third strategy is the weakest because it gives humanity too much power without a monitoring dynamic, which could lead to unjust use of the environment. In addition, I found the ecojustice strategy to be strong because it motivated human persons to help since the environment has integrity, which people often forget in an over-commercialized world. However, stewardship was also strong because it offered people a means of redemption towards God, but without the fear of becoming malicious because the definition of dominion was altered in a way that suggested positive impact for all. Jenkins concludes his book by saying that each of these ecological theologies have their merit, but in the current climate change crisis they might not be as adaptive for practical use. Therefore, he uses examples of people who are living ecological theologies by innovating environmental responses and using new sustainable ecologies of grace in their movements.¹⁵² This understanding of taking a theoretical ecological theology and applying it to a practical and tangible environmental response will be shown in the following chapter.

2.24 Summary

In summary, this chapter has analysed different ecological theologies described by Dennis Edwards, Michael S. Northcott, and Willis Jenkins. Edwards explains that Christians need to go through an ecological conversion that will help guide them towards a theocentric ecological theology. This theocentric ecological theology shows care for creation through kinship by understanding that non-human creation holds integrity. In addition, Northcott explains that there are three positions to ecological theology: theocentric, anthropocentric, and ecocentric. However, they all have faults and shortcomings. As a result, Northcott argues that a hybrid between the three is the most suitable ecological theology for modern application on climate change. This hybrid model looks at how Genesis recounts the created order in a way that gives importance to land distribution in a just and equal way. This distribution is administered by humans who serve as God's representatives in a loving and caring way. Lastly, Jenkins argues that there are three strategies that Christians can take towards their ecological theology which are: ecojustice, Christian stewardship, and creation spirituality. However, Jenkins argues that

¹⁵⁰ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 97.

¹⁵¹ Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 98.

¹⁵² Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 241.

these perspectives need revision for practical use and that an ecological theology can be formed in innovating the use of grace. The next chapter will show a prime example of this type of innovation in grace by looking at the different ways the Anglican Church of Canada can promote sustainability in the face of climate change.

Chapter 3: The Church and Creation

3.1 Introduction

The Anglican Church of Canada is a large network of churches that span from east coast to west coast. As outlined in the introduction, the Anglican Church of Canada refers to the generalized population of Anglican denominational church parishes in Canada. Chapter 2 outlined different ecological theologies that the Anglican Church of Canada could implement in response to climate change. This chapter will explain who the Anglican Church of Canada is and what are practical ecological hermeneutics they can use towards sustainability. More specifically, the following chapter will investigate Michael S. Northcott's concept of "fruitful resistance" and Tom Driver's view on the benefits of ritual. It will also consider Gordon D. Kaufman's constructive theological method with the help of Nathanel L. Inglis and Jerome Paul Soneson. Also explored will be, Wendell Berry's concept of "atonement with creation" with the views of Brent D. Laytham and Harold K. Bush. Lastly, the chapter will end with identifying a suggestion that the Anglican Church of Canada join with the Green Churches Network to expediate sustainable work.

3.2 The Anglican Church of Canada

The Anglican Church of Canada has a rich history. It has its roots in the Church of England, which separated from the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century. Influenced by the Protestant Reformation, the new English church simplified rituals and introduced the *Book of Common Prayer* (1549), which enabled services in English instead of Latin. At the same time, the church preserved certain traditions, including the early church creeds and the succession of bishops from the line of the apostles. Because of this history, Anglicanism is sometimes referred to as "Reformed Catholicism."¹⁵³

Anglicanism travelled abroad with British colonial expansion. In 1578, near present-day Iqaluit, Nunavut, a chaplain celebrated the Eucharist as a member of Martin Frobisher's Arctic expedition. This was the first Anglican Eucharist in what is now Canada, but it was not until the 18th and 19th centuries that Anglicanism truly took hold, as military chaplains, Loyalists, and British immigrants fanned out and settled across the growing colony. Missionaries arrived as well, endeavouring to meet the spiritual needs of settlers and to evangelize Indigenous Peoples.¹⁵⁴

Gradually the Canadian church carved out its own identity. In 1787, Charles Inglis of Nova Scotia became the first bishop in British North America.¹⁵⁵ In the 1840s the first new dioceses were established in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Newfoundland. These overseas expansions of the Church of England were a product of the Colonial Bishopric Fund. Two of the first bishops in North America were Edward Field and John Medley. According to Phillip Carrington, both were men of strong character, learning, and devotion. In addition, they were missionaries and church builders. John Medley was consecrated on May 4th, 1845, and began his episcopate in New Brunswick by laying the foundation-stone for the

¹⁵³ The Anglican Church of Canada, *About Us*, accessed July 30, 2021, <https://www.anglican.ca/about/>.

¹⁵⁴ The Anglican Church of Canada, *About Us*, accessed July 30, 2021, <https://www.anglican.ca/about/>.

¹⁵⁵ The Anglican Church of Canada, *About Us*, accessed July 30, 2021, <https://www.anglican.ca/about/>.

cathedral of Fredericton on June 4th, 1845.¹⁵⁶ This was the first Anglican cathedral in Canada and is a proudly claimed landmark today by local New Brunswickers. More dioceses cohered as the population grew, and in 1893, the dioceses created the national body of General Synod. In 1955, the church changed its name from “the Church of England in the Dominion of Canada” to “the Anglican Church of Canada.”¹⁵⁷

Today the Anglican Church of Canada is an independent, self-governing church in communion with the other 44 churches of the worldwide Anglican Communion. There are around 1,700 Anglican churches in Canada and over 500,000 members across 30 different dioceses and each of those are led by a Bishop. The church, like Canada, has become culturally diverse. On any given Sunday, the tradition of common prayer is expressed across Canada in many languages, including Inuktitut, French, Spanish, and Cree.¹⁵⁸

