

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON GLOBAL WARMING: NIGERIAN RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES IN THE WAKE OF 2024 FLOODS IN BORNO STATE

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Abstract

This study examines the theological reflections of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria concerning the 2024 floods in Borno State, Nigeria: Highlighting the religious perspectives on global warming. Using a qualitative methodology, the research draws on interviews with Christian and Muslim religious leaders, congregants, and scholars, alongside analyses of sermons, religious texts, and community responses to the floods. The Theory of Environmental Stewardship was applied in evaluating this study. The findings reveal that both religious groups view the floods as a manifestation of divine displeasure with humanity's neglect of environmental stewardship. Christian leaders emphasize the biblical mandate for creation care, while Muslim scholars cite teachings on the responsibility of humans as stewards (khalifah) of the Earth. The problem addressed is the insufficient engagement of religious teachings in the national discourse on climate change, particularly in flood-prone regions. The gap in knowledge is the limited understanding of how theological interpretations from both faiths can inspire effective environmental action. The study recommends interfaith collaboration on climate awareness, promoting theological teachings that emphasize environmental stewardship, and integrating religious insights into national disaster management policies to strengthen community resilience.

Keywords: Global warming, theological reflections, perspectives, religious, wake, floods.

Introduction

In recent years, global warming has emerged as a pressing concern, prompting various disciplines including religious communities to reflect on its implications. Ripple et al (2024) enunciates that the 2024 State of the Climate Report warns of a critical and unprecedented phase in the climate crisis, with record-breaking temperatures, extreme weather events, and increasing fossil fuel emissions pushing the planet earth toward potentially irreversible damage. They hold that despite decades of warnings, global policies are failing to prevent severe impacts, leading to escalating disasters that are affecting both human populations and ecosystems. The authors call for immediate, decisive actions from policymakers and the international community to mitigate further harm.

Umair Shahzad (2015) warns that global warming, driven by the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation, is causing significant environmental damage and altering ecosystems, yet many remain unaware of its immediate impacts. He highlights the urgency of addressing global warming by identifying its causes and hazards while advocating for the adoption of renewable energy sources, such as law, wind, hydro, geothermal, and biomass; as crucial solutions to mitigate its effects. Mann (2024) asserts that global warming refers to the rise in average air temperatures near Earth's surface over the past one to two centuries, primarily driven by human activities since the Industrial Revolution. He avers that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), established in 1988, reported that from 1850 to 2019, global average surface temperatures increased by approximately 1.07°C (1.9°F), with human activities contributing to a rise of 0.8 to 1.2°C (1.4 to 2.2°F) since preindustrial times. Mann streamlines that these changes indicate a significant impact of human actions in the climate, evidenced by detailed observations of weather phenomena and climate influences.

The United Nations (UN) (2024) maintains that fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas are the primary drivers of global climate change, responsible for over 75% of greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90% of carbon dioxide emissions. The organization delineates that their emissions trap heat from the sun, leading to unprecedented global warming and altered weather patterns, which threaten both human and ecological systems. Bradford et al (2023) affirm that global warming, driven by human activities like fossil fuel combustion, results in rising global temperatures, melting ice caps, altered animal migration, and shifting plant behaviours. They elaborate that its effects include more frequent extreme weather

events, sea level rise, and ocean acidification, all of which contribute to social and ecological disruptions worldwide.

The studies alongside the reports of Haustein (2024), St. John (2024), Milman et al (2024), and Wolfe et al (2024) suggests that Hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024 were both triggered by climate change, which intensified their effects. The researchers along with the reporters conclude that global warming increased rainfall by 10% and boosted wind speeds due to warmer ocean temperatures. They equally intimate that Hurricane Helene caused catastrophic damage across Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee, with major flooding, wind destruction, and storm surges, especially in Florida's Big Bend region: Hurricane Milton followed shortly after, hitting Florida's Gulf Coast, making these back-to-back storms particularly devastating.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2024), Bamako (2024), Diaw (2024), and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (2024) documents that severe flooding across West and Central Africa in 2024 has affected around 4 million people, displacing at least 500,000 and destroying over 300,000 homes. Countries like Liberia, Mali, Niger, Chad, Nigeria and others are severely impacted, with Northeast Nigeria seeing a burst dam flood 40% of Maiduguri. The flooding has damaged schools, health centers, and infrastructure, heightening the risk of waterborne diseases, especially for children. UNICEF is actively responding with emergency supplies, sanitation efforts, and health support across the region, but urgently needs \$6 million in funding to continue reaching the most vulnerable populations. All these natural disasters and problems are a result of global warming.

