

# Ecotheology and Analysis of Christian Education in Overcoming Ecological Problems

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## Abstract

Various environmental problems have become a central focus recently and are expected to increase in the coming years. God's command to Adam and Eve to fill and dominate the earth was not intended to exploit natural resources. As stated in Genesis 1:28,31; 2:15, one of God's purposes for creating humans is to inhabit, rule, and maintain the universe as a sustainable place to live. The method used in this study is a qualitative method with a review of literature on ecotheology and analysis of Christian Religious Education in overcoming ecological problems. The basis for understanding environmental theology (ecotheology) is the awareness that the environmental crisis is not only a secular problem, but also a serious religious problem, because it stems from religious misunderstandings about life. Through environmental theology, a review is carried out on religious understandings in society, especially regarding the position of humans and their responsibilities in relation to the nature that has been inhabited. The environment is a very important subject to pay attention to and of course it must get special attention within the learning and application of Christian Religious Education.

**Keywords:** *Theology, Ecology, Ecotheology, Environment, Christian Education.*



## A. INTRODUCTION

A new approach to theological study of the environment (ecotheology) was born from the reality of a damaged environment. Meanwhile, throughout the history of the church, systematic and biblical theological studies paid little attention to the environment or at least tended to do theology by emphasizing the special relationship between humans and God (Robert, 2019). This 'anthropocentric' study is centered on the theme of *imago Dei* which is interpreted as the superiority of humans because they are blessed with a mind (*anima rationalis*) to rule over other creations. The environment is not considered important as a theological subject, it is only conveyed without in-depth explanation, but only interpreted through the interpretation of creation texts (Robert, 2019).

Entering the 21st century, various environmental problems have occupied an important position and are expected to increase. Global warming, greenhouse effect, depletion of the ozone layer, environmental degradation, nuclear pollution, loss of green space, and extinction of several species of plants and animals are the main phenomena of today's ecology (Nurasyah, 2022). These natural phenomena are important things to study and be assessed seriously within theological perspective. Discussions about the relationship between theology and ecology are increasingly receiving attention from various perspectives, not only in the Christian community, but also in various religious communities around the world.

For some people the term religion is always used to refer to a series of religious ceremonies, such as worship and celebration of holidays; in which this also happens within the Christian communities and the church. The study of creation in relation to nature is rarely discussed in the church, instead the church often debates doctrines such as messiahism, ecclesiology, dogma and so on, even though the study of creation and the presence of God's kingdom is important for the growth of Christian faith. God's ultimate goal is to establish His kingdom over all creation (David, 2015). With the close connection between creation and the presence of God's kingdom on earth, it is necessary for Christianity to intensely through the church convey themes related to nature and the environment, so that through it the faith of God's people grows so that the presence of God's kingdom is real in the lives of mankind.

God commanded Adam and Eve to participate directly in the preservation of the environment (Earth) where they live. This shows that God does not want man to use his destructive nature to satisfy his desires. God's command to Adam and Eve to fill and dominate the earth was not intended to blindly exploit nature's contents. As stated in Genesis 1:28,31; 2:15, God's purpose in creating humans is to dominate; inhabit; Fulfill; maintaining the sustainability of the universe as a sustainable habitat (Kalis, 2019). Furthermore, Stefanus stated that when God gave a message to humans to master His creation, it meant that God legalized the exploitation of natural resources by humans to meet their needs, but should not ignore the preservation of nature. He entrusts humans to manage nature so that it can be used for human life and welfare, but once the results are obtained, humans must also be responsible for preserving nature (Kalis, 2019).

Therefore, through this article the author wants to explain that there is a need for Christian Religious Education with an environmental perspective, so that as people who believe and have Christian faith, they can also contribute in dealing with the environmental crisis.

## **B. METHOD**

The research method used is library research, which is research that utilizes library resources to obtain research data (Mestika, 2004). In this study, the author used a literature study by conducting library research, through books, articles, web, and other library sources related to eco-theological themes and analysis of Christian religious education in overcoming ecological problems.

