UNIT 14: ECOLOGICAL ETHICS: CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

UNIT STRUCTURE

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14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Examine the Christian views on the relation between human, nature and God
- Understand the debates surrounding the Christian views on human relation to nature.
- Understand how the basic tenets of Christianity and Islam can inspire environmental awareness
- Examine the Islamic views on nature and environment.
- Understand the role of Islamic environmental movements towards resolving contemporary environmental problems.

14.2 INTRODUCTION

Christianity has a long historical tradition of reflection on nature and human responsibility. Historically, there has been stronger

environmental concern associated with Protestantism than with other religious traditions. Countries with the strongest array of environmental laws and regulations and the largest number of environmental non-governmental organizations include Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and New Zealand. Although environmental concern first arose in these Protestant countries in the 1960s, when formal churchgoing was in decline, elements of Protestant Christian culture are friendly toward environmental protest and democratically expressed pressure for restraints on capitalism and industrialism. Catholic and Orthodox Christian countries, by contrast, have seen much less environmental mobilization, and these countries have much less environmental regulations than most Protestant countries. Some argue that environmentalism arose in Protestant Christian countries because these countries were the first to experience significant rises in living standards in the mid twentieth century. This produced a greater emphasis on quality of life, including the environment, in public concern and hence in public policy.



LET US KNOW

To understand Jesus Christ's teaching about nature we have to bear in mind the Old Testament beliefs about creation and also the Jewish ethical and legal tradition which he and his hearers shared. For this one has to look at Judaism.

14.3 CHRISTIAN VIEWS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Although Christianity has a tendency towards anthropocentrism, Christian environmentalists emphasize the ecological responsibilities of all Christians as stewards of God's earth. However, Christian environmentalists point out that the biblical emphasis is on stewardship and not ownership, that the earth remains the Lord's and does not belong

to its human inhabitants. They therefore oppose policies and practices that threaten the health or survival of the planet. Such environmentalists are particularly concerned with the current widespread reliance on non-renewable resources, habitat destruction, pollution and all other factors that contribute to climate change or otherwise threaten the health of the ecosystem.

They believe that environmental pressure is weak in Islamic and Asian countries. In the Asian context, the commonest form of environmental protest has not occurred in the formal political arena. Rather, it has taken the form of the environmentalism of the poor, in which communities whose natural resources are degraded or destroyed by the actions of corporations, governments, or private landowners protest or resist such abuse of their local habitats by forms of direct action, such as that of Chipko women who hugged trees to prevent them from being cut down by timber companies around their villages in North India.

However Lynn White in his famous essay ‘‘The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis’’ suggested that far from Protestantism’s being friendly to environmental concerns, traditional Christianity in both Catholic and Protestant forms was the major ideational source of the anti - ecological tendencies of Western industrial societies and technologies. White proposed that the roots of our contemporary ecological crisis lay with the concept of human dominion over nature as found in the Genesis, and that the western technological development and approach to nature has been based on such attitude towards nature. White’s thesis has been refuted many times. White argued that the Christian doctrine of creation involved a clear separation of the divine from the biosphere. This, combined with the Genesis teaching about human dominion over other species, fostered the desacralization of the nonhuman world in the West. It also fostered a strongly anthropocentric view of the biosphere and of other species that emphasized their instrumental value to humans, rather than their intrinsic value. By contrast, White claimed, other cultural and religious traditions have sustained a greater emphasis

on divine immanence in the physical world and on the interrelationships between humans and other creatures, such as the belief in reincarnation in some Asian traditions. White also acknowledged, however, that the Christian tradition is not homogenous, and that Christian teachers such as Saint Francis and others have emphasized a less domineering and more democratic relationship between humans and other creatures. White's arguments that the Christian tradition is the root of the environmental crisis in Western civilization, and that it contains resources to repair that crisis, have been influential and have helped provoke an extensive array of Christian responses to the environmental crisis.