The national church office is known as General Synod, The Primate, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, is the national pastoral leader and works from the General Synod office in Toronto, Ontario. The national office is divided into departments, and their work is guided by volunteer Anglicans through committees and councils. The Primate is Chief Executive Officer of General Synod. General Synod is also the name for the national meeting of Canadian Anglicans, held every three years. Between these meetings the national church is governed by a smaller Council of General Synod that meets twice a year.¹⁵⁹

According to the official records of the Anglican Church of Canada, the belief system in place for this religious organization is as follows. As a partner in the worldwide Anglican Communion and in the universal Church, they proclaim and celebrate the gospel of Jesus Christ in worship and action. They value the heritage of biblical faith, reason, liturgy, tradition, bishops and synods, and the rich variety of their life in community. They acknowledge that God is calling them to greater diversity of membership, wider participation in ministry and leadership, better stewardship in God’s creation and a stronger resolve in challenging attitudes and structures that cause injustice. Guided by the Holy Spirit, they commit themselves to respond to this call-in love and service and to fully live the life of Christ.¹⁶⁰ Now that the history, infrastructure, and beliefs of the Anglican Church of Canada have been confirmed, it is easier to view the following ecological hermeneutics through the Anglican theological lens.

3.3 Michael S. Northcott

According to Northcott, a major problem with modern society is the disconnect humans have with the natural order. For example, artificial lights in offices and workplaces, frozen and air-flown food, air-conditioning and central heating causes disconnect in humanity from natural processes of time, season, and place. Therefore, Northcott argues that churches have an important part in re-establishing the connection between natural processes and humanity. Northcott demonstrates that churches can be vehicles for exerting ecological values through

¹⁵⁶ Carrington, Phillip, *The Anglican Church in Canada*, (Toronto, Collins, 1963), 101-103.

¹⁵⁷ The Anglican Church of Canada, *About Us*, accessed July 30, 2021, <https://www.anglican.ca/about/>.

¹⁵⁸ The Anglican Church of Canada, *About Us*, accessed July 30, 2021, <https://www.anglican.ca/about/>.

¹⁵⁹ The Anglican Church of Canada, *About Us*, accessed July 30, 2021, <https://www.anglican.ca/about/>.

¹⁶⁰ The Anglican Church of Canada, *About Us*, accessed July 30, 2021, <https://www.anglican.ca/about/>.

theological methods such as: rituals, mobilised care, land audits, and fruitful resistance. These four methods would help the Anglican Church of Canada respond to the negative impacts of climate change by promoting a sustainable ethos for ecology on a whole.

Worship and rituals create an opportunity for ecological renewal in churches. For example, the liturgical year reflects the cycles of the earth through seasons and in worship humanity gets to reconnect to these natural cycles. In doing this sort of worship humanity becomes less alienated from natural processes of earth, and as a result becomes more familiar with creation.¹⁶¹

Tom Driver, a theologian and peace activist, argues that ritual is one of the features of human behavior, which is shared with non-human animals.¹⁶² Rituals connect us to the social world and to our environment and enable us to develop many motor and linguistic functions without which we could not live as adults, nor engage with other adults.¹⁶³ In addition, Driver suggests that the biophysical connection between nature and culture, which are constructed and learnt through ritual are an essential part of ecological consciousness. Therefore, if ritual becomes a fleeting part of our culture and family meals become replaced with watching television, then a crucial part of ecological consciousness becomes at risk of disappearing. Ritual begins to dissipate and giving grace over God's creation starts to vanish and the link between religious belief and environmental problems becomes less clear. Northcott is showing that when one reads scripture, they are not only interpreting a divine teaching, but they are partaking in the ritual of reading scripture, and that ritual helps build their culture and worldview.

Prayer is a type of ritual. For example, a prayer attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, *The Canticle of the Creatures* is a type of ritual that focuses the worship on creation. This prayer uses operative words like "sustains and governs" which illustrates the importance of not only humanity's relationship with God, but humanity's relationship with creation, in a very real ecological sense, humanity needs the earth to be sustained more than the earth needs humanity.¹⁶⁴ Northcott identifies that Christian worship since the Reformation, perhaps especially since the Industrial Revolution, has mostly rejected the Franciscan way. Ritual has lost its traditional connection to place and land, time and seasons, and instead focuses primarily on the minds and intuitions of individual participants.¹⁶⁵

Fortunately, contemporary liturgists, like Episcopalian priest Scott McCarthy, have created rituals that are forms of thanksgiving for water, minerals, food, and animals. These types of rituals do two things, they give recollection to the kinship humanity has with creation and

¹⁶¹ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 321.

¹⁶² Driver, Tom, *The Magic of Ritual: Our Need for Liberating Rites that Transform Our Lives and Our Communities* (San Francisco, Harper Collins, 1991), 19.

¹⁶³ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 321.

¹⁶⁴ Saint Francis of Assisi, *The Canticle of the Creatures*. From *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, Vol.1, The Saint*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap., J.A. Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv., William J. Short, OFM (New York: New City Press, 1999), 113-114.

