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Edited by
M. Christian Green
Muhammed Haron

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5 PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE THROUGH THE PRISM OF RASTAFARI IN ZIMBABWE

Fortune Sibanda¹

Rasta is the future!

– Bob Marley²

Let Rastafari be our guide in the environment so that ones and ones will get more educated on the laws of Maat.

– Ancient Abuna³

INTRODUCTION

The environmental crisis is arguably one of the greatest global challenges of our time. This challenge is anchored on anthropogenic factors and has resulted in climactic disaster, global warming, and pollutions of land, air and water, which endanger the ecosystem.⁴ The gravity of this ecocide has been articulated thus: “People are being subjected to unhealthy environments by greedy developers; auto and oil industries, which resist alternative fuels and rapid transit; and industries that illegally pollute air, land and water.”⁵ Therefore, the introduction of toxic waste has become a huge problem without a straightforward or forthcoming respite. Because humanity is significantly blameworthy for the environmental and climate change crises, new “global ethic” and global responsibility are required to address these trans-boundary and cataclysmic developments. It is paradoxical that the effects of the environmental crisis have affected both the ethically “good” (“green”) and the ethically “bad” (“greedy”) in society. Amanda Machin, an environmentalist scholar, relying on the work of Lorraine Elliott, research expert in global environmental ethics, has made reference to this paradox in observing that environmental harms, including those of a changing climate, are “displaced” in various ways, so that those who cause the problem are not the ones most impaired by it, given that “transactions of environmental harm ... extend the bounds of those with whom we are connected, against whom we might claim rights and to whom

1 Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

2 Interview with Man Soul Jah by F Sibanda, Gweru, 8 September 2017. He used Bob Marley’s statement to illustrate Rastafari environmental stewardship. See “Bob Marley Interview Rastas, Cannabis and Politics”. Online at: <https://youtu.be/odYICsb9EuE> [Accessed 13 March 2020].

3 Interview with Ancient Abuna by F Sibanda, Harare, 11 March 2020. In addition, Ancient Abuna claimed that “Rastafari is ancient environmentalist”.

4 Sibanda F. 2012. “The Impact of Rastafari Ecological Ethic in Zimbabwe: A Contemporary Discourse”, *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 5(3):60.

5 Okonkwo I. 2011. “Ecological Crises: From the Perspective of Christianity and African Traditional religion”, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 141 (November):34.

we owe obligations within the moral community”.⁶ This has been the sad reality for most African states that are least industrialised as their Western counterparts. As such, the absurdity of climate change has prompted some to describe it as a parallax, suggesting that a multiplicity and diversity of standpoints attached to it exist.⁷ On that basis, diverse responses have been registered through political, environmental, economic and religious positions towards the environmental and climate crises challenges in Africa and the world over.

This chapter investigates the perceptions, responses and engagements of the Nyahbinghi Rastafarian community⁸ towards addressing the human-induced environmental crisis in Zimbabwe. The study focuses on the Rastafarian lifestyle and the award-winning participation of Rastafari youth in the Italian Embassy of Harare’s annual AMBIENTE-Art and the Environment project.⁹ This initiative aimed at sensitising and educating people on the effects of microplastic and nanoplastic on fish and birds through the “Death by Plastic” school competition. The competition caption was intended to coincide with World Environment Day theme of “Beat Plastic Pollution” for the year 2018. The chapter posits that despite being understudied, abused, misunderstood, marginalised, and sometimes not engaged in secular forums and inter-religious dialogues,¹⁰ Rastafari’s active participation and impact in contemporary efforts to stem the environmental challenges defies this new religious movement’s misrepresentation and negative rating in society. The chapter further demonstrates that Rastafari creativity in the art competition utilising plastic

6 Machin A. 2013. *Negotiating Climate Change: Radical Democracy and the Illusion of Consensus*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 33.

7 Machin, *Negotiating Climate Change*, 88. A parallax is an astronomical term that refers to difficulties of directly observing stars. It is an apparent displacement of an observed object due to different positions from which it is observed.

8 The Nyahbinghi Rastafari community in Zimbabwe consists of more than 8 houses. “Nyahbinghi” refers to one of the Rastafari groups in existence alongside others such as Bobo Ashanti and Twelve Tribes. For the purpose of this study individuals and Nyahbinghi Rastafari houses such as Chaminuka Nyahbinghi Rastafari House in Chitungwiza, Marcus Garvey Nyahbinghi Rastafari House in Epworth (Harare), Dzimbabwe Nyahbinghi Rastafari House in Glen Norah (Harare) and Cherutombo Nyahbinghi Rastafari House (Marondera), Sally Mugabe Nyahbinghi Rastafari House in Borrowdale Brook (Harare) and Dangwe Arts Centre are important to mention.

9 The AMBIENTE-Art and the Environment project competition was held at Lake Chivero on 15 June 2018. Online at: <https://www.facebook.com/ItalianEmbassyHarare/posts/ambiente-art-and-the-environment-death-by-plasticworld-environment-day-on-5-june/2028055847406963/>

10 See Afari Y. 2007. *Overstanding Rastafari: Jamaica’s Gift to the World*. Jamaica: Senya-Cum, n.p., where Yasus Afari, the Rastafarian author and adherent, noted with reference to Rastafari: “This epic movement of the millennium has been grossly misunderstood, as a consequence, The RASTAFARIANS are the most exploited, underutilized, underdeveloped, misused and abused natural resource at the disposal of the Jamaican-Caribbean community.” See Sibanda F. 2017. “Praying for Rain? A Rastafari Perspective from Zimbabwe”, *The Ecumenical Review* 69(3):412 [<https://doi.org/10.1111/erev.12303>].

