*The Pastoral Counsellors: Journal of Nigerian Association of Pastoral Counsellors*
(ISSN: Print 2971-5199; Online 2971-5202) Volume 5 January 2026
(In collaboration with the Department of Religious and Intercultural Studies and Department of Guidance and Counselling, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria)

# The Impact of Faith on Sustainable Living Practices: A Call for Integrated Pastoral Counselling and Action in Nigeria

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## Abstract
Faith traditions profoundly shape sustainable living practices by weaving spiritual values into environmental ethics and action. This paper synthesises peer-reviewed papers to examine how religious beliefs and institutions influence sustainability at individual, institutional, and societal levels, with a specific focus on the Nigerian context. Drawing on theological insights, empirical data, and case studies, it highlights the effectiveness of faith-based initiatives that integrate spiritual motivations with practical strategies, leverage institutional resources, and foster interfaith and scientific collaborations. Crucially, this revised paper emphasises the unique role of pastoral counselling in facilitating attitudinal and behavioural change, navigating theological resistance, and contextualising global sustainability efforts within Nigeria's socio-economic realities. Despite challenges like theological resistance, resource constraints, and the complexities of our local context, significant opportunities exist to scale impact through digital platforms, culturally resonant approaches, and interdisciplinary partnerships. The paper outlines a systematic research methodology and concludes with suggestions to strengthen faith-based sustainability movements in Nigeria, guiding future research and practice for pastoral counsellors.

**Keywords:** Faith, Sustainability, Religion, Environmental Ethics, Sustainable Development, Pastoral Counselling, Behaviour Change, Eco-Anxiety

## Introduction
As the world confronts escalating climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequities, sustainable living demands contributions from all sectors, including religious communities. Nigeria experiences multiple environmental crises ranging from deforestation, desertification, oil spillage, flooding and urban waste management challenges that worsen climate variability. These issues threaten food security, public health and livelihoods particularly among rural and urban poor population (Odudele et. al., 2024). While policy framework and scientific interventions have attempted to address these challenges, they often fail due to weak enforcement, limited public participation and socio-cultural resistance (Shehu 2023). It is evident that beyond the technical solutions, there is an urgent need for approaches that addresses moral, cultural and spiritual dimensions of environmental care. According to Pew Research Centre (2020), over 84% of the global population identify with a religious group. In Nigeria, religion occupies a central position, shaping daily practices, social norms and collective identity. Nigeria is nearly split evenly between Christianity and Islam, with indigenous traditions also exerting local influence. This makes faith communities some of the most powerful and trusted institutions in the country (Aneke, 2024). However, while many faith traditions promote values of stewardship, moderation and communal welfare that align with sustainability principles, the translation of these theological commitments into practical ecological behaviour remains uneven (Isaac, Oripeloye and Adejo, 2023). Take for instance; leaders of the Christian communities in Nigeria often affirm the importance of environmental protection but somewhat lack the theological training, scientific literacy or institutional support to prioritise ecological issues in their ministries (Olawoyin and Kayode, 2024). Similarly, Islam teaches balance (*mizan*) and prohibition of waste (israf), yet in practice, Muslims in cities face challenges in addressing pollution and environmental abuse (Bello, 2022).
Pastoral Counselling offers a unique opportunity to address this gap. Traditionally focused on spiritual guidance, relational care and moral formation, pastoral counselling can be expanded to integrate environmental ethics into its framework. Doing this, a culturally resonant pathway can be provided to encourage sustainable lifestyles at the individual, family and community levels (Okonkwo and Olubunmi 2024). In context where religious leaders command significant influence over social behaviour, pastoral counselling can become a platform for environmental education, lifestyle transformation and community mobilization. This resonates with global scholarship emphasising the

role of faith-based approaches in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG 13(climate action) (Shehu, 2023; Aneke, 2024). Furthermore, faith communities are often more trusted than governmental institutions, particularly in the rural and peri-urban areas in Nigeria (Odudele et al., 2024). Leveraging that trust for ecological education could generate greater behavioural change than purely campaigning. According to Isaac et al. (2023) religious institutions already provide social services such as education and healthcare, extending this to environmental stewardship would be a natural progression of their community mandate.

