

INTERFAITH ECOTHEOLOGY: UNIFYING RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES IN RESPONDING TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

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Abstract

The worldwide ecological crisis calls for solutions that go beyond mere technical and secular approaches. This study explores how interfaith perspectives can be developed and integrated to effectively tackle the environmental crisis within the context of sustainable development. Employing a qualitative-descriptive methodology and a literature-based approach, the research conducts a comparative examination of ecological principles found in Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The results indicate that these four religious traditions share congruent environmental values, including the reverence for nature, humanity's ethical duty toward creation, and the emphasis on harmony and compassion for all living beings. Additionally, the study highlights that cross-faith collaboration through dialogue platforms, environmentally focused spiritual education, and joint initiatives can enhance global environmental ethics and expand the groundwork for sustainability efforts. In conclusion, interfaith ecotheology serves as a strategic approach to harmonizing religious and secular perspectives, fostering a collective commitment to environmental stewardship as an integral aspect of the spiritual obligations of faith communities. These findings underscore that religion, when approached inclusively and cooperatively, plays a crucial role in shaping a sustainability framework grounded in humanity's moral and spiritual principles.

Keywords: Ecotheology, Cross-faith Collaboration, Religion and Ecology, Environmental Crisis, Sustainable Development.

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1. Introduction

The ongoing global environmental crisis represents a complex, multifaceted challenge that goes beyond ecological issues, encompassing ethical, spiritual, and humanistic dimensions, and crossing geographic and cultural boundaries. Phenomena like ecosystem decline, climate shifts, resource depletion, and diminishing biodiversity are not merely technical problems but also carry profound moral, spiritual, and existential implications.

These issues highlight the unbalanced and exploitative dynamics between humanity and the natural world. For years, responses to this crisis have largely depended on secular, scientific, and technocratic methods, yet these have proven inadequate in tackling the deeper roots of the ecological crisis, which are tied to a lack of human awareness of nature as a sacred and living entity. Within this framework, religion and spirituality are gaining renewed attention as vital sources of values, ethical principles, and innovative perspectives for cultivating a collective ecological consciousness in human-nature relationships.

Ecotheology, an approach emerging from the intersection of religion and environmental concerns, examines how religious teachings can address ecological challenges. It plays a pivotal role in confronting the crisis by providing a spiritual lens that enhances scientific efforts, encouraging a shift in human attitudes from exploitation to mindful stewardship. A central contribution of ecotheology is its promotion of ecological contrition (Collins et al., 2021).

With its transcendent doctrines and role in guiding adherents' conduct, religion offers substantial potential for cultivating a shared ecological consciousness. Across diverse religious traditions, nature is viewed not as a resource for exploitation but as a sacred entity that demands care and protection as part of a moral and spiritual duty. Concepts like khalifah in Islam, creation theology in Christianity, *rta* and *ahimsa* in Hinduism, and the notion of interdependence in Buddhism illustrate that each faith provides a pertinent cosmological foundation for fostering environmental ethics.

Consequently, incorporating cross-faith perspectives into environmental concerns is not only viable but a pressing need to encourage inclusive cooperation in tackling the global ecological crisis. The field of ecotheology, which merges theological insights with environmental thinking, has gained traction in recent decades. In Indonesia, various studies have examined this topic from different angles. For example, Edi Purwanto, in his work *Persimpangan Sains, Agama, dan Filsafat Lingkungan*, underscores the value of integrating scientific and religious viewpoints through environmental philosophy as a common reflective platform. He explains how religion can act as an epistemological catalyst, inspiring followers to nurture a balanced relationship with the natural world. By engaging religion, ecological understanding can transcend purely rational scientific approaches and embrace spiritual insight. Nonetheless, Purwanto's framework remains theoretical and lacks a practical model for interfaith collaboration (Purwanto, 2025).

