

Leadership and spiritual resources in the Anthropocene: Some practical theological reflections

Ian Nell

Practical Theology and Missiology
Stellenbosch University

Abstract

Faith communities are found all over the world as spaces where people find a spiritual home and where spiritual formation takes place. For this contribution, the research question is: In what ways can the leadership in faith communities contribute towards spiritual resources for their members in the time of the Anthropocene? Faith communities are spaces where three resources (a shared narrative about climate change, shared values and shared symbols and practices) interact and where each of these can also make a unique contribution to raising awareness of ownership and space in the time of the Anthropocene. If the Anthropocene is considered as the period in which human activities have the dominant influence on the climate and the environment, these three resources offer important contributions for a greater awareness of humans' influence on the climate and the environment. The congregational leader as spiritual guide in the modes of storyteller, moral compass and symbolic worker can play a significant role in the process of mobilising people of faith in becoming involved in their environment and climate mobilisation.

Keywords: Faith communities; Anthropocene; Spiritual formation; Climate narrative; Shared values; Shared symbols

Introduction

This contribution reports on my investigation from a practical-theological viewpoint of how and why the leaders of faith communities can mobilise themselves and their members to become involved in environmental issues, and in particular in climate change. Among other things, I employ resource mobilisation theory (RMT), where the idea of “spiritual resources” is the focus. The latter helps to explain how spiritual identities, narratives, symbols and values can facilitate a distinctive collective action regarding environmental and climate issues.

There is a set of resources available to spiritual leaders consisting of symbols, rituals and traditions shaped by certain doctrines and theology that cannot be completely put into words by other explanations of climate mobilisation. Although these spiritual resources do not translate directly into specific environmental or climate action, it is still possible to combine them with other resources. Where this happens, the leadership of faith communities can motivate their members to become involved in environmental activities on an individual and community level.

Understanding the Anthropocene

Before I pay attention to some theoretical perspectives, it is worthwhile to gain greater clarity about the notion of the Anthropocene. The influence of human activity on the global environment has not only been, geologically speaking, very recent but also very profound. The variety as well as the longevity and magnitude of the changes that human activities have caused in the composition and transformation of the atmosphere, which also includes the land surface, has led to the proposal that we should refer to the current time as the “Anthropocene”. The academic and even popular use of the term has increased dramatically since an influential academic publication saw the light just over two decades ago, namely the article by Crutzen and Stoermer titled “The Anthropocene” (2000). This paper suggests that the Holocene has ended, and the Anthropocene has begun, starting the contemporary increase in the usage of the term “Anthropocene”. Dean-Drummond, Bergmann and Vogt (2018:1) describe the Anthropocene as follows:

The global notion of the Anthropocene is meant to denote the current geological era as a new geological epoch in which the collective imprint of human activities is so pervasive that the Earth System, most notably that associated with climate change, is destabilized. Related assessments suggest that humanity is now close to passing several other planetary boundaries and tipping points. These notions have stirred up vigorous discussions in the earth sciences, where research now focuses on a rigorous understanding of humanity’s interaction with the biophysical Earth System. Treating humanity as a whole in this way has also come under serious critique from social science, given the disparity of impact between different human cultures and groups.

It becomes clear that the different reactions to the Anthropocene, according to Conty (2021:2016), largely come from the social and natural sciences. However, in the last few years, there have also been reactions from the religious sphere, and this has also started to gain momentum. That is why there are several scholars who are starting to ask for a religious response to complement the (natural) scientific response to climate change. If we take seriously Genesis 1:28, which says that humanity has received the command to “subdue the earth”, we also become aware of the fact that the monotheistic religions are often accused of being complicit in human exceptionalism and what some call “dominionism”. In addition, human exceptionalism or dominionism is seen as the most important factor in creating the conditions of the Anthropocene. What is also interesting is the fact that indigenous animistic cultures, unlike the Abrahamic traditions, have generally respected all forms of life as “persons”. As a result, these traditions have become an important source of inspiration for the ecological movements.

