

**Environmentalism in the Face of Impending Global Divine Judgment:
Examining the Role of Faith and Science**

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Keywords: Environmentalism, Divine judgment, Faith-science integration, Religious leaders, Interdisciplinary approach

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Abstract:

Many environmental challenges may be traced back to human conduct. Therefore, the integration of faith and science in education could be an approach to encourage pro-environmental human behaviour in the South Pacific Division. This paper considers the escalating environmental problems drawing on biblical teachings about divine judgments on a global scale (Genesis 2:15; Revelation 11:18). The study examines the various views of major religious groups about divine judgment and how faith and science may integrate environmental issues. Pastors, teachers, and chaplains play a unique role in integrating faith and science, shaping congregations and future generations, and diverse populations. Stewardship (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 24:1) and creation care (Romans 8:19-21) are also discussed as ways to incorporate environmental themes into sermons, teachings, and counselling.

The article also discusses faith-science collaborations, disagreements, and conflicts. In retrospect to divine judgement, the projected increase in frequency and intensity of natural disasters on a global scale (Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Peter 3:10-13), interdisciplinary environmentalism is stressed with future research and action recommendations. The study found that, in the face of global divine judgment, examining faith, science, and religious leaders' roles in environmentalism fosters collaboration and promotes positive environmental outcomes, leading to a more sustainable future (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1).

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I. Introduction

The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Report 2007 has confirmed the widespread agreement among experts that human activities are most likely the primary cause of global warming (Strumse, 2007). Major faiths have linked environmental destruction to divine judgment at the end of time as part of the ultimate restoration of all creation (Djupe & Burge, 2023; UNEP, 2019).

Faith and science are frequently perceived to conflict on many subjects; nonetheless, collaboration is vital, particularly in vulnerable areas such as the South Pacific, to solve major environmental challenges (UNEP, 2019). Pastors, teachers, and chaplains in the South Pacific Division (SPD) must explore ways to integrate faith and science and inspire environmentally responsible behaviour.

A. Ecological Overview

The South Pacific faces climate change-induced extreme weather events (Nurse et al., 2014), increasing sea levels that endanger low-lying island states, and the degradation of marine ecosystems crucial to local inhabitants (Jupiter et al., 2014). In the Pacific, Faith-based community advocates are lobbying for climate action, preserving and conserving the environment through ecological legislation, sustainable practices, and environmentally conscious personal behaviour (Martel & Parker, 2017).

B. Global divine judgment

Human actions and neglect, including environmental destruction, will not escape divine global judgment (Revelation 11:18). The dramatic increase of natural disasters

globally can help promote environmental responsibility and sustainability in the South Pacific (James 2:14-17; Veldman et al., 2013).

C. Environmental issues and faith-science.

Faith communities are increasingly ecologically sensitive and are establishing practices and liturgies to address the environmental challenges in the Pacific (Hosea 4:1-3; Ives, 2023). As Pacific parents, we should support the environmental concerns of our children and teach them about God's creation and our duty to maintain it (2 Timothy 2:15; Stackelroth, 2019).

D. Pastors, teachers, and chaplains in faith-science integration

Pastors can inspire congregations to care for the earth by preaching on stewardship and creation care (Psalm 24:1). Teachers can promote environment and scientific literacy (UNESCO, 1988, as cited in Murdoch, 2012; cf. Proverbs 22:6). By so doing, encourage critical thinking (see 1 Timothy 4:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:21) among children to embrace the values of environmental stewardship and a better future for the South Pacific (see Murdoch, 2012).

E. Purpose of article

The integration of faith and science is often not an area that is easily achieved among pastors, teachers, and chaplains in the South Pacific when addressing environmental issues. This study examines the duties and the unique challenges spiritual leaders face in the South Pacific region. It considers divine judgments experienced in the region through increased natural disasters. It offers insights and recommendations on building collaboration, promoting environmental stewardship, and contributing to a more sustainable future.

