

INTER-FAITH ECO-STEWARDSHIP FOR RECLAIMING THE GREEN: THE CASE OF THE PROCMURA THINK AND WORK GREEN INITIATIVE IN NGAOUNDERE, CAMEROON

Margarate Salli Effungani

effunganisalli@gmail.com

Publication Date: August 2025

ABSTRACT

Purpose of Study: This study examined the PROCMURA Think and Work Green initiative in Ngaoundere, Cameroon, to demonstrate how inter-faith collaboration between Christians, Muslims, and adherents of the African traditional religion has contributed significantly to ecological stewardship.

Problem Statement: The African continent faces some of the most severe impacts from climate change. The quest to reduce global warming to 1.5 degrees by 2050 and the call for eco-justice have drawn the attention of everyone across a wide range of disciplines and highlighted the need for interdisciplinary solutions. However, the potential role of religion in environmental conservation remains under-recognised. Some scholars partially embrace Lynn White's accusation of religion for promoting environmental exploitation without incorporating his emphasis on religion as a solution.

Methodology: This study based its thesis on the concept of a global ethic propagated by Hans Kung. This is a case study design and qualitative research. A purposive non-probability sampling technique was employed, and 18 respondents, 6 Christians, 6 Muslims, and 6 African traditionalists, participated in the study.

Result: The study established that religious beliefs and values within Christianity, Islam, and traditional African religions evoke a consciousness of religious people as stewards of the environment. The study emphasises the ethical and value-driven motivations inherent in religions, a theocentric paradigm that dismisses the anthropocentric epistemology loaded with egocentrism and exploitation often associated with religion.

Conclusion: The study concludes that effective climate action in Africa must incorporate the insights and contributions of religious communities, advocating for their involvement in policy-making and on-the-ground initiatives to achieve meaningful and lasting ecological outcomes. More so, inter-faith eco-stewardships in policy and praxis are essential for reclaiming the green.

Recommendation: The study recommends that Policymakers and other stakeholders should actively integrate religious insights into environmental strategies. Promote Inter-Religious Collaborations and scientific and religious collaboration

Keywords: *Inter-religious cooperation, climate change, eco-stewardship, global ethics*

INTRODUCTION

The global environmental crisis, now recognised as an issue of profound urgency, compels immediate action from individuals and organisations spanning various disciplines. Over the centuries, human activities have wreaked havoc on our ecosystems, resulting in catastrophic events, such as more severe natural disasters than ever before. As Berry (1988) noted, human intervention has significantly altered the planet's chemistry, leading to various environmental challenges. These human-induced changes have triggered a concerning rise in global temperatures, giving rise to hazardous conditions such as soil degradation, extreme droughts, devastating floods, and even violent conflicts over increasingly scarce resources (Berry, 1988). At the heart of this environmental crisis is the emission of greenhouse gases, or carbon pollution, a direct consequence of human activity. This alarming issue was a focal point during the 2015 Paris Peace Agreement on climate change, where delegates warned that failure to curb global emissions could cause a temperature increase of over three degrees Celsius by 2100. Such a rise could have catastrophic consequences for the planet and its inhabitants (NRDC, 2017). This paper will present a PROCMURA Think and Work Green initiative case study for Ngaoundere, Cameroon, anchored on interreligious cooperation and religious environmental stewardship. It is structured into sections; the first addresses the problem statement and objectives. The second section discusses the theatrical and literature review, and the last section addresses the findings, conclusion and recommendations.

The quest to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius continues to permeate discussions within international forums and among global leaders. Patricia Espinosa, the Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change, articulated this pressing need in 2019, stating, *“Once a distant concern, climate change is now an existential threat and the greatest challenge facing this generation... We must limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees and, on the road to doing so, achieve climate neutrality by 2050. This must be done urgently and cooperatively; a global project requiring the best efforts from all nations, all businesses, and all people.”* (UNCCS, 2019). In my opinion, Patricia's urgent call to action extends to religious communities, participating in discourse and interventions on reducing global temperatures and mitigating the effects of climate change on the people and communities. More on the religious provenance, Tucker and Grim (2001) explore this relationship between religion and ecological conservation from an inter-religious point of view. They assert that no single religion holds a monopoly on environmental values. Their perspective highlights the importance of incorporating multiple religious viewpoints, each of which can uniquely contribute to the broader eco-justice dialogue and praxis.