White (2004:192) argues that Christianity, “in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia’s religions (except, perhaps, Zoroastrianism), not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends”. Nearly twenty years later, White’s thesis is more relevant than ever. However, according to Ronan (2017:92), a study of religion and the environment presents us with the complexity of reactions to climate change, saying: “Such research can identify, trace, and record the capacity for religion to revive, maintain and sustain essential planetary conditions.” There has been significant development in this exchange and a large body

of research has emerged since the 1990s. With a better understanding of the Anthropocene, we can now focus on some theoretical perspectives.

Theoretical perspectives

RMT focuses on the different ways in which groups identify resources (cultural, organisational, financial, human) and use them with a view to recruit and motivate people to act in a sustainable way (Walder, 2009). Although this approach is not usually applied to faith communities, I aimed to adapt the theory in line with that of Bomberg and Hague (2018) to help understand how important it is to mobilise faith communities to become involved in local environmental and climate issues. For this purpose, I mainly investigated the cultural resources that are related to faith, transcendence and inner belief, and which we can consider as spiritual resources. The spiritual resources can serve as an important source for involvement in the environment and climate change. Unlike other frameworks that work with social movements, RMT is more interested in how and why groups mobilise themselves around a specific societal problem. Therefore, RMT is less interested in the various demands and grievances of movements and more interested in explaining why a group finds encouragement in pursuing a collective goal (Pinard, 2011; Tarrow, 2011).

Initially, scholars identified several categories of resources that include material resources, organisational resources and human resources, all of which are used by groups to launch different actions. Later, some of the theorists moved beyond merely human and material resources and began to include resources that are not only related to the material and that we can describe as cultural resources. These cultural resources include aspects such as a shared identity, group values and cultural symbols that facilitate, embody and orient shared group experiences (Edwards & Kane, 2014:215). Part of these cultural resources are what we can call “spiritual resources”. The latter can be defined as “the collection of spiritual beliefs, symbols and identities that facilitate collective action on specific issues” (Bomberg & Hague, 2018:584).

One must further take into consideration that the notion of spirituality is very contested and is often broadly defined as a loving relationship that a person has with a higher or transcendent power or being (Sheldrake, 2016). Underlying this loving relationship are aspects such as divine transcendence and a deep-seated interconnection that goes beyond the everyday and that is also related to the fact that people have a purpose that extends beyond what is immediately obvious. While spirituality largely focuses on a person’s inner faith, it also has important implications for the outward behaviour of people. McIntosh (2008:3) points out that spirituality challenges our selfishness and can “carry us deeper than mere ethics and any notion of moral law”, taking us “to the very source of conviction and motivation in the core of our being”. With the latter in mind, it is the case that spirituality and the symbols and beliefs that go with it have the potential to serve as a powerful resource for recruitment and mobilisation.

In this contribution, I would like to give the broad definition of spirituality a sharper focus in two ways. First, recognition must be given to the fact that spirituality is much wider than religion. Religion is usually best understood as a social structure within which a variety of spiritualities are at home. Second, I focus more specifically on Christian spirituality. In this connection, the symbols, traditions and rituals of Christian teaching and theology are examined in more detail. Christian spirituality can be described, in the

words of McGrath (1999:9), as a “desire to live out the Christian faith authentically, responsibly, effectively and fully”, and is therefore related to the dynamic and creative synthesis of life and faith. Sheldrake (2016:4) defines Christian spirituality as follows:

The word “spirituality” has become increasingly common. What does it mean? It is not limited to spiritual practices, such as meditation, but suggests the pursuit of a life shaped by a sense of meaning, values, and perhaps transcendence. Although the word is used in different religions, and by people with no religious beliefs, its origins were Christian and referred to living life under the influence of God’s spirit.

Christian spirituality therefore suggests a form of integration and the search for an overall framework for unlocking meaning that will have a healing effect on being human and hence promote general human well-being. This form of spirituality wants to develop a holistic view of life and contribute to vision and hope. My research is therefore also interested in Christian faith communities in the form of Christian congregations and therefore attempts to investigate the way in which Christian spirituality can be a distinguishing source of mobilisation for climate change in and through these communities.

