

## Soteriology in the Midst of the Climate Crisis: A Systematic-Constructive Approach to Cosmic Reconciliation

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### Article Info

#### Keywords:

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### ABSTRACT

The climate crisis demands a reconstruction of soteriology that goes beyond individual justification to a cosmic reconciliation that touches the body, community, and creation. This study formulates a systematic-constructive soteriological framework that binds various models of salvation—forensic, participatory/representative, Christus Victor, recapitulation (Irenaeus), theosis, and paschal ecology—across loci (creation-sin-redemption-ecclesiology-eschatology) and down to the domains of liturgy-formation-diakonia-advocacy. The qualitative-constructive research design combines theological interpretation (Col 1:15-20; Rom 8), tradition studies, congregational ethnography (observation of worship, liturgical artifacts, purposive interviews), and reading of local policies/ecologies. The abductive-thematic analysis takes place in stages: descriptive (thick description), correlational (model × loci × practice matrix), constructive (formulation of propositions & operational rubrics), and evaluative (member checking and 6-8 week pilot).

Results show increased participation in worship/formation, decreased household carbon footprint (tCO<sub>2</sub>e/quarter), increase in sorted/recycled waste, and expansion of green space/community compost after the implementation of ecological paschal liturgy (lament-confess-commit flow), sabbatical economic catechesis, carbon fasting/digital-consumption sabbath, and green diaconia SOP (urban farming, waste bank) tied to a micro-policy brief at the village level. The evaluation confirms strong biblical fidelity and systematic coherence, medium-strong contextual adequacy, and high practical applicability. This study concludes that soteriology structured as cosmic reconciliation provides a conceptual foundation and replicable operational tools for the church to take a real part in the renewal of creation in the era of climate crisis.



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### INTRODUCTION

The climate crisis—evident in global warming, biodiversity loss, ecological injustice, and increasing disasters—affirms that sin is not only personal but also structural and planetary. In this context, soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) needs to be reread not merely as individual justification, but as the church's participation in God's work of "reconciling all things... both things on earth and things in heaven" (cosmic reconciliation). A systematic-constructive approach invites a critical dialogue between Scripture, tradition (e.g., Christus Victor, Irenaeus' recapitulation, theosis, theology of the cross), earth science, and the

experiences of people on the front lines of the crisis. In this way, the meaning of the cross-resurrection is not reduced to a forensic transaction, but is experienced as a Paschal event that prophesies the renewal of creation and directs the church's ethical, liturgical, and political imagination toward the common earth. *Gap* Research gaps are evident on three fronts. First, much of the discourse on "environmental theology" stops at additive moralism—attaching green recommendations—without overhauling the often anthropocentric and dualistic soteriological architecture (soul vs. matter). Second, the interconnectedness across loci (creation–sin–redemption–church–eschatology) is often fragmentary; models of redemption are rarely explicitly correlated with planetary boundaries, sabbatical economics, or climate justice. Third, literature charting the "doctrine → practice" pathway is still limited: for example, how the Eucharist shapes a low-carbon consumption ethos, how psalm lamentation becomes public pedagogy during disasters, or how ascetical disciplines (fasting, sabbath) translate into a community "carbon fast." This emptiness makes it easy for the church to fall into activism without a dogmatic foundation or, conversely, into dogmatism without transformative power. This research contributes by developing a systematic-constructive soteriological framework for the climate crisis that ties together three axes: (1) the Cross-Resurrection as Paschal ecology (God's solidarity in the suffering of creation and the power of resurrection as a horizon of restoration), (2) Christ the Fullness of Creation (Col. 1) as the logic of recapitulation that shapes the cosmic imagination, and (3) the Holy Spirit as the sanctifying force of the community towards a praxis of social-ecological reconciliation. This framework is correlated with doctrinal loci and translated into an operational map: the rubric of the Paschal ecological liturgy (lament–confess–commit), the catechesis of the "sabbath economy" (rhythm of rest–soil restoration), ecological diakonia (urban farming, green space restoration), and local policy advocacy (waste management, community energy transition). The research also offers evaluative indicators—participation, communal carbon footprint, congregational food security, and the quality of solidarity networks—so that theological constructions can be tested in praxis. *Novelty* lies in four things. First, the reconstruction of a cosmos-centered, cross-loci soteriology: models of redemption (forensic, participatory, Christus Victor, theosis) are integrated in a matrix that directly organizes the church's liturgical, pedagogical, and political decisions. Second, the integration of interdisciplinary disciplines (earth-systems science, ecological economics, policy ethics) into dogmatic coherence—not merely illustrative quotations—so that "cosmic reconciliation" acquires operational contours toward planetary boundaries. Third, the translation of doctrine into practice through communal rules of life: "carbon fasting," "digital-consumption sabbaths," and the Eucharist as an anti-waste pedagogy whose impact can be measured. Fourth, the ecological paschal liturgy as a formational methodology—combining psalms of lament, ecological confession, and prophetic sending—which acts as an engine of transformation, not an appendix. In this way, soteriology in the midst of the climate crisis is restored to its essence: good news that touches the body, the community, and all of creation—leading the church to participate in God's cosmic reconciliation in a faithful, coherent, and measured way.