There is a global concern about the contention between religion and environmental care, which has existed for decades. Löwith (1949) notes that the contention is informed by several circumstantial views, one of which is that religious ideas and values are essential ingredients in the civilised worldview. More so, the civilised worldview, influenced by religion, describes the basis for relationships between culture and nature. This submission by Löwith suggests that religion influences individuals' worldviews, which leads to patterns of behaviours, including environmental behaviours. Berry (2013) agrees with Löwith and adds that the tension between religion and environmentalism was more visible after Lynn White presented his thesis in 1961, accusing Abrahamic religions of promoting environmental exploitation.

The conversation on religious and inter-religious environmentalism has been ongoing across the globe on various platforms. Bellah et al. (1985) note that during the 1990s in the United States of America, social scientists and theologians analysed religion and argued that eco-spirituality is religious. According to the writer, this explains why, by the close of the 20th century, prominent sociologists such as Robert Bellah and Robert Wuthnow underscored the

importance of ecological awareness stemming from religious dynamism (Bellah et al., 1985). In the present experience in the United States, religious environmentalism is at the core of religious activities. Gould et al. (2018) intimate that religious environmentalism in America focuses on the sacredness of nature and religious-based environmental actions. These sentiments on religious environmentalism are expressed in other parts of the world, such as Europe.

Ugwu (2024) discusses the current state of Environmental Protection, the Rights of Nature, and Religious Beliefs in Europe. He approaches the issue in a unique way, where he blames environmental exploitation and pollution in Europe on the decline of religion. Making a case for the importance of religious environmentalism, the author states that, despite the environmental legal instruments in Europe and what he termed anthropocentric environmental laws, Europe is still involved in exploitative environmental behaviours. According to Ugwu, the Right of nature is an interplay of culture, religious beliefs, and the people. The ontology of nature is deeply intertwined with religion, with terminologies like stewardship, custodianship, and guardianship rooted in both religion and the right of nature. The writer expresses his worry about the decline of religion in Europe, as he concludes that the environmental laws and instruments in Europe may never lead to a change of behaviour in favour of environmentally friendly behaviour. He recommends a regeneration of religion in Europe to partner with other agencies to address issues of ethics and morals, such as environmental degradation.

The discussion of religion and environmental issues in Asia is not different from that in the United States. The uniqueness is described by Le Duc (2017), who intimates that Asia is a religious continent. According to him, addressing environmental concerns outside of Asia will not yield the desired results. He argues that achieving sustainable development goals in Asia depends significantly on the improvement of human moral and spiritual well-being that religion aims to promote. Religious contribution to promoting environmental sustainability in Asia means that the approach must consider spiritual and transcendental dimensions inherent to the religious worldview, which addresses the deeper dimensions of human reality.

Chukwunonyelum et al. (2013), in their analysis of religion and environmentalism in Africa, blame industrialisation and technology for the root causes of environmental degradation globally and in Africa specifically. More so, there is rampant foreign dumping in Africa, which continues to pollute the environment. They underscore the power of religion in transforming people's minds to adopt environmentally friendly behaviours. Stressing the role of traditional African religion and environmental care in Africa, they argue that nature, including the environment, is sacred. This means Africans do not view nature from an anthropocentric perspective but as equal ecosystem partners. African religious values and practices respect this sacredness of nature and ensure that humanity does not destroy nature; hence, calamity will fall on the community.

A study conducted by Effungani (2022) on inter-religious cooperation on climate change mitigation in Cameroon established that inter-religious collaboration towards mitigating the effects of climate change and cultivating friendly environmental practices, especially in farming methods, was impactful. More so, inter-religious cooperation towards climate change mitigation among women has built relationships across religious borders, leading to peaceful coexistence and peaceful ways of resolving climate-induced conflicts in the communities.

