

Christian Stewardship: Reinterpreting Psalm 24:1 in the Context of Environmental Awareness Education

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengonseptualisasikan makna "pelayanan" dalam Mazmur 24:1 sebagai landasan teologis bagi pendidikan kesadaran lingkungan. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian studi pustaka dan pendekatan analisis isi (*content analysis*), hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bumi beserta segala isinya adalah milik Allah. Prinsip ini mengandung implikasi etis dan pedagogis yang kuat bagi orang percaya dalam menjaga ekologi. Dalam konteks ini, pelayanan tidak hanya dipahami sebagai kewajiban moral, melainkan juga sebagai bentuk partisipasi aktif orang percaya dalam menjalankan misi Allah (*Missio Dei*) terhadap dunia. Penatalayanan Kristen (*Christian stewardship*) menegaskan kedaulatan Ilahi atas ciptaan, yang kemudian membentuk sebuah etika ekologis Kristen yang mencakup tanggung jawab sosial, spiritual, dan lingkungan. Lebih lanjut, artikel ini mengusulkan integrasi nilai-nilai ekoteologi ke dalam kurikulum pendidikan Kristen sebagai salah satu strategi untuk menumbuhkan kepedulian lingkungan berbasis pendidikan iman. Dengan demikian, pendidikan Kristen dapat menjadi agen transformatif dalam membangun budaya kesadaran lingkungan yang berkelanjutan.

ABSTRACT

This article aims to find the concept of service in Psalm 24: 1 as a theological basis for the context of environmental awareness education using research methods with the content analysis approach and literature study. The results showed that the earth and all of its contents belonged to God that contain strong ethical and pedagogical implications for believers in maintaining ecology. In this case the service is understood as a moral obligation but also as a form of participation of believers in carrying out God's mission towards the world. Christian stewardship affirms Divine ownership of creation, Stewardship as a Christian Ecological Ethic, stewardship encompasses social, spiritual, and ecological responsibilities. This article also proposes the integration of ecotheological values in the Christian education curriculum as one of the strategies to foster concern for the environment based on faith education, thus Christian education can become a transformative agent in building a culture of sustainable environmental awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Ecological issues are a hot topic that continues to be discussed in many circles, emphasizing that this issue is fundamental. It concerns the survival of all creatures, including humans. Furthermore, ecological issue are not only social, economic or human issues but also

issues of poverty, which are certainly rooted in the moral crisis of humality.¹ Within this context, anthropocentric activities serve as the primary driver of the environmental crisis, while simultaneously rendering humanity the victim of its own behavior,² consequently, humans act as the central agent of environmental degradation, suffering the consequences of their own destructive actions. In response to this predicament, there has been a notable rise in awareness among various civic groups actively addressing ecological concerns. This is exemplified by millions of individuals across diverse social strata – led by school children – who mobilized in cities and towns globally to demand urgent action against climate change.³ In this regard, the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) reported in 2023 that greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are the main cause of global warming. Accelerating the climate crisis⁴ the greenhouse effect is actually needed to maintain the earth's temperature so that the temperature difference between day and night is not too great, but excessive effects cause global warming, the earth's temperature will rise significantly, marked by melting ice at the poles, ecosystem destruction, rising sea levels and extreme climate change.⁵ To address this phenomenon, the government is striving to protect the environment by reducing coal use and greenhouse gas emissions through the promotion of green energy, renewable energy or environmentally friendly energy, referring to energy sources generated from natural resources that can be continuously renewed. This has a positive impact because it is environmental damage, and ecosystem degradation.⁶ The high level of environmental damage has contributed to the obstruction of the development process and even the extinction of plant and animal species⁷ so it is clear that ecological issues are responsibility of all human

¹ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Theology The Queen of Science and The Master of Philosophy (Pengantar Filsafat Ilmu Theologia)*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Penerbit Geneva Insani Indonesia, 2015), 237; Agustina Pasang, "Ekologi Penciptaan Dalam Kejadian 1-3 Sebagai Landasan Evaluasi Kritis Terhadap Perilaku Ekologis Para Teolog Reformed Indonesia Masa Kini," *Excelsis Deo: Jurnal Teologi, Misiologi, dan Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (June 26, 2019): 67–76, <https://sttexcelsius.ac.id/e-journal/index.php/excelsisdeo/article/view/2>.

² Recently, Indonesia was confronted with the alarming reality of methane gas emissions at the Bantar Gebang Integrated Waste Management Site (TPST), which reached 6.3 tons per hour, positioning it as the world's second-highest methane-emitting location

³ Somini Sengupta, "Protesting Climate Change, Young People Take to Streets in a Global Strike - The New York Times," last modified September 20, 2019, accessed June 24, 2026, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/20/climate/global-climate-strike.html?eafs_enabled=false; Tony Salurante, "Konsep Prophetic Pragmatism Willy Jenkins: Membangun Ekologi Spiritual Untuk Kehidupan Berkelanjutan Menggereja Di Indonesia," *KHARISMATA: Jurnal Teologi Pantekosta* 7, no. 2 (January 31, 2025): 271–289, <https://e-journal.stajember.ac.id/index.php/kharismata/article/view/284>.

⁴ "AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023," accessed June 24, 2026, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/>.