## **C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Ecotheology is part of Christian social ethics. This science explores the Christian understanding of the universe and creation, especially the responsibility of Christians to the environment, and is often called "environmental theology" (Yunus, 2019). In religious studies, ecology enters the central concept as a collective movement of religious intellectuals, which invites humans to be responsible for caring for nature and maintaining its balance by developing interpretations in theological works. This is shown to make people aware, especially Christians, that the ecological crisis can

bring suffering and threats to humans throughout the world (Aritonang, 2018). Having human action as a form of responsibility in protecting and caring for nature will have a good impact on the environment by maintaining a balance in the ecosystem, and Christians should understand that doing so is a form of responsibility and obedience to God.

The basis for understanding ecotheology is the awareness that the environmental crisis is not only a secular problem, but also a serious religious problem, because it arises from religious misunderstandings about life. Through environmental theology, the understanding of religion in society is reviewed, especially regarding the position and responsibility of humans towards nature which they have inhabited so far. Two entities, namely humans and nature, are inseparable, and there is no hierarchy between the two (Hasiholan, 2020). A reconstruction of understanding is needed for Christians that the environmental crisis is not the burden of the government and environmentalists alone, but is a shared responsibility of mankind and for this it is necessary to provide a correct understanding through religious life about responsibility for the environment.

Celia Deane-Drummond argues that Eco-theology seeks to clarify the theological foundations of the right relationship between God, mankind, and the universe. Many approaches to eco-theology aim to restore our understanding of our place on earth by reminding us that the earth is our common home and that earth history and humankind are one (Caliea, 2008). The relationship between God, humans, and nature in relation to eco-theology is that humans are responsible to God in managing and preserving the environment, because the earth given by God is a place for all creatures as a common home.

Wilkinson saw that there were several environmental accusations leveled against Christianity, including; (1) The patriarchal creator God is also transcendent (meaning separate from what He created); (2) Humans were created in the image and likeness of God (an illustration that human status above other creations of God has unlimited power; (3) Giving 'power' to humans means allowing them to do whatever they want with creation; (4) The doctrine of the 'fall of nature,' by looking at natural processes (including death) a thing that is basically evil; (5) The doctrine of salvation which only promises humans eternal life, as a result of which all other creations become a means for the salvation of humanity human beings; (6) A historical view that contributes to the idea of destructive progress; (7) A short time scale that hinders an appreciation of evolution as well as of ecology; (8) Encouraging technology and science through the desacralization of creation, through belief in its intelligence, and also through confirmation of the appropriateness of human power over it (Loren, 2011). Wilkinson's opinion above is in accordance with what was stated by Lynn White who stated that Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion in the world and bears a heavy burden of blame for various environmental problems (Lynn, 1967).

## 1. The Biblical Foundation of Ecotheology

The Bible clearly shows the duties and responsibilities of humans involved in cultivating the land (Leviticus 25:2-4), "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the Lord. For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards (NIV).'" Israel became the first nation to receive the text of the Book of Leviticus, which explained that God had determined the Israelites to be His holy possession, and was given a mandate by God as a blessing to other nations on this earth by means of God teaching the Israelites to manage the land allotted to them. Not sowing the fields in the seventh year to provide an opportunity for the fields to restore soil fertility with the availability of nutrients for the next crop.

In the book of Genesis 25:2-4, when God handed over the land to the Israelites to be cultivated, God also gave instructions on how to manage the land as a responsibility as administrator. Yewangoe explained that the process of handing over the land of Canaan to the Israelites was a process of maturing for the people, and that the handing over of the land was not only given to Israel with a lifetime land deed, but also as a means of maturing Israel as a nation called by GOD to be a blessing to all nations (Yewangoe, 2017). An invitation to bring blessings to all nations is a sacred mission that must also be seen in the context of an ecological crisis that seeks to address the issue of environmental destruction.

The work of redemption, namely the reconciliation of man with God through Christ, is actually not limited to the reconciliation between God and man, but is the work of God's reconciliation which includes the entire created order, including the universe. Yewangoe said, "God's redemption is not only for humans, but also for the universe" (Yewangoe, 1983). God's act of salvation for all creatures must have a theological relationship with the church. Theological relationships not only encourage the church to reach out to humanity that seems anthropocentric, but the church must become an agent of peace on a planet threatened by overexploitation.

