

# Including Faith Communities in Disaster Recovery Phase via Religious Diversity: Qualitative Descriptive Analysis

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## Abstract

A hypothesis on the relationship between disaster management and religion is that the benefits of disaster recovery increase with an increase in religious diversity in disaster recovery. This article aims to examine the role of faith communities during disaster recovery with the ultimate goal of increasing religious diversity. Qualitative descriptive analysis was used to examine mass care-oriented disaster recovery and further specialized care across four stakeholders: religiously highly diverse countries, religiously moderately diverse countries, religiously least diverse countries, and international organizations. Additionally, the PRISMA 2020 checklist and flow diagram were employed as supplementary tools. A key tenet was that all four stakeholders should try to supplement mass care-oriented disaster recovery (e.g., sheltering, feeding, health services) with further specialized care while appropriately addressing religious tolerance, literacy, and competency, as well as the roles of emergency managers and sustainable education. This study provided a more comprehensive description of including faith communities in disaster recovery than was available in the existing literature.

**Keywords:** Community; Further Specialized Care; Mass Care-Oriented Disaster Recovery; Religious Competency; Spirituality

## INTRODUCTION

At some point, in their familiar religion assigned to birth, approximately 85% of the world's population has believed. Their religious beliefs and worldviews play an important role in their



understanding of various disasters, referred to as acts of God (Borja, 2025; Clarke & Parris, 2019). Individuals and communities' worldviews are shaped by factors such as religious texts, participation in religious practices, and secular influences. Diverse worldviews and religious beliefs have influenced how stakeholders manage the disaster-recovery phase in multiple regions. Likewise, following the 2015-earthquake in Nepal, religious organizations had a variety of functions (Fehr, 2022).

Theories of disaster management are broad and complex, encompassing human activities, natural hazards, acts of God, and the relationship between society and the environment. Disaster management comprises the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, including governmental organizations and non-governmental partners (such as faith communities), to address a variety of calamities (McEntire, 2021). By exploring several subjects and posing difficult questions regarding religious diversity, this study aims to reinforce the key elements of disaster management theories.

Since the end of World War II, religions have diversified worldwide (Lin et al., 2022). Many Southeast Asian and West African countries have demonstrated significant religious diversity. For instance, although most Indonesians identify as Muslims, a significant portion of the population continues to follow Buddhist, Hinduist, Christian, and indigenous traditions (Adon, 2021). Given that missionary work in Southeast Asian and African regions was prevalent during colonial periods, missionary activities, free human thought, political ideologies, economic situations, general diversity, and other factors have led to an increasing level of religious diversity. However, this religious diversity has produced spillover (or ripple) effects on neighboring nations in the 21st century. Spillover effects describe the impact or influence – often unexpected or indirect – of a choice, action, or event in one area, sector, or group on another.

Although many individuals and nations have discussed religion, worldviews, disaster management, and disaster recovery, almost no entity has rigorously examined religious diversity within the context of disaster recovery (Grim, 2020). Notably, the disaster recovery phase has become more diverse. Consequently, faith communities have engaged in a wide range of activities worldwide, which are projected to expand substantially more than secular organizations. This study seeks to support disaster management theories at the international level by utilizing the religious literature (Cvetković et al., 2023). This study sought to answer the following research question: How have key stakeholders addressed the disaster recovery phase through religious diversity?

This study examines the process of including faith communities in the disaster recovery phase by promoting religious diversity. This study proposes that this step could reduce human loss, economic damage, and psychological impact in the field. Mass care-oriented disaster recovery and further specialized care were compared across four stakeholder groups: religiously highly diverse countries, religiously moderately diverse countries, religiously least diverse countries, and international organizations. The most notable finding is that faith communities can enhance their mass-care-oriented disaster recovery efforts through further specialized care. Additionally, it is recommended that they improve religious tolerance, literacy, and competency as well as strengthen the roles of emergency managers and educational initiatives based on the benefits of religious diversity.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Among the four major concepts discussed in this paper, two—religious diversity and faith communities—are related to religion. According to the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2025),

