The Church as an Ecological Community: Practising Eco-Ecclesiology in the Ecological Crisis of Indonesia

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Abstract

Given the ecological crisis in Indonesia, the churches must implement an ecclesiological reconstruction based on the church as an ecological community and on the understanding that the churches are an inseparable part of Indonesian society and cultures which emphasise respect for nature, while at the same time reconstructing their identity in the Christian faith tradition rooted in the Triune God, faith in Christ as Saviour, and an eschatological dimension. Ecclesial praxis will promote ecological awareness among church members, involvement in conservation efforts and in making public policies related to ecological issues.

Keywords


1 Introduction

In Indonesia, the environmental preservation movement began in 1978 when Yayasan Indonesia Hijau (the Green Indonesia Foundation) was formed. In the same year, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia under President
Soeharto appointed Emil Salim as the first Minister of the Environment. In 1980, Minister Salim held a National Environmental Meeting that involved 78 organizations engaged in environmental conservation. Since then, religious communities in Indonesia have also paid increasing attention to environmental issues. Religious communities from various religious backgrounds have discussed how to deal with problems related to climate change. It is recognized that religion and its communities can play an important role in addressing environmental problems. Churches and Christian institutions in Indonesia have responded with a series of seminars, and the 15th Assembly of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (CCI) took a theme that focused on environmental issues, ‘God is Good to Everyone’.

It is important to emphasize that problems related to the ecological crisis are not merely the problems faced by the Indonesian people but have long been part of the global problem. In 2007 in Bali, Indonesia hosted the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Although the Kyoto Protocol agreed on the importance of facing climate change by limiting carbon emissions, more concrete steps are needed from countries in the world to deal with the problem of the ecological crisis. It is increasingly realized that ecological crises are global problems that require global cooperation and collective agreement beyond the national interests of each country. The global Christian community has also paid serious attention to ecological issues, as illustrated by ‘The Christian Faith and the Earth’ project initiated in January 2007 by Ernst M. Conradié, Sigurd Bergmann, Celia Deane-Drummond and Denis Edwards. This project proposes various changes in theology in the context of the global ecological

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crisis, including moving from anthropocentrism to biocentrism and theocentrism, from androcentrism to ecofeminism, from environmental ethics to creation ethics, and from political advocacy to public theology.\(^8\)

It is unfortunate that, amidst efforts to overcome the ecological crisis, there have been no serious efforts to reconstruct ecclesiology in the Indonesian context by re-understanding the essence of the church in the context of ecological damage. In Indonesia, the ecological crisis is not viewed as important in ecclesiological construction. Examples of its neglect include the books of Avery Dulles,\(^9\) Y. B. Mangunwijaya\(^10\) and B. S. Mardiatmaja,\(^11\) Karel Phil Erari\(^12\) and the ecumenical document by Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia (PGI)\(^13\) have touched on the issue of the relationship between the church and the ecological crisis, but neither explicitly reconstructs ecclesiology with the ecological crisis in view.

In this article, I shall argue for the importance of carrying out ecclesiological reconstruction in the context of the ecological crisis in Indonesia. This should be based on the idea of the Church as an ecological community implementing the praxis of faith when dealing with the ecological crisis. This kind of ecclesiological construction is based on understanding that the churches in Indonesia are an inseparable part of Indonesian society. Moreover, they are cultures which place a strong emphasis on respect for nature while understanding themselves in the terms of the Christian faith tradition, which includes existence related to the Triune God, faith in Christ who saves the world and eschatology. I will break this article into six parts. After the introduction, I will present the facts of the ecological crisis in Indonesia in an ecclesiological context. In the following sections, I will present how ecclesiological construction is carried out in an ecological crisis, namely by becoming embedded in a society and culture that respect nature and strive to preserve the environment (section 3) and by utilizing the sources of the Christian faith and Christian experience (section 4). Later, in section 5, I will present the implications of the idea that the church is an ecological community in its practical form. Finally, I will offer closing remarks in section 6.

