

THEOCENTRISM AND PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE CARIBBEAN

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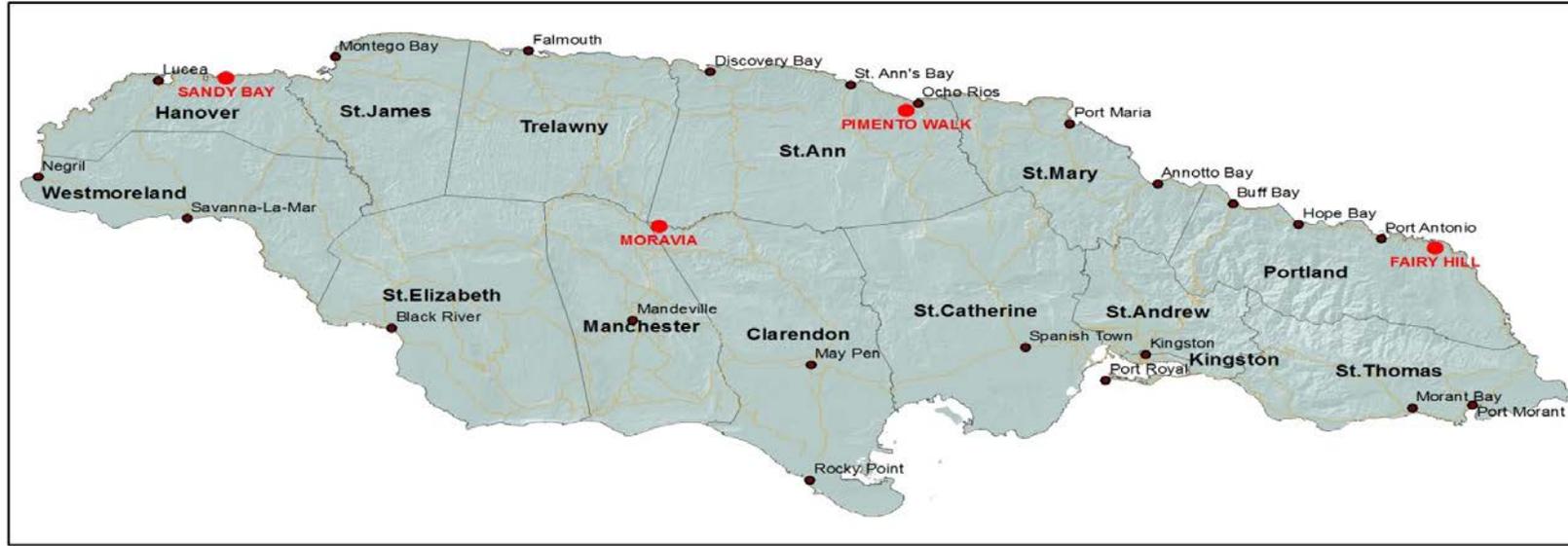
SUMMARY

- Theocentric (religious-based) environmental values are integral antecedents to responsible environmental behaviour in an adaptation of Stern's (2000) linear value-based model of environmentalism, particularly in the Caribbean context.

TYPES OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

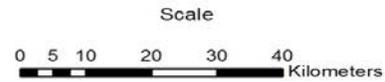
Parish	Organisation Name	Nature of Project	Type of Environmental Project
Clarendon	UNITAS – Project Development Arm of the Moravian Church and Moravia Moravian Church	Faith-based - NGO and Church Led	Reforestation and Mitigation against Soil Erosion Livelihood
St. Ann	Hills United Development Organisation (HUDO)	Non-faith-based CBO	Reforestation Livelihood
Hanover	Fletcher’s Grove Baptist Church	Faith-based - Church led	Solid Waste Management Advocacy and Environmental Awareness (Recycling component commenced after 2010)
Portland	Fairy Hill Citizen’s Association	Non-faith-based CBO	Solid Waste Management Advocacy and Environmental Awareness And Recycling

Site Map Showing Project Locations



Legend

- Project Locations
- Towns
- Major Roads
- Parishes



FINDINGS

- Faith-based participants were more motivated to participate because it was the 'Lord's' work
- Both faith based and non faith based participants had high values of theocentrism