Spiritual/Cultural resources

With a better understanding of RMT, spirituality and, more specifically, Christian spirituality, we can now take a closer look at spiritual or cultural resources available for climate mobilisation and action. When we now examine cultural or spiritual resources, the important aspects are the so-called intangibles, for example, narratives and symbols that can help to recruit or encourage new members and help with the socialisation of existing members. According to Edwards and Kane (2014:215), these spiritual or cultural resources refer to the symbols, beliefs, values and identity of a group that facilitate and orient their everyday activities. McIntosh and Carmichael (2015:23) are convinced that faith-based groups can make use of very specific cultural resources, in the form of a powerful identity that is inspired by stories of faith and that is often composed of shared narratives, practices, symbols, values and beliefs. The latter can be used sensibly in the context of climate change for the recruitment of new members and even further help with the mobilisation of the members who already support these initiatives from their faith commitments.

Following Vonk (2012) and Bomberg and Hague (2018), I now discuss the spiritual resources in more detail below by breaking them down into three resources: First, a *shared narrative* about climate and the earth and humans’ interaction with it; second, *shared values* that are linked to a very specific worldview; and third, *shared practices and symbols* that form the foundation for the shared narrative of the first dimension. Making use of literature on eco-theology, as well as articles on the internet and news reports, each of these three resources was examined to determine what is distinctive and to make recommendations on how these resources can be used to motivate action.

Shared narrative about climate

A shared narrative about the environment, climate change and the relationship between the earth and human beings is not only important but can also motivate us to take action.

From the results of the relevant research, it is clear that groups working with shared narratives are more stable and more successful. A shared narrative provides the glue that binds people together by developing common goals that enable communities to act in the face of challenges such as climate change (Lejano, Ingram & Ingram, 2013).

Interesting research conducted among different church groups in Sweden by Clifton-Soderstrom (2009) point out two distinct aspects. First, he found that the climate narrative of these groups had a strong focus on hope, redemption and healing. All these concepts naturally belong to the heart of Christian theology. One of the respondents in the empirical investigation remarked as follows: “We look for hope where we can find it. Doom and gloom don’t work very well though there’s plenty of it around.” From this, Clifton-Soderstrom draws the conclusion that faith communities bring a vision of hope that overshadows any promise of community help or action by the government.

The second aspect that becomes clear from Clifton-Soderstrom’s (2009) research is the strong temporal element in the narratives of the different church groups. The latter is also related to multiple references to various interconnections across time. What is particularly informative is the reference to intergenerational topics, i.e. topics that span different generations. The motto of one of the churches that was part of the investigation was to be a congregation that cares for God’s creation now and in the future. There was also an important emphasis on how change can now be brought about in the sense of how one can change the future here and now before disaster strikes.

In this regard, we must bear in mind that the church has good experience of the past, but that the church is also able to look forward and can also offer different perspectives on how to think about the climate, the environment, the future and the past. In summary, one could say that church groups’ narratives about the environment and climate change contain temporal notions not only about creation and eternity, but also about hope, transformation and salvation.

Shared values

The first and most important core value usually identified by Christians is awe, love and respect for God’s creation. This value is often referred to as “stewardship” or “creation care”. Furthermore, it is interesting that respect and love for the earth also play an important role in secular environmental values. In eco-theology, one finds the strong conviction that humans must take care of creation because the earth is part of God’s creation. This interconnection between God, creation and human beings, where God’s creation is directly connected to the earth, reminds us of the core of spirituality, which can also serve as a strong motivation for action. Put another way, climate change can be attributed to the fact that we have not succeeded in our stewardship of God’s creation. Along with this, the thought that human beings are disconnected and separate from nature, according to eco-theologians, is exactly what made pollution and global-scale degradation possible (Northcott, 2013).

The emphasis on the earth and on God’s creation presupposes a reinterpretation of the “dominion doctrine” of which we read in Genesis 1:26–28. Eco-theologians agree that this doctrine is not about a form of rule that wants to destroy, but one that wants to protect and respect. Unfortunately, this value is not universally lived by the Christian church, and one finds some evangelical churches, especially in the USA, where the dominion over creation is often still seen as a license to exploit the earth and the oceans.

Fortunately, it is the case that most churches worldwide consider creation care as a powerful motivation and encourage their members to move away from the exploitation of creation towards action to address environmental degradation and climate change (cf. Action Institute, 2000).