In the book of Genesis, the story of creation tells us that the universe is an environment where humans can live and receive God's attention. Therefore, the impression one gets from the creation story in Genesis 1 and 2 is a friendly impression in which humans were created to be able to live in harmony with the rest of God's creation in the universe. The fall of humans into sin in Genesis 3, made the relationship between humans and nature unfriendly. A friendly relationship before humans fell into sin is now an interaction that dominates, exploits, and also manipulates for the benefit of humans. The result of the fall of humans to sin is nature as an object that is in human power (Yewangoe, 1983). The fall of humans into sin not only damages human relations with God, but sin also has an impact on human actions towards nature, where humans in fulfilling their needs exploit natural resources as objects in their power. Exploitation of natural resources is carried out arbitrarily and does not

consider destructive influences, so that environmental damage occurs as a result of an imbalance in the natural ecosystem.

So, when God redeems fallen mankind because of sin, and at the same time God Himself reconciles Himself to everything, including the universe. Tarigan argues that Christ's Redemption includes the restoration of the relationship of the universe (cosmos) to God as Creator. This can be witnessed through Paul's statement in Romans 8:19-22 (Tarigan, 2019). This means that the work of Christ is not only the reconciliation between man and God, but also the reconciliation between the universe and God, restoring nature to its original state in friendly and harmonious relations. This reveals that the Christian doctrine of salvation is not only anthropocentric, but holistic. When people live in God and follow the Bible as His rule, God's reason leads them to manage and use nature wisely.

## 2. Perspectives on Ecology

The problem of the ecological crisis is clearly very different from non-ecological problems, the issue of the ecological crisis cannot be simply ignored because it involves life in nature and affects all life on this earth. Human passivity and activity in responding to the topic of this ecological crisis will determine human views and actions towards this issue which has long been a debate. The issue of the ecological crisis has signaled three minds, namely firstly materialists, secondly pantheists, and thirdly Christian thinkers who represent theism.

First, *the View of the Materialists*; materialists argue that human ability to control environmental problems can be achieved through education. This means that materialist groups emphasize that global learning can save the planet and people (Gaisler, 2015). Knowledge gained through education is one of the tools so that humans have broad insights and knowledge so that they can think critically to respond to and deal with problems that occur, including issues regarding the ecological crisis. Education will make humans consider every action taken and always think about the impact that will occur.

With respect to ecology, materialists hold the view that ecological ethics emphasizes understanding in non-anthropocentric safety, this view considers a moral issue that goes far beyond humans (Jefri & Remi, 2020). As Jonathan Hughes emphasized, "Moral concern ought to be extended to non-sentient parts of nature" (Jonathan, 2000). Moral actions that must be considered by humans must touch not only those related to human morality, but also must be broader on non-anthropocentric matters. Therefore, moral action must also show the active involvement of humans to maintain and preserve nature, which is part of a form of moral responsibility for the surrounding environment. This is a human effort in creating harmony between creation (Gina & Katu, 2020). The materialist view of seeing safety globally is a human responsibility in protecting and protecting the environment is a moral responsibility that must be carried out actively.

One of the materialist figures, Karl Marx, saw that it was human duty as a caretaker of nature for the future of life, and explicitly rejected the concept of human

ownership of land. According to him, humans are not absolute owners of nature, earth or land, but humans are only residents where they are obliged to leave the land for the next generation in good condition and well maintained (Bottomore, 2001).

Second, *the View of the Pantheists*; Pantheism is often referred to as a cosmocentric view, because the focus of this view is the cosmos, namely the world, the earth, or the natural environment and this understanding recognizes, accepts, and respects the cosmos. Pantheistic comes from the word 'pan' which means all, and 'theos' which means God. So, the meaning of pantheism is an understanding that equates God with the forces and laws of the universe (Kristiantoro, 2022). Furthermore, Geisler put forward the view of pantheism that nature is an organism that embodies God, nature, and life (Gisler, 2001).

