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Saving Souls and ‘Trees’: An Emerging Model of Pentecostal-Charismatic Eco-Missions in the Church of Pentecost, Ghana

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Abstract: The emergence of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Ghana has historically been characterized by a perceived schism between faith and science. This schism was particularly evident in some Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches (PCCs), where the use of both orthodox and herbal medications was prohibited. The rift between the two domains within the African Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition, which persisted until recent times, highlights significant implications for the intersection of religious beliefs and scientific practises within various African contexts. This traditional one-dimensional approach adopted by PCCs in Africa influenced their interpretation of the Great Commission and has resulted in the oversight of important aspects of their mission, particularly the lack of attention to the well-being of the natural environment and other non-human entities. However, there is a noticeable shift in this narrative in Ghana, as shown in the case of the Church of Pentecost, which is increasingly becoming involved in initiatives aimed at preserving the earth and its inhabitants. This article utilizes document reviews, a survey, and personal observations to examine the extent to which this emerging eco-mission is embraced within the Church of Pentecost and explores its potential as a model for PCCs in Ghana and beyond. The article proposes strategies for reimagining traditional doctrines to enable the full integration of eco-missions within the broader mission of the church.



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1. Introduction

The growth of Christianity globally, particularly in the non-Western world, can be attributed significantly to the Pentecostal movement’s vibrant Evangelism and spiritual dynamism. This unwavering fervour and enthusiasm to save souls stems primarily from the tradition’s strong emphasis on the empowering work of the Holy Spirit and the imminent expectation of Christ’s return. In other words, the impulsion to save souls before the Parousia is sustained by their understanding of Acts 1:8, where the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is understood to give the believers power to be witnesses of Jesus Christ and to save dying souls before Christ appears the second time. In the words of Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “Pentecostals believe that they have been called by God in the ‘Last days’ (Acts 2:17) to be Christ-like witnesses in the power of the Spirit” (Kärkkäinen 2018, p. 31).

Despite the enthusiasm characterizing the Pentecostal movement, its overreliance on Lukan Pneumatology and the pronounced emphasis on the imminent return of Christ have resulted in notable weaknesses in its missional approach. One discernible area of neglect is the concept of “mission to the ecosystem”¹ (eco-missions), which has been insufficiently integrated into the ecclesiological frameworks of Pentecostal Churches (PCCs). This

weakness has created a significant gap in their missionary endeavours. Such shortcomings are evident not only in Pentecostal ecclesiology in Africa but also in European and Asian contexts (Frestadius et al. 2022).

Speaking about the problem of climate change in Ghana, Frestadius et al. argue that,

In Ghana, for example, non-renewable natural resources continue to be depleted rapidly through illegal mining, environmental pollution, deforestation, and increased use of fossil fuels. Some scholars suggest that a major contributing factor to this indiscipline in Ghana, as in other African countries, emanates from the dominion theology embraced by African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians. This theology, which takes its root from the American prosperity gospel, tends to reduce nature to human utility. To be prosperous and successful by the standards of this teaching, one needs to subdue (exploit) the earth for personal advantage. (Frestadius et al. 2022, p. 4)

However, in recent times there has been an improvement in the appreciation of ecological stewardship among Pentecostal-Charismatics in Ghana, as in the Church of Pentecost (CoP). This is demonstrated in the CoP in many ways, including the church's annual environmental care campaigns (Frestadius et al. 2022, p. 4). In an edited volume, *Re-Visioning African Pentecostal-Charismatic Ecclesiology in the Public Sphere*, the authors discuss ways in which Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches are beginning to respond favourably to issues of public concern, including the environment (Tsekpoe and Donkor 2024).

This article studies the CoP, the largest Pentecostal denomination in Ghana, as a case for Pentecostal-Charismatic's receptivity to eco-mission and integration of eco-cultures into the tradition's mission strategies. The researchers reviewed annual reports from 2018, when the concept of the creation care campaign was introduced, including council meeting reports, personal observations, and the CoP's Vision 2023 and Vision 2028 documents.² In this article, the authors observed that although creation care has yet to be fully integrated into the CoP's statement of faith and mission, there has been an appreciable level of acceptability, which can be used as a model for Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Ghana.