The pursuit of environmental justice, particularly for vulnerable communities, lies at the heart of the work of PROCMURA. While climate change poses a threat to everyone, it is the marginalised and economically disadvantaged individuals who bear the brunt of its devastating effects. The intersection of religion and environmentalism has emerged as a powerful narrative in the fight against climate change. The discussions surrounding interreligious

environmentalism, or the "greening" of religions, have sparked a renewed consciousness regarding the importance of faith-based engagement in ecological issues. Particularly in the Global South, religious institutions and beliefs have significantly influenced people's attitudes and behaviours toward the environment. Therefore, religion is a strategic ally in the battle against global warming and climate change, offering moral guidance and community mobilisation, leading to meaningful action. This multidimensional approach fosters a rich tapestry of beliefs and practices that can mobilise communities toward ecological action and promote a sense of ethical stewardship for our planet. Unfortunately, the strategic role of religion in the ecological crisis is not emphasised in some quarters as people try to disconnect religion and science within the ecological corridors.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Climate change is one of humanity's most urgent and multifaceted challenges. Its repercussions fall disproportionately on vulnerable populations and exacerbate existing social inequalities. The interplay of these factors creates an environment where marginalised communities bear the brunt of ecological degradation, leading to a cycle of violence and instability. Climate change is frequently framed as a scientific issue or a complex and abstract concept that can be difficult for the general public to grasp fully. Additionally, scientists have pointed to religious beliefs as a significant factor in environmental degradation, arguing that specific theological perspectives promote a mindset that exploits natural resources.

These tensions between scientific understanding and religious beliefs pose significant challenges for climate justice initiatives. When science and religion are viewed as opposing forces, it complicates efforts to develop inclusive climate interventions that recognise various communities' diverse values and beliefs, especially in the global south, where religion influences every aspect of life. Furthermore, if you look at the climate action plans and policies by some governments across the globe, including Africa and Cameroon in particular, the specific contribution of religion has not been spelt out. Despite the ethical frameworks, the principles rooted in religious teachings are often overshadowed in contemporary climate discussions, resulting in missed opportunities for collaboration and action. To address climate change effectively, bridging the gap between these differing perspectives is essential in fostering cooperation between scientific and religious communities to create a more unified and responsive approach to our environmental challenges.

This paper aims to foster a holistic approach to environmental justice by first empirically showcasing the practical contribution of religion to environmental conservation in an effort to encourage collaboration between religious and scientific ecological activism. We need more than science to address the world's ecological crisis, especially in the global south. Engaging with and integrating the contributions of religious communities in Africa is imperative to tackle the ecological crisis effectively. This can be achieved when scientists and religious environmentalists correctly understand the approach to inter-religious stewardship of the environment. This study aims to showcase religion's contribution to addressing ecological challenges from an inter-religious approach through the PROCMURA Think and Work Green campaign.

Strategic Goal

This study's strategic goal is to emphasise the crucial role that religious values and beliefs play in promoting ecological conservation. Specifically, it aims to demonstrate how integrating moral and spiritual values in religions with scientific insights can lead to more effective and holistic ecological care.

Research Objectives

- i. To explore Lynn White's religious environmental exploitation.;
- ii. To examine the concept of Religious environmental stewardship;
- iii. To analyse the importance of interreligious cooperation for reclaiming the green.

THEORETICAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework

A Call for a Global Ethics. "No new global order without a new global ethic" (Küng, 1993, p. 24). Hans Küng, a Swiss Roman Catholic theologian, propagated this theory. The theory of global ethics calls for all people and religions to move towards a global responsibility in resolving the crisis plaguing the planet and humanity. This theory argues that the world is facing a moral crisis, which requires global ethics to address the crisis. The Parliament of the World's Religions 1993 adopted this concept formulated by Hans Küng. Most importantly, Congress intimated that religions have ethical values, which can be applied to resolve the crises plaguing the world. More so, religions must dialogue about the world's challenges and humanity. (Parliament of the World's Religions, 2018). The declaration by the parliament explained the basis of the everyday ethics of the religions using four basic statements or commitments:

1. Non-violence and respect for life
2. Solidarity and a just economic order
3. Tolerance and a life of truthfulness
4. Equal rights and partnership between men and women (Küng, 1993, pp. 24-34)

Knitter (1995) critiqued this theory as he intimates that the dialogue between religions for global ethics is pluralistic. Although he considers the theory necessary, he also sees it as dangerous. The danger he sees in such a theory is that it may lead to particularities where the voices of the oppressed people will not be heard or generalised due to the incorporation of various religious perspectives. Knitter brings to light the issue of class inequality, where the privileged political elites will dominate any interreligious dialogue. Knitter recommends an ecological interreligious dialogue considering environmental ethics to resolve this ambiguity. (Knitter, 2000).

I know scholars have critiqued the concept of a global ethic, especially its religious undertone. Because of its accusation of ambiguity of generalisation and particularity, scholars are searching for a hermeneutical privilege of the oppressed to ensure their voices are heard, as Knitter (2000) notes. However, I believe I see religion converging on the *theocentrism* of nature and the environment. Instead of searching for ethics in the environment to inform interreligious ecological dialogue, as proposed by Knitter, it is preferable to understand the ethics and morals within the religions to inform interreligious ecological interventions. Employing this perspective, both secular and religious Ecology activists have conceptualised the theory of global ethics in specific contexts in their ecological activism.

Ecology activists have conceptualised this theory to address ecological challenges. Posas (2007) intimates that science, research, technological development, policies, incentives and economic measures are all components for addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation, among other procedures. He adds that religion has a unique and complementary role that stems from its ethical and moral contribution to people's lives, influencing and inspiring people towards positive actions that are absent in science. Brown (2002) adds that the climate change crisis is an ethical and moral issue. Gardiner puts it this way:

“...we cannot get very far in discussing why climate change is a problem without invoking ethical considerations...But once we see this, then we appear to need some account of moral responsibility, morally important interests, and what to do about both. And this puts us squarely in the domain of ethics.” (Gardiner, 2006, p. 398). Johnstone (2004) notes that the social functions of religion identified by Durkheim include providing a basis for a common purpose and values that can maintain social solidarity and exert social control by defining right and wrong behaviour and setting boundaries. I believe religion is a powerful source of ethical and moral guidance. Since the ecological crisis is a moral issue, the global ethics theory informed by religious values, as propagated by Kung, is necessary to address the challenges of the environmental crisis. This premise informs this study in that religious values produce attitudes and commitments to environmental care, as well as the application of scientific teachings and recommendations.

Literature Review

Lynn White (1967) argues that religion has given humans a consciousness of dominion over natural resources. As a result, humanity exploits the environment without caring for it. Religion, therefore, is a significant factor in environmental exploitation. Hayes et al. (2001) and Guth et al. (1993) support this view and note that religious people express low ecological concern. Religious environmental stewardship is enshrined in the teachings of all religions, as noted by Asamoah-Gyadu (2002) and Kavusa (2002). From an Islamic perspective, Daud et al. (2015) argue in favour of environmental stewardship as an ethical, moral, and spiritual responsibility for Muslims based on the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. In African traditional religions, nature, including the environment, is sacred. This means Africans do not view nature from an anthropocentric perspective but as equal ecosystem partners.

According to African religions, God is in creation. As a result of this understanding, Africans set aside sacred forests and preserved mountains, rivers, streams and other natural features associated with native religious cosmology. (Rukeh et al. 2007). Despite this clear explanation of religious environment stewardship, scholars like Palmer (2003) have critiqued the steward concept as oppressive. He argues that the stewardship model is anthropocentric and not ecological because it encourages human interference in nature, whereas nature has the power to maintain itself. Inter-religious cooperation towards environmental care has yielded more impact. Effungani (2022). Interreligious dialogue and collaboration on the environmental crisis demonstrate that religions recognise the shared responsibility of all people to care for the planet. (Le Duc, 2017).

