Eco-Justice Mission and the Unity of the Church: A Reflection on the Ecumenical Conciliar Commitment of WCC

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This study discusses the WCC (World Council of Churches) commitment on eco-justice mission. The significance of this study is to re-echo all churches and Christians the fact that justice and love to all creation is already at the heart of Mission. The WCC, based on biblical theological consideration, confesses that eco-justice mission is Triune God’s mission. Thus, the WCC has persistently called the churches in unity to promote and exercise the eco-justice mission to and with all creation. To achieve this purpose, the writer revisit and reflect on various commitments of WCC from the official conciliar statements, assembly reports, conference meetings, website accounts, and others. Four areas need to be revisited in order to get wide-ranging reflection of WCC commitments on eco-justice mission: the historical review, cultural context of changing ecological landscape, theological consideration on Triune God, and eco-mission in practice.

Historically, the organized and global commitment of WCC on mission to all creation has been for more than two decades. Theologically, the biblical foundation has been intensively constructed. Missionally, the global and various enterprises have been well programmed. So the vision and mission for the justice of the earth is not something new. However, the question is: why is the eco-injustice persistently haunting us?
The poverty and oppression are still present directly related to the unjust natural resource distribution, economic international system, and consumerist lifestyle. In fact, within 20 years the changing ‘earth’ landscape is worse; the climate change has affected suffering both to billion of human and non-human. This situation asks the WCC and her members again and again of his missional role as the agent and instrument of God’s mission. By revisiting and reflecting the WCC commitment on eco-mission, this paper is significant to maintain the unity of all churches in promoting and exercising consistently the eco-justice to all creation.

Key Words

Eco-Justice, Creation, Eco-Mission, Ecumenical Commitment, World Council of Churches, Triune Theology, Unity
A Commitment in Unity toward Eco-mission

On the road to the WCC Assembly in Busan (South Korea, October 2013), it would be impressive and pertinent to reflect on the commitment on ecological issues at WCC World Convocation on Justice, Peace, and Integration of Creation (JPIC) in Seoul (South Korea, 1990). The convocation firmly accepted that; *the whole creation is beloved by God* and that Christians are called to resist human exploitation of creation, the extinction of species, consumerism, pollution leading to climate change and policies that lead to the destruction of life. *The earth is the Lord’s* and thus human use of land should allow the earth to replenish its life-giving resources and to provide the necessary space for all its creatures.  

1) The first ecological pilgrimage was from South Korea, and this year, comes back to South Korea. So, it is essential to question will the eco-commitment of Seoul WCC World Convocation influence the Busan WCC Assembly?

It would also be a promising stimulus to recognize the nature of the last assembly of WCC. The Ninth Assembly of WCC in Porto Alegre (Brazil, 2006) clearly states the call for Christian mission to love all creation as the genuine

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demonstration of justice and the feature of unity with Triune God. Reviewing all the experiences in WCC Porto Alegre, Samuel Kobia, General Secretary (2004-2009), points out that one of the next three-fold understandings of ecumenical pilgrimage within the web of relationship is the mission to all creation: to protect the earth and to promote a culture of sustaining all life and demonstrating the care for creation.\(^2\)

In this point, under the theme “\textit{God, in your grace, transform the world},” all church delegations of assembly affirmed by praying to God to hear \textit{the cries of all creation, the cries of the waters, the air, the land and all living things; the cries of all who are exploited, marginalized, abused and victimized, all who disposed and silence.}\(^3\) Are not the commitment and prayer to remain the church of an urgent and relevant mission to care for all creation?

Following the Porto Alegre Assembly, Commission of World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) has prevailed an overwhelming justice mission to all creation through its new affirmation “\textit{Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscape.}” It has been approved as the official mission statement of WCC by Central Committee (Grace – September 2012), and will be presented in 10\(^{th}\) Assembly of WCC in Busan. This new affirmation will be the guidance to unite the churches for God’s mission. Various terms on


this statement properly play the authentic mission of God in which the eco-justice mission is acknowledged. The title of this statement is already in *oikou* dimension; *Together towards Life* is understood “with all-life,” and the changing landscape is closely related to earth terrain.\(^4\) In his assessment to this new affirmation, presenting at the pre-assembly of World Mission (Philippine - March 2012), Metropolitan G. Mor Coorilos, the moderator of CWME, addresses:

The statement is creation-centered. It articulates a missiology that begins with creation. Creation in other words, is at the heart of the missiology that is expounded here. Here mission is to turn to the Triune God in creation. God celebrates creation and life and this celebration is deemed a mission activity of God. In this new statement, creation is not simply deemed an object human concern, but also as an agent of God’s mission where creation becomes a channel of divine grace and blessing. The statement affirms that “mission begins with God’s act of

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\(^4\) WCC - CWME, “Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscape” *WCC International Review of Mission* (Vol. 101-No. 2, November 2012): 250–80. The first CWME statement is Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation (1982). Although it may be the most important ecumenical statement in this period, it was dry of ecological discussion. We cannot find the clear commitment of mission to care for the earth within the seven convictions which are seen as normative for ecumenical missionary practice. There is an anxiousness of the exploitation on natural resources as the context of world mission (*in the preface*) but without more confirmation and application to the rest of the affirmation. World Council of Churches, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation*, (Geneva: WCC Publication, 1983).
The above ecumenical commitment shows the intention of this humble paper which is to revisit and examine the concerns and efforts of WCC on eco-justice mission. The term of WCC involves the committee, commission, and programs that directly deal with mission and ecology such as CWME, Justice - Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation, and Working Group on Care for Climate Change and Justice (CCCJ). The official statements and publications of these bodies, including the accounts of Central Committee and General Secretary to WCC Assembly and the official report of WCC Assembly, will be the main sources. By focusing on account, theology and mission of WCC to all creation, we are called to confess that God’s good creation is intrinsic to Christian missions. Mission to and with all creation should be the spirit of every church. In Sally McFague’s words, one of the basic marks of the church today is its ‘ecological catholicity.’

Considering the prevailing eco-mission commitments of WCC from 1990 Seoul Convocation to at present (Busan), some may ask “why are eco-injustice and global warming


progressively haunting us, while WCC has broadly provided eco-justice statements every seasons, has electronically uploaded the documents and actions every day, has widely celebrated the Water and Earth Day every year? Why? Jacques Matthey reflects to the significance of Sixth Conference of World Mission and Evangelism in Athens that we did not deal sufficiently with how God’s mission has an ecological purpose and we human tend to situate the reconciliation of creation as such humanity’s agenda.\(^7\) This is our inability, Carmen Lansdowne reflects on the theme of the Ninth Assembly, to see how God’s spirit moves in creation.\(^8\) Moreover, some simply say this is the reluctance to reflect the unity of Triune God within the missio ecclesia for the unity of the church and all creation. To respond to these arguments, we extend the significance and importance of this paper as the missiological reflection for the church unity in God’s mission.

**The Historical Review of Eco-mission**

On the ecumenical conciliar perspective, both the WCC World Convocation on JPIC in Seoul (South Korea – 1990) and the Seventh Assembly of WCC under theme “*Come, Holy Spirit – Renew the Whole Creation*” in Canberra (Australia


1991) may become the pillar of the organized and global commitment of WCC for eco-justice mission. The World Convocation on JPIC in Seoul accepted at least two influential affirmations for eco-mission; the whole creation is believed by God and the earth is the Lord’s. The Canberra assembly placed the JPIC as the primary agenda that depicted through various studies and meetings concerning the mission of churches towards the environment. The first section: Giver of Life – Sustain Your Creation, covering the eco-theology, eco-ethic and eco-mission, became the outset of the plenary discussion. Likewise, the other three sections closely compacted to the commitment of JPIC. Thus, at this assembly the JPC Unit was formed.

Actually, WCC and its members have for a long time been struggling with the mission towards all creation. Robert

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9) Dana L. Robert affirms that over past thirty years all major branches of Christianity: Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical, have thought about what it means to extend the saving work of Christ beyond the individual human redemption. The mainline Protestants and Orthodox, through the WCC, embraced the ideas of "justice, peace, and the integrity of creation" as intrinsic to the nature of Christian witness in 1989. Dana L. Robert, “Historical Trends in Missions and Earth Care,” International Bulletin of Missionary Research (Vol. 35-No. 3, July 2012): 123.