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“religious diversity refers to the fact that there are significant differences in religious beliefs and practices. It has always been recognized by people outside the smallest and most isolated communities. But since early modern times, increasing information from travel, publishing, and emigration has forced thoughtful people to reflect more deeply on religious diversity.” Worldwide, there are approximately 200–45,000 religious denominations ([Holleman et al., 2022](#)), indicating significant differences in religious beliefs and practices. Faith communities, comprising many religious congregations ([WEA Team, 2023](#)), have undertaken missions focused on cultivating religious believers, disseminating knowledge, sharing resources, building networks, and fostering trust relationships.

The disaster recovery phase in the disaster management cycle, comprising disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, aims to restore the impacts of all aspects of disasters, including natural hazards and manmade emergencies, within communities and return them to normalcy ([UNDP, 2023](#)). This phase includes short-term recovery efforts, such as rehabilitation, and long-term recovery efforts, such as reconstruction. Moreover, analyses show that individuals and communities are affected differently by various disasters, highlighting the need to include everyone equally within the scope of disaster recovery ([Twigg et al., 2018](#)). Inclusion ensures that stakeholders have equal access to recovery opportunities and resources, thereby advancing the overarching goals of disaster recovery.

Religious diversity has been discussed as frequently as in the entire community approach ([FEMA - Emergency Management Institute, 2016](#)). In the entire community approach, all community members, encompassing both secular institutions and faith communities and their resources, can participate in disaster management. Without diverse individuals, institutions, and their

networks, disaster recovery efforts would suffer significantly. In this context, religious diversity is a crucial element of disaster recovery.

Religious diversity offers significant benefits to the disaster recovery phase (McManus, 2016) because almost all religions regard helping disaster victims and affected communities as a fundamental religious obligation. Most faith communities promote communication, tolerance, learning, and harmony during disaster recovery. When faced with critical challenges, they collaborate through mutual alliances and coalitions. Moreover, their recovery activities contribute to increased workplace productivity among communities with diverse faith.

However, religious diversity also has negative effects, such as creating complex perspectives on the disaster recovery phase, leading to divisions, political polarization, and conflicts (Raymond, 2019). The presence of multiple religious groups may heighten competition to influence recovery initiatives, diverting attention from unified efforts. Religious diversity often causes delays when differing theological perspectives, practices, or priorities hinder the distribution of resources. Notably, not all faith communities collaborate in disaster recovery efforts. While these communities generally maintain respect for each other, differing beliefs sometimes prevent collaboration. Additionally, some faith communities prefer to collaborate with government entities rather than with peer groups.

However, in international disaster recovery, religious diversity has not been negatively associated with national identity or neighborhood trust (Bennett et al., 2022). In contrast, studies on Christians in England suggest an association between religious diversity and neighborhood trust, and no link between religious diversity and national identity. Major religious groups frequently collaborate with governments during disaster management (Eballo & Eballo, 2024). Studies of other faith communities in England have

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found no significant links between religious diversity, national identity, and neighborhood trust during disaster recovery. In summary, the negative impact of religious diversity is not statistically significant.

Similarly, faith communities have played a crucial role in helping governments manage the disaster recovery phase ([USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture & National Disaster Interfaiths Network, 2014](#)). Consequently, the values of faith communities have significantly influenced individuals, local areas, and key aspects, such as demography, communication networks, and local languages. Notably, faith communities have effectively mobilized trained and vetted volunteers in affected local areas. To provide emotional support, faith communities have served as indispensable partners in governments' disaster recovery efforts.

There has been more research on religious diversity than on other diversity subtopics such as race, sex, culture, personality, and age ([Lundgren & Fransson, 2023](#)). Additionally, despite controversies, researchers have found more positive than negative effects of religious diversity ([Singh & Babbar, 2020](#)). However, only a few researchers have systematically examined the role of religious diversity in achieving disaster recovery goals.

