

Chapter Eight

THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN NIGERIA

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Executive Summary

Human existence would have been a farce without the environment just as without human beings, there would be nothing known as the environment. In fact without the environment, there wouldn't be a place where human beings can exist and without human beings tending and caring for the environment, it would have been a waste land without any benefit. The environment and human beings complement each other. This work attempts to bring to the fore the fact that one cannot talk about human beings and the environment without giving religion its pride of place especially with regards to the vital role God played in creation. In most parts of the world especially in Nigeria, the environment have been polluted due largely to the activities of the same human beings who ought to, and is expected to preserve it. The method used in data gathering

is basically the secondary source of data collection while the descriptive phenomenological approach of data analysis was adopted. Our findings revealed that religion has solution to every challenge human beings face in the world including environmental problems. The study proved that religion provides the most viable means through which effective environmental management can be achieved in Nigeria, since the three main religions practiced in Nigeria are rooted in environmental ethics and values. This work, therefore, maintains and concludes that managers and policy makers, government and non-governmental agencies; collaborating with religious leaders should lay more emphasis on religious values to achieve the sustenance of the environment for the good of humanity at large.

Keywords: Religion, Environment, Sustainability, Nigeria, Africa, Waste, Preservation

Introduction

The earth and its treasure base, is experiencing a siege from all aspects of human endeavors ranging from misuse and degradation of the environment that have become so easily spotted. These wanton disruptions go on every day and almost everywhere. Environmental degradation and its sustainability has become a major global concern owing to the fact of its importance to the continued survival of humanity and other living and non-living creatures. Nature, according to Pope John Paul 11, is one and indivisible reality such that a harm to one affects the other “because of the mutual connection in an ordered system” (Laudato Si’, 2015).

The unchecked activities of man has continued to degrade the integrity of the natural environment destroying its biodiversity and stripping it of its natural forest fauna, wastelands, waters, air, humidity and temperature. At the global level, the challenge is with persistent climatic change occasioned by global warming with the constant rise in sea level due mainly because of the concentration of the greenhouse gases. The situation is made worse on account of the development models based on the intensive use of fossil fuels which has remained the core element of the global energy system. Global warming is also a factor in the melting of the polar ice caps which can lead to the dangerous release of the methane gas and also responsible for the decomposition of frozen organic material which increases the emission of carbon dioxide (Laudato Si', 2015).

The Nigerian nation is not isolated from this widespread concern about sustainability of the environment. This concern is made worse as a result of increasing environmental degradation in the country. There is no doubting the fact that environmental degradation and poor sanitary conditions have affected Nigeria in recent years. These are particularly expressed in terms of environmental pollution, desertification, deforestation, and other adverse environmental conditions.

The human greed and insatiable appetite for exploration and exploitation of the environment and its resources via the false superintendence of scientific prowess have brought this calamitous situation for which it obviously lacks the capacity to proffer any desirable results cum solution. The question now is what strategy can be formulated to protect the environment and keep it intact for the present and future generation. This paper is of the view that attention must of necessity turn to religion as the final arbiter since it has the interpretative scheme to define the

place of nature and its ultimate meanings. This paper therefore is intended to explore the nexus between religion and environmental sustainability and the role religion can play in reversing the anomalies.

Conceptual clarification

The term **ecology** is derived from the Greek OIKOIC which means “living relation’. Ecology is defined as the ‘study of how organisms interact with one another and with their physical environment’. Their inter-relationship and distributions is shaped by both biotic and abiotic factors. Ecosystem however encompasses the community of living and non-living organisms such as air, water and mineral soil (Wikipedia 2010). It is concerned with creation and all within it especially the natural environment for the prime purpose of achieving their ultimate aim as destined by the creator and entrusted to man against the backdrop of responsible accountability and stewardship. Inferring from this, Chibuko (2016) opined that ecology underscores the interdependence of all creatures: animate and inanimate creatures of which without the support of the other organisms within the same system, living will largely be jeopardized. Such interdependence implies that predators and preys, fire and water, food and shelter, etc., remain in equilibrium with each other and with the environment around them.