Borrong in his assessment to the WCC eco-missions states that the environment surfaced on the ecumenical agenda following a 1961 speech to the WCC assembly in New Delhi by Joseph Sittler, calling for an earthy Christology and a greater emphasis on cosmic redemption. In his paper, entitled “Called to Unity,” he challenged and prodded the church to expand the scope of its Christological vision to include nothing less than all of reality. In the following WCC assembly 1968 in Sweden, the churches’ attention and responsibility towards the environment was reconsidered more seriously. The problem of environmental damage or the ecological crisis cannot be separated from the problems caused by the impact of the progress of science and technology. In the 1970s, the WCC really began to recognize the environmental challenges, following the first UN Conference on Environmental and Development at Stockholm as it has connections between justice, peace, and ecological sustainability.\(^{12)}\)

It is recognized that the Vancouver Assembly in 1983 officially added the third element, *the integrity of creation*, to the World Council’s commitment to justice and peace. However, the previous assembly in Nairobi, 1975 the Australian scientist, Charles Birch, gave an impressive address in which the first time the attention of the wider ecumenical public was drawn to the danger to the creation caused by human behavior. He referred to the connection between

human justice and the replenishing of the earth and between human injustice and the deterioration of the environment.\textsuperscript{13} Thus, in line to that new mission, at the Vancouver Assembly, the WCC encouraged member churches to publicly commit to addressing environmental concerns as part of a common effort to promote JPIC, which became known as the JPIC process. In 1988, the WCC launched its Climate Change Program to promote the transformation of socioeconomic structures and personal lifestyle choices that contribute to global warming.\textsuperscript{14}

Since the formation of JPIC and the influence of Canberra Assembly, the WCC critically and actively engaged in various eco-justice missions. In completion to the local and regional issues on eco-injustice such as land-grabbing, poverty and earth pollution, the WCC has presented the inclusive term “climate change” to encompass the global and most challenging issue on eco-mission to all creation. WCC has published written-study documents and books and uploaded numerous publications through its official website. WCC has also supported and hosted hundred seminars, rallies, workshops, campaigns, trainings, and conferences at the level national, regional and international in all continents. The annual conferences of UN Frame Work on Climate Change (UNFWCC - the first conference is in Kyoto, Japan in 1997) and the UN Intergovernmental Panels on Climate Change (UNIPCC)


\textsuperscript{14} Robert Borrong, \textit{Environmental Ethics and Ecological Theology}, 184.
have significantly influenced the WCC for mission on justice and integrity of creation.\textsuperscript{15)} The WCC regularly addressed the delegates and organized seminars, prayer and worship services accompanying the UN events.

\textbf{The Changing Landscape of Mission}

The WCC has considered the climate change as the most hazardous and frightening changing landscape in our 21\textsuperscript{st} century. There are considerable ecological problems related climate change that has changed and shaped our landscape in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century: rising temperature, falling water tables and water pollution, shrinking cropland per person, shrinking forests, the lost of plant and animal species, population growth, poverty and oppression, the danger of the ozone layer and conflict of natural resources. This situation relates to the metanarrative of the modernization on unlimited development from 17\textsuperscript{th} century up to now. Kyong Ho Han affirms that it is originated from industrial revolution, but in recent years, neo-liberalism is the driving force behind the rapid destruction of environment through unlimited economic completion all over the world. The Korean Government has also strongly developed national industry for last forty years.\textsuperscript{16)}

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As a result, Guillermo Kerber, the coordinator of WCC Climate Change Programme, presents that climate change is already affects all people and creation on the earth.

Climate change and global warming are, indeed, among the most important challenges facing the world today. Populations in different parts of the world – for instance, in the low island atolls of the Pacific, in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa regions, in the Caribbean and in Southeast Asia – are threatened by the consequences of climate change and global warming. Churches in different regions, the ecumenical movement at large and the WCC in particular, have raised their voices to express their concerns and are responding to the effects...In this work, advocacy at the global level, especially at the United Nations, plays a key role.\(^{17}\)

Although WCC has actively participated through various eco-justice missions, some still ask why should the churches as the religious body be involved at the UN Conference on Climate Change? The delegation of WCC and LWF for COPs16 in Cancun states that the core of churches' engagement is to remind us the ethical responsibility and to exercise justice for all creation, especially the vulnerable communities who have contributed the least to global emissions. These include women and children, indigenous