⁵ Maria Ulfa, "Apa Itu Gas Rumah Kaca, Emisi Karbon & Dampaknya Untuk Lingkungan," last modified March 9, 2021, accessed June 24, 2026, <https://tirto.id/apa-itu-gas-rumah-kaca-emisi-karbon-dampaknya-untuk-lingkungan-gaZn>; Paige Stallwood, "What Can We Expect From COP27, And What Must Happen?," *Eart.Org*, November 3, 2022, <https://earth.org/cop27/>.

⁶ Max Ki, "Perkembangan Terbaru Dalam Inovasi Energi Hijau," *News* (6, 2025), <https://umsu.ac.id/berita/energi-hijau-pengertian-manfaat-dan-contoh/>.

⁷ T Pranadji and Wahida, "Environmental Policy, Ecology, and Threat towards the Unsustainable Agriculture Development in Indonesia," *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental*

beings, both individually and collectively, including the responsibility of all religions or beliefs.

From a Christian theological perspective, humanity was initially divinely entrusted with the stewardship of nature to manage and preserve God's creation (Gen. 1-2). However, historical realities demonstrate a failure to fulfill this mandate, evidenced by extensive anthropogenic exploitation that has precipitated severe environmental degradation, particularly air pollution. The atmospheric conditions in Indonesia sharply contradict its paradoxical reputation as a nation possessing vast tropical rainforests that serve as "the lungs of the world." Instead, the country faces a critical air quality crisis. This is corroborated by the 2025 Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) data, which ranks Indonesia among the countries with the poorest air quality in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, nearly the entire population inhabits regions where fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) levels exceed the WHO safety threshold of 5 µg/m³, causing the average Indonesian citizen to lose approximately 1.3 years of life expectancy due to chronic exposure to air pollution.⁸ Severe air degradation is driven not exclusively by transportation and industrial sectors, but is significantly exacerbated by rampant forest and peatland fires. Recent empirical studies reveal that peat fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan contribute to approximately 33,100 premature adult deaths and 2,900 infant mortalities annually.⁹ This predicament underscores humanity's failure to comprehend and execute its divinely appointed role as the caretaker of creation. Therefore, ecological consciousness extends beyond mere ethical or scientific dimensions; it lies at the very core of spirituality and stewardship.

After reviewing several studies on the relationship between Psalm 24:1 and stewardship, several were found to be relevant to the current study, namely: O.J Adigun, in article entitled *Christian Stewardship to God-given Natural Resources for Sustainability: A Biblical Perspective*, writes that Psalm 24:1 articulates the position of humans as stewards of creation which has ethical implications for sustainable practices in education.¹⁰ Rini et al in an article entitled *The Contribution of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Through a Problem Based Learning Approach - 4A Cycle Model* emphasizes that although this article does not specifically refer to Psalm 24, the approach taken

Science 892 (November 1, 2021): 1–6, <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1755-1315/892/1/012078>.

⁸ "Indonesia Fact Sheet," AQLI (*Air Quality Life Index*), no. Figure 1 (2022): 1–2, https://aqli.epic.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Indonesia-FactSheet_2024.pdf; Ahmad Faqih, "Indonesia Peringkat 15 Negara Paling Berpolusi, Terburuk Di ASEAN! – SustainLife Today," last modified March 12, 2025, accessed June 24, 2026, <https://www.sustainlifetoday.com/indonesia-peringkat-15-negara-paling-berpolusi-terburuk-di-asean/>.

⁹ Saritha Kittie Uda, Lars Hein, and Dwi Atmoko, "Assessing the Health Impacts of Peatland Fires: A Case Study for Central Kalimantan, Indonesia," *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* 26, no. 30 (October 30, 2019): 31315–31327, <http://link.springer.com/10.1007/s11356-019-06264-x>.

¹⁰ Olusegun James Adigun, "Christian Stewardship to God-given Natural Resources for Sustainability: A Biblical Perspective (Genesis 1:26-30 and Psalm 24:1) and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG #14 & #15)," *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies* 6, no. 3 (May 7, 2025): 1–12, <https://bjmas.org/index.php/bjmas/article/view/1276>.

shows how stewardship values can be implemented into contextual and applicable educational pedagogical practices.¹¹ Simon in an article entitled *The Role of Christian Religious Education in Addressing Ecological Issues*, also emphasizes the importance of the role of Christian educators in building ecological awareness among students through an educational approach that is both practical and theological.¹² Zaluku in article an article entitled *Christian Ecopedagogical Transformation through Ecotheology* presents the concept of ecopedagogical transformation in the Christian religious education curriculum to build faith-based environmental awareness.¹³ Several other studies also highlight the role of faith education in shaping student's ecological awareness, for example White.¹⁴

The above topic emphasizes the role of education in ecological stewardship, but there have not been many studies that specifically interpret Psalm 24:1 as the basis for environmental awareness education. This article offers a new approach by placing Psalm 24:1 as the theological basis for environmental awareness education. The literature is further enriched by an article entitled *Christian Stewardship: Reinterpreting Psalm 24:1 in the Context of Environmental Awareness Education*. To uncover this phenomenon, this study attempts to answer the question, "How does the reinterpretation of Christian Stewardship in Psalm 24:1 as a Theological basis Shape Environmental Awareness Education?" The answer to this question is the purpose of this article, which is to find the concept of Christian Stewardship in Psalm 24:1 as the basis for Environmental Awareness Education.