Based on the foregoing, this study is structured to explore Nigerian religious perspectives on global warming, particularly as it manifested in Borno State in the wake of the 2024 floods, through the lens of environmental stewardship. The methodology adopts a comparative approach, analyzing Islamic and Christian teachings on humanity's responsibility to care for the Earth. Scriptural texts from the Bible and Quran are examined to evaluate the moral obligations toward the environment. The theory of environmental stewardship underpins this study, emphasizing humanity's role as caretakers of God's creation, with specific recommendations adapted to reflect religious insights on addressing climate change and mitigating its impact.

Conceptualizing Global Warming and Its Dangers

Gale (2023) expounds that global warming and climate change, though often used interchangeably, have distinct meanings: Climate change refers to long-term shifts in weather patterns, while global warming specifically denotes the rise in earth's average surface temperatures primarily due to human activities. Anthropogenic climate change highlights the impact of human actions, particularly industrialization and agriculture, on the climate. The board elucidates that UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) consolidates extensive scientific research, recently reporting 1.1°C increase in global surface temperatures since the late 19th century, linking this rise to the increased severity of natural disasters and significant changes in water availability, food production, health, and wealth. Gale delineates that despite overwhelming evidence and scientific consensus regarding these issues, a minority of climate deniers, often backed by fossil fuel companies, argues that climate change is a natural occurrence, disputing the role of human activity in global warming. Specifically, global warming, driven by human activities such as fossil fuel combustion, is a primary cause of climate change, resulting in long-term shifts in weather patterns and increased severity of natural disasters.

Berry (2021) and MacMillan et al (2021) expose that global warming, primarily caused by human activity, refers to the gradual increase in earth's average surface temperature due to greenhouse gas emissions. This rise leads to severe consequences such as rising sea levels, melting glaciers, extreme weather events, ecosystem changes, and reduced agricultural production, all of which significantly impact the environment and human societies. They specifically note the top ten causes of global warming as, overfishing; industrial pollution, destroying local ecosystems to make room for farming; burning fossil fuels emissions produced by manufacturing and industry; burning fossil fuels of carbon and other types of pollutants released into the atmosphere via transportation means like cars, planes, boats, trains and so on;

generating power; consuming too much; waste; deforestation; and emissions of carbon dioxide and methane together with other greenhouse gases caused by producing food.

The United Nations (2007) and Bradford et al (2023) chronicle that global warming equally causes infectious diseases, heat waves; loss of agricultural productivity; asthmas and other respiratory diseases; increase in the number of lightning strikes; increase in extreme weather events; major shifts in wind patterns; annual precipitation and seasonal temperatures variations; less snow cover; reduction in Arctic sea ice; glacial retreat; high sea levels; high tornadoes, earthquakes and hurricanes; increase in acidity of seawater; alongside the fact that animals that live in the polar regions will be facing existential threats. Bradford et al particularly cite a 2020 study published in the journal proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences suggesting that one in every three species of plant and animal are at risk of extinction by 2070 due to climate change.

Tabari (2020) and Young (2024) posit that global warming contributes to high flooding through several key mechanisms viz: As the Earth's temperature rises, polar ice caps and glaciers melt, increasing the volume of water in the oceans and causing sea levels to rise. Warmer temperatures also lead to more intense and frequent storms, which bring heavy rainfall that overwhelms drainage systems and rivers, resulting in floods. Additionally, warmer air holds more moisture, which means storms can produce more rain. These factors, combined with altered weather patterns due to climate change, increase the likelihood of severe flooding in many regions across the globe.