In his work *Penguatan Kecerdasan Teologis dan Teleologis (Pendekatan Theo-AntropoEkologis)*, Bahosin Sihombing presents a model that blends theology, anthropology, and ecology. He promotes strengthening the spiritual and purposive (teleological) aspects of human life to cultivate ecological consciousness, highlighting the role of intellectual insight in fostering a faith-based, eco-conscious mindset. While this approach enriches the theological perspective on environmental issues, it remains focused on individual

transformation and has yet to explore opportunities for collective cross-faith dialogue (Sihombing & Dewi, 2025).

Likewise, Abdu Salafush, in his article *Menelisik Urgensitas Fikih Ekologi terhadap Pelestarian Lingkungan Hidup*, underscores the importance of reforming Islamic jurisprudence to better address environmental challenges. He advocates for the development of a contextually relevant and sustainability-focused ecological fiqh, drawing on Yusuf Qardhawi's views on Maqashid Sharia (goals of Islamic law). Nevertheless, this research remains confined to an Islamic framework and does not yet engage with the potential for interfaith collaboration (Sholihin, 2025).

Within the field of education, Simon, in his work *Peranan Pendidikan Agama Kristen Menangani Masalah Ekologi*, argues that cultivating an ecotheological mindset can start early through religious education that promotes awareness of environmental conservation principles. Nevertheless, this initiative remains confined to internal efforts and has not yet tapped into the possibilities of cross-faith collaboration to jointly tackle ecological concerns (Simon, 2021). Conversely, Acyutananda Wayan Gaduh, in his research *Teo-Ekologi Hindu dalam Teks Lontar Sri Purana Tatwa*, effectively brings to light ecological principles rooted in the local wisdom of Balinese Hinduism, illustrating the potential of indigenous spirituality to nurture culturally anchored environmental consciousness (Gaduh & Harsananda, 2021). Likewise, Miftakhul Azizah, in her article *Hidup Damai dengan Alam Perspektif Umat Buddha Vihara Mahavira Graha Semarang*, examines the Buddhist practice of aligning with nature. While both studies are vital for pinpointing ecological values, they have not yet formulated a cooperative interfaith approach to collectively address the environmental crisis (Azizah et al., 2022).

An analysis of the referenced studies reveals that, although they significantly advance the understanding of the interplay between religion and ecology, most are limited in scope, concentrating on specific religious traditions without fully embracing a cross-faith perspective. This underscores a critical gap: the lack of research that explicitly constructs an interfaith ecotheological model as a concrete expression of interreligious cooperation on environmental matters. Such a trend results in a deficiency in developing collaborative cross-faith strategies that could enhance collective ecological ethics within diverse societies.

Current approaches often remain disjointed, focusing on individual faiths, and are typically theoretical or context-specific, falling short of establishing a cohesive framework that could serve as a global ethical solution for sustainable development. Nevertheless, numerous religious doctrines converge on universal principles, including stewardship of creation, environmental harmony, modesty, and empathy for all living beings. This convergence points to a significant potential for integrative initiatives to promote interfaith collaboration in tackling the environmental crisis more comprehensively and sustainably.

This study arises from recognition of the identified gap and puts forward a cross-faith

ecothological model that synthesizes ecological principles from diverse religious traditions to promote spiritual and ethical unity in confronting the environmental crisis. This model not only emphasizes the theological insights of each faith but also calls for platforms for dialogue and practical collaboration among religious communities as collective agents in advancing sustainable development to address pressing ecological issues.

Utilizing a qualitative approach grounded in literature review, this paper formulates a synthesis of ecological tenets drawn from Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism, while examining tangible instances of interfaith environmental efforts. By doing so, it seeks to illustrate that when religious values are interpreted inclusively and across divides, a spiritual ecology takes shape, providing a crucial basis for fostering a sustainable and ecologically equitable future. The study aspires to contribute to more comprehensive sustainable development initiatives by establishing religion as a pivotal collaborator in crafting a transformative, ethical, and inclusive ecological framework for the future.

2. Methods

This research is a qualitative study with a descriptive and analytical focus, designed to outline and evaluate the ecological principles embedded in the doctrines of prominent global religions, namely Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Rather than testing hypotheses, the study seeks to pinpoint, articulate, and contrast religious tenets pertinent to tackling the environmental crisis. A descriptive method is utilized to methodically present these teachings, while an analytical approach delves into the deeper significance and compatibility of values within the framework of cross-faith ecotheology. In terms of methodology, the research employs a literature-based approach, selected due to its dependence on examining sacred texts and interpretations from pertinent sources.

