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An Investigation into the role of Eco-Praxis and Sustainable Environmental Development of Selected African Indigenous Churches: Towards Reimagining the Full Gospel of African Pentecostal Churches

The emergence of several zoonotic diseases including SARS-COV, MERS-COV, Bird Flu, H1N1, Lassa fever, Ebola, and the recent Covid-19 in the 21st century seem to be pointing fingers at the kinds of violence being meted out to flora and fauna. Ecocide from the human species has resulted in several forms ecological crises including global warming, radioactive poisoning, loss of wild/marine habits, and food web/chain poisoning, resulting in the epidemics/pandemics that have plagued the world.

Despite the consequences, Pentecostalism, the fastest growing church tradition in Africa, has done little to sustain the environment. One of the major causes has to do with the anthropocentric interpretations of their major doctrines popularly known in their circles as the 'Full Gospel' or 'Four-Fold' Gospel – Jesus the Savior, the Healer, the Baptizer of the Holy Spirit, and the Soon Coming King. But aside from the 'Full Gospel' neglecting the *creatio ex-nihilo* and *ex-vetere* roles of Christ, it is also usually anthropocentrically interpreted and excludes ecological ethos.

Some African Instituted Churches, however, show evidence of eco-praxis, contributing to sustainable development. This paper will investigate some of these eco-praxes in some selected African Instituted Churches – Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Zimbabwean Earthkeepers, Mosuma Disco Christo and Ossa-Madih Churches in Ghana using interviews, archival records and observations. The paper aims to examine how they have cross-pollinated African primal eco-conservatory methods and biblical insights to form their own Eco-theologies and how this contributes to sustainable development. The paper aims to draw out evidence that may contribute towards reimagining African Pentecostal theologies (the Full Gospel) for the development of a Pentecostal ecotheology towards a sustainable environmental development.

Keywords: African Indigenous Churches, Pentecostalism, eco-praxis, Eco-Theology, sustainable environmental development