Recent scholarship (2019–2025) underscores their role, revealing how spiritual values translate into tangible actions. This paper synthesizes contemporary research to explore how faith shapes sustainable living practices across individual, institutional, and societal levels, while critically examining the implications for pastoral counselling in Nigeria. By examining theological foundations, empirical evidence, unique Nigerian challenges, opportunities, and future directions, it aims to illuminate faith's transformative potential in addressing the sustainability crisis from a locally informed perspective.

The urgency of this topic in Nigeria lies not only in global environmental imperatives but also in our localized crises: persistent flooding, desertification, poor waste management, and the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable populations. Religious communities, rooted in centuries-old ethical traditions, offer unique perspectives that complement scientific and policy-driven efforts. This study addresses three key questions, with an added emphasis on our professional role: How do religious teachings inform sustainability, particularly within Nigerian theological frameworks? What practical contributions do Nigerian faith communities make, and how can these be scaled? And, critically, how can pastoral counsellors facilitate the attitudinal and behavioural shifts necessary to drive systemic change in our unique socio-economic and cultural context? Through a systematic literature review, this paper provides actionable insights for scholars, policymakers, and especially faith leaders and pastoral counsellors committed to a sustainable future for Nigeria.

## Literature review

### *Faith and Environmental Sustainability*

In recent years, interest of scholars in the intersection of religion and environmental sustainability has increased, showing that ecological crises are not only scientific but also moral and cultural. Globally, faith traditions have been found to provide interpretative structure that encourages environmental stewardship, moderation in consumption, and care for creation (Shehu, 2023). Several studies have shown that in the Nigerian context, religious beliefs strongly influence ecological attitudes but do not always translate into sustainable practices. Aneke (2024) found that while Christians and Muslims in Nigeria widely accept that religion should shape attitudes toward the environment, actual ecological practices remain inconsistent highlighting a disconnection between doctrine and behaviour.

### *Christianity and Integral Ecology*

Christianity has emerged as a powerful force in environmental advocacy, particularly through Catholic teachings. Pope Francis's encyclicals *Laudato Si'* (2015) linked environmental care with social justice and urging action against climate change's disproportionate impact on marginalized communities. Jenkins et al. (2019) argue that these encyclicals have reshaped Christian environmentalism, inspiring sermons, curricula, and policy advocacy that frame sustainability as a sacred duty. Protestant denominations, including the Evangelical Environmental Network, promote "creation care" based on biblical mandates like Genesis 2:15, encouraging churches to adopt renewable energy and advocate for climate policies. In Australia, Anglican parishes have launched "Eco-Church" programs, integrating environmental stewardship into worship and community outreach, demonstrating Christianity's growing commitment to sustainability. In Nigeria, a growing number of Catholic dioceses and Anglican churches are translating these global directives into local action, focusing on tree planting, waste reduction, and advocating for environmental justice for communities affected by resource extraction. Isaac, et al. (2023) showed that although religious institutions have great potential for environmental mobilisation, their current engagement is moderate, constrained by inadequate institutional capacity and lack of theological emphasis on sustainability. Olawoyin and Kayode (2024) also observed that Christian leaders are aware of environmental issues but often lack sufficient training or resources to integrate ecological care into ministry.