\(^9\) Avery Dulles, *Model-model Gereja* (Ende: Nusa Indah, 1990), translated from *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1974). Although Dulles is not an Indonesian theologian, his book has been discussed in Indonesian ecclesiological studies until now.
Ecclesiological Context: The Ecological Crisis in Indonesia

It has been recognized that Indonesia is the emerald of the equator. However, the undeniable facts witness that it is suffering ecological destruction. Traditional gold mining at the Botak Mountain, Buru Island, Moluccas, has destroyed the land and ecosystem. Sago trees, which have long supported the diet of the local people, have withered and died from the mercury waste water pollution that is produced during the process of separating gold ore from dirt. Flash floods and mudslides have occurred in Java. Slash-and-burn, illegal logging, and deforestation for the sake of timber businesses and palm monoculture are widespread in Kalimantan and Sumatra. There is irreversible damage from mining activities in Papua, Moluccas, North Moluccas, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara Barat, Nusa Tenggara Timur, and other Indonesian areas. Growing industrialization in Java, with the rapid development of factories on the north coast of Java Island, has led to a decline in the land surface that has allowed seawater to seep into the land and has resulted in various social problems.\(^{14}\)

Apart from these various events, the real ecological crisis issue in Indonesia is deforestation. Since 2000, tropical rainforests have been destroyed and replaced by monocultural oil palm plantations, which also provide pulp, paper and timber.\(^{15}\) In 2014, more than 10 million hectares of forest in Indonesia had been given over to oil palm production, which is about 10% of the total area of Indonesia’s territory. It is estimated that deforestation for oil palm monoculture will increase by 600,000 hectares each year.\(^{16}\)

The ecological crisis related to deforestation in Indonesia is a global ecological problem as well. Forests in Indonesia have extraordinary biodiversity, but various species are threatened with extinction.\(^{17}\) Indonesia has the third-largest tropical forest in the world, but in 1990–2000 there was a forest loss of 1,312,000 hectares.\(^{18}\) The loss of tropical rainforests will increase global warming because these forests function as the world’s lung system.\(^{19}\) Deforestation has contributed to CO\(_2\) emissions that affect global climate change. The burning of

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18 Nomura, ‘Democratisation’, p. 496.
land and forests continues and occurs every year.\textsuperscript{20} Besides this, deforestation threatens ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as causing landslides, floods, changes in the rainy season and increased air temperatures.\textsuperscript{21} Deforestation in Indonesia is a direct result of the activities of international companies in Indonesia. Maxton-Lee concludes that international trade policy inspired by neoliberalism has contributed to deforestation.\textsuperscript{22} The power of global capital is hard to resist. The oil palm monoculture causing ecological damage is supported by international funding, especially investment from Malaysian and Singaporean businessmen.\textsuperscript{23} Conservation efforts have largely been defeated by powerful neo-liberal economic policy, which emphasizes growth at the expense of the environment.\textsuperscript{24}

3 The Church as an Inseparable Part of Indonesian Society

To carry out ecclesiological reconstruction that grounds the church as an ecological community, churches in Indonesia need to become more deeply embedded in Indonesian society. Environmental sustainability and preservation need to be further encouraged both by the government and by religious communities. Although efforts have been made to make Christianity an integral part of Indonesian society, due to the history of colonialism in Indonesia it is still widely considered foreign.\textsuperscript{25} In dealing with problems resulting from ecological damage in Indonesia, especially deforestation, the non-Christian movement for the preservation of nature has been active, with many NGOs working for environmental sustainability. Apart from establishing the Ministry of Environment in 1978, the Indonesian government has issued laws and regulations related to environmental protection. However, the response to the ecological crisis still requires a joint movement, including the participation of churches in Indonesia.

