

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: AN ECOTHEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Wolter Parlindungan Silalahi¹, Monang Asi Sianturi², Arip Surpi Sitompul³, Andar Gunawan Pasaribu⁴, Binur Panjaitan⁵, Lustani Samosir⁶, Rida Gultom⁷, Ibelala Gea⁸, Evi Ulina Turnip⁹, Rismawaty P Rajagukguk⁹

¹ Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; silalahiwalter1@gmail.com

² Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; monanggambiri@yahoo.co.id

³ Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; aripsurpisitompul@gmail.com

⁴ Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; andargunawanpsaribu@gmail.com

⁵ Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; binurpanjaitan5@gmail.com

⁶ Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; lustani_s@yahoo.co.id

⁷ Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; ridagultom@gmail.com

⁸ Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; ibasloel3@gmail.com

⁹ Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; eviulinaturnip@gmail.com

¹⁰ Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; rajagukgukrisma@gmail.com

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ABSTRAK

Krisis lingkungan saat ini menuntut upaya konkret dari seluruh elemen masyarakat. Pendekatan eko-teologis memberikan perspektif religius dan etis dalam mengelola alam sebagai ciptaan Tuhan yang harus dijaga kelestariannya. Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk memberikan sosialisasi dan pelatihan kepada masyarakat dalam memahami pengelolaan lingkungan berdasarkan nilai-nilai eko-teologis. Metode yang digunakan meliputi ceramah, diskusi, dan praktik pengelolaan lingkungan sederhana. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan peningkatan kesadaran masyarakat akan pentingnya perlindungan lingkungan dan munculnya inisiatif kolektif dalam pengelolaan sampah dan reboisasi.

Kata Kunci: Manajemen Lingkungan; Eko-Teologi; Pengabdian masyarakat

ABSTRACT

The current environmental crisis demands concrete efforts from all elements of society. The ecotheological approach provides a religious and ethical perspective on managing nature as God's creation, which must be preserved for its sustainability. This community service activity aims to provide outreach and training to the community in understanding environmental management based on ecotheological values. The methods used include lectures, discussions, and simple environmental management practices. The results of the activity indicate increased public awareness of the importance of environmental protection and the emergence of collective initiatives in waste management and reforestation

Keywords: Environmental Management; Eco Theology; Community Service

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Corresponding Author:

Wolter Parlindungan Silalahi

Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Indonesia; Silalahiwalter1@gmail.com

Introduction

Environmental issues are currently a major concern in various parts of the world. The phenomena of global warming, air pollution, water pollution, the accumulation of plastic waste, deforestation, and the decline in biodiversity are clear symptoms of the ecological crisis currently gripping the earth. Climate change, characterized by rising average global temperatures, shifting seasons, and increasingly frequent natural disasters, demonstrates that environmental damage not only threatens natural ecosystems but also disrupts the quality of human life (Raharjo, Bachtiar, Ruslinda, Matsumoto, & Rachman, 2019). Environmental management from an ecotheological perspective emphasizes the importance of balancing human needs with ecosystem sustainability. This approach teaches that preserving the environment is a form of worship, obedience, and moral responsibility to the Creator (Wijaya, Santoso, & Azhar, 2021). Furthermore, ecotheology can also serve as a foundation for developing sustainable, equitable, and future-oriented development policies and practices (Triyanti, Kurniasari, Yuliaty, Muawanah, & Febrian, 2020).

Historically, the modern development paradigm, which emphasizes the exploitation of natural resources for economic growth, often neglects ecological balance. As a result, nature is treated as an object with only instrumental value, without regard for its function and dignity as a creation closely related to human life. This is where the need for a new paradigm for viewing, managing, and protecting the environment arises. One perspective that offers an ethical and spiritual framework is ecotheology (Muhashiby, Hasibuan, & Wahyono, 2021). Ecotheology seeks to integrate ecological awareness with theological values, namely the belief that the universe is God's creation, endowed with meaning and purpose (Naldi, Herdiansyah, & Saraswati Putri, 2021). This perspective emphasizes that humans are not absolute rulers of nature, but rather partners and stewards mandated to maintain and preserve creation (Fitriani, 2021). Thus, environmental management is not solely driven by economic and social interests, but also by an ethical and spiritual calling (Radhali & Wahyu Ramadhani, 2021).

