

ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS: AN URGENT NECESSITY FOR PRACTICAL INTERFACE BETWEEN VIRTUE ETHICS AND CREATION CARE

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ABSTRACT

The human environment is experiencing consistent flux. Media houses around the world continue to provide, progressively worsening reports of the negative effects of global warming due to seemingly unforeseen changes in weather patterns with adverse effects on both humans and natural habitats. The search for positive solution calls for collective responsibility and practical initiative beyond rhetorics and unthoughtful nationalism. Given the burden for an enduring, acceptable and practical solution, this study applies a historical analytical approach to the study of environmental crisis, solution efforts, challenges and prospects. The study proposes that an adequate understanding of the tenets of Virtue Ethics if practically aligned with environmental climate awareness through Creation Care could produce the much-needed motivation for protection and preservation of nature and natural habitat. Furthermore, the paper addresses global environmental issues with greater emphasis on carbon emission, to answer the question of where the globe is today concerning the environmental crisis. It also evaluates the causes and effects of environmental crisis, to answer the questions for reasons why the globe is where it is environmentally. Furthermore, this study pries into the needed solutions to the environmental crisis, to answer the question of what has been done and what is globally happening in the search for the solution to the crisis. In addition, the paper looks into the nature of various solutions proffered, to answer the question on the level of compliance and obstacles to global environmental initiatives. Lastly, the paper looks at implications of study for further Global Environmental Accords. The findings through this study showed that it takes humans with virtue, conscience, courage, fairness and exhibit in sincere terms quest for shared community experience, irrespective race, wealth and ethnicity. Humans whose actions are correct in both intellect and will can in actuality find lasting solution to environmental global crisis and not necessarily accords.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The natural environment exhibits a clear sense of order and imperious beauty. The environment becomes a platform for the interaction of lives, whether human or non-human. “The interaction between the different components of the earth made life possible very glary in the creation story and in the succession of life forms.”¹ This interaction within the earth is experiencing catastrophe contemporarily on an alarming scale. The human environment consistently is experiencing flux seemingly undictated by humans.

Furthermore, human actions have drastically affected the ecosystem negatively. As human population increases, other species of nature decreases based on demand for human appetite, desire for anthropocentric dominance and technological advancement, all exacting and depleting the ecosystem. According to the Kyoto, Durban, Paris, and Cop26 agreements in Glasgow, Scotland, the quest for a reduction of CO₂ by 1.5 degrees to end pollution of both human and non-human environments has become increasingly difficult to agree upon among the league of rich industrialized countries. The pretentious search for a solution to the environmental crisis remains the bane of finding a practicable resolution.

The famous cliché “who will bell the cat”, becomes the plight of the poor nations which are mercilessly at the receiving end of this crisis. The question of who is responsible and what they should do resonates in the spine of all concerned, affected, and yet to be affected. This paper addresses the global environmental issues with more emphasis on carbon emission, to answer the question of where the globe is today concerning the environmental crisis. It also evaluates the causes and effects of environmental crises to answer the questions for reasons why the globe is where it is environmentally. Furthermore, this study pries into the needed solutions to the environmental crisis, to answer the question of what has been done and what is globally happening in the search for the solution to the crisis. In addition, the paper will look into the nature of various solutions proffered, to answer the question on the level of compliance and obstacles to global environmental initiatives. Lastly, it examines the implications of the crisis for further Global Environmental Accords.

2.0 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

The research of this intent entails clarification of certain terms as expressed below.

