



ECOTHEOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORSHIP MOVEMENT: A STUDY OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICES BASED ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION IN DANDANG VILLAGE

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Abstract:

Ecotheology emerges as a perspective that combines theological teachings with concern for environmental sustainability, while simultaneously encouraging the emergence of environmentally friendly religious practices. This study aims to examine the concept of ecotheology and its implementation in the form of an environmental worship movement that is developing in Dandang Village. The research method used is a qualitative case study approach, through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of religious leaders and the local community. The results show that nature conservation-based religious practices in Dandang Village are manifested in various activities, such as environmental management linked to worship values, sustainable use of natural resources, and internalization of religious teachings on human responsibility as caliphs on earth. This movement functions not only as a spiritual expression but also as a concrete effort to maintain ecosystem balance and strengthen community ecological awareness. This study confirms that ecotheology can be an effective theological foundation in building ecological piety and encouraging the integration of worship, environmental ethics, and nature conservation practices at the local community level.

Keywords: *Ecotheology, environmental worship, nature conservation, religious practices.*

INTRODUCTION

Various environmental problems that continue to increase indicate a less harmonious relationship between humans and nature. Phenomena such as deforestation, environmental pollution, and climate change are the impacts of human activities that have not fully considered ecological balance (Tangdiong, 2024). This situation requires alternative approaches that are not only technical in nature but also involve dimensions of values and spirituality derived from religious teachings.

Ecotheology is a concept or field of study that discusses the relationship between religious teachings and the natural environment. The term originates from the Greek words *oikos*, meaning home or environment, and *logos*, meaning knowledge. In simple terms, ecotheology examines how religion, humans, and nature are interconnected in efforts to preserve and protect the environment (Matin, 2024).

In a religious context, ecotheology teaches that spiritual values align with environmental awareness. Preserving the environment is viewed as part of worship and as a human responsibility as God's representative on Earth. Cooperation between

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religious institutions and environmental organizations needs to be strengthened (Andira, 2024). Through such collaboration, practical programs can be implemented, such as tree planting, community-based waste management, and environmental awareness campaigns integrated with religious values. Thus, protecting the environment is not only a social activity but also a form of worship and collective responsibility. This perspective emphasizes that nature is not merely a resource to be exploited, but a creation of God that must be maintained, respected, and protected.

In this regard, ecotheology serves as a framework that connects religious beliefs with ecological responsibility. It views nature as a divine creation with intrinsic value that must be treated wisely. Humans are entrusted with the role of stewards of the Earth, responsible for maintaining the sustainability of life. Therefore, environmental problems are understood as a reflection of weakened ethical and spiritual awareness in religious practice (Januaripin, 2024).

Furthermore, the concept of environmental worship emerges as an application of ecotheology in daily life. Worship is not only interpreted as ritual activities but is also manifested through behaviors that support environmental preservation, such as maintaining cleanliness and using resources responsibly (Azzahra, 2026). Environmentally oriented religious practices demonstrate that caring for nature is an integral part of worship values.

The environmental worship movement is one form of religious practice that has developed as a response to the increasingly evident ecological crisis in rural areas. In Dandang Village, religious practices are not only understood as ritualistic spiritual activities but also as ethical and theological means of maintaining ecological balance. Environmental worship appears as a collective movement that integrates faith-based values with environmental conservation efforts, such as protecting water sources, managing land sustainably, and respecting surrounding ecosystems.

Etymologically and sociologically, the etiology of the environmental worship movement in Dandang Village is influenced by the interaction between religious teachings, local wisdom, and community experiences in facing environmental degradation. Ecologically vulnerable conditions, such as declining soil quality and reduced natural resources, encourage the community to reinterpret religious teachings as moral guidelines for caring for nature. This interpretation is then realized in worship practices that emphasize human responsibility as stewards (khalifah) of the Earth, transforming spiritual values into concrete actions oriented toward environmental sustainability.

The study of the etiology of the environmental worship movement in Dandang Village is important to understand how environmentally based religious practices are formed, developed, and function as socio-religious strategies in addressing ecological challenges (Rahmawati, 2018). This study is expected to contribute to the development of adaptive, contextual, and environmentally conscious religious practice models, both at the local level and in broader discourse.

