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Facing Climate Change Risk: Green Theology Commitment Crisis in Ritual Practices

Henky Fernando

Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
email: fhenky92@gmail.com

Eko Ariwidodo

Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Universitas Islam Negeri Madura,
Pamekasan, Indonesia
email: ekarwdd@gmail.com

Qodariah Barkah

Fakultas Syariah dan Hukum, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang,
Indonesia
email: qodariahbarkah_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

Eny Boedi Orbawati

Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Tidar, Magelang, Indonesia
email: enyorbawati@untidar.ac.id

M. Nastain

Fakultas Ilmu Komunikasi dan Multimedia, Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta,
Yogyakarta, Indonesia
email: nastain@mercubuana-yogya.ac.id

Yuniar Galuh Larasati

Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
email: yuniargaluhlarasati@gmail.com

Farahdilla Kutsiyah

Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Madura,
Pamekasan, Indonesia
email: keindahanmaduraku@gmail.com

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Abstract

The crisis of commitment to green theology has been sublimated into collective consciousness, making the potential ecological damage caused by ritual practices often seem normal or acceptable. However, this issue is often overlooked in academic discussions. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, utilizing a case study method. Data collection and analysis were conducted intensively by examining online news articles published between May 29 and June 11, 2025, using the keywords "climate change, ritual, and ecological knowledge" via the Google search engine. The findings indicate that ritual practices conducted in natural settings frequently disregard their long-term ecological implications. This situation is further exacerbated by the use of non-environmentally friendly ritual materials, such as plastic and synthetic substances, which leave residues that are not easily biodegradable. The lack of waste management and the absence of ecological rehabilitation efforts following the rituals reflect a weak commitment to green theology in the implementation of tradition-based rituals. The significance of this study lies in its emphasis on reorienting traditional ritual practices to be theologically and ecologically integrated, thereby supporting environmental preservation without compromising religious intentions and cultural values.

[Krisis komitmen green theology telah tersublimasi dalam kesadaran kolektif, sehingga potensi kerusakan ekologis akibat praktik ritual sering dianggap lumrah. Namun kondisi tersebut cenderung terabaikan dalam diskusi-diskusi ilmiah. Studi ini bersifat deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus. Proses pencarian dan pembacaan pada data dilakukan secara intensif terhadap berita-berita daring periode 29 Mei sampai 11 Juni 2025, dengan menggunakan kata kunci "Perubahan iklim, ritual, dan pengetahuan ekologis" melalui mesin pencarian Google. Temuan dalam studi ini memperlihatkan bahwa praktik ritual yang masih dilakukan di lingkungan alam seringkali mengabaikan implikasi ekologis jangka panjang. Kondisi tersebut semakin diperparah oleh penggunaan bahan atribut ritual yang tidak ramah lingkungan, seperti plastik dan material sintetis, telah meninggalkan residu yang sulit terurai secara alami. Pengabaian terhadap pengelolaan limbah dan absennya upaya rehabilitasi ekologis paska ritual, mencerminkan lemahnya komitmen green theology dalam pelaksanaan ritual berbasis tradisi. Signifikansi studi ini menekankan pentingnya reorientasi praktik ritual berbasis tradisi agar terintegrasi secara teologis dan ekologis, sehingga dapat mendukung pelestarian lingkungan tanpa mengorbankan orientasi agama dan nilai budaya.]

Keywords: climate change; green theology; environment crisis; ecology preservation; ritual practices

Introduction

Ritual practices rooted in cultural heritage and tradition often overlook the ecological preservation principle after the ritual. This neglect is frequently legitimized socially and symbolically, as such practices are part of a shared collective commitment. This form of legitimization renders ritual activities largely unquestioned, even when they carry the potential to cause significant ecological harm.¹ Wiratama and Wijaya² also argue that ritual practices often deviate from their original value orientations, leading to a loss of sensitivity to ecological preservation efforts. This condition reflects a deeper crisis in the commitment to green theology and, ideally, serves as a framework for integrating theological values with ecological awareness in tradition-based rituals. Disregarding this principle increases the risk of post-ritual ecological residues, such as plastic waste and other pollutants that can severely damage natural environments. According to Fibiona,³ It is essential to expose the ecological crises arising from ritual activities as a symptom of a weakened commitment to green theology, particularly in its role of integrating theological values with sustained ecological preservation efforts.⁴

Green theology is a theological approach that integrates religious teachings with ecological responsibility, positioning environmental stewardship as a concrete expression of spiritual commitment within cultural and religious contexts.⁵ This concept

¹ Yi-tze Lee, "Environmental Shift and Multiple Memories of Ritual Landscape: Boat Ritual as Making Culture Heritage for the Nangshi Amis," in *Heritage and Cultural Heritage Tourism* (Springer International Publishing, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-44800-3_12.

² I. Gusti Ngurah Made Wiratama and I. Made Wahyu Wijaya, "Study on Temple Waste Management and Its Potential for Reducing Carbon Emission," *Revista de Gestão Social e Ambiental* 18, no. 4 (2024): e06684, <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n4-103>.

³ I. Indra Fibiona et al., "Heritage In Motion: Safeguarding The Cultural Legacy of Wayang Kulit Kedu, Indonesia," *Trames. Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 28, no. 2 (2024): 189–208, <https://doi.org/10.3176/tr.2024.2.06>.

⁴ Alfred Brunson, "Waging the Green War: Initial Steps towards Eco-Practical Theology and Eco-Pastoral Care in the African Context," *Practical Theology* 16, no. 5 (2023): 551–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2023.2206200>.

⁵ Heather Marshall, "Integrating Sustainability into Religious Education," *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, May 22, 2025, 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2025>.

frames nature not as an object to be exploited, but as a sacred entity that holds an essential place in human life. As Xie⁶ notes, green theology explicitly rejects the anthropocentric paradigm that places humans in a position of dominance over nature. Beyond serving as a value framework, green theology also provides an epistemological foundation for evaluating ritual practices that may cause environmental harm, especially those legitimized in the name of tradition.

Dames⁷ further argues that green theology redefines the relationship between theological doctrines and ecological ethics, enabling ritual practices to carry not only spiritual significance but also a commitment to environmental preservation. Therefore, green theology can serve as an evaluative framework for reconstructing both the commitments and ritual practices that risk perpetuating exploitative environmental paradigms under the guise of cultural heritage.