The body of literature regarding Lynn White's thesis on religion and environmental exploitation is extensive, with numerous scholars articulating arguments in support and opposition. Additionally, considerable discussion has been on religious environmentalism, stewardship, and interfaith cooperation, supplemented by a few case studies. However, there remains a notable scarcity of empirical studies conducted in Africa, and to my knowledge, no research has specifically addressed the effectiveness of Lynn White's thesis in Cameroon. This study aims to fill that gap by evaluating the extent to which individuals in Cameroon understand and interpret their religious teachings concerning environmental care. Furthermore, this research has contributed to the literature by proposing a practical model for inter-religious cooperation in environmental conservation efforts.

METHODOLOGY

This is a case study design and qualitative research. A purposive non-probability sampling technique selected 18 respondents: 6 Christians, 6 Muslims, and 6 African traditionalists.

Interviews were the main instrument for data collection. Content from the document review was also used to support qualitative data. The content analysis was used to analyse the data, where the interviews were transcribed and coded thematically to identify patterns and themes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Lynn White’s religious environmental exploitation concept

Lynn White holds that there is a big disconnect between religion and the environment. His argument stresses the role of religion in conditioning human ecology through its belief systems about nature and destiny. White accuses religion of anthropocentrism, especially among the Abrahamic faiths, rooted in the creation story where human beings controlled all the animals and thus established their dominance over them. In this theology of dominion, according to whites, nature has no reason to exist but to serve humanity. This explains the reasons why Christian missionaries have been chopping down sacred groves, which are idolatrous because they assume a spirit in nature. He concluded that since the root causes of the environmental crisis are primarily religious, the solution must also come from religion (White, 1967).

To evaluate the effectiveness of Lynn White’s concept, 6 Christians and 6 Muslims were interviewed to establish their understanding of human dominion over other creations and how that understanding influences their behaviour towards the environment. The Christian participants were asked to explain their understanding of dominion over all creation as indicated in Gen 1:26-28 *“And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and the cattle, and all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”* The Muslim respondent, on their part, looked at Ayah al-Isra` (Children of Israel, The Israelites) 17:70. *“Indeed, we have honoured the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, granted them good and lawful provisions, and privileged them far above many of our creatures”*. The responses from the respondents generated the themes as tabulated below.

Table 1: Christian and Muslim view on religion and environmental exploitation concept.

Interview question	Themes	
Christians and Muslims		
Understanding of Gen 1:26-28	First among equals Responsibility Control	Stewardship Protection accountability
Understanding of Quran 17:70.	Responsibility, Manager Caretaker, Custodian	Stewardship Protection, Control, Accountability

Source: field data, February 2024

Responsibility, stewardship, protection, accountability, and control are the recurring themes generated from the views of Christians and Muslims regarding their understanding of Biblical and Qur’anic teachings and interpretation of humanity's relationship with creation. One of the Christian respondents noted that humanity controls everything God has created and has to use what God has created to live a better life, but this does not mean the destruction of creation. Another Christian respondent argues that God has given Human beings the right to manage creations, ensuring that it is well protected and nurtured. Looking across the data collected, the interpretation of dominion in Gen 1:2-26-28 is different from exploitation and destruction.

Applying this to environmental care, clearly indicates that, Christian do not exploit the environment because religion teaches them to do so. The Muslim respondents noted that the Quran indicates that humanity has been privileged over other creations, which has given humanity more responsibility to take care of other creatures and not destroy them.

Christian and Muslim respondents do not find their religious teachings to be in conflict with environmental preservation. Instead, religious teachings on humanity's privilege over other creations evoke a sense of responsibility. With these findings, I argue strongly that religion may not be a sustainable factor responsible for environmental exploitation, especially in the global south. The above patterns and themes generated by the respondents suggest a contrary opinion to Lynn White, who sees religion as a primary factor responsible for environmental exploitation. This view finds credence in Biel & Nielsson (2004), which intimates that while religion is part of the cultural landscape influencing environmental attitudes, it is neither solely responsible nor universally negative in its influence. Instead, religion is a significant source of positive environmental ethics and action when interpreted and applied thoughtfully.