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waste and their day-to-day environmentally-friendly lifestyles exhibit stewardship informed by an Afrocentric green philosophy and spirituality. Thus, the epigraph attributed to Bob Marley by a Rastafarian elder suggests that an integration of Rastafari ecosophy can transform society against the backdrop of climate change. The same sentiments can be read from Ancient Abuna's proclamation that Rastas are typical guides on environmental stewardship, in contrast to the lukewarm and Western consumerist approach of the local municipal authorities of Zimbabwe, which is detrimental to aquatic creatures, animal and human health.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The chapter uses a qualitative research methodology to examine the perspectives of Nyahbinghi Rastafari community on climate crisis in Zimbabwe and the world at large. As data gathering techniques, I used personal observation, face-to-face and telephone interviews, documentary analysis of Rastafari pamphlets such as the "Death by Plastic" school competition brochure and related electronic media, social media and print media that encompassed local newspapers and magazines. Through observation, I was exposed to the "Death by Plastic" collage and other Rastafarian paraphernalia and visual artefacts, such as toys and vases, made from recycled material that illuminated their environment-friendly lifestyles. The study also tapped insights from the historical, sociological and phenomenological approaches. The historical method enhanced the study to situate Rastafari environmental ethic in historical perspective at the backdrop of the global climatic disaster. The sociological method was vital in articulating the Rastafari *Ital* lifestyle of being in harmony with nature as a social capital that defines their individual and group identity in society. The way people relate to the environment as Mother Earth is a social fact worth interrogating. The phenomenological method provided a leeway to get the insider perspectives and experiences of Rastafarians on climate crisis through the use of *epoche* (bracketing) and empathy. In addition, descriptive accuracy and *eidetic* intuition (meaning of phenomena) are other elements utilised in the study from the phenomenological approach. Notwithstanding the weaknesses of these approaches, the present study employed their insights to describe and interpret phenomena under focus in a complementary fashion.

ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

This section provides a general picture on the benefits of engaging religious groups and spiritualities in responding to the global climate crisis. Statistics show that 85% of the world's population is affiliated with a religion and many of them have been active in the climate justice movement.¹¹ Engaging religions is essential to "human societies' relationships to their environments are shaped, often unconsciously,

11 Haluza-DeLay R. 2014. "Religion and Climate Change: Varieties in Viewpoints and Practices", *WIREs Climate Change* 5:267 [<https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.268>].

by religiously influenced worldviews, cosmologies, and value systems".¹² In a religiously pluralistic society where there is a melting pot of faiths, the mobilisation to address climate change is ambivalent. The diverse religious responses to climate change are comparable to those of fire-fighters in the metaphor of a hut on fire that was originally used by the World Council of Churches in the context of responses to HIV and AIDS.¹³ The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13, which focuses on climate action, has been a clarion call for all players, including religions, to take action, but there are also various responses towards it. However, in recent years, environmentalist scholar, Randolph Haluza-DeLay has expressed the optimism that climate change is "becoming an area of interfaith cooperation",¹⁴ notwithstanding the tremendous variety of religious groups and their impacts in confronting this human-induced phenomenon.

Christian action for ecojustice began in the 1960s through the pioneering work by Lynn White, a historian and ecologist,¹⁵ asserts that religions, particularly Western Christianity, are a major cause of the global ecological crisis, in spite of relatively current efforts on stewardship and climate justice. Christian teachings on stewardship and the environment are biblically based. Genesis 1:28 refers to the God-given dominion to humanity over plants and animals. These scriptures have been interpreted differently, with some Jewish scholars criticising this interpretation as a licence for subjugation and domination that results in an environmental crisis.¹⁶ Along the same lines, Norman Habel, an Old Testament scholar, critiqued the ambivalence of Judeo-Christian tradition on creation when he described the Bible as "An Inconvenient Text", which had "green texts" and "grey texts", where the latter do not show empathy and concern with creation and the Earth.¹⁷ The World

12 Moe-Lobeda C and Helmiere F. 2013. "Moral Power at the Religion-Development-Environmental Nexus", in Clarke M (ed). *Handbook of Research on Development and Religion*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 207.

13 See Dube MW. 2009. "On Being Firefighters: Insights on Curriculum Transformation in HIV and AIDS Contexts", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 35 (December):83, 84. In the theory of the Hut on Fire, the villagers respond differently. One group jumps to action to put out the fire in solidarity whilst another group of villagers stood still, crying helplessly and yet another group just gives a casual glance, ignored and seemed not to care. This is an apt metaphor that mirrors the various responses in different religious groups and their adherents in the context of climate emergency.

14 Haluza-DeLay, "Religion and Climate Change", 261.

15 White L (Jr). 1967. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis", *Science*, New Series 55 (3767) (March):1203-1207 [<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.155.3767.1203>]. See also Haluza-DeLay, "Religion and Climate Change", 269. A note of caution is that Christianity is a complex faith that cannot be defined in monolithic terms and its effects on the environment vary in differing contexts.

16 Kay PA and Chodos B. 2006. "Man the Hunter? Hunting, Ecology, and Gender in Judaism", *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture, Ecotheology* 11(4):505 [<https://doi.org/10.1558/ecot.v11i4.494>]. See also, Sibanda, "The Impact of Rastafari Ecological Ethic", 63.

17 Habel N. 2009. *An Inconvenient Text: Is a Green Reading of the Bible Possible?* Hindmarsh: ATF. See also, "The Impact of Rastafari Ecological Ethic", 63.

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Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church initiated “green” religious practices and called for climate justice from the 1980s forward,¹⁸ and they have largely endured to this day. The Christian environmental ethic of stewardship has been aptly articulated through an observation that, “The universe as a whole is a product of God’s creative and imaginative will. All its parts are interdependent. Men and women are to be stewards and creators, not exploiters, of its resources: material, animal and spiritual.”¹⁹ Therefore, despite its diversity, Christianity shows an ambivalent stance that exacerbates the crisis, on the one hand, and an environmental concern that promotes climate justice, on the other, especially when viewed from the alternative Christian view proposed by ecologists such as St. Francis of Assisi and Pope Francis.

The Islamic tradition also teaches about stewardship. Muslims believe that the universe and everything in it was created by Allah (Quran 55:5-8). Adam was created as a *khalifa* (vicegerent). By the same token, all Muslims are *khalifas* guided by the Quran and the *sharia*. On this basis, they strive to reduce pollution and preserve resources.²⁰ The doctrine of *amanah* (human trust or accountability) is in tandem with the role of humanity as a vicegerent entrusted by God. Failure to uphold this Islamic teaching is a betrayal of trust (*khiyanah*).²¹ In the context of this study, destruction of the environment is synonymous to self-destruction. This is echoed by Muhammad Haron, a scholar of Islam, who says that “mischief”, “pollution” and “destruction” reflect reluctance to respect nature’s laws, which have resulted in the climate change crisis. This calls for the need to engage in a “green *jihād* (a struggle)” against climate change.²² Thus, Islam is endowed with relevant values, motivations and worldviews that can enforce an Islamic environmental ethic of stewardship in the context of climate change emergency, notwithstanding that many Muslims – and other religious groups – often fail to walk the talk.