Rituals, as cultural heritage elements, are not solely confined to religious practices but also encompass collective and inherited traditions passed down through generations. Rituals carry symbolic meanings that can serve as a medium for integrating theological values with ecological awareness.⁸ However, rituals often deviate from this integrative purpose in practice and may instead normalize exploitative behaviour toward the natural environment. Instances such as mass burning, waste disposal, and the pollution of forests, rivers, and oceans

2504983; Mohammad Hefni, “Rokat Tèkos Jhâghung (Ritual of Repellent of Maize-Eating Rats in East Madura: A Phenomenological Study),” *KARSA: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 25, no. 2 (2018): 396, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v25i2.1378>.

⁶ Shaobo Xie, “Green Religion as a Way of Life: Thoreau and His Ecocentric Esthetics of Existence,” *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews* 33, no. 4 (2020): 252–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0895769X.2019.1687278>.

⁷ Gordon E. Dames, “Towards an Eco-Practical Theology: An Eschatological Horizon of True Hope,” *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (2024): a9768, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9768>.

⁸ I. S. Zen et al., “Sustaining Subak, the Balinese Traditional Ecological Knowledge in the Contemporary Context of Bali,” *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 1306, no. 1 (2024): 012034, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1306/1/012034>; Henky Fernando et al., “The Deconstruction of Women’s Values in #MeToo on Instagram,” *Italian Sociological Review* 15, no. January (2025): 27–46, <https://doi.org/10.13136/isr.v15i1.821>; Yuniar Galuh Larasati et al., “Adolescent Forced Marriage and Community Misconduct: Rethinking Islamic Family Law,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir’ah* 23, no. 1 (2025): 34–49.

frequently occur in ritual activities driven primarily by ceremonial, instant, or aesthetic motivations.

Köhrsen⁹ emphasize that the absence of green theology principles in ritual practices increases the likelihood that environmental exploitation is perceived as acceptable within traditional or ceremonial contexts. This condition illustrates a broader crisis in the commitment to green theology within tradition-based rituals, often resulting in the neglect of ecological preservation following the ritual. Arofah¹⁰ and Jabani¹¹ further underscores the critical importance of integrating theological values with ecological orientation, particularly in preventing the risk of environmentally harmful practices justified in the name of tradition.

Over the past five years, studies on green theology have remained concentrated within three primary contexts. First, research has focused on green theology within institutional and theoretical discourse frameworks.¹² Second, studies have examined green theology in relation to doctrinal teachings and ritual value orientations.¹³ Third,

⁹ Jens Köhrsen et al., *Religious Environmental Activism* (Routledge, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003017967>.

¹⁰ Kurnia Arofah et al., “Mediatized Eco-Religious Movements in Indonesia: Negotiating Religiosity and Environmentalism in Digital Islam,” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 26, no. 3 (2025): 530–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649373.2025.2489888>.

¹¹ Muzayyanah Jabani and Takdir Takdir, “Implementation of Religiosity and Local Function in Development of Office Human Resources Ministry of Religion Palopo City,” *Nurani: Jurnal Kajian Syari’ah Dan Masyarakat* 20, no. 1 (2020): 163–78, <https://doi.org/10.19109/nurani.v20i1.4817>.

¹² Mohamad Sobirin and Karimatul Khasanah, “The Pesantren Scholars’ Fatwa on Global Warming and Climate Change: An Integrative Analysis of Islamic Law, Theology, and Environmental Sciences on the Practice of Multidisciplinary Ijtihad,” *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 10, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2193023>; Meilanny Risamasu, “From Marginalisation to Mission: Akit’s Indigenous Ecological Knowledge for Transmissional Ecotheology,” *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 81, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v81i1.10076>; David K. Goodin, “Sacred Texts and Environmental Ethics: Lessons in Sustainability from Ethiopia,” in *State of the Art in Ethiopian Church Forests and Restoration Options* (Springer International Publishing, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86626-6_4.

¹³ Karman Karman et al., “The Qur’anic Learning Based on Islamic Eco-Theology at Pesantren,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2023): 169–86, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v9i2.24933>; Madeleine Ary Hahne, “From Eco-theology to Eco-skepticism: How American Latter-day Saint Environmental Perspectives Changed over Time, and How They May Change Again,” *WIREs Climate Change* 15,

research has explored green theology through conceptually objective manifestations.¹⁴ While these studies offer valuable insights, they often lack a comprehensive analysis of ecological praxis, particularly within ritual practices that may pose substantial risks to the natural environment. Buttigieg¹⁵ argues an urgent need to move beyond normative idealism toward a more evaluative approach that critically examines ritual practices and their potential to neglect long-term ecological consequences, reflecting a broader crisis in the commitment to green theology.

A comprehensive review of the recent literature, particularly from 2019 to 2024, indicates an emergent emphasis on the intersectionality of sustainability and spirituality, with a significant increase in academic discourse exploring this nexus, as evidenced by over 500 articles across Web of Science and Scopus.¹⁶ This surge in research highlights the growing recognition of the crucial role of religious and spiritual frameworks in addressing contemporary environmental challenges. However, a notable gap persists in the literature concerning the practical implementation of these spiritual frameworks in tangible ecological initiatives, particularly in mitigating the environmental impact of traditional ritual practices. For instance, while frameworks such as Tri Hita Karana, Sumak Kawsay, and Ubuntu

no. 1 (2024): e864, <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.864>; Neethu M. S. Kunnathu and Bhuvanewari R., “Eco-Dharma and Climate Change: An Ecospective Rendition of Valmiki Ramayana and Hindu Eco-Praxis for Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Living,” *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 15, no. 1 (2024): 145–63, <https://doi.org/10.18848/2154-8633/CGP/v15i01/145-163>.

¹⁴ Christopher William Hrynokow, “Greening God? Christian Ecotheology, Environmental Justice, and Socio-Ecological Flourishing,” *Environmental Justice* 10, no. 3 (2017): 81–87, <https://doi.org/10.1089/env.2017.0009>; Maria Nita, *Praying and Campaigning with Environmental Christians* (Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-60035-6>; Alfred Brunson, “Waging the Green War: Initial Steps towards Eco-Practical Theology and Eco-Pastoral Care in the African Context,” *Practical Theology* 16, no. 5 (2023): 551–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2023.2206200>.