Through this library research, the study explores how each religion conceptualizes the human-nature relationship and the ethical guidelines established to safeguard divine creation. To improve clarity and enable structured comparisons, the research compiles its key findings into a table comparing environmental teachings across the religions. This tabular format is intended to streamline comparative analysis across traditions and highlight areas of alignment among religious values that bolster sustainable development.

This research utilizes data from two distinct categories: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources encompass sacred texts and religious scriptures acknowledged by each faith tradition. These texts undergo thematic analysis to uncover teachings that directly or indirectly relate to ecology, the interplay between humans and the natural world, and ethical duties toward environmental preservation. Secondary sources comprise scholarly publications, journal articles, prior studies, and official statements from religious organizations addressing ecological issues from a faith-based perspective. Here, the normative framework does not draw on secular legal systems but on religious principles that

provide moral and spiritual guidance for adherents in their interactions with the environment.

The study employs two analytical methods: content analysis and thematic comparative analysis. Content analysis is used to pinpoint keywords, metaphors, symbols, and ethical injunctions within religious texts that indicate perspectives or responsibilities toward nature, focusing on themes such as prohibitions against environmental harm, natural equilibrium, and stewardship obligations. Thematic comparative analysis organizes findings from each religion into a unified thematic structure, facilitating comparison and synthesis in a table that showcases overlapping or mutually reinforcing ecological values.

The findings are presented in a cross-faith synthesis table, with columns detailing the religion, cited teachings, inherent ecological principles, and contextual interpretations tied to modern environmental challenges. This format underscores the collective potential of religious traditions to forge a cohesive, inclusive, and actionable interfaith ecotheological framework for sustainable development. By employing these methods and approaches, the research seeks to foster a deeper, more holistic understanding of the connection between religion and ecology, while reinforcing religion's pivotal role as a collaborator in advancing global sustainability objectives.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Religious Approaches to Ecology: An Interfaith Study

A. Islam: The Principle of Khalifah and Ecological Fiqh

In the Islamic worldview, the connection between humanity and the natural world is grounded in the principle of tawhid (the unity of God), which emphasizes that all creation derives from and is subject to Allah SWT. A cornerstone of Islamic environmental ethics is the concept of khalifah, positioning humans as Allah's stewards (khalīfah) on Earth (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah [2]:30).

وَأَذِّنْ لِلْمَلَأَةِ أَنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ

Humans are entrusted with the duty to protect, uphold balance, and responsibly manage the Earth, rather than exploiting it. The khalifah role is not one of unchecked authority but a morally binding spiritual obligation. In their engagement with nature, humans are expected to adhere to the values of 'adl (fairness), mīzān (equilibrium), and ihsān (benevolence). Thus, environmental harm resulting from greed and excessive exploitation constitutes a violation of this sacred trust (Tamam, 2021). As stewards of the Earth, as noted earlier, humans are responsible for applying the teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah to environmental care. Consequently, Muslims are urged to thoroughly examine Islam's active role in environmental stewardship through both formal education and informal channels. Humanity's unique status and elevated role among creation confer a distinguished responsibility, imbued with great honor by Allah SWT (Syamsudin, 2017).

In the context of ecological fiqh, modern Islamic jurists are advancing a specialized

area of jurisprudence focused on environmental conservation. This fiqh integrates ecology into the framework of Islamic legal principles (maqāṣid al-syarī'ah), prioritizing environmental protection as essential to preserving al-nafs (life), al-māl (property), and al-naṣl (future generations). This approach broadens Islamic law beyond regulating human interactions to include humanity's relationship with the natural environment. Practical applications of Islamic ecological fiqh include restrictions on wasting water during ritual purification (wudu), promotion of tree planting, and humane treatment of animals (Laksono, 2022).