METHOD

The research method used was content analysis a research technique used to systematically describe and analyze the content of writings such as books, articles or newspapers in order to draw valid conclusions from the text to the context in which it is used.¹⁵ In this study, the author used content analysis to identify similarities and differences by comparing the same type of variables (leadership models) in two different contexts (teacher

¹¹ Wahyu Astjarjo Rini et al., "The Contribution of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Through a Problem Based Learning Approach - 4A Cycle Model," *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 56 (April 9, 2024): 338-350, <https://techniumscience.com/index.php/socialsciences/article/view/10809>.

¹² Simon Simon, "Peranan Pendidikan Agama Kristen Menangani Masalah Ekologi," *EDULEAD: Journal of Christian Education and Leadership* 2, no. 1 (June 1, 2021): 17-35, <https://stakpesat.ac.id/e-journal/index.php/edulead/article/view/60>.

¹³ Amirrudin Zalukhu, "Transformasi Ekopedagogi Kristen Melalui Ekoteologi Dalam Kurikulum Untuk Kesadaran Dan Mitigasi Pemanasan Global," *DIDAKTIKOS: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 8, no. 1 (May 7, 2025): 26-39, <https://journal.stipakdh.ac.id/index.php/didaktikos/article/view/233>.

¹⁴ Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science, New Series* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203-1207, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1720120>.

¹⁵ Satu Elo et al., "Qualitative Content Analysis: A Focus on Trustworthiness," *Sage Open* 4, no. 1 (January 1, 2014), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2158244014522633>; Stevri Indra Lumintang and Danik Astuti Lumintang, *Theologia Penelitian Dan Penelitian Theologis: Science-Ascience Serta Metodologinya* (Jakarta: Geneva Insani Indonesia, 2016), 114.

leadership and pastoral leadership).¹⁶ In addition, content analysis methods were used, which helped to gain an in-depth understanding of related research,¹⁷ based on critical thinking about oneself.¹⁸ This study also used a literature review method by examining primary literature (the Bible) and secondary literature in the form of books and journal articles discussing stewardship in Psalm 24:1 and environmental awareness education. In this regard, the researcher conducted an online literature search across major academic databases, specifically Google Scholar and Portal Garuda. The search process employed a combination of specific keywords: 'Christian Stewardship', 'Exegesis of Psalm 24:1', 'Ecotheology', and 'Environmental Awareness Education'. While the initial search yielded several articles and books related to the overarching theme of ecotheology, a rigorous selection process based on direct relevance to the exegetical focus and its educational applications narrowed the selection.

Consequently, the researcher selected six primary sources as the units of analysis for this study, including the book *Etika Bumi Baru* (Ethics of the New Earth) by Robert P. Borrong, which establishes the theological foundation of stewardship¹⁹ and Agustina Pasang's *Teologi Penciptaan Dan Tanggung Jawab Ekologis: Fondasi Pendidikan Kristen yang Transformatif*, which emphasizes earth care as an inseparable aspect of Christian faith. Pasang argues that transformative Christian Education must actualize the doctrine of creation, cultivating a new generation that balances ritual piety toward God with moral responsibility in sustaining the natural environment.²⁰ Bbosa Esau Kimanje's article, "Divine Ownership and Human Stewardship: Environmental Ethics Implications of Psalm 24:1." This study asserts that the acknowledgment of God's ownership repositions environmental stewardship and social justice as intrinsic components of authentic worship and discipleship, firmly rejecting the notion that they are merely peripheral or optional duties.²¹ Cheryl Le Roux's article, "Teaching towards Christian environmental stewardship - to what extent are the Tbilisi Declaration objectives for environmental education relevant?" Emphasize that Christian stewardship posits God's ownership of creation as the foundation of sustainability ethics. Environmental education (EE) within the church context must position reverence for creation as the primary objective prior to the development of environmental awareness; consequently, Christian

¹⁶ Chad Nelson and Robert H Woods Jr., "Content Analysis," in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, Ed. Steven Engler and Michael Stausberg (London, New York: Routledge, 2013), 109–110.

¹⁷ Dilek Esen and Pınar Süral Özer, "Sustainable Human Resources Management (HRM) a Study in Turkey Context and Developing a Sustainable HRM Questionnaire," *International Journal of Management Economics and Business* 16, no. 3 (2020): 550–580, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ijmeb/article/798548>.

¹⁸ Elo et al., "Qualitative Content Analysis: A Focus on Trustworthiness."

¹⁹ Robert P. Borrong, *Etika Bumi Baru* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2019).

²⁰ Agustina Pasang, *Teologi Penciptaan Dan Tanggung Jawab Ekologis: Fondasi Pendidikan Kristen Yang Transformatif* (Palu: Feniks Muda Sejahtera, 2026).

²¹ Esau Kimanje Bbosa, "Divine Ownership and Human Stewardship: Environmental Ethics Implications of Psalm 24:1," *Jumuga Journal of Education, Oral Studies, and Human Sciences* 8, no. 2 (July 31, 2025): 1–11, <https://www.jumugajournal.org/index.php/jjeoshs/article/view/131>.

stewardship is rendered more effective when reverence for creation is prioritized within the curriculum and instructional practices of environmental education in schools and churches.²² Sabda Budiman and Enggar Objantoro's article, "Ecotheology: Christianity's Responsibility to the Environment." This work highlights the transition from theology to praxis, asserting that biblical mandates for environmental care must be realized through a threefold framework of awareness: the way of thinking (conceptual understanding), the way of utilizing (resource management), and the way of caring (preservation).²³ along with several other relevant articles.