2. Soul-Winning Compared to Eco-Mission in the Church of Pentecost

The history of the CoP shows that it is a missional church. From a small prayer group at Asamankese in the 1930s, the CoP is currently the largest Pentecostal denomination in Ghana, with a total membership of 3,864,355, representing 11.3% of the Ghanaian population (The Church of Pentecost 2024a). As of December 2023, the church boasts of its presence in over 170 nations worldwide (The Church of Pentecost 2024a, p. 18). This numerical growth can largely be ascribed to the church's evangelistic and soul-winning strategies instituted right from its inception. In 2023 alone, "the church undertook 390,545 evangelistic outreaches. These outreach programmes resulted in 381,865 souls being saved." (The Church of Pentecost 2024a, p. 18). Amos Jimmy Markin attributes the growth of the CoP to the church's emphasis on the second conversion experience and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, among other factors. He states:

The growth and expansion of the CoP can be attributed, among other factors, to its distinctive pattern of spirituality. The Spirituality is evident, for example, in personal conversion through faith in the gospel message; water baptism by immersion; emphasis on Pentecostal phenomenon—as subsequent baptism in the Holy Spirit, discipleship, biblical prayer, aggressive evangelistic ethos, belief in the efficacy of prophesy, strict or uncompromising holiness ethics, belief in miracles, healings, and deliverance—and closely knit community-based congregational lifestyle. (Markin 2019, p. 234)

Within the CoP, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is strongly emphasized as a distinct experience that follows spiritual rebirth, empowering believers for effective ministry. The seventh doctrinal statement of the church states, “We believe in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit for all believers with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues (Joel 2:28, 29; Ac. 2:3, 4, 38, 39; 10:44–46; 19:16) and in the operation of the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12:6–8; Gal. 5:22, 23 and 1 Cor. 12:8–11; 28–30)” ([The Church of Pentecost 2010](#), p. 9). Thus, from the inception of the church to date, every member has been encouraged to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues. The founder of the church, Reverend James McKeown, is noted to have maintained that anyone who is not baptized in the Holy Spirit should not be received into the ‘full-time’ ministry of the CoP, and he would encourage that even the laities who were working at the headquarters of the church be baptized in the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues ([Tsekpoe 2022](#), p. 71). This, they believe, energizes the individual to win souls for Christ and to bear the fruit of the Spirit. This practice is upheld at all levels of the church to date. “To McKeown, the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men is the power to overcome sin, cast out demons and evangelize” ([Tsekpoe 2022](#), p. 72). Despite its merits, this viewpoint seems to confine the Holy Spirit’s activity to a narrow scope, primarily focusing on deliverance, healing, soul-winning, and individual piety, thereby neglecting broader missional imperatives.

Aside from the premium the CoP places on Holy Spirit baptism, they also strongly believe in the Parousia, and its urgency encourages them to spread the gospel of Christ to every nook and cranny. Brain Stanley made a similar observation about the protestant mission activities of the early 20th century when he asserts that “Although premillennial convictions were not necessarily the sole source of the extraordinary scale of conservative evangelical missionary activity after 1918, they have undoubtedly supplied much of the dynamic for the unchanging insistence on the urgency of the world evangelisation that has been characteristic of conservative evangelical missions since 1918” ([Stanley 2000](#), p. 116). In Pentecostal circles, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues, is often closely tied to the Second Coming of Christ, with the belief that Spirit-empowerment facilitates the rapid evangelization of nations preceding Christ’s imminent return ([Kärkkäinen 2018](#), p. 31). At crusade or rally grounds, they sing and chant songs like *Yesu reba, bio Hallelujah* (Jesus is coming again, Hallelujah), *Monka aheman mu nsem . . . ntem ara monka aheman mu nsem* (preach about the Kingdom of God with all urgency) to show how imperative the return of Christ is.