DEFINING THEOCENTRISM

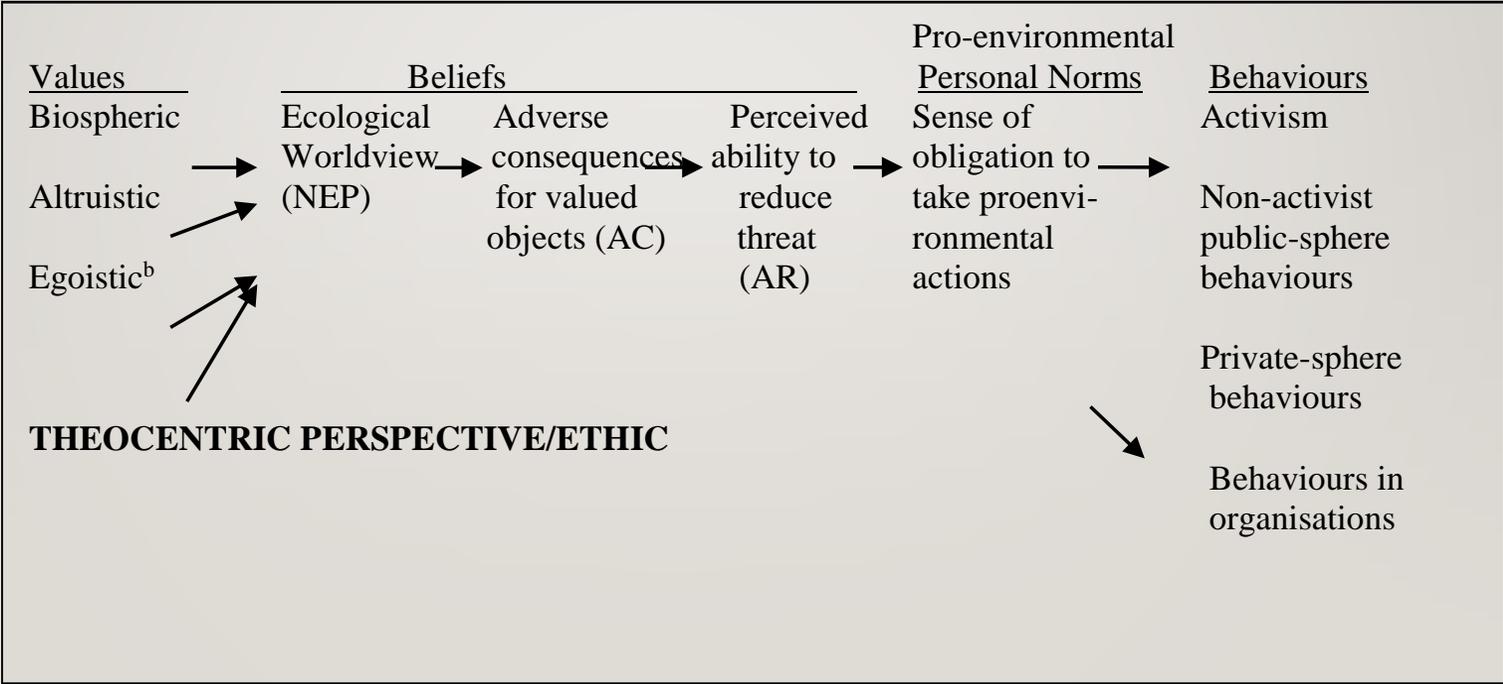
- Theocentrism places focus on God the creator and posits that all of life is to be conducted so as to relate all things in a manner appropriate to their relationship with God.
- Theocentrism is seen as offering an alternative to anthropocentrism which places humans as central to nature and how nature is understood. Anthropocentric constructs include ecocentrism or biocentrism, altruism and egoism.