RESULTS

Based on a content analysis of Psalm 24:1 alongside relevant ecotheological literature, this study delineates critical insights concerning the text's theological discourse and its pedagogical relevance for environmental education:

First, The Declaration of YHWH's Absolute Sovereignty and Ownership over the Cosmos (La-YHWH): Textual analysis of the Hebrew syntax at the inception of the verse reveals the utilization of the preposition *le-* prefixed to the tetragrammaton (La-YHWH), signifying "Belonging to the LORD." Positioned at the beginning of the clause for emphatic prominence, this phrase asserts that God is the sole, legitimate proprietor of the entire cosmos. By doing so, it effectively deconstructs anthropocentric claims of absolute ownership, fundamentally shifting the ecological status of humanity from autonomous owners to accountable stewards under divine proprietorship.²⁴

Second, The Democratization of Creation via the Concepts of 'Erets, Tevel, and Melo'ah: Psalm 24:1 utilizes poetic parallelism to delineate the constituent elements of the earth through the terms 'Erets (the physical terrain), Tevel (the habitable, life-sustaining world), and melo'ah (its cosmic fullness or biodiversity). Exegetical inquiry demonstrates that this linguistic framework situates human beings (*yosvei vah*) horizontally alongside nature, establishing them as co-creatures bound by a shared ontological dependence on God.²⁵

Third, Pedagogical Significance: Scripture as a Curriculum for Attitudinal Transformation: In the realm of education, exegetical findings demonstrate that Psalm 24:1 offers rich thematic substance capable of reconstructing students' ecological consciousness.

²² Cheryl Sheila Le Roux, "Teaching towards Christian Environmental Stewardship – to What Extent Are the Tbilisi Declaration Objectives for Environmental Education Relevant?," *Koers - Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 85, no. 1 (October 5, 2020): 1–10, <http://www.koersjournal.org.za/index.php/koers/article/view/2422>.

²³ Sabda Budiman and Enggar Objantoro, "Ecotheology: The Christianity's Responsibility to the Environment," *GRAFTA: Journal of Christian Religion Education and Biblical Studies* 1, no. 2 (January 27, 2022): 106–123, <https://grafta.stbi.ac.id/index.php/GRAFTA/article/view/14>.

²⁴ Craigie asserts that the poetic structure of Psalm 24 begins with a radical liturgical confession regarding God's sovereign ownership of the earth, Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 19* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004); Borrong, *Etika Bumi Baru*.

²⁵ Brown examines how the creation psalms democratize the cosmos by situating humanity within – as opposed to above – the ecosystem, William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

The pedagogical value of this text underscores two urgent imperatives: first, a comprehensive redesign of Christian Religious Education curricula to shift the focus away from an exclusively anthropocentric view of personal salvation toward a framework of cosmic, ecological redemption; and second, the strategic deployment of faith-based pedagogical frameworks to foster a cognitive shift (metanoia) among learners, transforming them from dominators of nature into stewards dedicated to preserving the sustainability of creation.²⁶

DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher discusses Christian stewardship Psalm 24:1, which affirms God’s ownership of creation. Stewardship as Christian ecological ethics encompasses social, spiritual and ecological responsibilities, as follows:

Tabel 1. Stewardship in Psalm 24:1 affirms God’s ownership of His creation

Hebrew	Transliteration	Meaning	Grammatical/ Tense Analysis
לַיהוָה	Yah-weh	Belonging to God (YHWH)	proposition לַ (le-/la-) = 'possession' + name of God. ²⁷
הָאָרֶץ	ha-aretz	Earth	Singular feminine noun, with the definite article (הַ = 'the' ²⁸
וּמְלוֹאָהָ	u-melo’ah	And everything in it	ו (u) = 'and'; מְלוֹאָהָ = 'completeness'; suffix הָ. ²⁹
תֵּבֵל	tevel	The world	Synonyms for “earth” often denote an inhabited world. ³⁰
וַיִּשְׁבְּוּ	veyoshvei	And its inhabitants	Masculine plural active participle of יָשַׁב (to live) ³¹

²⁶ Edu Arto Silalahi, “Peran Pendidik Agama Kristen Dalam Membangun Kesadaran Ekologis Berdasarkan Kajian Teks Kejadian 1:26-28,” *JURNAL LUXNOS: JURNAL SEKOLAH TINGGI TEOLOGI PELITA DUNIA* 11, no. 1 (June 28, 2025): 231–244, https://luxnos.sttpd.ac.id/index.php/20_luxnos_20/article/view/andi2025; Raymon Imanuel Biah and Ezra Tari, “Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dalam Mengembangkan Kepedulian Ekologi Pada Generasi Muda Kristen,” *Scholars: Jurnal Sosial Humaniora dan Pendidikan* 2, no. 1 (August 21, 2024): 57–68, <https://ejournal-polnam.ac.id/index.php/JS/article/view/2377>.

²⁷ Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs-Genesis Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1980), 510; “Bible > Interlinear > Psalm 24:1” (Bible Hub, n.d.), <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/psalms/24-1.htm>.

²⁸ R.Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament Volume 1* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 75; “Bible > Interlinear > Psalm 24:1.” bnd BibleHub. (n.d.). *Interlinear Hebrew-English Bible*.

²⁹ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs-Genesis Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 569; “Bible > Interlinear > Psalm 24:1.”

³⁰ Harris, Jr., and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament Volume 1*, 376; “Bible > Interlinear > Psalm 24:1.”