According to the World Bank (1991) cited in Ogboru et al (2015), the environment is the natural and social conditions surrounding mankind including future generations. The environment as posited by Bayode, and Sogbon (2011), is made up of biophysical and natural environment of land, water and air. It also includes all layers in the atmosphere, inorganic and organic matters,

socio-economic components and processes of human endeavors. The elements mentioned here have a symbiotic relationship, any distortion of which could impact negatively. Emmanuel and Alakinde (2006), lending credence to the above asserted that land and associated resources, structures, sites, human health, nutrition and safety are also inclusive. Environment therefore is the natural habitat of man with several components within which various kinds of activities and processes occur.

According to National Conservation and Environment Protection Act (1987), environment include the physical factors of the surrounding of human beings, land, soil, water, atmosphere, climate, sound, odor, taste and the biological factors of animals and plants. Similarly, The Federal Environmental Protection Agency Act (1992) deposed environment to include water, air, land, and all plants and human beings, or animals living there in and the interrelationships which exists among these or any of them.

Sustainability has become the central focus in development studies and echoes notes of inter-generational equity in environmental resource utilization. The concept is diverse in application and meaning depending on the orientation and professional framework being used. Of central value to the concept are economic, technical, ecological, environmental, material and human resource base. The origin of the sustainability concept is traced to the Club of Rome Report titled *"Limits to Growth"* published in the early 1970s; the Brunt-land Report titled *"Our common future"* published in the 1980's and the "Agenda 21", a declaration of the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 are significant contributions to the development of the subject of sustainable development. According to International Union for the Conservation of Nature

(IUCN, 1980), the concept of sustainable development was first used and developed in the World Conservation Strategy. The document focused on three specific areas which have to do with the maintenance of ecological processes, the sustainable use of resources and maintenance of genetic diversity (Ogboru, 2015).

Sustainable environment involves the use of natural products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment. Sustainability therefore, is the balance between every component of environment – the human and the bio-physical environment (Wikipedia, 2009) in such a way as to avoid depletion or degradation of natural resources and allow for long term environmental quality. From the foregoing, sustainable environmental management is the one that recognizes the linkages between human and natural environment and integrates the well being of humankind and the other organisms. **Religion**, as a concept, has a considerably large number of definitions. All the definitions however emphasize certain aspect of religion and exclude others. While, some definitions tend to be too inclusive and easy to qualify as a religion, others are too exclusive and difficult to pass for a religion. According to Emile Durkheim (1912) “Religion is a unified system of belief and practices relative to sacred things, that is, things set apart and forbidden. This belief unites into one single community all those who adhere to them”. Here Durkheim makes distinction between the sacred and the profane. Sacred objects produce a sense of awe and respect which leads to veneration for which profane objects do not. As plausible as this functional definition may appear, it missed the link between religion and its transcendental origin which is very essential in drawing the line of demarcation between the sacred and the profane realms and in challenging some secular ideologies threatening religion,

which environmental degradation is one of them (Olumati, 2017).

For Robertson (1970) however, religion is viewed in terms of supernatural belief - it refers to the existence of supernatural being that has governing effect on life; while Spiro (1965) combined both supernatural element and institutional aspect of religion to define it "as an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally patterned superhuman beings". Although, none of the definitions given above is all embracing, it reveals, however, that religions comprise of sacred, supernatural and institutional elements. Thus, we can view religion as the system of culturally patterned faith that is based on the existence of sacred or supernatural.

From the foregoing, religion provides more general guidelines for action in the form of beliefs, values, and system of meaning which is necessary for value consensus, social order and collective conscience. Every society or group evaluates the behavior of its members as appropriate or otherwise through the acceptable concepts about what is good, right or desirable, known as value. The concept of value is defined by Tukur, (1999) as "a conception of the desirable which influences or guides in the selection of one from any number of available means and end action". Schaefer (2004) also sees values as collective conception of what is considered good, desirable, and proper, or bad, undesirable, and improper in a given culture. It is logical to assert that values influence people's behavior and serve as criteria for evaluating the action of others. Religious value, therefore, can be explained as the conception of desirable standards or principles dictated by the belief system.

Lessons from Genesis and *Laudato Si'*

Like every myth of origin, the two Genesis stories of the beginning of all things (Genesis I: 1-2, 4 and 2: 4-25) have been used to explain and justify the ways human beings relate to one another and to the non-human world. As narratives of how things came to be and depictions of how things were and presumably ought to be, these creation stories have been elaborated into cosmologies and theories of the soul and twisted into ideological support for male dominance and industrial exploitation.