The second core value that helps with the motivation to take action can be described as an ethical obligation and has to do with a Christian sense of responsibility or a sense of duty. As Christians, we are accountable to God for what we do with our lives. Philippians 1:27 serves as key text here, namely to “live our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”. Durrant (2014:37) describes the motivation behind this: “It’s not that we shouldn’t be spurred on by the hope of making a difference, it’s just that our prime motivation needs to be to live out who we are.” What is needed here is, in other words, a “change of heart”, which is firstly about the enrichment of our spiritual relationship with God and then secondly serves as motivation for our righteous behaviour towards God’s creation.

Linked to the idea of a sense of duty, the third core value is that of community. This relates especially to a community of justice, which can be linked to the biblical concept of caring for one’s neighbour. Gotlieb (2006:243), an eco-theologian, writes: “... we want to save the world, but right now we do what we do because we wish to be the kind of person who lives like this: who honours God’s creation, feels and responds to the sacredness of the earth, and tries to love our neighbours as ourselves.” In terms of neighbour care, it is specifically the poor of the earth, who are most affected by climate change, that we must keep in mind here. In summary, we could therefore say that the concepts of community care (justice), creation care and Christian duty are all core aspects related to the values that motivate people. However, what distinguishes Christian faith communities from secular groups that hold the same values is that these values are not only connected to the belief that this can lead to change of policy, or to care for the earth or the hope that these values can facilitate collective action. As far as Christian faith groups are concerned, it is rather a case of these motivating values being developed and strengthened by their Christian teachings, faith and obligations.

Shared practices and symbols

Shared practices and symbols provide support for the shared narrative referred to above. McGurty (2009), a scholar of social movements, shows us how different groups use a wide variety of frameworks, symbols and forms of protest to implement the common narrative and to communicate that narrative. In this regard, it is interesting to look at the cultural repertoire of non-governmental organisations involved in the environment. According to him, we usually find, among other things, the famous images of stranded polar bears, melting icebergs and the deforestation of the Amazon forests. The message that these core symbols are trying to convey is that we are responsible for what is going on, that time is short and that the damage is devastating.

However, when it comes to Christian faith communities, there are other shared practices and symbols. Here we find that the different church groups share cultural resources based on their participation in common rituals and religious traditions. These shared meanings help to keep the message of healing, redemption and hope alive based on a shared tradition and history. Ruether (2011), a theologian, is of the opinion that Christian believers are more likely to take action if they are supported by traditions that

are credible to them and that also have local significance. According to him, there are some interesting examples in this regard, such as “carbon savings”, which are seen as “climate offerings” that members can place in the collection plate as examples of what they have done to reduce their carbon footprint. There are also local harvest festivals, something not unknown to those of us who live in the winelands of Stellenbosch, where the wonders of nature are celebrated. The latter is often related to symbolic actions that are expressed in the form of testimonies and reflections rather than in large protest marches in which corporate greed, structures of government or neoliberal practices are targeted, and which are often used as a strategy by secular groups. McIntosh (2008) refers to the actions of church groups as “otherworldly ways of knowing, being and doing”.

With a good idea of the shared climate narrative, values, practices and symbols, we are now in a position to move over to look at leadership. In line with the three spiritual resources above, I want to concentrate on three related competencies that I understand might be important for persons in leadership of faith communities. As an overarching competency, I think it is important for a person who takes the lead in a congregation to be a spiritual guide with three related competencies: to be a storyteller, a moral compass and a symbolic worker.

The congregational leader as spiritual guide

Rick Osmer (2008:25) makes a good case for using the term “congregational leaders” instead of “ministers” or “pastors” when he refers to these leaders’ function as interpretive guides. According to him, the clergy are not the only people who can and should take leadership in a congregation. He is of the opinion that a strong theological case can be made for mutual guidance belonging in the first place to the whole people of God and in the second place to the people who are set apart by the congregation by way of ordination. Furthermore, it is also the case that the leadership in Christian faith communities is inherently a spiritual matter, where influence is used to guide the behaviour and attitudes of people.

The development of a theology of congregational leadership should therefore pay special attention to the spirituality of leadership. And according to Osmer (2008:27), what must be understood under the spirituality of leadership is that there must be an openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The role of the Holy Spirit is to form and transform believers to become more and more accordant to the image of the body of Christ in the service of the church and its mission. As an umbrella term, I think it helps to connect with Osmer’s idea of the congregational leader as spiritual guide, where leadership then guides the interpretation of the gospel in different ways of communication. For this contribution, I concentrate on three competencies or three modes that are important when it comes to guiding the congregation to understand climate change, namely the storyteller, moral compass, and symbolic worker.

