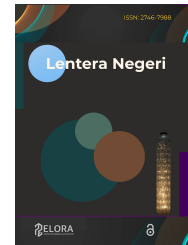




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# Interfaith convergence in environmental action: comparative analysis of christian and islamic ecological responses

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### ABSTRACT

The ecological crisis in Sentani District, Papua, including the 2019 flash flood, pollution of Lake Sentani, land-use change, waste accumulation, and forest degradation, shows the need to examine how religious values are translated into ecological responsibility. Addressing the empirical gap in studies that often discuss religion and ecology at doctrinal or global levels, this study examined and compared how Christian and Muslim communities in Sentani interpret ecological degradation and transform religious teachings into environmental action. The study employed a qualitative multiple case study design with two cases: Christian ecological praxis and Islamic ecological praxis. Informants were selected purposively from religious leaders, environmental practitioners, and congregation members who were actively involved in religious and ecological activities. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentary analysis, and were analyzed using within-case analysis, cross-case analysis, and thematic analysis. Credibility was strengthened through data triangulation, saturation-oriented recruitment, an audit trail, peer debriefing, and member checking of key interpretations. The findings showed that ecological degradation was understood as both an environmental problem and a moral-spiritual crisis. Christian ecological responsibility was grounded in *imago Dei*, stewardship, and Genesis 2:15, while Islamic ecological responsibility was articulated through *amanah*, *khalifah*, cleanliness, moderation, and the prevention of *fasad*. Churches and mosques functioned as pedagogical and social spaces that shaped ecological awareness through preaching, education, worship, and collective action. This study concludes that faith-based ecological praxis can support contextual and sustainable interfaith environmental collaboration in Sentani.



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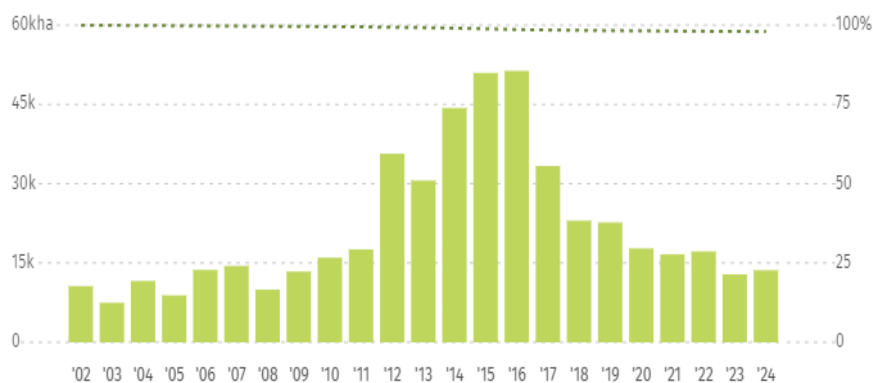
## Introduction

The global ecological crisis has positioned sustainability as a multidimensional concern that requires the involvement of science, public policy, economics, and religion. Scientific knowledge has contributed significantly to public decision-making in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion, although its impact depends on more integrated and participatory approaches (Aricò, 2014; Jepson, Jr., 2019; Weinstein & Eugene Turner, 2012). Public policy has also promoted sustainability practices across sectors such as energy, water management, and corporate governance by integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations (Kacperska & Klusek, 2025; Ozanne et al., 2016;

Stillwell, 2015). However, many sustainability initiatives continue to face structural and policy barriers, particularly in contexts where governance systems and community participation remain limited. In this regard, collaborative governance and multi-stakeholder networks are essential for strengthening ecological responses and improving long-term environmental resilience (Celata & Coletti, 2019; Sinervo et al., 2026).

Sustainability also intersects with economic theory and practice, particularly through sustainable finance and green economic policies that seek to balance economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity (Das & Mandal, 2020; Luzgina, 2024). Nevertheless, ecological degradation is often intensified by globalization and capitalist systems that prioritize short-term economic profit over long-term ecological sustainability (Danilov-Danil'yan & Reyf, 2018; Suša, 2019). In this context, religion offers a distinctive contribution by emphasizing stewardship, moral responsibility, simplicity, and the interconnectedness of human beings and nature (Johnston, 2012; Öhlmann & Swart, 2022; Tucker, 2008). Because these economic systems shape not only patterns of production and consumption but also human values and ethical priorities, addressing ecological degradation requires more than technical or policy-based solutions. In this context, religion offers a distinctive contribution by emphasizing stewardship, moral responsibility, simplicity, and the interconnectedness of human beings and nature. These religious values can provide an ethical foundation for challenging exploitative economic practices and encouraging more sustainable ways of living. Religious values can influence sustainable consumption and subjective well-being by encouraging socially responsible and environmentally friendly behavior, although the integration of religious perspectives into sustainability efforts remains underexplored (Leary et al., 2016; Minton et al., 2018).

The ecological crisis is not merely a technical problem, but also a sign of a fractured relationship between human beings and nature. Papua illustrates this paradox clearly. On the one hand, the region possesses rich forests, mountains, lakes, and seas that hold ecological, historical, and spiritual meaning for local communities. On the other hand, extractive development, land conversion, illegal logging, and settlement expansion in protected areas have placed the region under increasing ecological pressure. Consistent with these patterns of extractive development, Global Forest Watch reported that from 2002 to 2024, Papua lost 490 kha of humid primary forest, which accounted for 65% of its total tree cover loss during the same period, while the province's total humid primary forest area declined by 2.0% (Watch, 2024). This condition demonstrates that ecological degradation in Papua must be understood not only as environmental decline, but also as a crisis of governance, ethics, and social responsibility.



**Figure 1.** Global Forest Watch data on forest degradation in Papua

Furthermore, Sentani District provides a critical context for examining this problem because it has experienced severe ecological pressures, including the 2019 flash flood, pollution of Lake Sentani, land-use change, waste accumulation, and disturbances to forest and water-source areas. Reports on the Sentani flash flood recorded 109 deaths, 90 missing persons, 150 people seriously injured, 100 damaged buildings, 11,725 affected families, and damage to one airport (Prastiwi, 2019; Wandik, 2024). The causes of the disaster were associated with extreme rainfall and the steep slopes of the Cycloop Mountains; however, these natural conditions were intensified by human activities mentioned earlier, including illegal logging, land clearing, and settlement expansion in conservation areas (BNPB, 2019). Local government assessments identified these activities as key contributing factors that increased environmental vulnerability and worsened the impacts of the disaster. In addition, ecological degradation has continued through pollution of Lake Sentani caused by domestic waste, plastic waste, and fish-feed residues (Jubi, 2024). These problems reveal a deeper

systemic crisis involving consumption patterns, weak ecological awareness, inadequate resource governance, and the limited integration of faith-based values into everyday environmental practices.