The first of the two stories has been the basis of both the overlordship and stewardship images for the role of humanity in the natural world. God proclaimed:

Let us make the human being in our image and likeness ... God blessed them, saying to them, 'Be fertile and increase; fill the whole earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and all the living things that move on the earth' (Gen. 1:26 and 28).

Part of the human being's likeness to God is the exercise of dominion over the rest of creation. The twin images of being given dominion and being commanded to subdue the earth and all the creatures which fill it are closely connected with sovereignty. God's sovereignty is asserted often in the Hebrew Scriptures. Here the image and likeness of God, the human being, is entrusted with sovereignty. From the perspective of the first creation myth in Genesis, without such dominion and power over the rest of creation, the human being would not be 'like God'.

This is a central theme of the second creation myths recorded in Genesis 2:4b-25. The dominion motive is depicted in the first human being naming all the animals that God has made and led before him 'to see what he would call them' (Gen. 2:19). All other creatures will be what the human being says they are - certainly an extraordinary statement of the power over creation given by God to humanity. But the context of this conferral is the human hunger for companionship. In the first of the creation myths, the first divine judgment on humanity is that it is 'very good' (Gen. 1:31). That judgment is made on humanity that was differentiated into male and female, and as relational beings. The first judgment of God regarding human beings in the second myth makes this even more explicit. Having fashioned the human being from the dust of the earth and breathed the divine breath into him, God announces that 'it is not good for the human being to be alone' (Gen. 2:18). Again there is the insistence that human beings are meant to be in relationship to one another. Thus, in this second creation story, companionship is the explicit ground given for the creation of the two sexes. But it is important to note not only human beings are intended for relationship to one another. This is also the reason for the creation of 'the various wild beasts and birds of the air' (Gen. 2:19). The natural world is not merely intended for subjugation by human beings but for companionship.

In keeping with the spirit of this scripture, Pope Francis declared that the earth existed before us and it has been given to us. This allows us to respond to the charge that Judeo-Christian thinking, on the basis of the Genesis account which grants man "dominion" over the earth (Genesis 1:28), has encouraged the unbridled exploitation of nature by painting him as domineering and destructive by nature. This of course is a contradiction of the intentions of the creator which as a matter of fact must be

forcefully rejected. The notion of our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth does not in any way justify absolute domination over other creatures. The biblical texts are therefore to be read in their proper context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing injunction to 'till and keep' the garden of the world (Genesis 2:15). 'Tilling' refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while 'keeping' means caring, between human beings and nature. Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations. 'The earth is the Lord's' (Ps24:1); to him belongs 'the earth with all that is within it' (Deut. 10:14). God rejects every claim to absolute ownership: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me".

This responsibility for God's earth means that human beings, endowed with intelligence, must respect the laws of nature and the delicate equilibrium existing between the creatures of this world. The scripture was also explicit to indicate that these relationships are not only among individuals but also with other living beings. 'You shall not see your brother's donkey or his Ox fallen down by the way and withhold your help... If you chance to come upon a bird's nest in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting upon the young or upon the eggs; you shall not take the mother with the young' (Duet. 22:4, 6). Along these same lines, rest on the seventh day is meant not only for human beings, but also so "that your ox and your don-key may have rest" (Ex 23:12). Clearly, the Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism unconcerned for other creatures (Laudato Si' 2015).

Dominion over the earth and all that it contains the command 'to fill the whole earth and subdue it' certainly this conveys power. Such a claim to power by human beings over all non-human creation contains the possibility, all too often realized, of mindless domination and exploitation of the earth. Clearly the claim to power must be balanced by the call to responsibility, which no doubt include consistent traditional appeal to stewardship. The relationship between humanity and the rest of creation has often been as that of a caretaker, which is, being charged by God with the maintenance of the earth. The non-human world has been given to human beings for our good, to be used responsibly for our self-development, as co-creators and to answer to our purposes and thus to fulfill God's purpose in creating it as the First Cause. To be sure, this stewardship image prohibited wanton wastefulness, the mere exploitation of nature by humankind. The world is presented as a garden given into our care to be tended and nurtured. But undeniably the role of stewardship carries the implication that non-human creation is to be used.

