**Ecofeminism in creation care:**

**Alternative ways of reflecting on environmental issues**

 By Ericcson T. Mapfumo

As l have been thinking of ways in which to connect the theme of the Black History Month (BHM), and environmental issues, l came across the word “ecofeminism”, this word has been interesting to me, especially since l like things to do with creation. However, it seems that there is no agreement on what it means, and depending on where it is practiced it is thought differently. I borrow from the Latin America version, which has tried to relate it to gender equality, and showing how the treatment of women, and environmental issues are interdependent.

Researching what this word means, l was thrilled to find out that, there are some people who have been looking at how the environmental crisis can also be linked to how we treat women in general. The theme this Black History Month (BHM), has been about saluting our sisters”, this has meant that the emphasis has been aimed at recognizing the contribution of females in general especially towards issues to do with equality and diversity.

This whole conversation made me to relate with the way in which l have interacted with the earth, as an African. As l have said in various places, there is a spiritual relationship with the Land, among many indigenous communities around the globe. Africans more generally are the same, especially when we look at the Bantu people of Southern Africa, in places such as Zimbabwe. As the late Black Theologian Vuyani Vellem used to say, “Our Mother our Land”, there seems to be a strong connection between the land and our existence as human beings.

The reason for linking the land to life, is that perhaps in the African milieu, the umbilical cord of children is dug into the ground, so that it becomes soil again and fertilizes the plants. This has created a sacredness when they see the land. In Zimbabwe, there is term which has been used more often, such as “Mwana Wevhu” to signal that one is a child of the soil/earth.

 So as we celebrate and recognize the contribution of our Mothers and sisters, let us remember that the way we treat each other especially those who are female, has implications to how we treat the earth more generally. I can see connections with the 5 marks of mission, which has to do with integrity of creation, and caring for God’s creation, which is about treating each other respect, regardless of our colour, race or creed.

Based on these ideas l have shared, no wonder, there are connections being made between climate change and issues to do with race and racism.  Perhaps it’s also a realization that there are certain segments of the population that are mostly affected by negative changes brought by climate change, such as floods, cyclones and the like. We continue to remember all those who have lost their lives during Storm Babet in Scotland and around England.