¹⁶⁵ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 321.

enacts the Christian vision of the incarnate God who becomes one with creation to restore order.¹⁶⁶

Another theological method that Northcott describes is that parish churches can become places of true care for the earth in a mobilised fashion. For example, the neighborhood church could act as a focus for people in that neighborhood to reclaim patterns of housing, employment, and production that are more conducive to an ecologically balanced environment, especially in the heart of cities.¹⁶⁷

In addition, churches could subscribe to land audits that would help educate the congregation and the church leaders with remarkable knowledge. This information would help to repair ecological integrity in degraded areas, to challenge polluting and destructive industrial and agricultural practices, and to promote better environmental practice amongst local farms and firms.¹⁶⁸

Northcott argues that churches are places where the divine story of salvation and hope for human life and the cosmos is declared and experienced in worship. In worship, Christians give hope in a redeeming God, who embodied life through Jesus Christ and died in sacrifice for the life of the cosmos and gave way for the Spirit of Life to take effect in creation. The Spirit of life brooded on the face of primeval waters but continues to urge the creation at every level and realises the goods of harmony and reciprocity of cooperation and creativity, of community and diversity, which is found in both human and non-human communities.¹⁶⁹

3.4 Fruitful Resistance

Northcott's understanding that "ecological justice" is critical in how Christians perform rituals and liturgy is linked to how Christians should read the Bible. Essentially, Northcott's hermeneutic is a stance that empowers this "ecological justice" within scripture. However, how does one formulate such an empowering position? According to Northcott, the answer is "fruitful resistance".¹⁷⁰

"Fruitful resistance" is the product of community effort towards the development of a spirituality and mentality that helps the Christian reader navigate through the industrial web of ambiguity. Essentially, "fruitful resistance" is an awareness that Christians should work together to develop society for the better, especially during post-modern times where conglomerates operate on all social levels and within almost all realms of our lives (i.e. online shopping, online communities, social media, and mass consumerism). Northcott stresses that "fruitful resistance" cannot be developed by a single individual participant; instead, a community must engender it.

Northcott emphasizes that Christian communities must combat mass consumerism and industrial technological processes; by simply being humans and expressing care and love for their neighbors. Directing the minds and morals of a Christian people towards heaven and not the material world is a movement towards the good. In these practices, Christian communities can seek to sustain these goods and virtues, which characterize the flourishing of persons-in-relation,

¹⁶⁶ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 322.

¹⁶⁷ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 322.

¹⁶⁸ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 323.

¹⁶⁹ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 324.

¹⁷⁰ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 324.

and which enable them to resist the currents of materialism and individualism, which both threaten to undermine human community and the relationality of human life to the non-human world.¹⁷¹

Furthermore, Christian communities are also called to remember the universality of the church and of Christ's work, and the globality of our modern way of life. We cannot wish this globality away, but we can challenge the harmful effects it has on the poor of the world, on the degraded environments, and the unreasonable rates of consumption of resources by Northern Europe and North America. Northcott implores Christians everywhere that "fruitful resistance" must be developed by communities in order to employ "ecological justice" in not just how we interpret scripture, but in how we apply scriptural teachings towards protecting creation from harm.¹⁷²

Interestingly, Northcott writes that in Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* this understanding of "ecological justice" is being demonstrated. For example, Pope Francis writes that a suitable human response to climate change in protection of "our common home" is to establish new moral duties for rich people to restrain their consumption to preserve law-like functions and stability of ecosystems and of the earth's climate.¹⁷³ For Francis, how humans treat the nonhuman world, including indirectly through their consumption behaviors, is indicative of their moral virtue and the moral and spiritual quality of their relationships with God and other persons.

Not surprisingly, Pope Francis refers to St. Francis of Assisi who said: "Praised be you my Lord with all your creatures" indicating that one should contemplate each creature in the entirety of God's plan and this will enable us to grasp the deep truth that ecological science teaches that everything is connected; And these connections cannot be ignored, otherwise we will observe the limits to our sustainable use of nature. Clearly, the hermeneutic of Northcott is like that of Pope Francis', which adds support for the concept of "ecological justice" not only in the world, but in the teachings of Christ in scripture.¹⁷⁴

Ultimately, Northcott argues that church parishes need to develop worship, liturgies and educational media that enables people to live and thrive in ecological ambiguity and simultaneously develop a spirituality and mentality of fruitful resistance. Fruitful resistance is the fostering of central and determinative practices of living by which the goods of human flourishing and the goods of the non-human world are sustained and encouraged against their threatened subversion by technological processes.¹⁷⁵ This ecological hermeneutic should be shared for change to be established, therefore a vehicle for sharing this information is needed.

¹⁷¹Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 325.

¹⁷²Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 326.

¹⁷³Northcott, Michael S., *Planetary Moral Economy and Creaturely Redemption in Laudato Si*, (Theological Studies, December 2016) 77, no.4, 887.

¹⁷⁴ Armstrong, Regis J. and Brady, Ignatius C.(eds.), *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (London: SPCK, 1982), 38-39.

¹⁷⁵ Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, 324.

3.5 Ownership, Management, and Community

One could argue that church parishes are important in developing a place for ecological theology to thrive in the face of climate change for one reason, community. Community offers a vehicle for ecological hermeneutics to be shared and built upon. Community is an especially important concept that is often overlooked when examining ecological theology and climate change. People often demand the science or refer to scripture, but both of these sources understand community at their core, whether a scientific body or religious one. A community creates a paradigm, and a paradigm creates viewpoints of study.

According to Nathanael L. Inglis, the language people use, and the stories people tell potentially widen or narrow our moral imaginations. Inglis refers to the old guard of ecological conversation, Lynn White Jr., who made a point that is still topical today “what people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them”.¹⁷⁶ Inglis explains that human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about one’s nature and destiny; how we relate to the world and live in it are essential, but ultimately constrained by our worldviews. Inglis understands that White is pushing theologians to creatively reimagine humanity’s relationship with the rest of creation. In response, Inglis highlights three major Christian metaphors used in conversation on ecological theology in reference to humanity’s place in the world: ownership, management, and community.¹⁷⁷

The first metaphor Inglis discusses is ownership, a concept used to refer to Genesis 1, where the idea of subduing and having dominion over the earth was present. A forefather of the scientific method, Francis Bacon, championed this understanding of ownership. However, Inglis identifies that few modern theologians would agree with this understanding. For example, in Pope Francis’ recent encyclical on Christian responsibility for creation, he problematizes theologies of human ownership over creation. Pope Francis states, “The Christian tradition has never recognized the right to private property as absolute or inviolable and has stressed the social purpose of all forms of private property”.¹⁷⁸ Inglis explains that Pope Francis is saying that possession of property should be understood to be provisional and contingent on its use for the common good of the larger human community, future generations, and most importantly, the well-being of creation.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, when one looks at the network of the Anglican Church of Canada and observes how much property is actually owned, one could begin to reframe how this property should be used in reference to ecological theology. For instance, current land owned by the Anglican Church of Canada could be converted to nature preserves to sustain and encourage neighboring biodiversity, in addition, tree planting could be done for their carbon capturing capabilities.