¹⁵ Dorianne Buttigieg, “‘Fruit of the Earth’, ‘Fruit of the Vine’, ‘Work of Human Hands’: A Logiké Latreia towards a Transformative Response to the Ecological Crisis? Liturgical and Pastoral Implications,” *Religions* 15, no. 8 (2024): 913, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15080913>.

¹⁶ Walter Leal Filho et al., “Linking Sustainability and Spirituality: A Preliminary Assessment in Pursuit of a Sustainable and Ethically Correct World,” *Journal of Cleaner Production* 380 (2022): 135091, doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2022.135091.

emphasize harmonious human-nature relationships, the concrete application of these worldviews to mitigate post-ritual ecological footprints remains under-investigated.¹⁷

Similarly, despite the increasing prevalence of green initiatives in various sectors such as healthcare and logistics, there remains a lack of specific research on how these broader sustainability frameworks can be adapted and applied to the unique challenges posed by traditional ritual practices.¹⁸ This lacuna underscores the necessity for a methodological approach capable of dissecting the intrinsic complexities of ritual activities and their environmental sequelae, moving beyond descriptive accounts to provide actionable insights into sustainable practices.¹⁹ Furthermore, the literature reveals a lack of standardized approaches and tools for measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of sustainable practices within evolving frameworks of systemic sustainability, hindering the assessment of optimal strategies for ritual contexts.²⁰

This research endeavours to bridge these identified gaps by developing a sustainability-driven risk management framework that builds upon existing theoretical constructs and empirical investigations to address ecological impacts in ritualistic practices.²¹ This framework

¹⁷ Putu Devi Rosalina et al., “Rural Tourism Resource Management Strategies: A Case Study of Two Tourism Villages in Bali,” *Tourism Management Perspectives* 49 (October 2023): 101194–101194, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2023.101194>.

¹⁸ Francis Kamewor Tetteh et al., “Green Logistics Practices: A Bibliometric and Systematic Methodological Review and Future Research Opportunities,” *Journal of Cleaner Production* 476 (September 2024): 143735–143735, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.143735>; Manas Sahoo et al., “Promoting Green Healthcare Initiatives: A Systematic Literature Review, Conceptual Framework and Future Research Agenda,” *Journal of Cleaner Production* 498 (February 2025): 145024–145024, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2025.145024>.

¹⁹ M. P. Florez-Jimenez et al., “Corporate Sustainability, Organizational Resilience, and Corporate Purpose: A Review of the Academic Traditions Connecting Them,” *Review of Managerial Science*, ahead of print, February 7, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-024-00735-3>.

²⁰ Andrés Fernández-Miguel et al., “Exploring Systemic Sustainability in Manufacturing: Geoanthropology’s Strategic Lens Shaping Industry 6.0,” *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management* 25, no. 3 (2024): 579–600, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40171-024-00404-0>.

²¹ Mohamed Elseknidy et al., “Developing a Sustainability-Driven Risk Management Framework for Green Building Projects: A Literature Review,” *Journal of Cleaner*

will integrate insights from environmental sciences, engineering, and social sciences to provide a holistic understanding of sustainability performance within these unique cultural contexts.²² This framework aims to facilitate proactive, predictive risk management in sustainable construction, thereby advancing the global pursuit of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, particularly within the specialized context of green buildings and traditional practices.²³

Specifically, this study will adapt and extend current sustainability-driven risk management frameworks, which primarily focus on commercial Green Building projects, to incorporate the unique cultural and environmental variables present in traditional ritual practices.²⁴ This adaptation necessitates a rigorous methodological approach capable of accommodating both quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring a robust analysis of environmental risks and their mitigation within these culturally significant contexts. This refined framework will also draw upon multi-stakeholder perspectives, including community, management, and government inputs, to ensure a comprehensive assessment of sustainability drivers and interrelationships within such specialized contexts.²⁵ This integrated approach will enable the development of tailored risk response matrices that identify both individual and collective mitigation activities specifically adapted to the nuanced challenges of traditional ritual practices.²⁶ By dissecting the intricate web of interdependencies among

Production 519 (June 2025): 145891–145891, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2025.145891>.

²² Fernández-Miguel et al., “Exploring Systemic Sustainability in Manufacturing: Geoanthropology’s Strategic Lens Shaping Industry 6.0.”

²³ Elseknidy et al., “Developing a Sustainability-Driven Risk Management Framework for Green Building Projects: A Literature Review.”

²⁴ Davide Settembre-Blundo et al., “Flexibility and Resilience in Corporate Decision Making: A New Sustainability-Based Risk Management System in Uncertain Times,” *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management* 22 (August 2021): 107–32, 40477510, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40171-021-00277-7>; Elseknidy et al., “Developing a Sustainability-Driven Risk Management Framework for Green Building Projects: A Literature Review.”

²⁵ Saifur Rahman Tushar et al., “Driving Sustainable Healthcare Service Management in the Hospital Sector,” *Journal of Cleaner Production* 420 (August 2023): 138310–138310, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2023.138310>.

²⁶ Settembre-Blundo et al., “Flexibility and Resilience in Corporate Decision Making: A New Sustainability-Based Risk Management System in Uncertain Times.”

socio-cultural norms, environmental impacts, and risk management strategies, this framework offers a novel lens for evaluating and enhancing the ecological integrity of traditional rituals.

The neglect of post-ritual ecological preservation reflects a tangible crisis of commitment to green theology, continually reproduced and normalized, thereby escaping ecological critique. This study focuses on three core questions. First, what are the characteristics of ritual practices that continue to occur in open natural environments? Second, how are non-environmentally friendly materials used in these rituals? Third, how is ecological preservation disregarded in the post-ritual phase?

This study is grounded in the argument that such neglect not only poses environmental risks but also signals a deeper crisis in the commitment to green theology. This condition has contributed to the construction of manipulative narratives that legitimize environmental exploitation under the guise of tradition and cultural heritage. A critical evaluation of the commitment to green theology is therefore essential to uncover ritual practices that, while harmful to the environment, are often taken for granted and justified as part of a collective tradition and heritage.