³¹ B. Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon: Consisting of an Alphabetical Arrangement of Every Word and Inflection Contained in the Old Testament Scriptures, Precisely as They Occur*

בָּהּ	bah	Within it	בָּ = 'at'; ending הָ = 'nya' (feminine, referring to *aretz*). ³²
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Psalm 24 opens with a clear declaration that the entire earth belongs to YHWH (Yahweh), establishing the theological foundation for the entire psalm. Because God holds absolute rights over the whole of His creation, this sovereign claim undergirds the subsequent demands for holiness and worship articulated in the following verses.³³ The word “ לַיהוָה ” translated as “proper name, of deity Yahweh, the proper name of the God of Israel,” it asserts that this specific name signifies a unique covenantal relationship with Israel, which is further translated as the “God of Israel.”³⁴ The Lexicon specifically notes that “YHWH is the covenant name by which the God of Israel uniquely identifies Himself,”³⁵ Consequently, this name serves as the specific personal name through which God uniquely reveals Himself, particularly to Israel as His chosen people, and is followed by the preposition lamed (ל), which further reinforces this sense of ownership.

The word hā-’āreṣ (הָאָרֶץ), meaning "earth" with a definite article translated as "the earth," does not merely refer to the land of Israel in this verse; rather, it encompasses the entire earth as God's creation, demonstrating that the scope of this term is universal and signifies God's sovereign rule over the whole world.³⁶

The word û-məlō’āh (וּמְלֵאָהּ), with the conjunctive prefix waw (= and), is translated as "and all its fullness, and that which fills it, abounds, or is in plenitude." This term specifically denotes the entire contents of the earth, encompassing natural resources, flora, fauna, and all existing forms of life therein.³⁷

The word tēbēl (תְּבֵל), meaning "world," is derived from the root yābal and is translated as "moist and inhabited; the globe." It implicitly denotes its inhabitants or a specific habitable land mass (the inhabitable part of the earth), or the world at large.³⁸ or the world inhabited by humanity. In relation to the word hā-’āreṣ (the earth as a creation), Goldingay asserts that the juxtaposed usage of these two terms demonstrates that God is Lord over both the natural world and the human society that dwells within it.³⁹

in the Sacred Text, with a Grammatical Analysis of Each Word, and Lexicogr, 2nd ed. (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1848), 358.

³² Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs-Genesius Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 108; “Bible > Interlinear > Psalm 24:1.” bnd BibleHub. (n.d.). *Interlinear Hebrew-English Bible*.

³³ James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville, Westminster: Jhon Knox Press, 1994), 115–116.

³⁴ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs-Genesius Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 510.

³⁵ “Bible > Strong’s > Hebrew > 3068.Yhvh: The Divine Name in Scripture” (Bible Hub, n.d.), <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3068.htm>.

³⁶ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1973), 113.

³⁷ Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms: The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Academic, 2017), 246.

³⁸ Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance. “Bible > Interlinear > Psalm 24:1.”

³⁹ John Goldingay, *Psalms, Volume 1: Psalms 1–41* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2006), 362–363.

The word *wəyōšəḇê* (וְיֹשְׁבֵי), derived from the root *yāšab* (to dwell), is translated as "and the inhabitants." It concludes with the term *bāh* (בָּהּ), translated as "in it," which refers back to the preceding word *wəyōšəḇê*, thereby rendering the meaning "those who dwell within it." The Qal participle form denotes a continuous, ongoing state; consequently, all inhabitants of the earth are understood as those who continuously live within a realm that belongs entirely to God.⁴⁰

Based on the word-by-word analysis above, it can be concluded that the earth and its fullness belong entirely to YHWH (the God of Israel). Craigie explains that this declaration of God's ownership over the universe also possesses a polemical dimension against the Ancient Near Eastern world; whereas the nations surrounding Israel generally associated specific deities with localized territories, Psalm 24 asserts that Yahweh is Lord over the entire world, not merely over Israel⁴¹ and theologically undergirds the understanding of stewardship, in the sense that humans are merely caretakers and preservationists of creation, rather than its owners. The assertion that the entire earth belongs to God provides an ontological and spiritual foundation showing that humanity is not the owner of creation, as Stott writes:

This earth belongs to God and to humans. It belongs to God because He created it and it belongs to humans because He has given it to us—not in the sense that He has given it to us so completely that He no longer has any rights or control over it, but rather that He has given it to us so that we may rule over it on His behalf.⁴²

This means that human control over the earth is based on usage rights and not ownership rights. This means that there must be a restoration of the relationship between humans and nature, starting with humans. Humans must return to their original nature as God's representative on earth, which means that humans must reflect glory in exercising their power over nature while also representing God's glory over nature. Placing God as owner not just creator, shapes the understanding that the relationship between humans and nature is one of responsibility not domination. This view also corrects the exploitative interpretation of the mandate to "subdue the earth" (Gen. 1:28).

Stewardship as Christian Ecological Ethics

In relation to Christian ecological ethics, Psalm 24:1 establishes the foundation for the concept of ecological stewardship, wherein humans are called to care for and preserve creation as an act of obedience to God. In this capacity, as God's representatives, humans bear a profound responsibility toward nature and the environment, as this constitutes a divine mandate or command. Consequently, the reconciliation of humanity's relationship with God births peace both for humans and for nature itself; furthermore, God's glory over creation becomes vividly manifest, demonstrating that humans have truly functioned as responsible

⁴⁰ Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 614–617.