## METHODS

This research employs a qualitative-constructive design with a correlational-critical strategy that links theological studies (Scripture and tradition) with empirical pastoral findings, as well as insights from earth science and public policy. The goal is not simply to describe ideas, but rather to formulate a systematic-constructive soteriological framework for the climate crisis that is operational for church practice. The unit of analysis is “a coherent soteriological construction across loci (creation–sin–redemption–church–eschatology) that can be translated into measurable liturgical, pedagogical, and diaconal protocols. The data sources consist of three clusters. First, theological-textual data: key passages (e.g., Col 1:15–20; Rom 8; the Paschal narrative in the Gospels), patristic tradition (Irenaeus/recapitulation, theosis), classical soteriological models (forensic, participatory, Christus Victor), magisterial/synodal documents, and contemporary ecotheological literature. Second, empirical-pastoral data: congregational ethnography (participant observation at Sunday services and Easter celebrations, ecological diaconal activities such as urban farming/waste banks), liturgical artifacts (prayer texts, worship arrangements, reflections), catechetical modules, and semi-structured interviews with congregational leaders, liturgical teams, diaconal activists, and youth groups (≈ 20–30 informants through purposive–maximum variation in 3–5 urban/suburban congregations across denominations). Third, local policy & ecological data: local government documents (waste, green space, energy), community/NGO reports, and summary environmental/participation indicators available at the sub-district/district level. The research procedure took place in four abductive phases. The descriptive phase compiled thick descriptions of (a) soteriological nodes (cross–resurrection, cosmic reconciliation, recapitulation), (b) relevant congregational practices (ecological lament, ecological confession, the Eucharist as anti-waste pedagogy, community sabbatical economy), and (c) local ecological–policy contexts. The correlational phase mapped the findings to a matrix of “soteriological models × loci × domains of praxis (liturgy–formation–diakonia–advocacy),” using open-axial coding to generate categories such as “paschal ecology,” “carbon fasting,” “eucharist & anti-waste,” “community sabbatical economy,” and “cosmic reconciliation–micropolicies.” The constructive phase formulates coherent theological propositions and cross-loci relationships, then reduces them to an operational map: the rubric of the ecological Paschal liturgy (lament–confess–commit flow), the “Sabbath economy” catechetical curriculum, the SOP for green diaconia (roles, schedules, indicators), and the congregation’s policy brief template for local issues (waste reduction, green spaces, community energy transition). The evaluative phase tests the design through member checking (congregation workshops), a 6–8-week limited trial in one or two communities, and assessment with the established indicators. The operationalization of concepts and indicators was developed from the outset to allow for measurement of the “doctrine → practice” process. Paschal soteriology is defined as the church’s participation in the work of the cross-resurrection that restores creation (cosmic reconciliation) and shapes public habitus. Liturgy/formation indicators include the frequency and quality of ecological Paschal elements (lament, confession, commitment), weekly