2.1 Environmental Crisis

Environment in this paper represents the physical scene of the earth’s globe, the abode of both human and non-human lives. Scientifically it “is the third nearest to the Sun... it is also... the only habitable of all the planets, solar systems, galaxies, and other heavenly bodies. The earth is a very special place, and not just because we humans inhabit it. More than imitation, life forms have developed in their unique spot in the solar system.”²

Furthermore, Sweiker Wiliam cites Welker Michael’s description of the environment as creation or created earth observes that, “It is the differentiated structure pattern of reciprocity of natural and cultural forms of life and events, oriented and ordered towards the human capacity and experience.”³ The imbalance in the systemic order of the earth’s environment as a result of humans’ activities, interference and abuse of nature has given rise to environmental crisis. Environmental crisis begins on human choices which obviously have consequences both on them and other non-humans. This crisis is on a global scale and the effects of its changes or imbalance are also global.⁴ In this paper,

¹. Areola O.O., “The Biblical and Management of Biosploric Resource.” *A Creation Sacred to God, Sacred to Earth Ministry*. Eds. Adatoye Famiran & Emiola Nihinlola , Ogbomoso New Series 1 (2007): 57.

². Adetoye Faniran “The Biblical and Man-Nature Relationship A fundamental Paradigm Shift” *A Creation Sacred to God*. (City Press & Sever): 1.

³. William Schweiker, “Theological Ethics and Global Dynamics”, in *Times of Many Worlds* (Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 16.

⁴. Smith Kimberly, “Exploring Environmental Ethics: An Introduction AES” *Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies and Science Series*, (New York: Spring Science Business Media, 2018), 8.

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the environment represents the ecosystem and would often be used interchangeably with climate, while environmental crisis would connote climate change. The relationship between carbon dioxide and temperature on the earth was brought to light by Joseph Fourier, John Tyndall and Svante Arrhenius and by 1950 matters on atmospheric dynamics became a global social concern with global negative effects of climate change.⁵

2.2 Virtue Ethics

Daniel Russell highlights that virtue ethics, “centres on excellence of character expressing itself in fairness, courage and self-control, practiced by living good lives, ourselves and others as well, and shared community experience.”⁶ Elders Leo similarly placed virtue ethics on human dispositions, “such as prudence, which gives us the right knowledge of what must be done so that our acts are normally correct, engages both the intellectual and the will.” He insists that humans in dealing with issues of life must honestly find a solution to achieving set goals with right attitude.⁷ Besser Jones and Slote Michael rank virtue ethics as prominent among the field of philosophy and posit that, “Virtue Ethics is one of the three leading approaches to normative ethics, which calls for sharing concern interest”⁸. These are characterised by benevolence, mercy, compassion, kindness towards victims “in the unsatisfying cycle of lives.”⁹ Philip Cafaro observes that virtue ethics focuses on “character, experience and human flourishing, which sometimes expresses itself through a consequentialist approach.

The much-needed well-being for humanity could be achieved through environmental protection and support for human flourishing.”¹⁰ In addition, Cafaro cited John O’Neil’s virtue ethics perspective, which emphasizes objective goods such as health, friendship, knowledge, and the development of our natural capacities. O’Neil argues that ‘nature must be protected both to secure the basic resources people need to live and to preserve opportunities for us to develop our higher capabilities.’¹¹ Virtue ethics requires courage and will to act in order to avert the devastating consequences of climate change. These perspectives stated above, value human & non-human existence and will engender placing a limit to human economic demand on natural resources, while seeking the flourishing of nature through virtuous behaviours.

2.3 Creation Care

Creation care is pivotal to the divine mandate given by God to humanity in the Jewish/ Christian tradition as recorded in Genesis chapter 1:28, where obligation to care for God’s creation was expressly stated with the model for such care in the context of humanity as God’s image and likeness. Most likely, if humans take seriously, God’s delegated representations and functions on care of the environment, then, the question should be asked, how did He (God) handle creation? What are his expectations about it? Are His expectations from humans to bless or destroy His creation?’ When humans understand that in their physical presence on the created environment, they represent God’s divine presence then the mental capacity for creation care will be achieved.¹² Dalton Anne Marie, as

⁵. Maria Ivanova, “Politics, Economics, Society” *Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Analysis and Commentary*. Eds. David Klein, Maria Pia Carazo, Meinhard Doelle, Jane Buliner and Adrao Higham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 17.

⁶. Daniel Russel, *Cambridge Companion to Virtue Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), xv.

⁷. Leo J. Elders, *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas*, (Washington D.C: Catholic University in America Press, 2019), 149.