Methods

This study was conducted amid the growing prominence of green theology as a global response to increasing ecological exploitation in various ritual practices rooted in local traditions. Specifically, it highlights forms of neglect toward ecological preservation mechanisms within such rituals, which are interpreted as manifestations of a crisis in green-theological commitment. This crisis is understood as a disconnection between ecological awareness and local ritual practices within traditional contexts, which should reinforce one another. Wiratama and Wijaya²⁷ further explains that this neglect can be identified through three primary indicators: the selection of ritual sites that pose environmental risks, the use of non-environmentally friendly materials, and the weak commitment to ecological preservation

²⁷ I. Gusti Ngurah Made Wiratama and I. Made Wahyu Wijaya, "Study on Temple Waste Management and Its Potential for Reducing Carbon Emission," *Revista de Gestão Social e Ambiental* 18, no. 4 (2024): e06684, <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n4-103>.

after the ritual concludes. Using this conceptual framework as the analytical lens, the study develops a more reflective argument on how theological, social, and ecological aspects intersect, offering a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics underlying the weakening of green-theological commitment in ritual practices rooted in local traditions.

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach because it enables a holistic examination of the complex crisis of green-theological commitment in ritual practices rooted in local traditions. The phenomenon extends beyond ecological behavior, encompassing its interconnection with spiritual values, traditional constructions, ritual symbolism, and social dynamics. This approach allows the study to analyze the neglect of ecological preservation mechanisms through narratives, visual materials, and representations of ritual practices reported in online media. A qualitative descriptive approach is also appropriate, as the study's objective is not only to examine causal relationships but also to interpret the phenomenon in detail.²⁸ Due to its flexibility, this approach facilitates the analysis of diverse ritual contexts, variations in practice, and differences in ecological information, thereby providing a robust conceptual foundation for understanding the crisis of green-theological commitment as a dynamic, meaning-laden socio-theological phenomenon.

The primary data sources used in this study are news reports published online. These sources were selected because they can capture empirical events rapidly, comprehensively, and in a structured manner without requiring direct on-site presence. Creswell²⁹ also emphasizes that public documents, including media reports, can serve as empirical evidence because they record factual details of events in the field. However, the use of online news in this study differs from media-construction research, which treats news as an analytical object for examining how media frame issues, shape meaning, or reinforce

²⁸ Hyejin Kim et al., "Characteristics of Qualitative Descriptive Studies: A Systematic Review," *Research in Nursing & Health* 40, no. 1 (2017): 23–42, <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.21768>.

²⁹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Sage Publications, 2014).

particular ideologies.³⁰ In this study, online news is not treated as media construction but rather as an empirical source that provides factual descriptions of ritual practices as they unfold on the ground. In other words, online news is treated as an empirical information source for explaining the phenomenon of neglecting ecological preservation mechanisms in ritual practices rooted in local traditions.

The data collection technique in this study was conducted through a systematic keyword-based search of online news using the terms “perubahan iklim, ritual, dan pengetahuan ekologis” (climate change, ritual, and ecological knowledge) via the Google search engine from May 29 to June 11, 2025. This technique is methodologically justifiable because keyword-based searches enable the study to obtain relevant, targeted, and replicable data, thereby fulfilling the principle of traceability in qualitative research. As the largest search engine, Google aggregates content from various media outlets, enabling broader data coverage and reducing the potential bias that can arise from relying on a single news portal.

The thematic use of keywords also establishes clear conceptual boundaries, ensuring that only news containing information on ritual practices and ecological issues enters the selection process. Bowen further reinforces this methodological justification,³¹ who asserts that online documents may serve as valid qualitative data when collected systematically, purposefully, and according to explicit criteria.

The data analysis in this study follows Miles and Huberman,³² who emphasize three systematic stages. First, data reduction involved sorting information from online news sources into predetermined categories, such as ritual location, types of materials used, and forms of ecological commitment. Second, data verification was carried out by evaluating the relationship between the data and the thematic focus to

³⁰ William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, “Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach,” *American Journal of Sociology* 95, no. 1 (1989): 1–37, <https://doi.org/10.1086/229213>.

³¹ Glenn A. Bowen, “Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method,” *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009): 27–40, <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>.

³² Matther B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, in *Thousand Oaks Sage Publications*, 2 nd ed, vol. 14, no. 4 (Thousand Oaks, California : Sage Publications, 1994, 1994), [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-4944\(05\)80231-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-4944(05)80231-2).

ensure consistency of meaning and to obtain cross-validation through relevant concepts or other related reports. Third, data were presented in the form of thematic tables, including textual excerpts, visual illustrations, and analytical notes that explained the relationships between ritual practices and their ecological impacts.

Following these three stages, an inductive interpretation was undertaken to identify conceptual patterns regarding the characteristics and implications of the crisis of green theological commitment. The interpretive process involved restating and reflecting on the data in light of emerging patterns and contexts, thereby enabling the identification of how the crisis of green-theological commitment influences ecological preservation mechanisms within tradition-based ritual practices.

Results

The Persistence of Ritual Practices in Ecological Spaces

Ritual practices that continue to take place in natural environments reflect a profound interconnection between humans, nature, and theological values passed down through generations. The use of natural settings as ritual sites does not occur spontaneously or as a matter of convenience; rather, it is the result of deeply rooted historical and cultural processes within tradition. Risamasu³³ also notes that the use of nature as a ritual space signifies that such practices are not only ecological but also carry complex theological meanings. This context demonstrates that collectively held theological concepts can shape a theological consciousness surrounding the sacredness of place, space, and time as an ideological construct. Ritual practices, therefore, cannot be separated from the presence of humans, nature, and inherited theological values embedded in the continuity of traditional rituals performed in natural environments (see Table 1).

Table 1. Natural Settings Where Ritual Practices Continue to Be Performed

³³ Meilanny Risamasu, "From Marginalisation to Mission: Akit's Indigenous Ecological Knowledge for Transmissional Ecotheology," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 81, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v81i1.10076>.

Ritual	Place	Description
<i>Kenduri beureuat</i> in Aceh	Rice field	<i>Kenduri Beureuet</i> in Aceh is a communal prayer ritual held before the rice planting season, intended to seek blessings and ensure a bountiful harvest. ³⁴
<i>Bakar tongkang</i> in Riau	River	The <i>Bakar Tongkang</i> ceremony is a Chinese ritual held on the banks of the Rokan River in Bagansiapiapi, Riau, in which a wooden boat is burned as a symbolic offering to attract good fortune. ³⁵
<i>Pesta tabuik</i> in Sumatera Barat	Sea	The <i>Tabuik</i> Festival, held in Pariaman, West Sumatra, commemorates Ashura through a ceremonial procession of the tabuik effigy, which is later cast into the sea as part of the ritual. ³⁶
<i>Maniring hinting</i> in Kalimantan Tengah	Forest	<i>Maniring Hinting</i> is a sacred ritual performed in the forests or customary lands of the Dayak people in Central Kalimantan, serving as a symbolic marker of prohibition and a means of protecting ancestral territory. ³⁷
<i>Melasti</i> in Bali	Lake	<i>Melasti</i> is a purification ritual performed by Hindus at the beach or a lake, intended to cleanse both the self and sacred temple objects in preparation for Nyepi Day. ³⁸

³⁴ Ulvia Nur Azizah, “38 Upacara Adat Tiap Provinsi Di Indonesia Beserta Penjelasannya,” *Detik.Com*, 2025.