The main research problem addressed in this study concerns how Christian and Muslim religious practices in Sentani shape ecological awareness and environmental action in response to local ecological degradation. Although religious communities possess moral, symbolic, and institutional resources, ecological problems in Sentani indicate that these resources have not always been fully translated into sustained environmental praxis. The issue is therefore not only whether Christianity and Islam contain ecological teachings, but how these teachings are interpreted, embodied, and institutionalized by religious communities living within a shared ecological crisis.

A general solution to this problem requires the integration of theological reflection with concrete ecological action. Religion can become a strategic social force when its teachings are translated into repeated, contextual, and institutionalized practices. In Sentani, Christian and Muslim communities have the potential to reconstruct ecological awareness by interpreting environmental care as a religious responsibility. Such reconstruction can transform ecological action from an incidental social activity into a sustained expression of faith, moral accountability, and communal responsibility.

The scientific literature has shown that Christianity and Islam provide strong theological foundations for ecological responsibility. In Christian thought, ecological care is closely related to the concept of *imago Dei*, in which human beings are understood as representatives of God who are called to preserve the integrity of creation (Dorkas Me et al., 2025; Magezi, 2024). Environmental destruction is therefore interpreted as a failure to fulfil the mandate of stewardship and as a violation of human responsibility before God. This interpretation challenges human-centered domination over nature and affirms that human authority must be exercised within the limits of divine trust.

In Islamic thought, ecological responsibility is articulated through the concepts of *amanah* and *khalifah*. Human beings are entrusted with moral responsibility to care for the earth, prevent *fasad*, and maintain ecological balance (Malatuny et al., 2025). Nature is not understood as an object of unrestricted exploitation, but as a trust from Allah that must be protected for present and future generations. This theological orientation provides a normative basis for moderation, restraint, cleanliness, and environmental preservation.

Previous studies have also developed broader discussions on religion and ecology through Christian ecotheology, eco-Sufism, Green Islam, and interfaith ecological spirituality (Delahoya, 2025; Fikri & Colombijn, 2021; Jaelani, 2025; Malatuny et al., 2025). These aspects are relevant to this study because they show how religious values can shape ecological awareness, critique exploitative development practices, and encourage communities to protect the environment. In addition, religious institutions may also contribute to environmental education, policy advocacy, and social mobilization. Therefore, the specific solution proposed in the literature is not merely doctrinal reform, but the formation of faith-based ecological praxis that links belief, worship, education, and collective action.

Despite these contributions, several research gaps remain. First, many studies on religion and ecology still emphasize normative and doctrinal dimensions, while giving less attention to how ecological teachings are practiced in local religious communities. Second, much of the existing literature focuses on urban, national, or global contexts, whereas research on interfaith ecological praxis in eastern Indonesia, particularly Papua, remains limited. Third, few studies have examined how a local ecological crisis can simultaneously reshape Christian and Islamic theological understanding within a shared social and ecological setting.

These gaps are significant because Papua has distinctive social, ecological, and religious characteristics. Sentani is not only a geographical area affected by environmental degradation, but also a space of encounter where Christian and Muslim communities live side by side in a multicultural society. In such a context, religion does not operate only through doctrine and ritual, but also through churches, mosques, youth communities, interfaith forums, and everyday practices. Thus, examining Christian and Islamic ecological praxis in Sentani provides an opportunity to understand how faith communities respond to ecological crisis through theological interpretation, institutional action, and interfaith convergence.

This study aims to explore the relationship between faith and ecological action among Christian and Muslim communities in Sentani District and to formulate the contribution of a contextual interfaith ecological praxis model to the study of religion and environmental sustainability. The novelty of this study lies in its analysis of the shift from an anthropocentric paradigm toward a theocentric-relational paradigm,



in which God is positioned as the center, human beings are understood as stewards, and creation is regarded as part of a sacred relational order. The scope of the study covers Christian and Islamic religious practices in Sentani, including sermons, religious education, worship practices, tree planting, collective cleaning, waste management, youth involvement, and church- and mosque-based ecological initiatives. By focusing on these practices, this study explains how local ecological crises can stimulate theological reconstruction, ecological awareness, and sustainable interfaith environmental collaboration.

## Method

This study used a qualitative research approach with a multiple case study design to examine religious practices and ecological actions among Christian and Muslim communities in Sentani District, Jayapura Regency, Papua. Multi-case designs encourage a more thorough examination of different sources and allow analytical comparison across cases (Yin, 2013). This design was appropriate because the study examined a contextual phenomenon involving faith, ecological consciousness, religious institutions, and collective environmental action. Christianity and Islam were treated as two distinct but interrelated cases, allowing the study to compare how each religious tradition interprets and responds to ecological problems.

The study was interpretative-comparative in orientation. The interpretative dimension was used to understand how religious leaders and community members explain ecological crises, religious teachings, and environmental responsibility. The comparative dimension was used to identify similarities, differences, convergences, and distinctive patterns in Christian and Islamic ecological praxis in Sentani. This orientation enabled the study to move beyond doctrinal description and examine how theological values are translated into everyday ecological practices.

The research site was Sentani District, Jayapura Regency, Papua. Sentani was selected because it provides a significant socio-religious and ecological context in which Christian and Muslim communities live side by side while facing environmental pressures. These pressures include the 2019 flash floods, pollution of Lake Sentani, changes in land use, waste accumulation, and disturbances to forests and water sources. These conditions made Sentani a relevant setting for examining how religious communities respond to ecological degradation through theological reflection and practical action.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, supported by snowball recruitment when additional information-rich participants were needed. The sampling strategy sought maximum variation across religious affiliation, institutional role, gender, age group, and involvement in ecological activities. The inclusion criteria were: (1) being at least 18 years old; (2) living, working, or serving in Sentani for at least 10 years; (3) having direct knowledge of Christian or Islamic teaching, community life, or environmental activities; and (4) being willing to participate voluntarily. Individuals who had no direct experience with religious or ecological activities in Sentani, or who were unable to provide informed consent, were excluded.

