

## Eco-Theology - The theological foundation of creation care

- ▶ I) 2000 years of creation theology - 50 years of eco-theology: Rethinking the Dominium Terrae Concept of Gen 1,28b and moving towards a concept of Care, Stewardship and Responsibility (Gen 2,15)
- ▶ II) ETCF Report: Eco-Theology, climate justice and food security in theological education - global survey 2016
- ▶ III) The Volos Manifesto for an Ecological Reformation of World Christianity 2016
- ▶ IV) Kairos for Creation - The Wuppertal Call 2019 - How to Mobilize People's Passion for the Planet?
- ▶ V) EKD Study Paper on Animal Ethics, Food Ethics and Sustainability Sept 2019 (EKD Texte 133)
- ▶ VI) Kairos for Creation: What is the Basis of Hope in a Time of Despair?

# I) 2000 years of creation theology - 50 years of eco-theology: Rethinking the Dominium Terrae Concept of Gen 1,28b and moving towards a concept of Care, Stewardship and Responsibility (Gen 2,15)

Discovery of the eco-theological dimension in the ecumenical movement after 1961 due to

- a) the influence of orthodoxy and its cosmocentric ecclesiology/pneumatology,
- b) the beginning dialogue between faith and natural science and
- c) the insights of modern biblical scholarship + modern schools of thought

- Crucial Role of Bukarest Conference 1974 “Role of Science, Technology for Human Development” is the birth place of the ecumenical concept of Sustainability (**almost 20 years before UN Rio Conference 1992!**)

- Definition: a pattern of development in which environmental pollution is kept well under the capacities of the eco-system to absorb pollution; in which utilization of non-renewable energy resources is lower than what can be made available as new resources; human activities are to be held within the boundaries of natural climate conditions.

## II) ETCF Report: Eco-Theology, climate justice and food security in theological education - global survey 2016

- ▶ Global Report on Eco-Theology, Climate Justice and Food Security in Theological Education 2014
- ▶ two thirds argue that their regional context is already heavily affected by the effects of climate change, though only one third of the theological schools say that they have had experiences with interdisciplinary courses on eco-theology.
- ▶ 65% of respondents argue that they would definitely need more resources and there is an immense need for strengthening ETCF learning

### III) The Volos Manifesto for an Ecological Reformation of World Christianity 2016

- ▶ Classical European Reformation 500 years ago focused on Christology as the relationship between man/women and God and the understanding of salvation and grace was at stake.
- ▶ 500 years later a more comprehensive theological approach is needed as the relationship between God and the whole of creation is at stake and humankind and its behavior has altered and challenged the sensitive balances within creation (anthropocene)
- ▶ We need an ecological reformation of the whole of Christianity to develop a trinitarian perspective of eco-theology and to go beyond an “anthropocentric despotism” (Pope Francis Laudato Si)

## IV) Kairos for Creation - The Wuppertal Call 2019 - How to Mobilize People's Passion for the Planet?

- ▶ A new sense of the urgency of the ecological crisis
- ▶ Listening and feeling with suffering creation (Rom 8,22)
- ▶ Christians need to confess their involvement in the root causes of the crisis
- ▶ God is still present with his promise to renew the face of the earth (Ps 104,30)
- ▶ There shall be “a year of complete rest for the land”(Lev 25.5.) - this calls for a declaration of a “Decade for the Healing of Creation” to be started during the next assembly of WCC in 2021 in Karlsruhe

## V) EKD Study Paper on Animal Ethics, Food Ethics and Sustainability Sept 2019 (EKD Texte 133)

- ▶ We need to reread key biblical texts on the relation between humankind, animals and God (Koh 3,19; Ex 20,10; Jes 11,6a)
- ▶ Animals are co-creatures of humankind and gifted with the spirit of God (Ps 150,6)
- ▶ The system of industrialized agriculture which treats animals only as industrial products need to be reformed in terms of more animal welfare and sustainability criteria
- ▶ Our rates of meat consumption in western countries are not sustainable in the long run

## VI) Kairos for Creation: What is the Basis of Hope in a Time of Despair?

- ▶ We need to go beyond certain distortions and false ways in theological reflection (**Granvollen 1988: WCC consultation on integrity of creation**)
- ▶ Obstacles and distortions in developing a holistic theology of creation:
- ▶ - **theological reductionism**: individualized and spiritualized conceptualization of salvation;
- ▶ **Natural science based, technological hybris**: ecological crisis is only a technological problem;
- ▶ **Leaning towards a romantic reconceptualization of nature**: back to untouched nature;
- ▶ **Resignative neo-apocalyptic perceptions**: ecological crisis as pre-sign of the final end of this world to come soon for only the faithful to be rescued;
- ▶ **Utopianism of an ideal world**: perfectionist and ideal world without conflicting goals and interests is possible;
- ▶ **Fatalistic attitudes**: we cannot do anything as the world cannot be changed;
- ▶ **“Not my problem” - attitudes**: ecology only as an issue for the industrialized countries;
- ▶ Instead: The promise of the covenant of Noah: God has not abandoned this earth; The covenant is made with every living creature, for all future generations (Gen 9,12)