

Perceptions on the Nexus between Water and Religion: A Christian Theological Perspective

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Abstract

Water plays a crucial role in societies and the universe as a whole. It creates and sustains life and, in the process, legitimizes social hierarchies. Water is used in several physical and non – physical ways, including in religious practices. However, there appear to be insufficient studies that try to ascertain the link between Water and religion. This study examined perceptions of the association between water and religion. It assessed water as a sacred resource in line with theological aspects, as being required in remembering God through spiritual rituals and practices, for He allows humanity and nature to flourish. The study also addressed the importance of conserving this resource. An interpretive and theological framework from the Christian perspective was used to understand this nexus. Further thematic analysis led to the identification of three main themes. Semi – structured interviews were carried out with 21 participants from the Christian faith. The results revealed that water is a sacred resource that is highly used in religion. It brings healing, sanctification, and consecration among users. Water also plays a pivotal role in baptism and spiritual rituals, and is also very helpful in improving the health of individuals. Water conservation, including rainwater harvesting, recycling, and the avoidance of water pollution, was recommended.

Introduction

Water is a very essential natural resource that is highly necessary for the sustenance of life. Without water, no species will be able to inhabit the planet Earth. It also has connotations of being sacred and forms the basis for all cultures and religions (Dubey & Dubey, 2022). The human body constitutes a substantial amount of water, which it uses for various purposes, including the formation of blood and quenching of thirst, enabling the body to function properly. If the body functions properly, human beings feel healthy (Wergin, 2022). Water is a unique natural resource partly because of its vast benefits and uses, which are both physical and non – physical. The different ways to express life and humanity are best understood through the broad knowledge of spheres, of which water is the prime component. It links different aspects of humanity into a coherent unit and is a social and religious resource to which societies and human beings have strong attachments. It is also greatly associated with the realm of nature as liquid (Oestigaard, 2005). The hydrosphere, which is the total amount of water on the planet, encompasses all places and all structures together. It conceptualizes the world through its physical and historical character and interconnects the past with the present and the future. These dualistic attributes of water are both cultural and natural, but also life – giving, enabling humanity to have significant connections to water in ways that supersede any other elements (Tvedt, 2002).

Numerous practices, including construction, energy, recreation, religious practices, basic ecosystems, and agriculture, all rely on the availability and, more importantly, the accessibility of this resource. Similarly, economic, social, and cultural practices founded in common traditions also function constructively as a result of the presence of water (Porta & Wolf, 2021). Ordinarily, there is a strong association between water and religion, and the two cannot be separated. Religion is the acknowledgement of God as the creator and the deeper sense of interconnection between all creations (Ramawadh et al., 2023). Religion seeks to understand or ascertain the beginning and development of the universe as a whole, as well as the role of humanity within it (Chuvieco, 2012). To fully appreciate the spiritual aspects of water, it is important to first understand the origins of this resource. Drawing from the creationist theory, water is documented as part of God's first creation. The Bible states that after God created the heavens and the earth, His Spirit hovered upon the face of the water that covered His creation (Genesis 1:1–2). This clearly proposes that water was part of the creation of the heavens and the earth. The scriptures further reveal that God created a vault between the waters to separate waters from waters to create order in the universe. Some of the water went under the vault while some remained above it (Genesis 2:6). The movement of water beneath and above the vault meant that some water was trapped underground while some remained on land to form rivers, streams and oceans (surface water). The water trapped underground is what scientists refer to as groundwater, and this water is found in subterranean aquifers underneath the earth's surface (O'Donnell, 2025).

Since creation, water has been used for various purposes and continues to be a vital resource essential in different aspects of life. The creationist theory validates the interconnection of water to religion in the sense that water was created by God and He controls this natural resource (Psalm 24:1). This is evident in the fact that He directs the water to be contained within the sea and not spill over to the land where human beings have established their structures of abode (Job 38:8). Such action depicts Him as a God who is in control of water and a loving creator who ensures a balance of things. Some theologians posit that the vault or the firmament is the space between heavens and the earth. They argue that construed on the fact that the Spirit of God was hovering over the whole creation which included heavens and the earth, the separating of the waters was between these two elements. This vault is portrayed as a solid space above the earth and the sky. It is assumed to separate the earthly realm from what is beyond the earth. The Bible portrays it as a place with 'windows and doors' from where comes rain and snow (Christian Editorial Staff, 2024; Genesis 7:11; Isaiah 24; 18). While there are variations on the separating of the waters from waters, the general agreement among theist is that water was available in the first creation (Brown, 2015).