\textsuperscript{20} Maxton-Lee, ‘Narratives’, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{21} Maxton-Lee, ‘Material Realities’, p. 419.
\textsuperscript{23} Maxton-Lee, ‘Material Realities’, p. 423.
\textsuperscript{24} Maxton-Lee, ‘Narratives’, p. 45.
Before the pro-environment movement grew globally and nationally, cultures in Indonesia generally contained ideas that upheld and respected the environment. Indonesia is a complex country that includes various ethnicities that occupy around 17,508 islands with various cultures. However, Javanese ethnicity is dominant. Although cultures are very diverse, they strongly emphasize respecting nature and being pro-environment. In Maluku, there is a sasi tradition that prohibits taking fruit at a certain time and place. This protects the environment from the uncontrolled extraction of natural resources. In Sumba, there is a belief in Marapu, an indigenous ancestral religion in Sumba, which rests on the belief in ancestors who protect the forest. In preserving the environment, ancestors also participate in the management of natural resources. According to Sumba culture, when humans destroy forests, Marapu will sanction humans. The religion of the Marapu tribe provides cultural resources for environmental preservation and ecological ethics, including the protection of forests (plants), water sources, and animals. In research conducted by Fowler, it was found that the Sumbanese people who converted to Christianity cut forests, took plants in forbidden forests, and carried out hunting because in response to these actions they no longer felt threatened as a result of Marapu beliefs, which were considered to protect the forest. Even so, there are efforts from churches in Sumba to learn from local wisdom related to ecological sustainability, such as turning sacred tree groves into sites for churches.

In Bali, although nature and the environment are in reality often sacrificed for the sake of tourism, Balinese culture and society have practised a harmonious relationship with nature. Nyepi Day is celebrated every year, when people are required not to light a fire nor to consume electricity to show respect for nature. The agricultural system in Bali, which is known as subak, also emphasizes respect for and preservation of nature and the environment.

The appreciation of Balinese culture and society for nature is reflected in the teachings of Balinese philosophy called *Tri Hita Karana*, which is the human obligation to be responsible for maintaining a balance between three important elements in the world: the spiritual, social and environmental domains.33

Javanese culture and philosophy uphold the universe as embodied. One of the very important values in Javanese culture is *manunggaling kawulo Gusti*, the unity of the servant and the Lord. This concept emphasizes the responsibility of humans to the world, as God almighty is responsible for the continuity of the world.34 Human are called to participate in the task of *mamayu hayuning bawana*, which is the responsibility to maintain the earth in safety.35 The hope in Javanese cultural values is that nature will provide humans with prosperity and fertility, which is known as *gemah ripah loh jinawi*.36 Humans are considered a microcosm, while the universe is a macrocosm. The relationship between the two is close, and imbalance will produce havoc in the world. In Javanese culture, the damage that occurs to nature therefore occurs to humans as well.

To become an ecological community, the churches in Indonesia should become an integral part of Indonesian society with cultures that respect nature and environmental sustainability. The penetration of global capitalism, which often sacrifices the environment, suggests that churches in Indonesia need to immediately take the initiative together with the Indonesian people to respect nature and preserve the environment by affirming their identity as an ecological community.

## 4 The Church as an Ecological Community Inspired by Christian Tradition

While interacting and collaborating with people and cultures in Indonesia that respect nature and preserve the environment, churches also need to affirm their identity as ecological communities by drawing on resources from the Christian faith tradition. Three points that need to be highlighted are the relationship

between the Church and the Triune God, the relationship between the Church and Jesus Christ, and the eschatological element of the Church.

4.1 The Church and the Triune God

To become an ecological community, churches in Indonesia need to start with the confession of the Triune God, as has been suggested by several theologians, including Miroslav Volf. Volf's ecclesiological understandings ground the Church in an inseparable relationship with the Triune God. According to Volf, participation in *communio* with the Triune God is not only the Church's hope but should be its contemporary experience. The understanding of the relationship between the Church and the Triune God should be that put forward by Sallie McFague. According to her, the relevant models of God in the context of the ecological crisis are God as the creator, lover, and sustainer of the planet Earth.