\(^{17}\) Guillermo Kerber, “Caring for Creation and Striving for Climate Justice”: 220.
peoples, poorest communities, people with disabilities and inhabitants of coastal low lying areas. Their survival is at risk, and justice requires that the nations most responsible historically for the adverse ecological conditions should take the greatest responsibility towards the adaptation of these vulnerable communities and nations.\textsuperscript{18}

In 2000, the Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today of CWME depicted the changing landscape by which it called the churches to participate in God’s mission for the fullness of creation life. Mission paradigm for that time was characterized by the rapidly spreading processes of globalization, expressed in the savage and uncontrolled free-market economy and in high technology which reduces the value of the whole of reality to economic and financial categories. In the contexts of poverty and inhuman exploitation this is experienced as a daily struggle for the most elementary basic of life, even for life itself.\textsuperscript{19} Clearly, the relationship of globalization and trade to human development and the environment is a very important cross-cutting issue for sustainability and for attempt to promote just and sustainable communities.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18} WCC and LWC for COPs on Climate Change: http://www.oikoumene.org/en/@@search?SearchableText=Climate+Change+in+Cancun, accessed on May 10, 2013.


Looking back further to the 1991 Canberra Assembly, when the first time the theme of WCC focused on the third person of the Trinity, WCC already shouted out the changing earth that was preoccupied by injustice and exploitation because of greedy lifestyle of humans and their anthropomorphic attitude to other creations. The landscape context for all creation, as Assembly notified, was threatened by the land-grabbing, poverty, injustice, war, deforestation, erosion, species extinction, pollution and more. All creation seems broken, wounded and hurt.\textsuperscript{21}

In the poetic way, Chung Hyun Kyung expresses: “Come. The spirit of earth, air, water, raped, tortured and exploited by human greed for money.\textsuperscript{22}

Thus, the prayer theme: “Come, Holy Spirit – Renew the Whole Creation” is in regard to grow the eco-justice awareness and the attempts to fix the broken planet. The section I: “Giver of Life – Sustain your Creation!” states:

Pursuing justice requires us to learn new ways of paying attention to all creation – the land, water, air, all people, plant life and other living creatures. A new vision will integrate our interdependent ecological, social, economic, political and spiritual needs. We want to say as forcefully as we can that social justice for all people and eco-justice for all creation must

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  \item \textsuperscript{21} Report of Section I “Giver of Life – Sustain Your Creation,” in Michael Kinnamon (ed.), \textit{Sign of the Spirit}, 14, 56.
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go together. Social justice cannot happen apart from a healthy environment, and sustainable and sustaining environment will not come about without greater social justice...This way of viewing justice help us understand the linkage between poverty, powerlessness, social conflict and environmental degradation. 23)

The calling, pray and hope of 1991 Canberra Assembly to renew all creation because of the negative changing landscape that has affected the suffering and injustice to all human and all creation shall today summon us to rediscover the justice theology of God’s mission to all creation. Aram I in Moderator Report at 1998 Harare Assembly re-echoes this calling “the churches shall deepen the understanding of the link between the sustainability of God’s creation and the quest for a just and sustainable society.” 24) This calling draws a parallel to the last COPs in Doha (Qatar – 2012) where WCC certainly states that the WCC believes that the whole earth community deserves to benefit from the bounties of creation. Faith communities are addressing climate change because it is a spiritual and ethical issue of justice, equity, solidarity, sufficiency and sustainability. Climate change is happening! It is imperative to act now without more delays in view of the serious and potentially irreversible impacts of climate change. 25)

The Eco-Justice and Triune Theology of Mission

Reading the plentiful and various documents of WCC linking to the eco-theology, some fundamental features need to be highlighted. First, the construction of eco-theology is a clear biblical basis by emphasizing the mission of Triune God. Second, the eco-theology promotes justice and salvation towards all creation, mankind and all creatures. Third, the Three-in-One model affirms the eco-justice mission to all creation is in other to unite the church, humanity and all creation as the Triune God has united and reconciled all creation.

As can be observed, the Triune God is the primary feature. The Triune God, the 1991 Canberra Assembly formulates, is the source of all life, Holy Spirit manifests God’s energy for life present in all things, and through Jesus Christ all things have been made, and in Him God’s creation comes to its fulfillment and is made new.”