II. The Concept of Divine Judgment in Religious Traditions

A. Overview of divine judgment in various religious traditions

1. Christianity: Many Bible verses discuss environmental conservation. As a result, Christians bear some responsibility for fostering positive change for the benefit of future generations (Edubirdie, 2022). In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Even were instructed by God to “tend and keep” it (Genesis 2:15). Hence, the neglect of environmental stewardship is associated with divine judgment (Hyneman, 2013). The Israelites were warned about God’s presence (Numbers 35:33-34). Contamination among them was prohibited. They were required to keep their dwelling places clean.

2. Islam: The concept of divine judgment in Islam is closely related to the Day of Judgment or Qiyamah. On the day of judgment, Allah will judge everyone for their deeds, including how they care for the environment. The Qur’an emphasizes the importance of environmental stewardship, as seen in Surah 6:141, advising Muslims not to waste resources and maintain the balance in nature (UNEP, n.d.).

3. Judaism: The teachings of Judaism have long emphasized divine judgment and human accountability, including the obligation to care for the environment (UNEP, n.d.). This concern for the sustainable use of natural resources and the interdependence of all living beings is exemplified in Jewish tradition by the Shmita (sabbatical year) and the Bal Tashchit (waste prohibition) (Schwartz, 2016).

4. Hinduism: With its belief in the rule of karma, Hinduism connects divine judgment and karma to environmental responsibility. According to religion, actions that harm the environment may have karmic consequences that affect an individual’s future life. The spiritual teachings of Hinduism emphasize the importance of environmental conservation and the sacredness of nature (Nelson, 1998).

5. Buddhism: In Buddhism, karma and rebirth are the basis of divine judgment (Kaza, 2000). When an individual harms the environment, they may create negative karma that can affect their future rebirths (Kaza, 2000). Thus, the Buddhist path to enlightenment emphasizes environmental responsibility.

B. Common themes and implications for environmentalism

The world's major religions emphasize divine judgment and environmental care (Kaza, 2000; Hyneman, 2013). They stress the interdependence of all living beings and the need for environmental responsibility (The Pluralism Project at Harvard University, n.d.). These lessons can motivate people to practice sustainability and support environmental legislation, which benefits the environment (Hyneman, 2013). We care about creation like God does because He created, owns, and rules it. Our love for God motivates us to care for creation. God created everything, not humans. God will judge us if we harm creation (Hyneman & Shore, 2013).

Humanity has been given both sovereignty and stewardship over creation so that it might fulfil its role of caring for all people today and in the future. These duties are so vital that misuse of dominance and stewardship results in judgment (Hyneman & Shore, 2013; Kaza, 2000).

III. The Role of Faith in Environmentalism

A. Faith-based environmental initiatives

1. Green congregations and eco-theology: Religious beliefs can significantly impact people's perception of the natural world. Those who care for the earth enjoy its bounty. By exploiting the land, they risk unimaginable consequences (Ituma, 2009). Green communities practice eco-theology, emphasizing nature's sacredness, the

interdependence of all living things, and the importance of responsible stewardship (Gottlieb, 2006).

2. Interfaith environmental movements: Interfaith environmental movements unite people of different faiths to advocate for the environment. These initiatives recognize that numerous religious traditions share environmental stewardship precepts and use their broad membership to promote environmental awareness and action (Tucker, 2011). The Parliament of the World's Religions' Climate Commitments Project and the Interfaith Power & Light network support faith communities in addressing climate change (Interfaith Power & Light, n.d.).

B. The impact of religious beliefs on individual environmental behaviours

Seventh-day Adventists believe that protecting and nurturing the environment is inextricably linked to how we serve God (De Lisser, 2019). The Bible underscores that the original responsibility of humankind was to care for their surroundings rather than to violate them. Not to lose anything but to keep it (Caesar, 2019; Veldman et al., 2013).

C. Faith as a motivator for environmental stewardship

Faith can also inspire environmental stewardship by giving a sense of moral obligation and spiritual fulfilment beyond the immediate benefits of sustainable practices (Taylor, 2016; Kearns, 2007; Wardekker et al., 2009). Combined with scientific knowledge of environmental issues, this motivation can bridge the gap between knowledge and action (Clayton et al., 2015; Veldman et al., 2013).