As seen in the previous paragraphs under this section, right from the inception of the church, soul-winning is prized so high above any other aspect of mission within the church. The CoP prioritizes soul-winning above all else, allocating its resources to evangelize and baptize individuals. Every individual in the church is encouraged to be a soul-winner. Consequently, major doctrines like Christology, Redemption, Pneumatology, and Eschatology are interpreted primarily through the lens of soul-winning. Kärkkäinen contends that the eschatological vision of Pentecostals made them overlook certain aspects of mission ([Kärkkäinen 2018](#), p. 31). Beyond eschatological considerations, Pentecostals’ narrow view of Spirit-empowerment, rooted in their Lukan interpretation, contributes to the neglect of creation care. A more comprehensive Pneumatology from both the Old and New Testaments reveal the Spirit’s empowerment as integral to eco-mission as well. As mentioned in the introduction, until the launch of Vision 2023, the focus of mission in the CoP was mainly on soul-winning and church planting, as can be found in most Pentecostal-Charismatic denominations.

3. The Holistic Missional Focus of the Possessing the Nations Agenda

In the 1980s, the Anglican Church introduced a distinctive mission paradigm that has had a lasting impact on its outreach strategies. This model, which is called “the five marks of a wholistic mission”, has been adopted by many mainline historic denominations as their mission strategies. The components of this model are “to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom; to teach, baptize, and nurture new believers; to respond to human needs by loving service; to seek to transform unjust structures of society; and to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth” (Ross 2008, p. xiv). This model has gained broad acceptance as the definitive approach to holistic mission within several prominent Christian denominations, especially those belonging to the Mainline Historic Churches (MHCs). Unlike the mission of these MHCs, Pentecostal denominations in Ghana have traditionally approached mission through three primary levels—Evangelism, Discipleship, and Compassion. Emmanuel Awudi and Samuel Yormesor contend that “Until recently, the Ghanaian Pentecostal mission has been one-dimensional, focusing on saving souls” (Awudi and Yormesor 2024, p. 144). Other activities related to social transformation and environmental stewardship were viewed as ancillary or catalysts for soul-winning and discipleship. However, there is a growing recognition within Pentecostal circles that social transformation, environmental stewardship, and sustainability must become integral components of Christian mission. The Korean missionary couple Julie C. Ma and Wonsuk Ma observe that “Every issue that society wrestles with is a mission agenda, be it corruption, poverty, or racial conflict” (Ma and Ma 2010, p. 6).

The CoP’s Vision 2023 marked a significant shift in the focus and direction of the church’s appreciation of holistic mission by broadening its focus. Cardinal areas listed under Vision 2023 that are directly related to Mission include Evangelism and Church planting, Marriage and Family Life, Enhancing Church and State Relations, Chaplaincy, Socio-Economic Development, Ministry to Persons with Disabilities, and Community Transformation (The Church of Pentecost 2019b, pp. 46–64). In relation to eco-mission, the vision states:

The Church will embark on sanitation campaigns at the district and local levels. These campaigns will seek to sensitise members and community members on good sanitation practices. Our annual Bible Study lessons will make provision for topics on sanitation and other environmental issues for the next five years to educate our members on the importance of sanitation. (The Church of Pentecost 2023, p. 63)

Since 2019, the CoP has celebrated environmental campaigns with clean-up exercises, tree-planting exercises, and education on environmental stewardship (Anim and Awudi 2023, pp. 539–45). Following the expiration of the five-year vision in 2023, the CoP adopted a new guiding vision, dubbed Vision 2028, which prominently features creation care as a critical mission area with an expanded scope. Part of the document reads:

We shall collaborate with the Chieftaincy Ministry to empower chiefs to lead the Environmental Care Campaign in their respective communities. We shall celebrate the annual World Environment Day to trumpet the Environmental Care Campaign goals. Our annual Bible Study lessons will make provision for topics on sanitation and other environmental issues for the next five years to educate our members on the importance of sanitation. (The Church of Pentecost 2023, p. 94)

Since the launch of the first environmental care campaign in the CoP in Ghana in 2019, there has been a marked increase in awareness among its members regarding their ethical

obligation to engage in societal transformation, including environmental stewardship, using the values and principles of the Kingdom of God.