18 Haluza-DeLay, “Religion and Climate Change”, 269.

19 Watton VW and Stone RM. 2005. *Religion and Society*. London: Hodder and Murray, 28. In essence, greater privilege means greater responsibility. This is based on a 1991 statement on “Christian Faith Concerning the Environment” attributed to the Methodist Conference quoted in Watton VW and Stone RM. 2016. *Edexcel Religious Studies for GCSE (9-1): Beliefs in Action (Specification B)*. London: Hodder Education/Hachette Digital. Online at: http://www.rsrevision.com/GCSE/christian_perspectives/environment/environment/church.htm

20 Watton and Stone, *Religion and Society*, 31.

21 Sibanda, “The Impact of Rastafari Ecological Ethic”, 63.

22 Haron M. 2017. “Drawing on African Muslims’ Intangible Assets: Doing Jihad against Climate Change”, *The Ecumenical Review* 69(3):354, 355 [<https://doi.org/10.1111/erev.12298>]. See also, on the planting of trees, Smith G. 2002. “Islam and the Environment”, *Earth Island Journal* [https://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/magazine/entry/islam_and_the_environment/], which says that Prophet Muhammad is regarded as a pioneering environmentalist as he once said: “When doomsday comes, if someone has a palm shoot in his hand, he should plant it.” Ahmad Ibn al-Hussayn al-Bayhaqi al-Kubra. n.d. *Sunan al-Bayhaqi al-Kubra*. Hyderabad, 3:184.

In this pluralistic and globalised society, African Indigenous Religion also serves as a cultural resource vital in the preservation of the environment and mitigation of the human-induced climate crisis. The attitude of its adherents towards the environment is anchored in their consciousness to protect the earth and their fear of consequences for violating taboos in the community. The African cosmology upholds that the well-being of humanity is intimately linked to the well-being of the entire creation.²³ On this basis if humanity abused nature or the environment, nature will also reciprocate through the occurrence of natural disasters. In African religion, there is a close relationship between humanity, spirit and nature to the extent that Joram Tarusarira, a religious studies scholar, says “the environment is the people and the people are the environment”.²⁴ This implies that there is no separation between people and the environment. From this point of view, humanity must live in harmony with the natural world as destruction of nature and environment is tantamount to self-destruction.²⁵ African Indigenous Religion informs how its adherents relate to nature and humanity, which makes it useful in the context of human-induced environmental injustice. All in all, in spite of weaknesses and the huge burden of guilt they bear on the ecological crisis within diverse traditions, the potential role of religion in climate action cannot be underestimated. Lynn White, the historian and ecologist, aptly warned: “More science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecological crisis until we find a new religion, or rethink our old one.”²⁶ In the subsequent sections of the chapter, focus is placed on a new religious movement, Rastafari, and its responses to climate and environmental injustices, which I regard as a typical example of a new-found religion that White referred to. The coverage on Rastafari responses is preceded by a historical overview of this new religious movement.

RASTAFARI HISTORY: AN OVERVIEW

Rastafari, an Afro-religio-political and cultural movement of Jamaican origin, has a fairly long history in Africa.²⁷ A number of factors inspired the emergence of Rastafari. In the context of Jamaica, three intertwined Afrocentric ideological pillars linked to Rastafari come to the fore, namely, Garveyism, Pan-Africanism

²³ Okonkwo, “Ecological Crisis”, 38.

²⁴ Tarusarira J. 2017. “African Religion, Climate Change and Knowledge Systems”, *The Ecumenical Review* 69(3):407 [https://doi.org/10.1111/erev.12302].

²⁵ Tarusarira, “African Religion, Climate Change”, 407.

²⁶ White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis”, 1206.

²⁷ Sibanda F. 2017. “Rastafari Perspectives on Land Use and Management in Postcolonial Zimbabwe”, in Green MC, Hackett RJJ, Hansen L and Venter F (eds), *Religious Pluralism, Heritage and Social Development in Africa*. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media, 192 [https://doi.org/10.18820/9781928314288/12]. See also, Sibanda F. 2019. “Promoting Human Flourishing Through Rastafari *Ital* Foodways in Africa”, in Green MC (ed), *Law, Religion and Human Flourishing in Africa*. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media, 369 [https://doi.org/10.18820/9781928314592/22].

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and Ethiopianism.²⁸ Marcus Garvey, an early twentieth century Jamaican black nationalist and evangelical preacher influenced former black slaves who inhabited the then British-ruled Caribbean Island of Jamaica mainly through his “Back to Africa” movement that championed black pride.²⁹ In addition, Garvey preached to his followers to look to Africa for a Black King who would be crowned to redeem the oppressed black people. On this basis, when Emperor Haile Selassie I was crowned on 2 November 1930 as Negus of Ethiopia, the 225th leader amongst a line of Ethiopian kings descending from Menelik I, the Rastafarians regarded it as a fulfilment of Garvey’s prophecy.³⁰ This influenced subsequent ideological orientation of the movement.

In Rastafari ideology, Ethiopia represents the promised land, also referred to as paradise and Zion, which symbolised a free and unfettered African identity. In line with this thrust, the Rastafarians have adopted the Ethiopian colours of red, gold and green.³¹ The Pan-Africanist stance in Rastafari naturally dovetails with the other two pillars, which depict much of the Western-influenced consumerist culture in which they live as “Babylon”, the biblical city of evil.³² This means that Rastas are exposed to oppressive environments through stigma and discrimination of their *livity*.³³ The process of repatriation has seen some Rastafarians settling in Africa, including Ethiopia, as one Pan-Africanist gesture. Nevertheless, many Rastafarians in the diaspora have jettisoned the concept of physical repatriation to Africa and replaced it with a spiritual repatriation, which helps to sustain their dignity and self-worth as Africans. Today, Rastafari has become an international movement spread world-wide partly through reggae music, which was popularised by the Jamaican Rastafarian icon, Bob Marley. The invitation of Bob Marley by the post-colonial government of Zimbabwe to perform at its independence eve celebration on 17 April 1980 provides one of the explanations for the blossoming of Rastafari in the country.³⁴ Rastafari developed more as spirituality and way of life than a religion,³⁵ with spin-offs recalibrated from a matrix of diverse traditions, such as the

28 Sibanda, “Praying for Rain?”, 413.

29 Sibanda, “Promoting Human Flourishing”, 370.

30 Afolabi JA. 2004. “By the Rivers of Babylon: The Bondage Motif in Performing Arts, Life and Aesthetics of Rastafarians”, *Tinabantu: Journal of African National Affairs* 2(1):37.

