

Amplifying the Call for Stewardship: Exploring the Role of Christian Communication in Promoting Sustainability in Kaduna State

John Ishaku¹; Shua'ibu Halimah Sa'adiya²

¹PhD, Principal Researcher/Investigator

¹Christian Religious Studies, Kaduna State University, Kaduna

Publication Date: 2026/07/27

Abstract: This interdisciplinary research project investigates the impactful role Christian communication channels play in fostering environmental sustainability awareness and action within Kaduna State. Recognizing the significant influence of Christianity in the region, this study examines how religious messages, disseminated through sermons, church-led initiatives, and digital platforms, can inspire sustainable practices among Christian communities. Through a mixed-methods approach, the research will analyze sermon content, evaluate community programs, and assess the potential of digital outreach to understand how these communication avenues can contribute to a more environmentally conscious and proactive Christian populace in Kaduna State.

How to Cite: John Ishaku; Shua'ibu Halimah Sa'adiya (2026) Amplifying the Call for Stewardship: Exploring the Role of Christian Communication in Promoting Sustainability in Kaduna State. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 11(7), 1158-1163. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26jul351>

I. INTRODUCTION

Kaduna State, encompassing a vast 983,213 km², grapples with substantial environmental degradation stemming from the interplay of its burgeoning population, exceeding 120 million, and their interaction with the natural world Omofonmwan & Osa-Edoh, (2008). This degradation manifests in various forms, including deforestation, pollution, and the far-reaching consequences of climate change Omofonmwan & Osa-Edoh, (2008); Mshelia *et al.*, (2020). Simultaneously, Kaduna stands as a region deeply rooted in Christianity, a faith that significantly shapes values, behaviors, and societal norms Ogunkan, (2010); Asadu, (2021). This research acknowledges the latent power of religious institutions, particularly within the Christian community, to act as agents of positive transformation, both socially and environmentally Ogunkan, (2010). By looking into how Christian communication channels, encompassing sermons, teachings, community outreach, and digital platforms, engage with the concept of sustainability, this study seeks to pinpoint effective messaging strategies that resonate within this faith-based context Campbell & Vitullo, (2016); Forrey, (n.d.). Furthermore, it aims to reveal the pivotal role these institutions can play in fostering a greater sense of environmental stewardship among their adherents, aligning with Christian values of creation care and responsibility Amadi, (2020).

➤ Problem Statement/Justification

Despite the growing urgency of environmental challenges, particularly within Kaduna State, a significant gap persists in understanding how religious communication, specifically within the Christian context, engages with and promotes sustainability Koehrsen *et al.*, (2022). This lack of understanding poses a barrier to the development and implementation of effective communication strategies aimed at fostering sustainable practices within Christian communities Rhea, (2019). The existing disconnect between faith-based messaging and environmental action stems, in part, from the complex relationship between religion and environmentalism, often marked by tensions and divergent perspectives Tomalin, (2016); Koechrse *et al.*, (2022). This research aims to bridge this knowledge gap by directly examining how Christian teachings and sermons address environmental stewardship, moving beyond generalized assumptions about religion and environmentalism to analyze specific content and messaging Acheoah & Hamzah, (2015).

Furthermore, this study will evaluate the effectiveness of church-led environmental initiatives, recognizing that faith-based organizations can play a crucial role in promoting community-based conservation efforts Kothari *et al.*, (2013); Galvin *et al.*, (2018). By analyzing the structure, communication strategies, and outcomes of these initiatives, the research will provide insights into best practices and potential challenges faced by churches in mobilizing their congregations for environmental action Rhea, (2019).

Recognizing the evolving landscape of communication, this research will also assess the potential of digital platforms in disseminating sustainability messages to Christian audiences Fernandez *et al.*, (2017); Campbell & Rule, (2020). This analysis will be crucial in understanding how churches can leverage technology to reach wider audiences, engage younger generations, and promote sustainable behaviors in a digitally connected world Campbell & Vitullo, (2016); Woods & Woods, (2010).

➤ *Objectives of the Study*

This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Christian communication channels can contribute to environmental sustainability in Kaduna State. The study will be guided by the following objectives:

- To analyze the content of sermons and religious teachings in selected churches across Kaduna State to identify the presence and framing of sustainability messages. This objective aligns with research emphasizing the importance of understanding how religious messages are constructed and disseminated Acheoah & Hamzah, (2015).
- To evaluate the role and impact of church-led initiatives and community outreach programs in promoting sustainable practices among Christian communities. This objective recognizes the potential of faith-based organizations to drive practical action on environmental issues Kothari *et al.*, (2013); Rhea, (2019).
- To assess the utilization and potential of digital platforms and social media by Christian organizations in Kaduna State to disseminate sustainability awareness and mobilize action. This objective acknowledges the growing influence of digital communication in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors Campbell & Vitullo, (2016); Fernandez *et al.*, (2017).