Therefore, according to this view, man is a partner of God and nature. Humans are seen as allies of nature, humans are not the masters of nature, on the contrary humans are nature's servants, who have the responsibility to create harmonious conditions and work together with nature. Ecological ethics from a pantheistic point of view shows that ecological ethics is not human-centered, but rather lays down rules for humans about how they serve other creatures. Understanding of ecological ethics influences social behavior, to protect nature from damage and create good conditions. Because nature is a manifestation of God, then humans are obliged to maintain and care for and respect nature, thus humans cannot be arbitrary in exploiting nature, on the contrary, humans as servants of nature are obliged to preserve it.

Third, *the View of Christianity*; The Christian view of Ecology comes from a theistic perspective which emphasizes that nature and the world are God's creations. As the psalmist said, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1). Norman Geisler said that there are two important aspects of Christian ecology, namely God's ownership and human responsibility (Gaisler, 2010). Therefore, the theme of ecology in Christianity is closely related to the duties and responsibilities of humans to care for the earth for God and human cooperation with nature to express God's glory. Theologically, we can say that humans and nature are God's creation, property, and also God's temple, and all of that exists in a covenant relationship with God. This means that destroying nature means destroying the treaty relationship. Nature is a gift from God and must be preserved and utilized by humans. Therefore, the Christian view of ecology is that environmental ethics is centered on God, not on humans or nature.

### **3. Originator of Ecotheology**

Environmental damage as a result of developments, especially industrialization in the West, has raised criticism from certain people against the negative role of Christian theology, even the negative role of the Christian Scriptures in environmental damage. The first and foremost criticism came from Lynn White Jr. a citizen of the United States, who is a cultural historian, in his article entitled "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" (1967) in Borrang (2019) argued that Christianity bears a huge burden of blame for the contemporary environmental crisis.

White called the Judeo-Christian Scriptures neglecting the sanctity of nature. Judaism-Christian tradition and theology have interpreted Genesis 1:26-28 in an anthropocentric manner which causes humans to exploit and not take care of nature (White, 1967).

The following criticism comes from a landscape architect named Ian McHarg. In his article entitled "The Place of Nature in the City of Man" which was published in a book edited by Ian G. Barbour titled "Western Man and Environmental Ethics: Attitude toward Nature and Technology", McHarg, among other things, said that Christianity and Judaism had long been concerned with issues of justice and mercy but limited to mercy and justice between humans only (Barbour, 1973). While nature is seen as just a background for human games. This kind of criticism became the trigger for the massive and intensive spread of theological studies on the environment (ecothology) starting in the 1970s but especially in the 1980s in the West (Borrong, 2019).

David Kinsley summarizes three reasons for those who criticize the Bible and the Christian Faith as destroying the environment or at least having a negative attitude towards the environment which causes an ecological crisis or environmental damage. First, the desacralization of nature. It is suspected that the Bible and the Christian Faith rid nature of the elements of gods, spirits and the divine. Second, the Bible and the Christian Faith are highly anthropocentric in that they teach that mankind is the Image of God who is mandated to conquer and rule over nature and every species in it. Third, look at the inferior nature. In general, much of the writings of Christians and especially the themes of Christian theology reduce nature and matter to a low status compared to the divine and the spiritual (Kinsley, 1995).

#### **4. Analysis towards the Christian Religious Education**

Ecopedagogy aims to assist people in building their ecological views through environmental mitigation (Funda, 2012), therefore education must be directed at forming attitudes and behaviors for sustainable community development. The education in question includes religious education in which religious and spiritual values about the environment and the universe are taught continually and continuously. However, environmental education that is more science-oriented does not achieve the capacity to form personality and character, and thus needs to bridge the gaps that arise from different scientific and theological interpretations (Ituma, 2013).

Ituma cites Unitingearthweb's understanding of ecological theology as follows, "a form of constructive theology that focuses on the interrelationships of religion and nature, particularly in the light of environmental concerns." In general, ecotheology begins with the premise that there is a connection between human religious/spiritual beliefs and the destruction of nature. In this understanding, a gap appears between scientific and theological perspectives that are bridged by ecological phenomena. In other words, the place where science and religion meet is in ecotheology. Man lives in the universe as a created being and a believer in God. In the realm of spirituality,

humans live by the religious values they believe in. At a minimum, human attitudes are shaped by theological concepts which are seen as values to live in harmony with the universe and other creations (Napitupulu, 2022).