White located the source of the environmental crisis in the exploitative attitude towards nature that is at the heart of the dominant strand of the Christian tradition. As a historian of science and technology, White did not underestimate their importance to the environmental crisis. However, he saw them as proximate rather than ultimate causes. On his view, science and technology themselves are expressions of the dominant tendencies within Christianity. White granted that environmental problems occur all over the world, even in those regions that we do not think of as part of the Christian world. Yet even there Christianity is ultimately responsible for the environmental crisis through her progeny, science and technology, and her heresies, such as Marxism. What is special about Christianity, according to White, is that it is the most ‘‘anthropocentric" of world religions. At the center of the traditional Christian story is God becoming man in the figure of Jesus. This idea is blasphemous from the perspective of other Near Eastern religious traditions such as Judaism and Islam. Rather than ‘‘anthropocentric," these traditions are fundamentally ‘‘theocentric." In both Judaism and Islam, God is utterly transcendent. He is as radically distinct from humans as he is from nature. Both humans and nature are his handiwork, but they are not in any way divine. In the traditions of the Far East – Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism, for example – the idea of the divinity of Jesus would not come as big news. For in these traditions

divinity is seen as manifest among all living things. Indeed, within these traditions the goal of spiritual practice is often seen as the realization of the divinity within oneself. In contrast to Christianity, what all of these traditions share is the rejection of anthropocentrism. It is this anthropocentrism, which White believes is unique to the dominant form of Christianity, that gave rise to the development of modern science and technology, which in turn has led to the environmental crisis.

White tells his story in some detail. For him, the development of new forms of plowing, irrigation, and logging in the late medieval period mark the beginning of the rise of modern science and technology. The introduction and widespread adoption of these technologies also mark the beginning of the modern view of the world. On this view, nature is there to be managed by humans for their benefit. White points out that the use of these technologies was often opposed by those who clung to a minority tradition within Christianity, one that sees the human transformation of the Earth as an expression of the sin of pride. This minority tradition emphasized that the role of humans is to live in partnership with nature, rather than to dominate it. The twelfth-century saint, Francis of Assisi, is emblematic of this tradition. White believes that any real solution to our environmental crisis will have to draw on such minority Christian traditions, as well as on traditions from Asia and those found in indigenous cultures.

14.4 NATURE AND BELIEF IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Christian traditions in East and West have held a range of positions on the relationships between God, humanity, and nature, rooted mostly in the Biblical narratives of creation and redemption, the life of Jesus, and the early Christians. Genesis occupies a pivotal role in historical Christian reflection on the place of humans in the cosmos, particularly the first three chapters, on which the early Christian fathers commented extensively and to which modern Christians have returned

for a source of traditional wisdom on the current environmental crisis. Christians have traditionally held that the Genesis narratives indicate that God created the world out of nothing (ex nihilo), and that it was created to reflect God's glory and to serve humanity. Christians, unlike Jews, have also held that the story of Adam and Eve and the forbidden apple indicates not only a changed relationship between humans and the Creator, but the entry of evil into the created order. The early Christian fathers adopted the Platonic view that humanity is a microcosm of the natural world and that the destiny of humans therefore has central significance to the destiny of all creatures. But for most of the early fathers, this unique status did not make humans the center or destiny of Creation. Rather, all life, all being in time, was conceived of as being in motion from birth to death. They saw creation in time and space as a realm set apart from the eternal, infinite divine yet teleologically ordered to return to God. As interpreted by the Greek fathers such as Gregory of Nazianzus (Bergman 2005), the Fall of Adam and Eve has consequences that are not confined to the human species but infect all creatures, and hence the whole biosphere. Thus the doctrines of the Fall and of original sin have an important place in explaining the modern ecological crisis as both evangelicals, such as Francis Schaeffer, and Orthodox theologians, such as Patriarch Bartholomew, have argued. The Fall is the first instance in history in which humans pridefully set themselves in place of the Creator. In consequence, out of their created freedom they bring into the world evil, which sets humans at odds not only with God and with one another but also with other creatures. This new reality, evil, disturbs the original peace and harmony of the created order. In this perspective, the modern environmental crisis is the outcome of this sinful disturbance to the cosmos and is as much a moral and spiritual crisis as an economic and scientific one.

From the perspective of the ecological crisis of the twenty-first century, a crucial feature of the Genesis narrative is the distinctive role conferred on human beings to ‘‘rule over’’ other creatures and Creation. The teaching on dominion in Genesis 1 and 2 has received particular

emphasis in theological teaching since the Protestant Reformation. This mandate of dominion was also frequently invoked by the missionaries who followed the traders and warships of modern European imperialism. The contiguity of Christian missions and the extinctions and ecological calamities that followed the introduction of non-native species and the spread of European agricultural practices around the earth have led many environmentalists to argue, like White, that Christianity is the root of the ecologic crisis. However although such prominent figures in Western Christianity as Augustine (354–430) and Thomas Aquinas (1224/25– 1274) have emphasized the dominion over Creation given to Adam and Eve as creatures made in the image of God, others such as Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022), Hildegaard of Bingen (1098–1179), and Francis have emphasized that humans and other animals share the status of being divinely made creatures called to multiply on the earth, and that, according to the Genesis narrative, animals are created as companions for humans.