How Global Warming Causes Flooding in Nigeria

According to the observations of Kehinde (2022), Echendu (2023), The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2024), Stromsta (2024), and Abubakar Monguno (cited by Saad, 2024) Flooding is a natural event where an excess of water inundates areas that are usually dry, caused by factors like heavy rainfall, overflowing rivers, storm surges, or rapid snowmelt. It can lead to significant environmental and infrastructural damage, affecting human life, property, and ecosystems. Floods vary in type, such as flash floods, riverine floods, and coastal floods; depending on the source and speed of water accumulation. They are often worsened by human activities like deforestation, urbanization, and inadequate drainage systems, highlighting the need for effective flood management and preparedness. Global warming hence significantly impacts Nigeria; leading to increased flooding through the following several interconnected processes:

First is via the resultant effects of rising Sea Levels. Nigeria has a long coastline along the Atlantic Ocean, and rising sea levels due to global warming threaten coastal communities. As sea levels rise, low-lying areas become more susceptible to tidal flooding and storm surges, especially during heavy rainfall events. Subsequently, is increased rainfall and intensity of storm. Climate change has led to shifts in weather patterns, resulting in increased rainfall in many parts of Nigeria. Heavier and more intense rainfall during the wet season can overwhelm drainage systems and cause flash floods, particularly in urban areas where the ground is often impervious.

Altered seasonal patterns equally facilitate high flooding in Nigeria. Global warming can disrupt traditional rainfall patterns, causing longer dry spells followed by intense rainfall. This sudden influx of water can lead to flooding in areas that are not typically prone to it. Deforestation and land use Changes is also another associated complication to this effect. Human activities, such as deforestation and urbanization, reduce the land's ability to absorb rainwater. The loss of vegetation and wetlands diminishes natural flood defenses, making areas more vulnerable to flooding.

Furthermore, river basin flooding is another causal effect of high flooding in Nigeria. Nigeria's major rivers, such as the Niger and Benue, are affected by climate change. Increased rainfall upstream can lead to river overflow, impacting communities along the riverbanks. The combination of high water levels and heavy rains can result in severe flooding in these areas. Infrastructure Challenges in Nigeria intensifies this peculiar concern. Many Nigerian cities like Awka and Onitsha in Anambra State, Aba in Abia State, Maiduguri in Borno State and Lagos in Lagos State, face challenges with inadequate drainage systems. Urbanization without proper planning can exacerbate flooding, as runoff from heavy rains

accumulates without sufficient pathways for drainage. Ultimately, climate variability and extreme weather aids in escalating flooding in Nigeria. The country experiences climate variability that can lead to extreme weather events. These include sudden heavy rainfall events that lead to flash floods, impacting communities and infrastructure.

Summarily, global warming contributes to flooding in Nigeria through rising sea levels, increased and altered rainfall patterns, environmental degradation, and inadequate infrastructure, posing significant risks to communities, agriculture, and the economy.

2024 Flooding in Borno State, Nigeria

Ann Weru, Head of Public Information, UN Africa for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Abuja (cited by Uba, 2024) details that the United Nations (UN) posited that about 414,000 people were displaced by the devastating flood in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State within the month of September, 2024. The Reports expresses as registered by Ann Weru that 37 people died, while 58 people sustained injuries: With access to hospitals, schools and market hampered. Damages to infrastructure, including bridges, were recorded. Weru (cited by Uba) streamlines that as at the time of registering this report, people in high-risk areas are yet to be completely evacuated to the safer ground; even as the state envisages disease outbreaks.

Duncan Harvey (2024), country director of Save the Children in Nigeria, highlights that recently, Borno state, Nigeria, experienced its worst flood in 30 years, displacing over 400,000 people and leaving all three million children out of school indefinitely, heightening risks of child marriage, labour, and exploitation. His report portrays that the devastating floods, driven by climate change, destroyed homes, schools, and farmlands, worsening malnutrition and triggering outbreaks of diseases like cholera: With school being used as shelters, the disaster has deepened vulnerabilities in a region already grappling with conflict, displacement, and desertification. Harvey submits that immediate action is critical to safeguard the children's health, safety and education amidst the growing crisis.

Manzo (2024) stipulates in his own report that in September 2024, severe flooding in northeastern Nigeria caused by the collapse of the Alau Dam on the Ngadda River in Borno state killed at least 30 people and affected over one million others. According to his report, the Dam, overwhelmed by heavy rains, caused the worst flooding in the state in decades, forcing residents to flee. Officials fear the death toll may rise as the number of displaced people is expected to reach nearly two million. Kingimi (2024) adds that amid the flood devastation, Borno state was hit by cholera outbreak. Whereas, Peterside (2024) posits that the extensive damage of the flood to farmlands, affecting more than 12,000 hectares, threatens food security in a region grappling with severe hunger and malnutrition. He ultimately laments that the tragic death toll stands at over 50, with many more still unaccounted for: Submitting that the Borno flood is beyond relief; and thus require immediate tackle of the root causes.