Likewise, the first statement of the new WCC Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism by CWME, which may become the major thought for the whole affirmation, consists of solid Triune theology for eco-mission:

We believe in the Triune God who is the creator, redeemer and sustainer of all life. God created the whole oikoumene

in God’s image and constantly works in the world to affirm and safeguard life. We believe in Jesus Christ, the Life of the world, the incarnation of God’s love for the world (John 3:16). Affirming life in all its fullness is Jesus Christ’s ultimate concern and mission (John 10:10). We believe in God, the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver, who sustains and empowers life and renews the whole creation (Genesis 2:7; John 3:8). A denial of life is a rejection of the God of life. God invites us into the life-giving mission of the Triune God and empowers us to bear witness to the vision of abundant life for all in the new heaven and earth.27

Although today affirmation on WCC Mission and Evangelism emphasizes the Spirit’s role and penetrates the domination of Christ-centeredness, this approach develops the eco-justice theology that this Spirit proceeds from God, the Father, and rests upon Christ, the Son. This comprehension helps to avoid the temptation to separate the presence of God or the Spirit from the Son of God.

God the Father is the Creator. Evaluation on the contemporary eco-theology by theologians such as John Cubb, Paul Santmire, Sally McFague, Granberg-Michaelson, Calvin B. DeWitt and Robert Borrong, WCC is the same line affirming that Triune God as the Creator is the foundation of our justice mission to all creation. God’s mission begins

with the act of creation. Creation’s life and God’s life are entwined.\(^{28}\) As Christians, we believe that the universe comes forth and lives by the love and power of Triune God the Creator. The doctrine of God as the Creator is an important backdrop for all aspects of Christian understanding because it stands at the very opening of the Bible (Gen. 1:1) and become the first confession of the universal creed of churches (Apostolic Creed).

We can consider that the confession of WCC that God as the Creator is the conviction that God the Father is the center of all things. Why? Because the earth is not ours; it belongs to God. So, God is the core of all things. We may be or try to be the measure of all things, but we are not.\(^ {29}\) From this perspective, the justice to all creation is the core of the biblical message; no hierarchy of creatures before the Creator. All forms of life; the sun – stars, elephants – ants, giant trees – grass, rich – poor, men – women, are valuable and depend on God. Since God is the just source of all in Christian faith, all creatures share in a common and just relationship. This is the starting point for a Christian’s responsibility for the earth’s environment.

Where is the place human being in the midst of God’s creation for the eco-justice? When exploring the prayer-

\(^{28}\) This statement emphasizes the creation of God through the \textit{ru’ach} (Gen 1:2) – she is the God in Creation. WCC – CWME, “Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscape,” 4.

\(^{29}\) Steven Bouma-Prediger, \textit{For the Beauty of the Earth} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic), 100-105.
Theme, Giver of Life – Sustain your creation, the Canberra Assembly discovered that the scriptures reveal the essential truth about creation and the relationship to human beings. God is the Creator of all that exists (Gen. 1:1ff) and has declared that all are very good (Gen. 1:31; 1 Tim. 4:4). The scriptures teach that human beings were created by God from the earth, gave them breath of life, and created them in the divine image and likeness. Thus, humanity is both part of the created world and charged to be God’s steward of the created world. Human beings are charged to “keep” the earth and “serve” it. The relationship between the Creator, creation and humanity is often expressed in covenants, beginning with Noah, and renewed with the people of God.30)

Christ is the Savior of all Creation. Justice, peace, and unity of all creation are in and through the second person of Triune God, Jesus Christ. The new affirmation of WCC both issued by Central Committee and CWME is evidently declare that God did not send His only Son for the salvation of humanity alone or give us partial salvation. The whole of creation is a gift from God. It is the will of God that the whole creation, things in heaven and things on earth, should be brought to ultimate unity and communion in Christ and with Christ (Eph 1:10).31) In Christ, “the creation itself will be set

31) WCC – Central Committee, Unity Statement: God’s Creation and Our Unity (EN For Action, No. GEN 8, 2012), 2
free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21).\textsuperscript{32} It is therefore vital to recognize God’s mission in a cosmic sense and to affirm all life, the whole \textit{oikoumene}, as being interconnected in God’s web of life.\textsuperscript{33}

... Christians are called through metanoia to “have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16), to be agents of God’s mission in the world (Matt. 28:19-20, Mark. 16:15), to identify the signs of God’s presence, affirming and promoting them... for the transfiguration of the whole creation. Thus the goal of mission is “a reconciled humanity and renewed creation”, and “the vision of God uniting all things in Christ is driving force of its life and sharing.”\textsuperscript{34}

Therefore, we shall consider what Granberg-Michaelson has written that the New Testament builds on this foundation which integrates creation into the work of God’s redemption. God’s rule as a Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer is ascribed to Jesus Christ in understanding the incarnation (Jn. 1:10-14). The reconciliation achieved through the life, death and resurrection of Christ shall be extended to all creation (Rom.