The uses of water vary from physical to spiritual. It is often categorized by virtue of its life giving nature as both physical and spiritual in principle and often viewed more spiritual than physical particularly in religion. This resource is used in various ways across different religious groups and this includes being used in the ritual acts of purification, reparation, revitalization and socialization (Singh, 2020). The usage of holy water is quite common in Christianity and other religions. Holy water or sacred water is water that has been blessed by a member of the church leaders or a clergy. It is perceived as a repellent of evil forces (Evinger, 2018). According to Flemming (2008) water is an important medium in various ceremonies and religious rites. It is often associated with divine agency. Oceans, rivers, streams, rainfall and snow are some of the forms water takes when incorporated and interpreted in religious spheres. Water flowing from rivers, oceans, streams, and water harvested from rainfall is described as a symbol of sanctification and purity (Meister, 2000). It has properties that enable it to cure diseases and has an important role in the cyclical nature. This resource is a very prominent component in religion particularly in rituals and worship. It is professed as sacred and is constantly in fluidity and emergence whilst maintaining its close association with a precise location of its origin (Mody, 2018).

There is a lot of reference in scripture whereby water was widely used. For example water was used in baptism which is referred to as an important step in some religious organizations like in Christianity. It symbolizes the death of the old carnal being, being cleansed and rebirthed and in the process resurrected into a new spirit – filled life (Acts 2:38 – 41; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:1 – 4; Colossians 2:9 – 13). Oestigaard (2005) also agrees affirming that symbolism of water in baptism indicates both death and rebirth. In the Christian faith, when an initiate is baptized, the individual dies from the carnal self in the water and is reborn from it in the Kingdom of God attaining salvation. Conversely, baptism is a practice that plays a pivotal role in salvation. Exodus also records another account whereby water was used for purification. The Lord instructed Moses to make a bronze basin and fill it with water. This water was to be used by Aaron the priest and his sons to wash their hands and their feet before entering the tent of meeting and also when approaching the altar. The Bible says that Aaron had to do the washing of hands to prevent him from dying and such an ordinance was to last forever for Aaron and his descendants for generations to come (Exodus 30:17 – 21; 40:30 – 38). The severe consequence of death emphasizes the holiness necessary in approaching God. In the broader biblical theme, God is holy those who serve Him must be holy and thus the washing of hands and feet may be construed to symbolize holiness (Leviticus 11:44). In another account, the Bible reveals that the Pharisees and Jews did not eat before washing their hands with water. They also used water to wash cups, pots, dining couches and copper vessels holding to the tradition of their forefathers (Mark 7:1 – 5). This shows the long history of water usage and its importance in human lives.

Water in the form of rain carried in the atmosphere pours down and infiltrates the soil, and also fills rivers and oceans, ensuring replenishment of surface water to support life. This water is used in different ways, including bathing, cleaning, washing, cooking, drinking, irrigation of crops, and other non – physical uses. Water found in rivers, streams, lakes, wells, and oceans also played a significant role in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Kotze & Van der Walt, 2023). A practical example of such significance is documented in the Bible, whereby the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, fleeing away from Egypt, a place of slavery. The Bible states that the water from the Red Sea parted, and the people of Israel, who were people of God, crossed on dry land. The Egyptian armies were pursuing them, trying to stop them from leaving Egypt, and God performed a miracle on behalf of the Israelites. Scripture reveals that the Egyptians were not able to cross the Sea as the water came crushing down and drowned them (Exodus 14:21 – 29). Moses, who was the leader, together with the rest of the Israelites, sang the Song of the Sea. Miriam led the women in song and they danced unto the Lord (Posner, 2025). They were praising and thanking God for saving them from their enemies. Water can also be used for destructive purposes. The fact that the Egyptians were destroyed or killed in the Red Sea presents evidence that water can be used to destroy enemies or kill people. Apart from the Red Sea encounter, water is observed as a destruction medium in the Noahic phenomenon whereby the Bible states that God destroyed the world due to the sinful nature of humanity. God instructed Noah to build an ark in readiness for the destruction that was to come (Genesis 6:5 – 7). The Bible clearly notes that this destruction was initiated by God acting in anger towards humanity for their pervasive ways (Genesis 6:6). Indeed this event took place whereby it rained continuous and all living things were wiped out. It was only Noah, his family and all different kinds of animals in pairs (male and female) that were spared (Genesis 6:6; 7 – 9). This displays the destructive attributes of water. It is observed that the destructive attributes of water are allowed by God and He also has the capability to contain water keeping it from being a violent resource. The Noahic theory presents evidence of the close link between water and the divine.