This understanding of the relationship between the Church and the Triune God allows the Church to encourage people to centre their lives on God rather than within their interior selves. The immanent God who is present in Jesus Christ is also transcendent. This is crucial because it has long been suspected that the waning of the transcendental aspect within modern culture has caused ecological damage to the planet Earth. This culture envisions nature as an object to be exploited for the sake of human well-being. In contrast, we may note McFague's view of nature. She not only regards it as God's creation but more importantly as the body of God. Consequently, if nature is the body of God, how we treat nature is how we treat God. Because God is the Creator, then to understand and to serve God's creation is regarded as the 'avenue toward knowing God'. Loving creatures will deepen the relationship with God the Creator.

In line with the understanding of the Church as always connected with the Triune God, the biblical texts that are believed to be the Word of God provide

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much inspiration about caring for nature. They contain concerns about this world, including the earth and the environment.\textsuperscript{43} They contain concerns about the earth, including the seasons (Ecc. 3) and sheep grazing on pasture (Pss. 23 and 121).\textsuperscript{44} It is also stated that God created human beings from the ground (Gen. 1). In the New Testament, especially the Gospels, the teachings that Jesus conveyed in parables are replete with words taken from ecology.\textsuperscript{45} One of the famous titles for Jesus is the good shepherd. The earth is a place where humans are born and live.\textsuperscript{46} This suggests the integrity of creation and integrity of life.\textsuperscript{47} Humans are an inseparable part of nature and every being is interdependent.\textsuperscript{48} This is following the concept of \textit{shalom} (peace) in the Old Testament, which includes all relations between all creatures, including the relationship with the earth created by God.\textsuperscript{49} Also, biblical texts emphasize that nature needs to be cared for and given attention to prevent humans from exploiting it. In these traditional sources, humankind is asked to protect other humans but also nature (Exod. 23:10–12), so that the balance of nature may be guaranteed.\textsuperscript{50}

The relationship between the Church and the Triune God is the essential context of Christian participation ‘in the Triune God’s economic work towards Creation’.\textsuperscript{51} The Church has always been called to be engaged in the process of God’s creation by loving sustaining and caring for it. Human beings are an inherent part of God’s creation and are invited to be involved actively in this process, not as dominators, but rather as God’s co-workers for the sake of the ongoing process of creation.

\section*{4.2 \textbf{The Church and Jesus Christ}}

From the beginning of its formation, the Church understood itself as connected with Jesus Christ. The advent of Jesus on earth constitutes the

\textsuperscript{45} McPhail, ‘Living,’ p. 142.
\textsuperscript{46} Hiebert, ‘Reclaiming,’ p. 344.
\textsuperscript{47} Clint Le Bruyns, ‘Re-placing Stewardship? Towards an Ethics of Responsible Care,’ \textit{Religion & Theology} 16 (2009), pp. 67–76, at p. 67.
\textsuperscript{49} Rockefeller, ‘Christian Faith,’ p. 134.
\textsuperscript{50} Ruether, ‘Ecology,’ p. 358.
revelation of God. Believers consider Jesus Christ to be the incarnation of God. That is, Jesus Christ manifests God in a body that is present in the middle of the earth together with humans and other creatures. In the Gospel of John, in Jesus Christ the incarnated God is the Logos through which all things were created. The revelation of God through and in Jesus Christ is regarded as the manifestation of God's love to the world (cosmos). The idea of incarnation as a medium of God's revelation is deeply connected with ecology. Ecological faith in Christ is manifested in the Church's claim that Jesus is the Saviour of the world. In the New Testament, the Church affirms Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world but also the Saviour of the cosmos. In biblical texts, it is affirmed that salvation and redemption are not only to do with human beings but even more importantly with the redemption of creation. The Gospel of John understands the cosmos to belong to God and as created by God. The love of God for the cosmos is revealed in the Christ event, which includes both the crucifixion and resurrection. It is then that the confession of Jesus as Christ, the Lord and Saviour, has to do with the human sphere. This confirms the view that ecology has not to do merely with human beings and the Earth, but also with the universe.