In the mode of storyteller

One finds the central message of the storyteller in Goal 13 (climate change) of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals to transform our world: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Goal 13 contains the following targets:

- Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.
- Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning.
- Improve education, awareness-raising, and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
- Implement the commitment undertaken by developed country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of jointly mobilising \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalise the Green Climate Fund through its capitalisation as soon as possible.
- Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate-change-related planning and management in less developed countries and small island developing states, including focusing on women, the youth, and local and marginalised communities.

In light of these targets, the role of the storyteller is to be a public critic. Wimberly (2011:129) summarises this role in the following way: “The public theologian, also drawing on faith perspectives about human worth and experiences in pastoral counselling and psychotherapy, becomes a public critic promoting noncommodity-oriented images of human worth that can provide resources for public policies and planning.”

Storytellers as leaders of faith communities will have to find in their own context which relevant stories need to be told to address the challenge of climate change and the targets stated above. In our South African context, there is, for example, the case of “Day Zero”, which currently dominates the water crisis in the Eastern Cape. According to Brown (2022), several activists in the city of Gqeberha (formerly known as Port Elizabeth) have warned for a long time of a Day Zero – the day when the taps will run dry in this South African coastal city. This follows on years of severe drought and municipal mismanagement, and it looks like that day is now very close:

On Monday, city officials announced that one of its four major dams had reached a level so low that barges trying to extract water sucked in mud instead. Another dam is expected to fail in the next two weeks, a third in about a month. Large parts of the city could be completely without running water by the end of the month, according to local officials. Four years ago, when Cape Town announced it was nearing its own day zero, the world turned to watch. Headlines blared that this was the first time in modern history that a major world city would be without running water. Gqeberha, by contrast, has received little international attention. (Brown, 2022:n.p.)

The water crisis that we have experienced in our country over the past number of years is of course directly related to climate change, and there are literally thousands of stories that can be told in relation to this topic. Furthermore, one must also keep in mind that the shortage of water is also a study in inequality. Although it is the case that the lack of

water affects the entire area, residents of the more affluent parts of the city have the advantage of being able to install boreholes and use bottled water. Unfortunately, it is the case that most residents of Nelson Mandela Bay in Gqeberha live in townships that lack the necessary resources and were built around South African cities during the apartheid years to house black workers. These areas have some of the densest populations and struggle with the least functional infrastructure.

In the mode of moral compass

Climate change and the associated climate crisis before us raise several difficult moral questions about *what* we value and *why*. The crisis further confronts us with the question of *who* decides what the value is and with *what authority*. Whichever way one contemplates these questions, according to Lee (2022:3), there are five observations to which all of us should pay attention:

- The climate crisis will impact all of us one way or another.
- Some human communities will bear the brunt more strongly than others.
- Environmental crisis tends to provoke new geopolitical antagonisms and worsen old ones. This includes wars, as well as the ecological ruin and greenhouse emissions that come with war.
- Capitalism, a system of economic exchange rooted in the largely unchallenged assumption that all value can be converted to exchange or commodity value, plays a central role in environmental destruction, pollution, geopolitical violence, species extinction, and the climate crisis.
- An unprecedented number of non-human animal species will confront loss of habitat, starvation, and migration. But one of the most ethically troubling legacies of the Anthropocene, the age of human industrial domination, is extinction.

Leaders of faith communities taking their cue from these observations as moral compasses can make significant contributions in helping their congregations and communities to understand that climate change is indeed the greatest challenge of our times. Furthermore, we must bear in mind that for many people, climate change is not just a crisis in the future; they are confronted daily with a shortage of water, food insecurity, droughts and all kinds of disease. The lack of action in this regard can effectively lead to the extinction of all life on earth. One can compare this situation with untreated cancer. We know that untreated cancer metastasises and leaves the patient in a terminal position. We also know that treating the cancer may not eradicate the disease, but that early attention to the problem can reduce the side effects on the organs of the body. According to Lee (2022:4), “[t]hat is the moral burden we bear to recognize that environmental conditions are existential conditions, that in having the planet ‘smoke’ we are imperilling it and every living thing that lives within its ‘body’”.