However, as opposed to such views, scholars like Robin Attfield point out that Christianity upholds the independent values of natural creatures and is committed to an ethic of responsible care and stewardship of the natural world. These values were enshrined in the Old Testament, presupposed by Jesus Christ and assumed throughout the New Testament. They were sometimes forgotten or distorted but have been continually rediscovered in the late twentieth century.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What according to Lynn White are the roots of the contemporary ecological crisis?

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Q 2: What are the environmental concerns of Christian environmentalists?

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Q 3: Who is the author of the famous essay ‘‘The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis’?

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Q 4: What is the most common charge against Christianity in the context of environmental ethics and why?

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Q 5: What environmental values were enshrined in the Old Testament?

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15.5 ISLAMIC VIEWS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Islam is an Arabic term, literally meaning ‘‘submission’’— that is, to the will of Allah. A monotheistic religion having arisen in the Arabian Peninsula during the early seventh century, in the twenty-first century. According to Islamic tradition, a pious merchant from the west Arabian town of Mecca, Muhammad, son of Abdallah, began in the year 610 to receive divine revelations during the course of a mountain retreat. These revelations, transmitted from God to Muhammad via the angel Gabriel, continued over the course of the next twenty-three years until Muhammad’s death in 632. Collectively, this body of divine revelation is known as the Quran.

Islam is not just a way of life but a civilization, in which the way of life may vary “from one Muslim country to another, but is animated by a common spirit far more humane than most Westerners realize”. The religious life of Muslims in Islamic countries is governed by the tenets of Islam. Islam is not so much about believing in the faith but how Muslims respond to the faith, that is, “not so much a noun but a verb, an action” It is said that Islam is tantamount to accepting a way of life – spiritually, politically, and socially, about how to behave in family and public life.

Islamic values impact on all areas of society. In Arabia in the early seventh century, God or *Allah* through the Prophet Muhammad, revealed the religion of Islam, which means 'to surrender' or "submission to the will of God".

The largest concentration of Muslims today is found in the South Asian countries of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh (about 350 million, or a third of the world total), and the country with the largest Muslim population is Indonesia (about 200 million). By contrast, about 25 percent of Muslims live in the Middle East, and Arabs today constitute only about 15 percent of the world's Muslim population.



LET US KNOW

According to the hadiths (Muslim oral traditions), which, being far more voluminous than the Qur'an, actually serve as a more frequent basis for Islamic norms, the Prophet possessed what might be termed a kind of ''environmental consciousness'' that was perhaps characteristic of the Arabs in general as they had to survive in a marginal environment providing limited natural resources. The Prophet instructed Muslims to respect plants and animals, to conserve water, and to set aside certain lands as preserves (hima and harim). Among Muhammad's best-known sayings cited by contemporary Muslim environmentalists are ''The entire earth is a mosque'' and ''Live in this world as if you will live in it forever, and live for the next world as if you will die tomorrow.''

14.6 ISLAMIC VIEWS OF HUMANS AND NATURE

The Quran states that Allah is the all-powerful creator of the universe and all it contains, and that the proper role of humans is that of khalifa, a term generally understood in this context as meaning a steward or vice-regent. Creation is said to be good, and all aspects of it are miraculous signs (ayat) proving the existence of God. All of creation,

moreover, is said to praise God, though humans may not perceive it. Nonhuman species are said to constitute ‘‘communities’’ similar to those of humans. In fact, humans are distinct only in that they possess a conscious will (taqwa), making them morally answerable to God for their actions. Islam is described as the religion of fitra, ‘‘the very nature of things,’’ and all created beings are said to be originally ‘‘muslim,’’ in that their nature is to submit to God’s will, but many humans err by choosing not to do this. Accordingly, it may be said that of all created beings, humans alone have a potentially problematic relationship with Allah. While the Quran explicitly states that the Earth was created for all beings and not just for humans, it is also stated that certain species (particularly domestic animals) were created to serve humans. Given that Islam accords the special status of khalifa to humans, it could be said to be an anthropocentric religion, though Muslims often prefer to call their faith ‘‘theocentric.’’