D. Challenges and limitations in faith-based environmentalism

Nothing goes without challenge. Despite efforts to increase environmental sustainability at religious head offices, congregations and branches do not necessarily follow through (Koehrsen, Blanc, & Huber, 2022). In addition, Religious teachings may prioritise human needs over ecological concerns, creating an anthropocentric worldview that devalues environmental management (White, 1967).

Despite these problems, faith-based environmentalism contributes unique insights and resources to the environmental movement. By tackling these challenges, faith groups may strengthen their environmental efforts and promote a sustainable future.

IV. The Role of Science in Environmentalism

A. The scientific basis for environmental concerns

1. Climate change is one of the most serious global environmental issues caused by the use of fossil fuels and deforestation (Ritchie & Roser, 2021). Human-caused greenhouse gas emissions have been widely acknowledged as the primary contributor to a one-degree Celsius rise in global surface temperatures since pre-industrial times (Livingston, 2020). Consequently, the more frequent and severe extreme weather events, sea-level rise, and ecosystem and agricultural disruptions have fuelled global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to their increasing effects (IPCC, 2021).

2. Biodiversity loss: Another significant environmental issue. Human activities such as habitat destruction, overexploitation, pollution, and the introduction of alien species have accelerated species extinction, threatening ecosystem stability and critical services such as pollination, nutrient cycling, and climate regulation (WWF, 2020; IPBES, 2019).

3. Pollution and waste: Scientific research has revealed information about pollution and waste, such as air and water pollution, plastic pollution, and hazardous waste. Governments are working to reduce emissions, improve waste management, and develop more sustainable materials and technologies to protect human life, wildlife, and ecosystems from pollution (UNEP, 2019).

B. The role of scientific research in shaping environmental policy

Scientific research informs environmental policy by revealing the causes, effects, and solutions to environmental issues (Selin, 2014). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is critical in providing scientific assessments on climate change, which have influenced international climate policies such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, n.d.).

C. The relationship between science and environmental activism

Science underpins environmental activism, raising awareness and pushing for change. Providing scientific knowledge also increases public awareness of the necessity of climate policies, especially among those sceptical about climate change (Lewandowsky, 2021).

D. Challenges and limitations in science-based environmentalism

Environmental action requires research, frequently requiring substantial resources such as funds, knowledge, and technology. Scientific study is difficult since Earth's climate and ecosystems are complex. This uncertainty often makes opponents criticise environmental action and policy. Political, economic, and ideological pressures may undermine environmental policy (Sarewitz, 2004). Money and data

may limit scientific studies in impoverished countries or disenfranchised areas disproportionately affected by environmental challenges (Reid et al., 2009).

Scientists and environmentalists can overcome these limits to gain information and promote evidence-based solutions to critical environmental concerns.

V. The Intersection of Faith and Science in Environmentalism

A. Areas of agreement and collaboration between faith and science

Nature and revelation are inextricably linked, as God is the author of both. Modern science arose within a Judeo-Christian culture, and many of its founders were Christians who studied nature as God's creation to praise God (Clausen, 2021).

Faith and science emphasise care and responsibility for nature differently. Due to their shared environmental concerns, both can work together.

B. Conflicts and debates between faith and science perspectives

Despite commonalities, faith and science disagree on environmental issues. Some religious organizations may question scientific findings on evolution, climate change, and reproductive technology. Resistance may originate from a perceived threat to traditional values or a distrust of the scientific establishment. On the other hand, some academics and environmental campaigners may consider faith-based ideas as unreasonable or unscientific.

C. Case studies of successful faith-science partnerships

Many faith-science alliances have addressed environmental issues. The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), a worldwide organization, works with religious groups to promote faith-based environmental initiatives using scientific knowledge and expertise (Alliance of Religions and Conservation [ARC], n.d.). The Interfaith

Power and Light movement in the United States is dedicated to promoting energy conservation, renewable energy sources, and climate advocacy by bridging faith and science. The organization encourages religious institutions and communities to actively participate in environmental issues (Interfaith Power & Light, n.d.).