¹⁷⁶ Inglis, Nathanael L., *Creation and Community: The Roots of an Anabaptist Environmental Ethic*, (Brethren Life and Thought, Fall 2017), 62, no.2, 1.

¹⁷⁷ Inglis, *Creation and Community*, 1.

¹⁷⁸ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si: Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home*, (Vatican, Vatican Press, 2015), 93-103.

¹⁷⁹ Inglis, *Creation and Community*, 2.

Inglis realizes that modern theologians are adopting this understanding and emphasizing care for creation and good stewardship, which leads us to management. Management, also known as stewardship, is a popular stance on how humanity should treat the earth. However, Inglis points out that in a social and economic context shaped by globalization and consumerism even people who care about the environment continue to live as if the planet can be owned, used, and disposed of according to human interest.¹⁸⁰ Inglis explains that this occurs because at the heart of management, is anthropocentrism. Therefore, humans and human values are prioritized over all other considerations. This is a concerning issue because it is easy for this to spread into how the Anglican Church of Canada is managed, even if prioritizing human benefit seems to be inherently good, it can come at the costs of not prioritizing non-human life, which could negatively impact ecological systems in nature.

A solution to this inherent self-interest from within the metaphor of management is community. For example, humans rely on trees to breathe, now the question lies on who needs whom more? Ecological community envisions humanity as a part of a larger, interdependent family or community of creation.¹⁸¹ However, people may read the Bible through the lenses of ownership, management, or community, and possibly all three. In any case, the point Inglis is making is that we ought to try and be aware of our own interpretations. We must be able to identify our understandings to question and reimagine our theologies. Inglis argues that the best means of articulating this awareness is through a constructive theological method.¹⁸²

3.6 Gordon D. Kaufman

In the early days of his career, Gordon D. Kaufman suggested that “the objective of systematic theology is not simply to repeat traditional views but rather to grasp and think through the central claims of Christian faith afresh, and one should expect this to produce novel and even offensive interpretations.”¹⁸³ Inglis highlights that although Kaufman shifted from identifying as a systematic theologian to identifying as a constructive theologian, at the core his understanding that theology should be novel, creative, and suggestive never changed. Inglis argues that Kaufman’s constructive method offers a viable option for theologians who want to interpret faith claims on a comprehensive scale while also engaging in cultural developments like pluralism, individualism, and contextualism.¹⁸⁴

Kaufman wrestled with the idea of how theology should be done for his entire life. In his best-known work, *In Face of Mystery*, Kaufman identifies theology’s task as primarily constructive. The starting point for Kaufman, understands that the reality of God is ultimately a mystery, and that all our concepts of God are constructs of the human imagination. Inglis

¹⁸⁰ Inglis, *Creation and Community*, 3.

¹⁸¹ Inglis, *Creation and Community*, 4.

¹⁸² Inglis, *Creation and Community*, 5.

¹⁸³ Inglis, Nathanael L., *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman’s Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, (The Conrad Grebel Review, Spring 2016), 34, no.2, 131.

¹⁸⁴ Inglis, *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman’s Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, 132.

identifies that this methodology is based on two key philosophical commitments: historicism and pragmatism.¹⁸⁵

According to Kaufman, there are no absolute or universal truths. All theological beliefs and practices are shaped by the time and place of their construction, and should be critically reconsidered in light of new developments.¹⁸⁶ The understanding that God-talk has always been historically conditioned and thus relative to its social context was breaking new ground for Kaufman's thought, it was reframing his description of the task of theology from systematic to constructive.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, the focus of his method shifts from loyalty to the Christian tradition to loyalty to ultimate mystery, which Christians call God.¹⁸⁸

Interestingly, the historicism aspect of Kaufman's method essentially stresses that every theological claim is provisional and historically contextual. However, Inglis explains that this is not meant to dissuade people from doing theology, but on the contrary, it is to help liberate Christian theologians to creatively engage with the Christian tradition considering their own situational experiences. As a result, the Anglican Church of Canada can use this conceptualization to engage with climate change in a theologically significant way.¹⁸⁹

The pragmatism component to Kaufman's method goes beyond a mere reference back to scripture or tradition, this component must adhere equal parts to the judgment call of whether a theological claim encourages ethically responsible ways of life or not. Therefore, when assessing the validity of a theological claim, the most important question for Kaufman is not how it came to be known, but whether it empowers people to act more humanely in the world.¹⁹⁰ As a result, Kaufman judges theological claims with the understanding that it must be practical, not just theoretical. Inglis explains that the main goal to Kaufman's method is ultimately a practical interest in finding an orientation for life in face of the problems and evils of modernity (i.e. climate change).¹⁹¹ In addition, his method promotes a hope that the central Christian symbols may provide us with such an orientation.

Moreover, Inglis uses the example of the Mennonite tradition, showcasing the understanding found in Menno Simons teachings, where a Christian can understand the entire Bible as authoritative, but understand Jesus' teachings as a practical component. As a result, an individual adopts a theological disposition that prioritizes discipleship or a christomorphic praxis. Therefore, unlike a christocentric faith that focuses on correct doctrines and ideologies, a christomorphic faith focuses on the ethical responsibility that Christians have towards others,

¹⁸⁵ Inglis, *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, 132.