The final sample consisted of 100 participants: 20 Christian religious leaders, 20 Muslim religious leaders, 20 environmental practitioners or community activists, 20 church members, and 20 Muslim congregation members. This sample size was justified by the logic of information richness and thematic saturation rather than statistical representativeness. Recruitment began through formal contact with church and mosque leaders, community organizations, and environmental networks. After initial participants were interviewed, several participants recommended other individuals who met the selection criteria. Recruitment stopped when saturation was reached; specifically, after the 100 interview, no substantially new themes emerged regarding religious interpretations of nature, ecological responsibility, institutional action, or interfaith collaboration.

Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through the direct accounts of participants regarding their experiences, interpretations, motivations, and actions related to ecological care. Secondary data were obtained from sermon texts, religious lecture materials, church and mosque program documents, archives of ecological activities, photographs, and field notes. These sources provided contextual evidence of how ecological values were expressed within Christian and Islamic communities in Sentani.

**Table 1.** Participant groups, selection criteria, and recruitment route.

Participant group	Planned/final number	Selection criteria	Recruitment route
Christian religious leaders	20	Leaders involved in sermons, pastoral guidance, church programs, or ecological activities.	Church institutions and referrals from community leaders.
Muslim religious leaders	20	Leaders involved in sermons, Islamic teaching, mosque programs, or ecological activities.	Mosque institutions, Islamic organizations, and referrals.
Environmental practitioners/community activists	20	Individuals involved in environmental education, disaster response, waste management, conservation, or community-based ecological work.	Environmental networks, local organizations, and snowball referrals.
Church members	20	Congregation members who had participated in or observed religiously framed ecological activities.	Church groups, youth groups, and community referrals.
Muslim congregation members	20	Congregation members who had participated in or observed religiously framed ecological activities.	Mosque groups, youth groups, and community referrals.

Three data collection instruments were used: a semi-structured interview protocol, a participatory observation guide, and a document review sheet. The interview protocol contained four sections: participant background; religious interpretation of nature and ecological responsibility; community responses to environmental problems; and interfaith or institutional ecological initiatives. The observation guide focused on the setting of religious or ecological activities, actors involved, ecological messages communicated, forms of participation, material practices, and researcher reflections. The document review sheet recorded the type of document, institutional source, date, ecological theme, religious concept used, and relevance to Christian or Islamic ecological praxis. Together, these instruments ensured that interviews, observations, and documents addressed the same research questions while still allowing context-specific findings to emerge.

In-depth interviews were conducted August 2025 until February 2026. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was conducted in Indonesian at locations agreed upon by participants. With consent, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim / recorded through detailed field notes. Participatory observation was conducted during sermons, religious lectures, collective cleaning programs, tree-planting, waste-management activities, environmental education sessions, and other community-based ecological actions. Documentary study was conducted throughout the fieldwork period to complement and verify interview and observation data.

Data analysis was conducted through thematic analysis combined with within-case and cross-case analysis. The analysis began with data familiarization, in which interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were read repeatedly. Initial open coding was then conducted to identify meaningful units related to religious teachings, ecological awareness, environmental problems, institutional responses, community participation, and interfaith collaboration. Codes were grouped into categories, and categories were refined into broader themes. The codebook was revised iteratively as new patterns emerged from the data.

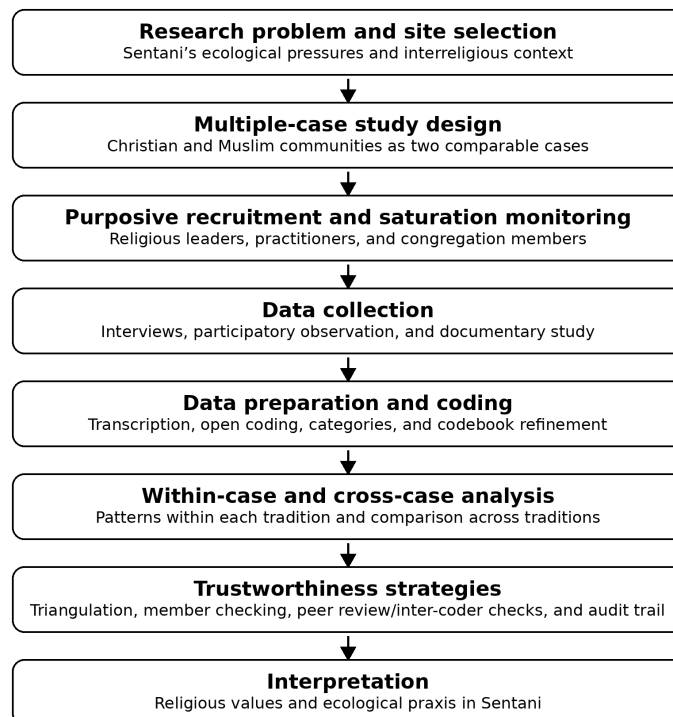
Within-case analysis was first used to examine Christian and Islamic ecological praxis separately. This step identified the internal logic of each case, including religious concepts, institutional roles, ecological actions, and perceived barriers. Cross-case analysis was then used to compare both cases through a

comparative matrix. The matrix examined: (1) theological framing of nature; (2) moral responsibility and stewardship; (3) forms of ecological action; (4) institutional support; (5) responses to local ecological degradation; and (6) possibilities for interfaith ecological collaboration. This procedure allowed the study to identify both shared ecological values and distinctive religious expressions.

**Table 2.** Initial coding framework for thematic and comparative analysis

Analytical focus	Initial codes	Purpose in the analysis
Religious interpretation	Creation, stewardship, khalifah/amanah, gratitude, moral duty, sin/damage, balance.	To identify how participants understand the religious meaning of nature and ecological responsibility.
Ecological awareness	Floods, lake pollution, waste, land-use change, deforestation, water sources, disaster vulnerability.	To connect religious interpretations with concrete ecological problems in Sentani.
Community practice	Sermons, religious lectures, cleaning programs, tree planting, waste management, youth activities, education.	To examine how religious values become collective ecological action.
Institutional and interfaith action	Church programs, mosque programs, religious networks, collaboration, barriers, leadership, local partnerships.	To compare institutional support and possibilities for interfaith ecological praxis.