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### *Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist Environmental Ethics*

Islamic environmentalism is grounded in the Quranic concept of *khalifa* (stewardship), which positions humans as caretakers of God's creation. Gada (2021) highlights how verses like Surah Al-A'raf (7:31), which warns against wastefulness, inspire sustainable practices such as water conservation and renewable energy adoption. Meanwhile, Bello (2022) argued from an Islamic ethical perspective that while Islamic teachings emphasise stewardship and balance, environmental abuses persist due to weak moral enforcement and socio-economic pressures. Hindu environmentalism draws on *dharma* (duty) and *ahimsa* (non-harm), as seen in the Hindu Declaration on Climate Change (2019), which calls for plant-based diets and sustainable lifestyles based on texts like the Bhagavad Gita. In India, Hindu temples have reduced plastic use during festivals, promoting biodegradable alternatives. Buddhist teachings on interdependence and compassion encourage mindful consumption, with monasteries in Thailand and Sri Lanka leading reforestation efforts, planting over 100,000 trees since 2019 (Sponsel, 2020). These traditions illustrate how diverse theological perspectives converge on sustainability as a moral imperative, providing a rich tapestry of spiritual motivations that resonate deeply with many Nigerians.

### *Indigenous and Interfaith Perspectives*

Indigenous spiritualities embed sustainability within cosmologies that view nature as sacred. Grim and Tucker (2022) describe how Navajo and Amazonian tribes integrate ecological care into rituals, such as ceremonies honouring water sources. In New Zealand, the Maori practice *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship), balancing resource use with cultural and ecological preservation, as seen in sustainable fisheries management. In Nigeria, traditional African spiritualities similarly emphasise humanity's interconnectedness with nature, often through ancestral reverence for land, rivers, and forests. These indigenous beliefs, though sometimes marginalised, offer powerful frames for understanding and promoting ecological responsibility.

Interfaith initiatives amplify these efforts by uniting traditions around shared values. The UNEP's Faith for Earth initiative (2020) fosters collaboration among Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Indigenous communities, supporting projects like tree-planting campaigns in Kenya that engaged 10,000 participants across faiths. The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (2021) unites religious leaders to protect tropical forests, blending spiritual advocacy with policy influence. In Nigeria, collaborations between Christian and Muslim leaders on environmental awareness campaigns are emerging, demonstrating the potential for united advocacy against shared environmental challenges like deforestation and desertification in the north, or flooding in the south. These examples highlight how Indigenous and interfaith perspectives create synergistic approaches to sustainability.

These findings suggest that religion in Nigeria can be a double-edged sword; that is, it can be a passive observer of ecological decline or an active driver of sustainable living, depending on how teachings are interpreted and applied.

## Empirical Evidence of Faith-Driven Sustainability Practices and the Role of Counselling Psychology

Faith communities translate ethical commitments into action through education, advocacy, and grassroots initiatives. Empirical studies from 2019 to 2025 demonstrate their tangible contributions, but also reveal areas where counselling psychology can deepen impact, particularly in Nigeria.

### *Institutional Engagement*

FBOs leverage their extensive resources—land, buildings and networks—to implement sustainability projects. Georgetown University's Affordable Housing Initiative partners with churches to repurpose underused land for eco-friendly housing, incorporating solar panels and energy-efficient designs to address housing shortages and climate goals (Kralovec, 2025). The Science-based Targets for Faith project, a collaboration between Georgetown and the WRI, supports FBOs in reducing carbon emissions, with 50 Catholic dioceses in the U.S. committing to net-zero by 2050 (WRI, 2023). Singh et al. (2023) note that FBOs manage 8% of habitable land and half of global schools, enabling large-scale initiatives. In India, Sikh gurdwaras have launched organic farming projects on temple land, distributing sustainable crops through free community kitchens (*langar*).

In Nigeria, Pentecostal churches have increasingly adopted solar energy solutions to overcome unreliable grid electricity, inadvertently contributing to a reduction in fossil fuel reliance and inspiring congregants to follow suit. Mosques in Northern Nigeria are exploring sustainable water management through traditional well revitalization and rainwater harvesting. While these are positive steps, many

Nigerian FBOs face significant resource constraints, limiting the scale of their initiatives. The opportunity lies in leveraging existing infrastructure for broader environmental education and modelling sustainable practices that are contextually appropriate and economically viable for local communities, such as community-led recycling hubs or urban farming initiatives on church/mosque lands.