¹⁸⁶ Inglis, *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, 132.

¹⁸⁷ Inglis, *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, 133.

¹⁸⁸ Inglis, *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, 133.

¹⁸⁹ Inglis, *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, 133.

¹⁹⁰ Inglis, *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, 134.

¹⁹¹ Inglis, *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, 134.

through practices that conform one's life to the model of Jesus.¹⁹² In adopting this understanding, one begins to realize that there is a clear possibility for the use of a constructive theological method when approaching the modern problem of climate change. In addition, this christomorphic praxis can be applied in the Anglican Church of Canada, without having to do away with the Christocentric faith. Rather, it adds to that dimension.

As discussed earlier, there is an anthropomorphic problem in reading the Bible. The understanding of management over the earth results in humans prioritizing human values. A possible solution to this was ecological community, and that solution is perfectly valid, but when it comes to theological claims for practical application one must configure that component of community to orient towards the christomorphic praxis. As a result, in the words of Walter Klassen "the scriptures could only be properly interpreted in the 'gathered disciple-community'".¹⁹³ Therefore, not only does Kaufman's constructive theological method exhibit an understanding that theology must accomplish the task of encouraging people to act humanely, like in discipleship, but that this should be done within a community. It is no surprise that Kaufman acquired a master's degree in sociology prior to his doctorate in theology because his societal awareness within his method shines through frequently.

Inglis explains that this ideal of the church as a hermeneutical community continues to serve as a model for many Mennonites who think biblical interpretation should be intrinsically intertwined with a commitment to living as the body of Christ. In this way the community of disciples forms a locus of authority that ideally avoids both authoritarian interpretation and individualistic imagination. However, one must keep in mind that ideals, almost always, are just that, but at least the orientation for encouraging humane action is there. Similarly, this hermeneutical community can be established with Anglican church parishes throughout Canada and does not need to substitute any other traditions but can serve simply as an addition to an already rich liturgy.

Inglis recognizes that Kaufman's constructive method is a timely contribution to theological method on a whole. This is because, societies governed by the authority of traditions are increasingly evolving due to pluralism, individualism, and an increasing awareness that truth claims are subjective and can be questioned¹⁹⁴. For example, if the tradition of modern politics and science is to deny the existence of climate change, then one must be given the tools to question this truth claim. For the world to become more ecologically sound, the Christian world must adopt a more theologically sound method, as a result, the Christian world must become a proper community of disciples who act humanely to others and the world around them.

3.7 Kaufman's Theological Method

Now that the relationship between climate change and Kaufman's theological constructive method has been established, we can now delve deeper into understanding

¹⁹² Inglis, *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, 137.

¹⁹³ Inglis, *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, 138.

¹⁹⁴ Inglis, *The Importance of Gordon Kaufman's Constructive Theological Method for Contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite Theology*, 144.

Kaufman's theological method on a whole. Kaufman's most significant contribution and legacy rests in his theological method.¹⁹⁵ Jerome Paul Soneson explains that Kaufman was an innovator in constructing his theological method because it offers the allowance for theologians to embrace and directly address unique problems of modernity that have been so challenging to Christian faith over the past centuries. Possible problems Kaufman's method can help address are: historical relativism, religious pluralism, and new knowledge in social and natural sciences.¹⁹⁶ One of the most surprising aspects about Kaufman's method is his own willingness to accept that his method is tentative and always open to criticism and begs that future theologians recognize its historical and theological relativity.¹⁹⁷ It was important to Kaufman that no theology was bound to blindly following any one absolute authority, but that everyone should question and revise with the purpose of living life responsibly.

Soneson begins this venture into Kaufman's method by first illustrating the reasoning behind why Kaufman did theology in the first place. According to Soneson, Kaufman is not primarily interested in developing speculative metaphysical knowledge about God or the world, even though he did engage in it, but rather Kaufman believes critical reflection to be a practical means of guiding how people live.¹⁹⁸ What truly lies at the core of Kaufman's method is responsible and fulfilling action. In the words of Kaufman "if we are truly to help bring about a more humane and just order in human affairs, then we must think through carefully, in the light of modern knowledge, the questions of who or what we humans are, what sort of world this is in which we find ourselves, and which God must be served."¹⁹⁹ Soneson explains that Kaufman promoted such a method because he felt that humanity was on a path that was increasingly destructive and that it could lead all too easily to the complete obliteration of human existence.²⁰⁰

Soneson refers to Kaufman's earlier work *Theology for a Nuclear Age* (1985), where Kaufman describes a huge error in understanding the methodology in approaching nuclear warfare. Humanity created nuclear missiles, therefore people think that nuclear warfare is a human problem, but Kaufman points out that there is a very real possibility of a nuclear holocaust, where the human project would end abruptly. As a result, the Christian understanding of the "sovereignty of God" comes into play, because the ultimate responsibility for a nuclear disaster is God's. Humanity's understanding then becomes obscure on what they are doing or what they are failing to do²⁰¹. This conceptualization can be applied to a plethora of modern issues, including climate change. Humanity's viewpoint is obscured because they believe that over consumption and global pollution are human problems only, when in fact, if there is an ecological holocaust, that does circle back to the sovereignty of God. This circular formula can only be halted if humanity, more specifically, the Anglican Church of Canada adopts Kaufman's

¹⁹⁵ Soneson, Jerome Paul, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman: Theological Method and Its Pragmatic Norms*, (Zygon, September, 2013), 48, no. 3, 533.

¹⁹⁶ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 534.

¹⁹⁷ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 534.

¹⁹⁸ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 534.

¹⁹⁹ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 535.

²⁰⁰ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 535.

²⁰¹ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 535.

constructive theological method where human purpose and responsibility are constantly reviewed, like in all affairs, the checks and balances must be assessed.