The Prophet Muhammad set a profound ecological precedent, cautioning against reckless deforestation and praising those who nurture animals and reclaim arid land. Within Islamic ecotheology, humans are not positioned as the universe's center (anthropocentric) but as integral to a divine cosmic harmony. Ecosystems are seen as āyah (divine signs) of God's majesty, deserving reverence. Thus, harming the environment violates core Islamic spiritual principles. Through the concept of khalifah and the evolution of ecological fiqh, Islam provides a solid religious basis for promoting environmental consciousness. This underscores that the environmental crisis is not merely a scientific or political challenge but a spiritual and ethical concern, necessitating a fundamental change in humanity's approach to nature.

B. Christianity: Creation Theology and Moral Responsibility

Within Christian doctrine, the cosmos is regarded as God's inherently good creation, as stated in Genesis 1:31, "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good." This viewpoint underpins creation theology, which perceives nature not simply as a resource for human use but as a sacred manifestation of God's love and divine intent, deserving reverence. Historically, some interpretations of Christian theology leaned toward anthropocentrism, particularly in readings of Genesis 1:28, which instructs humans to subdue the Earth. However, contemporary theological scholarship and Christian ecotheology have embraced a more comprehensive perspective. The focus has shifted from human dominance to an ethical duty to nurture and safeguard God's creation. Humans are viewed as stewards tasked with preserving the Earth for the benefit of all living beings, rather than as its ultimate proprietors (Widiarto & Wilaela, 2021).

The principle of stewardship forms the foundation of Christian environmental ethics. From this perspective, humanity's duty toward the Earth involves safeguarding ecosystems, biodiversity, and natural equilibrium as an expression of devotion and respect for the Creator. Environmental harm is seen as a result of systemic sin and excessive consumerist behaviors that disrupt the balanced relationship among humans, their communities, and the natural world. Globally, churches have started to integrate environmental concerns into their spiritual mission. They play a crucial role in educating their members about environmental care through preaching, workshops, and discussions that highlight the value of practical steps, such as minimizing waste and using resources responsibly. Additionally, churches can engage

in advocacy for eco-friendly public policies and partner with diverse groups to support ecological conservation while defending marginalized groups impacted by environmental degradation (Harefa et al., 2024).

Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015) represents a pivotal moment in promoting environmental consciousness among Catholics. The document advocates for an ecological transformation and highlights the linkage between environmental challenges, social inequities, and ethical decline. Pope Francis refers to the Earth as "our shared home," stressing humanity's collective duty to protect it (Francis, 2019). Christian ecotheology contributes to global discussions by offering an inclusive spiritual perspective, connecting nature to God's transcendent and immanent presence.

Nature is seen not only as a creation to be safeguarded but also as a conduit for encountering the divine. As a result, environmental destruction is regarded as a breach of God's intent and a disturbance of creation's balance. Rooted in this theological framework, Christianity advances a vision where salvation extends beyond human souls to encompass all of creation. Environmental stewardship is an integral aspect of faith practice. Consequently, cross-faith cooperation in tackling the environmental crisis is becoming ever more essential to fulfill a joint commitment to preserving the Earth as a holy inheritance for future generations.

C. Hinduism: The Concept of Rta and Cosmic Harmony

Within Hinduism, the connection between humanity and the natural world is articulated through the concept of *Rta*, the cosmic principle that upholds universal order. *Rta* is a core tenet that maintains balance and coherence in the cosmos, governing the cycles of time, celestial movements, and life's rhythms. This doctrine is not merely metaphysical but carries ethical implications: humans are obligated to align their lives with *Rta*, fostering equilibrium and avoiding actions that cause disorder (*anṛta*). *Rta* underpins *Dharma* (truth and ethical responsibility), infusing human interactions with the environment with deep spiritual meaning.