These objectives will be addressed through a rigorous mixed-methods research design, ensuring a nuanced and in-depth exploration of the subject matter.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research draws upon a synthesis of scholarly work across three interconnected domains to provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding the nexus of Christian communication, environmentalism, and sustainability in Kaduna State.

➤ *Religious Communication and Environmentalism:*

The intersection of faith and environmentalism has emerged as a significant area of scholarly inquiry, particularly in the context of increasing global environmental challenges. This body of literature explores how religious beliefs, values, and institutions intersect with environmental concerns, highlighting the potential of faith-based communities to contribute to environmental stewardship Tomalin, (2016); Koehrsen *et al.*, (2022). A central theme within this scholarship is the role of religious leaders as communicators, examining how they frame environmental issues within theological contexts, integrate

environmental messages into sermons and teachings, and mobilize their congregations for environmental action Acheoah & Hamzah, (2015); Forrey, (n.d.). Studies have analyzed the effectiveness of faith-based environmental messages, investigating their ability to resonate with religious audiences, inspire behavioral change, and foster a sense of responsibility for creation care Amadi, (2020). This research will draw upon these studies to understand how Christian leaders in Kaduna frame sustainability within their sermons and teachings, and to assess the effectiveness of their communication in promoting environmental awareness and action.

➤ *Sustainability in the Nigerian Context:*

Nigeria, being a rapidly developing nation, faces a complex array of environmental challenges, including deforestation, desertification, pollution, and the impacts of climate change Agbebaku, (2015); Omofonmwan & Osa-Edoh, (2008). Understanding the specific environmental context of Nigeria, particularly Kaduna State, is crucial for developing culturally relevant and context-specific communication strategies for sustainability. Research on sustainability in the Nigerian context has examined the effectiveness of environmental policies, the role of government agencies in environmental management, and the contributions of local communities to conservation efforts Gadzama & Ayuba, (2016); AbdulKadir *et al.*, (2013). Studies like Abaje *et al.* (2016) highlight the significant impacts of climate change on rural communities in Kaduna State, including declining crop yields (mean score of 4.01 on a 5-point Likert scale), increased sickness (mean score of 3.85), and decreased soil fertility (mean score of 3.83), emphasizing the urgency of addressing these issues. This research will draw upon these studies to understand the unique environmental challenges facing Kaduna State and to identify how Christian communities are responding to these challenges.

Furthermore, this research will explore the role of religious institutions in promoting sustainable development in Nigeria, recognizing the significant influence of faith-based organizations in shaping social norms and behaviors Ogunkan, (2010); Asadu, (2021). Studies have highlighted the potential of religious values and teachings to inspire environmental action, advocating for the integration of eco-theology into environmental management strategies Ogunkan, (2010). This research will analyze the extent to which Christian institutions in Kaduna State are actively engaged in promoting sustainability, and how their efforts align with broader sustainability policies and initiatives in Nigeria.

➤ *Communication Channels and Strategies:*

Effective communication is essential for promoting environmental awareness, inspiring behavioral change, and fostering community participation in sustainability initiatives. This research will draw upon literature examining communication channels and strategies within religious contexts, recognizing the unique dynamics and influential power of religious communication Cameron, (2023); Woods & Woods, (2010). Studies have highlighted

the importance of framing environmental messages within theologically relevant frameworks, using language and narratives that resonate with religious audiences Forrey, (n.d.). This research will analyze how Christian communicators in Kaduna utilize different platforms, from traditional sermons to digital media, to convey sustainability messages.

Within religious contexts, sermons and community engagement have long been primary channels for disseminating information and shaping values Acheoah & Hamzah, (2015). This research will examine how these traditional platforms are being utilized to address environmental concerns, analyzing the content and delivery of sermons related to sustainability, as well as the role of church-led community programs in promoting sustainable practices Rhea, (2019).

