

**PRESENTATION AT THE STAKEHOLDERS'
CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON NUTRITION IN ZAMBIA**

THE SPIRITUALITY OF AGROECOLOGY

1.0. Introduction

When we talk about agroecology we mean a holistic way of growing our food that take into account the demands and dictates of nature. In other words, human beings working together, with the environment to produce food and wealth. This demands that we listen to messages the environment is sending to us as we till the land and use nature's resources for our food requirements.

Spirituality is a situation where we live out that which we believe in. If we believe that God is love, then we must show love to others. If we believe that we are part of creation, then we should avoid indiscriminate destruction and pollution of nature.

2.0. The Beginning

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2](#)He was with God in the beginning. [3](#)Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. (John 1:1).

When human beings lost their dignity [14](#)"the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth".

So Jesus's mission was to link us back to his Father, because we had, as human beings broken down this relationship with our creator. In his death, he showed us that creation is one and everything is linked, and so his death reconciled us with him and all creation.

So God created everything – trees, plants, animals. He also created Human beings – in his image He created them female & male. Out of soil He molded and breathed his Spirit into him, then Adam began to live and later out of his rib, Eve became human too. When God completed this, he saw that **everything was very good**. Can we say today that everything in creation is still very good? Why? – too many distortions...

Then God gave a Job for human beings: To be **stewards** of creation and to **fill** the land.

When God saw that Human beings were spoiling His creation – he gave orders and rules to help them stay within the plan of creation. In Leviticus 19:19, he says;

“Keep my decrees; do not mate different kinds of animals. (e.g. Cattle and donkeys). Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed”

Through the Israelites God is warning us today that we should seek his wisdom and plan for creation. This sounds like a rebuke against growing food and changing our animal breads through genetic engineering. Mixing genes of a beetle and maize is against God's plan for nature. Since everything in nature is connected, a distortion like that can lead to other larger negative consequences humans may find hard to resolve, such as increased cancer related ailments among animals and people.

3.0. Our modern tilling of the land to grow food – protein, energy and fiber

Our modern way of growing food is associated with,

- a) Cutting down of trees covering large areas for timber, charcoal and agriculture
- b) Disturbing water source as farmers cultivate on river banks and sources of rivers
- c) Use of chemicals such as fertilizer or for pest and weed control
- d) Tilling the soil using ox-driven ploughs or tractors

The Results:-

- Dead soil
- Loss of biodiversity
- Loss of Natural habitat for animals
- Loss of nutritious foods – wild fruits, tubers, mushrooms etc.
- Loss of sacred places - designated so by our ancestors
- Loss of top soil through erosion – wind and floods

Modern societies should begin to learn from the wisdom of our ancestors who understood the Spirituality behind the reality that bind all creation together **As One. The Spirituality of agroecology demands that we go back to the beginning.**

Going back to the beginning – means to;

- a) **Realizing that all creation is linked** - disturb or alter one side – all gets affected.
- b) **Taking care of the soil** - bringing back dead soil to life. Chemicals can't do it – organic matter can because it heals and resurrects the soil by putting back the living organisms and humus that gives life to the soil.
Good soil produces crops that are high on nutrition. The bacteria in the soil that help the plants to absorb nutrients and grow, is the same bacteria in our guts that helps the body to absorb the nutrients the body needs for its growth. The less there is in the soil, the less there is in our guts – so we suffer from diseases associated with digestion, including **Colon Cancer**.
- c) **Protecting biodiversity** – we can use biodiversity to grow food. Our ancestors did it and it worked. Maize was grown with pumpkins, beans, cucumbers, millet etc.
- d) **Realising that the more we use chemicals to kill the weeds the less the nutrition we draw from crops and the more we contaminate the environment and accelerate our own death.**



It is the **Spirituality of Agroecology** that inspires many people practicing this way of farming and growing crops, to continue and expand their work in spite of the many challenges that they have been facing. Agroecology not only is God's way of farming, it is also a movement that is gaining momentum in the world and it challenges

conversional methods of producing food.

If we want to promote nutrition and live a health life, we should be ready for a war between Multinational Food Producers using conversional methods and farmers using agroecology.

Conclusion

As the UPND prepares for legal and policy changes around nutrition, the driving underlying principle that should guide the reforms is **holistic approach**. Since everything is linked and in line with God's plan, nutrition security is for all sectors: Mining, Agriculture, Water, Land, transport, health, education, judiciary etc. This way Zambia will be on course to improve its nutrition status.

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