⁴¹ Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 19* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 211–212

⁴² John Stott, *Isu-Isu Global Menantang Kepemimpinan Kristen*, 3rd ed. (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih/OMF, 1996), 150.

representatives of God over the earth. This framework decisively rejects the anthropocentric worldview, which posits that nature or the environment possesses merely instrumental value to serve human interests. This anthropocentric perspective is frequently linked to Western worldviews that view the environment solely through the lens of its utility for human welfare and prosperity. Within this paradigm, only humans are elevated as subjects, while nature and the environment are relegated to mere objects; consequently, nature is scrutinized, explored, and ultimately exploited.⁴³ Consequently, this anthropocentric ethics is fundamentally incompatible with Christian ethics, which emphasizes the profound continuity between humanity and the natural world.

The failure of Western anthropocentric ethics—which is frequently rooted in a misinterpretation of the cultural mandate in Genesis 1:28 regarding the terms "subdue" (*kābaš*) and "have dominion" (*rādā*)—has been sharply criticized by ecofeminist theologians and modern Christian ethicists. The dualistic separation between humanity as a rational subject and nature as a soulless, mechanical object is a legacy of Enlightenment philosophy (*Aufklärung*) and Cartesian thought, which reduces creation to a mere economic commodity.⁴⁴ On the contrary, a Christian ecological ethics that remains faithful to the biblical witness maintains that human dominion over nature is not an absolute ownership, but rather a delegated dominion. The concept of stewardship within the framework of Psalm 24:1 asserts a theocentric sovereignty: because the earth belongs to YHWH,⁴⁵ human management of nature must therefore reflect the character of YHWH, who sustains, loves, and values every creation for its own intrinsic value before God, rather than merely for its materialistic utility to humanity.⁴⁶

Furthermore, the continuity between humanity and the universe is rooted in their existential parity as fellow creatures. Materially, human beings were formed from the dust of the ground (*'ādāmā*), demonstrating an inseparable, organic bond with the biosphere. The restoration of humanity's relationship with God through the redemptive work of Christ is not confined to an anthropological salvation, but is inherently cosmic in scope (cosmic redemption). As the Apostle Paul declares in Romans 8:19–22, the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together, eagerly awaiting liberation from its bondage to decay. Consequently, Christian stewardship ethics demands a paradigmatic shift from anthropocentrism toward a theocentric ecocentrism. Within this framework, humans act as the "priest of creation," elevating the praises of the universe to God,⁴⁷ while simultaneously

⁴³ Borrong, *Etika Bumi Baru*, 183–188.

⁴⁴ Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis."

⁴⁵ Celia Deane-Drummond, "Environmental Stewardship: Critical Perspectives – Past and Present – Edited by R.J. Berry," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9, no. 3 (July 15, 2007): 375–378, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2400.2007.00276.x>.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; Borrong, *Etika Bumi Baru*, 183–188.

⁴⁷ Richard Bauckham, *Living with Creatures: On Being Human on a Dying Earth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1–62.

ensuring that present-day environmental preservation serves as a faithful anticipation of the eschatological cosmic restoration that promises a new heaven and a new earth.

Based on the preceding discourse, it can be concluded that a Christian ecological ethics rooted in Psalm 24:1 offers a total deconstruction of the Western anthropocentric paradigm. Through a redefinition of the cultural mandate, the Scriptures assert that humanity does not hold absolute ownership, but rather a delegated dominion as stewards who are directly accountable to YHWH. The recognition of an existential continuity between humanity and nature as fellow creatures shifts the paradigm from subject-object exploitation to an organic-ethical relationship. Ultimately, the restoration of humanity's relationship with God yields a profound cosmic transformation, wherein Christian ecological responsibility becomes a sacramental act of faith in anticipation of the eschatological cosmic restoration.

Stewardship includes social, spiritual and ecological responsibilities

Reinterpretation of Psalm 24:1 invites believers to develop a spirituality rooted in reverence for creation as seen in Genesis chapter 1 and 2. God is the Owner of the earth and all its contents and He reigns supreme over His creation. He shows His extraordinary care for humanity by providing a special dwelling place in the Garden of Eden with all its beauty and riches.⁴⁸ Although there is a unique relationship between God and humans, this does not make humans equal to God because God is different from humans, who are His own creation. Through the framework of this voluntary condescension, God establishes the mandate of stewardship not as an isolated ecological task; rather, as Calvin asserts, the preservation of the universe is fundamentally a direct reflection of humanity's spiritual knowledge of God the Creator. Consequently, the spiritual dimension of this stewardship serves as an expression of faithful obedience and creaturely worship offered to the One who holds absolute sovereignty.⁴⁹ Regarding the natural being that exists between God and man, Geerhardus Vos affirms in the Westminster Confession as faith follows:

The distance between God and the creatures are so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of His as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.⁵⁰

Categorically speaking, God and humans are so different that it is impossible for humans to live up to God's standards and bear fruits for Him. However God, who is sovereign and powerful over His creation, has full rights over humans and binds them in a covenant of creation as a law or provision regarding how humans should live before Him.⁵¹ Stewardship

⁴⁸ Hans Walter Wolff, *Antropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 95.

⁴⁹ John T. McNeill, ed., *Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Vol. 1* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 179–181.