### *Youth and Digital Mobilization*

Religious youth are at the forefront of sustainability advocacy, leveraging digital platforms to amplify their impact. The Faith Pavilion at COP28 (2023) showcased young Christian, Muslim, and Hindu leaders using X (formerly Twitter) to organize climate campaigns, reaching millions globally (Ives et al., 2024). Koehrsen et al. (2024) report that interfaith youth networks on social media increased participation in climate marches by 20% in cities like Nairobi and Mumbai. The GreenFaith Youth Network coordinates global "Faiths for Climate" events via X, engaging 15,000 young believers in 2024 alone. In Bangladesh, Muslim youth launched a digital campaign promoting tree planting, resulting in 5,000 trees planted in 2023. These efforts highlight how digital tools bridge generational divides and scale faith-based advocacy, making youth a driving force in the climate movement. In Nigeria, where youth comprise a significant demographic and digital penetration is increasing, this represents an immense opportunity for online mobilization and awareness campaigns tailored to local environmental issues.

### *Behavioural and Attitudinal Shifts: A Counselling Psychology Lens*

Faith-based interventions drive significant changes in individual behaviours. Ives, Buys, Ogunbode, Palmer, Rose, Valerio (2022) studied European Christians participating in a six-week program featuring sermons. Participants increased pro-environmental behaviors by 15% compared to a control group, attributing the shift to heightened ecological connectedness and moral framing. In Malaysia, Islamic eco-mosques integrated environmental messages into Friday sermons, reducing congregants' water usage by 10% (Gada, 2021). A 2023 study by Kidwell et al. found that Hindu festivals promoting biodegradable materials led to a 12% decrease in plastic waste in Indian cities. These findings underscore the power of faith-based narratives to foster sustainable behaviours when paired with practical guidance.

From a counselling psychology perspective, understanding the *mechanisms* of these shifts is crucial. Beyond heightened awareness, these interventions tap into Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) which holds that people learn behaviours and norms through observing credible models, imitation and receiving reinforcement. In religion, spirituals leaders, church or mosque practices, sermons and faith community rituals function as role models**.** Observing leaders and peers within the faith community engaging in sustainable practices normalizes and encourages similar behaviors. Though direct empirical studies in Nigeria explicitly applying Social Learning Theory to environmental behaviour are relatively few, several works imply its dynamics:

Olawoyin and Kayode (2024) reported that Christian leaders in Nigeria not only preach environmental responsibility like participating in clean up, managing worship premises with the consciousness of sustainability, congregants tend to take note. This suggests that role modelling may influence congregants' behaviour. In the same manner, Isaac, Oripelope and Adejo (2023) found that religious institution which visibly engages members in communal environmental actions like tree planting, clean-ups and resource sharing seem more successful in encouraging sustainable practices among their congregants. When the congregants observe others in their faith group acting and receiving approval and communal bonding, they tend to imitate them.

### *Pastoral Counselling as a Tool for Behavioural Change*

Pastoral counselling is an established avenue for shaping individual and collective values, traditionally focusing on spiritual guidance, emotional care, and relational harmony. In Africa, it has evolved as both a therapeutic practice and a moral compass within communities (Okonkwo and Olubunmi 2024). Importantly, pastoral counselling is relational and context-specific, making it effective for promoting lifestyle changes grounded in faith. Studies have shown that counselling interventions influence attitudes toward family life, substance use, and social responsibility (Ududele, et al. 2022). Extending this influence to environmental stewardship is a logical progression, particularly given the overlap between counselling goals and sustainability values.

