



Ecology and Christian Teenagers for Environmental Protection

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ABSTRACT

Background: Ecology plays a crucial role in fostering awareness about the interconnectedness of life and the environment, but the misunderstanding of human-environment relations often leads to ecological imbalance.

Purpose: This study aims to explore how Christian teenagers understand the intersection of ecology and biblical teachings in environmental protection.

Methods: A qualitative approach is employed, combining ecological and biblical perspectives to analyze teenagers' understanding of their responsibility in sustaining environmental balance.

Result: The study finds that adolescents demonstrate a strong commitment to environmental protection, especially when guided by biblical principles, yet face challenges from societal practices that encourage environmental degradation.

Contribution: This research emphasizes the need for continued integration of Christian teachings into environmental education to foster a generation of responsible environmental stewards.

Keywords: teenagers; ecology; biblical; environmentalist

INTRODUCTION

Ecology focuses on discussing the impact and relationship between humans and various living things around them¹. Although it still tends to be counterproductive, the existence of humans as the dominance of the scope and relationships of living things becomes very conspicuous in many ways, some members of society. Especially those who encourage green life, say that if humans did not exist, they would still encourage the process of life on Earth. This is in line with the opinion that if humans were not on earth, they would support a better earth². While humans seem to be able

¹ Jani Pulkki, Jan Varpanen, and John Mullen, "Ecosocial Philosophy of Education: Ecologizing the Opinionated Self," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 40, no. 4 (2021): 347–364.

² Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (Routledge, 2015).

to support the earth not to live on earth, or can act as God who sees the natural surroundings without form or form. However, if we go back to the Bible, it is as if the environment was created as a home and a place for humans to develop and live in society. This is in line with how the Bible teaches humans were created at the end of time.

Moreover, misuse or misunderstanding of the use of conquest is often considered wrong by some people. It assumes that conquest is regarded as the destruction or arbitrary use of the ecological relationship between humans and creatures. It may still be wrong if one looks at how the sustainable relationship between humans and the environment in various human cultures cultivates the land for farming so that they can survive in various contexts³. On the other hand, although humans in some cultures hunt several animals, they are also in a position as animal breeders who are guarded so that they can produce themselves without having to be hunted in the wild. In terms of ecology, cooperatives are considered as a balance or equality between humans and the environment. But equality will not apply if there is no guardian position of the owner and conqueror where humans are trusted by God as guardians.

METHODS

This paper was written and researched using qualitative research since the writer reads and understands the context of teenagers, biblical views and teenagers about how the relationship of those in environmental studies⁴. When viewed from the youth's point of view, they can see ecology as a good balance where in various subjects, especially Christian religious education and also biology, the role of humans as guardians of the world is more emphasized than how they will have a bad impact if they damage the environment⁵. This is the opposite, wherein a context there are forest fires and land widening, which seem to violate the ecological balance. It can be concluded that the principle difference between environmental destruction and protection in ecology can be seen from the teaching and understanding of the age

³ Héctor Ramírez-Cruz, "Ethnolinguistic Vitality in a Creole Ecology: San Andrés and Providencia" (University of Pittsburgh, 2017).

⁴ Deborah K Padgett, *Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research*, vol. 36 (Sage publications, 2016).

⁵ Vincent Barletta et al., *Repetition, Recurrence, Returns: How Cultural Renewal Works* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019).

structure as well as financial interests. If teenagers at this time do not think too much about how to expand forest use land and also make the best use of the environment for personal interests, these youth groups will basically be very enthusiastic to encourage various activities that protect the environment.

DISCUSSION

For urban communities who may not be able to be directly involved in reforestation, animal care, or various types of environmental protection activities, they can carry out various supportive activities such as making posters, filling out surveys, and providing short videos or short writings in which they show their full support to environmental protection. This is similar to the teaching of Christian religious education to teenagers about how humans act as guardians and also carry out God's beliefs. It is hoped that this teaching and learning can be continued until these young people develop later so that strong collaboration is needed between teachers, parents, and also various groups to be able to instil the philosophy and essence of teaching environmental protection where ecological balance is of common interest. However, this will also look difficult if they are faced with how people who are considered adults play a role in environmental destruction ⁶.

Perhaps ideally, these teenagers would not have the same way of thinking about a society that throws out the garbage or destroys the environment so badly. Therefore, these teenagers must be taught critical ecology so that they can have a way, at least to protect the environment starting from themselves. The strategy of teaching people to love the environment is basically a difficult action where environmental care can only be done if the community, especially teenagers and also the people around them have an understanding of how the environment helps the process of life and is sustainable.