D. Strategies for fostering collaboration between faith and science communities

Several strategies can be employed to foster greater collaboration between faith and science communities on environmentalism:

1. Encouraging open and respectful dialogue between faith and science communities can help to build mutual understanding, dispel misconceptions, and identify common ground for collaboration.
2. Integrating faith and science perspectives into environmental education programs can promote a more holistic understanding of environmental issues, highlighting the complementary contributions of both domains.
3. Faith-science collaborations can improve environmental action. Religion inspires environmental action. Both sides must work. Scientists and policymakers could work with religious leaders to include environmental issues in their teaching and practice. Faith-based organizations can collaborate on research, education, and conservation with scientific institutions (Ives, 2023).
4. Recognizing and respecting the diversity of perspectives within faith and science communities can help create a more inclusive and cooperative collaborative environment.

Since God created nature and revelation, they should harmonize. Modern science was founded by Christians who studied nature to glorify God (Clausen, 2021). By fostering collaboration between faith and science communities, environmentalism

can draw upon the unique strengths and insights of both domains, leading to more comprehensive and practical solutions to our planet's pressing environmental challenges.

VI. The Role of Pastors, Teachers, and Chaplains in Integrating Faith and Science

A. The unique position of religious leaders in promoting environmental stewardship

1. Pastors and their influence on congregations: Pastors are more aware of environmental stewardship than their congregations (Cha, 2011). Thus, they can raise awareness of environmental issues, promote stewardship of the planet, and encourage environmentally conscious conduct by including environmental themes in their sermons and ministry activities. They can inspire sustainable living and connect their congregation to environmental groups (Kearns, 2017).

2. The significant role of teachers: Faith, science, and the environment should be integrated into religious education. This strategy moulds the worldviews of future generations to be conscious of environmental stewardship (Poling, 2017). As teachers, it's our job to help children understand environmental challenges, ethics, and the ethics we already teach about God and people as stewards (Gonzalez-Socoloske, 2019).

3. Chaplains and their impact on diverse populations: Chaplains serve the spiritual needs of people in hospitals, prisons, universities, and the military. Environmental themes in counselling and pastoral care can help people have a sense of stewardship and responsibility for the planet (Kaplan & Gruber, 2019).

B. Strategies for integrating faith and science in religious education

1. Incorporating environmental themes in sermons, teachings, and counselling:
Pastors and teachers can use the Bible to advocate for environmental protection and scientific inquiry in their lessons, sermons, and counselling sessions (Chandler, 2020). This can help reconcile faith and science and expand environmental stewardship knowledge (Veldman, Szasz, & Haluza-DeLay, 2013).
2. Promoting scientific literacy within faith communities: Religious leaders can foster scientific literacy by hosting educational workshops or seminars (Hitzhusen, 2007), inviting scientists and environmental experts to speak, and incorporating scientific findings into sermons and teachings (Doran, 2015).
3. Addressing potential barriers and misconceptions: Some barriers and misconceptions might hinder integrating faith and science in environmental sustainability (Ecklund & Long, 2011). These issues can be addressed openly and honestly, facilitating greater understanding and collaboration between faith and science communities.

C. The role of religious leaders in building bridges between faith and science communities

1. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation: The role of religious leaders in building bridges between faith and science communities is crucial (Tucker, 2011). Interfaith dialogues and joint events with scientific organizations can be organized (Peters, 2018), as well as public discussions and debates on environmental issues (Rockström et al., 2021).
2. Facilitating collaborative projects and initiatives: By encouraging faith-science collaboration, religious leaders may address environmental issues more effectively

and inclusively. Collaboration may occur through conservation projects, teaching, or science and religion research (Djupe & Olson, 2013; Hitzhusen & Tucker, 2013).

Pastors, teachers, and chaplains can combine faith and science in ecology through collective influence (Bhagwat et al., 2011). Climate change should spur God's remnant church to work harder at evangelism and social justice and promote sustainable earth stewardship through teaching, teamwork, and open discussion. (Garner, 2021; Gardner, 2010).