Religion plays a role in the process of forming a person's value system so that all religious people can use it to understand, evaluate and interpret situations and experiences. In other words, the values come in the form of norms that indicate self-regulation. In fact, Kaswardi (1993) states that values provide a pattern of life in behavior, thoughts and attitudes. Religion forms and develops self-awareness, fellow human beings, and the universe as a living space. Religion that does not touch all areas of life leads to a dull perception of awareness of the universe and everything in it. As a result, misunderstandings and erroneous interpretations occur, which result in various acts of violence in the name of religion that are carried out consciously or unconsciously, against oneself, fellow human beings, the universe and everything in it.

Human perception of the environment is also conceptualized in religious teachings, where religion exists in the existence of culture. In this understanding, religion is needed to give direction to ethical awareness in cultural life. Therefore, the concept of eco-theology is the basis for building ethical awareness of ecology. The understanding of the concept of environmental theology in the realm of spatial planning influences ethical and spiritual responses and attitudes towards space based on the religious values one adheres to.

## **5. The Role of Christian Religious Education to Overcome the Ecological Problem**

The environment is a very important thing to pay attention to and of course requires a special "place" in the learning and application of Christian education. The main way Christian education plays an active role in environmental issues is that Christian education teachers provide an understanding that environmental damage is caused by human activities that are not environmentally friendly. The main characteristic of a Christian education teacher is how God's word is conveyed and taught as written in the Bible, and how it is packaged in relation to environmental issues. Things that can be done include giving an explanation of the importance of taking good care of the environment, as commanded by God to Adam in terms of maintaining and cultivating a garden (Genesis 2:15). God made the earth and its contents good for a good purpose too. Soil, plants, water, and so on will be maintained if cared for properly and correctly. Everything was created perfectly by God. Christian educators need to encourage and emphasize that humans have a duty to look after, maintain and enjoy and then try to keep nature in a well-maintained condition (Yohanes, 2022). Bonde said that in Christian education, it is necessary to convey an understanding that humans are also responsible for protecting nature and other creations. Why, because there is a connection between humans, the universe and the Creator, to continue to care for and maintain the continuity of the universe and also other creations, for the preservation and integrity of the universe (Imbran 2020).

The role of Christian education begins as much as possible by instilling an environmental paradigm in both schools and churches. If the paradigm of students and the church is built on the importance of caring for ecological problems from an early age, then a concern will emerge that follows a caring attitude towards nature. The formation of a paradigm that respects nature certainly begins when educators understand and think about ecological problems. Therefore, from the point of view of the Christian faith, the destruction of nature is tantamount to the destruction of the basic elements of the human self. It is undeniable that the human relationship with nature makes humans fully responsible for the maintenance of the natural world around them (Genesis 2:15). What is meant by trying in Genesis 2:15, is "Man is the image of God, he should use nature as worship and human service to God. This means that control over nature should be carried out responsibly; maintain, use, and also maintain (Keriapy, 2019).

Christian Educational themes and materials contain many sections of study related to matters of faith, salvation, scriptures, and church liturgy. Christian education should not only cover the part about that, but how social issues, including ecology, get balanced attention. In fact, teaching social issues, including ecology, is part of the Bible's doctrine. However, various ecological destruction events are always closely related to public education (religious and social). Ecological issues which are world issues should be placed at the forefront. Because this problem concerns everyone, then religion should be agile and intelligent in answering the core question about the existence of a distance between human relations and the environment which leads to massive exploitation of nature for personal and corporate gain. Seeing this reality, this is where religion is present and imparts intense teachings based on love for nature, comprehensive environmental protection, as well as beliefs and practices of religious life (Andreas, 2010).