31 Sibanda, “The Impact of Rastafari Ecological Ethic”, 66.

32 See Bourdillon MFC. *Religion and Society: A text for Africa*. Gweru: Mambo Press, 1990, 170. In Rastafari diction, “Babylon” also refers to all oppressors, whether black or white.

33 See, for example, Ncube D. 2015. “Rastafarians Bemoan Discrimination”, *The Sunday Mail*, 29 November.

34 Sibanda, “The Impact of Rastafari Ecological Ethic”, 67. Zimbabwe attained its political independence from Britain on 18 April 1980. Therefore, Marley’s musical show was on the “eve” of the country’s independence.

35 There are raging debates on whether Rastafari is a religion, spirituality or way of life. Some Rastafarians object to the classification of their movement as a religion. This objection is anchored on the belief that the movement is more of a way of life and spirituality than a religion. This view on Rastafari is upheld, despite the fact that the movement is grounded on religious principles, a factor which has made non-Rastas to view it as a religion. Being

Judeo-Christian tradition, Hinduism and African Indigenous Religion. This matrix of diversity is partly the foundation from which some of the Rastafari beliefs, practices and ways of knowing related to nature and the environment can be traced.

NATURE CONSCIOUSNESS IN RASTAFARI

As a way of expressing their consciousness and respect for nature, Rastafarians possess an ecological ethic,³⁶ which blends freedom and responsibility. In their *livity*, Rastafarians seek to preserve a rhythm between nature and themselves, since nature is closely related to the power of Jah Ras Tafari on the basis of “I-and-I consciousness”.³⁷ An interview with a Rastafarian elder revealed how Rastas operated within a framework of environmental I-consciousness by claiming that “they have become stewards to ‘*makomo nemiti*’ (hills and trees) in their particular areas as part of the environmental management of natural resources”.³⁸ Along the same lines, another Rasta elder echoed similar sentiments by stressing that “the reckless cutting of trees was prohibited and denounced by Rastas without fear or favour”.³⁹ The Jamaican context revealed that amongst the ex-slaves the “entire realm of nature has been endowed with personal life; and every tree or plant, every river or stone, becomes a source of energy or power which may be used, abused, offended or destroyed”.⁴⁰ Rastafarians expanded and modified this earlier teaching and formulated an ecosophy and ecotheology that rendered respect to Mother Earth. They advocated that streams were not to be polluted and that pesticides and

a way of life, it is a “natural progression towards self-realisation”. See, for example, Kafe E. “Rastafarianism: Natural Progression towards self-realisation”, *The Sunday Mail*, 26 November. The study views Rastafari in a fluid sense that refers to it as a religion, spirituality and way of life, interchangeably.

36 Sibanda, “The Impact of Rastafari Ecological Ethic”, 68.

37 Etymologically, the name “Rastafari” is taken the Ethiopian title “Ras Tafari”. The title “Ras” was equivalent to “prince” or “king” and it also consisted of the first name “Tafari”. Tafari Makonnen was the first name of Haile Selassie I prior to coronation, which meant “Creation”. Amongst Rastas, “Ras Tafari” means “king of creation” and “JAH Rastafari” is the personification of JAH, the Original Father, Father of all humanity – the Creator. The “I-and-I consciousness” is a common thread amongst many Rastas guiding how they relate to each other and JAH Rastafari. See, for example, Erskine NL. 2005. *From Garvey to Marley: Rastafari Theology*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 91 [<https://doi.org/10.1086/JAAHv91n4p497>].

38 Interview with an anonymous Rasta elder by F Sibanda, Harare, 20 October 2013. See also Interview with Ancient Abuna by F Sibanda, Harare, 11 March 2020. Pictures of ancient Rastafari hills of Sally Mugabe Nyahbinghi Rastafari Arts and Culture Community were shared with the researcher. The Centre is described as “the home of Ancient *livity* learning journey”.

39 Interview with Ras John by F Sibanda, Marcus Garvey House, Harare, 17 August 2014. Rastas proclaimed the use of “Jengeta Huni” (Rocket Stove) designed by Rastas to use twigs to effectively reduce the cutting of trees in society. See Interview with Ancient Abuna by F Sibanda, Harare, 11 March 2020.

40 Morrish I. 1982. *Jamaica and its Religions*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co.

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chemical waste were not to be buried in Mother Earth, since Selassie's kingdom builds upon nature. There is a string conviction in Rastafarian cosmivision that nature is not neutral as it can be employed as an instrument of Jah's judgment.⁴¹ This calls for responsibility amongst people in society to avoid environmental injustice.

Rastafarians live organically in harmony with the natural world. In their close relationship to Mother Earth, they do not shun dirt and grime and also may sit in dust. They also cultivate a healthy respect for land and regard the earth as a loving mother and even as God.⁴² In other words, they equate Jah (God) with nature as they say land belongs to His Imperial Majesty (HIM), Emperor Haile Selassie I, and is very sacred. Therefore, Rastafarians advocate an organic view in relation to Mother Earth, which is in tandem with natural living and in harmony with principles of creation. One Rasta elder asserted that in order to eat green, there was need for land on which Rastas would produce *Ital* food through organic farming for healing of the nation and human flourishing.⁴³ This concurs with what Noel Leo Erskine, an eminent Jamaican scholar on Rastafari, says when he writes: "Everything is given in Mother Earth for sustenance, healing, and wholesome living."⁴⁴ On the basis of wholeness and healing in relation to sacred earth comes the notion of '*Ital livity*',⁴⁵ which is very critical in understanding nature in Rastafari consciousness.

Rastafarian nature ethics reinforces the element of environmental stewardship anchored on their green philosophy. The *Ital* way is consistent to the concerns for environmental injustice bedevilling society. They aspire to develop an *Ital* way of life that promotes clean water, clean environment, and protection of flora and fauna.⁴⁶ Along these lines, a high level of Rastafari environmental consciousness is also testified by the efforts of Ancient Abuna and Empress Ithiop, self-proclaimed Nazarenes, who regularly participate in voluntary clean-up campaigns alongside the Environmental Management Agency (EMA). This duo of environmental artists said they reused and recycled what they collected and categorically stated that they were ecomorally bound to intercept "environmental terrorists" to be accountable for

41 Erskine, *From Garvey to Marley*, 91, 92. Rastas pronounce judgment on "Babylon" or the agents of "Babylon" calling on nature to embody the word and assist through statements like: "May lightning and thunder strike the downpressors". In Rasta diction, "downpressors" are the oppressors.