There are many instances whereby the Bible uses water symbolically. For example Water can mean trouble or problems. In the book of Psalm 69:1 David pleaded with God to rescue him because the waters were up to his neck. Similarly, David said; 'He sent from on high. He took me. He drew me out of many waters' (Psalm 1:16). While this can mean being saved from drowning in the physical water, this statement can also be paralleled to being saved from many trials and tribulations. The statement by David can be construed as meaning being saved from troubles of life. In many faith – based organizations, water symbolizes healing, reconciliation and regeneration (Priscoli, 2012). The Bible also symbolically depicts Jesus Christ as living water. The book of John says; 'On the last and greatest festival, Jesus stood up and said in loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to

me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them' (John 7:37–38). The King James Version of the Bible says 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water'. Notice that the Scripture speaks of anyone who believes in Christ, that individual shall have rivers of living water flowing in their belly. This cannot be literal water but rather an invitation to accept Him as the Christ. This can be interpreted to say that if anyone accepts Christ, He flows within his belly. It is safe to surmise that this scripture refers to Christ. He gives people living water. Christ is depicted as living in heaven after He rose from the death. This scripture refers to a Christ who is believed to be living hence the reference of living water. The book of Isaiah 12:3 speaks of drawing water from the wells of salvation, suggesting that salvation brings spiritual water. Biblically, salvation comes through accepting Christ (Romans 10:9; John 14:6). This also authenticates Christ as the living water documented in the book of John.

This study tried to ascertain the role of water in the relationship between human beings and the creator God. What is the relationship between water and religion? That is the question the study tried to contribute answers to. The aim of the study was first to find out the importance of water in the day to day lives of human beings and second, to ascertain the significance of water and its usage in religion. It argues that water was created by God and therefore sacred and cannot be separated from religion (Franks, 2008). Theological aspects of water require remembering God through spiritual practices like baptism for He allows humanity and nature to flourish (Kotzǎ & Van der – Walt, 2023). This relationship between water and the supernatural is important in religion as water features greatly in most religious bodies. The study also addresses the importance of conserving this resource ensuring sustainability of life. This exploratory study evaluates the nexus between water and religion by integrating both theological acumen and contemporary findings. The theological reflections and scholarly discourse contributes in offering comprehensive insights in understanding the subject. It presents unique and innovative inquiries, from a qualitative methodological approach. The study is limited in the sense that it had a low number of participants and it views the nexus of water and religion only from the Christian perspective. Vasileiou et al. (2018) support small sample sizes in a qualitative research. They suggest that small sample sizes allows for an in – depth analysis of the subject under inquiry. This study recommends further research from different religious perspectives.

There is a common belief in religion that everything that exists either visible or invisible is spiritual in nature. This is the reason why water is viewed as a sacred resource with a certain purpose in life and spirituality. To a certain extent religion plays an important role in showing how to deal with water more than science (Hagan, 2018). It has been established that water is needed for sustenance of life. If this resource sustains life it then becomes imperative to conserve it. In creating water, God willed that humanity would

have sufficient water in quantity but also have quality water. He labeled His creation as very good (Genesis 1:31). To be good or created well means nothing is bad about water, and it can cause no damage on its own unless allowed by God, polluted, or used by humans for the purposes of causing harm (Holmes 1995). Everything on earth belongs to God, and he allowed humanity to enjoy the fruits of the land (Psalm 24:1). God cares for His creation and His eyes are constantly upon it (Deuteronomy 11:12). In allowing humanity to enjoy the land, He also issued a warning against polluting the environment, including water (Numbers 35:33; Ezekiel 34:18).