Thus, strengthening ecotheology-based religious practices is an important step in building ecological awareness within society. Through environmentally oriented teachings and practices, religion can play an active role in shaping behaviors that support environmental sustainability. This effort is expected to strengthen the

relationship between humans and God while maintaining ecological balance as a shared responsibility.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at describing and analyzing the concept of ecotheology from an Islamic perspective. Its main focus is to understand how religious teachings and values influence the attitudes and behaviors of Muslims toward the environment, as well as to examine their application in daily life. In addition, this study elaborates on the Islamic view of the relationship between humans and nature and the human role as khalifah, who bears responsibility for preserving the Earth. The research also explores concrete examples of the implementation of ecotheological principles in social, cultural, and environmental conservation activities.

In its implementation, this research utilizes a library research method. Data are obtained through the review and analysis of various sources, including the Qur'an, Hadith, scholarly fatwas, and official religious documents discussing the relationship between humans and the environment. Other sources include books, scientific journal articles, theses, dissertations, and environmental policy documents related to Islamic teachings and ecotheological principles. Data collection is conducted by reading, noting, and analyzing the content of these materials in depth to identify concepts, values, and principles that support environmental preservation from an Islamic perspective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Ecotheology as a Theological Foundation of Environmental Awareness

Ecotheology is a branch of religious thought that emphasizes the relationship between humans, God, and the universe. From an ecotheological perspective, nature is not merely understood as an object of exploitation, but as a creation of God that possesses sacred value and must be preserved. Humans are positioned as khalifah or stewards of the Earth, not as rulers who are free to damage the environment (Siregar, 2024).

In the context of religious life, ecotheology teaches that caring for nature is part of obedience to God. Environmental damage, such as water pollution, illegal logging, and the wasteful use of natural resources, is viewed as a form of neglect of divine trust. Therefore, environmental concern is not only a social or economic issue, but also a matter of faith and spiritual responsibility.

Building awareness of environmental care based on spiritual values is not easy and requires a long process. However, when religious teachings are accompanied by real actions to preserve nature, a transformation in human perspectives toward the environment will occur. In this way, a more harmonious life with nature can be achieved in accordance with religious teachings (Runggang Agustinus, 2024). Thus, ecotheology provides a strong theological foundation for religious communities to actively participate in environmental conservation efforts as a tangible form of worship in daily life.

B. The Concept of Environmental Worship Movement

The environmental worship movement is a form of actualizing religious teachings that integrates acts of worship with environmental conservation. Worship is not only understood as formal rituals such as prayer, supplication, or religious study, but is also manifested in actions such as maintaining environmental cleanliness, preserving water sources, planting trees, and managing nature wisely.

This movement arises from the awareness that the relationship between humans and God cannot be separated from the relationship between humans and nature. When the environment is preserved, values of worship such as sincerity, responsibility, and social awareness are also realized (Rani et al., 2022). Conversely, when the environment is damaged, religious values lose their practical meaning. In this perspective, environmental conservation activities are understood as social and ecological worship – acts of worship that directly impact the sustainability of human life and other living beings.

The environmental worship movement represents a form of practicing religious teachings that goes beyond ritual activities and is realized through concrete actions to preserve nature. In this concept, worship is broadly defined, not limited to formal practices such as prayer, remembrance (dhikr), fasting, or religious gatherings. Worship also includes all good deeds that bring benefit to life, including maintaining cleanliness, caring for plants, protecting water sources, and managing the environment responsibly (Verawati, 2023).

This perspective is based on the awareness that humans do not live in isolation but exist within an interconnected system of life with nature. The relationship between humans and God cannot be separated from their relationship with the environment. This means that spiritual piety must go hand in hand with ecological piety. A person cannot claim to be devout if, in daily life, they harm the environment, litter carelessly, cut down trees illegally, or pollute water and soil.

The environmental worship movement emphasizes that protecting nature is a moral and spiritual responsibility of humans as beings entrusted to manage the Earth. In religious teachings, humans are often viewed as khalifah, responsible for maintaining balance rather than exploiting nature excessively. Therefore, every action that supports environmental sustainability carries the value of worship, as it reflects obedience to God's command to protect His creation (Rakhmat, A., 2022).