Trustworthiness was strengthened through triangulation, member checking, peer review, and an audit trail. Source triangulation was achieved by comparing data from religious leaders, environmental practitioners, and community members. Method triangulation was achieved by comparing interviews, observations, and documentary materials.



**Figure 2.** Research design flowchart

Member checking was conducted by sharing key summaries and interpretations with 20 selected participants, consisting of four representatives from each participant category: Christian religious leaders, Muslim religious leaders, environmental practitioners or community activists, church members, and Muslim

congregation members. This process was used to confirm the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations, reduce the risk of misrepresentation, and strengthen the credibility of the findings. Peer review or inter-coder checking was conducted by asking second researcher to review the codebook and independently examine transcripts or data excerpts. Differences in coding were discussed until agreement was reached on the meaning and boundaries of each theme.

The researcher also maintained an audit trail consisting of recruitment records, interview notes, observation notes, document review forms, coding memos, codebook revisions, and cross-case comparison matrices. Reflexive notes were used to record the researcher's assumptions, field impressions, and interpretative decisions. These strategies improved the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the study. Through this methodological process, the study constructed an integrated understanding of how Christian and Muslim communities in Sentani translate religious values into ecological awareness and sustainable environmental praxis.

## Results and Discussions

### Faith and Ecology: Christian and Islamic Understandings

Christian and Muslim communities in Sentani District interpret ecological degradation not merely as an environmental or technical problem, but as a moral and spiritual crisis. The 2019 Sentani flash flood, pollution of Lake Sentani, land-use change, waste accumulation, and damage to forest and water areas have become important reflective moments for religious communities. These ecological events have encouraged believers to reconsider the relationship between faith, human responsibility, and the integrity of creation. In this context, ecological crisis is understood as evidence of a broken relationship between human beings, nature, and God.

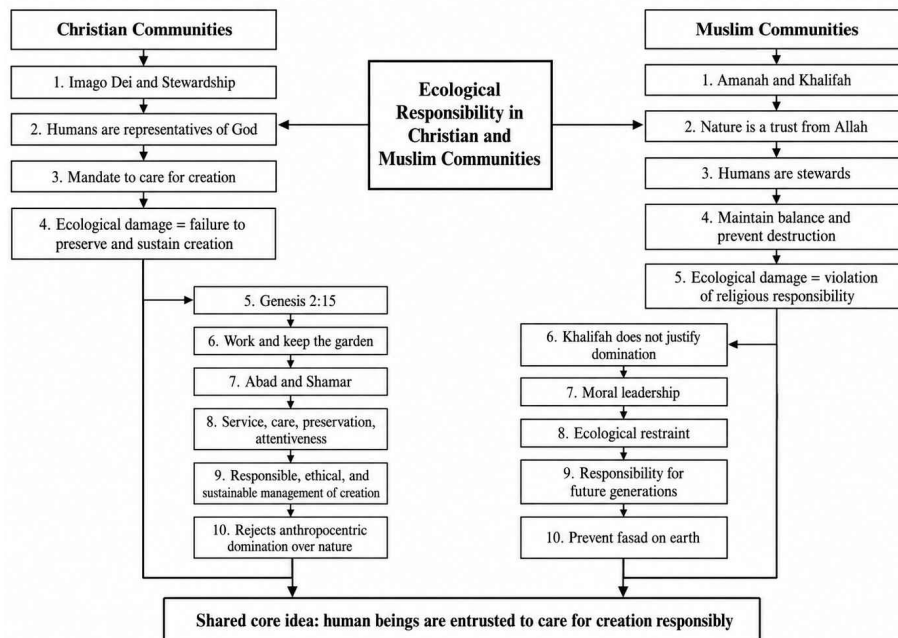
Among Christian communities, ecological damage is interpreted through the theological framework of *imago Dei* and stewardship. Human beings are understood as representatives of God who are entrusted with the responsibility to care for creation. This understanding shifts the meaning of *imago Dei* from a concept of human dignity alone to a theological mandate for ecological responsibility. Therefore, environmental destruction is viewed as a failure to fulfil the divine mandate to preserve and sustain creation. This finding is consistent with studies that emphasize *imago Dei* as the foundation of Christian ecological responsibility and stewardship (Dorkas Me et al., 2025; Knauer, 2025; Magezi, 2024; Mathu, 2025).

The Christian interpretation of Genesis 2:15 further strengthens this ecological consciousness. The command to "work" and "keep" the garden is understood not as a license for exploitation, but as a call to responsible, ethical, and sustainable management of creation. The concepts of *abad* and *shamar* emphasize service, care, preservation, and attentiveness toward the created order. This interpretation challenges anthropocentric readings that place human beings as absolute rulers over nature. Instead, it affirms that human authority must be exercised within the limits of divine trust and ecological responsibility (Cap et al., 2023; Chuvieco, 2012; Ottuh, 2022; *The Imago Dei in a Time of Mass Extinction*, 2024).

Among Muslim communities, ecological responsibility is articulated through the concepts of *amanah* and *khalifah*. Nature is understood as a trust from Allah, while human beings are positioned as stewards who must maintain balance and prevent destruction. In this view, ecological damage is not only a physical consequence of irresponsible human action, but also a violation of religious responsibility. The concept of *khalifah* does not legitimize domination over nature, but requires moral leadership, ecological restraint, and responsibility for future generations. This finding corresponds with Islamic ecological studies that interpret *khalifah* as stewardship and emphasize the obligation to prevent *fasad*, or destruction, on earth (Asshidiqi & Sholihah, 2024; Nur et al., 2025; Rakhmat, 2022). Various research findings on faith-based ecological responsibility are illustrated in Figure 3 below.

The figure concludes that Christian and Islamic ecological responsibility converge on the shared belief that human beings are entrusted by God to care for creation responsibly. In the Christian perspective, this responsibility is grounded in "*imago Dei*", stewardship, and Genesis 2:15, which emphasize service, care, preservation, and sustainable management of creation. In the Islamic perspective, it is rooted in "*amanah*" and "*khalifah*", which position nature as a trust from Allah and require humans to maintain balance, prevent destruction, exercise moral leadership, and avoid "*fasad*" on earth. Thus, the figure affirms that both traditions reject anthropocentric domination and frame ecological damage as a failure of religious responsibility, providing a strong theological foundation for faith-based and interreligious ecological action.