⁸. Elders, *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas*, XXII.

⁹. Besser Jones & Slote Michael, *Contemporary Approaches in Routledge Companion to Virtue Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2015), 198.

¹⁰. Philip Cafro, “Environmental Virtue Ethics” *Routledge Companion to Virtue Ethics*. Ed. Besser Slote (London: Routledge, 2015), 452.

¹¹. Cafro, “Environmental Virtue Ethics” *Routledge Companion to Virtue Ethics*, 428.

¹². Kelechi Agubama, “More Gains, More Harm: The Environment at a Crossroad” in *BETFA: Journal of the Ogbomoso Circle* 10 (2015): 138.

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an eco-theologian sees creation care as “a strenuous reclaiming of physical world, nature as a sphere of God’s action and care.”¹³ He further posits that “environmental degradation is not God’s intention rather a consequence from gradual accumulation and systematization of human interest and lack of attention”.¹⁴

In a more theological and ethical approaches, Douglas Moo expresses that creation care involves “two interrelated things at the same time both; our ethical obligation and foundational basic for that obligation; we care for creation because we care about creation.”¹⁵ Moo’s central approach to creation care has a link to virtue ethics; it is the gospel imperative “Love your Neighbour” (Matt. 19:19). This love involves “actions” to enable this world to sustain the “flourishing of our humans and non-humans. Therefore, assessment of our lifestyle and priorities in light of the interest of all our neighbours; those on the other side of the earth”¹⁶ this concept of neighbour reminds human of the brotherhood mind-set when dealing with his ecosystem. While focusing on the divine obligation for humans to care for creation, Enyinnaya O. John states that creation care “emphasis that humans are responsible to God for how they use the earth’s resources. They are answerable to the one who appointed them as vice-regents.”¹⁷ Creation care entails all that humans do to sustain the balance of the created world, the abode of humans and non-humans.

3.0 THE CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION

The organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and United Nations Development Programme report on the G20 contribution to the 2030 agenda; progress and way forward highlighted severe pressure marine life is undergoing due to unsustainable “fishing and over exploitation of marine resources, habitable destruction, pollution and climate change. It is estimated that 60% of the world’s major marine-ecosystem have been degraded or are being used unsustainably, which undermines the ecosystem serious upon which growth and human well-being depend.”¹⁸ By the time global agreement on reduction of Co2 in probably 2060 or beyond is achieved, all of marine life would have been wiped out, unless there is stronger care, conservation and sustainable use of marine life.

The current global reports hold that G20 countries alone are responsible for around 80% of energy related CO₂ emissions. Major issues of global concerns both from the rich and the poor nations alike, is the current impact of environmental crisis. The world looked up to COP26 summit at Scotland on climate change to help foster agreement on carbon emission reduction and commitment to economic package for poor nations might have been disappointed, however there may still be grounds for some hope. There is an awareness of power politics, which tend to undermine the hash effects of climatic conditions, with massive scale of protests yet a far-fetched pledge for practical reduction of CO₂ to 1.5°C.¹⁹ David Lockwood sounded optimistic to Summit to tackle climate change where 197 countries will gather to re-enact their pledges in “preventing dangerous human interference with the climate system.”²⁰

The 2021 IPCC Sixth Assessment Report on climate change prompted United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres to describe the crisis as a ‘Code Red for Humanity’ because of the alarming scale and intensity of global climate change. At the 20th Summit in Paris there was an

¹³. Dalton Anne Marie, Simmons Henry C. *Eco theology and the practice of Hope* (New York: Sunny Press, (2010) , 55

¹⁴. Marie Simmons, *Eco theology and the practice of Hope*, 57.

¹⁵. Douglas J. Moo., Jonathan A Moo., *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology the Natural World* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2018), 12.

¹⁶. Moo, Moo, *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology the Natural World*, 33.

¹⁷. John O. Enyinnaya , “A Theological Perspective on Responsible Citizenship” *the Biblical and Responsible Citizenship Sacred Earth Ministry*. Ed. Faniran A & Rachel Lateju. Ogbomoso New Series 3 (2008): 105.

