
This edited volume brings together an international and interdisciplinary team of scholars—theologians, geographers, researchers, sociologists, and sustainability advocates—to craft a truly remarkable exploration of conflicts between earth stewardship and religious affiliation across the globe. Timely and even-handed in its account, *Religious Environmental Activism* is a fine contribution to ongoing interdisciplinary discussions on climate change and the impact of religious belief concerning it. As the subtitle of the volume indicates, it is the elements of *conflicts and tensions* at the intersection of religion and environmentalism that are the primary focus. As the editors themselves assert, ‘[s]cholars of religion need to address these tensions to understand the challenges of religious environmentalism’ (p. 16). Rather than assuming religious belief to be separate from pressing global concerns and the ethics of climate activism, this volume critically explores their crucial imbrication.

Throughout its introduction and fourteen chapters, this work ‘argue[s] that tensions are an inherent part of religious environmentalism. [...] [T]his volume sheds new light on the problems of the supposed “greening” of religions as well as on the limitations that religions face when they seek to address the societal challenge of environmental degradation’ (p. 2). To do so, the volume’s contributors marshal an impressive array of sociological research. Christopher Monnot’s investigation into why two prominent Swiss churches have not ‘raised their voices for the ecological or climate cause’ (p. 68), qualitative analyses such as Juliane Stork and Charel du Toit’s connection of the African concept of ‘ubuntu’ to South Africa’s Zion Christian Church’s stance on ecological activism (p. 199), and theoretical approaches such as Katharina Glaab’s ‘Bourdieuian’ examination of religious environmentalism in global climate politics (p. 268) demonstrate the rich diversity of methodologies brought to bear on this complex but no less imperative topic. Highlighting the institutional and theological barriers that constitute and in some cases exacerbate tensions between religious belief and ecological commitments, *Religious Environmental Activism* provides essential insights into the role religion can play in a world that continues to become more globalized, more aware of its interconnectedness, and more sensitive to the intersection of religious belief and secular issues.

Readers will find a diverse wealth of insightful and often surprising connections between religious rituals and their relationship with environmentalism. Contributions involve empirical research on debates surrounding,
for example: intradenominational tensions regarding the proper course for environmental commitment in Roman Catholic orders in Germany and the Philippines (Jiska Gojowczyk), the recycling of halal wastewater in Islamic communities in Indonesia (Sofiah Jamil), and the use of ‘kosher electricity’ (i.e., diesel generators and others) during Shabbat and other Jewish holidays (Lior Herman). These revelatory contributions offer a wide breadth of perspectives hitherto underexplored in religious studies and ecocriticism. As such, the volume casts much needed light on the topic by seriously exploring the fact that religious practice is not separate from the environments in which it is performed, while at the same time getting readers to reconsider ritual practices that may otherwise seem innocuous or divorced from their surrounding contexts.

A major element of the volume is its effort toward objectivity in being neither naively optimistic nor critically pessimistic: ‘Drawing on empirical research, the contributions do not necessarily share the optimism of many theoretical contributions to the religion and ecology debate. Despite increasing environmental activities among religious leaders and networks, there appears to be no linear ‘greening’ process’ (p. 4). As such, the volume’s authors take a theologically-sensitive, ecumenically-minded, contextual approach rather than a universal, top-down one of naive advocacy. Situated at the sometimes-problematic nexus of theological and environmental concerns, the editors aptly point out that ‘religious views can discourage adherents from actively addressing environmental problems. These views can involve (a) skepticism about the existence of environmental problems, (b) the perception of the problems as a welcomed end-of-times, or (c) as divine punishment for human sins’ (p. 5).

This new compilation will appeal to a wide swath of scholars invested in interdisciplinary research, empirical and quantitative analyses, religious studies, ecocriticism, and theology, among others. The editors have brought together a diverse, engaging collection of contributions that will prove a vital resource for anyone interested in the role of religion as it relates to current global environmental concerns.

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