4. Eco-Mission Maturing in the Church of Pentecost

An analysis of the creation care strategies being employed by the CoP (as mentioned in the previous section) reveals an integral mission model comprising four key components. Paul Barreca explains that an integral mission is the incorporation of socio-economic engagement as an essential component of the gospel of Christ (Barreca 2024). The first component of this integral eco-mission model is sanitation campaigns, where the CoP uses a whole week to educate both members and non-members of the church on environmental stewardship. This comes with education and awareness creation both within and outside the church.

The second aspect of the model is a partnership between the church and the chieftaincy ministry. This strategy was initiated in 2023, where church leaders were encouraged to collaborate with the chieftaincy ministry and community leaders on clean-up campaigns and tree-planting projects. By empowering community leaders through the chieftaincy ministry, the church aimed to promote community-led creation care initiatives. The church leadership believed that community-led clean-up and tree-planting exercises would be more sustainable in the long run.

The third component of the CoP's Eco-Mission model is the integration of creation care into Bible study lessons. Since 2019, all the study manuals produced by the church have included topics on creation care, aiming to teach members about the relationship between scripture and environmental stewardship. Notable examples include the 2019 Bible Study Guide, which covered topics such as "Land Pollution", "Possessing the Nations by Obeying Environmental Law", and "Personal Commitment to Addressing Sanitation and Pollution Challenges" (The Church of Pentecost 2019a, pp. 65–79). The 2020 Bible Study manual, featured the topic "Environmental Care, Our Responsibility", (The Church of Pentecost 2020, pp. 57–58) while the 2024 guide focused on "Promoting Attitudinal Change to Creation Care" with scriptural reference from Deuteronomy 23:12–14. The introduction to this Bible study reads,

Our world is facing both natural and human-caused catastrophes. Its impact is devastating. The frightening proportion to which these calamities have escalated should be a cause for concern. Creation care is, therefore, the means of tackling this canker. "Creation care" means caring for everything God created. This includes every micro-organism, common plants or weeds and land. Creation care takes place by stopping and preventing every activity that is harmful to creation and by participating in activities that will promote its sustainability. It is the removal of every form of abuse in the physical and human social environments. (The Church of Pentecost 2024b, p. 29)

This initiative has also inspired the Youth Ministry of the CoP to incorporate topics on creation care into their daily devotional guides (Anim and Awudi 2023, p. 542).

The fourth component of the integral eco-mission model is Practical Action, which encompasses various initiatives such as clean-up exercises to promote environmental cleanliness within every community that the church is in Ghana, the "Buy Back Day" initiative, which involves collecting plastic waste and selling it to recycling companies, and tree-planting exercises to promote reforestation. Notably, in 2023 and 2024, the church commemorated World Environment Day by planting over 1.6 million trees across Ghana, demonstrating its commitment to environmental sustainability.

Despite the growing acknowledgement of creation care's significance within the church's mission, Evangelism and church planting remain prioritized over environmental

engagements. A significant knowledge gap persists regarding the intersection and synergy between eco-mission, Evangelism, and church planting. This was evidenced in a survey conducted by the researchers regarding the understanding of creation care as an integral part of mission.