Furthermore, the findings further show that Christian and Islamic ecological perspectives converge in their critique of human greed, negligence, and exploitative lifestyles. Both traditions reject the idea that nature exists solely for human consumption. Instead, both emphasize that the environment has spiritual meaning and must be treated as part of God's creation. In Christianity, this responsibility is expressed through stewardship and care for creation, while in Islam it is expressed through amanah, khalifah, mizan, and the prohibition of israf. These concepts form a shared moral basis for ecological responsibility in Sentani.



**Figure 3.** faith-based ecological responsibility

This convergence indicates a shift from an anthropocentric paradigm toward a theocentric-relational paradigm. In the anthropocentric paradigm, human interests dominate ecological decision-making, often resulting in exploitation and environmental degradation. In contrast, the theocentric-relational paradigm places God at the center, positions human beings as responsible stewards, and regards nature as part of a sacred relational order. This finding strengthens critiques of anthropocentrism, which has been associated with unsustainable practices and ecological disconnection (Acosta & Romeva, 2010; Hirvilammi & Helne, 2014; Taylor, 2017). It also supports the view that religious traditions can provide alternative ecological ethics by emphasizing humility, interdependence, and accountability before God (Çakmaktaş, 2026; Crane, 2025; Dadzie, 2026).

The practical significance of this paradigm shift lies in the way religious communities begin to translate theological values into daily ecological action. Simple practices such as disposing of waste properly, saving resources, planting trees, cleaning worship spaces, and protecting water sources are interpreted as expressions of religious obedience. These practices show that ecological theology in Sentani is not limited to doctrine, but is embodied in repeated communal actions. In this sense, faith becomes a formative force that shapes ecological habits and moral responsibility.

Compared with these studies, the contribution of the present research lies in its local Papuan focus and its interpretative-comparative design. Rather than treating Christian and Islamic ecological teachings only as normative doctrines, this study shows how religious ideas are translated into community practices in a shared ecological setting marked by flash floods, lake pollution, land-use change, waste accumulation, and forest disturbance. The study therefore extends previous literature by demonstrating how local ecological crises can become a basis for interfaith ecological praxis in Sentani.

Table 3. Comparison between the present findings and prior religion–ecology literature

Literature focus	Representative Sources	Relationship to the Present Study
Christian imago Dei and stewardship	Dorkas Me et al., (2025); Knauer, (2025); Magezi, (2024); Mathu, (2025)	Supports the finding that human dignity is linked to responsibility for creation, not domination over nature.
Genesis 2:15 and care for creation	Cap et al., (2023); Chuvieco, (2012); Ottuh, (2022)	Confirms the interpretation of work and keeping as service, preservation, and sustainable care.
Christian ecological spirituality and education	Cloete, (2023); Frederik & Rouw, (2023); Guelke, (2004); Panggarra et al., (2025); Purwanto, (2021); Saputra, (2023); Siwy & Hutagalung, (2024); Yordy, (2010)	Extends prior work by showing how sermons, youth ministry, church cleaning, and tree planting shape ecological habits in Sentani.
Islamic khalifah, amanah, mizan, and fasad	Asshidiqi & Sholihah, (2024); Basri et al., (2023); Lutfauziah et al., (2022); Mubarak, (2022); Nur et al., (2025); Rakhmat, (2022)	Supports the finding that ecological damage is interpreted as moral failure and violation of divine trust.
Mosque-based ecological praxis	Al kahfi & Qonitah (2025); Adu & Saimima (2024); Lara Fitri & Daflaini (2022); Riswandy (2023); Hidayat et al. (2018); Hariana et al. (2024); Vaudi et al. (2024)	Shows that Islamic ecological values can be institutionalized through sermons, majelis taklim, youth mosque programs, cleanliness, and EcoMasjid practices.
Interfaith ecological ethics	Aditama et al. (2023); Bratton (2018); Hassan Akhlaq (2018); Taylor (2017); Dadzie (2026)	Clarifies the study’s contribution by linking shared religious values to interfaith ecological action in a Papuan context.

To strengthen the comparison with prior literature, the findings were compared with a broader body of religion-and-ecology scholarship. The Christian findings are consistent with studies that connect imago Dei, stewardship, Genesis 2:15, ecological repentance, spiritual formation, and church-based environmental education with practical environmental responsibility. The Islamic findings are also consistent with studies that interpret khalifah, amanah, mizan, cleanliness, moderation, and the prohibition of fasad as foundations for ecological responsibility, mosque-based environmental education, Green Khutbah, and EcoMasjid initiatives.

### Christian Ecological Praxis in Sentani

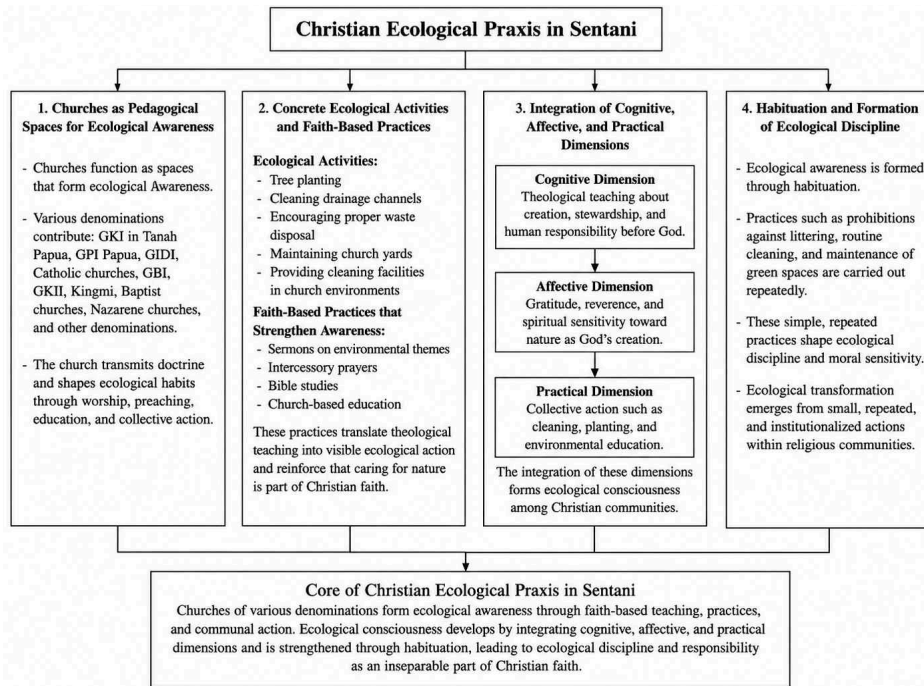
Churches in Sentani function as pedagogical spaces for ecological awareness. Various Christian denominations, including GKI in Tanah Papua, GPI Papua, GIDI, Catholic churches, GBI, GKII, Kingmi, Baptist churches, Nazarene churches, and other denominations, contribute to the formation of ecological consciousness among their congregations. The church does not only transmit doctrine, but also shapes ecological habits through worship, preaching, education, and collective action.