It is understandable that New Testament texts, especially those in the Pauline tradition, present Jesus Christ as not only the head of the ecclesia, but also as the head of the cosmos. He is the firstborn of creation and all things were created through him (Col. 1.16–17). Christ is the head of all things and also the head of the Church, which is the body of Christ. Since the beginning of the Church's development, it has believed in a salvation that includes an ecological dimension. In other words, the belief in Christ who saves the world shows that the Church needs to take ecology and the ecological crisis seriously.

57 Echlin, ‘Jesus’, p. 495.
It is important to connect the theology of creation with the theology of redemption.\(^5\) Redemption is cosmic, including not only humankind individually and collectively but all creaturely things.\(^6\) What is held out is not ‘redemption from the world, but rather the redemption of the world’.\(^7\) Joseph Sittler highlights the idea that the concept of redemption only works and has meaning when placed ‘within the larger orbit of a doctrine of creation’.\(^8\) When it is accepted that creation is an inherent part of God’s plan of redemption, the ecological crisis is directly related to redemption.\(^9\) It follows that if redemption includes the idea of sin, it should also include the idea of ecological sin. It is not only individual and structural sin that exist, but also sin in connection with our ecosystem. Ecological sin is the sin of mind, attitude and action that is passively and actively involved in causing ecological damage. Atonement for sins includes atonement for ecologically destructive actions. The sin associated with ecological destruction therefore requires ecological repentance.\(^{10}\)

Since the Church enjoys God’s redemption through Jesus’s works, she is called to proactive involvement in the ongoing process of creation, to sustain and care for the cosmos. The new humanity assembled in the Church should pioneer the ecological movement. Although extinction is part of the evolutionary process, humans trigger it by reducing biodiversity.\(^{11}\) The new human beings are to be involved in the ongoing process of creation by not perpetuating this reduction, and by ‘healing and liberating’.\(^{12}\) Successful environmental protection depends on changing human ethical behaviour and favouring actions that contribute to environmental sustainability.\(^{13}\)

### 4.3 The Eschatological Dimension of the Church

In connection with the confession that Christ is the head of the Church and the head of the cosmos, the Church should understand itself to be an eschatological community. The various identities of the Church related to the eschatological dimension include that the Church is a new creation

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59 Ayre, ‘Eco-Salvation’, p. 239.
64 Rakoczy, ‘Christian Faith’, p. 162.
and the house of God. New hopes for the future of the world are articulated in and through this community. This self-understanding follows that of the early Christian community, which perceived itself eschatologically. Although it existed in the world, it was a community moving ahead to the closeness of the Kingdom of God in eschatological time. The whole framework of understanding the Church should include the new eschatological creation of the Lord. The future of this new creation will be revealed in the personal presence of the Triune God with his glorified people, which is clear in the description of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1–22). In this process of moving ahead, the praxis of the Church in the ecological sphere overlaps with its calling as an eschatological community.

The doctrine of eschatology is abundantly shown in biblical texts. Jesus teaches about the coming of the Kingdom of God. A. M. Hunter even concluded that Christology was principally eschatology. The declaration of Jesus about the coming of the Kingdom of God is expanded by another concept, that its fullness will be completed at the end of the age. Eschatology is highly significant to the effort of reconstructing eco-ecclesiology, for it involves teaching a hope that in the time to come things will be better and actually perfect, including the ecosystem. Christian teaching on eschatology shows that Christian communities may be the entity engendering hope or optimism.