Christian Theological Reflections on the 2024 Flooding in Borno State

The 2024 flooding in Borno State invites deep Christian theological reflection, urging believers to consider the meaning of such disasters in light of their faith. G. Ekwo, A. Ngang, J. Okafor, A. Bello and M. Aliyu (personal communication, October 5, 2024) intimates that one central theme is the reality of human suffering and the sovereignty of God. Christian theology acknowledges that suffering is an inevitable part of life, especially in a world marred by sin and the fall of creation (Romans 8:20-22). Natural disasters like flooding serve as reminders of the groaning of creation, indicating that the world is not as God originally intended. However, Christians hold fast to the belief that God remains sovereign even in times of disaster (Psalm 46:1-3). John Bakeni (cited by Nzwili, 2024) comments that although events like the 2024 high flooding in Maiduguri may raise difficult questions about God's will, believers are called to trust that God is in control and can bring good even from tragedy (Romans 8:28). This trust, though challenging, strengthens faith in God's ability to work through suffering for His purposes.

I, Ezenagu, O. Ezeobi and I. Amobi (personal communication, October 5, 2024) comment that another key theological reflection centers on the tension between divine judgment and mercy. While some traditions might view natural disasters as instruments of divine judgment, akin to the flood in Noah's time

(Genesis 6-9), it is important to approach this view with caution: Claiming that specific disasters are acts of judgment risks oversimplifying complex spiritual realities. Instead, Christians are called to reflect on sin, repentance, and the need for righteousness in light of such calamities (Luke 13:1-5). K. Ekezie (personal communication, October 5, 2024) commentate that at the same time, disasters present an opportunity for the church to demonstrate the mercy of Christ. The flooding provides a platform for believers to care for the vulnerable, following Jesus' example of compassion for those in need (Matthew 25:34-40). Acts of kindness, support, and relief efforts during times of crisis reflect the heart of the gospel, extending love and mercy to the marginalized.

Christian reflections on the flooding also consider the issue of human responsibility, particularly in relation to environmental stewardship. The Bible teaches that humanity is entrusted with the care of creation (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 24:1). Disasters like the flooding in Borno State may raise questions about whether poor environmental management, such as deforestation or inadequate infrastructure, contributed to the severity of the disaster. Lucius Ugorji (cited by Dada, 2022) and Dashe Doeme (cited by Newton, 2024) enjoins that in this light, the flooding serves as a wake-up call for Christians to take their responsibility to care for the environment seriously. The call to better environmental practices, sustainable development, and disaster preparedness is not just a practical issue but a spiritual one, reflecting a commitment to honoring God's creation.

John Bakeni (cited by Aid to the Church in Need, 2024) albeit describing the flood in Maiduguri City, Borno State, as overwhelming and an act of God, intimates that in times of disaster, Christian theology emphasizes the importance of community and solidarity. Galatians 6:2 calls believers to "carry each other's burdens," and the flooding provides a tangible opportunity for Christians to live out this command. The church can be a place of refuge, offering shelter, food, and spiritual support to those affected. Beyond physical relief, the church is also a place where people can find spiritual solace, peace, and hope through prayer and worship. This solidarity extends beyond local communities to the broader body of Christ, reminding believers of the strength found in unity.

D'Avillez (2024) elucidates that amidst the suffering caused by the floods, Christians are reminded of the hope of God's redemption and restoration. Christian eschatology points to a future where creation will be fully restored free from suffering and pain (Revelation 21:1-4). The present distress, though overwhelming, serves as a reminder of this greater hope, encouraging believers to look beyond the immediate crisis toward the promise of a new heaven and earth. In the meantime, the church plays a crucial role in the restoration process, offering hope, pointing people toward Christ, and actively participating in rebuilding efforts, both physically and spiritually.