Acts that damage nature such as excessive exploitation, pollution, or greed are viewed as breaches of *Rta*, disrupting the harmony of the cosmic framework. As a result, Hindu teachings advocate for an environmentally mindful lifestyle that honors all forms of life, including humans, animals, plants, and natural elements like rivers, mountains, and forests. In the Indonesian context, this ethos is vividly embodied in the Balinese Hindu principle of *Tri Hita Karana*, which translates to "three foundations of well-being." This theological and cosmological framework encompasses *Parahyangan* (a balanced relationship with the divine), *Pawongan* (harmonious human relationships), and *Palemahan* (a symbiotic bond with nature). Together, these elements create a cohesive value system that not only guides individual spirituality but also influences social structures and environmental balance in Balinese culture. Far from an abstract idea, *Tri Hita Karana* is a practical theology intricately woven

into Balinese traditions, farming practices, architectural designs, and daily ethical conduct (Narti, 2024).

Hindu ecotheology asserts that personal salvation is intertwined with the preservation of the cosmos. In response to the global environmental crisis, Hindu principles stress the need to restore universal harmony through simplicity (*aparigraha*), moderation of desires, and fostering an awareness of the interconnectedness of all life. These values challenge modern exploitative paradigms while providing a philosophical and spiritual alternative for redefining humanity's relationship with the environment. This perspective is highly pertinent to interfaith initiatives aimed at collectively addressing the environmental crisis, underscoring that protecting the Earth is not just an ecological duty but a pathway to universal balance.

D. Buddhism: Living in Peace with Nature and the Principle of Non-Violence

Buddhist doctrine highlights *ahimsa* (non-violence) as a core ethical principle guiding behavior toward not only humans but also all living beings and the cosmos. This tenet underscores the belief that every creature possesses an inherent right to exist, placing a moral duty on humans to safeguard and avoid harming any life form. Within an environmental context, *ahimsa* offers a strong moral framework for resisting environmental degradation, resource exploitation, and pollution. Buddhism perceives nature not as a resource to be exploited but as an essential component of existence that deserves reverence and protection. The concept of interdependence (*pratītyasamutpāda*) emphasizes that all phenomena are interconnected, linking humans, animals, plants, and natural elements in an indivisible web of existence (Kurniawan et al., 2025). As a result, harm to any single component reverberates throughout the entire system. This understanding cultivates compassion and discernment in interacting with nature responsibly.

In everyday life, Buddhists are urged to embrace simplicity, eschew overconsumption, and practice mindfulness in their actions. Simplicity serves as both a spiritual practice and an ecological approach to minimizing environmental harm. Sacred texts like the *Dhammapada* and *Jataka* are rich with narratives and teachings that advocate living in harmony with nature and avoiding actions that endanger other beings. Furthermore, the doctrine of *samsara* (the cycle of rebirth) suggests that humans and other beings are reborn across various life forms (Hidayati, 2025). This perspective fosters empathy and ethical responsibility, as animals or plants, in the Buddhist view, may have been relatives or humans in previous lives, reinforcing the importance of treating all life respectfully. In tackling the global environmental crisis, Buddhism provides a perspective grounded in inner tranquility and environmental consciousness.

Transformation requires not only external measures, such as policies and technology, but also an internal shift in humanity's perspective and attitude toward nature. By addressing greed (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*), Buddhist teachings lay a spiritual

groundwork for building a more sustainable world. Consequently, Buddhist ecotheology presents the environmental crisis as a moral and spiritual challenge, resolvable only by fostering a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature through compassion, simplicity, and recognition of interconnectedness. These principles contribute significantly to interfaith discussions aimed at developing a global ethic centered on Earth's preservation and the sustainability of all life.

3.2 Interfaith Common Ground within an Ecological Framework

To confront the global environmental crisis, a cross-faith ecotheological framework stands out as a key approach that highlights shared universal principles across diverse religious traditions. While each faith expresses its teachings through unique terminology and perspectives, there exist multiple areas of alignment that enhance the prospects for interreligious cooperation in cultivating collective environmental consciousness. First, the sacredness of the natural world forms a common cornerstone. In Islam, nature is seen as *ayat kauniyah*, or manifestations of God's divine authority, whereas Christianity views it as God's creation deserving reverence. Hinduism regards nature as an embodiment of Brahman, and Buddhism perceives it as part of an interdependent web of life. Second, each religion emphasizes humanity's ethical duty to care for the environment.