¹⁸. OECD, UNDP, G20 Action Plan on the 2030 “Agenda for Sustainable Development” (2019):25.

¹⁹. Ajii Niranjan, Environment. (October 18th 2021), <https://p.doo.com/p/41hiH> accessed August 7 2025.

²⁰. David Lockwood, What is COP26 and How does it Affect Sports. (November 1st 2021). British Broadcasting Corporation Editorial <https://www.bbc.co.uk> assessed March 17, 2025.

accord to reduce the rate of Co₂ emission from 2°C to 1.5. However, the “Code Red” report estimated an increase of 2.7°C. This is where the globe is, instead of reaching 1.5°C on the contrary 2.7°C is the reality, which will definitely have disastrous consequences and be a climate catastrophe.”²¹

3.1 Causes and Effects of Environmental Crisis

As a global community, human beings need to understand and brace themselves for the causes and effects of environmental crisis. Late Catholic Pontiff Pope John Paul II says, “The earth will not continue to offer its harvest except with faithful stewardship. We cannot say we love the Land and take steps to destroy it for the use of future generation.”²² The main reason for the adverse situation according to Bruce Milne is, “The cold war polarities are being replaced by new power blocs gathered around global civilization, loyalties frequently driven by fanatic ties of ethnicity or religiosity.”²³ There is a wide range of consensus now existing among climate scientists, which maintains that climate change is happening, and its effect is on a global scale and human activity is the main cause. Scientists have empirical confidences that human activity is the major cause of current warming “because of several Climate Change converging lines of evidence, all pointing in the same direction.”²⁴

The G20 countries account for 80% of carbon dioxide related emission and 70% Global plastic menace engrossed with the ideology of “More gains through steam engines. More gains through production of massive mechanical power. More gains from increase production of furnaces and greater investments”²⁵. Consequentialists believe that the quest for more gains effect more harm. Therefore, negative effects of environmental crisis entail negative exploitation of the ecosystem. To mention some causes for example; the industry and motor vehicles, heavy metal nitrates, plastics, oil spill, fossil fuel combustion are major agents of, air, water, soil, noise, radioactive, light and thermal pollution.²⁶

Furthermore, the emission of greenhouse gases causes climatic warming leading to rising ocean levels and floods. In addition, massive deforestation, erosion overgrazing, exposure to pollutants, monoculture planting, soil compaction and “UN estimated, about 12million hectare of farmland a year get seriously degraded”.²⁷ The public health sector is not spared as air pollutants cause respiratory and cardio vascular diseases, such as asthma.²⁸ The emissions of greenhouse gases and Black carbon gases can result in negative health consequences on those living in close quarters, often women, children and sometimes deformation of unborn children.²⁹ The intensive agricultural engagement through the years in the bid to provide food for explosive population of the world has led to the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides, which has adversely devastated the farm land. Furthermore, the complete extinction of certain species due to human exploitation of terrestrial and aquatic life hence destroyed the balance in environment leading to loss in biodiversity.³⁰

3.2 Global Solution to Environmental Crisis

The global effects of the environmental crisis are evident in several recent events. In East Africa, severe locust invasions occurred between 2019 and 2021, coinciding with extreme weather conditions such

²¹. Niranjana, “Environment”

²². *Unity in the Work of His Service on the Occasion of His Pastoral Visit to the United States Catholic Conference* (California: United Council of Catholic Bishops, 1987), 344.

²³. Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth: A Handbook of Christian Belief* (Nottingham: Inter Varsity press, 1998), 113.

²⁴. Joseph Romm, *Climate Change: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 10.

²⁵. Kelechi Agubama, “More Gains, More Harm: The Environment at a Crossroad” in *BETFA: Journal of the Ogbomoso Circle* 10 (2015): 132.

²⁶. The Blue & Green Journey. (November 11th 2021) <https://www.conserveenergy-future.com> accessed on September 10, 2025.

