

A Zulu saying goes *"It is only a silly bird that destroys its nest"*. The world is in this sense a nest composed of varied mentality. Each member of the community has a constructive role in the sustenance of all creatures that dwell on earth. This study is a comparative explanation of the Biblical teachings and Ameru concept of environmental conservation. This is in view of the phenomenal global environmental crises. The objectives are to show Biblical understanding of ecology; Ameru mode of environmental conservation; a comparison between Biblical and Ameru conservation strategies an assessment of environmental degradation and, the plan of action.

Research questionnaires were designed to help attain the aforementioned objectives. It is established that both Israelites and Ameru conserved their environment by responsibly tilling and keeping the garden. When Israelites lived in a camp they had to keep their environment clean, revealing that "cleanliness is second to godliness" (Deut. 23:12-14). Ameru preserved their environment by positively caring for the animals, the earth, soil erosion, water-catchment areas, resting of the shamba and the caring of the ecosystems, pods, forests, sacred wood (*biitu*) and grasslands.

The area of study was South Imenti in Meru, presently in Central Meru District representing Meru area. Two questionnaires were employed to gather data. One dealt with the Biblical understanding of ecology and its application by the churches. The other questionnaire was about indigenous Ameru ways of conserving the environment. Data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources, constituted libraries and archives. Primary sources involved interviews, questionnaires and participant observation methods in Bible studies and in Sunday services. Findings indicate that there were also other common conservation methods employed by the faithful through preaching, seminars and camps for planting trees. All in all, the church played a positive role in caring for the environment. It was confirmed that Ameru through their theo-centric beliefs, myths, rituals, proverbs, sacrifices passed the knowledge of environmental conservation from one generation to another. This is viewed to be the reason underlying South Imenti's beautiful environment.

It was established after the independence the Ameru were freer to use natural resources due to demarcation of land. The preserved sacred groves, were cut down and the areas were made peoples' gardens. This also revealed that the change of the traditional land tenure from community (clan) to the individual was problematic, resulting into environmental degradations.

The study observes that environmental conservation is a necessity for both the Ameru and the Church as part of humanity. The Church must embrace the environmental mission by ratifying the environmental covenant signed in Israel at Beit Hanassi on 6th September, 1993. It reads:

*We hereby enter into a covenant with all humanity, whenever they may be, to stand united to close the breach, to stop the mindless destruction and extinction which threatens our planet. Environmental degradation knows no boundaries, no nationalities, no states. Now is the time to heed the message of RIO, Earth Summit, the message of International and Regional co-operation and rational responsibility- our only hope of success (Gitau 1997:260).*

The study recommends effective environmental conservation strategies underlining that both the Church adherents and Ameru have a role to play.