42 Erskine, *From Garvey to Marley*, 92.

43 Interview with Ras John by F Sibanda, Marcus Garvey House, Harare, 14 May 2014.

44 Erskine, *From Garvey to Marley*, 92.

45 In Rastafari parlance, and following Erskine, what is "*Ital*" springs from the earth, such that it is earthly, natural, or organic. "*Livity*" refers to living according to Rastafari principles. "*Ital Livity*" is a commitment to use things in their natural states in contrast to the ways of "Babylon" that show artificiality, greed and Western consumerism.

46 Nangwaya A. 2007. "Rastafari as a Catalytic Force in Ecotourism Development in Jamaica: Development as Economic and Social Justice". St. Augustine: University of the West Indies. Online at: <https://sta.uwi.edu/conferences/salises/documents/Nangwaya%20%20A%20.pdf>

their actions.⁴⁷ This shows a Rastafari commitment to environmental stewardship. The Rastafarian nature ethic in the Jamaican context, which is similar to what obtains in other contexts, is succinctly expressed by a Rastafarian researcher, Mandy Dickerson, who observes: “Rastafarians protest the long-term misuse of land by Babylon ... Abuse of land, first enacted by planters who restricted Africans’ national rights to use land for food, and more recently carried out through pollution of soil, water and air, is tantamount to abuse of people and popular society.”⁴⁸ The importance of “naturalness” is demonstrated therein in Rastafari discourse of nature consciousness. The Rastafarian *Ital* way of life is an Afrocentric “orthognosy” (correct knowledge) nurtured by the practice of “reasoning”, which liberate them from the Western consumerist lifestyle. This is a helpful framework in the context of climate and environmental injustice, evident in the problem of pollution, whose effects are comparable to the proverbial killing of the goose that lays the golden egg. Before looking at the Rastafari participation in the “Death by Plastic” competition, which demonstrates Zimbabwean Rastafari environmental I-consciousness, it is vital to provide the interface of education, art and environment so as to appreciate the importance of material and visual media in communicating information on environmental injustice.

THE INTERFACE OF EDUCATION, ART AND ENVIRONMENT

There is a close link that can be established in relation to education, art and the environment, which leads to environmental art education or eco-art education. This is where knowledge, skills, values and pedagogy from the visual arts, art education and environmental education are integrated and complementary.⁴⁹ Art can be a means of developing awareness of and engagement with the environment. Rosalind Hackett, a distinguished scholar of religious studies, writing particularly on the context of gender and religion, raises a critical point that reveals art as a neglected “text”, which is a useful observation in the current debate on art and environmental education.⁵⁰ This puts an emphasis on visual media, which can be used to redefine literacy on climate and environmental injustice. Such literacy entails a practical shift to reduce waste and toxicity through art as an agent of social change. Therefore,

47 Interview with Ancient Abuna and Empress Ithiop by F Sibanda, Kaseke Village, 15 December 2012; Interview with Ancient Abuna by F Sibanda, Harare, 11 March 2020. The two belong to Marondera Nyahbinghi Rastafari Arts Community. This is a registered arts and culture organisation under the Zimbabwe Youth Council with reg. number PA289/1213.

48 Dickerson MG. 2004. *I-tal Foodways: Nourishing Rastafarian Bodies*, MA thesis, Department of Geography and Anthropology, Louisiana State University, 28, 29 [http://etd.lsu.edu/docs/available/etd-06022004-174954/unrestricted/Dickerson_thesis.pdf].

49 Inwood HJ. 2013. “Cultivating Artistic Approaches to Environmental Learning: Exploring Eco-Art Education in Elementary Classroom”, *International Electronic Journal of Environmental Education* 3(2):129.

50 Hackett RIJ. 1998. “Art as Neglected ‘Text’ for the study of Gender and Religion in Africa”, *Religion* 28(4):363-370 [<https://doi.org/10.1006/reli.1998.0145>].

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through eco-art education, people are “attempting to reconnect with the earth in positive, restorative and often spiritual ways”.⁵¹ This makes art to be a conduit of education where religion and spirituality are evoked. In the context of Rastafari in Zimbabwe, the researcher has learnt through interviews and observation that the environmental artists are not doing art for art’s sake. One Rasta elder noted that art doubled as expressions of an environmentally friendly lifestyle and sustainable occupations for income known in Rasta diction as “JAH works” for economic liberation.⁵² Another artistically endowed Rastafarian elder is popular for making drums using canvas instead of leather, as well as doing paintings and Rastafari iconography at Nyahbingi Rastafari *binghis* in Zimbabwe.⁵³

In line with the above observation from Rastafari, art encompasses numerous ways of “expressing, appreciating and experiencing the sacred”.⁵⁴ This suggests that where nature is equated to God and deemed as sacred, the art employed can express symbolically, a people’s faith, which cannot be explained fully in words. In addition, art “exposes the deepest meaning of life”.⁵⁵ At different Rastafari *binghis* in Zimbabwe, the researcher has observed art paintings of Emperor Haile Selassie I, Bob Marley and Empress Menen Asfaw, who are central to Rastafari consciousness and Afrocentric views. In a way, art is oral scripture, which can be useful in the portrayal of the magnitude of the climate change crisis and environmental injustice in society. In this study, representational art is relevant, as it performs a didactic or teaching function that is linked to eco-art education. Essentially, the “Death by Plastic” school competition in which some Rastafari youth in Zimbabwe participated was an eco-art programme that entailed inculcating values of empathy, sustainability and respect for the environment through reducing, reusing and recycling in art making.

WATER POLLUTION AND DEATH BY PLASTIC: RASTAFARI PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE IN ZIMBABWE

This section examines Nyahbinghi Rastafari perspectives on environmental injustice in light of the water pollution and death by plastic in Zimbabwe. Although I make

51 Inwood, “Cultivating Artistic Approaches to Environmental Learning”, 131. See also Lankford E. 1997. “Ecological Stewardship in Art Education”, *Art Education* 50(6):50 [https://doi.org/10.2307/3193688].

52 Interview with Ras John by F Sibanda, Marcus Garvey House, 30 May 2014.

53 Interview with Ancient Binghiman by F Sibanda, Dzimbadzemabwe House, 23 February 2013. A *binghi* is a worship place normally located in a serene environment amongst the hills at the outskirts of the urban settlements.

54 Cox JL. 1996. *Expressing the Sacred: An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe publications, 101. Cox says art includes “songs and dances, music and rhythm, painting, architecture, drama, clothing, masks, sculpture, poetry and stories – in short, many ways in which a people’s experience of the sacred are symbolically presented and represented”.