Concrete ecological activities conducted by churches include tree planting, cleaning drainage channels, encouraging proper waste disposal, maintaining church yards, and providing cleaning facilities in church environments. These activities are important because they translate theological teaching into visible practice. Sermons on environmental themes, intercessory prayers, Bible studies, and church-based education strengthen the belief that caring for nature is an inseparable part of Christian faith. Through these practices, ecological awareness is formed through the integration of cognitive, affective, and practical dimensions.

The cognitive dimension is reflected in theological teaching about creation, stewardship, and human responsibility before God. The affective dimension appears in gratitude, reverence, and spiritual sensitivity toward nature as God’s creation. The practical dimension is expressed through collective action, such as cleaning, planting, and environmental education. This integration shows that ecological consciousness

among Christian communities develops not only through formal instruction, but also through repeated participation in communal practices.

The findings also reveal that ecological awareness is often formed through habituation. Prohibitions against littering in church areas, routine cleaning activities, and the maintenance of green spaces initially appear as simple practices. However, these practices gradually shape ecological discipline and moral sensitivity. This indicates that ecological transformation does not always begin with large-scale programs, but may emerge from small, repeated, and institutionalized actions within religious communities. Various research findings on Christian ecological praxis in Sentani are illustrated in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 4.** The Essence Christian Ecological Praxis in Sentani

Christian ecological praxis in Sentani is formed through the church's role as a pedagogical, spiritual, and practical space for developing ecological awareness. Churches across various denominations do not only transmit theological doctrine, but also cultivate ecological habits through worship, preaching, education, and collective environmental action. Practices such as tree planting, drainage cleaning, proper waste disposal, church-yard maintenance, and environmental education demonstrate that care for nature is understood as an inseparable part of Christian faith. The integration of cognitive, affective, and practical dimensions shows that ecological consciousness develops through theological understanding, spiritual sensitivity, and repeated communal participation, while simple habituated practices gradually form ecological discipline, moral responsibility, and sustainable Christian ecological commitment.

Furthermore, this finding is consistent with Christian ecological literature that links environmental care with spiritual formation. Ecological action can be understood as part of sanctification, because believers express faith through concrete care for creation (Guelke, 2004; Yordy, 2010). Christian ecological spirituality also emphasizes ecological repentance, in which human beings acknowledge ecological sin and seek to restore the relationship between God, humanity, and nature (Cloete, 2023; Pangarra et al., 2025). Thus, ecological praxis is not merely an ethical obligation, but also a spiritual discipline.

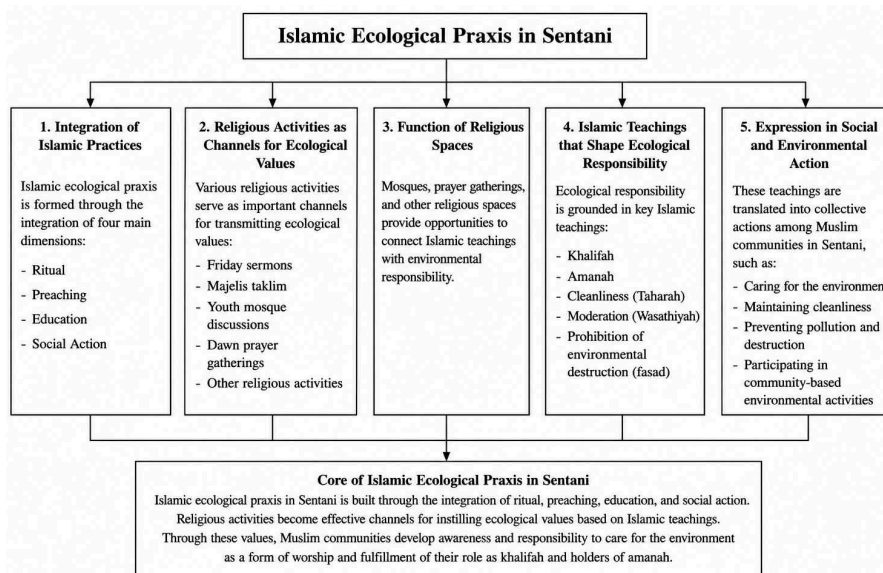
Pastors and Sunday sermons play a strategic role in strengthening ecological awareness. References to biblical texts such as Genesis 2:15 and Psalm 24:1 provide theological legitimacy for environmental care. When ecological themes are consistently integrated into sermons, Bible studies, Sunday school, youth ministry, and congregational programs, ecological responsibility becomes part of the church's witness. This supports previous studies showing that church-based environmental education can be implemented through Sunday school, catechism, youth activities, sermons, energy-saving practices, and environmentally responsible church management (Frederik & Rouw, 2023; Purwanto, 2021; Saputra, 2023; Siwy & Hutagalung, 2024).

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that ecological transformation within Christian communities remains gradual. Church programs related to cleanliness and reforestation have produced positive effects, especially in increasing congregational participation and shaping environmental habits. However, the level of change varies across communities and has not yet become a fully collective transformation. This condition demonstrates the need for stronger institutional commitment, regular programming, intergenerational education, and broader collaboration beyond individual congregations.

**Islamic Ecological Praxis in Sentani**

Islamic ecological praxis in Sentani is formed through the integration of ritual, preaching, education, and social action. Friday sermons, majelis taklim, youth mosque discussions, dawn prayer gatherings, and other religious activities serve as important channels for transmitting ecological values. These religious spaces provide opportunities to connect Islamic teachings with environmental responsibility, especially through the concepts of khalifah, amanah, cleanliness, moderation, and the prohibition of environmental destruction.