Water conservation and misuse are among the prime subjects in modern societies, considering the increasing climate change challenges (Marulak, 2023). Marulak called for a balance in developments done in societies to ensure that water is conserved. Seemingly industrial, residential and church developments prioritize economic and spiritual gains over sustainability of water (Turnip, 2024). In doing so, the sustainability of water and other ecosystems are threatened. There has to be educational initiatives, improvements in lifestyles increased legal frameworks and other communication tools for all including religious organizations in order to conserve water (Savage, 2006). However governments, religions and researchers must first establish appropriate ways to frame interactions which will reach specific populations through identifying the drivers of water conservation in residential households, religious establishments and industrial sites and these tend to be complex (Moglia et al., 2018).

Research Method

This qualitative study employed an interpretive and theological framework to examine the nexus between water as a sacred resource and religion from the Christian perspective. It is exploratory in nature, whereby the perspectives of participants created a better understanding of this phenomenon. It was important to get participants' perceptions to allow the researcher to witness how water interacts with religion as they have lived the religious life in the midst of the availability of water (Mugambiwa & Rapholo, 2024). Further thematic analysis was used to identify themes. Thematic analysis is not bound to any theoretical framework. In that sense, thematic analysis is a versatile tool suitable for qualitative study (Ahmed et al., 2025). Twenty – one (21) participants from the Christian faith were selected using a purposive data collection method. Semi – structured interviews were conducted to get the perceptions of participants. Twelve participants were male, and nine (9) were female. According to Vasileiou et al. (2018), sample sizes in qualitative research tend to be small in order to support the in – depth analysis of the subject under inquiry. Participants were between the ages of 21 and 54 years. All participants were asked to sign a consent form after the objective of the study was explained to them. The researcher guided the questions in order to get the individual's relationship with and perceptions about water. Additionally, the interview questions were set up in a way to

ascertain participants' religious practices, which involve the usage of water, and how these impact the community and religion (Risko, 2018). Participation was voluntary and it was explained to them that if at any point they felt like stopping the interview, they were allowed to do so. Data was transcribed and three main themes emerged.

Perceptions

After the data was coded and analyzed, following an interpretive and theological framework, perceptions of the participants gave insights into understanding the nexus between water and religion. All participants conceded that water is a sacred natural resource that sustains life. For example the human body constitutes a substantial amount of water and the water in body aids in the continuous flow of blood in the human system. Participants agreed that in the absence of water, nothing alive will be sustained. According to most participants plants and animals are also strongly reliant on this sacred resource. The bodies of animals require water for them to be fully functional. Plants also require water in order to grow and reproduce. Therefore water plays a pivotal role in enhancing reproduction (Tvedt, 2002). Participants argued that without water, the agricultural sector will not thrive and consequently, the availability of food for both humans and animals will be affected. This finding substantiates Atheru & Gichohi (2025) who also noted that water is important in the sustainability of humanity and animals. Water was seen as vital in contribution to peace in the continent. Without water, the human race will be unstable and their health will be affected (1 John 1:2). The availability of food which is made possible by the presence of water contributes greatly to the health and well-being of individual. Participants further revealed that shortage of water will result in the eruption of illnesses and greatly increase the level of poverty across the globe (Nazarko, 2018). Water was also perceived as essential in the purification of the human body through bathing (Leviticus 15:13). Not only that, it also plays an important role in washing of clothes and cleaning of houses enhancing the health of individuals.

There was a strong agreement that water plays a pivotal role in cleansing. Two participants made an example of the COVID 19 period whereby water was highly used to wash hands. It was perceived to reduce the spread of the virus. Health specialists recommended constant washing of hands with soap and water and this was a global recommendation. Sanitizers were also widely used in place of water to control the pandemic. Sanitizers were viewed by participants as containing a substantial amount of water in them and without water it would be difficult to formulate sanitizers. Participants also revealed that water plays an imperative role in the preparation of food to be consumed by humans. A lot of food requires water to be prepared and this is very essential in maintaining the health of individuals. Some participants revealed that water is used to make tea which improves the health of individuals (Porta & Wolf, 2021). Certain herbs are perceived as beneficial when mixed with water to make this tea which is also helpful in

healing some illnesses in the body (Genesis 1:29: Psalms 51:7. Similarly, three participants saw water as very helpful if used as steam. They mentioned that they boil water and cover themselves either with a blanket or a huge plastic bag which prevents the steam from spreading out of the confined area. Steaming was seen as very helpful in repelling evil forces and also removes any dirt in the pores enabling the body to function properly. According to participants, there are steaming services or facilities whereby people pay a certain amount to steam and detoxed in such establishments. They highlighted that after steaming one feels free or re – energized.

