

Example of essay on the role of religion

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



Psychology: Body Language and Society

solving environmental problems

in the world.

I. Introduction

a) Thesis. The Religions can play a useful role to understand and solve the environmental problem in our world.

II. Support 1

Belief in an almighty creator can create a sense of responsibility and respect among religious people for all aspects of nature. As people look at nature as a product of intelligent design by the same being that created them, they come to respect it and value it.

People can then sense that all aspects of nature both living and non living have some intrinsic purpose even if that purpose is not immediately obvious to them. Anything that was created by this intelligent creator must have been created for a purpose and therefore needs to be preserved. This can create a desire to preserve different life forms, for example as well as natural resources.

Belief in a creator can lead to people taking on a responsible role over creation and taking it upon themselves to preserve and maintain it. If god cares about his creation, then people who believe in god can take care of creation as a service to him.

People can also look at creation as a sign of the creator's presence and work in the universe and hence treat it with respect. Both the bible and the qur'an state that creation is a sign there exists a creator. The bible states that

creation testifies about god while the qur'an states that nature is a sign that there is a divine being.

All these examples show how creation in the context of religion can create healthy positive attitudes towards understanding the environment and being responsible with it.

a) Example 1

The Qur'an states that allah created everything and determined it most exactly (25: 2). The Qur'an further states that nature is a sign that there is a divine being. This elevates nature from something merely physical to something that has spiritual significance.

b) Example 2

In the bible, the first man Adam is placed in a garden. He is tasked with tending the garden as well as naming all the animals. Many modern day religious people see working towards environmental conservation as a service to God much like being a missionary in a third world country (Harrison & Aeschliman, 1994).

c) Example 3

III. Support 2

Many religions contain certain beliefs, myths, legends and superstitions that encourage environmental conservation.

Many native tribes hold some animals as sacred and they show a lot of respect for these animals. In many parts of the world, there are also forests that are believed to be sacred and this has resulted in the said forests

surviving untouched for hundreds of years. These beliefs have protected them from being exploited by humans and ensured their survival.

Certain animals or areas can also be protected by being seen as evil or cursed. No one would venture into an ‘evil’ forest. This ensures the continued survival of the natural resources. Sometimes such beliefs can have a negative effect. For example, many places where snakes are believed to be evil they have been almost decimated because they are killed on sight.

Snakes are almost never attacked in some parts of the world because of religious legends that ascribe some noble status to snakes. For example the story of the cobra that shielded Buddha from a rainstorm.

Some animals are also bred for religious rituals thus ensuring their survival. For Jewish people, the red heifer is important for religious rituals and this has led to efforts to breed red cows.

a) Example 1

Buddhists for example, revere snakes and particularly the cobra because it is believed to have shielded Buddha from a storm. Many other religions accord a high status to snakes because of their association with particular religious myths and legends. This has contributed to the high population of snakes in countries like Nepal. In African countries where snakes are believed to be evil or a bad omen, snake population is low because people can easily kill a snake.

In Christianity, the serpent is cursed by god and this explains the different attitude toward snakes in different religions.

b) Example 2

According to the CIDE (1991), some areas in Africa were protected in the past by a belief that they are sacred. These areas are like the Malshegu Sacred Grove in Ghana and the sacred Kaya forest in Kenya. These areas are losing the protection they hand because people are moving on from those superstitions and are more willing to harvest timber and medicinal herbs from those previously untouchable places.

c) Example 3

In Genesis chapter 7, the entire world is covered in flood waters but one man saves not just his own family, but also a pair of every animal species on earth all on instruction from the almighty.

Helping to preserve some indigenous religious beliefs in different parts of the world can help to protect and preserve nature. Many ancient forests have been protected for hundreds of years because of beliefs among the natives that the said forests are sacred and best left untouched. Thanks to modernization and the subsequent abandonment of such beliefs, these communities no longer hold their natural resources in high regard and they are now harvesting timber at an alarming rate. This phenomenon can be witnessed in many parts of the world including Asia, Africa and South America.

IV. Support 4

Many religions are rediscovering their call to environmental conservation as they reexamine their scriptures in the light of present day needs. Recent events including global warming and environmental disasters have forced religious leaders to develop a theology that will support greater involvement

in environmental preservation.

Many Christian scholars for example, are re reading the scriptures and discovering afresh that service to the environment is service to god and is a spiritual undertaking. This has been brought about by relatively recent scientific discoveries and the mainstreaming of environmental issues.

Environmental issues were just not a major concern for majority of people as recently as 50 years ago.

This has caused a renaissance of sorts. Religious groups are coming up with declarations, creating awareness through literature and even forming religious environmental groups. This development has been met by an increase in the amount of religious literature dealing with the subject of the environment.

Religion is an effective means for mobilizing support for environmental understanding and preservation. This is because most people in the world ascribe to religion in one way or another. This makes it an ideal way to reach as many people as possible.

Religious institutions are also finding that it is socially and politically expedient to show concern for environmental causes. This explains why all major world religions are now showing support for environmental concerns. It would not be wise to be indifferent.

a) Example 1

The American National Council of Churches has within the past 25 years, issued over 100 declarations on varying environmental issues. This means that among evangelicals and more importantly evangelical leaders there is an increase in the level of environmental awareness (Harper, 2008).

b) Example 2

An increasing number of Jewish groups are running educational and other educational and other environmental programs. They have even highlighted the importance of considering environmental protection in international trade (Harper, 2008).

c) Example 3

The Islamic Foundation on Ecology and Environment has availed educational materials in religious places like mosques and community centers for use by young people. There has even been a newsletter known as Eco-Islam (Harper, 2008).

V. Conclusion

Religion is a great resource for improving people's understanding and preserving the environment. Through religion people can appreciate how humans and nature are interconnected by a single creator. A firm belief in a single being that created everything and holds us responsible for it can help create that appreciation of how everything is interconnected. Religion can also help to create a sense of responsibility. Many scriptures and religious beliefs talk about kind versus cruel treatment of animals, for example.

Religion can therefore help people understand that they are responsible for the way they treat animals.

Native tribes cannot go back to the superstitions of the past most they are now too modernized to believe in sacred forests or sacred animals. However, they can certainly look to their past to rekindle the same respect for nature that they used to have.

References

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