⁵⁰ Geerhardus Vos, *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Atlanta: Committee for Christian Education and Publications, 1990), 25.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

grounded in genuine spirituality fosters ecological repentance and prompts active engagement in corporate environmental preservation. Furthermore, Schaefer cautions that this responsibility must not be confined to personal piety; rather, it must encompass a social dimension. The laws of God's covenant consistently govern how humans treat one another through the equitable utilization of natural resources. Greedy exploitation of the environment alienates fellow human beings, breeds inequality, and deprives future generations of their rights – thereby violating the social justice demanded by the covenant itself.⁵² Consequently, true Christian stewardship necessitates a holistic ecological preservation.

Present-day environmental degradation is fundamentally a manifestation of a spiritual crisis and the collapse of human social relations. In the context of concrete action, stewardship driven by a covenantal spirituality must compel an ecological conversion. This conversion entails a radical shift in how humanity perceives the fulfillment of its social needs without compromising the integrity of the created order.⁵³ Ultimately, active engagement in corporate environmental preservation serves as a tangible expression of a holistic restoration of relationships: humanity, having been reconciled with God (the spiritual dimension), will live in peace with one another (the social dimension) and manifest this peace through protective actions toward the earth upon which they stand (the ecological dimension).

Based on the entirety of the preceding discourse, it can be concluded that a reinterpretation of Psalm 24:1 demands an integrated and unfragmented paradigm of ecological stewardship. Through the concept of voluntary condescension bound within a creation covenant, God does not merely issue an isolated environmental mandate; rather, He ordains an integrative responsibility that unifies the spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions. These three dimensions stand as an inseparable ethical unity: a right spiritual relationship with God (the obedience of faith) must automatically manifest in inter-human social justice, which is then concretely expressed through protective and preservationist actions toward the universe as the absolute property of YHWH. Today's ecological failure is tangible evidence of a spiritual crisis and the collapse of human social order. Consequently, true Christian stewardship driven by a covenantal spirituality must culminate in an ecological conversion and active corporate engagement – a holistic act of faith wherein humanity, having been reconciled with God and one another, moves collectively to preserve the earth upon which they stand.

Stewardship enables learners to understand that preserving the earth is an integral part of worship and a vocational calling of faith.

Within the educational context, the government has launched a long-term initiative through formal education pathways, wherein students are nurtured to love the environment and developed to possess a keen sensitivity toward environmental preservation tasks. This

⁵² Jame Schaefer, *Theological Foundations for Environmental Ethics: Reconstructing Patristic & Medieval Concept* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 78.

⁵³ Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 115.

framework encompasses schools and higher education institutions alike, with the expectation that through the pivotal role of education, learners will cultivate a high degree of awareness regarding their responsibility to preserve the environment across personal, familial, institutional, and broader societal contexts—as Haruman writes, a healthy environment stimulates cognitive growth and paves the way for a better, more hopeful future.⁵⁴ Aspects of environmental awareness can be integrated through curriculum delivery, such as courses in environmental ethics or environmental education, wherein both the instructional content and methodology function pragmatically to uphold the values of environmental preservation, as part of the efforts to safeguard sustainability and the right to an ecological environment, as initiated in the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment adopted in Stockholm, Sweden, on June 16, 1972, and subsequently updated through the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro on June 14, 1992,⁵⁵ thereby demonstrating that humanity plays a pivotal role in maintaining a healthy and dynamic ecological continuity. In the context of educational discourse, Cheryl Le Roux analyzes the extent to which these universal UN declarations are relevant and can be integrated into the teaching of Christian environmental stewardship. Le Roux asserts that for Christian institutions, the goals of universal environmental education are elevated into a vocational calling of faith, wherein caring for the earth is not perceived as a burden of secular regulation, but rather as a tangible form of worship offered to the Creator.⁵⁶

In this context, Christian stewardship enables learners to understand that preserving the earth is an integral part of their spirituality. This aligns with the argument of Bbosa Esau Kimanje, who reinterprets Psalm 24:1 by asserting that the acknowledgment of divine ownership over the earth necessitates a moral education that emphasizes humanity's absolute accountability before God;⁵⁷ hence, an environmental ethics curriculum becomes profoundly crucial. Echoing this perspective, Sabda Budiman and Enggar Objantoro state that ecotheology must be integrated into formal education to awaken the awareness that the church and believers bear an existential responsibility toward environmental sustainability.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, within the school environment, Christian Education teachers hold a pivotal role in deconstructing the misinterpretations of Genesis 1:26–28; educators must guide students away from adopting exploitative attitudes, directing them instead to become

⁵⁴ M. Soejani and M. Somad, eds., *Manusia Dan Keresasian Lingkungan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1983), 9; Agus Jatmiko, "Pendidikan Berwawasan Ekologi Realisasi Nilai-Nilai Ekologis Dalam Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2016): 45–62, <http://ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/tadzkiyyah/article/view/1493>.

⁵⁵ Jatmiko, "Pendidikan Berwawasan Ekologi Realisasi Nilai-Nilai Ekologis Dalam Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam."

⁵⁶ Roux, "Teaching towards Christian Environmental Stewardship – to What Extent Are the Tbilisi Declaration Objectives for Environmental Education Relevant?," 5–7.

⁵⁷ Bbosa, "Divine Ownership and Human Stewardship: Environmental Ethics Implications of Psalm 24:1."