²⁷. The Blue & Green Journey.

²⁸. The Blue & Green Journey.

²⁹. Robert Baron, David Montgomery, Suganadha Tuladhar, “Black Carbon Mitigation” *Smart Solution to Climate Change Comparing Cost and Benefits: Copenhagen Consensus on Climate 2009 (CCC09)*. Ed. Bjorn Lomborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 142.

³⁰. The Blue & Green Journey.

as rising temperatures, heat waves, and heavy rainfall that devastated crops on a massive scale. In Spain, a major wildfire in August 2022 destroyed over 7,780 hectares of farmland within a week and displaced more than 2,600 people. Around the same period, European heat waves in 2022 led to the loss of over 170 lives across several countries. In China, widespread flooding in 2020 and 2021 displaced more than 2 million people from their homes. Meanwhile, Canada and the United States experienced the unprecedented “Heat Dome” event in June–July 2021, which caused extreme temperatures and contributed to the death of an estimated over one billion marine animals along the Pacific coast. As Joseph Romm explains, five main factors contribute to rising sea levels: thermal expansion, changes in groundwater storage, glacier ice loss, Greenland ice loss, and Antarctic ice loss. These developments highlight the consequences of technological, human-driven exploitation of nature in the pursuit of scientific advancement and political power

Furthermore, global sporting events have not been spared from the climate crisis. During the 2014 Australian Open, an extreme heat wave often referred to as the “Melbourne heat wave” forced the postponement of scheduled matches as temperatures exceeded 40°C. In that same year, the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi experienced unusually warm conditions that led to melting snow, prompting organizers to rely heavily on artificial snow to sustain the events. The Rugby World Cup match between France and England was halted by Typhon Hagibis in 2019. Fresh in memory is the Tokyo 2020 Olympics held in 2021, where extreme heat conditions led to the change of Marathon venue. This situation was called “Brutal heat condition” by athletes and was tagged the “hottest ever game”. Further predictions on future sporting events indicate harsher climatic conditions. Lockwood cites Fung Fai, a sporting executive that “climate projections are the best windows we have on our future world and looking through that window reveals that all aspects of our lives will be affected increasingly by climate change.”³¹

In light of the worsening environmental conditions, global initiatives have led to different Summits for the past 25 years, where nations of the world converge to finding solutions to environmental crisis. Over the years, the global community have created platforms for dialogue, from social consciousness to global political context of the 1970’s where issues of environmental concerns have featured prominently in the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held at Stockholm 1972. By 1992, after several interfaces and consultations which involved the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and World Metrological Organisation, it was agreed that climate change has become a global concern that required urgent action by the community of nations. Consequent upon such acceptance on eminent global environmental crisis, 166 national governments adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).³² Furthermore, Maria expresses, “The goal was to stabilize greenhouse gas emission a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with climate system.”³³

Moreover, the first global environmental crisis solution conference was held in 1995 at Berlin tagged the Conference of Parties (COP), saddled with the responsibility to co-ordinate actions to avert global warming. The Kyoto Accord of 1997 targeted Carbon dioxide emission reduction from developed nations only. In Copenhagen, 2009 witnessed a seeming retrogression in the drive for global agreement on carbon emission as there was no legally binding agreement to enforce decisions taken. The Durban Accord of 2011 called for international cooperation in seeking ways to uphold agreements,

³¹. Lockwood, *What is COP26 and How does it Affect Sports*.

³². Ivanova, “Politics, Economics, Society” *The Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Analysis and Commentary*. Eds. David Klein, Maria Pia Carazo, Meinhard Doelle, Jane Buliner and Adrao Higham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 17.

³³. Ivanova, “Politics, Economics, Society”, 17.