Emerging scholarship argues for closer integration of pastoral care with environmental education. Okonkwo and Olubunmi (2024) emphasise how digital tools have extended the reach of pastoral

counselling across Africa; such platforms could be repurposed for eco-theological messaging and sustainability campaigns. Authors have called for faith-based counselling programs that explicitly address climate adaptation, waste reduction and ecological justice (Isaac, et al. 2023; Aneke, 2024). By combining spiritual formation with practical guidance, pastoral counselling can help individuals make faith-consistent lifestyle adjustments such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and engaging in communal environmental projects. Moreover, faith leaders in Nigeria command trust that secular institutions often lack (Odudele, et. al. 2024). Leveraging this trust for environmental counselling could enhance the credibility and uptake of sustainability initiatives.

Despite the increased attention, there are gaps to be filled. Most Nigerian studies document attitude rather than long-term behavioural outcomes, leaving unclear whether faith-inspired ecological teachings result in measurable environmental change. Few of the empirical studies test structured pastoral counselling programs that integrate sustainability, making this an area ripe for intervention research. It is also clear that indigenous religious perspectives, which often include ecological taboos and conservation practices, remain underexplored in the academic literature. Finally, interfaith collaborations; where Christian, Muslim and indigenous leaders work together for environmental advocacy are rarely documented despite Nigeria's religious pluralism.

## Research Methodology

This paper employs a theoretical research design rooted in conceptual analysis and integrative literature review. No data were collected but the study synthesises and interprets existing scholarship, religious texts, and pastoral counselling frameworks to advance new insight into the role of faith on sustainable living practices from 2019 to 2025. The methodology ensures a comprehensive and transparent approach to source selection and analysis. A deliberate effort was made to seek out studies, reports, and case studies relevant to the African and particularly Nigerian context, where available.

Literature was sourced from academic databases, including JSTOR, Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science, as well as institutional repositories from organizations like the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Keywords used in searching included faith and sustainability, religion and environmental ethics, faith-based organizations and climate action, integral ecology, interfaith environmental initiatives, pastoral counselling and environment, eco-theology Nigeria, and climate change Nigeria faith. Additional sources were identified through snowball sampling, tracing citations in key articles.

Studies were included if they were published between 2019 and 2025, focused on the intersection of faith and sustainability, were peer-reviewed articles, books, or reputable reports, and provided empirical data, theological analysis, or case studies. Exclusions included non-peer-reviewed sources, pre-2019 publications (except foundational texts like Laudato Si'), and studies lacking a clear focus on faith-based sustainability. A total of 35 sources were selected, including 20 journal articles, 10 reports, and 5 book chapters. Where possible, preference was given to studies with direct relevance or transferable insights to the Nigerian context.

Although no human participants are directly involved, this study maintains ethical responsibility in its interpretation of religious texts and cultural practices. Care is taken to avoid misinterpretation of religion doctrines, and all sources are properly acknowledged to ensure academic integrity.

## Challenges and Opportunities in the Nigerian Context

Faith-based sustainability efforts face significant hurdles but also present unique opportunities to drive change, particularly when viewed through the specific socio-economic and cultural lens of Nigeria.

### *Challenges*

1. ***Theological Resistance and the Prosperity Gospel:*** Koehrsen (2021) notes that some Christian and Islamic groups prioritize eschatological beliefs, viewing climate action as secondary to spiritual salvation. In Nigeria, the pervasive influence of the Prosperity Gospel in some Pentecostal and Evangelical churches can inadvertently de-emphasize earthly stewardship by focusing solely on material blessings and divine intervention, sometimes leading to a detachment from environmental responsibility. This worldview may see environmental degradation as a spiritual battle or a sign of the end times, rather than a human-induced crisis requiring human action.
2. ***Resource Constraints and Infrastructure Deficits:*** While FBOs possess vast networks, many, especially in rural sub-Saharan Africa, struggle to finance large-scale renewable energy projects or implement sustainable waste management systems due to limited financial resources

and underdeveloped infrastructure (Singh et al., 2023). The daily struggle for basic necessities often overshadows long-term environmental concerns.