³⁵ Azizah, “38 Upacara Adat Tiap Provinsi Di Indonesia Beserta Penjelasannya.”

³⁶ Azizah, “38 Upacara Adat Tiap Provinsi Di Indonesia Beserta Penjelasannya.”

³⁷ Azizah, “38 Upacara Adat Tiap Provinsi Di Indonesia Beserta Penjelasannya.”

³⁸ Azizah, “38 Upacara Adat Tiap Provinsi Di Indonesia Beserta Penjelasannya.”

<p><i>Kosodo</i> In Jawa Timur</p>	<p>Mountain</p>	<p><i>Kasodo</i> is a ritual of the Tenggerese people at Mount Bromo, during which offerings are cast into the volcano's crater as an expression of gratitude and a plea for blessings.³⁹</p>
<p><i>Sekaten</i> in Yogyakarta</p>	<p>Open field</p>	<p><i>Sekaten</i> is a traditional ritual in the Northern Square of Yogyakarta commemorating the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, featuring gamelan performances, night markets, and the symbolic offering of <i>gunungan</i> (cone-shaped food mountains).⁴⁰</p>

Source: Online news via Google.

Table 1 presents locations where ritual practices continue to take place in open natural environments, such as rice fields, rivers, seas, forests, and mountains. These locations indicate that natural settings are not merely physical backdrops, but also carry profound symbolic, spiritual, and social significance both ecologically and theologically. Nature is regarded as a sacred space with ecological power and as a conduit between humans and theological forces. The selection of these sites is not arbitrary; rather, it is rooted in ecological and theological knowledge passed down through generations within a social system. The attachment of rituals to specific natural environments also reflects a reverence for nature, recognizing it as an integral part of the community's ecological and theological framework. This context highlights that ritual practices performed in natural environments embody a deep interconnection between ecological values and theological traditions.

Table 1 also highlights seven characteristics of ritual practices that continue to take place in natural environments across various regions of Indonesia. These characteristics reflect three key concerns related to the ecological risks posed by such rituals. First, rituals conducted in natural settings often risk overexploiting natural

³⁹ Azizah, "38 Upacara Adat Tiap Provinsi Di Indonesia Beserta Penjelasannya."

⁴⁰ Azizah, "38 Upacara Adat Tiap Provinsi Di Indonesia Beserta Penjelasannya."

resources, particularly when ritual materials are used excessively and without regulation. Second, these practices can interfere with ongoing efforts to preserve vulnerable ecosystems such as forests, lakes, or coastal areas under environmental stress. Third, ritual practices in natural environments may overlook sustainability principles, especially when there is no proper regulation or ecological awareness among practitioners. These three concerns underscore the urgency of fostering a context-specific green-theological commitment that ensures ritual practices do not disregard essential mechanisms of ecological preservation.




The Use of Non-Ecofriendly Materials in Ritual Practices

The use of environmentally non-ecofriendly ritual materials not only reflects a shift in function but also reveals ecological challenges in the process of environmental preservation. In the context of ritual practice, attributes serve not only as essential theological symbols but also as supportive elements that enhance the ritual's spiritual significance.⁴¹ However, in practice the production of ritual materials often disregards long-term ecological preservation mechanisms rooted in green theological commitments frequently involving synthetic materials, plastic, styrofoam, or chemical dyes for the sake of efficiency and aesthetics, without consideration of their environmental consequences. This context highlights a contradiction between ritual practices and the principles of sustainable ecological preservation grounded in green theology. The use of non-biodegradable ritual materials poses a significant threat to post-ritual environmental preservation efforts (see Table 2).

Table 2. The use of environmentally non-ecofriendly ritual materials

Material	Figure	Description
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⁴¹ Muchammadun, "Sacred Waters: The Lingsar Site among Lombok's Hindu-Muslim Community," in *Numinous Fields: Perceiving the Sacred in Nature, Landscape, and Art* (BRILL, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004687387_009.

<p>Styrofoam</p>		<p><i>Ogoh-ogoh</i> statues made from environmentally harmful materials such as styrofoam pose significant negative impacts. In addition to being non-biodegradable, burning them releases toxic substances that can pollute the air, pose serious health risks, and threaten the sustainability of the surrounding environment.⁴²</p>
<p>Plastic</p>		<p>Cultural parade costumes made from non-biodegradable plastic materials can lead to ecological problems. These materials decompose very slowly, pose a high risk of environmental pollution, and generate hazardous waste, especially when disposed of improperly.⁴³</p>
<p>Metal</p>		<p>The use of non-environmentally friendly iron materials in statue production carries several risks, including high carbon emissions during manufacturing, significant energy consumption, and metal waste that can contaminate the soil and disrupt surrounding ecosystems.⁴⁴</p>

⁴² Ari Budiadnyana, “[OPINI] Perbedaan Membuat Ogoh-Ogoh Dari Bambu Vs Styrofoam,” *Balli.Idntimes.Com*, 2023.

⁴³ Radar Kudus, “Kirab Budaya Getas Pejabat Kudus Soroti Isu Sampah, Kreasi Gaun Dari Plastik Menjadi Pusat Perhatian,” *Radarkudus.Jawapos.Com*, 2025.

⁴⁴ Antara Jatim, “Patung Sampah Logam,” *Jatim.Antaranews.Com*, 2016.