Many national governments in various regions have either experienced or considered religious diversity a source of social instability. Moreover, some developing nations have viewed a lack of religious uniformity as a major barrier to disaster recovery. Religious diversity has contributed to social unrest in these nations. In contrast, the United States (US) and several Western nations have sought to embrace religious diversity while striving for religious freedom ([Hoover, 2023](#)), with many democratic nations championing religious diversity as a requirement for disaster recovery ([Pickel, 2019](#)).

Religious uniformity is identified as a potential source of vulnerability.

Researchers have discussed religious diversity; however, a comprehensive discourse is not within the scope of this research. Holmgaard (2019) compared two distinct roles of religion in Samoa within the context of local disaster perception. After the tsunami in Samoa in 2010, churchgoers in two Samoan villages distinctly perceived its cause and effect as a divine punishment and as a potential sign of a second tsunami. Consequently, those perceiving it as divine punishment did not take any action regarding future tsunamis, whereas those seeing it as a sign attempted to manage potential tsunamis.

Orr et al. (2021) researched how the Jewish ultra-Orthodox, a religious minority in Israel, prepared for earthquakes. The researchers assumed that disaster management could not achieve its objectives without reflecting the needs of the various religious minority groups in the region. They found that Jewish ultra-Orthodox individuals knew how to prepare for earthquakes by referring to their religious beliefs and customs, while the majority in Israel had a low level of risk perception in this respect.

Canaan et al. (2022) examined the effects of religious diversity among college students in Lebanon. The survey respondents were three religious groups that attended Islamic, Christian, or secular high schools. The more homogenous group experienced greater diversity than the less homogenous group. They found that Islamic students' exposure to students of other religions increased their level of trust in other religions, thus improving their school grades. However, this study did not discuss disaster recovery.

In its 2023 disaster analysis report, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) emphasized the significance of humanitarian planning for disaster recovery. In fact, over half of the

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expenses associated with humanitarian responses were not successfully paid, despite the quadrupling financial costs of humanitarian appeals during the last decade (UNDRR, 2023). Humanitarian planning aims to provide emergency supplies and strategies for vulnerable groups. To guarantee religiously sensitive interventions during disaster recovery, humanitarian planning also considers religious conventions and practices such as prayer hours, dietary restrictions, burial ceremonies, and other relevant customs.

This study aims to rigorously examine how to include faith communities in disaster recovery while expanding religious diversity. The results demonstrate that religious diversity has more positive than negative effects on disaster recovery. The teachings of the religious majority are considered ethically normal, whereas the norms of religious minorities are represented as morally inferior (Triandafyllidou, 2011; Waddock, 2021). Thus, this study assumed religious diversity (including religious majorities and minorities) to be a robust asset in disaster recovery.

Furthermore, this study aims to improve theories related to disaster management, acknowledging that faith communities, the disaster recovery phase, and religious diversity are significant aspects of disaster management (Forino, 2024; D. W. Miller et al., 2018). Thus, the study can encourage more resilient, inclusive, and culturally competent management throughout the disaster recovery phase. It offers a foundation for faith in community engagement through disaster management theories by providing a conceptual context for disasters, disaster recovery, and religious diversity.

## **METHOD**

A qualitative descriptive analysis was used in this study because it provides straightforward descriptions of the subject to extensively produce appropriate insights (Doyle et al., 2020). This research