Soneson argues that Kaufman's method developed from Systematic theology to Constructive theology because of his view that theology should be a construction of fundamental religious concepts based upon the idea of humans as cultural and/or bio-historical creatures. Kaufman wants to figure out a means of getting the whole picture that is not only seen in the light of today, but one that will guide human actions; so that we might be better able to live together, in fulfilling ways, regardless of cultural and religious differences.²⁰² This sort of foresight is what is needed when facing climate change, and sustainability must be a priority because it will guide ecological theology forward.

Soneson examines Kaufman's method by understanding what Kaufman means by human nature. Kaufman focuses on human nature to understand anthropological assumptions; to Kaufman, theology is imaginative construction. Therefore, this focus on human nature is centrally linked to how one conducts methodology. For Kaufman, human nature is not a fixed object, but is highly plastic, open to development in many different directions. A failure to recognize diversity in human nature is what leads to discrimination and oppression, what is different, is seen in the same lenses as being wrong. Kaufman's method encourages plurality and plasticity, to conquer modern problems; the human species must set aside their hatred towards difference, and instead embrace new approaches with a positive outlook towards diverse perspectives.²⁰³

According to Soneson, to clearly see the theological significance of this historical character of humans, it is helpful to consider the roles that religion plays in culture. Kaufman explains that religion emerges naturally in the historical development of cultures as ways to provide overall unity, order, meaningfulness, and direction.²⁰⁴ Kaufman explains that religion emerged most probably because human life became complex and needed some overarching orientation, but at the same time no one orientation of the whole is completely adequate. Therefore, Kaufman identifies that the religious effort is an attempt in the human imagination to construct "worldviews" and "conceptual schemes"; to fulfill these fundamental needs for unity and orientation.²⁰⁵ The overall purpose or function is to provide a comprehensive orientation and meaning in the face of mystery, that mystery being God.²⁰⁶

Kaufman argues that truth about the whole, as correspondence to reality, is not directly available. The purpose of theology is not to discover and publish the truth about reality, whatever that might be, but rather to construct a picture of the whole, in the imagination, that provides at least two things: an inclusive unity of understanding, and unity of orientation.²⁰⁷ More specifically, when looking at Christian theology, the subjects of God and Christ are added, but the method remains the same, theologians must examine these two subjects with reflection aimed at bringing even better understanding and orientation to human culture and human life.²⁰⁸ For

²⁰² Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 536.

²⁰³ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 537.

²⁰⁴ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 540.

²⁰⁵ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 540.

²⁰⁶ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 540.

²⁰⁷ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 542.

²⁰⁸ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 542.

Kaufman, it is the living that matters in theology, and living meaningfully and responsibly in this world, with all we know about it, and all our current problems. This is the real purpose behind theology.²⁰⁹ It is through this type of theology that a proper framework in ecological theology should be formed within the Anglican Church of Canada to correctly tackle the problem of climate change.

3.8 Wendell Berry

The idea of community being the basis for a guiding tool towards sustainable action against climate change is not necessarily new. For example, classic authors like Wendell Berry have discussed the topic of community as being a cornerstone in ecological matters. In his book, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, Berry says that we need to look at creation with an approach that is hands on.²¹⁰ Berry argues that humanity is constantly looking for conquests and new frontiers to chart, but once the unknown of geography was mapped out, the next frontier was industrial marketplace²¹¹. Berry underlines this component of human behavior because it is intrinsically attached to creation. If we think of the marketplace as something to conquer, as opposed to something that can serve an ecological community, we will constantly deprioritize creation and this will lead to our demise.

Berry's hermeneutic on creation is divided into two subdivisions "exploitation" and "nurture".²¹² In turning to scripture, one could use Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.". This excerpt is constantly used in debates about how humans should treat the earth and the environment. Berry is arguing that the reader could interpret this passage in two ways. Firstly, the reader could put emphasis on the phrasing "dominion over", which elevates humanity above all other species and can be argued for the exploitation of land and animals. However, the exact same passage could be read with emphasis on the phrasing "in our image, according to our likeness", in this way the reader puts emphasis on being Christ-like, which could be used to argue that the mentioning of all these animals in the passage is evidence that humanity, like Christ, must watch over them in a nurturing fashion. Where one places emphasis can mean all the difference when reading scripture, therefore it is critical that readers of scripture keep in mind this dynamic of exploitation and nurture.

Berry argues that the concept of "work" is vital to the longevity of creation. Interestingly, Berry opens this argument by referring to the words of Confucius "If a man have not order within him, He can not spread order about him..." This quote illustrates the fact that we are the product of our inward selves, like our spirit and vision, as much as we are the products of nature and work. Berry explains that our attitude toward work is in need of revision. In post-modern

²⁰⁹ Soneson, *The Legacy of Gordon Kaufman*, 542.

²¹⁰ Berry, Wendell. *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, (San Francisco, Sierra Club Bks, 1977), 101.

²¹¹ Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 5.

²¹² Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 9.

times, the most rapidly growing industries are industries that promote automatization. This trend underlines the post-modern hermeneutic that “work”, particularly any form of handwork, is beneath human dignity. Berry argues that we may be the first generation of humanity to think we can fully escape this type of work, but Berry reminds us that trying to escape the sweat and sorrow promised in Genesis will leave us forswearing love, excellence, health, and joy.²¹³

Furthermore, if one reads scripture with a renewed attitude towards handwork, an attitude that puts the creative aspect into creation, we can begin to see life breathed back into our environments. For example, Genesis 2:15, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it”; This passage puts handwork at the forefront in fulfilling God’s purpose for us. We are not slaves to God, we are not forced to do this, and based on our current environmental crisis, we certainly haven’t been doing this. However, Berry’s point is not to show a slaver and slave dynamic, but more of a landlord and caretaker dynamic, in which humanity is given the opportunity to cultivate creation in God’s image and likeness and through this “work” we will harvest the reward of love, excellence, health, and joy.²¹⁴

Berry shows that revising our post-modern view of “handwork” is essential in reading scripture. For example, when looking at all of the instances of “handwork” in the Bible, it is not simply an indication that ancient times contained more labour-intensive fields; It is God intentionally using “handwork” as a symbolic sign of God’s intended theological purpose for us. Berry would argue “to till it and keep it” speaks volumes past simply farming but is indicative of cultivating life and sustaining that life in the many beautiful forms life takes.