Candle flame		The ritual of releasing fire-powered <i>lampion</i> (lanterns) has harmful environmental impacts. The burning process emits carbon, poses a fire hazard, and the fallen lantern debris can pollute forests and rivers, vital freshwater sources. ⁴⁵
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Table 2 illustrates the use of environmentally unfriendly materials in the creation of ritual attributes. Materials such as styrofoam and plastic are often used due to their moldability and lightweight nature, making them more practical for artistic and aesthetic purposes in rituals. However, these materials are not biodegradable, leading to the accumulation of waste that poses long-term environmental pollution risks. In addition to synthetic materials, metals such as iron are also commonly used in ritual artefacts, despite their high-energy production processes and the environmental risks associated with post-ritual waste management. This context underscores that the use of non-eco-friendly materials in traditional ritual practices poses significant risks to ecological preservation, particularly when long-term green theological commitments are not adequately integrated into ritual processes.

Table 2 identifies four key characteristics of environmentally unfriendly materials commonly used in the creation of ritual attributes. First, the use of styrofoam in the construction of *ogoh-ogoh* statues allows for efficient shaping, but the material is extremely resistant to natural decomposition. Second, cultural parade costumes made from plastic, while visually appealing, contribute to the accumulation of non-organic waste. Third, iron statues not only require significant energy during production but also pose challenges for recycling and waste management. Fourth, the practice of releasing fire-lit lanterns into open natural environments poses risks of littering and can potentially lead to forest fires. These four characteristics reveal a clear ecological contradiction and indicate a crisis of green theological commitment,

⁴⁵ Sean Anggiatheda Sitorus and Suryanto, "Makna Dan Simbolisme Pelepasan Lampion Waisak Di Candi Borobudur," *Amtaranews.Com*, 2025.

particularly in the post-ritual phase, where ecological preservation is often neglected.

Neglect of Post-Ritual Ecological Preservation Mechanisms

The neglect of ecological preservation mechanisms persists in the implementation of rituals in open natural environments. This issue is not merely a result of technical oversight, but also reflects a deeper crisis of post-ritual green theological commitment. Pesonen emphasizes that such a crisis risks reinforcing the normalization of ecological neglect as an accepted part of ritual practice.

This context illustrates that green theological commitment, intended as a mechanism for ecological preservation, has yet to be internalized in the collective consciousness and in post-ritual behaviour.⁴⁶ The lack of post-ritual green theological awareness also reveals an inherent tension between ritual practices and long-term ecological preservation. This failure is clearly evident in the case examples presented in this study.

Rituals still practiced along the coastal areas of Bali have generated significant plastic waste in the post-ritual phase, as highlighted in the report by Suciartini⁴⁷ below:

“Offerings and waste from rituals and celebrations in Bali often end up in rivers and the ocean. This situation has turned areas that are meant to reflect cultural values and natural beauty into polluted sites filled with plastic waste, raising public concern and threatening both environmental sustainability and the future of Bali’s tourism industry.”⁴⁸

Rituals still practised along urban streets in Palembang have led to significant paper waste during the post-ritual phase, as illustrated in Adliyah's report.⁴⁹ below:

“During the Eid al-Adha celebration, thousands of Palembang residents gathered at the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin Jayo

⁴⁶ Heikki Pesonen, “Innovation, Adaptation, and Maintaining the Balance,” *Approaching Religion* 12, no. 3 (2022): 16–31, <https://doi.org/10.30664/ar.112793>.

⁴⁷ Ni Nyoman Ayu Suciartini, “Sampah Plastik Dalam Sesaji,” *Balebong.Id*, 2023.

⁴⁸ Suciartini, “Sampah Plastik Dalam Sesaji.”

⁴⁹ Sabrina Adliyah, “Panen Sisa Sampah Usai Salat Idul Adha Di Masjid Agung-Jembatan Ampera,” *Detik.Com*, 2025.

Wikromo Grand Mosque, stretching to the Ampera Bridge. After the prayer, the area was left littered with discarded newspapers used as prayer mats, creating sanitation issues and polluting the environment around the worship site.”⁵⁰

Rituals still conducted in the mountainous regions of East Java have resulted in non-organic food waste during the post-ritual phase, as highlighted in the report by Arifianto⁵¹ below:

“Following the Yadnya Kasada ritual on the sea of sand at Mount Bromo, members of the Tengger community and the Mountain Friends Forum worked hand in hand to clean up the waste. Most of the waste consisted of non-organic food remnants left by visitors, vendors, and local participants in the ritual. This effort was carried out to maintain the cleanliness and sustainability of the Mount Bromo area”.⁵²

Rituals still held in conservation forest areas in East Java have resulted in the accumulation of post-ritual plastic waste, as documented in a report by Fanami.⁵³

“The Suroan ritual in Alas Purwo National Park left behind waste piles, polluting the forest area. Park officials discovered approximately 200 kilograms of plastic waste at the ritual site. This situation raised concerns, especially given that the area is a conservation zone that should be preserved and kept clean”.⁵⁴

Rituals still conducted in the river areas of Riau have resulted in the accumulation of wood waste following the ritual, as reported by Hallo Riau.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Adliyah, “Panen Sisa Sampah Usai Salat Idul Adha Di Masjid Agung-Jembatan Ampera.”

⁵¹ Hermawan Arifianto, “7 Pikip Sampah Terkumpul Usai Ritual Yadnya Kasada Di Gunung Bromo,” *Liputan6.Com*, 2022.

⁵² Arifianto, “7 Pikip Sampah Terkumpul Usai Ritual Yadnya Kasada Di Gunung Bromo.”

⁵³ Ardian Fanami, “Parah! Pengunjung Ritual Suro Tinggalkan 200 Kg Sampah Di Alas Purwo,” *Detik.Com*, 2022.

⁵⁴ Fanami, “Parah! Pengunjung Ritual Suro Tinggalkan 200 Kg Sampah Di Alas Purwo.”

⁵⁵ Hallo Riau, “3 Ribu Petugas DLH Rohil Bersihkan Sampah Usai Festival Bakar Tongkang Bagansiapiapi,” *halloriau.com*, 2024.

“Following the 2024 Bakar Tongkang ritual, the Rokan Hilir Environmental Agency (DLH) deployed 3,000 personnel to clean up waste, including leftover 'dufa' wood and ash along Aman Street. Personnel were stationed across various parts of Bagansiapiapi City to ensure cleanliness and smooth proceedings throughout the celebration.”⁵⁶

These cases of neglecting post-ritual ecological preservation mechanisms provide concrete evidence of a crisis in green-theological commitment. From the identified cases, three critical contexts emerge. First, the locations where rituals are performed, such as coastal areas, rivers, mountains, forests, and urban streets, carry a high risk of environmental pollution due to the absence of post-ritual ecological preservation measures. Second, the types of waste produced vary significantly, ranging from plastic, paper, and food waste to metal and wood, highlighting the environmental consequences of disregarding green-theological-based ecological stewardship. Third, the lack of integration between ritual practices and green theological commitments significantly increases the likelihood of neglecting environmental preservation after rituals. Overall, the continued disregard for ecological preservation mechanisms following rituals reflects not only a profound crisis in green theological commitment but also poses a serious long-term threat to environmental sustainability.