The authors contacted 60 members of the CoP in Kasoa to seek their views on the nexus between environmental stewardship and evangelism/church planting.³ They were selected from Diamond City Worship Centre and Mountain View District as representative samples of the members of the Church in Kasoa.⁴ These members were randomly interviewed on different occasions over a period of one month. Both men and women were involved in the survey without any specific consideration of status or age. When asked, "Creation care and Evangelism/Church planting, which one is important to you?" 38 per cent of the participants chose Evangelism/church planting instead of seeing both as important aspects of the Great Commission. The rest, comprising 62 per cent, indicated both were important, but it was surprising that none of them chose creation care over evangelism. One respondent mentioned, "For evangelism and church planting, it is mandatory for every believer to be engaged in them" (Respondent 2, Survey on 11 October 2024). The respondent believes that creation care is the domain of a select group rather than a collective duty for the entire faith community. Similarly, another respondent explained why they will choose evangelism over creation care or both, "Evangelism is the heartbeat of the church and the primary goal for Christians" (Respondent 6, Survey on 11 October 2024). While the participants acknowledged that creation care is an important duty of every Christian, they could not rank it alongside Evangelism and church planting. These responses show that although there is an increasing awareness of the importance of the environment, it does not carry the same significance as Evangelism. CoP's creation care efforts are, therefore, yielding some commendable fruits and must be commended. This notwithstanding, more intentional efforts must be put in place to sustain the model and also increase members' understanding of the significance of creation care.

The participants were also asked, "Evangelism and creation care, which one have you been involved in?" Sixteen (16) out of the total participants stated that they have only been involved in Evangelism. The rest, comprising 44 participants, were involved in both, while none of them indicated that they were involved in only creation care. One of the participants indicated that the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is meant for Evangelism, and creation care is secondary. He stated, "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost has come upon you. That power is for witnessing and not for creation care" (Respondent 7, Survey on 11 October 2024). This view corroborates our earlier observation that among Pentecostals, the empowerment of the Spirit is seen as a catalyst for soul-winning and casting out demons. Before the CoP's Vision 2023, it was common to hear comments like

Personally, my concern has not been so much with this life here on earth, simply because I know life on earth is no more a delight given the extent of abuse and decay. My view has always been what Peter said in 2 Peter 3:13, 'But according to this promise, we look forward to a New Heaven and a New Earth in which righteousness dwells'. Thus, my hope has always been on the coming celestial kingdom and not on this depraved kingdom of the world, always bearing in mind what Jesus said to Pilate, 'My kingdom is not of this world' (Jn. 18:35). (See [Awudi 2019](#), p. 42)

Thus, despite the growing involvement in creation care, some members of the church in Kasoa perceived soul-winning as a universal calling for all Spirit-baptized believers, whereas creation care is viewed as a secondary or specialized concern. The data also show that some members of the church see social interventions as evangelistic tools rather than integral aspects of Christian mission. Respondent 23 stated, "Creation care is important

because it can serve as a tool, demonstrating Christian values and lead to evangelism and church planting” (Respondent 23, Survey on 11 October 2024). As far as this respondent is concerned, evangelism and church planting is the focus. Creation care becomes a tool that serves that purpose.

5. Maximizing the Eco-Mission Among Pentecostals

5.1. Strengthening the Emerging Features of the Model

Samson Gitau posits that “If Christians were to treat the environment as they possibly treat the Lord’s Supper, that is, with faith and awe, the battle against environmental degradation would become less menacing” (Gitau 2000, p. 3). Thus, if members of the Christian community see every aspect of human endeavour as sacred, integrating creation care into the church’s mission would not be difficult. This article reveals some important features of the CoP’s approach to environmental stewardship. One such important example is seen in the development of a curriculum on the creation of care for ministerial training and formation at Pentecost University. The Pentecost School of Theology and Mission, a faculty at Pentecost University, has successfully embedded ecotheology into its ministerial formation curriculum over the past four years, cultivating a stronger sense of environmental responsibility among ministers and promoting grassroots activism within the CoP (Anim and Awudi 2023, pp. 541–42). This is in the belief that every curriculum must be tailored to address the needs of a particular society. The world-acclaimed educationist J. S. Farrant argues that the needs of a particular society determine the content of its education curricula. He states:

The curriculum represents the distilled thinking of society on what it wants to achieve through education. It tends to mirror society itself, reflecting its aims, values and priorities. It spells out clearly the knowledge society considers important and useful. It identifies those physical and mental skills that society prizes, and adopts those methods which it approves. (Farrant 2004, p. 24)