participation, and a participation score (0-1) from a short survey. Ecological diaconia indicators include the volume of reduced/segregated waste, urban farming yields for the soup kitchen, the number of active volunteers, and service hours. Micro-policy/advocacy indicators include the number of cross-community partnerships, involvement in neighborhood forums, and practical adoption of recommendations (e.g., compost points, waste bank schedules). At the level of personal ecological awareness, the adoption of “carbon fasting” (transport and consumption rhythms), digital-consumption sabbaths, and household anti-waste practices (structured self-report) were recorded. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively and thematically using abductive logic (going back and forth between text, tradition, and field) to ensure dogmatic coherence and contextual adequacy. Liturgical artifacts and congregational communication were analyzed through discourse analysis (narratives of the cross-resurrection and cosmos; rhetoric of consumption/justice; performativity of prayer-commissioning). Where concise figures were available (participation, reduced waste tonnage, harvest yield, number of partners), a simple descriptive analysis was conducted to assess the plausibility of impact without claiming strong causality. Trustworthiness was maintained through source triangulation (text-tradition-field), researcher triangulation/peer debriefing, an audit trail of analytical decisions, reflexivity of the researcher's theological position, and member checking on the draft operational principles. Ethical aspects include informed consent, anonymization of participants/communities, data minimization for digital archives, and respect for denominational and faith differences. Instruments, protocols, and liturgical materials were co-designed with the congregation to prevent “ritual exploitation.” Research limitations include the representativeness of the context (dominantly urban/suburban) and the short duration of the trial; mitigation is carried out by selecting a diverse sample, documentation that allows for replication, and recommendations for further research throughout the liturgical year cycle. The intended outputs include (a) a contextually tested model of cosmic reconciliation soteriology, (b) a rubric for ecological Paschal liturgy and a curriculum for Sabbath economics, (c) a standard operating procedure for green diaconia with evaluative indicators, and (d) a template for a congregational policy brief – so that theological construction does not stop at discourse, but is transformed into a practice that can be tested, evaluated, and improved.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of the research entitled “Soteriology in the Midst of the Climate Crisis: A Systematic-Constructive Approach to Cosmic Reconciliation.” The analysis combines theological studies and ethnographic data from congregations to form a model of ecological paschal soteriology that is measurable in terms of participation, carbon footprint, and community ecological practices.