55 Streng FJ. 1985. *Understanding Religious Life*. Belmont: Wardsworth, 167.

reference to air pollution and land pollution, I deliberately concentrate on water pollution in the interest of space. I commence by providing the nature and extent of water pollution and then proceed to explore the “death by plastic” phenomenon before connecting these elements to Rastafari perspectives.

Water pollution

Water pollution has become one of the biggest environmental concerns to individuals, communities, governments and organisations because it disturbs the ecosystem in Africa. A wide range of health problems and disorders in humans have been associated with water pollution, especially in towns and cities where they are literally “feasting on faecal matter and other dangerous chemicals that pose serious health risks”.⁵⁶ It is regrettable that some of the domestic and industrial waste cannot be recycled and is not biodegradable. In Zimbabwe, water has been contaminated by sewage and plastic waste disposal, which have affected rivers, dams, animals, birds and humans. Cities such as Harare, Chitungwiza and Gweru have challenges of clean water supply, sewage reticulation and refuse collection, which resulted in water-borne diseases.⁵⁷ The water in Lake Chivero has become a health hazard because of contamination caused by industrial, agricultural and domestic activities in Harare and Chitungwiza. So polluted are the water sources in Zimbabwe that one Rasta elder lamented the situation and described the water as “sewage water” and further claiming that he now drew water for domestic use from a deep well that was sunk at one of the *binghis* instead of using municipal water whose quality was a deadly health hazard.⁵⁸

Artisanal gold mining on Kintyre Estate also contributes to water pollution in Lake Chivero. Along the same lines, small-scale miners also dump mercury into the environment. Harare City Council now requires nine chemicals to treat water to satisfactory levels, and it is said these quantities of chemicals are a health hazard.⁵⁹ The Urban Councils Act prohibits the discharge of sewage into waterways. However, the level of enforcing the law has been lackadaisical on defaulters. In addition, some laws such as the Public Health Act of 1924 was undergoing revision, as it was old and outdated. Local authorities and companies in Zimbabwe were taking advantage of the gaps and weaknesses of the colonial enacted Act to continue polluting water bodies, because it was cheaper to pollute and pay than to dispose

56 Kafe E. 2019. “Feasting on human waste”, *The Sunday Mail*, 27 October. The Environmental Management Agent (EMA) says Harare is discharging half a billion litres of raw sewage into Lake Chivero, the city’s major source of water, daily.

57 Mbanje P. 2018. “Lukewarm Approach to Typhoid Outbreak Slammed”, *News Day*, 5 September, 8.

58 Interview with anonymous Rastafarian elder by F Sibanda, Dzimbabwe House, 23 February 2013.

59 Kafe, “Feasting on human waste”. The World Health Organization guidelines stipulate that water for human consumption must be free from chemical contamination. See, also Chidakwa B. 2019. “Zimbabwe: Who is Polluting our Water?”, *The Herald*, 12 November.

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raw sewage and industrial waste appropriately.⁶⁰ In cities and towns, uncollected plastic waste, which is difficult to biodegrade, constitutes about 12% of waste and contributes to flooding, air and water pollution.⁶¹ This shows how toxic wastes from anthropogenic sources have polluted land, air and water, which sacrifices the environment for selfish ends.

“Death by Plastic” competition

Research has revealed that plastic is one of the most mismanaged wastes in the environment with detrimental impact on humans and seabirds, 90% of which have plastic in their stomachs.⁶² Therefore, plastic is one of the most pervasive solid wastes in the environment. The “Death by Plastic” competition was an Italian Embassy of Harare’s annual AMBIENTE-Art and the Environment project in Zimbabwe, which was co-sponsored by the European Union, Environmental Management Agency, Environment Africa, Green Ink, Clean and Green. Different schools, both primary and secondary, participated in the “Death by Plastic” art competition held in 2018.⁶³ The project was an education and awareness campaign to highlight the effects of microplastic and nanoplastic on fish or birdlife and, resultantly, the food chain and human health.

Furthermore, in the “Death by Plastic” competition, schoolchildren were invited to design a 3D collage using plastic waste from their homes, schools and communities. This theme of “Death by Plastic” was meant to coincide with the 2018 World Environmental Day’s theme of “Beat Plastic Pollution”.⁶⁴ The submissions were to be made to Bird Life Zimbabwe or Mukuvisi Woodlands Nature Reserve. The organisers were partly stimulated by the rampant illegal use of plastic artisanal gillnets, which had a devastating impact on wildlife in dams of Zimbabwe. Discarded gillnets polluted Zimbabwe’s inland waters, which had detrimental effects on both bird life and fish. In terms of the National Parks Act, the monofilament nets were illegal,⁶⁵ but people were taking advantage of the laxity of legal enforcement currently obtaining in Zimbabwe.

60 Mbanje, “Lukewarm Approach to Typhoid”, 8; Kafe E. 2019. “Feasting on human waste” notes that EMA prohibits the discharge of pollutants, wastewater and effluent into any water body. See also Gottlieb RS. 2003. *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*. London: Routledge, 4 [https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203426982], who observes that due to environmental pollution, the average male sperm counts have dropped by 50% in the last 50 years and there has been rise in testicular cancers.

61 Gogo J. 2018. “Only 11 pc of plastic waste recycled in Zim: EMA”, *The Herald*, 11 June.

62 Traydon RJ. 2018. “#Wake-Up Call 8: The Shocking Truth about Plastic and how it’s Killing Us”, *News 24*, 26 April.

63 Pierre J. 2018. “The Death by Plastic Competition”, *The Crystal*, No. 2, April.

64 Pierre, “The Death by Plastic Competition”. See also, Gogo, “Only 11 pc of plastic waste recycled in Zim”, who notes that the World Environment Day is held on 5 June annually set aside by the United Nations Environment Programme that was formed in 1972.

65 Pierre, “The Death by Plastic Competition”. Pertaining to fish conservation in controlled waters, the Parks and Wild Life Act, PART XIV of Chapter 20:14, Section 91(1) on the control of fishing nets states: “(1) No person shall possess a fishing net— (a) unless he is

The Rastafarian participants in the “Death by Plastic” competition showcased the use of art to portray the problem of plastic waste pollution on the environment, particularly fish and birds, through a collage. From the interviews and observation held for the study, the materials used to make the collage consisted of plastic waste, card board box, waste planks, bottle caps, waste wire, glue, oil paint, old ribbon tapes of radio and VCR cassettes to tape the artwork. Following the announcement of the competition in April 2018, the preparations started in May 2018, whilst the presentation was held on 15 June 2018. The venue for the competition was Lake Chivero. This location was ideal, as it was meant to sensitise and educate the society about the dangers of waste pollution, including plastic waste, industrial waste and sewerage water, which polluted water in Lake Chivero, the main water source for the city of Harare.