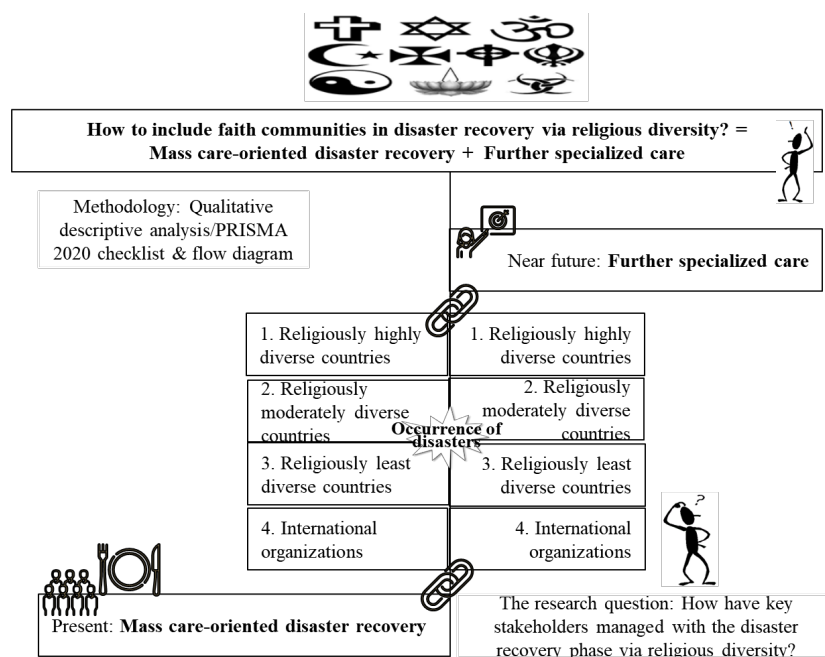


method sought to obtain qualitative data to describe the relationship between religious diversity and disaster recovery. This method consists of four main steps: proposing a research question, outlining the research design, identifying qualitative data, and describing the reality of the subject (Loeb et al., 2017). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 checklist and flow diagram were used as auxiliary methods in this investigation (see Data Availability Statement).

The aforementioned research question reflects a persuasive or persistent phenomenon in the field of disaster recovery. Subsequently, a research design was suggested (Figure 1). The research design, including the basic structure of all the research efforts, was repeatedly revised and improved during the research process.

**Figure 1**

*Research Design*



Source: Author's analysis.

To identify qualitative data, this study entered the following keywords into online search engines, such as Google.com, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect, and Oxford University Press: “religious diversity,” “religious diversity and disaster management,” “religious diversity and disaster recovery,” “faith communities and disaster recovery,” and “religious tolerance, literacy, and competency.” A key criterion for including or excluding textual data was whether specific data were clearly related to religious diversity, disaster recovery, and inclusion. The date of publication of the data was another eligibility criterion; the selection procedure mostly featured new publications.

When describing the reality of the subject, this study intended to determine whether observable patterns (or analytical categories) existed in the qualitative data. Two patterns were proposed: mass care-oriented disaster recovery and specialized care. The former means that faith communities provide not only basic needs (e.g., water, food, medical supplies, and shelters) and spiritual support, but also volunteers and other community services for disaster victims (Cullen & Ray, 2022). The latter refers to providing mass care that is professionally tailored to the needs of affected communities (World Health Organization, 2020).

This study included and analyzed the four major stakeholders as units of analysis and described the aforementioned two patterns. All nations were initially classified into three groups in terms of religious diversity: highly diverse, moderately diverse, and least diverse countries (Pew Research Center, 2014). Categorization as high, moderate, or low depends on the proportion of a nation’s population. The religions covered included Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, folk religions, and unaffiliated religions. Among them, folk religions and indigenous beliefs were frequently entwined because they both included regional, custom-based spiritual practices and worldviews that were firmly anchored in particular groups (Alles,

2023). The closer a specific nation is to an equal proportion of those eight religions, the higher the extent of its religious diversity. Further, the fourth group of international organizations attempted to manage international humanitarian aid by embracing complicated relations with the nations classified above.

By employing strategies such as peer debriefing, coworker checking, and maintaining a reflective notebook (with the support of the PRISMA 2020 checklist and flow diagram), researcher bias was reduced to ensure a more impartial and balanced interpretation of qualitative data (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). Additionally, qualitative data were subjected to both systematic coding and theme analysis, with thorough documentation of the analytical procedure, thus guaranteeing transparency and rigor and enabling inferences to be made from a large and representative collection of qualitative data.