Since society is dynamic, its needs are bound to change with time, so a curriculum must change to reflect the current situation (Awudi 2023, p. 194). Many parts of the African continent, especially cities, are overwhelmed with filth. It would be unwise to do theological education without a curriculum on ecology (Awudi 2023, p. 194). Thus, the inclusion of ecotheology in the ministerial formation curriculum at the Pentecost School of Theology and Mission is aimed at equipping church ministers to inspire their members. In the CoP, pastors play a crucial role in the life of the church. CoP pastors are involved in training a large number of lay leaders who intend to have contact with the over 3 million church members at least once a week. The Pentecost School of Theology and Mission trains an average of 110 pastors every year. Training the pastors in ecotheology is a model that can truly impact the entire church with time. Now, there is increasing environmental awareness and action at the grassroots of the church. Therefore, the authors recommend that every minister of the CoP who has not had the opportunity to receive any training in ecotheology should be given the opportunity to do so through refresher courses.⁵ This will equip and inspire them to, in turn, motivate their congregations to actively participate in creation care initiatives.

5.2. Rediscovering the Great Commission

Though the CoP has organized the environmental care campaign for six years now, and some successes have been chalked in the area of tree planting and the creation of awareness among church members about preserving the environment, there remain some gaps in the integration of the eco-mission into the mainstream mission, as pointed out earlier. To maximize the impact of creation care in the CoP and effectively integrate eco-mission into

the church's mission, this article recommends a discovery of the true meaning of the Great Commission. In addition to soul-winning, the Great Commission is about sending the Good News of the kingdom to the whole universe (Mk. 16:15; cf. Matt. 28:19–20). Some commentators have limited the phrase 'all creation' in Mark 16:15 (an anchor text of the Great Commission) to the human community (See [Barclay 1955](#), p. 370; also see [Henry 2008](#), p. 1447). However, the Great Commission is to bring back harmony in the *oikos* through the preaching of the good news of reconciliation (Mk. 16:15, cf. Matt. 28:19–20). Therefore, there is a link between the work on the cross and the redemption of all creation, as in the words of the Apostle Paul, "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19–21).

Brandon Hubbard-Heitz states, "Early Pentecostals were not so interested in developing any sort of systematic hermeneutic of human-occupied space as they were into soul-winning, healing and Spirit Baptism" ([Hubbard-Heitz 2014](#), p. 23). The scarcity of green theology within Pentecostalism stems primarily from an anthropocentric interpretation of core doctrines, such as eschatology, which has resulted in the marginalization of earth-care initiatives. Andrew Walls points out that "The Great Commission . . . is wider than has often been recognized" ([Walls 2022](#), p. 147). It extends beyond the borders of the human community to include the community of the other-than-human species.

While scholars such as John Mackenzie and David N. Livingstone argue that Protestant missionaries integrated missions with science in certain African contexts through education and medical practice, ([Mackenzie 2003](#); [Livingstone 2005](#)). Pentecostal churches with African roots, like the Christ Apostolic Church in Ghana and Nigeria, have historically been resistant to embracing science, technology, and medicine until recently ([Larbi 2001](#), p. 105). Amos Yong argues that throughout the history of the modern Pentecostal movement, from its inception to the present, Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders have fulfilled the Great Commission without thoroughly examining the intersection of science, technology, and theology.⁶ Yong advocates for an inclusive understanding of the Great Commission, encompassing the stewardship of creation and the earth. He contends that Pentecostalism's conventional methodology has been overly specialized, focusing solely on human conversion.