The mosque functions not only as a place of worship, but also as a center of social and ecological formation. Collective activities such as cleaning the mosque environment, community service, social charity, waste management, and tree planting help strengthen ecological awareness among congregants. These practices show that ecological responsibility is embedded within the broader framework of social piety. Environmental care is therefore understood not as a separate secular activity, but as part of religious devotion and communal responsibility.



**Figure 5.** The Essence Islamic Ecological Praxis in Sentani

Islamic ecological praxis in Sentani as a faith-based process formed through the integration of ritual, preaching, education, and social action. Religious activities such as Friday sermons, majelis taklim, youth mosque discussions, dawn prayer gatherings, and other mosque-based practices function as important channels for transmitting ecological values to Muslim communities. These religious spaces connect Islamic teachings with environmental responsibility through the concepts of khalifah, amanah, cleanliness, moderation, and the prohibition of environmental destruction or fasad. The figure 5 shows that ecological awareness is not separated from religious life, but is developed through worship, learning, communal participation, and practical environmental action, making care for the environment a form of religious responsibility and fulfillment of the Muslim role as steward and trustee of Allah’s creation.

Furthermore, friday sermons are particularly strategic because they reach Muslim congregants regularly. Through sermons, ecological messages can be connected with Qur’anic teachings and prophetic traditions. The study findings are consistent with research on Green Khutbah, which shows that Friday sermons can become an effective medium for promoting water conservation, waste ethics, forest protection, and ecological responsibility (Al kahfi & Qonitah, 2025). Similarly, majelis taklim and youth mosque programs provide educational spaces for developing ecological awareness across different age groups (Adu & Saimima, 2024; Lara Fitri & Daflaini, 2022; Riswandy, 2023).

The spiritual dimension of Islam also contributes to ecological awareness. Prayer, supplication, Qur'anic recitation, zikir, tafakkur, and tadabbur encourage believers to recognize nature as part of Allah's signs. QS. Ar-Rum: 41 is especially significant because it frames environmental destruction as a consequence of human action. This interpretation strengthens the view that ecological crisis is not accidental, but is connected to moral failure and the need for repentance. Previous studies similarly emphasize that Qur'anic ecological teachings call human beings to avoid destruction and return to the right path (Basri et al., 2023; Lutfauziah et al., 2022; Mubarok, 2022). The concept of cleanliness also plays an important role in Islamic ecological praxis. A clean and green mosque environment is understood as a practical expression of faith. Cleanliness is not merely related to physical comfort, but is interpreted as part of religious obedience. Mosque-based cleanliness programs therefore become a concrete form of ecological education. This finding is supported by studies showing that mosque-based public health and cleanliness programs can internalize environmental responsibility among congregants (Hariana et al., 2024; Vaudi et al., 2024). The concept of EcoMasjid further demonstrates that mosques can become models of sustainable religious spaces that integrate worship, environmental care, and community education (Hidayat et al., 2018; Muchlis, 2009)

However, the findings also reveal that mosque-based ecological programs in Sentani are not yet fully institutionalized. Many cleanliness and reforestation activities still depend on particular moments, religious events, or the initiative of certain leaders. This indicates that Islamic ecological praxis has strong normative and practical potential, but requires more systematic program planning, organizational continuity, and institutional support. Strengthening mosque management, youth participation, and regular ecological education could increase the sustainability of these programs.

### **Interfaith Ecological Convergence and Its Implications**

The most significant finding of this study is the emergence of ecological convergence between Christian and Muslim communities in Sentani. Although both traditions use different theological vocabularies, they share a common ethical orientation: human beings are responsible before God for caring for the earth. Christianity expresses this through *imago Dei*, stewardship, and care for creation, while Islam expresses it through *amanah*, *khalifah*, *mizan*, and the prohibition of *fasad*. These theological frameworks create a shared foundation for interfaith ecological praxis. This convergence demonstrates that ecological crisis can become a meeting point for religious communities. In Sentani, environmental problems are experienced collectively by people of different faiths. Floods, pollution, waste, and land degradation affect the entire community, regardless of religious identity. As a result, ecological concern becomes a shared moral agenda. Idea that Christianity and Islam can contribute to ecological responsibility through shared values of stewardship, sacredness of nature, moral accountability, and intergenerational justice (Aditama et al., 2023; Bratton, 2018; Hassan Akhlaq, 2018)

The findings also indicate that religious institutions have the capacity to mobilize ecological action. Churches and mosques can function as moral agents, educational centers, and organizational platforms for environmental initiatives. Their influence is significant because religious institutions are deeply rooted in community life. Through sermons, lectures, youth activities, women's groups, worship practices, and community service, religious institutions can shape ecological behavior in ways that are culturally and spiritually meaningful. Interfaith ecological collaboration in Sentani can be developed through joint tree planting, collective cleaning activities, environmental education, waste management programs, youth ecological campaigns, and cooperation with interfaith forums such as the Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama. Such collaboration would move interfaith relations beyond dialogue toward shared action. This is important because ecological problems require not only theological agreement, but also coordinated social practice. In this regard, Sentani offers a contextual model of interfaith ecological praxis based on local experience, religious values, and collective environmental responsibility.

The practical implication of this finding is that ecological programs should be institutionalized within both churches and mosques. Religious leaders need to integrate ecological themes consistently into sermons, religious education, youth formation, and community programs. Ecological action should not remain incidental or event-based, but should become part of regular religious life. This would strengthen the transformation of ecological awareness from individual concern into collective habitus. The scientific implication of this study lies in its contribution to the study of religion and ecology in Eastern Indonesia, particularly Papua. Previous studies on religion and ecology have often focused on normative doctrine, urban contexts, or global discourse. This study shows that local ecological crises can reshape theological understanding and generate practical interfaith collaboration. Sentani therefore functions as a socio-religious laboratory where ecological crisis stimulates theological reconstruction, moral reflection, and collective praxis.

The findings demonstrate that faith has transformative capacity when theological values are embodied in repeated, contextual, and institutionalized actions. Christian and Muslim communities in Sentani show that ecological awareness is formed through the interaction of lived ecological experience, religious interpretation, institutional practice, and collective action. The movement from anthropocentric thinking toward a theocentric-relational paradigm provides a strong basis for ecological ethics, while the convergence between churches and mosques opens possibilities for sustainable interfaith environmental collaboration. All the findings of the research on interfaith ecological convergence and its implications are summarised in this table 4.