Some participants highlighted that they use holy water for steaming purposes and adding a tad bit of holy water in steaming water was portrayed as helpful in repelling evil forces. Some participants revealed that the usage of holy water is not availed in most public steaming places. Consequently, it is a practice that is mostly used privately at home based on the varying belief system of public users of steaming facilities. For participant G and J the usage of holy water helped them immensely particularly in repelling evil forces ensuring that they have peaceful sleep at night. Water was also portrayed as used to wash hands and feet of individuals as a spiritual practice. The washing of feet was linked to bringing luck to the individual. If one has clean hands and feet, wherever his feet touches, he will be accepted and respected. Water also rendered as very instrumental in quenching thirst and contributes greatly to the sustainability of the human body. It is also very important in washing the human body and clothes ensuring that individuals don't smell. This finding is aligns with symbolical biblical accounts of the book of Hebrews which states that; 'Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water' (Hebrews 10; 22).

Apart from washing the human body, water was seen as very helpful in cleaning houses and household utensils and in the process eliminating germs and order organisms which may affect the health of individuals. While participants supported ritualistic practices aligned with water, there appeared to be some concerns with rituals that tend to venerate hydro – spiritual gods. The veneration of such hydro – serpents was seen as stripping God of His supremacy. Some participants saw a danger in the worship of sea gods. They highlighted that it is dangers to uplift spirits which there are no guidelines to control. Angering such spirits has no sufficient founding instructions to appease if they get angered. There are no biblical accounts of how to control such hydro – spirits. So the practice of serving such gods was understood as diving into the dark without direction and very dangerous. Participants suggested abstinence from such practices. Other participants appeared to refute the existence of sea gods firmly confirming that there is one true God who cannot be equated to sea gods or any other god for that matter. It became evident that there were variations in the existence of other gods except the true

God who created the heavens and the earth. The Bible seems to acknowledge the existence of other gods, but it makes it clear that such gods should not be worshiped (Exodus 20: 3–6; Isaiah 44:6). Some participants seemed to be positive that any worship that is separate of worshipping the true God was displeasing to the true God documented in the Bible. The God who created the water was viewed as the true God to be worshipped. The results also revealed that rain is given by God to sustain the rivers, streams and oceans. Without rain such reservoirs will not be sustained, but rather will dry out and everything will be non – existent. Validating the importance of water one participant said;

We exist mostly because of rain which keeps constant availability of water. Without rain, the rivers and oceans will dry out. While we take rain for granted, rain is very important for the sustainability of everything on earth. We see this in times of drought where we fear a lot because of uncertainty of when rain will come again. We begin to see water rationing as the rivers dry out. And to be honest, rain plays a very important part in the sustainability of all species. To think we can survive without water, we will only be doing ourselves a disservice [Participant H].

Participants alleged that water is given, and there is not much human beings can do apart from conserving what is given. This became a common disposition across most participants. Additionally, participants revealed that there is no amount of education or intelligence that can avail water in the world. One participant even strongly emphasized that humanity cannot avail a resource they had no contribution in creating. According to this participant, scientists study and provide strategies for conserving or sustaining a resource that has already been provided, but have no power to create it.

Sacredness of Water

It was ascertained that water is sacred and is a medium created by God. The sacredness of water was aligned to its religious benefits of which included its wide usage in religious practices. Participants confirmed that they follow practices of their forefathers and those practices stipulated in biblical annals. Some of the usages of water which were deemed necessary were those associated with purification, healing and cleansing. In association with purification, most participants confirmed that water purifies against dirt and spirit – induced forces. As purified water ensures that human beings are cleansed from negative forces that may hinder their progress in life. Several participants also stated that water heals diseases. Their implication was mostly drawn from Biblical references where water was used to heal diseases. Two participants made reference to the writings of the Book of 2 Kings, whereby the Bible states that Naaman was sick with leprosy. He went to the Prophet Elisha. When Naaman went to see the Prophet of God, Elisha sent a messenger to him, instructing him to go and wash his body seven times in the river Jordan. When he did that he received his healing. These participants revealed that there was no laying on of hands upon Naaman. The instruction was enough to steer the water and activate the