Because creation belongs to God, humans are not to engage in activities that cause it harm. Wastefulness and excess consumption are likewise condemned.

Classical Islamic philosophy, which thrived from the ninth through the eleventh centuries, was derived to a large extent from Greek philosophy and incorporated much of the Greeks’ views of nature.

The purpose for the creation of mankind and Man’s role as stated in the *Quran* is that human

beings have been placed on the earth as God’s representative or ‘*Khalifah*’. The *Quranic* doctrine of vice-regent or ‘*Khâlifah*’ placed Man in the role of *Amâna* or trustee and custodian of the earth, thus responsible for building the earth and utilizing its resources with a sense of justice to oneself and to fellow mankind. While nature can be said to be man’s testing ground, man is instructed to read it’s ‘signs’ in order to understand God. Thus Muslims developed natural science in order to understand God and fulfil their role as God’s representatives.

The role assigned to 'Man' by the *Quran* included accountability of the numerous resources given by God or *Allah*. Moreover, the Islamic concept of knowledge includes both the transcendental knowledge as well as the knowledge based on sense perception and observation. Consequently, all knowledge gained through scientific activities aims to result in human welfare; and seeks to utilize the resources of the universe for beneficial purposes, that is, there is both social justice and compassion. Hence all scientific endeavours by scientists need to be scrutinized by the values, ethics and theological standards as encompassed in Islam.

The Islamic philosophers affirm the position of humans near the top within the hierarchy of created beings, below angels but above other animals, plants, and minerals. Humans are the mediators between the heavenly and earthly realms and a major channel for divine grace. The human body, furthermore, is perceived as a microcosm of the universe, with specific parts of the body being identified with parts of the zodiac and thus subject to their influences.

Muslim mystics, known as Sufis, have tended to interpret Quranic references to the oneness of God (tawhid) as indicating an underlying unity to all reality. They describe 'creation' in terms of ''unity of being''. Many mainstream Muslims have found this belief to verge dangerously close to pantheism, however; the eighteenth-century Indian Sufi teacher Shah Waliullah (1703–1762) preferred the term ''unity of witness'' (wahdat al-shuhud) as more clearly maintaining the distinction between creator and creation.

The Sufi notion of the ''complete man'' (insan alkamil), expands the conception of the human being as microcosm of the universe. For Sufis, cultivation of the individual is analogous to cultivation of the cosmos as a whole; thus, one's personal spiritual development can affect the entire world. To Sufis such as Jalal al-din Rumi (1207–1273), not just animals and plants but the entire universe of creation is alive. ''Earth and water and fire are his slaves,'' he writes, ''With you and me

they are dead, but with God they are alive''. Nature also speaks, though only the mystics realize this: ''The speech of water, the speech of the earth, and the speech of mud are apprehended by the sense of them that have hearts''.

14.7 CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC ENVIRONMENTAL THOUGHT

While the preceding observations could indicate a basis for environmental ethics in the Islamic tradition, to project present-day environmental understanding onto any pre-modern society would be inappropriate. Among Muslims, as is the case with all human societies, environmentalist discourse today is in many respects distinctly contemporary and is emerging in response to particularly modern problems and ways of thinking. Despite the presence of some apparent attention to environmental protection in the classical Islamic texts, in general it would seem that Muslim societies historically caused no more or less damage to the environment than others.

These same societies today share the problems common to all developing countries, including severe and in most cases worsening environmental degradation. Islamic environmentalist thinking as such emerged only toward the end of the twentieth century. Moreover, it has come largely as a defensive or apologetic response to Western environmentalist critiques, and remains unknown to the majority of Muslims who are far more preoccupied with issues such as international and domestic politics, social justice, and gender roles. On the other hand, because environmental problems in countries where Muslims live have become so severe, a certain awareness of these problems is on the rise.