Discussion

The neglect of ecological preservation mechanisms in tradition-based ritual practices reflects a broader crisis of commitment to green theology, particularly in the post-ritual phase. This crisis is identified through three key findings of the study. First, rituals performed in ecologically vulnerable natural areas are often conducted without considering their long-term environmental impact. Such practices can disrupt ecosystem balance, particularly when repeated without sufficient environmental safeguards. Second, the use of non-environmentally friendly materials in creating ritual attributes, such as plastic, synthetic fabrics, or chemical dyes, indicates a weak integration of green theological values within ritual processes. Third, the lack of

⁵⁶ Hallo Riau, “3 Ribu Petugas DLH Rohil Bersihkan Sampah Usai Festival Bakar Tongkang Bagansiapiapi.”

concrete post-ritual actions, such as waste management, site cleanup, or ecological rehabilitation, demonstrates an absence of ecological reflection that should be integral to green theological commitment. These three aspects suggest that the crisis of green theology is not merely a technical issue in ritual practice, but also reflects a deeper epistemic problem: the failure to integrate theological values with ecological responsibility.

The growing trend of using non-environmentally friendly materials in ritual practices rooted in local traditions is influenced not only by aesthetic considerations but also by the practical logic that has developed within modern society. According to Goswami,⁵⁷ economic modernization has generated high demand for instant materials to reduce production costs, leading communities to prefer items such as styrofoam, plastic, and synthetic ornaments that are inexpensive, easily shaped, and require no specialized skills. The use of these modern materials is also interpreted as a symbol of progress or as an adaptation to market-oriented preferences that prioritize a neat, clean, and uniform visual appearance in ritual settings.⁵⁸

This context indicates that material choices are increasingly driven by efficiency, production speed, and commercial aesthetic standards rather than ecological values or environmental ethics. As a result, ritual practices have shifted from a sustainability-oriented framework toward market logic, enabling the continued reproduction of non-environmentally friendly materials as part of the visual and economic demands characteristic of the crisis of green theological commitment in the era of modernization.

The crisis of green theological commitment in tradition-based ritual practices often occurs systematically and pervasively within broader socio-cultural contexts. This condition highlights a growing dichotomy between theological values and ecological responsibility, in which ritual practices are prioritized more as markers of cultural

⁵⁷ Srijan Goswami et al., "Micro- and Nano-Plastics, the Globally Emerging Environmental and Public Health Crisis," in *Sustainable Development Goals Series* (2025), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-5047-7_1.

⁵⁸ Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa, "Preserving Offerings, Prolonging Merit: Efficacy, Skillful Means, and Re-Purposing in Plastic Buddhist Material Culture in Contemporary Sikkim," *Worldwide Waste* 6, no. 1 (2023): 3, <https://doi.org/10.5334/wwwj.96>.

identity than as expressions of long-term ecological awareness.⁵⁹ When rituals and their associated attributes are driven primarily by aesthetic considerations, ecological concerns are frequently disregarded in the post-ritual phase.

In many cases, the continuity of ritual practices as expressions of cultural identity takes precedence over long-term efforts to preserve the environment. Brunsdon⁶⁰ also argues that this crisis reflects an underlying epistemology of ritual practice that remains anthropocentric, positioning humans at the centre of ecological relations while reducing nature to a mere supporting role in ritual activities. This dynamic suggests that environmentally harmful ritual practices are often legitimized as cultural heritage, allowing the crisis of green theology to become sublimated into collective consciousness, reproduced repeatedly, and normalized over time.

The neglect of ecological preservation mechanisms represents a concrete manifestation of the crisis of green theological commitment in ritual practice. This crisis arises not only from the absence of substantial ecological action but also from the disregard of ecocentric principles within tradition-based ritual activities. When rituals fail to acknowledge nature as an ethical subject, their orientation shifts toward formalistic expressions, reinforcing exploitative logics toward the environment. As Pesonen⁶¹ explains, the crisis of green theology not only has long-term consequences for ecological systems but also disrupts the symbolic and spiritual meanings embedded in ritual practices. Dames⁶² further argues that this crisis may reinforce manipulative narratives that legitimize ecological exploitation on a broader, even global, scale. In other words, the green theology crisis not only poses serious threats to ecosystems but also constitutes an epistemological barrier to integrating ecocentric

⁵⁹ Jens Köhrsen et al., *Religious Environmental Activism* (Routledge, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003017967>.

⁶⁰ Brunsdon, "Waging the Green War: Initial Steps towards Eco-Practical Theology and Eco-Pastoral Care in the African Context," 2023.

⁶¹ Heikki Pesonen, "Innovation, Adaptation and Maintaining the Balance Roy Rappaport's Ritual Theory as a Framework for Interpreting Religious Environmental Rituals," *Approaching Religion* 12, no. 3 (2022): 16–31, <https://doi.org/10.30664/ar.112793>.

⁶² Dames, "Towards an Eco-Practical Theology: An Eschatological Horizon of True Hope."

principles essential for cultivating a global ecological consciousness rooted in collective spiritual and cultural practices.

The crisis of green theological commitment in ritual activities reflects a highly complex discourse, as it has become sublimated into collective consciousness and reproduced as part of cultural heritage. This context illustrates how the legitimization of ritual activities that contradict ecological principles has become normalized and largely unquestioned, owing to their perceived status as traditional claims. Gade⁶³ asserts that discussions on green theological commitment have often been concentrated within institutional religious and cultural frameworks, thereby overlooking ritual practices that carry significant ecological risks. A more comprehensive understanding of green theological commitment may provide an alternative framework for critically evaluating the normative assumption that ritual practices are inherently aligned with ecological preservation principles. In reality, however, such practices frequently neglect ecological values, legitimized through manipulative historical narratives. Byrne⁶⁴ further argues that treating ritual as a static entity reinforces the crisis of green theological commitment by obstructing the integration of ecological principles into collective spiritual and cultural activities.