\textsuperscript{34} WCC – CWME, “Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today 2005,” 66.
The final victory and perfection of the entire creation, as the future world will be very ecological (Isa 11:6-9 and Rev. 21-22), belongs to God in Christ. It is the form, holiness and beauty world in which Christ will hold all things together. Within process of transformation, Leandro Bosch writes, the cosmic world constantly taking place in accord with the divine economy of God; Christ himself being the beginning, the fulfillment and goal of this transformation, i.e. from where it begins, in where it reaches its fulfillment, and towards where it comes to an end.\(^\text{36}\)

**Holy Spirit the Spirit of Life.** This confession affirms the work of God the Creator and Christ the Savior of all creation. The mission of Holy Spirit is to and with all creation. “The same Spirit of God that “swept over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2) in creation, now is believed the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver, who sustains and empowers life and renews the whole creation (Genesis 2:7; John 3:8), being the source of life and the breath of humankind (Genesis 2:7).”\(^\text{37}\) The introduction of sub-theme of Canberra WCC affirms that the clear work of the Spirit is within and with the creation, especially, when God breathed into humans the breath (or spirit) of life.\(^\text{38}\) Moreover,

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jointly with the Father and Son, the Holy Spirit’s action carries forwards the historical divine mission of Triune God in and with all creation: creation, covenant, redemption, salvation and parousia. Calvin’s theology, according to Schreiner, claims that God is reclaiming all of his creation; this activity restores creation to its original purpose, namely, the praise and glory of God. Consecutively, the Holy Spirit is continually and positively working in and with all creation, until the consummation of the universe in the Parousia of Christ. Why? Because the world is filled with the glory of Triune God (Isa. 6:3; Ps.19:1-4; Mark 1:12-13; Eph. 4:6).

As the WCC confesses that Holy Spirit is the healer, reconciler, and transformer all creation, missions in the Spirit warrants a new perspective – a life-centered approach that will cause the earth to flourish and sustain human communities. The Spirit will break the human-centered culture that has separated the human and non-human, and warrants the respect of life and the integrity of all creation. The truth Spirit of God, not every spirit, creates the intrinsic mission of creation to its original purpose “the boundless mystery of the universe, the abundance, beauty and grandeur of creation and of this

planet is to manifest and to proclaim the glory of God.”\(^{41}\) Within this perspective, God’s mission involves non-human creation both as the subject and object of mission. Mankind shall humbly accept that the eco-justice mission is truly biblically authentic when we work together with all creation.

For all creatures, from the firmament even to the center of the earth, could be witnesses and messengers of his glory to all people, drawing them on to seek him, and having found him, to do him service and honor according to the dignity of a Lord so good, so potent, so wise and everlasting... For the little singing birds sang of God, the animals acclaimed him, the elements feared and the mountains resounded with him, the river and springs threw glances toward him, the grasses and the flowers smiled.\(^{42}\)

**The Eco-Justice Mission in Praxis**

We cannot list all the praxis eco-justice mission of WCC offices due to the global ranging and diversity of the missional effort. Geographically, the mission covers all continents and many countries in various levels: international, regional,

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national, and local scales. The WCC tries to work to and with all church denominations, para-churches, other religions, and NGOs with all-ages, all-genders, all-races and all-creatures. WCC has seen that the issues of eco-justice are integrated with the workings of governments and international business and linked to whole dimensional lives; social, culture, politic, education and economy. As the Triune God’s mission prefers to the poor, therefore, the emphasis of eco-justice mission in the WCC circle is to, in and with the poor. As the WCC is the ecumenical international body, so the WCC statements have showed that the primary aim is, providing the unity of divine framework of Triune God, to unite all churches in a common concern, namely, eco-justice mission to all creation. The examples how the WCC office has actively engaged on God’s mission to all creation are:

1. **The Ecumenical Conciliar Statements and Documents (Publications).** The rich statements and documents of WCC on the mission to all creation are already holistic, intensive and extensive. In fact, the various ecumenical conciliar statements, the result of long and complex researches, discussions and seminars, are already mission in nature. Below are some instances of statements and documents on mission to all creation:

   • Address and Report of Climate Change Working Group
Annually to COPs (1997 ? 2012)
- *Accelerated Climate Change: Sign of Peril, Test of Faith* – Central Committee (1994)
- *Justice, Peace and Integration of Creation* – Central Committee (1991)

2. Conferences and Seminars. The WCC assembly itself is the appreciation to the existence and the exercise of justice to all creation. A number of discussion topics, worships and prayers, art performances, and more are the expression of love to all creations. The special attention should be given to the active role of WCC and its offices on Conferences of Climate Change both hosted by United Nation and various organizations. The engagement of WCC is obvious to combat the effect of climate change, to criticize the economic business without inherent ecological morality, and promote the justice on the global life. Another important missional effort of WCC on eco-justice is through the level of regional and national meetings, including the interfaith dialogues. The evidence for study effort has since WCC Canberra been the JPIC process to articulate the theology of creation/life. The unusual meeting ever on this process that represented ecological pilgrimage of WCC was at *sokoni* in

3. High-tech Campaigns. To guide the international community, the WCC uploads the updated and challenging information, study, and statement on eco-justice concerns. The works of Justice, Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation and CCCJ need to be awarded. Another interested effort is the WCC Face book (2011); Time for Creation (from September 1, October 4 every year) uploads the ecological promotions; local, national and international programs, eco-wisdoms, eco-scripture and message, eco-inspiration, eco-advises, eco-prayer and liturgy, eco-photos, eco-book and resources, etc. It informs great eco-events around the world, really inspired and helpful one. It exposes the cry, hope and concern for creation of the churches worldwide. Fifteen year ago (1997), through its official website, the WCC started widely to organize a petition campaign aimed

43) The heart of theology of life program in this meeting was a series of 22 case studies by local groups from around the world. The gathering took the form of sokoni, which is the Swahili word for “market place” where people came to meet others and exchange not only goods but also information and ideas. Seven “hut” sokoni has been built, whose design and structure reflected traditional African cosmology. World Council of Churches, *From Canberra to Harare; An Illustrated Account of the Life of the World Council of Churches 1991-1998* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998), 26.

at encouraging churches in industrialized countries to press their government to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

4. Special Program. Three programs of WCC that have continually and fruitfully promoted and exercised eco-justice mission shall be mentioned: *Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth* (AGAPE), *Decade Overcome Violence* (DOV), and *Working Group on Care for Creation and Climate Justice* (CCCJ). AGAPE has since the 1998 Harare Assembly conducted regional studies and consultations in all continents and one of the peak celebrations of AGAPE was recently held in Bogor (Indonesia ? 2012). DOV have intensively worked towards firmer alliances and more effective links between churches, networks and people movements. DOV has supported and coordinated many common projects, which are aimed at building up structures, instruments and communities non-violent to humanity and all creation.\(^{45}\) CCCJ actively engages through meetings and actions confronting the climate change and striving for climate justice. For example, in 2011 Kingston Meetings, the CCCJ selected an appealing theme: “One Church, One Climate, One Love.”\(^{46}\)

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The Further Missiological Reflection

**Historical Aspect:** It is presumed that WCC and her members positively initiated the mission beyond the human salvation. Dana Robert asks, what has been the historic rule of Christian mission for the earth care? The history of Christian missions provides rich data showing a diversity of missionary attitudes toward traditional nature-based practices. Churches have been for millennium involving in God’s mission to all creation. Considering the Robert’s *Historical Trends Mission and Earth Care* and Santmire’s *Nature Reborn*, in addition to WCC’s statements, the missionary attitudes towards the creation has been (a) *destructive*, power-encounter model, as the nature is the home of evil spirits, (b) *exploitative* as nature, together with colonialists and new free-market system, is material-economic sources, (c) *preservative* as creation is the general revelation of God, yet still anthropomorphic, (d) *just* as all creation are equal before Triune God and will be redeemed in the coming of Christ, (e) *missional* as creation, exceeding salvific, proclaims and presents God’s majesty and love to all creation, and (f) *ecumenical* as human, reflecting the integrity of creation, works together *with* all creation to represent the kingdom of God. Therefore, it is our hope that WCC and her members, as WCC missionary engagement with

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the earth has been diverse and involved broad ecumenical dimension, has been in the *just*, *missional* and *ecumenical* attitudes, in which the churches recognized herself as the partner *with* all creation in God’s mission.