The Muslim probably having the best claim to be the first contemporary Islamic environmental ethicist is the Iranian-American philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who attributes his environmental awakening to walks in Walden Woods during the 1950s. His identification

of human mistreatment of the environment as arising from a crisis in values slightly predates Lynn White Jr.'s famous 1967 essay ''The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis.'' Contrasting the Islamic tradition to White's portrayal of the Christian West, Nasr argued in a number of works that Islamic science never lost its reverence for the sacredness of nature, and his attribution of Muslims' loss of environmental consciousness to pernicious Western influence has been taken up by many if not most subsequent Muslim environmentalist writers. It may be noted that Nasr, like most Islamic environmentalists, lives in the West and writes in English, largely for a non-Muslim audience, though some Islamic environmentalist works have begun to appear in Muslim countries and languages, including translations of earlier works published in the West.

Perhaps the first explicit attempt to articulate an Islamic position on environmental protection was a short tract commissioned by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in 1983 and written by a group of Islamic legal scholars then based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The resulting text was published in English, French, and Arabic, but very poorly circulated. One of the authors, the Iraqi-born Mawil Izzi Dien, went on to write a number of articles on Islam and the environment as well as the first full-length book on the subject, which he published in 2000. Izzi Dien has been engaged in attempting to establish a Centre for Islam and Ecology at the University of Lampeter, Wales. A major watershed in the emergence of Islamic environmentalist discourse was the conference on Islam and ecology organized by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim at Harvard University in 1998. Some forty Muslim scholars, politicians, and activists from around the world participated, and the resulting volume of papers, published as Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust in 2003, is the largest single collection of writings on Islam and the environment as of 2007. Similar conferences have since been held in Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia and Iran, and a growing number of scholarly and popular articles on Islam and the environment are appearing worldwide.

14.8 CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM ENVIRONMENTALIST MOVEMENTS

It should be noted that while increasing numbers of Muslims worldwide are engaging in environmental activism, their activism is more often motivated first by environmental concern than by religious belief. Thus much of this activism seems more ‘‘Western’’ than ‘‘Islamic,’’ and many Muslim activists are only marginally religious or not at all.

In the case of activists who are also believers, in most cases it would appear that the individuals involved first become committed to the environmental cause, then subsequently seek to understand and justify it in terms of their Islamic faith.

Similarly, while most governments of Muslim countries now have departments devoted to environmental protection, they are typically staffed by Western-trained scientists and policy-makers who often do not share many of the values of the broader society. The environmental programs initiated by such government organizations, which often focus more on the interests of tourism or local elites than on genuine environmental needs of the population (such as clean water, garbage collection, and so on), are frequently seen as ineffective or even illegitimate. Moreover, in all Muslim countries, as elsewhere in the world, environmental concerns are almost invariably subordinated to the demands of development. Economic constraints limit the implementation of environmental protection programs and up-to-date technologies, and corruption and cronyism often privilege industrial and commercial interests at the expense of the environment.

Finally, policies imposed by external organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank often lead to an increase in environmentally destructive activities and unsustainable projects which disproportionately hurt the poor.

Nevertheless, a small number of Muslim environmentalist organizations have proven effective, some of them promoting explicitly

Islamic values. The most significant such organization is the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES), established in Birmingham, England, by Fazlun Khalid. Since the early 1990s IFEES has conducted environmental education campaigns based on Islamic principles throughout the Muslim world. Among its successes are persuading the Muslim fisherman of Zanzibar to cease fishing with dynamite, and getting religious schools in Indonesian villages to add environmental issues to their curriculum. One Muslim country where suspicion of environmentalism as an alien Western ideology is largely absent is the Islamic Republic of Iran, where environmentalists have sought government approval by articulating their message and justifying their activities by using Islamic language. The Iranian government, for its part, has adopted strongly environmentalist rhetoric, though its environmental policies are often not put into action. One area in which Iranian government policies have been effective has been human population control. Beginning in the late 1980s an official policy of family planning was adopted, providing for women's health clinics and free contraceptives across the country, with the result that by the year 2000 Iran's fertility rate had dropped to only 1.8 births per woman, lower than that of many Western nations. This success story stands in contrast to most of the rest of the Muslim world, where population control is largely seen as Western propaganda and incompatible with traditional preference for large families. Recently, however, Indonesia has seen some success in implementing family planning programs as well. While environmental awareness and familiarity with Islamic principles concerning proper attitudes toward nature remain extremely marginal throughout the Muslim world, this is slowly changing as Muslims increasingly suffer from the effects of severe environmental degradation and seek appropriate responses from within their own religious and cultural traditions.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.6 Fill in the blanks:

a) The Quran states that the proper role of humans is that of....., a term generally understood in this context as meaning a steward or vice-regent.

b) The two dominant tendencies within Christianity are.....and.....

c) The doctrines of the ..... and of ..... have an important place in explaining the modern ecological crisis within Christianity.

d) Islam is an Arabic term, literally meaning "....." that is, to the will of Allah.

e) The religious life of Muslims in Islamic countries is governed by the .....of Islam.