Islam upholds the principle of *khalifah*, Christianity promotes stewardship, Hinduism stresses the significance of *dharma*, and Buddhism champions *ahimsa*, which forbids violence against any living being. Third, all traditions share a prohibition against exploiting and damaging the environment. Theologically, harming nature is not only a destructive act but also a spiritual and ethical violation. This supports the notion that the ecological crisis reflects a deeper crisis in modern human ethics and spirituality. Moreover, values like simplicity, ecological fairness, and compassion for all creatures act as ethical connectors across religions, rejecting consumerist behaviors and advocating for balanced, sustainable, and inclusive lifestyles within ecosystems. Most fundamentally, these faiths converge on the understanding that humanity and nature are part of an interconnected life system. In Islam, *tawhid* underscores the unity of all creation (Alfadhli et al., 2025). Christianity teaches that humans are created to exist in loving harmony with other creations. Hinduism and Buddhism highlight interconnectedness and balance as central spiritual tenets. Consequently, these shared elements in interfaith ecotheology offer a strong theological and moral basis for fostering collaboration among religious communities to address the environmental crisis collectively and transformatively.

The cross-faith ecotheological framework carries profound implications for developing environmental movement strategies grounded in spiritual principles. In a diverse and multi-religious society such as Indonesia, cooperation among religious groups can act as a compelling ethical and societal force to promote collective recognition of the need for environmental sustainability. Environmentally focused movements rooted in faith can be

advanced by weaving ecological ethics into religious sermons, educational programs, interfaith community initiatives, and public advocacy campaigns that highlight spiritual ecology as a basis for action (Ndruru, 2025).

This approach not only expands public engagement with environmental concerns but also enhances the credibility of ecological initiatives by drawing on sacred values deeply ingrained in the shared consciousness of faith communities. Moreover, the interfaith ecotheological perspective influences the creation and execution of environmental and sustainable development policies. By emphasizing moral values, justice across generations, and spiritual accountability for the cosmos, this framework urges policymakers and stakeholders to craft policies that prioritize ecological health and social harmony over mere economic gains. Additionally, the cross-faith approach fosters dialogue between governments and religious organizations to formulate regulations that bolster environmental protection. Consequently, it is essential for decision-makers to engage interfaith groups in designing sustainable development plans, such as through advisory panels, the creation of faith-based environmental education, and the harmonization of policies that reflect spiritual and ecological principles.

3.3 Analysis and Synthesis of Interfaith Ecotheology

An exploration of the ecological teachings within Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism through the lens of ecotheology reveals that, despite their diverse spiritual origins, these faiths share universal ecological principles that can form a collective basis for interfaith initiatives to tackle the environmental crisis. Core values, including the sacredness of the natural world, ethical obligations toward environmental care, injunctions against ecological harm, and the ideal of coexisting harmoniously with nature, constitute a common thread in the spiritual narratives of these religions. These shared ecological principles offer a vital foundation for crafting a cohesive interfaith ecotheological framework (Reno, 2024). For example, Islam underscores humanity's role as khalifah (stewards) on Earth, entrusted with protecting and preserving divine creation.

Christianity articulates the notion of stewardship, grounded in the belief that the Earth is a sacred gift entrusted to humans for safeguarding. Hinduism, through the principles of *ṛta* and *dharma*, advocates for cosmic harmony and equilibrium between humanity and the environment, while Buddhism emphasizes *ahimsa* (non-violence) and interdependence as spiritual pillars for sustaining ecological balance. These converging values provide a strong basis for fostering an integrative and cooperative interfaith ecotheology. Such alignments highlight that major global religions share a common concern for environmental issues and that spirituality can act as a moral conduit for addressing the global ecological crisis. Values such as ethical accountability, reverence for creation, recognition of the interconnectedness of all life, and moderation in consumption create a unified narrative that transcends doctrinal divides. In the face of intensifying ecological challenges such as climate change,

deforestation, biodiversity decline, and pollution of water and air the urgency of integrating spiritual and religious perspectives has grown significantly (Febryanti, 2025). Thus, interfaith ecotheology offers substantial potential to develop a transformative ethical framework that inspires collective and impactful ecological consciousness across humanity.