The theme of companionship, the relationship which exists not only between human persons but between humans and non-humans, has been largely submerged in the stewardship theme. We need to recover it. Companionship implies mutuality. It excludes the reduction of either side of the relationship to a tool of the other's purposes.

Effects of environment on religion

If the mythology of the Hebrew Scripture as given in the creation account of the Book of Genesis 2: 7-20 is to be taken as already stated above, the foundation of the interactions between man and the environment becomes very explicit and relevant. From this biblical narrative, man is a product of the earth (sand), "then

the lord God formed the man of dust from the ground” (Genesis 2:7), and he received life through the gift of air. “And he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”. The narrative went further to state that “out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food”. Here lies the basis for the relationship between religion, man and the environment. Man and his environment is from one and the same source – God. At his expiration like all other mortals, he returns to the same dust (not unmindful of his ultimate destiny) adding to the nutritive value of the soil of the environment for its sustainability.

The environment serves the needs of man, including his religious need. There is nothing in religion that does not come from environment. In Christianity and in particular the orthodox churches, Christ crucified on the Cross is the hallmark of Christian faith always represented symbolically in the ‘wood of the Cross’. This wood is made from plant trees. Other religious images/status, artifacts, including alters and ambos, pews and the entire church buildings are products of the environment. In the liturgical setting as in the Catholic Church as in most Protestant Churches like the Anglican Church, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church etc, the Eucharistic species like the bread and wine are made of wheat flour and vine grapes respectively. The Olive Oil for the anointing of the sick, baptism, confirmation and Sacerdotal Ordinations are sourced from the olive tree plant. Still from the plant trees, the palm fronds is used for the ritual celebration of Christ triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-48) otherwise known as Palm or Passion Sunday. The dried palm fronds used for the Palm Sunday are burnt to produce ashes marked on the foreheads of Christians on Ash Wednesday to mark the beginning of the Lenten season. It

is also used to mark the thanksgiving for the fruitful annual harvest. In some African independent churches, (Cherubim and Seraphim and Celestial Churches) and the traditional African religion, it is used for exorcism. Some masquerades do wear palm fronds as part of their paraphernalia in most African communities. This is true of the *Eri Wangbe Olo and Obi-Okirika*, masquerades among the Ubima people of Ikwerre in Rivers State, Nigeria. The *Mini Nnumu* worshippers in Ubima community and traditional medicine doctors also use the palm fronds in decorating their shrines. This is also common among almost all Nigerian communities.

Water is another religious element used among the three major religions in Nigeria and beyond. There are notable passages in the Judeo-Christian scriptures on the use of water for religious purposes, as can be discerned with Neman the Leper and the miraculous cure (2 Kings.5). It is used for Christian initiation, baptism (Matthew 3:13-17). Water is used in Islam before *salat* for ablution (*wudu*) and '*mauda*' (ablution fountain) which is a central feature of each mosque, and placed strategically for the *Umas*. In African traditional religion it is also used for ritual cleansing.

African traditional healers collect water from rivers and streams since they are believed to possess healing powers from the spirit residing in them. Some water bodies are also dedicated and believed to have healing powers (Fatubarin, 2014). The members of some Christian religious sects also have Prayer Mountains, which they occasionally frequent, to offer prayers. This is a practice in imitation of such Patriarchs like Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, who while on their mission on earth did occasionally visit some mountains and deserts for private prayers and fasting (Mt.3;1, 4;1-11, Isaiah 40;3). These prayer

mountains continue to exist among Christian people as they often move to lonely and deserted places for prayers and fasting, to say the least, pilgrimages. It must also be mentioned that some religions, and in particular, African Traditional Religion, dedicate certain forests as sacred forests and sacred groves.

Some positive effects of Man's interaction with the environment

The interactions of the natural environment with man, is expectedly, not a one-way affair. Man is not only benefitting from the natural environment, he too is also blessing the natural environment in different ways.