Berry has argued that one should read scripture with a hermeneutic that constantly keeps in check the dynamic of exploitation and nurture, as well as, the importance of literal and metaphorical “handwork”, but what is even more intrinsic than those concepts is our attitude towards our own biological existence. What is the purpose or value we assign to our own bodies living in this world? What connections or responsibilities do we maintain between our bodies and the earth? Berry recognizes that these are religious questions, because our bodies are apart of Creation, and they involve us in all the issues of mystery.²¹⁵

However, Berry, being the farmer that he is, recognizes that these are also agricultural questions, because no matter how urban our lives are, our bodies live by farming, we come from the earth and return to it.²¹⁶ As we live, our bodies are moving particles of the earth, joined inextricably to both the soil and to the bodies of other living creatures. Therefore, Berry proposes that it is hardly surprising that there should be profound resemblances in how we treat the earth in comparison to how we treat our own bodies.²¹⁷

In post-modern times we are quick to turn to scientific understandings of the world around us, and this is a beautiful and beneficial privilege that we are afforded thanks to technological advancements, but “biological existence” does not necessarily have to be an exclusively modern construct. For example, in reading Genesis 3:19 “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and

²¹³ Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 15.

²¹⁴ Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 15.

²¹⁵ Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 101.

²¹⁶ Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 101.

²¹⁷ Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 101.

to dust you shall return”, this passage, very clearly, shows what Berry is pointing out via biology. In another sense, one could look at this passage with a concept of “wholeness” with Creation.

To better understand Berry’s concept of “wholeness”, one must understand “health”. Berry argues that “health” is not simply the absence of disease, for the word itself belongs to a family of words such as: heal, whole, wholesome, and holy. Therefore, to reduce “health” down to a medical definition, is to do an injustice, because “health” is much more complex and positive.²¹⁸ Therefore, if “health” is better defined as “wholeness”, one can begin to understand the interdependence of the world. For example, William Blake once said: “Man has no Body distinct from his Soul...”²¹⁹ Berry explains that this quote displays the convergence of health and holiness. In that, all the convergences and dependences of Creation are implied.

Furthermore, our bodies are not distinct from the bodies of other people, for there is a complex codependence both biologically and spiritually. To expand further, Berry argues that our bodies are not even distinct from the bodies of other plants and animals, for we are all involved in cycles of feeding and in the intricate companionship of ecological systems and of the spirit. Our bodies cannot be whole alone. Persons cannot be whole alone. Berry exclaims that in trying to heal the body alone is to collaborate in the destruction of the body. Healing is impossible in loneliness; it is the opposite of loneliness. Therefore, the “cure” to bad health is conviviality.²²⁰

According to Berry, using the hermeneutic of friendship when reading scripture is crucial in saving creation and community. Throughout the Bible stories of friendship shine through (Proverbs 18:24, John 15:13, Proverbs 27:17, etc.) because they are crucial to the Christian journey of creating life and sustaining life. The concept of “atonement” propagates this very idea of befriending the world.²²¹

3.9 Berry’s Atonement

“Atonement” is the oldest metaphor in Berry’s work, dating back over forty years ago in the essay “Discipline and Hope”. Berry believes that we are estranged already; therefore, we need “at-one-ment” with land, one another, and God. As a result, Berry has devised “atonement” into three interrelated dimensions: farming, marriage, and worship. “Atonement” thus represents the correct relationships we should have with parts of a greater whole and is an appropriate harmony with God’s creative purpose. Berry explains that “atonement” in all three dimensions serves as a theological hermeneutic in our reading of scripture, while also being the goal we strive for in relation to Christian creation and community.²²²

Interestingly, the Bible to Berry, is an outdoors book, what he means is, the Bible contains ideas that when confined by walls seem impossible, but when brought outside seem

²¹⁸ Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 107.

²¹⁹ Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 107.

²²⁰ Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 108.

²²¹ Laytham, Brent D., *So as Not to Be Estranged: Creation Spirituality and Wendell Berry*, (The Covenant Quarterly, February, 2008), 66, no.1. 39.

²²² Laytham, *So as Not to Be Estranged*, 40.

natural. Moreover, many of the stories in the New Testament take place in outdoor settings, again emphasizing the outdoors component to the Bible. As mentioned earlier, Berry's theological hermeneutic is inseparable from his identity as a farmer, therefore this combination of who he is as an outdoorsman, and how he reads scripture can be defined as a "passionate spirituality".²²³ This understanding of how to read scripture stems from his view on "wholeness", given that all of Creation is an intricate network of codependence, why wouldn't we incorporate who we are into how we read the Bible? This is not an argument saying that any individual person should put their own views into scripture without consequence; on the contrary, people should accept that their hermeneutic is integrated with their identity, which is always in relation to their community and all of creation. Therefore, according to Berry, a reader of the Bible should always be mindful of their own thoughts and how those thoughts and hermeneutics would impede on others in this grand expanse of interdependence.

3.10 The Green Churches Network

The ecological hermeneutics explained by Northcott, Kaufman, and Berry all serve as good approaches that the Anglican Church of Canada could take in their theological mission to support sustainable motions considering climate change. More specifically, the Anglican Church of Canada could join the Green Churches Network to expediate their positive impact on creation.