Kinga Schierstaedt (cited by Newton et al, 2024) maintains that the high flooding of Maiduguri serves as an opportunity for Christians to express acts of charity to the victims of flood disaster as enjoined in Matthew 25:35-40. John Bakeni (cited by Newton et al) intimates that furthermore, the flooding highlights the importance of prayer and dependence on God. Throughout the Bible, believers are seen crying out to God in times of trouble, seeking His intervention, protection, and guidance (Psalm 107:28-30). In the face of the 2024 floods, Christians are called to lead communities in prayer, asking God for wisdom for leaders, relief for the suffering, and comfort for the grieving. The disaster also underscores the humility of human limitations, reminding Christians of their need to depend on God in all things, trusting in His provision and protection during the process of recovery.

Alexander Ibezim (personal communication, October 1st, 2024) and Agenzia Fides (2024) enunciate that 2024 high flooding in Borno State presents a profound theological challenge, but also an opportunity for the church to respond with compassion, stewardship, and solidarity. The flooding calls Christians to reflect deeply on the themes of suffering, God's sovereignty, and the hope of redemption. It also encourages a renewed commitment to caring for creation and for one another, demonstrating the love and mercy of Christ in tangible ways. As believers hold fast to the hope of God's ultimate restoration, they are also called to act as spiritual and physical refuges, offering comfort, support, and practical help to those in need.

Islamic Theological Reflections on the 2024 Flooding in Borno State

Islamic theological reflections on global warming, particularly in light of the 2024 flooding in Borno State, already emphasize key themes grounded in Islamic teachings—such as human responsibility, stewardship (Khilafah), and the concept of balance (Mizan) in creation. These ideas resonate with the understanding that environmental crises like flooding are consequences of neglecting these core responsibilities as Koehrsen (2021) and I. Adamu (personal communication, October 6, 2024) underscore.

Apposite to stewardship (Khilafah) and Environmental Responsibility; Islam teaches that humans are appointed as stewards (khalifah) of the earth, responsible for maintaining its balance. The Quran, in Surah Al-Baqarah 2:30, underscores this role, and Islamic scholars like I. Ahmed and U. Lawal (personal communication, October 5th, 2024) have long interpreted natural disasters, such as the flooding in Borno State, as consequences of humans neglecting their stewardship duties. Global warming and environmental degradation, worsened by human activities, disrupt this balance, and thus, Muslims are reminded of their obligation to act in ways that protect and preserve the environment, lest such disasters continue to occur, leading to destruction (fasad) on earth.

In relation to balance (Mizan) and natural harmony; the concept of Mizan, or balance, in creation is a fundamental aspect of Islamic teachings, as highlighted in Surah Ar-Rahman 55:7-9. Islamic Scholars H. Sanni and F. Shehu (personal communication, September 5th, 2024) reflect that the disruption of this divine balance through excessive resource exploitation or environmental harm results in consequences like extreme weather events, including the flooding seen in Nigeria. Islamic teachings, therefore, call for adherence to this natural balance, promoting sustainable living and a conscious reduction of actions that contribute to global warming, which in turn can help prevent such disasters.

Justice (Adl), especially social justice, is another principle that Islamic thought emphasizes in the context of environmental crises. The flooding in Borno disproportionately impacts vulnerable groups, including farmers, low-income families, and displaced persons, which underscores the need for both preventive action and immediate relief. Ocha (2024) posits that Islamic principles clearly guide the Ummah (community) to act with compassion, providing aid to those affected while also addressing the root causes of such disasters, aligning environmental care with the cumulative ethical responsibility to support those in need.

Islamic theology stresses Tawhid, the oneness of God, and this concept extends to the environment. B. Datan and F. Mohammad (personal communication October 5th, 2024) interprets that since all of creation is interconnected and belongs to God, humanity is expected to respect this unity by avoiding waste and environmental harm. Surah Al-A'raf 7:31 reminds believers not to commit excess or waste, for "Allah does not love the wasteful." By failing to address the causes of climate change and factors contributing to disasters like flooding, humans are violating their trust and accountability to God; a reflection emphasized by Islamic scholars in response to contemporary environmental challenges.

OCHA (2024) expresses that Islamic leaders and scholars in Nigeria, as elsewhere, are calling for urgent action to mitigate the effects of climate change, drawing upon Islamic values. They link environmental care to faith, advocating for practices such as reducing carbon footprints, promoting renewable energy, and engaging in reforestation efforts. Such actions are seen as part of the holistic duty to protect the earth and prevent further disasters like the 2024 flooding.