Such benefits as noted by Fatubarin (2003), includes the following:

- Boosting the biological productivity of the natural environment, through his activities in plant biodiversity in such things as crop production, forestry and horticultural activities and his activities in animal biodiversity, in such things as livestock production, poultry, fisheries and wildlife management.
- Conserving the biological resources in form of plant and animal biodiversity and the non biological resources such as rocks, mineral resources, petroleum resources, natural gas and the atmospheric resources of the biologically important gases such as oxygen, carbon dioxide and nitrogen and the rare gases.
- Mankind has succeeded in controlling a large number of diseases, parasites and pests afflicting his biological resources of plants and animals.
- Mankind has adopted strategies such as a forestation, crop rotation, land reclamation, establishment of shelterbelts among others, to conserve the terrestrial environment and

planting of stream banks with appropriate species of plants and specialized engineering works along coastal areas, to conserve aquatic environments.

Some negative effects of Man's interaction with the environment

Nigeria has one of the worst environmental records in the world (Butler, 2008) due to mindless exploitation which has led to the depletion and degradation of the environment. The impacts are manifested in widespread social and environmental problems ranging from oil spillage, biodiversity, desertification, pollutions, urbanization, de-forestation and so on. The combined effects of these and many other environmental features have resulted in a visible and alarming rate of degradation in its environment, causing great damage to the land and bringing sorrow and poverty to many Nigerians.

Oil spillage is a common environmental challenge of the Niger Delta. The region has had the worst effect of oil spillage. There are numerous instances a case in hand is the Exxon Valdez in Asaka 1989, one of the worst oil spillage in history. This gives the Niger Delta the 'honor' of being one of the polluted places in history due to oil exploitation. Ogoniland is not left out as one of the severely damaged area of the region (UNEP, 2011). The UNEP report has it that the Benzene levels 900 times higher than World Health Organization recommendations and with oil in the soil five meters below the surface.

Desertification is common in the northern region of Nigeria with the desert encroachment on land that was once fertile. The features to deserts are barren lands, waterless and treeless (Omofonwan and Osa- Edoh, 2008). The states affected by desertification accounts for about 38% of the country's total land

area (Agagu, 2009). In these areas, population pressure, resulting in overgrazing, over exploitation for fuel wood of mangrove land and aggravated drought due to global warming have accelerated the rate of desertification (Ogunkan, 2015). This challenge is made worse by the massive water impoundment and irrigation schemes. It is estimated that Nigeria is losing 0.6 kilometers of land to desertification each year. The reports from FORMECU (1997, 1998 cited in Ogunkan, 2015) show the increase in the total areas lost to sand dunes from 812 sq km in 1976 to 4829 in 1995. Desertification is a serious environmental problem which has led to famine, diseases, and destruction of crops, livestock and man. Environmental pollution has been categorized into three groups: The air or atmospheric pollution, aquatic or water pollution and land pollution (Omofonwan and Osa- Edoh, 2008). However, municipal and industrial pollution constitute the two major sources of pollution in Nigeria. It is disheartening that most Nigerian cities lack proper solid waste management scheme and the monitoring of industrial waste is inefficient (Agagu, 2009). Despite the low level of industrialization in the country, industrial waste pollution still poses a major threat to Nigerian environment. This is made manifest in the percolation of effluent from industrial process into public drains and rivers thereby contaminating the surface or ground water. It is imperative to say that petroleum industry contributes a significant quota to Nigeria's environmental pollution (Agagu, 2009). This is manifested in incessant oil pipeline spill incidents, equipment malfunctioning, corrosion of aged pipelines, sabotage of oil installations by militants and oil thieves.

Deforestation increases water flow over the land surface, as rain will fall directly to the ground, no longer being impeded by vegetation cover. This will probably lead to the magnitude and

frequency of flooding, soil erosion increased sediment loads in rivers, slopes instability, and degradation of adjacent lands (Ityavyar and Tyav, 2012). As noted by Agagu (2009), Nigeria is among the countries with the world's highest deforestation rate of primary forest today as half of its primary forest has been lost to deforestation in the recent past. In 2006, UNEP estimated the annual deforestation in Nigeria to have covered 663,000ha with an annual national deforestation rate of 0.76%. It also affirms that the deforestation rate in southwestern geopolitical zone doubles that of national average. The major cause of this problem is the rapidly growing population with attendant higher demand for agricultural land, livestock production and fuel woods. The repeated cultivation of crops on cleared area of plant also plunders the forest and exhausts the soil and its mineral contents (Omiegbe, 1998). The increasing global demands for agricultural developments, urban growth, industrial expansion, and pressure from increasing population have had profound impact on the deforestation in Nigeria. This has ultimately reduced the extent, diversity and stability of the Nigerian forest.