healing power within it (2 Kings 5:1 – 14). Additionally, participants thought that water has a very strong healing force within it; however, in order to activate the healing power of the water, prayer is necessary. Spoken words activating the healing power of water were also seen as sufficient. These participants mentioned that Elisha issued spiritual words to Naaman, and those were enough to stir up the water. Some participants supported this by highlighting that in the Biblical accounts, an angel of the Lord stirred up the water at certain seasons. Once the angel stirred up, the first person to enter the water was healed of any infirmity (John 5:4 – 8). The water was not able to heal the people before the spirit was infused. Some participants supported the usage of water in churches to heal diseases. They stated that after praying for the water, anyone who drinks or bathes with the water can be healed from infirmity and evil forces (Evinger 2018).. However, participants highly emphasized the element of belief in any healing practice that involves water. They noted that the subject has to believe that, after using the water, healing is imminent.

There was a strong assertion among participants that water is essential for the baptism practice. According to participants, once an individual accepts the gospel and is converted into the faith, such an individual must undergo water baptism. This practice was also observed in the writings of the Book of Matthew 3:13 – 17, whereby Jesus Christ was baptized by John the Baptist. When He was baptized, the Bible states that two doves were seen flying above the water, and a voice was heard affirming Christ as the Son of God. As participants observed, in the Christian faith, the doves and the voice that was heard signify the acceptance of the water baptism practice. According to participants, this practice is still relevant even today and is practiced in most Christian denominations. This finding aligns with Oestigaard (2005), who suggested that baptism is still relevant and contributes as a remedy against sin. Some participants also mentioned that even a child has to go through water dedication at some point. This is a practice whereby the child is dedicated to God, and water is sprinkled on the child's forehead. While participants agreed that it is not every denomination that does the water sprinkling for children, such practice was seen as a relevant spiritual practice. In light of this finding, one participant said;

I personally see no problem in dedicating a child to God using water sprinkling. Water is a spiritual force that symbolizes life. When water is sprinkled upon the child, it is a spiritual symbol of a long, healthy life. However, I also don't have a problem with those denominations that sprinkle water on the child, but only dedicate the child through prayer. Whatever way, the child must be dedicated to his or her creator [Participant E].

According to some participants, water is also used in homes to repel evil forces. Spiritual individuals sprinkle water around their home, combined with prayer, and at other times, other elements like salt are put into the water before being sprinkled around the home. When such a practice is done, there have to be words spoken commanding all evil forces to recede. Participants noted that it all lies on the believe system of spiritual

individuals. Two participants confirmed that they sprinkle water around their homes as a symbol of protection against any spiritual attacks. They affirmed that it has worked for them. Nevertheless those participants also mentioned that some people relate such a practice to superstition or witchcraft. Therefore, care must be taken in ensuring that the practice does not bring questions to unbelievers and negate the Christian faith. Participant B stated that he does this practice in the evenings when by passers cannot see him and perceive him as a witch when he is not. Participants G and F saw such a practice as more inclined to witchcraft. They stated that it is very dangerous to do things that are not biblically founded. The Bible was viewed as the guiding book, and any practice involving the use of water must align with it and adhere to God's standards.

Water Conservation

All participants agreed that it is important to conserve water because if water is misused, it might lead to its scarcity and, in the process, threaten the sustainability of life. The harvesting of rainwater featured greatly among most participants. They emphasized the importance of rainwater harvesting to reduce the overconsumption of water from rivers and streams. According to participants, most of the water they use is provided by the Municipality, and they have to pay for its usage. However, participants noted that such water originates from rivers, dams, streams, and rainfall, which contributes greatly to the sustainability of these reservoirs. In support of this finding, one participant said;

There are times when we receive a lot of rainfall, and such water is wasted. I said it is wasted because we don't harvest this rainwater. It is crucial for the government to emphasize water harvesting, as the exact timing of the rain is uncertain. It becomes so hard to access water in times of drought. There was a time when there was a lot of water rationing because drought had hit the land. We seemed to forget that the rain is allowed by God and no one knows when he will not allow it. It is therefore important to harvest this water and keep it in storage tanks in readiness for the unknown future. Water does not rot, and even if the water is kept in tanks or silos, it can be safe for human consumption; there are ways of purifying such water for safe usage.