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raise funds, adapt to gradual cut on CO₂ emission, with the view to garner more commitment and actualization of the set goals by 2015.³⁴

It would be recalled that a bigger milestone was achieved at the Paris Accord of 2015, after 20 years of intense negotiation where 196 nations accepted to limit CO₂ emission to between 2°C and 1.5°C. The agreement was reached on 5th of October, 2016 and its implementation was accentuated on 4th of November 2016 by 197 national governments.³⁵ Also, there is the “need [is] to capture shared and common interests, to manage unequal power, and to mediate cultural diversity and value conflict”³⁶. David Ryfisch optimistically noted, “The Paris Accord is the starting point for a whole series of change. It’s a signal that the intent of countries is real and that it will have real world implications.”³⁷ Brandlin quotes Paul Young, a climate analyst who reiterates the importance of carbon dioxide the world economy, “CO₂ just pervades everything, the whole world economy. And it is quite hard to turn that oil Tanker around. Carbon dioxide is not something we sweep out with another chemical. It is our main issue if we want to address the climate problems.”³⁸

Furthermore, environmental climatic change is a universal problem of general concern for humanity, the unifying language of the United Nations Framework convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which extends to all nations of the globe seeks potentially for global solutions, hence “the reason for negotiating the two principal multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) on the subject—the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. It is the reason for trying to negotiate a further post-Kyoto global agreement.”³⁹ The international community’s efforts to moderate the devastation caused by climate change have faced notable challenges, which hinder these efforts. “Negotiations on climate change have always been difficult, not only because of the complexity of the issues and the diversity of the interests at stake, but also owing to the centrality of the “public bad” under discussion (carbon and its by-products) to global systems of production, distribution, and consumption.”⁴⁰

As the Sacred Earth Conference was held in 2021, so also the community of nations met in Glasgow for the COP26 Climate Summit in an effort to address issues related to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. Before COP26, was the 2021 G20 Summit held in Rome, where issues of climate change were addressed on the cut on carbon dioxide from 2°C to 1.5°C and the pledge to raise 100 billion Dollars to assist poor countries to adapt to the change caused by environmental crisis.⁴¹ Meanwhile, some countries have pledged cuts to emissions. For instance, Germany’s pledge is by the year 2045, China by 2060, Holland by 2030, France by 2050, Saudi Arabia by 2040 and United States by 2050, yet there was no agreement on the actual dates for zero emissions. Therefore, the global expectation was turned to COP26, held from October 31 to November 12, 2021, in Glasgow. Still fresh in memory were the failed attempts of climate pressure groups to push their countries to commit to greater carbon dioxide cuts at the COP25 Summit in Madrid in 2019.

3.3 Nature of Solutions

Nations, especially the highly industrialized ones should be commended on their aspiration to tackle climate change by pledging carbon dioxide emission cuts, provide funds for poor countries and

³⁴. Kelechi Agubama, “More Gains, More Harm: The Environment at a Crossroad” in *BETFA: Journal of the Ogbomosho Circle*. 10 (2015): 136.

³⁵. Ivanova, “Politics, Economics, Society”, 18.

³⁶. Alan Boyle, Naraj Chaleigh, “Climate Change and International Law Beyond the UNFCCC” *Oxford Handbook of International Climate Law*. Eds. Cinnamon Carlarne, Kevin Gray, Richard Tarasofsky (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 27.

³⁷. Anne-Sophie Brandlin, “COP26: Everything You Need to Know” (October 20th 2021). @ dw Environment.com accessed July 4 2025.

³⁸. Brandlin, “COP26: Everything You Need to Know”

³⁹. Boyle, et al, “Climate Change and International Law Beyond the UNFCCC” *Oxford Handbook of International Climate Law*, 27.

⁴⁰. “Climate Change and International Law Beyond the UNFCCC” *Oxford Handbook of International Climate Law*. 28

⁴¹. Brandlin, “COP26”.

consider the need for zero emission in future. However, issues of non-agreement on the specific time for zero emission, who raises the funds, verification on cut percentages, lack of legal framework, no accountability for defaulters and no legal institution to enforce compliance, who should take action, what actions to be taken and what is the stipulated pace for reduction in Carbon emission, make the whole aspiration seem a mirage. Boyle et al. posit, “In a pluralist and multi-polar world, we cannot assume that global interdependence will be reflected in a willingness to cooperate on common solutions, nor has it been. The problem here is that the climate regime is not based on principles of fairness that are broadly acceptable to all the major players.”⁴² Although global agreement is finally realized practically, it will assist “developing countries leapfrog already obsolete technologies towards the new technology that provide exponentially increased access to energy, boosted energy security, restored soil, improved food and water security, more livable cities and better health.”⁴³