However, the Great Commission does not exclude the other-than-human community. Walls understand the Great Commission as a call to disciple all nations, integrating their cultural heritage and environmental stewardship within a Christian worldview ([Walls 2022](#), p. 147). This resonates with Kwame Bediako's assertion that the Gospel is about orienting all aspects of life, including the natural environment, toward Christ ([Bediako 1997](#), p. 4). As Mark 16:15 and Bediako imply, the good news of the Kingdom involves a far-reaching transformation, surpassing individual conversion, baptism, and future hope to include the rejuvenation of the early systems, structures, and relationships within the *oikos*. "The first commission to humanity (Gen. 1:28; 2:15) was to maintain the balance in the ecosystem, but this was marred by sin" ([Awudi 2023](#), p. 40). Ultimately, the Great Commission seeks to reclaim the *oikos's* original harmony through the transformative power of the Gospel's reconciling message (Mk. 16:15, cf. Matt. 28:19–20) ([Awudi 2023](#), p. 39). The cross of Christ bridges the divide between humanity's salvation and the redemption of all creation.

5.3. Rebranding the Pentecost Christology

Influential scholars advocate for a revised understanding of the "Full Gospel" Christology of Pentecostals to bolster Pentecostalism's response to environmental crises. For example, Shane Clifton's book chapter, "Preaching the Full Gospel in the Context of Global

Environmental Crises”, proposes an environmentally informed revision of Pentecostal Christology, adapting the “Full Gospel” for eco-friendly relevance (Clifton 2009, p. 117; see also Lamp 2014, pp. 152–68). Jeffrey S. Lamp also makes a similar call for reimagining the Full Gospel to respond to ecological care (Lamp 2014, p. 68). However, a superficial rebranding of the traditional Full Gospel does not adequately address the complexities of environmental crises, requiring a more holistic approach. According to Steven Jack Land, the “Full Gospel” “consists of five elements—salvation, sanctification, healing, Holy Spirit baptism, and eschatology” (Land 2010, p. 7). Traditionally, the Pentecostal movement often combines sanctification with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, resulting in the quintessential “Full Gospel” framework: Jesus as Saviour, Healer, Baptizer with the Holy Spirit, and Soon-Coming King, often termed the “Four-Square Gospel”.

Although contextualizing the “Full Gospel” for environmental sustainability is commendable, it frequently neglects essential theological components, specifically the doctrine of God and Christ’s creative role, which are usually absent in conventional “Full Gospel” formulations (Awudi 2023, p. 7). Similarly, Kwame Bediako believes that any attempt to limit Gospel explanations to the New Testament or the incarnation of Christ risks oversimplification (Bediako 1997). Thus, any response to ecological crises developed from just the five or four elements of the “Full Gospel” or pneumatology not only renders such an eco-praxis narrow and inadequate but also does not represent a holistic Pentecostal theology (Awudi 2023, p. 7). Awudi, in his doctoral thesis, suggests six components to make the “Full Gospel” hexagonal (Awudi 2023, p. 184). He argues, “Thus, instead of the Full Gospel being pentagonal, he proposes a Hexagonal Gospel as the new paradigm for the ‘Full Gospel’ as Jesus the Creator, Saviour, Healer, Baptizer of the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, and the Soon-Coming King” (Awudi 2023, p. 184). Aside from adding the sixth component to the “Full Gospel”, all the elements need to be rebranded to eliminate their anthropocentric tendencies (Awudi 2023). First, the “Full Gospel” now begins with Christ the Creator as with biblical supports from Genesis 1:1, John 1:1–3, Colossians 1:15, and Ephesians 1:10. Second, Christ is not only the saviour of the human soul but all creation. If sin broke the relationship between God and all creation, then salvation in Christ must lead to the mending of all broken relationships. Thus, redemption in Christ is meaningless unless it is linked to a total liberation of all creation, as posited by the Apostle Paul (Rom. 8:19–21). Third, Christ the Healer does not only heal the human creation but the sick creation. In addition, Harold Hunter advised Pentecostals to extend divine healing to the sick creation. For him, Pentecostals must use the power in the finished work on the cross to heal the sick creation before the sick creation makes them sick (Hunter 2000, p. 146). Fourth, the empowerment of the Spirit is not only for casting out demons, healing the sick and living holy lives but also for living in harmony with all creation, working for their welfare (Awudi 2023, p. 88). It is also for the sanctification of both human and the other-than-human species. Lastly, the eschatological view of Pentecostals should not make them lose focus on their responsibility toward the earth. This article contends that just as the other-than-human creation benefited from the typologies of eschatology in the Old Testament (the deluge in Noah’s time, and the redemption of Israel from Egypt), all creation will also benefit from the return of Christ. Increasing Pentecostal involvement in creation care requires a doctrinal adjustment. We must move from a primarily human-focused approach to one that integrates environmental concerns and stewardship.