Religion and Environmental Stewardship

Respondents from Christianity, Islam, and African religions were interviewed to establish how their religious teachings have promoted environmental stewardship and their understanding of environmental stewardship. The environmental crisis has no geographical boundaries; however, it has been induced primarily by human activities. On the one hand, restorative human activities are required to deal with the damage caused. These human beings must act morally and ethically for positive change to occur. Most people’s moral judgments of ethics are influenced by their belief systems, including religion. The premise of this conversation is to focus on religion and environmental stewardship.

Table 2: Christian, Muslim and traditionalist views on religion and environmental stewardship

Interview question	Themes	
for Christians and Muslims		
Christians	Divine assignment	Taking care of God's creation
	Obeying God’s teachings	
Muslims	Dive assignment	continuous
	Mandatory	
African traditional religions	communication with the gods	Connection with the gods

Source: field data, February 2024

The theme generated from the data suggests that Christian, Muslim and African religion respondents say that they are stewards of the creation and the environment. More so, they see their stewardship role as a divine assignment, communicating obedience to God when properly executed. Most significantly, the assignment is mandatory and continuous. One of the Christian respondents noted that “because we are stewards of the creation, such as the sea, we clean the shores and ensure that bad chemicals are not deposited in the sea, which will destroy the fish and prevent us from having food”. The findings align with Asamoah-Gyadu's (2022) observation that religious beliefs, norms, and values emphasise human obligations to care for God’s creation. Kavusa (2002) agrees with Asamoah-Gyadu (2012) and notes that the human

dominion discussed in Gen 1:28 is not a dominion of superiors over inferiors but a responsibility of some creatures for others, meaning servanthood and stewardship.

Most especially in African traditional religion, religious stewardship of the environment is a divine assignment and a way of communicating with the Gods and remaining connected with them because they live within creation and the environment. This view is supported by Irerhievwie & Agbozu (2007:42), who note that “the major tenet of African traditional religion and belief system lies in the belief that the abode of the gods and goddesses is located on rock, streams, pond, land or anywhere they so desire to live within the community.”

The study has established that religious environmental stewardship is at the core of the values and beliefs of Christianity, Islam, and the traditional African religions. The religious traditions advocate for stewardship and care for creation. For example, Christianity's concept of "stewardship" and Islam's idea of "khalifa" or custodianship underscore a responsibility towards protecting the environment. (Biel & Nielsson, 2004). Religious ecological stewardship is not limited to humanity's responsibility to care for the earth, but also to the extent to which humanity faithfully executes that assignment. They conclude that religious stewardship combined with other determining factors like political ideology, technology, and science will provide substantive environmental care (Biel & Nielsson, 2004).

Interreligious cooperation: PROCMURA’S Think and Work Green Initiative

The Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) is a Pan-African Christian organisation founded in 1957 with the primary objective of building Christian - Muslim relations for peace, peaceful co-existence and the development of the human family and the environment. PROCMURA works in more than 22 African countries. Their efforts to build good relationships between Christians and Muslims ensure that people from the two faith communities attend to issues of common concern, such as climate change. In doing so, PROCMURA launched the Think Green and Work Green Campaign, which saw Christian and Muslim religious leaders champion planting trees in schools and communities. These interreligious initiatives are being carried out across the continent. Participants and beneficiaries of this initiative in Ngaoundere, Cameroon, were interviewed. They noted that their religious leaders working together to plant trees motivated them to unite with people from other religions.