MEASURING THEOCENTRISM

- On a scale of 1 to 7 (7 being highest), please indicate how important each of these is a guiding principle in your life:
 - Nature is sacred because it was created by God
 - Human beings should respect nature because it was created by God
 - Human beings should care for nature because God expects us to do so

STERN'S (2000) LINEAR VALUE-BASED MODEL OF ENVIRONMENTALISM

Figure 1 Stern's VBN theory with Theocentric Values (Adapted)



RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS

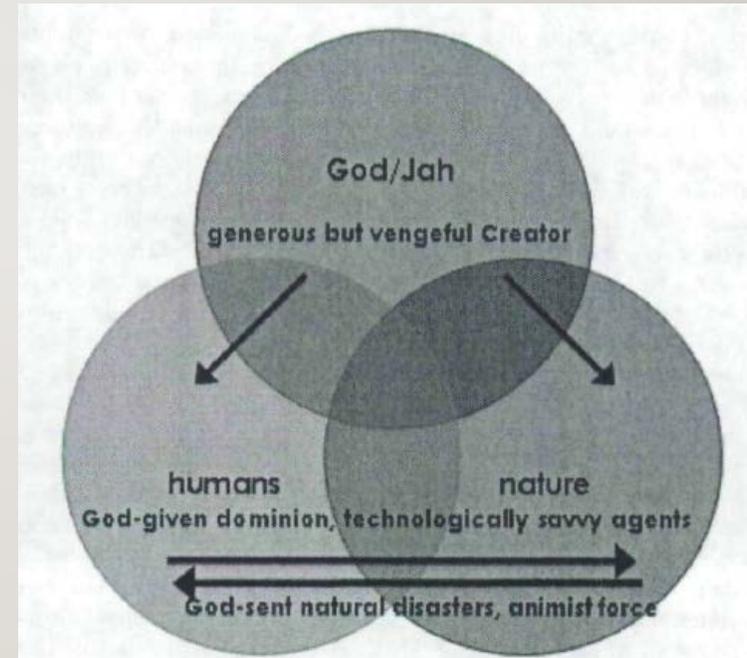
- Social scientists suggest that the religious beliefs people hold often have a marked influence on their overall outlook toward the world (Weber, 1963).
- Environmental concern and worldviews in the Caribbean are constructed largely through religious lenses (Jaffe, 2008;Yarde, 2012).

A CARIBBEAN REALITY?

- Findings supported other studies in the Caribbean
 - Ringel and Wylie (1979) found in Dominica that attitudes toward nature are shaped by religion: Nature is seen as part of a system which focuses on humankind's relationship with God. Their research led them to posit that the Church is the institution most likely to foster an environmental ethic.
 - In research in Dominica on how people conceptualize and think about nature Yarde (2012) explored responses to the question “What is nature?” Prime among these was the notion of nature as God’s handiwork, an idea that she identified as a recurring feature of Caribbean concepts of nature

A CARIBBEAN REALITY?

- Religion obviously played a strong role in shaping ideas about the relationship between humans and nature in Kingston Jamaica and Curacao.
- Not a two-sided relationship between humans and the natural environment, but in the Caribbean context it might be more useful to think in terms of trilateral relationship between humans, nature, and God or Jah (Jaffe, 2008)



UNDERLYING TENSIONS:A DOMINATION ETHIC

- Lyn White's Thesis (1967) that places Western Christianity's anthropocentric focus at the root of the ecological crisis,
- Church's focus on souls and the life hereafter inclined to impact how nature is treated
- Responses to Questionnaire were instructive
 - Indicate Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, to the following:
 - Nature is to be used to serve needs of humans mainly
 - Humans have greater rights to the resources of nature (water, clean air, trees) than other animals
 - Nature should be cared for by humans

TOURISM AND SUSTAINABILITY – THREATS, RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- OPPORTUNITIES
- Opportunity to encourage appreciation of the intrinsic worth of nature
- Opportunity to facilitate environmental stewardship through religious prisms which redounds to stewardship of the tourism product
- Opportunity as a Caribbean to leverage cultural norms and values to protect the tourism product
- Opportunity as SIDS, in the context of Climate Change, to minimise Carbon footprints through values-driven and/or religious oriented mitigation measures (Environmental and Social Justice etc.)
- Opportunity to engage a wide range of stakeholders in the sustainable tourism project (Church, Civil Society Groups, Schools and the Society in General)



• **THANK YOU**