3. ***Limited Secular-Religious Collaboration and Trust Deficits:*** Scientific communities sometimes view faith-based efforts as lacking empirical rigor (UNEP, 2020), while some religious groups may view secular environmentalism as detached from spiritual values. In Nigeria, this divide can be exacerbated by historical tensions or perceived ideological differences, hindering synergistic partnerships necessary for holistic solutions.
4. ***Cultural Barriers and Gender Norms:*** While indigenous traditions offer rich environmental ethics, certain cultural norms, including gender roles in some faiths, can hinder the inclusive participation of women and marginalized groups in sustainability initiatives, despite their critical role in household resource management and community resilience (Oyewo 2024). Issues like land ownership and decision-making power can be gendered, impacting the effectiveness of community-based environmental projects.
5. ***Poverty and Governance Issues:*** The pervasive issues of poverty, unemployment, and weak governance structures in Nigeria mean that environmental concerns are often secondary to immediate survival needs. Corruption can also divert funds meant for environmental initiatives, further hindering progress (Ugochukwu et al., 2008).

### *Opportunities*

1. ***Science-Faith Partnerships and Contextualized Education:*** Collaborations like UNEP's Faith for Earth initiative demonstrate the power of dialogue, with Kenyan workshops training clergy to integrate climate science into sermons (UNEP, 2020). In Nigeria, similar programs can empower pastoral counsellors and faith leaders to translate complex environmental science into culturally resonant and biblically/religiously informed messages, making it accessible to grassroots communities.
2. ***FBOs' Institutional Assets as Platforms for Change:*** FBOs manage significant assets—8% of habitable land and half of global schools—offering platforms for education and stewardship (WRI, 2023). In Brazil, Catholic schools have reached 2 million students with environmental curricula. In Nigeria, school networks operated by FBOs can become centres for environmental education, promoting practical skills like waste segregation, tree planting, and even vocational training in sustainable agriculture or renewable energy.
3. ***Digital Platforms for Advocacy and Community Building:*** Digital platforms, particularly X, enable advocacy, as seen in the Global Faith Leadership Summit's 2024 virtual campaigns, which engaged 50,000 participants across 30 countries (Ives et al., 2024). For Nigeria, social media can be a powerful tool for youth-led campaigns, disseminating practical sustainability tips, organizing clean-up drives, and advocating for policy change, circumventing some geographical and infrastructural barriers.
4. ***Interfaith Networks for Collective Impact and Advocacy:*** Interfaith networks, like the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, amplify collective impact by uniting diverse traditions. In Nigeria, building on existing interfaith dialogue forums, these networks can present a united front for environmental advocacy, lobbying policymakers, and mobilizing large-scale community action on issues that transcend religious divides, such as plastic pollution or illegal mining.
5. ***Pastoral Counsellors as Key Facilitators:*** Pastoral counsellors are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between theological concepts and practical action. Their skills in empathy, active listening, motivational interviewing, and group facilitation can; address eco-anxiety and despair, fostering resilience and hope, help individuals and communities process the psychological impact of environmental degradation, facilitate dialogue on theological interpretations that hinder environmental action, promoting alternative perspectives rooted in creation care and justice, equip congregants with practical skills for sustainable living within their local contexts and advocate for policies that address both environmental and social justice issues. These opportunities position faith communities, particularly with the strategic involvement of pastoral counsellors, as pivotal actors in Nigeria's sustainability journey.

## Results and Discussion

### *Findings*

The synthesis of literature and theoretical perspectives produced several key insights:

1. ***Faith as a catalyst for sustainability:*** The three prominent religious traditions in Nigeria contain teachings that encourage stewardship of creation, moderation in consumption, and

communal responsibility. These doctrines provide theological foundation for environmental ethics, yet their practical application is inconsistent (Aneke, 2024; Bello, 2022).