In the Indonesian context, environmental issues are both unique and complex. As an archipelagic nation with abundant natural resources, Indonesia has a significant opportunity to develop sustainable environmental management. However, uncontrolled natural resource exploitation often neglects sustainability (Fadhilah, Relynada, Erin, & Fadhillah, 2022). For example, illegal logging causes flooding, landslides, and the loss of flora and fauna habitats. In urban areas, household waste and air pollution are major issues, directly impacting public health. Furthermore, public awareness of the importance of environmental protection remains relatively low (Ghani, 2021). Many individuals and communities still view nature solely as a means to meet their needs without considering the long-term impacts (Pangihutan & Jura, 2022). An anthropocentric paradigm placing humans at the center of everything—often leads people to feel entitled to exploit nature without limits (Sayem, 2021). However, nature has the right to be cared for and preserved for the survival of all living things (Zheng, Xu, & Kong, 2017).

To address these problems, an approach is needed that is not only technical but also addresses moral, spiritual, and cultural dimensions. One approach considered relevant is ecotheology. The term ecotheology refers to theological reflections that connect humanity's relationship with God and nature. Ecotheology emphasizes that humans are not absolute rulers over nature, but rather part of creation, mandated to "cultivate and care for" the earth. Thus, excessive exploitation of nature is a betrayal of the divine mandate (Kgatle & Chigorimbo, 2024). An ecotheological perspective can provide an ethical and spiritual foundation for environmental management practices (Panahi & Moayerian, 2025). Religious values, such as gratitude, responsibility, justice, and concern for fellow creatures, are essential pillars in building ecological awareness. In religious traditions, humans are called to live in harmony with nature and maintain the harmony of creation (Pangihutan & Jura, 2022). This means that environmental destruction is not only an ecological issue, but also a moral and spiritual one.

In the context of community service, the integration of environmental management and ecotheology is crucial (Keriapy, 2023). Environmental management is inextricably linked to changes in people's mindsets and behaviors (Sayem, 2021). Education on how to sort waste, make compost, or reforest will be more effective if coupled with awareness that these actions have spiritual value. In other words, maintaining a clean environment is not only a social obligation but also a form of worship with religious value (Concradie & Lobeda, 2022). Therefore, the community service activity themed "Environmental Management: An Ecotheological Perspective" aims to instill ecological awareness based on spiritual values, ethics, and moral responsibility (Concradie & Lobeda, 2022). Through outreach, discussions, and hands-on practice, the community is encouraged to understand that protecting the environment is a concrete manifestation of responsibility as human beings and religious communities (Setyawan, 2021). This activity is expected to not only increase technical knowledge but also build collective awareness to create a sustainable ecological culture (Olawumi & Mavuso, 2023).

Method

This community service activity was held in Lumban Barat Village, Humbang Hasundutan Regency (Gilal, Ashraf, Gilal, Gilal, & Chaana, 2019). Participants included 15 community members, including religious leaders, traditional leaders, youth, and housewives (Cholil & Parker, 2022). The presence of diverse groups is expected to foster strong collaboration in environmental protection. The implementation method consisted of four main stages: 1. Counseling and Education 2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) (Chursinova, Petrushenko, & Petrushenko, 2025) 3. Field Practice (tree planting) 4. Mentoring and Monitoring (Ichsan, Sigit, Miarsyah, Ali, & Suwandi, 2020)

Results and Discussion

The implementation of the activities demonstrated several important achievements. First, the community began to understand the relationship between faith and ecological responsibility. Participants realized that protecting the environment is part of practicing their faith (Rachmat, 2022). Second, an environmental awareness group was formed that

plays an active role in managing household waste (Simanjuntak, Alexander, Venturini, Lumbantoruan, & Mulyadi, 2021). Third, the reforestation activities succeeded in planting hundreds of tree seedlings, which are expected to improve air quality and maintain groundwater availability (Nurwidodo, Amin, Ibrohim, & Sueb, 2020). Group discussions demonstrated a shift in community attitudes toward greater environmental concern (Olawumi, Mavuso, & Khalo, 2024). This indicates that the ecotheological approach is able to tap into the spiritual dimension of the community, so that environmental management is seen not only as a legal obligation but also as a moral and spiritual calling (Sunaedi, Hadi, & Bambang, 2019).



Figure 1. Series of Community Service Activities

Conclusion

The community service activity with the theme "Environmental Management: An Ecotheological Perspective" successfully increased community awareness and participation in environmental protection. The ecotheological approach has proven effective in building ecological awareness rooted in spiritual values. Recommendations for the future include the need for more intensive follow-up activities, such as the establishment of eco-friendly village regulations, household-scale waste management training, and the development of an ecotheology-based environmental education curriculum.

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