**Cultural Aspect:** It cannot be denied that eco-crisis is an urgent challenge and the most humanity face today. We live in the era of dangerous changing landscape. The unity of creation is threatened; every single problem of changing earth will negatively affect both humanity and creation. When WCC depicts the injustice to humanity, in the same time it expresses the injustice to all creation and vice verse. But, many churches have not seriously responded to this challenge, and it betrays the ecumenical commitment that the member churches of WCC have made since the 1991 Canberra Assembly. That is why, in the midst of intensive and extensive efforts of WCC, the missional impacts are questioned? The earth is fatally and continually damaged, the poverty and injustice presents everywhere, while human beings still lives in consumerist and hedonistic culture. Therefore, in some circles it has continually been popular to blame Christian culture for the environmental danger\textsuperscript{48} for they honor the Creator in word and worship, but destroy God’s work by consumerist and abusive deed.\textsuperscript{49} The critique lingers us to work more humbly and seriously in other


to improve the care for this broken earth. Be optimist to renew our cultural conversion and in the same time, we always ask God of Life to lead us into justice and unity with all creation. Within cultural endeavor, for example, the churches continually promote and sustain the eco-cultures of high-tech use and energy consumption in order to slow down the hazardous process of global warming (as many church buildings maintain the culture of lavish energy consumption); develop the new manner of banquets (as Christian table fellowship is often over-consumptive which is opposite to the condition of the poor) in order to overcome the dangerous exploitation of food sources; and envision green transportation (as many pastors drive cars with high-oil burning) to reduce the air pollution and save earth-energy.

**Theological Aspect:** The assessment on eco-justice theology has showed the Triune creation-centered theology and its significant consequence to the justice approach for eco-mission. This will also help the church to challenge anthropomorphism-based theology that characterizes, McFague warns, much of the Judeo-Christian tradition that has often fed a sensibility insensitive to our proper place in the universe."\(^{50}\) However, WCC needs to re-articulate a clear understanding of some theological convictions. For instance, the confession of WCC that Christ is the cosmic Savior, whom, through his death, resurrection and *parousia*, all creations are reconciled and redeemed, has a theological

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and missional problem. How do we know the participations of non-human creation in God’s cosmic salvation? Since, borrowing the question of Jae-Bubm Hwang in his assessment on a new confession of faith of PCK, it is impossible to talk about God’s saving works in a positive sense, since nature cannot be described as participating them consciously.  

**Practical Aspect:** It can be seen that the rich statements, documents and actions of WCC on the eco-justice to all creation give us the positive impression that the missional efforts are already comprehensive. However, there is certainly a discontinuity of the commitment to the level of local churches. The church delegations and leaders do not communicate well this ecumenical commitment to their local churches. For example, my local church (Kalimantan Evangelical Church) in Indonesia that has been for decades becomes the member of WCC, but it recently starts the commitment to care for the earth. While the eco-problems surrounding the church have been very obvious and massive; the water poisoned, the hill arid, the land flood, the animal extinct, the indigenous poor, and others. In consequence, for many parties the WCC’s missional efforts seem to be the central concepts rather than concrete local reality of life. The statements and documents are imperfect for the deficiency in ecumenical action at

grassroots as the cutting edge of the churches. The ecumenical progress and program shall be occurred more at the grassroots than at international and regional level. Therefore, the WCC needs to work harder to integrate the WCC statement and programs to the grassroots level appropriately so that these various and rich missiological documents will be evident. Nevertheless, WCC has already brought the very authentic mission to and with all creation as the missio Dei of Triune God. The works of WCC shall consistently inspire and characterize the self-mission of eco-justice according to our context. Likewise, every overseas missionary enterprise of churches “go to all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15) shall constantly consider the ecological landscape.
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