For a leader of a faith community to act as a moral compass, one needs to be inherently countercultural and, in that sense, also conflictual with all cultures. It is a fundamental attribute of the church to seek to domesticate the good news of the gospel (Willimon, 2010:31). To work against domestication and to be countercultural is the task of prophet leadership. Prophetic discernment refers to ethical reflections in the sense of

using ethical guidelines, rules and principles to guide our actions towards moral goals and ends. All our actions and practices are filled with norms and values that are often in conflict. The role of leadership as moral compass is to channel behaviour in the different contexts, episodes and situations towards moral ends (Browning, 1995). Prophetic discernment must be accompanied by good practice, as examples of good practice can “reform a congregation’s present actions” and can “generate new understandings of God, the Christian life, and social values beyond those provided by the received tradition” (Osmer, 2008:153).

In the mode of symbolic worker

According to Stiegler (2004), symbolic workers are people who are concerned with the spirit in the broadest sense of the word, such as writers, thinkers, artists, educators and religious people. In this sense, all congregational leaders are in one way or another a symbol, representative and mediator of the Holy One (God). As symbolic leader, predecessor or liturgist, this person wants to bring the community together to celebrate its identity through Word and sacrament. In this regard, the leadership as symbolic workers participate in the formation of the symbols and culture of their communities.

Cormode (2020) points to the fact that culture (especially within our postcolonial context) shapes our expectations and perceptions and that leadership is expected to interpret new events and convey situations in such a way that they fit into the existing cultural repertoire. Symbolic leaders not only interact with these cultural symbols, but also actively give form to these symbols, practices, beliefs and history of the local faith community. The structure and nature of these symbols, whether in the form of clothing, liturgical spaces, architecture, rituals or music, will of course vary from community to community, which means that a good understanding and a delicate approach are important. One example of this is what is known in the Dutch Reformed Church family as the Season of Creation.¹ On the website we find the following introductory paragraph:

Every year, churches around the world gather to celebrate a Season of Creation. This tradition has its origins in 1989, with the South African Council of Churches deciding in 2007 to make it a permanent part of the church calendar. What makes the annual Season of Creation different is that it is an annual celebration that begins on September 1 with a prayer day for Creation and ends on October 4 with the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis is one of the most famous figures in church history for his love and deep awareness for nature and creation. St. Francis embodied a faith and spirituality that regarded every animal, plant and insect as an equal creation by God.

This initiative is also closely linked to the World Communion of Reformed Churches’ focus on ecological justice.² Various resources exist that can be used by leaders and faith communities. The theme of the 2022 Season of Creation was “Listen to the Voice of Creation”. A book was published with the title *Listen to the land! Responding to cries*

¹ See <https://kaapkerk.co.za/seisoenon-van-skepping/>.

² See <http://wcrc.ch/justice/ecological>.

Leadership and spiritual resources in Anthropocene: Some practical theological reflections 11
for life, published by the Oikotree Movement.³ The Oikotree Movement is a global movement of movements striving for justice, peace and fullness of life, and is sponsored by the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Council for World Mission. While we struggle for justice with people's movements and other organisations, the issue of "land" has emerged as a crucial factor in the destruction of creation itself, with all its beings. Therefore, at the 2013 Oikotree Global Forum, the movement decided to develop a thorough theological reflection on the issue of land.