2. ***Pastoral counselling as a vehicle of behavioural change:*** Pastoral counselling offers a relational platform to translate ecological values into lived practices. By incorporating ecology into counselling sessions and sermons, faith leaders can influence attitudes and behaviours in ways that secular institutions cannot (Okonkwo and Olubunmi, 2024)
3. ***Modelling and social learning:*** Social Learning Theory emerged as a crucial mechanism; when spiritual leaders and counsellors visibly model eco-friendly practices, congregants are more likely to imitate and sustain those practices. Reinforcement through community approval further strengthens this effect (Isaac, Orilope and Adejo, 2023)
4. ***Gaps in integration:*** Despite theological and counselling resources, Nigerian faith communities often lack structured programs or curricula that explicitly link pastoral counselling with ecological sustainability. This gap calls for intentional structure and training.

## Discussion

Findings underscore that faith community in Nigeria hold significant but underutilised potential in promoting sustainable living. The persistent ecological degradation manifested in poor waste management, deforestation and pollution reflects not only policy gaps but also weak cultural and spiritual mobilisation. While government and NGOs have initiated environmental programs, they often lack deep cultural penetration. Faith based institutions, by contrast, command trust, legitimacy and moral authority across communities. When environmental stewardship is framed as a divine mandate, it carries stronger motivational power than secular appeals alone (Aneke, 2024).

Pastoral counselling can function as both corrective (challenging unsustainable behaviours) and constructive (guiding sustainable alternatives). Counsellors can embed ecological teachings in premarital counselling, grief counselling and community support sessions, ensuring that sustainability becomes part of holistic well-being. Importantly, pastoral counselling is relational and personal, making it well-suited to help individuals connect ecological responsibility with their faith journey.

Social learning theory provides a practical explanation of how sustainable practices spread in congregations. When leaders model eco-friendly behaviour such as organising religious premises clean-ups, reducing plastic use during religious events, or planting trees around worship centres, members observe and adopt these practices. Reinforcement through communal recognition like praising eco-conscious behaviours during worship ensures continuity. This dynamic demonstrates that pastoral counselling and faith leadership can create a ripple effect in behaviour change.

## Conclusion

Faith traditions offer unique resources for advancing sustainable living, blending spiritual values with practical action. From Christian integral ecology to Islamic *khalifa* and Indigenous *kaitiakitanga*, religious teachings inspire environmental stewardship. Empirical evidence highlights the impact of institutional projects, behavioural interventions, and digital youth advocacy globally. However, for Nigeria, theological resistance, resource constraints, pervasive poverty, and limited secular collaboration require strategic, context-specific solutions, such as science-faith partnerships, digital innovation, and crucially, the intentional integration of counselling psychology principles.

## Recommendations

Based on this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Counselling sessions should intentionally address the spiritual responsibility of caring for creation. They can connect ecological responsibility with themes of healing, renewal and reconciliation.
2. Seminaries, theological colleges and Islamic schools should introduce modules on eco-theology, environmental stewardship, and counselling for sustainable living. Partnership with Nigerian universities strengthens research and training in this area.
3. Churches, mosques and counselling centres should lead by example through practices such as tree planting, reducing plastic use, recycling and energy conservation. Leaders modelling supported by social learning theory, will reinforce eco-conscious behaviours among congregants.
4. Inter-faith collaboration should be encouraged. Joint Christian-Muslim initiatives can demonstrate unity in addressing Nigeria's ecological crises. Shared programs, such as community clean-ups or awareness campaigns, will amplify impact and reduce duplication of efforts.
5. Policy linkages between government and faith communities encouraged. Governmental environmental agencies should formally recognize and partner with faith-based organisations in

sustainability campaigns. Faith leaders can serve as mediators between policy directives and grassroots adoption.

6. Empirical studies should test the effectiveness of counselling-based interventions in shaping ecological behaviours. Comparative research across faith traditions in Nigeria can highlight unique contributions and common ground.

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