The findings of this study reveal significant differences compared to previous research on green theology. Most existing studies have emphasized normative idealism, with limited attention given to the ecological praxis dimension, particularly within ritual practices that pose considerable risks of environmental exploitation. This study, however, underscores that neglecting ecological preservation in the post-ritual phase not only contributes to environmental degradation but also reflects a deeper crisis of commitment to the core values of green theology. This crisis has given rise to manipulative narratives that justify environmental exploitation in the name of preserving tradition

⁶³ Anna M. Gade, "Tradition and Sentiment in Indonesian Environmental Islam," *Worldviews* 16, no. 3 (2012): 263–85, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685357-01603005>.

⁶⁴ Edmond Philip Byrne, "Traditional and Contemporary Eco-Cosmologies Within Western and Christian Traditions: Green Shoots for Integral and Integrative Sustainability Transformation," *The Oriental Anthropologist: A Bi-Annual International Journal of the Science of Man* 24, no. 1 (2024): 90–107, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972558X241227864>.

and cultural heritage. Winchester and Green⁶⁵ argue that the absence of green theological commitment within ritual practices creates space for legitimizing environmentally harmful actions under the guise of ritual observance. Therefore, evaluating the extent to which green theological principles are meaningfully applied in practice is crucial to challenging ritual practices that threaten the environment while remaining institutionalized as part of cultural heritage.

This study highlights the urgency of integrating green theological commitment into ritual practices through more concrete ecological values. As Runtuwene⁶⁶ and Orbawati⁶⁷ notes, such integration can only be meaningful if it is realized through a consistent, collective commitment, particularly in conducting ritual activities in open natural environments vulnerable to ecological damage. In addition, cross-sector collaboration among religious leaders, customary authorities, local governments, and educational institutions is essential to develop ritual guidelines that support sustainable ecological preservation mechanisms.

The study recommends incorporating green theological commitment as part of a broader transformation in religious and cultural ritual paradigms. Given the transboundary and intergenerational nature of the ecological crisis, this transformation is critical at the local level and globally relevant. By embedding green theological commitments within ritual activities, such efforts can provide a reflective ethical foundation for fostering ecological awareness, while also helping to minimize or even prevent environmental crises that contribute to global climate change.

These synergistic endeavours underscore the imperative for a paradigm shift toward an integrated approach to environmental stewardship, encompassing not only green theological principles but also robust policy frameworks and economic incentives. This

⁶⁵ Daniel Winchester and Kyle D. Green, "Talking Your Self into It: How and When Accounts Shape Motivation for Action," *Sociological Theory* 37, no. 3 (2019): 257–81, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275119869959>.

⁶⁶ Hendry Corneles Mamengko Runtuwene, "Ecotheology: Integrating Faith, Creation Care, and Contextual Practice in Indonesian Protestant Congregations," *Educatio Christi* 6, no. 1 (2025): 145–70, <https://doi.org/10.70796/educatio-christi.v6i1.215>.

⁶⁷ Eny Boedi Orbawati et al., "The Border Area Conflict Impact on Government Responsiveness Relating on Public Service," *E3S Web of Conferences* 73 (December 2018): 09009, <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/20187309009>.

comprehensive sustainability strategy demands a re-evaluation of established socio-economic structures and their impact on ecological systems, advocating systemic reforms that prioritize long-term ecological health and social equity over short-term economic gains.⁶⁸

Such a holistic understanding aligns with the principles of sustainable urban design, which advocate resilient, vibrant cities that harmonize with their natural surroundings while mitigating the environmental challenges posed by rapid urbanization. It involves promoting energy-efficient building designs, integrating renewable energy sources, and developing sustainable transportation systems to create healthier and more sustainable living environments. This integrated approach also incorporates green infrastructure solutions, such as green roofs and rain gardens, to manage stormwater, enhance urban biodiversity, and mitigate urban heat-island effects, thereby further contributing to urban resilience.

Conclusion

The neglect of post-ritual ecological preservation principles poses not only a significant risk of large-scale environmental exploitation but also reflects a latent crisis in green theological commitment. This study reveals that ritual practices conducted in natural environments often disregard their long-term ecological implications. The absence of environmental preservation principles during ritual execution increases the potential for ecosystem degradation, especially when such practices are repeated without proper regulations or context-sensitive protection mechanisms. This condition is further exacerbated by the use of environmentally harmful ritual materials, such as plastic and synthetic substances, which leave behind waste residues that are difficult to decompose naturally. The lack of post-ritual waste management and the absence of environmental rehabilitation efforts highlight a weak ecological consciousness within ritual practices. The findings of this study underscore that the green theology crisis is not merely a technical issue, but an epistemic one, revealing a disconnect between theological teachings and ecological

⁶⁸ Rebecca Chaplin-Kramer et al., "Integrated Modeling of Nature's Role in Human Well-Being: A Research Agenda," *Global Environmental Change* 88 (August 2024): 102891–102891, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2024.102891>.

responsibility that remains unaddressed in tradition-based ritual practices.

This study makes a significant contribution to the development of cultural studies discourse by offering a critical perspective on tradition-based ritual practices with ecological implications. Within the cultural studies framework, culture is understood as a dynamic and political arena for producing meaning, including in the context of human–environment relations. The study reveals that traditional ritual practices are not always neutral; instead, they have become a space for reproducing symbolic power that legitimates or exploitative practices in the name of cultural heritage. This study challenges taken-for-granted cultural meanings by deconstructing the narratives that use tradition to justify environmentally destructive rituals. It emphasizes the urgency of rethinking the relationship between tradition, theology, and ecological ethics. This approach broadens the scope of cultural studies by positioning ritual not merely as a theological expression, but also as a site of ecological conflict.

This study also presents a limitation in its data collection method, which relies solely on exploring online news sources accessed via Google using the keywords climate change, ritual, and ecological knowledge. This reliance on secondary sources limits the depth of understanding of the social and cultural contexts surrounding ritual practices and of communities' and authorities' perceptions of ecological issues. Nevertheless, this limitation opens the door to further, more in-depth research. Future studies are encouraged to explore the crisis of commitment to green theology through qualitative methods, such as interviews and participant observation, to capture in greater detail the perspectives and attitudes of religious communities and cultural authorities. Such approaches are essential for understanding how theological values are concretely manifested and integrated with ecological awareness in tradition-based ritual practices, thereby providing a more reflective and comprehensive picture of the relationship between theology and ecology.

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