## **MASS CARE-ORIENTED DISASTER RECOVERY**

### **Religiously Highly Diverse Countries**

Multiple countries in the Asia-Pacific region have actively engaged in disaster recovery through their religious diversity (Al Qurtuby, 2023; Hoover, 2023). Despite Indonesia's many faith communities being recognized by the state and promoting faith harmony and cultural diversity, religious violence has persisted in local communities. Singaporean faith communities are well known to participate in faith and civil society initiatives during disaster recovery. However, Singapore has excluded specific religions such as Jehovah's Witnesses and the Unification Church. Faith communities in Taiwan, including Buddhists, have contributed to disaster recovery efforts in mainland China, as observed during the 1991 flood in East China. Conversely, China has targeted faith communities in Taiwan through its influence campaigns.

Faith communities in South Sudan, located in sub-Saharan Africa, have often managed regional humanitarian crises (Wilkinson et al., 2022). While coordinating their humanitarian efforts with international partners, local religious stakeholders have made notable contributions to the localization of religious diversity, such as addressing local needs. Nevertheless, they feel distanced from the international community. In summary, a few local religious leaders have realized that the international humanitarian system has been reluctant to partner with them regarding disaster recovery, particularly by providing small grants and collaborating with other secular institutions.

### **Religiously Moderately Diverse Countries**

Faith communities in the US are known for their quick and flexible mass care services for disaster victims. However, they have experienced serious challenges in their coordination efforts (Sledge & Thomas, 2019). Despite being stakeholders in disaster recovery, their capacities vary substantially among faith communities. Only some faith communities have abundant resources for disaster recovery such as food, housing, and spiritual support. It appears that the US National Recovery Framework does not appropriately allocate roles and responsibilities to faith communities.

Notably, the extent of religious diversity among the Italian urban population has become increasingly heterogeneous during the recent disaster recovery, but the Italian government has not collaborated with Catholic communities and other faith communities (Morpurgo, 2021). Numerous Catholic churches are observed in every Italian city. However, buildings representing other religions were considerably more difficult to identify. During disaster recovery, Catholic churches prevailed in delivering mass care. To a certain extent, there is a high level of disconnection between Catholic churches and other faith communities.

## **Religiously Least Diverse Countries**

In Latin America and the Caribbean, regions where Christianity (Catholicism or otherwise) predominates, individuals provide mass care for various disaster victims, such as Venezuelan refugees ([Church World Service, 2020](#)). Regional faith communities provide temporary assistance along migration routes, including daily necessities, transportation, worship spaces, pastoral assistance, and legal education. Nonetheless, many international institutions have not coordinated with local faith communities, and this lack of coordination has likely created challenges in accessing various recovery resources.

Since the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria in February 2023, which measured 7.8 on the Richter scale, faith communities in the region have provided mass care to affected residents ([Adams, 2023](#)). Islam, Christianity, and Judaism originated in the Middle East, and Islam remained the primary religion in affected nations. Islamic communities have collaborated with other faith communities, as exemplified by their participation in initiatives such as religion for peace. However, mass media in the region has not equitably covered the activities of other faith communities, including Christian church initiatives.

## **International Organizations**

The United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development (UN IATF-R) has cooperated with various faith communities worldwide to relieve tension with secular organizations ([United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development, 2022](#)). Similar to some UN entities that joined the UN IATF-R, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) attempted to enable faith and secular communities to collaboratively manage the complexities of religion during disaster recovery. Nonetheless, the

UN's primary disaster management entity, UNDRR, has not undertaken initiatives related to religious diversity in disaster recovery.

Since the mid-1980s, diverse faith-based international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), such as Islamic INGOs and Christian INGOs, have played key roles in managing disaster recovery due to natural hazards, famines, and regional conflicts (Khafagy, 2020). They actively used religious funds, donations, and access to remote areas to provide mass care. Their activities were related to humanitarian aid and religious missionaries. As such, few INGOs have been involved in the politicization of religion during disaster recovery, referring to religious texts or related interpretations in affected areas, including World Vision during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Catholic Relief Services during the 2010 Haiti earthquake, Norwegian Church Aid during the 2011 Horn of Africa drought, and others (Beuk, 2019).