Christian Educators have a big responsibility to always teach students and people related to environmental issues. Christian educators are able to teach from an early age to care for, maintain and care for the environment for sustainability. Children can be taught from an early age to dispose of trash, save water, plant flowers and not damage plants. Assistance must be continued and carried out by parents, school teachers and even Sunday school teachers at the church so that this activity becomes a lifestyle and remains ingrained in the child. Of course it will be easier to bring Christian Education to ecological issues through teaching and exemplary teaching. As Stephen Tong said, the Christian religious educator has within him the firm principles of faith, continuity of worship, and good morals, and virtues befitting his religion, so he will do everything responsibly for immortality in eternal life (Tong, 2008).

When Christian religious educators teach ecology on an ongoing basis, it will instill in students that an interest in ecology is as important as studying the scriptures. Activities that are carried out with self-awareness will have a positive impact not only on oneself, but also on the people around them. Tafonao said the aim of Christian religious education, which applies to all walks of life, is to teach humans about their

relationship with God and other creatures, including nature. For this reason, Christian education must teach real life in order to understand the meaning of life and understand the circumstances of the environment (Tafonao, 2022).

Borrong said Christians should play a more active role in social issues, including ecological crises, rather than just being constructive and apologetic in responding to natural disasters. On the other hand, real practice is needed because actually caring for nature is not in an empty space but in a real, realistic and solution-oriented context (Borrong, 2019). Christians must function as light (Matthew 5:14-16). Being bright means having a positive impact on others. As the Bible says, we all reflect the glory of God (2 Corinthians 3: -18), the lives of Christians should reflect God's glory by setting an example, as well as being a good example in managing the environment as part of paying attention to environmental problems.

## **6. Christian Religious Education in Relation to Ecology**

The need for educational education for Christians so that this ecological problem can be resolved, or at least participate in environmental preservation and influence the people around them as witnesses of Christ. Education can be done through family institutions, churches and schools. With the active role of all parties, it is hoped that the problem of this ecological crisis can be handled more quickly.

## **7. Christian Religious Education within the Family**

The family is the first and most important place to teach children to preserve nature as early as possible. Through the family, children are taught to be responsible for the environment which is a regeneration of the mandate that God has entrusted to humans. Parents also play an important role in overcoming crises that occur in the environment. The duty and responsibility of parents is to teach children how to protect and preserve nature and the environment. Pasaribu and Boiliu stated that Christian Religious Education at home is an important thing for parents to do to educate, teach and encourage their children in everyday life related to protecting the environment (Fredik, 2020). Christian Religious Education must be taught by parents to children and their families, teach children and families that God has given them the duty and responsibility to protect and maintain the environment.

Parents need to teach their children from an early age that humans were created in the image and likeness of God to carry out the duties and responsibilities that God has entrusted to humans to control, protect and care for His creation. As recorded in the Book of Genesis 1:28,31; 2:15, protecting and preserving this universe starts with the family. God created humans to rule and preserve the universe as a sustainable place to live. In this case, parents really need to explain to their children that "mastering" does not mean being free to exploit natural resources just for their own or group's pleasure without thinking about the next life. This means that nature is left to humans and managed for the benefit of mankind and the glory of God (Djoys, 2019). Because humans are fully responsible to God for the preservation of this nature.

## 8. Christian Religious Education at Church

In carrying out its role, the Church pays more attention to issues such as poverty, ignorance, backwardness, social, economic and political justice. This shows the lack of relevance between the mission of the Church and the issue of ecological crisis/environmental damage. Labobar said that the church's attention is more regulated by attention to humans (anthropocentric). This theological thinking is still centered on humans, therefore it can be understood that the direction of the dominant church ministry is only aimed at fellow human beings (anthropocentric) and God (theocentric). In this case the church pays less attention to the environment as an integral part of all of God's creation (Labobar, 2021). For this reason, there is a need for a new awareness for the church in the field of thinking about the environment and nature as a unified whole in providing understanding and appreciation for the congregation. Because, the church as a social institution is also responsible for overcoming ecological problems. The ecological crisis seen every day is becoming more and more acute, and this must be the thinking of the church to understand the relationship between humans and the environment. Therefore, we need to realize the importance of a just relationship between humans and nature. In this regard, the church needs to carry out and pay attention to re-reading the Bible and reinterpreting all traditions, and it is also necessary to stimulate the sensitivity of churches to the environment through sermons, religious lessons and changes regarding environmental perspectives. Thus, the churches are expected to contribute in maintaining, protecting and preserving the universe in order to give peace to all mankind for the glory of God.