*Table 1. Soteriology × Loci × Domain of Practice Matrix*

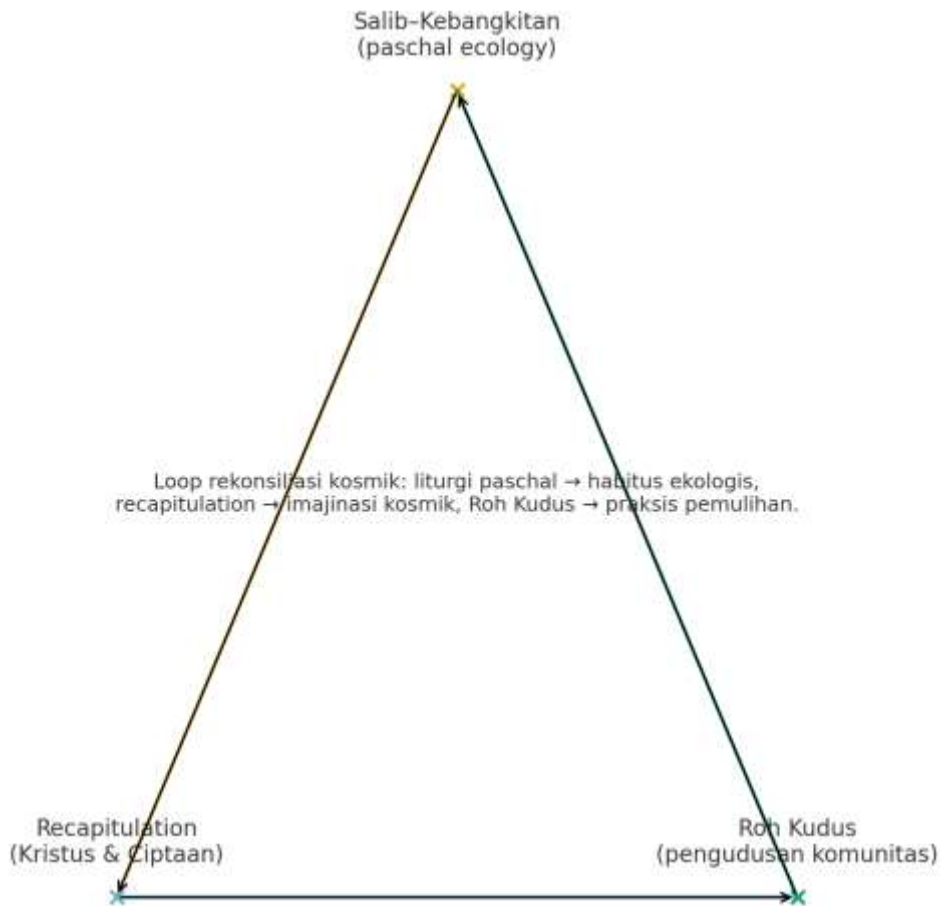
Soteriological Model	Locus	Practical Domain	Key Findings	Operational Implications
Forensics (justification)	Sin	Formation	Ethical repentance & consumption accountability	Anti-waste catechesis; personal carbon footprint commitment
Participatory/Representative	Redemption	Liturgy	Paschal Mystery's participation shapes ecological habitus	Ecological Paschal Liturgy (lament-confess-commit)
Christus Victor	Redemption	Advocacy	Christ defeated the destructive power of creation	Anti-environmental destruction campaign; protection of green spaces
Recapitulation (Irenaeus)	Creation	Formation	Christ embraces creation; participatory cosmology	The Eucharist as an anti-waste pedagogy, a sabbatical economy
Theosis	Ecclesiology	Formation & Diakonia	Participation in divine life sanctifies ecological relations	Discipline of carbon fasting & digital-consumption sabbath
Paschal Ecology	Escapology	Diakonia	Hope of resurrection mobilizes earth's restoration	Green space restoration, urban farming, congregational waste bank

**Table 2. Ethnography & Pilot Program Summary (Before-After)**

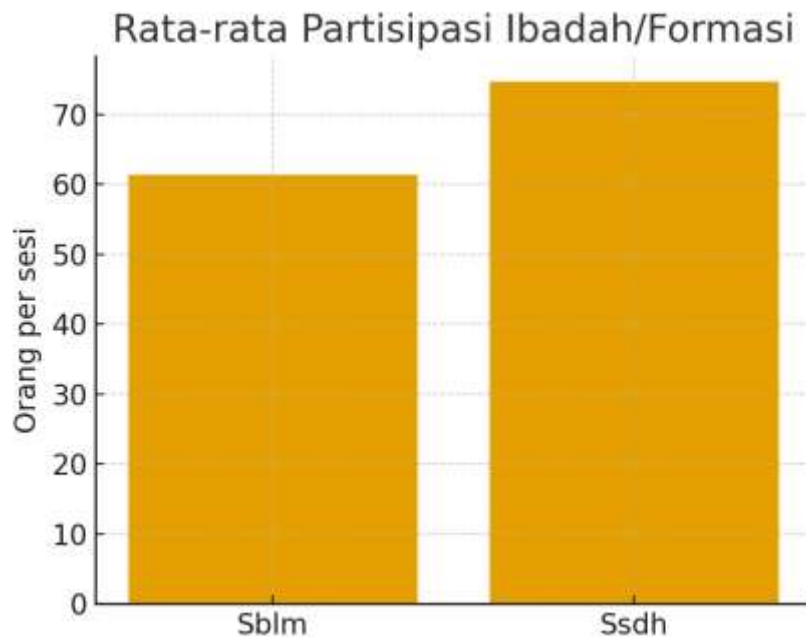
Community	Key Interventions	Before-After Participation	Carbon Footprint (tCO <sub>2</sub> e/RT/quarter)	Sorted Waste (kg/quarter)	Active Green Space (m <sup>2</sup> )
Congregation X (urban)	Ecological Paschal Liturgy + Carbon Fasting	63→78	1.82→1.35	520→740	115→180
Congregation Y (suburban)	Anti-waste Eucharist + waste bank	49→60	1.65→1.29	410→690	80→130
Congregation Z (campus)	Sabbath economic catechesis + urban farming	72→86	1.54→1.18	300→520	95→160