## IMPLICATIONS

### Implications for Theory Development

The results of this study provide new insights into religious diversity in the academic discipline of disaster management and vice versa. This study attempted to increase the four major stakeholders' disaster knowledge and respect for diverse faiths by summarizing the existing literature and allowing the importance of religious diversity and disaster recovery to be embedded in the literature. Moreover, this study provides new knowledge on the benefits of religious diversity and thus facilitates unexpected solutions in the phase of disaster recovery.

This study further aimed to theoretically advance the understanding of how management, spirituality, and religion interact during the disaster recovery period. As such, this study helps to

develop a thorough theoretical framework while substantially incorporating theories of disaster management into religious diversity (Nawaz et al., 2024). Furthermore, this study offers suitable recommendations on how disaster recovery professionals interact with religious diversity. Finally, diverse readers with multiple perspectives on catastrophe recovery can gain a comprehensive understanding of a new facet of religious diversity from this study.

### **Practical Implications**

Individuals' religious beliefs influence their meaning-making, allowing them to contribute to the disaster recovery phase (Hakkim & Deb, 2022). Some recovery workers simultaneously consider natural hazards as an act of God and apply their scientific knowledge to them. These recovery workers realize human vulnerability and the limits of human control; hence, their religious meaning allows them to treat disaster victims with humility, piety, and gratitude. Religious diversity has meaningfully motivated faith communities to participate in mass-care delivery.

Similarly, the purpose of discernment is to include people's religious convictions in their decision-making processes and motivate them to contribute to the disaster recovery phase, which has positive effects, particularly in the context of management, spirituality, and religion (K. D. Miller, 2020). The process of becoming aware of God in our limited, everyday existence and allowing ourselves to be moved by Him to serve His creative endeavor is known as discernment. Individual discerners help others discern and continue to support collective and diverse discernments during the disaster recovery phase.

Religious diversity improves the extent of disaster resilience at the national level (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2021). Resilience includes the capacity to expect, withstand, adapt, and recover from the impacts of various disasters. Resilience cannot be

achieved without appropriate recovery knowledge or best practices. In this context, national resilience has significantly improved because multiple faith communities with knowledge and experience are equally included in disaster recovery. Accordingly, disaster victims recover from various disaster impacts because of the effects of religious diversity. Similarly, utilizing their vast community networks and trust, various religious organizations play a critical role in supporting long-term healing processes and ensuring that the most vulnerable groups receive specialized interventions.

Even so, faith communities' disaster recovery efforts have both positive and negative effects (Chung et al., 2024). The positive aspects of all four stakeholders are related to their effect on the provision of mass care for affected communities. By contrast, the negative aspects of each stakeholder are distinct because of their unique environments. Thus, the mass care-oriented disaster recovery of faith communities should be supplemented with further specialized care to facilitate short- and long-term disaster recovery in multiple regions (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Supplementing the Mass Care-Oriented Disaster Recovery with Further Specialized Care*

<b>Units</b>	<b>Further specialized care</b>
Religiously highly diverse countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Asia-Pacific region must implement the fullest extent of religious freedom during disaster recovery by improving economic and social inclusion (i.e., Indonesia), public order (i.e., Singapore), and international politics (i.e., Taiwan). These countries may also make use of laws, political cooperation, etc.</li> <li>- Faith communities in South Sudan must further formalize their humanitarian efforts with the international community's support, including official registration systems, formal networking, cultural integration, formal emergency training, and the internationalization of local studies.</li> </ul>
Religiously moderately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The US federal government should equally allocate mass care resources for faith communities via its National Recovery</li> </ul>