**Table 4.** Interfaith Ecological Convergence and Its Implications

<b>Code</b>	<b>Research Keyword</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
KW-01	Interfaith ecological convergence	Shared ecological values between Christian and Muslim communities.
KW-02	Christian–Muslim ecological praxis	Comparative religious environmental practices in Sentani.
KW-03	Ecological crisis	Floods, pollution, waste, land degradation, and environmental damage.
KW-04	Moral-spiritual crisis	Ecological degradation understood as a religious and ethical problem.
KW-05	Imago Dei	Christian concept of human responsibility as God’s representative.
KW-06	Stewardship	Christian responsibility to care for and preserve creation.
KW-07	Care for creation	Christian ecological duty expressed through faith-based action.
KW-08	Amanah	Islamic concept of nature as a trust from Allah.
KW-09	Khalifah	Islamic understanding of humans as stewards of the earth.
KW-10	Mizan	Islamic principle of balance in creation.
KW-11	Fasad	Environmental destruction as moral and spiritual disorder.
KW-12	Religious institutions	Churches and mosques as centers of ecological education and mobilization.
KW-13	Faith-based environmental action	Ecological practices motivated by religious values.
KW-14	Sermons and religious education	Religious teaching as a medium for ecological awareness.
KW-15	Collective ecological action	Tree planting, cleaning programs, waste management, and youth campaigns.
KW-16	Interfaith collaboration	Joint Christian–Muslim environmental action.
KW-17	Ecological awareness	Community consciousness about environmental responsibility.
KW-18	Theocentric-relational paradigm	A worldview that places God at the center and nature within a sacred relational order.
KW-19	Anthropocentric paradigm	Human-centered worldview that may contribute to exploitation of nature.
KW-20	Institutionalization of ecological programs	Integration of environmental action into regular church and mosque activities.
KW-21	Local ecological crisis	Sentani’s environmental problems as a basis for theological reflection.
KW-22	Theological reconstruction	Reinterpretation of religious teachings in response to ecological degradation.
KW-23	Moral accountability	Human responsibility before God for environmental care.
KW-24	Intergenerational justice	Responsibility to protect the environment for future generations.
KW-25	Sustainable interfaith environmental collaboration	Long-term ecological cooperation between religious communities.



Codes such as KW-05 Imago Dei, KW-06 Stewardship, KW-08 Amanah, KW-09 Khalifah, KW-10 Mizan, and KW-11 Fasad identify the theological foundations used by Christian and Muslim communities to interpret ecological responsibility. Other codes, such as KW-12 Religious institutions, KW-14 Sermons and religious education, and KW-15 Collective ecological action, show how these religious values are translated into practical activities through churches, mosques, youth groups, tree planting, cleaning programs, and waste management. Meanwhile, broader analytical codes such as KW-01 Interfaith ecological convergence, KW-18 Theocentric-relational paradigm, and KW-25 Sustainable interfaith environmental collaboration capture the article's main argument: ecological crisis can become a shared moral agenda that brings Christian and Muslim communities together in practical environmental action based on faith, responsibility, and collective care for creation.

Furthermore, this study has several limitations. First, the construct validity of theological interpretation requires caution. Concepts such as imago Dei, stewardship, khalifah, amanah, mizan, and fasad were interpreted from participants' explanations, religious activities, and documentary materials. These interpretations reflect lived religious meaning in Sentani and should not be treated as exhaustive representations of all Christian or Islamic doctrinal positions. To reduce this limitation, the study used triangulation, member checking, and peer review of the coding framework.

Second, the transferability of the findings is limited by the qualitative and contextual design. Although the study involved 100 participants from five participant groups, the sample was selected purposively for information richness rather than statistical representativeness. Therefore, the findings should not be generalized to all Christian and Muslim communities in Papua or Indonesia. They may be analytically transferable to other multi-religious communities facing similar ecological pressures, especially where religious institutions play strong social and moral roles.

Third, researcher positionality may have influenced data interpretation because this study relied on interpretative analysis of religious meanings and ecological practices. The researcher addressed this limitation through reflexive notes, audit-trail documentation, member checking, and discussion with a second researcher. These procedures helped distinguish participants' meanings from the researcher's assumptions and strengthened the confirmability of the findings.

Fourth, the study examined ecological awareness and community practice rather than measuring ecological outcomes quantitatively. As a result, the findings explain how religious values motivate ecological responsibility, but they do not measure the direct environmental impact of church- or mosque-based programs. Future studies could combine qualitative analysis with environmental indicators, longitudinal observation, or participatory action research to assess the measurable effects of faith-based ecological initiatives.

## Conclusions

Christian and Muslim communities in Sentani interpret ecological degradation not only as an environmental problem, but also as a moral and spiritual crisis that reflects a broken relationship between human beings, nature, and God. The findings show a significant shift from an anthropocentric paradigm toward a theocentric-relational paradigm, in which humans are not viewed as absolute rulers over nature, but as stewards entrusted with ecological responsibility. In the Christian context, this responsibility is grounded in 'imago Dei', stewardship, and the interpretation of Genesis 2:15 as a mandate to serve, care for, preserve, and sustain creation. In the Islamic context, ecological responsibility is rooted in 'amanah', 'khalifah', moderation, cleanliness, and the obligation to prevent 'fasad'. These findings confirm previous studies that emphasize religious teachings as a foundation for ecological ethics and environmental responsibility. The importance of this study lies in its demonstration that faith can become a transformative force when theological values are embodied in repeated, contextual, and institutionalized ecological practices. Churches and mosques in Sentani function as pedagogical and social spaces that shape ecological awareness through sermons, religious education, worship, collective cleaning, tree planting, waste management, and youth participation. The study is worthy of note because it extends previous discussions on religion and ecology, which often focus on doctrinal or global contexts, by showing how local ecological crises in Papua can generate practical interfaith ecological convergence. Its realistic implication is that sustainable ecological action in Sentani requires stronger institutional commitment from churches and mosques, consistent integration of ecological themes into religious formation, and collaborative interfaith programs that move beyond dialogue toward shared environmental action.



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