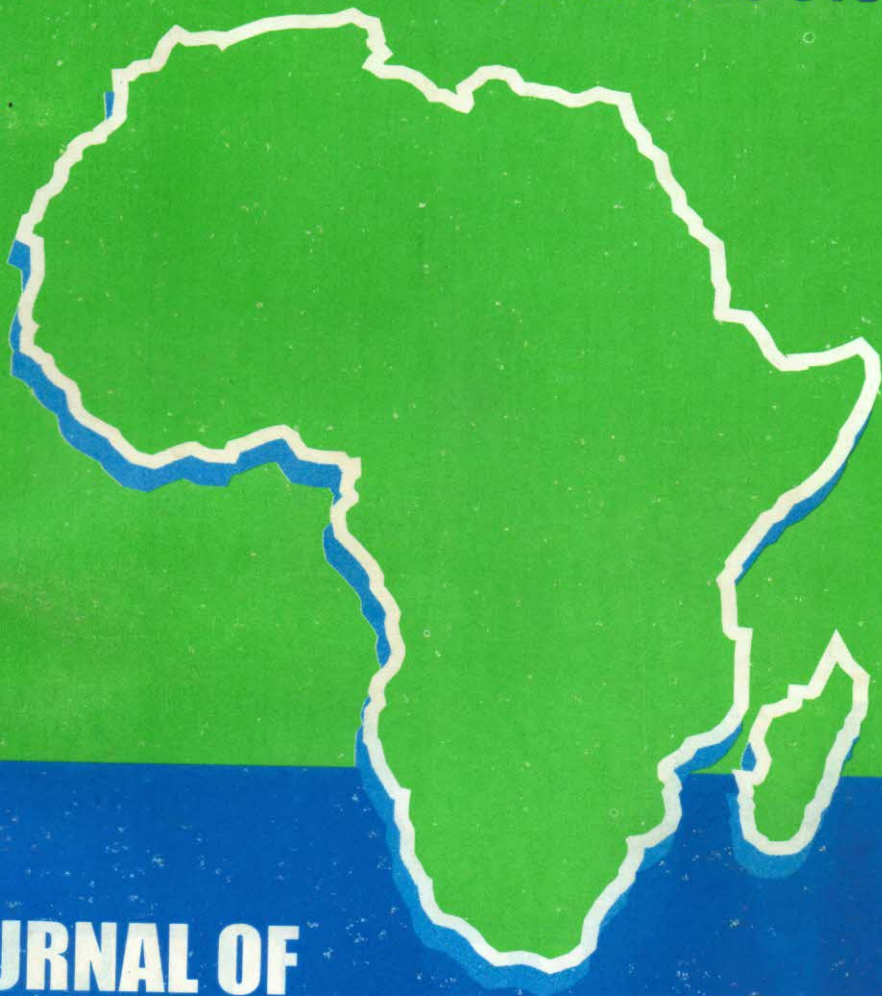


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## SPIRITUALITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: AN APPRAISAL

Patrick U. Nwosu, PhD\*

### Abstract

At the beginning of the third millennium, the natural environment faces a lot of pressure that seriously endanger the deeply complex balance that sustains the richly interrelated diversity of all forms of life. The environmental crisis is commanding the attention of people in various disciplines of life: politics, economics, health, religion, history and so on. Discussions on the concern for the environment and authentic human development revolve around areas of ecology. But less attention has been given to the historical causes and worldviews that have generated today's environmental crisis. Therefore, this paper adopts the historical and analytical approaches to investigate the root causes and worldviews that have made the environment to face serious challenges. The paper proposes a new spirituality of the environment that would enhance integral human development, and conclusively maintains that onslaught on the environment usually has multiple effects on the wellbeing of people. Hence, the urgent need to adopt new spirituality toward the natural environment.

### Introduction

Spirituality, in the 21st century, has assumed a broad application beyond religious realm. The concept is no longer limited to only one area of study. Spirituality in this context, could be described as the quality of being concerned about certain salient issues.<sup>1</sup> In other words, spirituality points to the ways people appropriate ultimate values and express same in worship and lifestyle. Spirituality as well expresses a people's worldview. In Christian tradition, spirituality is the whole human efforts to live in the light of conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit and within a community<sup>2</sup>. Spirituality, in other traditions, has personal and communal dimensions.

In this paper, we shall argue that any faith tradition, system or way of life that does not recognize the interconnectedness between creatures displays

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