VII. Impending Divine Judgment: Addressing Environmental Issues

A. The role of religious teachings in fostering environmental awareness

Seventh-day Adventism encourages a simple, healthy way of life free of excess, accumulation, and waste. A lifestyle change is required to respect nature, conserve resources, reassess needs, and affirm life (De Lisser, 2019). By modelling Christ's holistic purpose in our communities, we can impact people's values and beliefs while promoting environmental awareness and care (Guth et al., 1995). Leaders must advocate for the interdependence of humans, the environment, and stewardship (Taylor, 2016).

B. Encouraging science-based policy decisions within faith communities

Religions must support science-based environmental policies to solve problems (Wardekker et al., 2009). Being informed, sharing their knowledge, and pushing for evidence-based policies at the local, national, and international levels can assist religious leaders in promoting science-based decision-making.

C. The importance of an interdisciplinary approach to environmentalism

Science, religion, ethics, and public policy must be used to address environmental issues due to their complexity (Veldman et al., 2013). Religious leaders can work with all stakeholders to develop an interdisciplinary approach to environmental problems.

D. Recommendations for future research and action

1. Faith and science can solve environmental problems. This might include comparing faith-science cooperation and environmental outcomes.
2. Educational resources and training: Religious leaders should collaborate with scientists and educators to provide faith-based environmental education. Public schools, religious education, and community projects can use these resources.
3. Our global religious diversity necessitates interfaith environmental participation and partnership. Faith groups can share resources, best practices, and better environmental stewardship and sustainability plans.
4. Environmental justice: Religious leaders should promote environmental justice to protect disadvantaged groups from environmental deterioration and climate change. This may include supporting fair resource access, indigenous rights, and environmental injustice.

VIII. Conclusion

A. Religious leaders to explore faith and science in environmentalism

Addressing the pressing environmental challenges requires a comprehensive approach that involves faith communities, scientific institutions, and policymakers.

For teachers, chaplains, and pastors in the South Pacific, understanding the roles of

faith, science, and religious leaders in environmentalism is essential for fostering cooperation and idea exchange in tackling environmental issues.

Practical strategies:

1. Organize workshops and seminars to facilitate discussions on faith, science, and environmentalism.
2. Invite experts from various fields to share knowledge and perspectives on environmental issues.
3. Encourage the integration of faith and science in sermons and teachings on environmental stewardship.

B. Implications of faith-science collaboration and religious leader engagement

Religious leaders can inspire and mobilize their communities, advocate for science-based policies, and promote interdisciplinary approaches to environmentalism. Faith-science collaboration can foster understanding and cooperation towards shared goals.

Practical strategies:

1. Develop partnerships with local scientific institutions and environmental organizations.
2. Create joint projects and initiatives that address environmental challenges.
3. Advocate for environmental policies based on scientific evidence and faith values.

C. Environmentalism's role in response to impending global divine judgment

Environmentalism encourages responsible and sustainable living. Integrating faith and science can contribute to a more sustainable future by fostering a commitment to environmental stewardship (See how Adventist premillennial and cosmic eschatology lends it its most anti-cosmic aspects in Gutierrez, 2022).

Practical strategies:

1. Use faith-based teachings to emphasize the moral responsibility of environmental stewardship.
2. Encourage congregations to adopt sustainable practices in their daily lives.
3. Share success stories and best practices for addressing environmental issues from a faith-based perspective.

D. Research prospects and action integrating faith, science, and environmentalism

Several promising opportunities for future research and action include exploring faith-science partnerships, developing educational resources, promoting interfaith dialogue, advocating for environmental justice, and examining religious leaders' roles in promoting sustainable development.

Practical strategies:

1. Collaborate with researchers and experts to study the impact of faith-science partnerships on environmental outcomes.
2. Create and share educational materials that combine faith and science perspectives on environmental issues.
3. Establish interfaith forums to discuss and collaborate on environmental initiatives.

4. Advocate for policies that address environmental degradation and inequality rooted in faith-based values.
5. Support and promote the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals within faith communities.

By pursuing these strategies, teachers, chaplains, and pastors in the South Pacific can contribute to a more effective and inclusive approach to addressing environmental challenges.

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