The most fundamental doctrine in Christian faith is Jesus’s resurrection, of which Paul asserts in 1 Cor. 15:14: ‘If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.’ In the context of the religious teaching of the Jews, from which Christianity emerged, the resurrection was thought of as an event that would happen at the end of the world in the future. When Christians experience and believe that the resurrection (of Jesus) occurred, a new element is added to eschatology. Christian eschatology is based on the view that this is not the end of the world through destruction, but that ‘It is, rather, the beginning of the true life . . . the beginning of the new creation of all things.’ The doctrine of eschatology that includes the resurrection of Christ is ‘the ground and starting point of Christian hope’.

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69 Volf, After Our Likeness, p. 139.
As an eschatological community, the Church confesses itself as an inherent part of the coming of the Kingdom of God within the world. The coming of the Kingdom of God, and the process of the coming of the new heaven and new earth, has begun with the coming of Jesus to earth (Luke 22) and will be completed at the end of the age. It encourages the Church as an eschatological community to live and present itself as the forerunner in propelling the process towards the eschatological new world. The church that comprises the new humanity is called to implement the Triune God’s work in ongoing creation.74

5 The Praxis of Eco-Ecclesiology

As an ecological community, the Church is called to an eco-ecclesiological praxis, which may contribute to preserving the world.75 By raising the ecological awareness of its members, the Church should be involved in the conservation movement and actively involved in public policy to overcome the ecological crisis. The praxis of the Church as an ecological community is a form of worship, celebrating unity with the universe and respecting the universe, and being responsible for planetary life.76

5.1 The Process of Ecological Conscientization

Faith is one of the keys to changing attitudes and behaviour in dealing with environmental problems.77 It is necessary to understand that the problem of ecological damage is related to spirituality and cleanliness of the heart, which requires repentance, that is, a change in attitude.78 A collective awareness process therefore has the potential to change attitudes related to environmental sustainability. This change in consciousness and perspective includes ecological repentance,79 which includes how to view and treat nature as inseparable from faith in the Christ who is believed to be the Saviour of the world. The Church, together with other religious communities, has a strategic role in dealing with problems resulting from the ecological crisis and is a potent force for

75 Rakoczy, ‘Christian Faith’, p. 162.
changing the behaviour of its members towards the earth and the environment. A believer should exercise ethical responsibility for the environment by caring for the earth created by God. In other words, ethics includes not only the relationship between humans but all relationships, including with the natural environment.

How the Church interprets the Bible is important in this awareness-raising and conscientizing process. Biblical texts need to be read and interpreted from the perspective of values, ethics and concerns for caring, sustaining, maintaining and preserving nature. Such an interpretative process will encourage believers to bear responsibility and accept accountability for ecological preservation. Besides, in the light of ecological awareness, the Bible inspires and motivates. Although some biblical accounts seem to legitimize exploitative action toward nature, the Church and believers are challenged to put even these to positive and constructive ecological use.

In the process of raising the ecological awareness of church members, it is necessary to review the confessions, doctrine, ethics, liturgy, and the development of the community. The confessions that were compiled in the third and fourth centuries CE do not articulate the Christian belief in a context of ecological crisis. Doctrine and ethics should also be revisited within the context of full awareness of the ecological crisis. Church liturgy should be revised to include worship that not only manifests the relationship between people and God but also adds an explicit ecological aspect. ‘The whole liturgy must be right if the church’s ecological and justice praxis is to be right.’ Related to liturgy is church architecture and decoration, which need to embody ecological awareness concretely and tangibly.