Drawing on these common values, religion can contribute not only to raising individual consciousness but also to harnessing significant opportunities for cross-faith cooperation in practical efforts to safeguard the environment. Such cooperation may manifest through collective actions among religious communities, such as conservation initiatives, restoration of green areas, religious-based environmental education programs, and advocacy for eco-friendly public policies. Examples of feasible joint efforts include interfaith tree-planting activities, waste management programs grounded in spiritual principles, and the incorporation of ecology-focused sermons and teachings into the religious practices of each tradition (Ninda & Fiyani, 2025). In Indonesia's diverse and deeply religious context, there are ample possibilities for fostering interfaith ecological unity, particularly by involving religious leaders who hold significant moral and social authority within their communities.

These leaders, serving as ethical advocates, can effectively communicate the pressing nature of the environmental crisis in ways that resonate culturally and spiritually with their followers. Nevertheless, challenges and gaps in integrating cross-faith ecotheology must be acknowledged (Agung et al., 2025). A key obstacle is the existence of doctrinal variations that can foster resistance to inclusive approaches. Some religious groups remain rooted in theological exclusivity, which obstructs the creation of open dialogue spaces, especially for contemporary issues like ecology, often viewed as a scientific rather than spiritual concern. Furthermore, many religious leaders lack adequate knowledge of environmental issues and fail to fully leverage their faith's teachings to promote ecological values among their communities. This is largely due to insufficient environmental education and literacy in religious training, coupled with the limited integration of ecological principles with religious doctrines in public religious discourse, which hampers the progress of a cohesive interfaith strategy (Jimmy, 2024).

A further obstacle to overcome is reconciling spiritual perspectives with the technocratic frameworks that have predominantly shaped environmental policy. Frequently, religion's role is perceived only as symbolic or ethical, lacking direct engagement in the design and execution of environmental strategies. However, when harnessed effectively, religious principles can offer a compelling and enduring ethical basis for policies that prioritize ecological sustainability (Yopo et al., 2025). Consequently, collaboration among policymakers, religious figures, scholars, and civil society is vital to forge a connection between faith and scientific approaches within the context of protecting the planet.

Thus, the development of a cross-faith ecotheological synthesis should rest on foundations of mutual respect, understanding, and a collective dedication to preserving the

Earth as a priceless divine endowment. Such an approach not only expands the scope of ecological spirituality but also fosters interreligious unity in tackling universal humanitarian issues. Through continuous dialogue, partnership, and shared introspection, interfaith ecotheology can provide a practical and moral cornerstone for a religious ecological movement that extends beyond local efforts to achieve global and transformative impact.

4. Conclusion

The pressing global ecological crisis necessitates a comprehensive approach that goes beyond solely scientific and bureaucratic solutions. Within this framework, interfaith ecotheology presents a transformative paradigm that weaves together spiritual and ethical principles from diverse religious traditions to collectively tackle environmental decline. An examination of ecological doctrines in Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism reveals that each faith offers a solid theological basis for human responsibility toward the environment, exemplified by concepts like khalifah in Islam, creation theology in Christianity, Rta in Hinduism, and the principles of ahimsa and equilibrium in Buddhism. These converging values establish a shared moral and spiritual foundation that supports cross-faith partnerships to cultivate a unified ecological consciousness. Despite variations in terminology and doctrinal focus, the integration of interfaith ecotheology demonstrates considerable potential for galvanizing socio-religious efforts aimed at environmental conservation.

Core principles such as ecological equity, the sacredness of the natural world, and accountability across generations provide an ethical framework that can motivate diverse collective initiatives and policy advocacy. Nonetheless, applying interfaith ecotheology faces obstacles, including interpretive differences, the prevalence of human-centered views in some religious teachings, and the scarcity of inclusive dialogue platforms. To address these, there is a pressing need to enhance religiously informed environmental education, maintain ongoing interfaith discussion forums, and engage religious organizations actively in policymaking and sustainable development efforts. When fully embraced, interfaith ecotheology not only offers a spiritual counter to the ecological crisis but also establishes an ethical cornerstone for a future society in greater harmony with the natural world.

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