Table 3: inter-faith cooperation for reclaiming the green: the PROCMURA initiative

Interview question	Themes	
Christians	brings everyone on board	It is more effective
		It builds relationships
Muslims	Community ownership and unity	The community is committed and active
African traditional religions	It brings everyone on board	It builds relationships

Source. Field data, February 2024

From the themes generated above, respondents argue that interfaith cooperation towards environmental care, like the PROCMURA initiative, is more impactful than a single religious initiative. Some of the themes generated from the data suggest community ownership and unity, community active commitment to the projects, and building relationships among community members regardless of their religious persuasions. One of the respondents said

“We have witnessed initiatives on climate change in this community, which have been unsuccessful. Christians have implemented initiatives that ended only with a particular church denomination, and the same with the Muslim groups. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have worked with traditional chiefs on the waste management project; not everyone bought into that project, and people continued to poorly dispose of waste around the communities of Ngoundere. The Think and Work Green initiative, which religious leaders championed, has seen everyone participating in the tree-planting project. When the religious leaders in Christianity, Islam and African religion jointly promote a course in this town, that course is likely to succeed just like the think ad work green imitative of PROCMURA.”

Participants in the Think Green initiative argue that inter-religious cooperation in planting trees has been more effective in terms of bringing everyone in the community on board to commit to the process of afforestation in Ngaoundere, Cameroon. This has also ensured community ownership, as the project is spearheaded by a particular religious group and the three common religious groups in the community of Ngaoundere, Cameroon. On the nexus between religion and ecological conservation, Tucker and Grim (2001) intimate that no religion has a privileged ecological perspective. This stands in the importance of multiple religious perspectives and their importance to Eco-justice.

CONCLUSION

This study illustrates religion's vital yet often overlooked role in environmental conservation, particularly in Africa, where climate change poses significant challenges. By examining the PROCMURA Think and Work Green initiative in Ngaoundere, Cameroon, the research highlights how inter-religious collaboration can enhance community engagement and foster sustainable environmental practices. Contrary to certain narratives that attribute environmental degradation to religious beliefs, this study demonstrates that religious values provide a solid ethical foundation for environmental stewardship. In this case, inter-religious stewardship has a theocentric paradigm that dismisses the anthropocentric epistemology loaded with egocentrism and exploitation tagged on religion. The study also argues that instead of searching for ethical and moral values within the ecology, it is preferable to leverage the moral and ethical values within the religions to inform inter-religious environmentalism. The findings advocate for including religious perspectives in environmental policies, suggesting that such integration can lead to more culturally sensitive and effective climate action plans. Furthermore, fostering inter-religious dialogue and cooperation amplifies efforts to combat environmental crises and encourages unity among diverse groups. More so, addressing climate change effectively necessitates bridging scientific and religious approaches, leveraging religious communities' moral and ethical insights to drive significant and sustainable ecological action across the globe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Incorporate Religious Perspectives in Environmental Policies: Policymakers should actively integrate religious insights into environmental strategies, especially in the Global South. Given the ethical and value-driven motivations inherent in religious teachings, these perspectives can lead to more culturally sensitive and effective climate action plans. Engaging religious leaders in policy discussions ensures conservation strategies resonate with local communities and foster broader compliance.

Promote Inter-Religious Collaborations: Encourage initiatives similar to the PROCMURA Think and Work Green campaign that foster cooperation among various religious communities. Such collaborations enhance community engagement, create a unified approach to

environmental care, and amplify efforts to combat climate crises. Governments and NGOs should support these initiatives with resources and platforms for interfaith dialogue and action.

Foster Educational and Training Programs: Develop educational programs that highlight the role of religion in environmental stewardship. These programs should target religious leaders and community members, emphasising how religious values support sustainable practices. Training sessions can equip religious leaders with the knowledge and skills to advocate for environmental conservation within their communities.

Facilitate Scientific and Religious Interactions: Establish forums and platforms for dialogue between scientific and religious communities and policymakers. Facilitating these interactions can help bridge gaps in understanding and promote collaborations that leverage scientific insights and religion's moral influences to address environmental challenges comprehensively.

By adopting these recommendations, stakeholders can significantly advance efforts to address climate change effectively, utilising the rich ethical and cultural resources inherent in religious traditions alongside scientific approaches.