Western films as well as Indonesian films that are currently circulating in Indonesia have supported many environmental activities. These films are basically presented for viewing by the general public. However, for the sake of the film industry, it seems as if it was made and devoted to teenagers because at this time the number

⁶ Joseph Edward Hartman, "In His Image: God and Man in the Political Philosophy of Reinhold Niebuhr" (Georgetown University, 2015).

of teenagers and also the productive age community is the most ⁷. And those that are on the verge of extinction. Films that tend to beat, punish or advise environmental destroyers are often the climax of a film. The same thing also happens in the making of youth books and novels, where it is rare for novels and youth books to be dominated by people who have personality traits in crimes that damage the environment.

In general, the people involved in the making of the film are figures who take good care of the environment. Of course, it can be applied more from government support that makes protection rules. However, some countries or companies are more likely to see the importance of human sustainability than maintaining a balance. In this environment, relationships seem to differ from country to country, but the way society and the film and book industry take steps to make spectacle or entertainment for teenagers about how they love the environment and also blame the culprits is a very serious act.

Apart from the influence of the entertainment industry as well as instructional books from parents and teachers in schools, especially Christian teachers, they should be more focused on the relationship between humans and the environment and how it is a mandate given by God the creator to us. If the environment is damaged, it is a human error and negligence in maintaining and carrying out its responsibilities. In some aspects, the community must also be able to provide valid arguments so that the teenagers can understand and also feel helped in maintaining the environment in environmental balance. As with various types of disciplines, understanding and also ecosystem dynamics on ecology depends on the assumptions and interests of adolescents and the people around them ⁸. Unlike teenagers who are directed to trust their parents and close friends, especially those who are educated, they are directed to listen more to the references of researchers. Unfortunately, today's teenagers are in critical thinking, they want to get very simple information with the greatest impact. For many people, confusing results can create a problem that creates directionless confusion that cannot be synchronized with various interests. This will also be a problem for adolescents in their development to adulthood. In some understandings such as Neo Darwinism where humans live from the process of evolution, the

⁷ Nahason Bastin, *Pendidikan Kristen Dan Revolusi Industri 4.0* (Nahason Bastin Publishing, 2022).

⁸ David P M Lam et al., "Indigenous and Local Knowledge in Sustainability Transformations Research: A Literature Review," *Ecology and Society* 25, no. 1 (2020).

existence notes that the development of a materialistic type in this phenomenon hypothesizes that the earth is the mother who gives and produces a product for humans. However, this does not yet answer how the environment can encourage and support human interests, and humans do the opposite.

In some theological understandings, this may look different whereas, in the Book of Genesis, the understanding that humans act as conquerors and owners has no separate relationship to evolution, where humans are the result of the formation of earth processes. Even though it is something that is not the same as theological understanding, this understanding of Neo-Darwin teaching in evolutionary development can still be used as a form of support for how humans must be responsible for their adaptation to the environment⁹. Natural people or those who love the environment, tend to maintain the existence of plants and animals that exist in areas that tend to produce oxygen as well as various types of plants and animals in captivity. In their understanding, creation ecologists only provide a practical theory but cannot directly provide support and encouragement to regulators. Meanwhile, in the view of the Bible which recognizes that the process of designing an earth's existence is interpreted within six days, humans are responsible for controlling the owner and also the guardian of the ecosystem mechanism. The view that recognizes that the creator gives power to humans does not fully give humans the freedom to act as they please.

CONCLUSION

Teenagers are part of a society that has critical thinking skills and high enthusiasm for protecting the earth and its contents. Adult ways of thinking such as choosing to destroy the environment for the benefit of more humans along with other benefits will certainly be able to influence the development and ideals of teenagers in maintaining environmental balance. The understanding of teenagers in protecting the environment along with its balance can be seen from the spectacle they see and the books they read. Today's entertainment, which is specifically for teenagers, has helped inculcate a way of thinking to protect and conserve the environment. In the development of this research, it is hoped that the biblical teaching of protecting the

⁹ Giuseppe Ghini, "Imago Dei Anthropology in Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov," *Church, communication and culture* 2, no. 3 (2017): 206–219.

environment as a form of accountability for God's belief in humans can be continued and passed on by Christian youth in the future.

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