Islamic theological reflections on the 2024 flooding in Borno State affirm human accountability in global warming, the responsibility to maintain environmental balance, and the ethical duty to protect vulnerable communities. These teachings provide a comprehensive framework, both for understanding the causes of such disasters and for guiding responses through sustainable practices and a commitment to social justice.

The Theory of Environmental Stewardship

Leopold (1949) who champions this theory posits that the Theory of Environmental Stewardship, also known as Planetary Stewardship, involves the careful management and safeguarding of the natural environment through proactive efforts in conservation and sustainable practices. He elaborates that these efforts are carried out by individuals, small groups, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and

other collective networks. Aldo Leopold (1887-1949), being a key advocate of this theory, emphasizes its importance in his concept of land ethics. He explores the moral responsibilities humans have in their relationship with the land, including the animals and plants that thrive on it.

Gubazire (2022) expounding on the Theory of Environmental Stewardship, points out that being an ethical theory, it calls for a deep respect and care for nature, recognizing its intrinsic value and sacredness. It emphasizes that humans and nature are interdependent, with human survival relying on the preservation of the environment. The author exclaims that environment stewardship theory urges humans to responsibly engage with nature, limiting interference to the fulfillment of basic needs and avoiding destructive exploitation. It also challenges anthropocentric views, especially in capitalistic societies, and advocates for principles such as co-existence, personal responsibility, proportionality, and solidarity to foster greater environmental respect and sustainability.

Overall, the Theory of Environmental Stewardship is an ethical framework that emphasizes the dual responsibility of humans as both caretakers and beneficiaries of the earth's resources. Rooted in anthropocentrism, it asserts that humanity has a moral obligation to manage and use the environment in ways that promote the welfare of all living beings, ensuring sustainability for present and future generations. However, it goes beyond a purely human-centered view by integrating ecocentric principles, which recognize the intrinsic value of nature independent of its utility to humans. This holistic perspective calls for a balanced approach, where the earth's ecosystems are preserved, protected, and respected not only for their role in supporting human life but also for their own right to exist and flourish. In doing so, Stewardship Theory advocates for a collaborative relationship between humans and nature, urging ethical decision-making that accounts for ecological integrity while acknowledging humanity's unique role as stewards of the planet.

Evaluating this Study's Focus through the Lens of the Theory of Environmental Stewardship

The 2024 floods in Nigeria have intensified discussions on the theological implications of global warming, particularly from a Nigerian religious perspective. The Theory of Environmental Stewardship, rooted in the biblical mandate to "till and keep" the earth (Genesis 2:15), alongside the idea of humans being appointed as khalifah (stewards or vicegerents) on earth as reflected in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:30), can serve as a foundation for evaluating human responsibility in addressing environmental crises like floods. The theory emphasizes humanity's role as caretakers of God's creation, reflecting a balance between using the earth's resources and preserving its integrity for future generations. Nigerian religious leaders have increasingly urged congregations to consider the environmental consequences of their actions, stressing that environmental stewardship is not only a moral duty but a spiritual one. This highlights the need to shift from a purely anthropocentric worldview, which places human needs above the environment, toward a more holistic approach.

Anthropocentrism, prevalent in many societies including Nigeria, sees humans as the center of the universe, with the environment primarily serving human interests. This view often leads to exploitation of natural resources, contributing to environmental degradation and disasters like the floods. Many Nigerian religious leaders have critiqued this perspective, arguing that it reflects a disconnection from the biblical notion of stewardship. They stress that human dominion over nature does not mean exploitation, but rather responsibility for its well-being. This theological reflection challenges the idea that global warming and its effects are simply natural occurrences, pointing instead to human actions as contributing factors, emphasizing repentance and change in how Nigerians interact with their environment.

On the other hand, ecocentrism, seeing all life forms and natural systems as intrinsically valuable, offers a corrective to the anthropocentric mindset. Some Nigerian theologians alongside religious scholars like Afunugo (2023) have advocated for integrating ecocentric principles into Christian teachings, encouraging a view of creation that reflects God's concern for the whole of creation, not just humanity. This perspective encourages Nigerian Christians to adopt sustainable practices that protect ecosystems and mitigate the effects of global warming. The floods of 2024, for instance, are seen as a wake-up call

for both individuals and communities to live more in harmony with nature, recognizing that human well-being is interconnected with environmental health.