Furthermore, the predictions made towards zero emissions dating between 2040-2060 sounds like a furlough, which cast doubts on the sense of responsibility of these high-power nations. What Bruce Milne called ‘New Cold War’; placing national economics interest and prowess over massive destruction of humans and non-humans at any cost, are appalling. One could ask where common sense is in terms of the will to do the right thing rightly. In search of practical solution to climate change, the Copenhagen Consensus on Climate 2009 (CCC09), furnished a policy for mitigation of carbon emission based on the following alternatives: “(1) the future populations, economies, and emissions; (2) the working of the climate system; (3) the impact of climate change; (4) the impact of emission reduction; and (5) aggregation over space and time”.⁴⁴

As good as the policy appeared, one fundamental question raised against its global implementation was its economic consequences. This was the point at which the writer raised concerns about global conscience, willpower, courage, and virtue. The question was whether humanity, nature, and natural habitats could be placed above technological advancement, the hunger for power, and the economic domination pursued by developed and developing national governments. Hence, the question raised by Eric Bickel and Lee Lane while analyzing climate change and cost implications, “If the global community wants to spend up to, say, \$250 billion per year over the next 10 years to diminish the adverse effects of climate changes, and to do most good for the world, which solutions would yield the greatest net benefits?”⁴⁵ Various Accords over time have shown that several solutions have been proffered yet adequate and fair implementations in addition to the will to act; mistrust, suspicion and prejudice have adversely affected the expected positive results.

It is at this point that Virtue Ethics sues for “excellence of character, which expresses itself in fairness, courage, treating oneself and others well, and sharing community experience.”⁴⁶ The question of how the rich countries can approach the choice of zero carbon dioxide emission through expressing characteristics of virtue such as courage, consideration and honesty is theirs to answer. Secondly, actions that relate to virtue in resolving the global environmental crisis must be identified. Thirdly, stakeholders in environmental matters must determine how to arrive at a practical model that enables humans to address life-threatening crises such as climate change. If virtue ethics teaches character, excellence, and actions that promote human flourishing, then its role in motivating better climate accords must be clearly established. Furthermore, the question of whether human and non-human

⁴². Boyle, et al, “Climate Change and International Law Beyond the UNFCCC” *Oxford Handbook of International Climate Law*.

⁴³. Ivanova, “Politics, Economics, Society”, 17

⁴⁴. Richard Tol,, “Carbon Dioxide Mitigation” *Smart Solution to Climate Change Comparing Cost and Benefits: Copenhagen Consensus on Climate 2009 (CCC09)*. Ed. Bjorn Lomborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 74

⁴⁵. Eric Brickel, Lee Lane, “Climate Engineering” *Smart Solution to Climate Change Comparing Cost and Benefits: Copenhagen Consensus on Climate 2009 (CCC09)*. Ed. Bjorn Lomborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 95.

⁴⁶. Daniel Russel, ed. *Cambridge Companion to Virtue Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), xv.

environments can flourish without a conscious care approach remains a central concern in discussions of creation care.

4.0 INTERFACE BETWEEN VIRTUE ETHICS AND CREATION CARE

In view of the ways by which virtue ethics and creation care interface, Douglas Moo's central approach to creation care, is what he terms "the Gospel Imperative; Love your Neighbour." Firstly, this love is a virtue expressed in kindness, character, courage, good will, generosity, justice, equity and honesty embedded in virtue ethics. Secondly, creation care involves ethical obligation in order to sustain creation's flourishing for all community of life; human and non-human. Thirdly, James Schaefer posits that "the earth is good...good is the farm...good is the air...good is the food...good is health...good are the animals...good is the heaven with its own sun, moon and stars."⁴⁷