Erosion is one of the most critical environmental pollution affecting different parts of the country and this is particularly expressed in two types: soil erosion and coastal erosion. Soil erosion is particularly severe in parts of the Nigeria underlain by sandy formation and are said to be prevalent in the states like Edo, Anambra, Imo, and Enugu. (Agagu, 2009). This problem is aggravated by such factors as increased agricultural activities, civil construction works, and deforestation, bush burning, over grazing, drainage blockage, poor waste management, urbanization and increased population pressure. On the other hand, coastal erosion is highly visible on Nigeria's coastline as 853km along Nigeria coastland are prone to coastal erosion (Agagu, 2009). This constitutes a series of ecological concern

especially because a large percentage of Nigeria's population and economic activities are located within coastal zone.

Religion as the conscience of the society on environmental sustainability

There is no doubt from the foregoing that the environment is of great benefit to humans in their continued survival; just as humans are to the environment for its sustainability. There is however the need for religion to be involved and take the lead far more than it has been, in the affairs of man in his environment. Religion can take advantage of its spread and influence in society to positively engage in environmental advocacy. It has influenced the culture of the people as well as their education. This call is urgent because, it is only through the timely intervention of religion on environmental issues, that humankind can be restrained from certain activities that are inimical to the environment. To stem the tide of things in relation to diverse ecological challenges of the natural environment brought about by humankind; religion has an enormous role to play (Kanu 2015). This is due largely to the following:

- Religion as a major institution among the people, has a large followership in virtually all countries of the world; and so has an influence over a large number of people.
- It is an institution in which enlightened people and even professionals are present in their large numbers.
- It is an institution that has much influence over the people and governments which is positioned to make positive influence to bare on the attitude of people towards their environment.
- Since the environment has a vantage role to play in human existence irrespective of their level of education, economic status, sex or religion, believers of different faiths naturally

are thrust with responsibilities towards environmental management for its sustainability.

Having identified the influence religion have on the society vis-a-vis the environment, it can go further to impact on the environment by way of advocacy in the following area:

- Educating, Enlightening and creating awareness on diverse issues that relate to the environment. This can be effective through admonition from the pulpits and various other religious gatherings.
- Participation in different activities within the environment aimed at tending, nurturing and managing the same.
- Bringing to the limelight the implications of certain social vices that has direct and indirect adverse effect and its subsequent implications on the environment.
- Encouraging political leaders and the people they lead to appreciate and offer the people good governance and its impact on the environment.
- Admonish the people on certain programmes that have positive impact on the environment, bearing in mind that they will possibly stand before the Creator of all things; including the environment, to give account after this mortal existence.

Conclusion

The global environmental crisis is certainly as a result of lack of self discipline of scientific knowledge propelled by greed. There is no doubt that the scientific knowledge disregards the perennial wisdom of the world's religious or spiritual traditions while laying emphasis on rights over obligations particularly in the context of natural environment. A cursory glance at Nigerian environmental profile presents a heartrending situation. Nigeria is confronted with enormous environmental challenges. For instance, Nigeria has been identified to have one of the worst

environmental records in the world (Butler, 2008). Agagu (2009) also confirmed Nigeria to be one of the worst environmentally stressed region in the world. This abysmal record underlines Nigeria's vulnerability to environmental risks and lack of effective environmental management strategy to respond to the threats in a sustainable manner.

As effective environmental management in Nigeria remains elusive, this study has proved that religion provides the most viable means through which this could be achieved. The three main religions in Nigeria no doubt are rooted in environmental ethics and values which could be an all important solution to achieving sustainable environmental management in Nigeria.

Therefore, in their bid to solve the seemingly intractable environmental problems in Nigeria, environmental managers and policy makers, governments, non-governmental organizations, religious leaders and general public are encouraged to lay more emphasis on the religious value as it relates to sustainable environment. This will go a long way in formulating an effective and acceptable environmental management strategy in the country (Nigeria) in particular, and the world at large.

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