5.2 Church Participation in Environmental Sustainability Actions
A crucial aspect of realizing the Church as an ecological community is its mission, which should foreground accountability and responsibility for ecological actions. The local church and the universal Church overlap in the praxis of a new, eschatological community involving the eschatological earth. As long as

81 Le Bruyns, ‘Re-placing Stewardship?’ p. 69.
the local church presents the sign of the Kingdom of God by fully engaging in the ongoing process of creation, the universal church is concretely present. In this case, the Church not only becomes an ecumenical movement but, more importantly, should become a *cosmomenical* movement in which it maintains and cares for the cosmos. All of the Church’s actions should display its commitment to preserve nature and seriously take into account the long-term effects of the actions of the Church and its members. In the context of the ecological crisis in Indonesia, the Church should take responsibility for environmental sustainability as part of society.86 This effort should include involvement in conserving tropical rainforests and promoting biodiversity. Churches in Indonesia are called to implement their faith in their ethical behaviour, as ethical agents obliged to advocate environmental sustainability.87

5.3 Church Involvement in Policymaking

Ecological issues are also issues of ecological politics,88 which includes how environmental sustainability is promoted through the participation of the people, and of social and economic institutions. Public policy is key to ecological change. In particular, deforestation is closely linked to agricultural policies, which benefit producers and traders in economic commodities.89 The Church needs to involve itself in the public sphere in order to promote ecological public policies.90 To guide development of its public policy stances related to ecological issues, the Church needs to develop a public theology.91 The spearhead of Christian public theology is the church because it directly deals with public policy.92 Church involvement in influencing government policies extends to seeking to influence authorities and international treaties made by groups of countries. Churches articulating eco-ecclesiology should make efforts to influence public policies made by the government so that it seriously considers ecological issues.93

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87 Le Bruyns ‘Re-placing Stewardship?’ p. 68.
88 Ley, “Dry Feet For All”, p. 110.
Because the ecological crisis is related to economic development, the Church needs to continue to articulate the importance of sustainable economic development that respects and preserves the environment.94 In an Indonesian context, the Church needs to remind the Government that its policies in the field of economic development need to prioritize the sustainability of the environment and human beings, not merely to pursue economic growth and material benefits which exploit natural resources and result in ecological damage. Government policies must favour the interests of the people over the interests of economic growth so that people do not become mere instruments of global capitalism. If the Church were more willing to speak out critically about the influence of global capitalism on government policies that have an impact on the ecological crisis, this would be an important sign of its abandonment of neo-colonialism.

Concerning ecclesiological praxis, the Church is called to a prophetic critique of the economic and political idolatry that promote and sustain natural exploitation under the disguise of human well-being.95 However, the Church will only be able to articulate prophetic criticism in the public sphere if it is able to liberate itself from the grip of the ideology of global capitalism. In so doing, the Church should commit itself as a community that promotes the goodness and preservation of nature, and against actions that degrade our ecosystem. The ecological crisis is rooted in an ecclesial doctrine, theology and culture that affirms human glorification, which favours the spirit of capitalism.96 If the Church lives as a colony of global capitalism, it will never be able to express a prophetic voice or action in the global ecological crisis.

6 Closing Remarks

The ecological crisis in Indonesia is the context for doing theology, including ecclesiology. Ecclesiological reconstruction needs to be carried out immediately so that the Church can contribute to addressing national and global problems related to ecological damage. This article has argued that the ecclesiological reconstruction that is most needed in the face of the ecological crisis will recognize the Church as an ecological community. This reconstruction is an effort to contextualize ecclesiology. To become such communities, the churches in Indonesia need to become an inseparable part of the Indonesian

95 Miller, ‘The Doctrine’, p. 29.
nation and its cultures, which generally value nature and strive to conserve and maintain environmental balance. However, efforts to carry out ecclesiological construction to become a Church as an ecological community also need serious attention to the sources of the faith tradition. Three things that are important in this ecclesiological construction are the relationship between the Church and the Triune God, faith in Christ as Saviour of the world, and eschatology.

To realize itself in praxis as an ecological community, the Church needs to do three things. First, it must carry out an awareness-raising process for its members to respect nature and preserve the environment. Second, the Church needs to be involved in environmental conservation efforts with various programmes, which will be manifestations of its mission. Third, the Church should contribute to public policy debate on environmental issues. Through its praxis as an ecological community, the Church should participate in the creativity of the Triune God.