Furthermore, this research recognizes the increasing significance of digital platforms and social media in reaching and engaging diverse audiences, particularly younger generations Campbell & Vitullo, (2016); Fernandez *et al.*, (2017). Studies like Fernandez *et al.* (2017) have investigated the use of social media for pro-environmental campaigns, highlighting the importance of understanding user behavior patterns and tailoring messaging strategies to maximize engagement and impact. This research will explore the extent to which Christian organizations in Kaduna are utilizing digital platforms to disseminate sustainability messages, analyzing the content, reach, and engagement levels of their online communications. This analysis will provide insights into the potential of digital media to amplify sustainability awareness and mobilize action within Christian communities in Kaduna State.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research will employ a mixed-methods approach, drawing upon the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques, to provide a robust and multifaceted understanding of the link between Christian communication and sustainability within Kaduna State Teddlie & Tashakkori, (2011). This integrated approach allows for a more comprehensive exploration of complex social phenomena, particularly within the nuanced realm of religion and environmentalism. The research design will unfold across three distinct phases, each addressing a specific dimension of Christian communication related to sustainability.

➤ Phase 1: Sermon Analysis (Qualitative)

The first phase of the research will focus on analyzing the content of sermons delivered in selected churches across Kaduna State, recognizing sermons as a primary channel for disseminating religious teachings and shaping values within Christian communities Acheoah & Hamzah, (2015). To ensure a representative sample, purposive sampling will be employed, considering key factors such as denomination, geographic location (urban/rural), and congregation size Riffe *et al.*, (2019). This sampling strategy aims to capture

the diversity of Christian practices and beliefs within Kaduna State.

Sermons will be collected over a three-month period, focusing specifically on those addressing themes related to environment, creation care, and social responsibility Clarke & Braun, (2017). This targeted approach will allow for an in-depth analysis of how sustainability is framed within religious contexts. The collected sermons will be subjected to thematic analysis, a widely used qualitative data analysis technique, to identify and interpret recurring themes, language patterns, and the ways in which environmental stewardship is embedded within religious teachings Clarke & Braun, (2017). This analysis will provide insights into the dominant narratives, theological frameworks, and communication styles employed by Christian leaders in Kaduna when addressing environmental issues.

➤ Phase 2: Church-Led Initiatives (Qualitative)

The second phase will shift the focus to church-led initiatives and community outreach programs aimed at promoting sustainable practices within Christian communities, recognizing the practical role of faith-based organizations in driving environmental action Kothari *et al.*, (2013); Galvin *et al.*, (2018). Churches actively engaged in environmental or sustainability-focused programs will be identified through a combination of initial surveys and network referrals, ensuring a purposeful selection of cases representing diverse approaches and initiatives.

Data collection will involve in-depth interviews with church leaders and program coordinators, exploring the goals, activities, perceived impact, communication strategies, and challenges faced by these initiatives Barbour, (2010). To gain a broader perspective, focus groups will be held with community members participating in these programs, providing insights into their motivations, experiences, and the perceived effectiveness of the initiatives Barbour, (2010). Thematic analysis will be applied to the data gathered through interviews and focus groups to identify best practices, recurring challenges, and the role of communication in influencing program success. This analysis will provide valuable insights into how churches are translating sustainability messages into tangible actions and the factors that contribute to successful community engagement in environmental initiatives.

➤ Phase 3: Digital Communication (Quantitative & Qualitative)

Recognizing the growing influence of digital media in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors, the third phase will assess the utilization and potential of digital platforms and social media by Christian organizations in Kaduna State to disseminate sustainability awareness and mobilize action Campbell & Vitullo, (2016); Fernandez *et al.*, (2017). The social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) of selected churches and Christian organizations in Kaduna will be identified and analyzed, considering those with an active online presence and a focus on environmental issues.

Content analysis will be conducted on social media posts related to sustainability over a predetermined timeframe, examining recurring themes, frequency of posts, engagement levels (likes, shares, comments), and the demographics of target audiences Riffe *et al.*, (2019). This quantitative analysis will provide insights into the reach and engagement levels of sustainability messages disseminated through digital platforms. Furthermore, thematic analysis will be employed to understand the content and framing of sustainability messages within the digital sphere, exploring how churches are adapting their communication strategies for online audiences Clarke & Braun, (2017). This combined quantitative and qualitative analysis will provide a comprehensive understanding of how Christian organizations are leveraging digital media to promote sustainability, and the potential of these platforms to reach wider audiences and mobilize action within Christian communities in Kaduna State.

IV. RESULTS (EXPECTED OUTPUTS)

This research is anticipated to generate a range of significant outputs that will contribute both to academic understanding and practical interventions related to Christian communication and environmental sustainability in Kaduna State.

➤ *Enhanced Understanding:*

- *Prevalence of Sustainability Themes:*

The research will provide a comprehensive analysis of how frequently and prominently sustainability themes are integrated into sermons and religious teachings across different denominations and churches in Kaduna State.