The Rastafarian visual art collage portrayed fish dying from small particles of plastic in water. Although I made a visual analysis of the photographic caption of the collage, I further depended on the descriptive explanation of the artwork by one of the Rastafari youth participants, Ras Shuwela.⁶⁶ The dimensions of the collage were 40 cm by 15 cm with all the artwork mounted on a black plastic background. Both urban and rural settings were presented. The major features included a city depicted through high rise buildings, which had a dump site near the upper course of a big river painted blue, that was being polluted by, amongst other things, plastics. Used plastic bottle caps of different colours were used in showing fish and other aquatic creatures, such as tortoise and snakes, as well as seaweed and other water plants. In the river, fish were presented as eating countless plastic particles, using wrapping material of “Zap Naks” and “lollipops”⁶⁷ and artistically shaped by a paper punch and glued in place. At the lower course of the same polluted river, the environmental artists depicted fishermen fishing for fish that were dead, evidently due to plastic. The dead fish had an intact head and the rest of the body composed of a skeletal set of bones to portray lifelessness flowing down the toxic river. From the collage and the explanations given, it was logical that eventually the Rastafarian youth who participated in the “Death by Plastic” competition were amongst the prize winners. The artwork showed a high degree of creativity and commitment to enforce climate and environmental justice in Zimbabwe.

a registered dealer in or manufacturer of fishing nets; or (b) except in terms of a permit issued in terms of paragraph (a) or (e) of section ninety-four; or (c) unless such person is an appropriate authority for any waters.” By “fishing-net”, the law refers to the use of any gill-net, seine-net, draw-net or ring-net.

66 Interview with Ras Shuwela by F Sibanda, Kaseke Village, 11 March 2020.

67 In the Zimbabwean context, “Zap Naks” and “lollipops” refer to locally and regionally manufactured flavoured snacks and sweets on a stick, that are a favourite amongst children and the youth. “Naks” in that brand name is a short form for snacks.

Rastafarian perspectives on environmental injustice

Rastafarian day-to-day, environment-friendly lifestyles show their stewardship and naturality, which testify to their Afrocentricity and attitude against reckless consumerism. Complementing the explanation by Ras Shuwela in a separate interview, one Rastafarian elder, who attended the presentation event of the “Death by Plastic” competition, observed that sewage disposal, plastic waste and gillnets had polluted waters in Lake Chivero to the detriment of bird, fish, animal and human life. He added, “Plastics cause death. Plastics take 500 years to decay. Decay is not a full process as plastic breaks into particles causing fish to die. Livestock and wildlife are also endangered by plastics in rivers and lakes.”⁶⁸ This shows that humanity is shooting itself in the foot because of products that pollute the environment. Further reasoning with Rastafarians revealed that besides the dangers posed on public health through water pollution, treating water with chemicals made it more poisonous. A Rastafarian elder stressed that water pollution breached what the Most High taught as noted in one of the 42 principles of MA’AT which says: “Do not pollute the river.”⁶⁹ This shows the Rastafari pro-life philosophy and lifestyle to live in harmony with nature from an Afrocentric perspective.

In line with the competition and Rastafari ecological ethic, the participants became climate change educators through art that encouraged people to reduce, reuse and recycle plastic waste, something that was a re-lived experience by Rastafarians such as Ras Shuwela. The material and visual media provided an incredible platform for telling compelling and persuasive stories about environmental injustice anchored on plastic waste pollution. Essentially, the schoolchildren who participated in the “Death by Plastic” competition (Rastas included), learned by doing, which is reminiscent to John Dewey’s philosophical principles of education.⁷⁰ This is because Dewey’s method centred on a problem-solving approach where the problem was tackled on a cooperative basis, as was done by the various teams of schoolchildren in the national competition under focus. The Rasta competitors were partly informed by the Seven Kwanza principles,⁷¹ which the Rastafarians adopted as

68 Interview with a Rasta elder by F Sibanda, Dangwe Arts and Culture Centre, Kaseke Village, 30 July 2018.

69 Interview with a Rasta elder by F Sibanda, Kaseke Village, 30 July 2018. See, for example, Lisapo ya Kama. 2018. “The 42 Commandments of Ma’at”, 20 January. Online at: <http://en.lisapoyakama.org/the-42-commandments-of-maat> [Accessed 2 March 2020]. Ma’at represented the entire law that guided the life of ancient Kamits (Blacks) whose aim was to preserve and perpetrate life as well as guarantee order and harmony in society. Commandment 40 says “I did not pollute waters”. This shows its relevance to the context of humanity’s need to preserve the environment.

70 See Barker R. 1989. *Philosophies of Education: An Introductory Course*. Harare: College Press, 137. Dewey refers to the “project method” and the “activity principle”, which made leaning to be real, alive and meaningful.

71 See Gordon JU. 2004. “Africanism in African American Life and History”, in Gordon JU. (ed). *The African Presence in Black America*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 11. Gordon notes that one of the Afrocentric scholars, Maulana Karenga, created the Kwanza based

part of their cumulative tradition from Afrocentricity. The most relevant principles for ecological literacy and action include *umoja* (unity), *ujma* (collective work and responsibility), *nia* (purpose), *kuumba* (creativity) and *imani* (faith). In this way, the Rastafarian lifestyle is in sync with an arts-based environmental education in the practice of reducing, reusing and recycling of scrap material for livelihood through “JAH works” and reducing waste pollution in society. Therefore, the Rastafarian use of art in environmental education has the ability to stir emotion and change the attitudes of people in the context of climate and environmental injustice.