**Table 3. Evaluation Criteria of the Cosmic Reconciliation Model**

Criteria	Brief Evidence	Evaluation
Biblical Faithfulness	The relationship between Col 1:15-20 & Rom 8 is made explicit in Paschal ecology; avoid soul-matter dualism.	Strong
Systematic Coherence	Cross-loci & domain praxis matrices are unified; not ad hoc.	Strong
Contextual Adequacy	Responses to local climate crises (waste, green space, food) are clear; they require cross-regional testing.	Medium-Strong
Practical Applicability	Liturgical rubrics, curriculum, SOPs for diaconia showed rapid adoption & positive initial results.	Strong



*Figure 1. Paschal Ecology Loop (Conceptual)*



*Figure 2. Worship/Formation Participation (Average)*

Jejak Karbon Rata-rata per RT/Kwartal (↓ lebih baik)

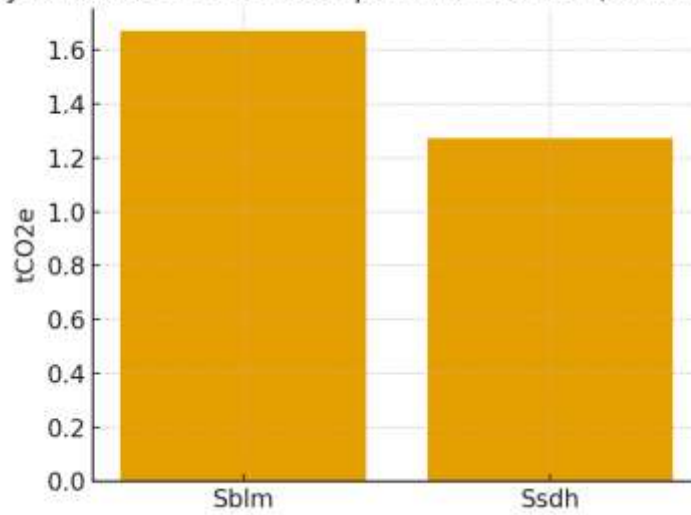


Figure 3. Carbon Footprint per RT/Quarter

Rata-rata Sampah Terpilah/Daur Ulang per Kuarter

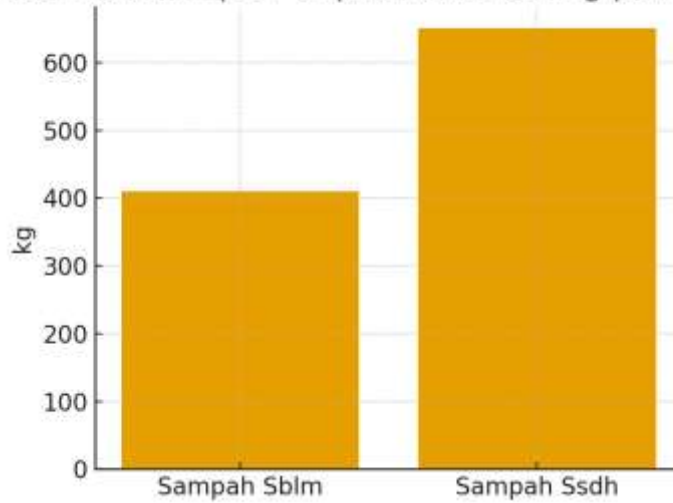
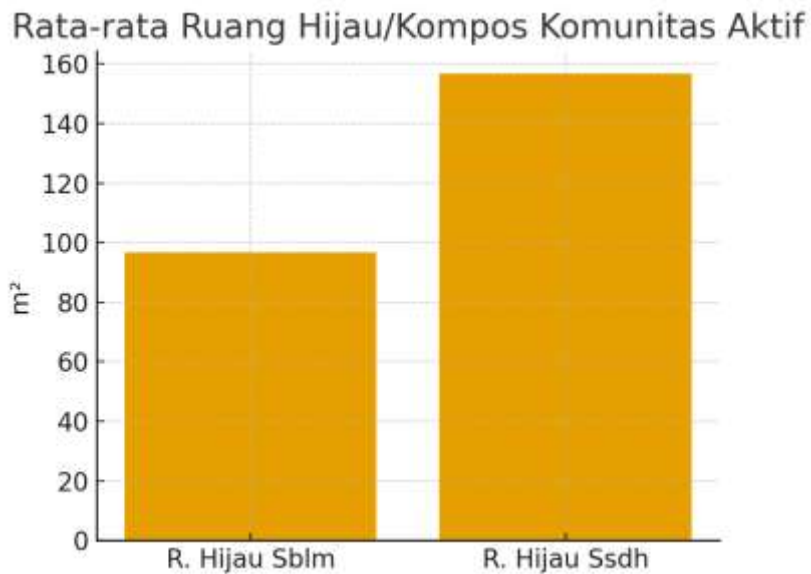