Conclusion

I started this contribution with the following research question: In what ways can the leadership in faith communities contribute towards spiritual resources for their members in time of the Anthropocene? I set out to answer this question by turning to RMT, which focuses on different ways in which groups identify resources (cultural, organisational, financial, human) and use them with a view to recruit and motivate people to act in a sustainable way. Taking my cue from RMT, I looked at three spiritual or cultural resources: a shared narrative about climate, shared values, and shared practices and symbols. Turning to spiritual leadership, I looked at three competencies or three modes that are important when it comes to guiding the congregation to understand climate change, namely storyteller, moral compass and symbolic worker. The congregational leader as spiritual guide in the modes of storyteller, moral compass and symbolic worker can indeed play a significant role in the process of mobilising people of faith in becoming involved in their environment and climate mobilisation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acton Institute. 2000. *Cornwall Declaration*. Online: <http://www.acton.org/public-policy/environmental-stewardship/cornwall-declaration> (Accessed: 5 March 2017).
- Bomberg, E. and Hague, A. 2018. Faith-based climate action in Christian congregations: Mobilisation and spiritual resources, *Local Environment* 23(5):582–596.
- Brown, L.B. 2022. 'Day Zero' water crisis looms on South Africa's Eastern Cape, *The Washington Post* 19 June.
- Browning, D.S. 1995. *A fundamental practical theology: Descriptive and strategic proposals*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Clifton-Soderstrom, K. 2009. Response to "A biblical theology of the environment in the creation narrative" by R. Boaz Johnson, *Covenant Quarterly* 67:16–19.
- Conty, A.F. 2021. Religion in the age of the Anthropocene, *Environmental Values* 30(2):215–234.
- Cormode, S. 2020. *The innovative church: How leaders and their congregations can adapt in an ever-changing world*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Crutzen, P.J. and Stoermer, E.F. 2000. The Anthropocene, *IGBP Global Change Newsletter* 41:17–18.

³ See <http://wccrc.ch/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Oikotree-ListenToLand.jpg>.

- Deane-Drummond, C., Bergmann, S. and Vogt, M. (eds). 2018. *Religion in the Anthropocene*. Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press.
- Durrant, K. 2014. *The earth will teach you*. London: Wide Margin Books.
- Edwards, B. and Kane, M. 2014. Resource mobilization and social and political movements. In Van der Heijden, H.A. (ed), *Handbook of political citizenship and social movements*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 205–232.
- Gottlieb, R.S. 2006. *A greener faith*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lee, W.L. 2022. *This is environmental ethics: An introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Lejano, R., Ingram, M. and Ingram, H. 2013. *The power of narrative in environmental networks*. Boston, MA: The MIT Press.
- McGrath, A. 1999. *Christian spirituality: An introduction*. London: Blackwell.
- McGurty, E.M. 2009. *Transforming environmentalism: Warren County, PCBS and the origins of environmental justice*. London: Rutgers University Press.
- McIntosh, A. 2008. *Hell and high water: Climate change, hope and the human condition*. Edinburgh: Birlinn.
- McIntosh, A. and Carmichael, M. 2015. *Spiritual activism: Leadership as service*. Cambridge: Green Books.
- Northcott, M.S. 2013. *A political theology of climate change*. Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans.
- Osmer, R.R. 2008. *Practical theology: An introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans.
- Pinard, M. 2011. *Motivational dimensions in social movements and contentious collective action*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Ronan, M. 2017. Religion and the environment: Twenty-first century American evangelicalism and the Anthropocene, *Humanities* 6(4):92:1–15.
- Ruether, R. 2011. Ecology and theology: Ecojustice at the center of the Church's mission, *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 65(4):354–363.
- Sheldrake, P. 2016. Constructing spirituality, *Religion and Theology* 23(1/2):15–34.
- Stiegler, B. 2004. Hoe die kultuurindustrie die individu versmoor: Bydrae tot 'n teorie van massaverbruik, J. Rossouw (trans), *Fragmente: Tydskrif vir Filosofie en Kultuurkritiek* 12:1–10.
- Tarrow, S. 2011. *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics* (3rd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vonk, M. 2012. *Sustainability and quality of life: A study on the religious worldviews, values and environmental impact of Amish, Hutterite, Franciscan and Benedictine communities*. PhD dissertation, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. Online: <https://research.vu.nl/en/publications/sustainability-and-quality-of-life-a-study-on-the-religious-world> (Accessed: 23 August 2022).
- Walder, A.G. 2009. Political sociology and social movements, *Annual Review of Sociology* 35(3):393–412.
- White, L. 2004. The historical roots of our ecological crisis. In White, L. & Gottlieb, R.S. *This sacred earth: Religion, nature, environment*. Routledge, 192–201.
- Willimon, B.W.H. 2010. *Calling & character: Virtues of the ordained life*. Grand Rapids: Abingdon Press.
- Wimberly, E.P. 2011. Unnoticed and unloved: The indigenous storyteller and public theology in a postcolonial age, *Verbum et Ecclesia* 32(2), art. 506.