The view above resonates with William Schweikers' opinion that "people around the planet must orient their existence by commitment to respect and enhance integrity of life."⁴⁸ Both creation care and virtue ethics advocate respect and value for lives whether human or non-human. Fourthly, creation care and virtue ethics contribute to flourishing of life, quality care for natural world as it affects the health of humans and the ecosystem. Both express the way humans can adapt ethical actions which uphold respect and regard for living things, even nature. Lastly, in Gnanakan's appeal, "Environment issues, is not enough only to see how we humans benefit from whatever measures are adopted. We must respect and honour the wider environmental framework and develop ethical culture that takes everything into account. Loving our neighbours and creation care must be joined together."⁴⁹ In the very words of Dirk Postma, "Care is a form of virtue ethics"⁵⁰ both are practically inseparable thereby becoming a framework for action in future global environmental accords.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Virtue ethics and creation care gear towards value for human and non-human flourishing, this remains the cardinal objective of any climate accord. If this is the case, then courage, honesty, kindness and love should produce commitment and obligation that cares for creation practically, to place limits on human economic exploitation of natural environment. For COP26, to produce the much-needed expectation, the tenets of virtue ethics and creation care such as well-being, health, friendship, honesty should characterize every decision in climate accords. In addition, environmental protection through creation care and human flourishing of virtue ethics should be the motivation through which agreement could be reached on 1.5⁰C carbon emission to urgently curb the devastating effects of environmental crisis.

The following recommendations are noteworthy. First, the Conveyance of various Accords remains the expression that human environment is actually in crisis and needs urgent solution geared towards environmental protection and support. Human choices have consequential effects and environmental exploitations are not left out. Therefore, humans must adhere to the clarion call for urgent action for solution before it becomes too late. Secondly, solution to environmental global crisis is a quest for sharing in global human concerns and human with conscience, who imbibe the virtues of mercy, kindness, compassion and benevolence toward, victims of human exploitation of nature can act on reduction of carbon emission. Thirdly, if humans are to take their God-given delegated representation and function seriously then protection and preservation of their environment is a

⁴⁷. James Schaefer, *Theological Foundation for Environmental Ethics* (Washington D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 125.

⁴⁸. William Schweiker, "Theological Ethics and Global Dynamics", in *Times of Many Worlds* (Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 16.

⁴⁹. Thomas Schirrmacher, Thomas Johnson. "Creation Care and Loving Our Neighbours: Studies in Environmental Ethics" *The WEA Global Issues Culture and Science Publication*. Bonn Series 17 (2016).

⁵⁰. Dirk Postma, *Why care for nature? A search for ethical frame work for environmental responsibility and education*, Vol.9 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 19.

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necessity. God cares for His creation. Fourthly, enforcement of agreements with legal framework by the International Community is a necessity to enact enforcement. However the success of this enforcement is based on the conscience of the global community. Beyond legal framework, “The Gospel Imperative: Love your Neighbour” demands justice and equity, commitment to respect and enhancing the integrity of life. The global industrial community must show commitment beyond lip service and flamboyant Accords without real corresponding effects.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Environmental issues rest on the premise of practical commitment tenets of virtue ethics and creation care. Human environment is experiencing severe and consistent flux, due to human activities. Gladly, humans have realized the massive devastation done to the environment because of their reckless exploitation of the ecosystem. However, the strides made by major carbon dioxide-emitting countries have been in the form of forums without corresponding actions. It is observed that many decisions have been made yet without reciprocal effects due to loop holes on issues of accountability and legal enforcement institutions. Also, the nationality pride over global community experience has been the bane in the progress expected in climate summits. However, there is a new consciousness based on the devastations visibly done to the natural world. This paper has highlighted the connection between virtue ethics and creation care as both encourages sustainability, wellness and flourishing of the ecosystem through honest care and courage, if imbibed by aid the League of Nations practically work out a strategy, which every member will act on responsively to allow verification of cuts and achieve in no distant time zero emission.

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