Furthermore, this movement views environmental conservation activities as having both social and ecological dimensions. It is considered social worship because its impact is directly felt by the community, such as creating a clean, healthy, and comfortable environment. It is also ecological worship because it helps maintain ecosystem balance and the sustainability of life for other living beings. For example, planting trees is not merely an agricultural activity but also an act of concern for air quality, water availability, and wildlife habitats.

The environmental worship movement also instills important values such as sincerity, responsibility, discipline, and social care. When individuals clean

the environment without expecting praise, they practice sincerity. When communities collectively protect water sources, they build a sense of shared responsibility. Thus, worship is no longer purely individual but also communal and oriented toward collective well-being (Sahmin, 2021).

Moreover, this concept is highly relevant amid various environmental issues such as pollution, deforestation, water crises, and climate change. The environmental worship movement emerges as a spiritual response to these crises. Religion not only provides ritual guidance but also ethical and moral solutions to ecological problems. By making environmental preservation part of worship, communities are expected to develop stronger and more sustainable awareness in protecting the environment.

Overall, the environmental worship movement is an effort to integrate religious values with environmental conservation practices. This concept affirms that caring for the Earth is part of devotion to God. When humans protect nature responsibly, they not only preserve the environment but also strengthen the meaning of worship in daily life. Conversely, damaging nature signifies neglecting divine trust and weakening spiritual values that should be reflected in real actions.

C. Religious Practices Based on Environmental Conservation in Dandang Village

Dandang Village serves as a concrete example of how ecotheological values are applied in community life. Religious practices in this village are not only focused on ritual aspects but are also directed toward maintaining ecological balance. Some forms of environmentally based religious practices carried out by the community include:

a. Environmental management as part of religious activities

The people of Dandang Village associate environmental cleanliness activities with acts of worship. For example, communal work (gotong royong) to clean water channels and surrounding areas is understood as a way to maintain both purity and collective health. Environmental management in Dandang Village is not merely seen as a social activity but is also interpreted as part of practicing religious teachings. The community believes that maintaining environmental cleanliness is a form of worship, as it aligns with religious values emphasizing cleanliness, purity, and social care.

One concrete example is the communal activity of cleaning drainage systems and residential areas. This activity is carried out collectively with full awareness, not only to beautify the village but also to maintain public health and comfort. Clean water channels prevent flooding and disease, creating a healthier living environment.

In the community's religious understanding, cleanliness is closely related to purity. A clean environment supports the proper performance of worship, both physically and spiritually. Therefore, cleaning the environment is seen as maintaining the sanctity of the living space granted by Allah SWT. This activity also fosters a sense of responsibility toward nature as God's creation that must be preserved rather than destroyed.

Additionally, environmental cleanliness activities strengthen the values of togetherness and mutual cooperation. Through communal work, people not

only clean their environment but also strengthen social bonds and cultivate mutual care among residents. Religious values such as cooperation, solidarity, and social concern are manifested in everyday life.

Thus, environmental management in Dandang Village exemplifies how religious teachings can be practically implemented in society. A clean and healthy environment not only provides physical benefits but also holds spiritual value, as it is regarded as part of worship and devotion to God.

Furthermore, one of the residents, Mr. Mahrus, demonstrates a strong commitment to environmental care by cultivating plants and raising catfish. His activities aim not only to support his family's economic needs but also to preserve the environment and apply local wisdom in daily life.

In cultivating spice plants, Mr. Mahrus utilizes his home yard to grow various types of spices such as ginger, turmeric, lemongrass, and galangal. These plants are chosen because they are easy to maintain and have multiple benefits, both as cooking ingredients and traditional medicine. The cultivation process includes preparing fertile soil, selecting healthy seeds, and regularly watering the plants. He also maintains the cleanliness of the planting area by removing weeds to ensure optimal plant growth.