6. Conclusions

The CoP’s “Possessing the Nations” Agenda represents a significant evolution in the relationship between Pentecostal-Charismatic communities and the domains of science and technology. Historically, these groups exhibited a degree of ambivalence toward scientific

inquiry and technological advancement, often relegating them to a secondary status in the context of spiritual and theological discourse. However, the incorporation of eco-missions into their agenda marks a pivotal departure from this trend. This integration signals a holistic understanding of the church's missional purpose, one that is increasingly attuned to the pressing ecological crises facing the planet. By adopting an eco-mission, the CoP not only acknowledges the urgent need for environmental stewardship but also aligns its theological framework with contemporary scientific understandings of creation care. This shift highlights a renewed commitment to the biblical mandate of caring for God's creation, thereby reinforcing the church's relevance in today's socio-environmental context.

Despite this notable progress, there remain significant gaps in the effective integration of eco-mission within the church's broader mission. Addressing these gaps requires a multifaceted approach, including a reinterpretation of Christology and the Full Gospel to incorporate an ecological ethos. This reinterpretation should emphasize the interconnectedness of all creation and the moral imperative to safeguard the environment as an inherent expression of faith. The establishment of a robust biblical foundation for creation care is essential. This foundation should draw from scriptural tenets that advocate for environmental sustainability and the well-being of future generations, thus encouraging congregations to embrace ecological responsibility as an integral part of their spiritual practice. By strengthening emerging models of ecological engagement and cultivating a deeper theological understanding of creation care, the Church of Pentecost can solidify its mission in a way that is both faithful to its heritage and responsive to the ecological challenges of our time.

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Notes

- ¹ In this article, the word "Trees" is used metaphorically to represent eco-missions or the environment. Trees evoke important imagery and symbolism, making them an effective metaphor for representing the environment in Ghana. Using "Trees" as a metaphor creates an imaginary green climate encompassing a healthy environment's cultural, ecological, economic, and visual significance.
- ² Vision 2023 represents a comprehensive five-year strategic plan formulated by the Church of Pentecost, delineating the church's focal points and objectives from November 2018 to October 2023. Following the conclusion of this period, the church conducted an assessment of the vision's achievements and subsequently formulated a successor plan known as Vision 2028, which encompasses the period from November 2023 to October 2028.
- ³ Kasoa was selected as the research site for its proximity to the researchers, as well as its significance in the Church of Pentecost's (CoP) environmental initiatives. Notably, Kasoa was the community where the CoP conducted its first clean-up exercise in 2023, following the launch of the initiative on 22 November 2018.
- ⁴ Kasoa is a cosmopolitan city with people from different backgrounds. Politically, part of Kasoa is in the Central Region, while part is in the Greater Accra Region. In the CoP's administration, Kasoa is considered Greater Accra. The composition of the city

in terms of gender, age distribution, and economic diversity makes it an important location for research, apart from its proximity to researchers. Again, the two churches were selected because of their proximity to the researchers and their multicultural, multigenerational and diverse socio-cultural composition.

⁵ Pastors who were trained in the CoP before 2020 did not have the opportunity to study ecotheology.

⁶ He made this claim at a conference held in March 2018 at Duke University on the theme, ‘Sighs, Signs and Significance: Pentecostal and Wesleyan Exploration of Creation and Science’, the Pentecostal theologian, Amos Yong, presented a paper captioned ‘Introduction: Pentecostalism, Science, and Creation: New Voices in the Theology—Science Conversation’.

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