- *Framing of Environmental Messages:*

The study will identify dominant narratives, theological frameworks (e.g., creation care, stewardship, social justice), and language choices used to frame environmental concerns within Christian sermons and teachings.

- *Communication Styles:*

Analysis will reveal the communication styles of religious leaders, including their use of persuasive techniques, emotional appeals, storytelling, and the integration of local environmental knowledge.

- *Role of Different Platforms:*

The research will distinguish the roles played by traditional platforms (e.g., sermons, church bulletins, community events) and digital platforms (e.g., social media, websites) in disseminating sustainability messages and engaging different audiences.

➤ *Best Practices and Challenges:*

- *Successful Church-Led Initiatives:*

Through in-depth case studies, the research will showcase successful examples of church-led environmental initiatives, highlighting effective communication strategies,

community engagement approaches, and the tangible impacts of these programs.

- *Barriers to Engagement:*

The research will identify common challenges faced by churches in promoting sustainability, including resource limitations, competing priorities, theological disagreements, or resistance to change within congregations.

➤ *Recommendations:*

- *Tailored Recommendations:*

The research will provide evidence-based recommendations for different stakeholders:

- ✓ *Religious Leaders:*

Guidance on integrating sustainability into sermons, teachings, and church programs, along with effective communication strategies for engaging their congregations.

- ✓ *Communication Practitioners:*

Strategies for developing culturally relevant and theologically appropriate communication campaigns to promote environmental stewardship within Christian communities.

- ✓ *Policymakers:*

Recommendations for policies and programs that support and enhance the role of religious institutions in environmental conservation and sustainable development.

➤ *Dissemination:*

- Presentations at national and international conferences to share findings with a wider academic audience.
- Workshops and policy briefs tailored for religious leaders, policymakers, and NGOs in Kaduna State, providing practical guidance and resources.
- Accessible reports and resources made available to participating churches and community stakeholders, ensuring that the research directly benefits those involved in promoting environmental stewardship at the grassroots level.

By strategically disseminating the research findings, this study aims to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical action, fostering collaboration among stakeholders and ultimately contributing to a more sustainable future for Kaduna State.

V. CONCLUSION

This proposed research highlights the potential of integrating faith-based communication with environmental advocacy to address ongoing ecological challenges in Kaduna State. By systematically exploring how Christian communication channels, specifically sermons, community-led initiatives, and digital platforms, frame and promote sustainability, this study seeks to address a notable gap in both academic literature and practical environmental strategies in Northern Nigeria.

Using a balanced, mixed-methods research design, the investigation is structured to provide objective insights into the current landscape of faith-based environmental messaging. The expected outcomes are intended to offer practical resources, including tailored guidelines for religious leaders, communication practitioners, and regional policymakers. These outputs aim to support the development of culturally resonant initiatives that encourage ecological stewardship and sustainable behaviors within Christian communities.