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diverse countries	Framework. These resources can include information sharing, community integration, emergency capacities, psychosocial support, and other targeted actions to improve the coordination of recovery efforts. - Italian politicians and emergency managers should systematically plan religious diversity (e.g., integration of religious practices, the connection among politics, religious beliefs and practices, and Muslim immigrants) and eliminate disconnection among faith communities for professionalized disaster recovery.
Religiously least diverse countries	- Latin America and the Caribbean should bridge the divide between international organizations and those for humanitarian aid by improving transparency, the standard of reporting, data integration, community-led monitoring, etc. - Mainstream media in the Middle East must equally allocate time and space to minority faith communities in the region and study the importance of all stakeholders in disaster recovery. Examples include balanced narratives, inclusive representation, local initiatives, etc.
International organizations	- As a new member of the UN IATF-R, the UNDRR should elaborate on its role during disaster recovery, including coordinated humanitarian efforts among faith communities and secular communities, advocacy for national policy change, joint crisis simulations, etc. - Because the politicization of religion contributes to diminishing disaster victims' religious trust, INGOs must focus more on the humanitarian mission during mass care delivery (e.g., health care, sheltering, food and water, mental support, etc.).

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Source: Author's analysis.

Changes in religious diversity over time have had a substantial influence on disaster recovery processes through their effects on social cohesiveness, resource mobilization, and community dynamics ([World Health Organization, 2021](#)). For example, increased religious diversity has promoted ecological cooperation, resulting in mutual understanding and extensive resource sharing. In contrast, when religious diversity results in tension or fragmentation, cooperation and trust are undermined, further hampering disaster recovery.

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Trends were found through longitudinal comparisons, such as how historical shifts in religious makeup affected recovery after disasters.

A high level of religious diversity establishes trust relationships among faith communities more firmly than a low level of religious diversity. Thus, faith communities' workplace productivity increases during disaster recovery, particularly based on extended public relations (Tilson, 2011). In realizing further specialized care, religiously highly diverse countries, religiously moderately diverse countries, and religiously least diverse countries will achieve the goal of disaster recovery under the guidance of international organizations, as the other conditions around further specialized care remain the same.

While embracing the category of further specialized care, emergency managers need to identify related special needs from various faith communities, such as communication barriers, access difficulties, disabilities, and faith-focused cultures, for the sake of their engagement (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2024). Based on multiple meetings with individuals of different religions, emergency managers are responsible for determining which religious priorities should be included in regional emergency operation plans to meet specific needs

Furthermore, emergency managers should consider increasing their cooperation with religious leaders to realize further specialized care (McGeehan & Baker, 2017). Faith leaders influence how faith communities perceive and understand various disasters. Thus, when emergency managers deeply connect with leaders regarding the acceptance of religious principles and information sharing, faith communities' interest in disaster recovery increases. In many senses, the role of religious leaders combined with that of emergency managers would help realize further specialized care.

When religious leaders realize that most emergency personnel are worn out from dealing with terrible disasters, they strengthen and apply their spiritual leadership throughout the disaster recovery phase (Yang & Fry, 2018). Both religious and non-religious workers can be spiritually influenced or motivated by spiritual leadership when they create and share compatible values and realistic visions. Specifically, spiritual leadership has the potential to reduce the degree of burnout among recovery workers, improve professional performance, and strengthen religious commitment.

Supplementing with further specialized care aligns with religious tolerance, literacy, and competency (Gray-Hildenbrand & King, 2019). The capacity to appreciate spiritual beliefs and practices that differ from one's own is known as religious tolerance (Nelson, 2010). By creating an atmosphere in which various faiths can live in harmony with one another and support the expression and preservation of various beliefs and practices, religious tolerance promotes religious diversity. Religious literacy involves an individual's understanding of complicated religious cultures, various religious expressions, and inter-relations among believers. Religious diversity is fostered by religious literacy, which dispels misconceptions and encourages coexistence by educating people on various beliefs and practices. Religious competency serves as a guide for multiple faith communities in disaster recovery settings and improves the constructive handling of religious differences in various contexts by promoting mutual understanding, tolerance, and effective communication among faiths (Jegalus et al., 2024). Consequently, the field must address religious tolerance, literacy, and competency for further specialized care.