The Green Churches Network provides practical tools to Christian communities who want to improve their environmentally friendly practices. These tools oriented towards action, education and spirituality enable them to successfully integrate the ministry of Creation care into their day-to-day church life. This charity organization is interdenominational (some say ecumenical) which means it is open to all Christian communities. Faith communities are encouraged to integrate the Creation Care in their prayers and teachings. They can adopt better practices like recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation; participate in campaigns of their choice.²²⁴

3.11 Summary

To summarize this chapter, the Anglican Church of Canada has grown from a small British colonial expansion of the Church of England into an independently run large network of half a million members with around 1,700 churches across Canada. In addition, the three ecological hermeneutics explained by Northcott, Kaufman, and Berry all serve as strong templates for the Anglican Church of Canada to take and apply into their community for sustainability purposes. Lastly, if the Primate, Archbishop Linda Nicholls partnered with the Green Churches Network it would expediate the process of the Anglican Church of Canada moving towards sustainable action that will have far reaching positive effects on the environment of Canada. The connection between climate change in Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada,

²²³ Bush, Harold K., *Wendell Berry, Seeds of Hope, and the Survival of Creation*, (Christianity and Literature), 56, vol.2, 313.

²²⁴ Green Churches, *About Us*, accessed July 30, 2021, <https://greenchurches.ca/about-us/>.

and the different ecological theologies and hermeneutics will be further elaborated on in the conclusion section of this thesis. These three chapters gave the reader the science, the theology, and the practical application of both. The conclusion will summarize these three chapters and will build an outline of a trajectory for study beyond this thesis. In addition, recommendations for future research will be given.

Conclusion:

This thesis was written to explore the question “Is the Anglican Church of Canada theologically responsible for stewarding creation, and if so, how can it mobilize sustainable action? Ultimately, the answer to this question is yes, because according to the ecological theologies explained in Chapter 2, the Anglican Church of Canada must act urgently in the face of climate change.

This thesis covered several points starting with Chapter 1: examining the science behind climate change, its impact, and some possible solutions with the aid of Mark Maslin. Chapter 1 also focussed on looking at climate change in Canada specifically, which highlighted some of the crucial vulnerabilities Canada possesses with the position of Rodney White. In addition, how humanity lives is a factor in climate change and Joseph Romm helped elaborate on that.

In Chapter 2: Ecological Theologies, the different ecological theologies approached by Michael S. Northcott, Willis Jenkins, and Denis Edwards were investigated and discussed. Northcott focused on three different stances, but ultimately saw that a hybrid approach of created order and primeval Hebrew land use were ideal for climate change solutions. Edwards gave focus towards a kinship and care position with creation. Willis provided three different strategies towards ecological theology, but ultimately proposed that more innovative models of grace be tested for practical use.

Lastly, in Chapter 3: The Church and Creation, the Anglican Church of Canada was highlighted, specifically, its history, infrastructure, and beliefs. In addition, Chapter 3 examined practical ecological hermeneutics presented by Michael S. Northcott, Gordon D. Kaufman, and Wendell Berry. Northcott explained the importance of building “fruitful resistance” to help create an ecological ethos within churches. In addition, Kaufman’s constructive theological method helped establish the importance of community in aiding in ecological efforts. Furthermore, Berry explained the importance of humanity using “atonement” as a means of being one with nature. These three ecological hermeneutics would act as practical tools for the Anglican Church of Canada. The point of this thesis was to show why the Anglican Church of Canada was theologically responsible for stewarding creation in a sustainable fashion and offer practical tools to do so, which was clearly accomplished. Especially clear was the direct prognosis given to the Anglican Church of Canada, which offers a suggestion to the Primate, Archbishop Linda Nicholls to join the Green Churches Network to expediate sustainable action within Canada.

It is important to note some of the challenges with this thesis, specifically, resources and limitations. This is largely to do the fact that this is a Master’s thesis, which allocates less time and funding, as opposed to a PhD thesis. In addition, sources used are largely represented by older white male authors, which has its limitations. However, the sources used gave different perspectives from authors from North America, Europe, and Australia. The regions of these authors help give a focused hermeneutic, which is helpful when studying a specific place. In this case, the focus of study is the Anglican Church of Canada and climate change within Canada, therefore the sources used were beneficial in keeping the material focused. However, if this were a PhD thesis, I would have given more space for a wider perspective, especially Indigenous perspectives of theological responsibility towards creation, which is critically important.

Recommendations:

I suggest that future studies look toward theological perspectives that are outside of Christianity, because Wendell Berry and Michael S. Northcott both speak about how nearly all world religions have a similar understanding of tending to the planet, nature, creation, land, and the world. I focused on Christianity because this is my specialty, but other theologians and academics may have different focuses and experience that would aid in their research towards other religions and creation.

In addition, if I had more resources such as time and funding, I would open this thesis to not only to more denominations, but even more countries. Specifically, instead of solely focusing on the Anglican Church of Canada and climate change, this thesis could be expanded towards the Catholic, Orthodox, and multiple Protestant church denominations within North America and even other Commonwealth countries. Moreover, the scope could be even larger, but would probably require mass funding, with multiple researchers involved. This thesis was a sample of what could be studied when looking at church bodies and climate change and the theological relationship between them.

Ultimately, this thesis is a stepping off point for future theological inquiries regarding the church body, climate change, and theological relationships with creation. This topic can be expanded as far as imagination can lend to it. This topic can be spread into religion, politics, environmentalism, sustainability, and much more. It is important to note that this topic should not be ignored because it is vital to the continuation of not only the world of academia, but to the world where all life exists. This thesis has been an effort in giving importance to sustaining life in all fashions and forms. Life is a beautiful gift that must be defended, protected, and encouraged. This theological stance is one means of encouraging life in this world and hopefully it will help others to encourage life to succeed in whatever contexts they find themselves in.

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