ABSTRACTS FOR ST. PAUL'S UNIVESITY RESEARCH CONFERENCE ON 23rd & 24th NOVEMBER 2017

THEME: Strengthening Research and Innovations for Climate Adaptation and Sustainable Development

Religion and Climate Change Response in Africa: The Case of ACK Thamanda Parish Forestation Initiatives, Kiambu County, Kenya

Paul Kinyanjui Kuria,
PhD Student, Department of Theology, St Paul's University
P.O. Private Bag, Limuru, 00217, Kenya.
Corresponding Email: kuria004@yahoo.com

Abstract

IPCC projections suggest that the Sub-Saharan Africa will bear the brunt of climate change. Efforts to find solutions in relation climate change mitigation and adaption have largely remain a preserve of scholars, governments and non-government agencies. During the last ten years, the church has however embraced initiatives to address climate change mitigations and adaptations. However, there is paucity of research on how these initiatives are implemented, as well as issues related to sustainability. This paper examines initiatives by the ACK church in Kiambu County to institutionalize tree planting in strategic church activities with a broader aim of rehabilitating the environment and ensure climate change mitigation and adaptation in the county. The research investigated the progress made in tree planting in households, the proportion of trees sustained during the last ten years and the challenges, and challenges households encounter in sustaining trees planted and the type of support households would like to receive to sustain trees planted to ensure livelihood sustainability and resilience in face of global climate change. Data were collected by visiting a selected sample of households that participated in tree planting during burial during the year 2007, 2008 and 2009. Secondary data were obtained on the number of trees planted. Field visits were done to establish the number of trees that were still flourishing out of the total planted. Study findings revealed that on average a household had planted 5 trees. However, sustainability of the trees planted was considerably poor, with some households recording a zero on the number of trees surviving in the year 2017. The study recommends collaboration with forest extension staff to work with rural households to ensure sustainability of the trees planted. There also a need to explore how collaboration of the church with universities could be implemented to complement church efforts particularly educating rural households to increase sustainability of the trees planted.

Key words: Religion, Climate change mitigation and adaptation, Sub-Saharan Africa, Sustainability, forestation.