REFERENCES

- Asamoah-Gyadu. K (2022). Christian Stewardship and Creation: African perspectives on environment and development. In Beros, Bosela, & Lismore, et al. (Eds.), *International Handbook on Creation Care and Eco-Diakonia* (PP.3–15). Regnum Books: Oxford.
- Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., & Tipton, S. M. (1985). *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Berry, E (2013). Religious Environmentalism and Environmental Religion in Arica. *Religion Compass*. 1(2). 1-13.
- Berry, T. (1988). *The dream of the Earth*. San Francisco: Sierra Club.
- Biel, A., Nielsson A (2005). Religious Attitudes and Environmental Concern: Harmony and Detachment. *Social Science Quarterly* 86(1): 178-191.
- Brown, D. (2002). *American heat: ethical problems with the United States' response to global warming*. Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD.
- Chukwunonyelum, k., Chukwuelobe, M., & Ome. E. (2013). Philosophy, Religion and the Environment in Africa: The Challenge of Human Value Education and Sustainability. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*. 1, (6), 62-72.
- Daud, M., Saam, Z., & Sukendi, A. (2015). Islam and the Environment: Education Perspective. *AL-TA'LIM JOURNAL* 22 (2), 2015, (96-106).
- Efuungani, S. (2022). Inter-religious Eco-Diapraxis Toward Climate Change Mitigation. In Beros, Bosela, & Lismore, et al. (Eds.), *International Handbook on Creation Care and Eco-Diakonia* (PP.739-745). Regnum Books: Oxford.
- Gardiner, M. (2006) A perfect moral storm: climate change, intergenerational ethics and the problem of moral corruption. *Environ Values* 1 (15), 397–413.
- Gould, K., & Kearns, L. (2018) Ecology and religious environmentalism in the United States. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.445>.
- Guth, J., Green, L., Kellstedt, A., & Smidt, C. (1995). Faith and the environment: Religious beliefs And attitudes on environmental policy. *American Journal of Political Science*. 1 (39), 364-82.

- Hayes, C., & Marangudakis, M. (2001). Religion and environmental issues within Anglo-American democracies. *Review of Religious Research* 42:159-74.
- Hermeneutics of Sustainability. *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* Vol. 8, No. 1, 1-28.
- Johnstone, R. (2004) *Religion in society: a sociology of religion* (7th ed). Pearson Education: Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Kanagy, C., & Willits, k. (1993). A greening of religion? Some evidence from a Pennsylvania sample. *Social Sc. Quarterly*, 4(6). 67-74.
- Kavusa, J. (2022). Sustainable Eco-Theology for African Churches: Imagining a Home-grown Knitter. P. (1995): Pitfalls and Promises for a Global Ethics. *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 1 (15), 221-29.
- knitter, P. (2000). A common creation story? Interreligious dialogue and ecology, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 37(4), 285-300.
- Le Duc, A (2017). Religious Environmentalism and Environmental Sustainability in Asia. RESEARCHGTE. Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312012302>.
- NRDC, (2017). "The Paris Agreement on Climate Change". Retrieved from; <https://assets.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/paris-agreement-climate-change-2017-ib.pdf>,
- Palmer, M., & Findlay, V. (2003). Faith in Conservation: New approaches to religions and the Environment. World Bank, Washington, DC.
- Posas, J. (2007). Roles of religion and ethics in addressing climate change. *ethics in science and environmental politics*(ESEP), 1(12), 31-49
- Rukeh, A., Irehievwie, G., & Agboze, E,. (2007). Traditional beliefs and conservation of natural resources: Evidences from selected communities in Delta State, Nigeria. *International Journal of biodiversity and conservation*, 5(7), 426-432.
- Tucker, E., & Grim, j. (2001). Introduction: The Emerging Alliance of World Religions and Ecology in Evelyn Tucker (Ed). Religion and Ecology Can the climate change? *Journal of American Academy of Art. And Sciences*. 130, (4), 1-20.
- Ugwu, P. (2024). Environmental Protection, Rights of Nature, and Religious Beliefs in Europe. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-024-10193-5>
- White. L, (1967) The historical roots of our ecologic crisis. *Science*. 155, (3767), 1203–1207.
- Woodrum, E., & Hoban, T. (1994). Theology and religiosity effects on environmentalism. *Review of Religious Research*. 1 (35), 195-206.