Four participants also emphasized the importance of reusing water from sewage systems. According to those participants, it is possible to purify sewage water. After being purified, such water can be allowed to re-enter rivers for continuous use. Most participants were against water pollution, saying that there are some industrial companies that dump waste in rivers. Such waste pollutes the water and kills hydro – animals, some of which are consumed as food for humans. Some participants mentioned that it is important to ensure that spiritual practices do not pollute water. Participants publicized that governments or country leaders, together with environmentalists and religious leaders, should spearhead the drive to conserve water (Jenkins et al. 2018). Political leaders were portrayed as having the power to drive policies and influence societies to conserve water. Apart from political and environmentalist, participants also revealed that religion can have a strong influence in enhancing water conservation through creating awareness in their

various religious structures. Religious leaders were seen as having some influence in communities, and such influence can be used to influence congregants to conserve water. Human beings were portrayed as guardians of the environment, which constitutes water (Genesis 1:28: Khumalo, 2025). In that regard, being stewards, religion was recommended to be at the forefront of ensuring the sustainability of everything God created. Some participants even mentioned that religious organizations must be included in crafting water conservation strategies and policies.

The clergy were portrayed as the ones who have the power to influence awareness of water conservation in the church, as they are the ones in the forefront of most religious gatherings. Oftentimes, they have the power to influence congregants, particularly based on their capability to influence followers. Another strategy participants saw as beneficial was to close taps when not in use. For example, instead of taking a bath in bath taps, showers were seen as one instrument of conserving water. While the authenticity of that finding was not verified, it appeared that shower usage conserves water better than the usage of bath bowls. It became evident that water conservation was a critical subject across all participants. Religious organizations were asked to spread the Theo–ecology gospel to ensure the sustainability and availability of water for the sustenance of future generations. In agreement with this disposition, participant J said;

We are responsible for the conservation of what God has provided for humanity. If we misuse resources, we cannot blame God for the lack of such resources. I think God supplies enough for our sustainability. It is then up to us to ensure that we don't misuse or pollute what is God given. I believe that God wanted us to have plenty and also quality water because I believe that He wants us to be healthy so we can worship Him happily. If we pollute water or misuse it, it doesn't mean it is not provided. It is mostly human–induced factors that contaminate water, and our misuse results in the scarcity of this resource [Participant J].

This participant strongly believed that, one way or another, human beings contribute to the scarcity of water. It therefore becomes evident that water conservation policies must be tightened to ensure the reduction of water misuse. This finding appears to be factual, based on human–induced contributions of water scarcity, which includes pollution of water propelled by industrial companies dumping waste on rivers and oceans, contributing to the pollution of this resource.

Conclusion

Water has various dimensions as a sacred natural resource and is critical to the sustainability of life on Earth. This is why the value of water in its multiple facets, including its spiritual aspect, should be examined to improve our understanding of its importance in life and religion. This study examined the nexus of water and religion. It was discovered that water is used in practices including construction, energy, recreation, religious practices, basic ecosystems, and agriculture. This resource is also associated with economic, social, and cultural practices founded in common traditions and practices like baptism and other rituals that help remember Him as the creator. It was concluded that water cannot be separated from religion based on the fact that it was created by God, who

ensures its constant availability and accessibility. It was further surmised that to ensure the sustainability and availability of water, examining strategies for conserving this natural resource and increasing awareness across all groups, including religious organizations, is essential. It is concluded that water holds a necessary connection with religion. This resource is highly utilized in the modern church, just as it was in the past, albeit at different levels. There is, however, a tendency to overuse or misuse water, and this can result in water availability and accessibility issues. Certain rituals tend to pollute this resource, posing a threat to aquatic animals and the sustainability of water. In a broader perspective, human actions contribute to the scarcity and pollution of this resource, for which tight policies must be enforced to conserve water for present and future generations. The study recommends further research on this subject from different religious perspectives.

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