While environmental degradation remains a multifaceted challenge requiring diverse interventions, this project represents a structured effort to understand and leverage the influential role of religious communication. It is anticipated that the findings will contribute constructively to the broader dialogue on creation care and foster collaborative partnerships for sustainable development in Kaduna State.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Abaje, I. B., Sawa, B. A., Iguisi, E. O., & Ibrahim, A. A. (2016). Impacts of climate change and adaptation strategies in rural communities of Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Ethiopian Journal of Environmental Studies and Management*, 9(1), 97-108.
- [2]. AbdulKadir, A. T. U. M., Usman, M. T., Shaba, A. H., & Saidu, S. (2013). An appraisal of the of eco-climatic characteristics in Northern Nigeria. *African Journal of Environmental Science and Technology*, 7(8), 748-457.
- [3]. Abrams, L. C., & Maibach, E. W. (2008). The effectiveness of mass communication to change public behavior. *Annu. Rev. Public Health*, 29(1), 219-234.
- [4]. Acheoah, J. E., & Hamzah, A. (2015). Style in Christian and Islamic sermons: A linguistic analysis. *American Research Journal of English and Literature*, 1(1), 23-31.
- [5]. Agbebaku, H. U. (2015). Environmental challenges and climate change: Nigeria experience. *Journal of Research in Environmental and Earth Science*, 2(4), 01-12.
- [6]. Amadi, S. E. (2020). Religion and Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria. *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, 3(6).
- [7]. Asadu, G. (2021). Christianity and national development: The Nigeria experience. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 77(1).
- [8]. Barbour, R. S. (2010). Focus groups. *Qualitative methods in health research*. London: Sage, 32752.
- [9]. Bennett, N. J., Whitty, T. S., Finkbeiner, E., Pittman, J., Bassett, H., Gelich, S., & Allison, E. H. 2018). Environmental stewardship: A conceptual review and analytical framework. *Environmental management*, 61, 597-614.
- [10]. Berkes, F. (2007). Community-based conservation in a globalized world. *Proceedings of the National academy of sciences*, 104(39), 15188-15193.
- [11]. Bielefeld, W., & Cleveland, W. S. (2013). Defining faith-based organizations and understanding them through research. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 42(3), 442-467.
- [12]. Bramston, P., Pretty, G., & Zammit, C. (2011). Assessing environmental stewardship motivation. *Environment and behavior*, 43(6), 776-788.
- [13]. Branch, K. (2019). *Guide to social impact assessment: a framework for assessing social change*. Routledge.
- [14]. Cameron, A. (2023). *Christianity and the rhetoric of empire: The development of Christian discourse* (Vol. 55). Univ of California Press.
- [15]. Campbell, H. A., & Rule, F. (2020). The practice of digital religion. *Handbuch soziale praktiken und digitale alltagswelten*, 363-371.
- [16]. Campbell, H. A., & Vitullo, A. (2016). Assessing changes in the study of religious communities in digital religion studies. *Church, Communication and Culture*, 1(1), 73-89.
- [17]. Clarke, G. (2008). Faith-based organizations and international development: An overview. *Development, civil society and faith-based organizations: Bridging the sacred and the secular*, 17-45.
- [18]. Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *The journal of positive psychology*, 12(3), 297-298.
- [19]. Fernandez, M., Piccolo, L. S., Maynard, D., Wippoo, M., Meili, C., & Alani, H. (2017). Proenvironmental campaigns via social media: analysing awareness and behaviour patterns. *Journal of Web Science*, 3(1).
- [20]. Forrey, J. Christian Communication. *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 16, 37-41.
- [21]. Gadzama, N. M., & Ayuba, H. K. (2016). On major environmental problem of desertification in Northern Nigeria with sustainable efforts to managing it. *World Journal of Science, Technology and Sustainable Development*, 13(1), 18-30.
- [22]. Galvin, K. A., Beeton, T. A., & Luizza, M. W. (2018). African community-based conservation. *Ecology and Society*, 23(3).
- [23]. Giovannoni, E., & Fabietti, G. (2013). What is sustainability? A review of the concept and its applications. *Integrated reporting: Concepts and cases that redefine corporate accountability*, 21-40.
- [24]. Koehrsen, J., Blanc, J., & Huber, F. (2022). How "green" can religions be? Tensions about religious environmentalism. *Zeitschrift für Religion, Gesellschaft und Politik*, 1-22.
- [25]. Kothari, A., Camill, P., & Brown, J. (2013). Conservation as if people also mattered: policy and practice of community-based conservation. *Conservation and society*, 11(1), 1-15.
- [26]. Mshelia, S. S., Unimke, O. P., Reigns, A., & Bashir, O. A. (2020). Environmental and Health Effects of Climate Change In Kaduna Metropolis. *Journal DOI*, 6(12).
- [27]. Ogunkan, D. V. (2010). Religious Value: An Instrument for Sustainable Environmental

- Management in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, 10(3), 25-30.
- [28]. Omofonmwan, S. I., & Osa-Edoh, G. I. (2008). The challenges of environmental problems in Nigeria. *Journal of human Ecology*, 23(1), 53-57.
- [29]. Pender, J. S., Gomez, C. P., Perera, R. A. T. M., Williams, J. A., & Roshan, R. (2019). Church-led Partnerships with Interfaith Religious Leaders and Government for Raising Awareness on Leprosy in Sri Lanka. *Christian Journal for Global Health*, 6(2), 26-32.
- [30]. Rhea, L. J. (2019). *Community Members' Perceptions Concerning Community Empowerment and Church-Led Coalitions*. Capella University.
- [31]. Riffe, D., Lacy, S., Fico, F., & Watson, B. (2019). *Analyzing media messages: Using quantitative content analysis in research*. Routledge.
- [32]. Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2011). Mixed methods research. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, 4(1), 285-300.
- [33]. Thiele, L. P. (2024). *Sustainability*. John Wiley & Sons.
- [34]. Tomalin, E. (2016). *Biodivinity and biodiversity: The limits to religious environmentalism*. Routledge.
- [35]. Woods, Q. J. S. R. H., & Woods, R. H. (2010). *Understanding evangelical media: The changing face of Christian communication*. ReadHowYouWant. com.
- [36]. Zubairu, S. M. (2016). *A history of industrial development in the Kaduna state of Nigeria* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Zululand).