ENVISIONING RASTAFARI ECOJUSTICE: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

The Rastafarian claim to be typical environmental artists is attested by their green philosophy and spirituality, which qualify the movement as nature-based. Rastafarians live in harmony with nature. Both the Rasta youth and elders are pro-active to the preservation of the environment as testified by their *livity* and “Death by Plastic” competition. Commensurate with international best practices on solid waste management, Rastafarians envision an ecojustice lifestyle, which follows an inverted pyramid that prioritises reducing, reusing and composting, recycling, and disposal, in that order.⁷² Ecojustice amongst Nyahbinghi Rastafarians is testified by their choice of secluded places as *binghis* (shrines), often hilly and rocky, but with a serene environment transformed from “wasteland” into “sacred land”.⁷³ Rastafarians as commanded by His Imperial Majesty, Emperor Haile Selassie I, planted trees for food, medicine⁷⁴ and to return to the Ancient glory upheld by the

on the seven principles of Nguzo Saba, which are Swahili words that mean “principles” and “seven”, respectively. The following are the seven principles: 1. *Umoja* (Unity): to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race; 2. *Kujichagulia* (Self-determination): to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, created for, and spoken for by others; 3. *Ujima* (Collective work and responsibility): to build and maintain our community together and make our sisters’ – and brothers’ – problems our problems and to solve them together; 4. *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics): to build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together; 5. *Nia* (Purpose): to make our collective vocation the building and development of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness. 6. *Kuumba* (Creativity): to always do as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than when we inherited it; 7. *Imani* (Faith): to believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle. Through Kwanza festival held for 7 days annually from 26 December until New Year, Rastafarians celebrate the First Fruits and New Life. Hence, Kwanza seeks fullness of life which can be realised through environmental justice.

72 Gogo J. 2018. “What Could Solutions to Zim’s Garbage Problem Look Like?”, *The Herald*, 28 August.

73 See, for example, Sibanda, “The Impact of Rastafari Ecological Ethic”, 70.

74 Interview with Ras John by F Sibanda, 30 May 2014. See also, Sibanda, “The Impact of Rastafari Ecological Ethic”, 71.

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Afrocentric MA'AT and Kwanza principles that seek the fullness of life. The Rastas believe that the *Ital* way would preserve Africa as a Zion as opposed to artificial lifestyles of Western consumerism.

Rastafarians advocate the use of biodegradable materials in making eco-art, as they seek to reduce the carbon and ecological footprint. In the history of the movement, the state and Rastas have had some clashes on the use of *ganja*, which the latter wanted legalised for spiritual, medicinal and herbatocal purposes.⁷⁵ Today, the government of Zimbabwe legalised the use of medicinal marijuana and through Statutory Instrument 208 of 2019, industrial hemp experimental projects were transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture, as a classified crop.⁷⁶ Though still in its embryonic stages and licensing to invest in industrial hemp out of reach of many, including Rastas, this venture has been accepted by Rastafarians as a fulfilment of what nature has provided to humanity and which "Babylon" system took long to legalise. The Zimbabwe Industrial Hemp Trust displayed on a banner some of the advantages of hemp, which Rastafarians have long advocated. These include: "Hemp is environmentally friendly", "Carbon footprint is low", "Bio-degradable products" and "Hemp plastic is better than steel".⁷⁷ This shows that Rastafarians had a correct stance about hemp in light of environmental justice. In spite of challenges, there are prospects for improvement in policy formulation on medicinal marijuana and industrial hemp and climate justice. This is a nature-centric approach that tries to avoid everything that is synthetic, plastic and artificial.

Finally, in light of the problem of water pollution due to industrial waste and solid waste bedevilling the environment, Rastas now have a strong determination to take the bull by its horns in defence of the environment by using social and cultural capital. On this point, one Rasta elder had this to say: "Rastas are now serious in engaging the community, today. They are no longer contented with staying in cocoons of extreme millenarian disposition. *Tava muvanhu* (we are now interacting with others). This is a form of repatriation and recalibration."⁷⁸ This change of attitude amongst Rastas through historical phases is what Michael Barnett, a scholar and adherent of Rastafari, refers to as "routinisation" to describe their interaction with the community.⁷⁹ Often placed at the margins of society and misrepresented, misunderstood and underutilised, the Rastafarians were

75 Interview with Ras Jabulani by F Sibanda, Harare, 30 December 2012. See also, Sibanda F. 2015. "Legalise It!: Re-thinking Rasta-State Relations in Postcolonial Zimbabwe", in Coertzen P, Green MC and Hansen L (eds), *Law and Religion in Africa: The Quest for the Common Good in Pluralistic Societies*. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media, 185-204 [https://doi.org/10.18820/9781928314004].

76 Maroveke Z. 2019. "Women in Farming", ZBC, 17 October.

77 Maroveke, "Women in Farming".

78 Interview with a Rasta elder by F Sibanda, Harare, 30 July 2018.

79 Barnett M. 2012. "Rastafari in the New Millennium: Rastafari at the Dawn of the Fifth Epoch", in Barnett M (ed). *Rastafari in the New Millennium*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1-10.

in a “diaspora within”. The Afrocentric Kwanza principle of *kujichagulia* (self-determination) has created prospects for genuine dialogue between Rastas and other religious and non-religious players in resolving climate emergency. In the context of climate change, “repatriation” can be explained as a metaphor for transformation and change of attitudes about the environment for the better in the eyes of humanity. This can be achieved through partnerships in using cutting-edge technologies to turn rubbish into biodiesel and electricity that would meet energy needs and national climate goals under the Paris Accord.⁸⁰ Unity of purpose can avert environmental injustice.

CONCLUSION

The chapter has demonstrated that Rastafarians can be counted amongst stewards determined to preserve and protect Mother Earth for posterity. Apparently, humanity is shooting itself in the foot because of lack of orthognosy, or correct knowledge, manifesting through greed and consumerism that have resulted in products from the industry, agricultural sector and domestic activities polluting the environment. Essentially, pure water, fresh air and organic *Ital* food produced without artificial chemicals and fertilisers are central in Rastafari ecosophy. This involves a “return to Eden”, which is an ancient glory, through Rastafari principles of ecojustice. By using eco-art, the participation of the Rastafarians in the “Death by Plastic” national schools competition typifies “routinisation” of the movement in Zimbabwe. Evoking the Rastafari roots of reggae music to inform and educate messages for promoting ecojustice in society is critical. The future of Africa and the Africans lies in their guarantee to promote climate and environmental justice. Rastafari commitment to reduce, recycle and reuse is vocation not only compatible to orthognosy and “JAH works”, but consistent with global trends of promoting stewardship, environmental justice and sustainable policies against the backdrop of climate crisis in twenty-first century Africa.

⁸⁰ Gogo, “What could Solutions to Zim’s Garbage problem look like?” One of the questions that arise is: With so much waste in Zimbabwe, why not build biodigesters that use the waste to produce methane gas for cooking?