In applying the Theory of Environmental Stewardship to Nigeria's flood crisis, it is essential to find a balance between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. Nigerian religious perspectives often emphasize the importance of community and collective responsibility. The floods can be seen as a call for deeper theological reflection on humanity's role in the created order. Churches, mosques, and religious institutions can play a critical role in promoting environmental awareness, urging their followers to live as true stewards who care for the earth, as part of their spiritual responsibility. By adopting both anthropocentric and ecocentric insights within the stewardship framework, Nigerian religious perspectives can offer a moral and ethical pathway for addressing global warming and its devastating effects on the nation.

Recommendations

This study proffers the following recommendations pertinent to its findings:

1. Nigerian churches should emphasize the biblical principle of stewardship, advocating for environmental responsibility. This can include encouraging eco-friendly practices, such as responsible waste management, sustainable agriculture, and reducing deforestation. Churches can also take an active role in disaster relief, working alongside environmental organizations to provide aid and support in flood-prone areas. By promoting these practices, Christian leaders can help their congregations align with the biblical call to care for creation, ensuring that dominion over nature is protective rather than exploitative.
2. Islamic leaders in Nigeria should highlight the Qur'anic teaching of *khilafah* (stewardship) and the importance of maintaining balance in nature. Communities should be encouraged to adopt sustainable practices, reduce their environmental impact, and participate in efforts like reforestation and flood control. While *tawakkul* (trust in God) is vital, it must be balanced with proactive human responsibility. Islamic leaders can advocate for investment in eco-friendly technologies and promote awareness about climate change to fulfill their divine duty of protecting the earth.
3. Christian and Islamic religious leaders in Nigeria should engage in interfaith dialogue to address the environmental crisis together. By uniting on shared values of stewardship, compassion, and responsibility, they can collectively encourage their followers to treat environmental care as a spiritual duty. Joint initiatives can include promoting awareness of climate change, leading disaster relief efforts, and advocating for sustainable practices to protect vulnerable communities from the impacts of floods and other climate-related challenges.
4. The Nigerian government should collaborate with religious institutions to promote environmental education and disaster preparedness, integrating faith-based approaches to stewardship with national climate policies. This partnership could involve supporting eco-friendly initiatives, such as reforestation projects and flood control systems, while also empowering religious leaders to mobilize their communities for environmental action. By aligning government policies with the moral influence of religious leaders, this collaboration could foster widespread environmental consciousness and enhance national resilience to climate change impacts like the 2024 floods.
5. Nigerian citizens should take personal responsibility for environmental conservation by adopting sustainable practices in their daily lives. This can include reducing waste, planting trees, minimizing the use of plastics, and supporting reforestation efforts. Additionally, individuals should become more informed about climate change and its impact, while actively participating in community-led initiatives to prevent flooding and environmental degradation. By making conscious efforts to protect their environment, citizens can collectively contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing the risk of future disasters.

Conclusion

The theological reflections on global warming from Nigerian religious perspectives underscore the vital role of faith communities in addressing the moral and ethical dimensions of climate change. Both Islamic and Christian teachings highlight stewardship of the earth, urging believers to act as caretakers of

God's creation. The 2024 floods serve as a stark reminder of the consequences of neglecting this responsibility, challenging religious leaders to foster a deeper ecological consciousness among their followers.

However, these reflections are not exhaustive, as they primarily focus on scriptural interpretations without delving into the complex socio-economic and political factors that exacerbate climate change. The limitations of this discourse are evident in the lack of comprehensive theological engagement with scientific findings and global climate policies, which are crucial for a holistic approach to the crisis. Nonetheless, this study has achieved the critical goal of bringing to the forefront the essential dialogue between faith and environmental responsibility, creating a foundation for future inquiry.

Moving forward, there is a need for further interdisciplinary collaboration between theologians, scientists, and Legislators to develop more robust frameworks that can guide religious communities in Nigeria. This should include ongoing dialogue on how faith can inspire practical solutions to mitigate environmental disasters and promote sustainable living, ensuring that religious teachings evolve to meet the realities of a changing world.

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