Q.7. State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) Lynn White argued that the Christian doctrine of creation is based on union of the divine with the biosphere. (T/F)

b) Lynn White believes that both Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity are the major sources of anti -ecological tendencies in Western industrial societies and technologies. (T/F)

c) The Bible emphasizes on stewardship and not ownership, (T/F)

d) Islam is a monotheistic religion having arisen in the Arabian Peninsula during the early seventh century. (T/F)



14.9 LET US SUM UP

The most important points in this unit are:

- Catholic and Orthodox Christian countries, by contrast, have seen much less environmental mobilization, and these countries have much less environmental regulations than most Protestant countries.

- Lynn White proposition that the roots of our contemporary ecological crisis lay with the concept of human dominion over nature as found in the Genesis, and that the western technological development and approach to nature has been based on such attitude towards nature.
- However White's position has been refuted by many and that Christianity upholds the independent values of natural creatures and is committed to an ethic of responsible care and stewardship of the natural world.
- Islam accords a special status to humans for which it could be termed an anthropocentric religion, though Muslims often prefer to call their faith ''theocentric.'' This is because they believe that creation belongs to God, humans are not to engage in activities that cause it harm.
- The role assigned to 'Man' by the *Quran* included accountability of the numerous resources given by God or *Allah*.
- The Quran states that Allah is the all-powerful creator of the universe and all it contains, and that the proper role of humans is that of khalifa, a term generally understood in this context as meaning a steward or vice-regent.



14.10 FURTHER READINGS

1. Jamieson, D. (2001). A Companion to Environmental Philosophy. USA: Blackwell
2. Callicot, J.B, Frodeman, R. (2009). Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy. United States: Macmillan
3. Foltz, Richard C. (2005). Environmentalism in the Muslim World. New York: Nova Science



14.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. To Q. No. 1: White proposed that the roots of our contemporary ecological crisis lay with the concept of human dominion over nature as found in the Genesis, and that the western technological development and approach to nature has been based on such attitude towards nature.

Ans. To Q. No. 2: Christian environmentalists point out that the biblical emphasis is on stewardship and not ownership, that the earth remains the Lord's and does not belong to its human inhabitants. They therefore oppose policies and practices that threaten the health or survival of the planet. Such environmentalists are particularly concerned with the current widespread reliance on non-renewable resources, habitat destruction, pollution and all other factors that contribute to climate change or otherwise threaten the health of the ecosystem.

Ans. To Q. No. 3: Lynn White

Ans. To Q. No. 4: Anthropocentrism. It is this anthropocentrism, which White believes is unique to the dominant form of Christianity, that gave rise to the development of modern science and technology, which in turn has led to the environmental crisis.

Ans. To Q. No. 5: According to the Old Testament, Christianity upholds the independent values of natural creatures and is committed to an ethic of responsible care and stewardship of the natural world. These values were presupposed by Jesus Christ and assumed throughout the New Testament.

Ans. To Q. No. 6: a) khalifa

b) Science and technology

c) Fall and original sin

d) Submission

e) tenets

Ans. To Q. No. 7: a) False

b) True

c) True

d) True



14.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

(a) Very short questions:

Q. 1: Does Christianity believe in the union of divinity and nature?

Q. 2: How is the world created according to Christian beliefs??

Q. 3: What role is assigned to humans by the *Quran*?

Q. 4: What is the position of humans within the hierarchy of created beings in Islam?

(b) Short questions: (answer in about 150-200 words)

Q. 1: Discuss the role of contemporary Muslim environmentalist movements towards environmental protection.

Q. 2: What is the basis of the Christian understanding of the relation among nature, humanity and God?

Q. 3: What is the role of humans on earth according to Islam?

Q. 4: What are the differences between Christianity and Islam on their environmental views?

(c) Long questions: (answer in about 300-500 words)

Q. 1: Write an essay on the Christian views on environmental ethics.

Q. 2: Are the charges of anthropocentrism against Christianity justified? Discuss.

Q. 3: Write a note on contemporary Islamic environmental thought.

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