⁵⁸ Budiman and Objantoro, "Ecotheology: The Christianity's Responsibility to the Environment."

dynamic ecological protectors.⁵⁹ As Raymon and Tari emphasize, through personal exemplarity and functional learning methodologies, Christian Education teachers hold the definitive key to cultivating a collective ecological concern among the Christian youth across familial, institutional, and broader societal contexts.⁶⁰

Through this holistic approach, the environmental awareness cultivated across both formal and informal educational pathways transcends mere cognitive knowledge, transforming instead into a manifestation of living worship and a calling of faith. Consequently, Christian stewardship enables learners to perceive that preserving the earth is inherently woven into their spiritual devotion and vocational calling. Within this framework, education and awareness serve as the catalyst for shaping and actualizing environmentally conscious behaviors. Through education, individuals both learn and are taught the imperative of safeguarding and loving the environment, alongside practical methods for implementation; hence, school-based environmental education programs and ecological awareness campaigns stand as tangible exemplars of this endeavor.

Environmental Awareness Education

Along with scientific and technological advancements that stimulate intensive human activities, these conditions inadvertently affect the environment, as evidenced by transportation emissions, deforestation, and the waste management crisis in landfills. Facing these challenges, organizations such as the Greeneration Foundation have recorded a surge in environmental movements over the past two decades, which has been subsequent to the global commitment of the United Nations through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, within SDG 4, emphasis is placed on the importance of inclusive and equitable education to ensure lifelong learning opportunities, which encompasses the right to access information regarding sustainable consumption and production patterns. From a theological perspective, Budiman and Objantoro assert that fulfilling this right to ecological literacy is a concrete manifestation of Christianity's existential responsibility toward the preservation of the universal environment.⁶¹ Hence, Environmental Awareness Education integrated through the pathway of Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a profoundly pivotal enabling role. As Simon writes, the role of Christian Religious Education in addressing ecological issues is highly crucial for transforming students' understanding, ensuring that they do not merely possess secular cognitive intelligence, but also the spiritual sensitivity to perceive that caring for the earth is an integral part of worship and a vocational calling of faith.⁶²

⁵⁹ Silalahi, "Peran Pendidik Agama Kristen Dalam Membangun Kesadaran Ekologis Berdasarkan Kajian Teks Kejadian 1:26-28"; Pasang, *Teologi Penciptaan Dan Tanggung Jawab Ekologis: Fondasi Pendidikan Kristen Yang Transformatif*, 90-92.

⁶⁰ Biaf and Tari, "Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dalam Mengembangkan Kepedulian Ekologi Pada Generasi Muda Kristen."

⁶¹ Budiman and Objantoro, "Ecotheology: The Christianity's Responsibility to the Environment."

⁶² Simon, "Peranan Pendidikan Agama Kristen Menangani Masalah Ekologi."

The Christian Religious Education (CRE) curriculum serves as a bridging mechanism to align the essence of the word "aware" – which etymologically denotes a state of knowing, understanding, and realizing – with concrete attitudinal and behavioral components within society. The cultivation of ecological awareness within formal school and higher education environments originates from the active role of Christian educators who are capable of reconstructing the theology of creation, particularly through the textual analysis of Genesis 1:26–28, thereby enabling students to comprehend their unique role as protectors, rather than exploiters, of nature.⁶³ This educational process must not stop at the theoretical level; rather, it must penetrate the character and disposition of the younger generation, equipping them to be responsive to the ecological issues within their surroundings. Aligned with this perspective, Raymon and Tari underscore the vital role of Christian Religious Education teachers in developing practical ecological concern among Christian youth, implemented both through personal exemplarity and the habituation of pro-environmental actions across familial, school, institutional, and broader societal contexts.⁶⁴ Consequently, under the umbrella of this structured Environmental Awareness Education, a shift in collective behavior can be actualized, guiding learners toward a harmonious, balanced, and responsible way of life toward all elements of creation.

CONCLUSION

Reinterpreting Psalm 24:1 within the context of Environmental Awareness Education dismantles the dichotomy of secular anthropocentrism by introducing a overarching framework of theocentric sovereignty: since the earth and all its fullness belong absolutely to YHWH, humanity is ontologically positioned merely as a steward of delegated dominion rather than the owner. The conceptual novelty of this study demonstrates that Christian stewardship is not merely an isolated ecological duty; rather, it constitutes an integrative response of faith that simultaneously interlocks three ethical dimensions: spiritual (liturgical obedience to the Creator), social (distributive justice and resource utilization for one's neighbors), and ecological (the preservation of biospheric integrity). In the practical realm, this multidimensional awareness will not emerge organically without systematic intervention through Environmental Awareness Education. Therefore, this study recommends the integration of ecotheology into the Christian Religious Education (PAK) curriculum as an instrument for transforming the character of learners – shifting them from exploitative agents into active "priests of creation." Given the limitations of this study, future research is encouraged to expand interdisciplinary textual exploration by cross-examining Psalm 24:1 with the Old Testament prophetic corpus as well as New Testament cosmic eschatology. This

⁶³ Pasang, *Teologi Penciptaan Dan Tanggung Jawab Ekologis: Fondasi Pendidikan Kristen Yang Transformatif*, 120–124; Silalahi, "Peran Pendidik Agama Kristen Dalam Membangun Kesadaran Ekologis Berdasarkan Kajian Teks Kejadian 1:26-28."

⁶⁴ Biaf and Tari, "Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dalam Mengembangkan Kepedulian Ekologi Pada Generasi Muda Kristen."

step is deemed crucial to reinforce the theological foundation of the educational curriculum, ensuring that the commitment to care for the earth within educational institutions is no longer viewed as an optional fulfillment of social regulation, but rather as a concrete manifestation of worship and a living calling of faith.

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