Therefore, Christian Religious Education education in the church must do several things, namely (Stevanus, 2022): (1) The church must strive to provide a natural, comfortable, clean and healthy living environment for both present and future life, (2) the church needs to collaborate with others and government with sincerity so that there is peace on earth, (3) the Church must have a network to protect the environment from destruction, (4) the church must be open to cooperating with both government and non-government institutions to realize responsibility and awareness of the environment in order to realize the welfare of all creatures and all the elements that exist in nature, both for the present and the future, (5) the church needs to work together with the government, private sector, religious groups to plan and carry out activities to love the environment which are carried out jointly either nationally or through organizations and also personally, (6) real action is needed from the church both individually and, for example, disposing of waste in the space provided, using water sparingly and appropriately, reducing air pollution, planting trees and plants, not logging indiscriminately, organizing a clean environment, living a frugal lifestyle, being disciplined in utilizing tools/goods that have the potential destroying nature, (7) The church must plan programs that include environmentally friendly activities such as cleaning campaigns, environmentally friendly campaigns, and waste recycling campaigns.

## **9. Christian Religious Education at School**

Christian Religious Education in schools is needed to prevent the current environmental crisis. In providing education, Christian Religious Education teachers must explain to students that God has given a mandate to humans to protect, protect and preserve the environment (Metallica, 2021). In addition, Christian Religious Education teachers explain to students that environmental damage is caused by humans. Therefore, when delivering Christian Religious Education material to students at school, the teacher must explain that the environmental crisis is a human responsibility (Joseph, 2021). This is intended to provide students with an understanding so that awareness arises about the importance of preserving the environment, as God commanded Adam to manage nature wisely.

In terms of the attachment to the relationship between humans and nature, humans are fully responsible for protecting the natural world around them (Genesis 2:15). This means that man, who was created in God's image, must take care of nature as part of his worship and devotion to God. Of course this needs to be taught to students so they understand their responsibility to accept and preserve it as part of their worship. Relevant to Christian Religious Education regarding the environment in schools, Shanta Reskita, and Kristi Wardana conveyed several things, namely first, the curriculum and activity plans and school budgets must protect and manage the environment, second, teachers must be able to develop learning activities related to the environment, third, a series of planned participatory environmental activities for school residents and supported by external organizations, fourth Quality of school facilities and infrastructure that are well managed and environmentally friendly (Shanta, 2022). Therefore, it can be understood that Christian Religious Education in schools is very important to provide understanding and awareness to students about their responsibility to preserve and protect the environment, as a form of responsibility to God as people of faith.

## **D. CONCLUSION**

The basis for understanding ecotheology is the awareness that the environmental crisis is not only a secular problem, but also a serious religious problem, because it stems from religious misunderstandings about life. Through ecotheology, religious understanding in society is reviewed, especially regarding the position and responsibility of humans towards nature.

The book of Leviticus 25: 2-4, clearly shows the duties and responsibilities of humans in cultivating land. God's reconciliation through redemption by Christ is actually not limited to God's reconciliation with humans, but God's reconciliation covers the entire created order, including the universe.

Environmental education through Christian Religious Education aims to help everyone build ecological attitudes through environmental mitigation, education must aim to shape attitudes and behavior for sustainable community development. The environment is a very important theme to pay attention to and certainly requires a special place in the learning and application of Christian Religious Education. The

main way Christian Religious Education plays an active role in environmental affairs is that Christian Religious Education teachers provide an understanding to students in schools and people in churches that environmental damage caused by human activities has a negative impact on the environment.

Christian educators have a great responsibility to educate their students about environmental issues. Christian Religious Education teachers can teach students from an early age to care for, preserve, and protect their environment. The family is the first and most important place where children are taught to protect the environment from an early age. The family must teach them how to be responsible for nature, which is the mission given by God to humans. The church in carrying out its mission and role for the people still very little discusses the issue of ecological crisis/environmental damage, therefore the church must pay more attention to this problem.

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