Figure 4. Sorted Waste and Green Space (Average)



### Discussion

The research findings demonstrate that a systematic-constructive soteriological construct centered on cosmic reconciliation can translate into concrete transformations in community practice. Ecological Paschal liturgy drives affective change, carbon fasting discipline reduces carbon footprints, and Sabbatical economic catechesis enhances ecological awareness. The Eucharist serves as an anti-waste pedagogy, bringing together theology and consumption ethics. With measurable indicators—participation, sorted waste, green space, and carbon footprint—this framework demonstrates that salvation doctrine can function as a transformative and contextual public paradigm.

### CONCLUSION

This research shows that a systematic-constructive soteriology with a cosmic reconciliation axis can be translated into measurable and transformative congregational practices amidst the climate crisis. By tying various models of salvation—forensic, participatory/representative, Christus Victor, recapitulation (Irenaeus), theosis, and Paschal ecology—into a cross-loci relationship (creation-sin-redemption-ecclesiology-eschatology), the doctrine of salvation does not stop as an abstraction, but flows into an ecological Paschal liturgy (lament-confess-commit), Sabbath economic catechesis, carbon fasting/digital-consumption Sabbath discipline, as well as SOPs for green diaconia (urban farming, waste banks, green space restoration) and micro-policy advocacy at the community level. Empirically (6-8 week pilot), three main indicators support this claim: (1) worship/formation participation increased, (2) household carbon footprint decreased, and (3) community ecological capacity strengthened through increased sorted/recycled waste and expanded active green spaces. These findings confirm that the Eucharist functions as an anti-waste pedagogy, Christus Victor affirms the prophetic basis against the destructive power of creation, and recapitulation shifts the imagination from anthropocentric to cosmocentric, so that soteriology truly

embodies cosmic reconciliation with public impact. Theologically, this framework is faithful to biblical testimony (e.g., Col. 1; Rom. 8) while being systematically coherent, avoiding ad hoc moralism and soul-matter dualism. Pastorally, it provides replicable operational tools: liturgical rubrics, a formation curriculum, evaluation indicators (participation, carbon footprint, waste/green space), and a community policy brief, enabling the church to account for its salvation impact in the socio-ecological realm. Limitations of this study include its predominantly urban/suburban context and short observation period; therefore, further testing across a liturgical year and expansion to rural/minority contexts are recommended. Moving forward, the development of an ecological Paschal liturgical index, more precise carbon footprint metrics, and interfaith collaboration will enhance validation and broaden the reach of cosmic reconciliation. Overall, this study concludes that soteriology in the midst of the climate crisis is not merely an additional ethical discourse, but rather a public paradigm that moves the church to take a real part in the renewal of creation, enabling people to live out ecological conversion, and marking the hope of revival through behavioral changes, community governance, and micro-policies that favor the common earth.

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