Gambar 1.1 tanaman rempah-rempah

Meanwhile, catfish farming is carried out by Mr. Mahrus using a simple pond located in his yard. He chooses catfish because they are known to be resilient to environmental changes and do not require complicated maintenance. The cultivation process begins with pond preparation, filling it with sufficient water, and stocking it with high-quality catfish seeds. During the maintenance period, Mr. Mahrus regularly feeds the fish and ensures that the water condition remains clean so that the fish can grow well and stay healthy. With consistent care, the catfish can be harvested within

a relatively short period of time.



Gambar 1.2 peternakan ikan lele

Interestingly, Mr. Mahrus applies an environmentally friendly cultivation pattern by integrating both activities. The wastewater from the catfish pond is utilized to water the spice plants because it contains natural nutrients that are beneficial for plant growth. In this way, almost no waste is wasted, creating a balance between agriculture and aquaculture within a household environment.

Based on the interview results, it is known that Mr. Mahrus manages land located in his own yard. Initially, the land was an empty plot that had not been utilized optimally. Seeing its potential, Mr. Mahrus took the initiative to develop the land into a more productive area by planting various types of spice plants and building a small pond for catfish farming.



Gambar 1.3 wawancara bapak mahrus

He chooses to grow ginger, turmeric, lemongrass, and similar plants because they are easy to maintain and have many uses. These plants are not only used as daily cooking ingredients but also as traditional medicine. According to him, growing spices independently can help meet household needs while reducing dependence on purchasing them from the market.

In addition to farming, Mr. Mahrus also cultivates catfish because this type of fish is relatively easy to maintain and has a short harvesting period. Catfish farming is carried out with simple but consistent care, such as regular feeding and maintaining pond cleanliness. In this way, the fish can grow well and remain healthy.

In managing his land, Mr. Mahrus strives to apply environmentally friendly principles. He avoids excessive use of chemical substances and utilizes wastewater from the catfish pond to water the plants, as it is considered beneficial for soil fertility. In addition, the cleanliness of the land is always maintained to prevent plants and fish from being easily affected by diseases.



Gambar 1.4

Mr. Mahrus emphasized that his land management activities are not solely aimed at obtaining economic benefits. He views these activities as a form of human responsibility toward nature. According to him, nature, which has provided many benefits, must be properly maintained and cared for. Taking care of plants and fish is considered part of the effort to preserve God's creation while also serving as a positive example for family and the surrounding community.

Furthermore, the activities carried out by Mr. Mahrus also have a social impact. Several local residents have shown interest and frequently ask about how to manage land, cultivate spice plants, and raise catfish. This indicates that Mr. Mahrus's practices can serve as a source of learning and inspiration for the community.

Thus, the interview results show that land management by Mr. Mahrus in Dandang Village is not only economically beneficial but also contains educational values, exemplary conduct, environmental awareness, and spiritual consciousness in preserving and caring for nature sustainably.

The activities carried out by Mr. Mahrus not only provide economic benefits but also hold educational value and serve as a model for the surrounding community. He demonstrates that with perseverance and environmental awareness, anyone can manage available resources sustainably. This practice also reflects the human responsibility as a steward of nature, where caring for plants and fish is seen as part of preserving God's creation.

Therefore, the cultivation of spice plants and catfish by Mr. Mahrus in Dandang Village represents a simple yet meaningful practice that combines economic independence, environmental awareness, and life values that are in harmony with nature (Mahrus, 2026).

CONCLUSION

Ecotheology explains that the relationship between humans, God, and nature is an inseparable unity. Nature is not only viewed as an object to be utilized but also as God's creation that has intrinsic value and must be preserved. From this perspective, responsibility toward the environment becomes an essential part of faith and worship. The study of the environmental worship movement in Dandang Village shows that worship practices based on environmental conservation are able to integrate spiritual values with concrete actions.

Through activities such as collective prayers in open spaces, tree planting, environmental cleaning, and learning from religious teachings about the importance of preserving creation, the community not only strengthens faith but also increases collective awareness of environmental responsibility. This movement demonstrates that religious teachings can act as a driving force in shaping more environmentally friendly mindsets and behaviors. Worship is no longer understood merely as symbolic rituals but is expressed through real actions in preserving nature.

Thus, the ecotheological way of life in Dandang Village serves as a relevant example in addressing environmental issues while strengthening the relationship between faith, humans, and nature.

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