Fundamentally, covenantal pluralism (e.g., interfaith councils, multicultural education, diverse workforces) provided by Templeton Religion Trust will have a central role in further specialized care

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([Stewart et al., 2020](#)). The philosophy of covenantal pluralism is to respect, engage, and protect one another, without regard to individuals' religious beliefs. Instead of a relativistic approach, covenantal pluralism emphasizes a relational paradigm and supports equality among individuals and solidarity across society. Thus, with covenantal pluralism, various faith communities can facilitate further specialized care for disaster victims based on mutual respect and sincere protection.

The importance of further specialized care does not mean that faith communities or religion alone would play an important role in managing future disaster recovery ([Cherry et al., 2015](#)). Some disaster victims have a high level of religiosity or sympathy toward religious diversity, but they are challenged by low incomes, low social support, and sometimes the limitations of their religious context. In these cases, they have trouble recovering from the impacts of various disasters and thus remain at risk. Therefore, further specialized care as a societal issue should be appropriately advocated by key stakeholders such as policymakers, community leaders, and social service providers.

Disaster management needs to systematically and regularly educate individuals by providing programs on religious diversity, faith communities, mass care, and further specialized care ([Koukounaras-Liagkis, 2015](#)). When disaster management students are involved in difficult situations related to religious diversity, educational intervention may promote not only their academic knowledge, but also their understanding of religion, changes in their religious perspectives, and the creation of a non-hostile environment for the disaster recovery phase. Effective education will improve the level of further specialized care while expediting societal cohesion.

## **CONCLUSION**

The increase in religious diversity has continued to benefit human society. The objective of this study was to analyze the efficient inclusion of faith communities in the disaster recovery phase via religious diversity. To achieve this, the study reviewed the literature on critical challenges and strategic alternatives by recognizing two proposed approaches: mass care-oriented disaster recovery and further specialized care.

The main theme of this research was the enhancement of mass care-oriented disaster recovery with further specialized care by all important stakeholders, including highly diverse countries, moderately diverse countries, lowly diverse countries (in terms of religious diversity), and international organizations. To achieve this objective, stakeholders should implement suggestions, such as promoting religious freedom, planning for religious diversity, establishing standard reporting, and coordinating humanitarian efforts. Additionally, they should embrace religious tolerance, literacy, and competency, clarify emergency managers' responsibilities, and promote practical education.

Policymakers, religious leaders, and disaster management experts should acknowledge the importance of religious diversity in developing more inclusive and successful recovery frameworks. According to this study, plans for disaster recovery should prioritize specialized care that considers the emotional, cultural, and spiritual needs of impacted communities in addition to mass care services. Disaster management strategies can become more comprehensive by acknowledging and formalizing the participation of communities with diverse faiths, thereby increasing resilience and promoting long-term recovery for all impacted communities.

A major strength of this research is that it describes the benefits of religious diversity for the disaster recovery phase more

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comprehensively than the present literature. Consequently, various believers in the Asia-Pacific region and sub-Saharan Africa are no longer expected to consider their religious norms to be morally inferior. However, the study's main national-level focus on religious diversity is a limitation that can be addressed by future studies examining the topic at the regional, local, and household levels.

Moreover, future research should analyze how religious diversity applies to all four phases of the disaster management cycle: prevention/mitigation, disaster preparedness, disaster response, and disaster recovery. The influence of religious diversity on man-made emergency prevention, the role of religious institutions in strengthening local catastrophe preparedness, and the impact of religious diversity on emergency response effectiveness are areas that can be examined by future researchers. Conducting such studies will advance the goals of religious diversity and disaster management.

### **Author Contributions**

Conceptualization: K.H.; Formal analysis: K.H.; Methodology: K.H.; Validation: K.H.; Visualization: K.H.; Writing – original draft: K.H.; Writing – review & editing: K.H. The author has read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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### **Data Availability Statement**

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### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest in this manuscript.

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