

PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS CSOS: MOVING BEYOND PROSELYTISM AND RELIGIOUS-BASED SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, NOW WITH A SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS

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Abstract

In this chapter, we examine how religious institutions and their respective leaders have sought to establish ties with public administrations in order to provide public services. Accordingly, we observe the efforts of religious and political leaders to transform religious institutions into religious civil society organizations (Religious Organizations) through legislative proposals. We also characterize the legislative instruments that enable administrative ties with these organizations, as well as the types of public services they may potentially provide. Our methodological procedures consisted of empirical observation and a literature review. The findings identified the expansion of Evangelicals and Evangelical religious institutions, as well as civil society organizations in their various forms throughout Brazil; legislative proposals intended to elevate religious institutions to the status of Religious Organizations; and the incorporation of environmental management processes into religious institutions. We conclude that, in view of contemporary socio-environmental needs, Religious Organizations seek to establish ties with public administrations in order to receive public funding for their community and social projects, among others, while providing services of public interest in return, without undermining the secular nature of the democratic state governed by the rule of law.

Keywords: CSOs, Public Administration, Religious Institutions, Religious Organizations.

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INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we address how progressive Christianity—or progressive Christianities—has created religious civil society organizations (CSOs), such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and religious associations, directing their community-based and solidarity-oriented activities no longer exclusively toward religious proselytism, as practiced by more conservative religious sectors, but also toward progressive political issues and agendas. Among other purposes, these include abortion (women's and public health), LGBTQIAPN+ issues (gender equality), same-sex unions (family), Indigenous and Quilombola issues (traditional peoples), and environmental conservation (the environment).

The socio-environmental crises that we continue to face even after ECO-92 are also evident. That conference became a landmark for addressing socio-environmental issues through environmental management processes at the glocal level. This prompts us to reflect on the extent to which the public and private sectors, the third sector (NGOs), social movements, and religions and their leaders have been—and continue to be—encouraged to commit to and promote human and planetary sustainability, as Pope Francis reiterates and emphasizes in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. As Burity (2007) aptly noted, following ECO-92 and the worldwide visibility it generated, nongovernmental organizations came to be widely valued at the local level as a fundamental point of reference for social and political practices.

Within this sociocultural context, one can identify the presence of institutionalized religions—churches, temples, and other places of worship—as well as various forms of religious expression in publicly accessible spaces. Beyond this, there has been an expansion of community associations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) led by Christian leaders, reflecting a clear form of “religious social activism, traditionally linked to philanthropic activities” (Burity, 2007, p. 23). More recently, new forms of civil society organizations (CSOs) have emerged under other legal structures, such as Religious Organizations (ROs).

Accordingly, it is possible to document the expansion of progressive Christianity—or progressive Christianities—broadly understood as sectors embedded within institutionalized religions that articulate

their worldviews and express their religiosity and spirituality on the basis of the teachings of Christ as the central figure and divine savior, believing in resurrection and therefore rejecting reincarnation.

Within these Christianities, positions and actions directed toward social well-being can thus be identified, preferably in support of the most vulnerable,² through the defense of human rights, justice, and social inclusion by means of the purposes described above, thereby seeking to preserve a secular and democratic state in Brazilian society.

These Christianities therefore also participate in the public sphere, where a “struggle for influence” takes place through debates over ideas and ideals and through interaction among institutions. Such influences arise from and are products of that same “sphere, encompassing not only political influences, but also the prestige of groups of people and experts,” as Habermas stated (Scarpioni; Viana, 2019).

At present, Christian leaders are visibly active in a reconfigured public sphere (Habermas, 2023), in public spaces, and in public policy. They mobilize through digital platforms, interact with center-left and left-wing sectors, receive support from alternative media networks, and champion secular causes (Camurça; Silveira; Andrade Jr., 2020).

Our challenge, therefore, is to explain, on the basis of surveys conducted on digital platforms, within public agencies, and through publicly available documents, how civil society organizations arising from progressive Christianities participate, interact, and contribute to the implementation of public policies by Direct Public Administrations; the work they perform; their objectives concerning the environment and other social areas; and their obligations under specific and bureaucratic legislation before a secular state and under its secularity³, within a reconfigured public sphere embedded in platformized digital environments—that is, within “semi-public spheres” (Habermas, 2023).

² For the purposes of this discussion, this refers to individuals who are socially discriminated against on the basis of race, color, or religious creed; deprived of basic economic means and living at or below the poverty line; or environmentally deprived of adequate housing or living in unhealthy spaces that do not guarantee a minimum quality of life and environmental quality in their locality.

³ In Brazil, at least two types of secularity can be observed: separationist secularity and collaborative secularity. There is also a recognition-based secularity, although the latter is subsumed within collaborative secularity. It should be noted that in France

Consequently, we will demonstrate the “‘encounter’ between secular and religious actors within the framework of the established constitutional order—legality, public policies, and institutionalized political competition—and initiatives in the sphere of civil society involving religious and secular organizations” (Burity, 2007, p. 12). We will not, however, disregard the permeability of the Brazilian public and political system to the religious sphere, nor the tensions and conflicts implicit in this process (Camurça; Silveira; Andrade Jr., 2020).

After all, as Pereira (2024) argues:

the presence and influence of ethical-religious values in the third sector, and the demonstration that religious and ethical factors are important elements of analysis for a broad and realistic understanding of this “nonprofit sector,” [...] contribute to the construction of citizenship and the implementation of public policies (Pereira, 2024, p. 1).

CHRISTIANITIES WITHIN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC OFFICIALS, AND PUBLIC POLICIES

Before proceeding to an examination of religious social organizations and their environment-related activities, it is important to revisit, albeit *en passant*, the structure and operation of the state’s “administrative machinery” in order to better situate the reader. It is also necessary to distinguish Direct Public Administration from Indirect Public Administration, their public officials, and the public policies developed and implemented in a democratic state governed by the rule of law (Scarpioni; Viana, 2019). These distinctions also entail differentiating between the state’s public sphere and society’s private sphere.

Direct Public Administration (DPA)⁴ may be broadly understood as a body of public officials—technical, administrative, and support personnel—who have the authority to identify problems arising from society’s demands, set agendas, and formulate, implement, execute, and evaluate public policies.⁵

there are at least six ideal types of *laïcité*, formed by different configurations of four principles [...]: (a) “separationist secularity”; (b) “anticlerical secularity”; (c) “authoritarian secularity”; (d) “civic-faith secularity”; (e) “recognition-based secularity”; and (f) “collaborative secularity” (Brito, 2012).

⁴ This structure is reproduced at the federal, Federal District, state, and municipal levels (Scarpioni; Viana, 2019.)

⁵ For the purposes of this discussion, as Rua (2014) explains, public policy has two dimensions: the apparently rational and neutral planning carried out by the state (policy), and the dimension resulting from action by political actors [and organizations]

These policies, in turn, are translated into public services designed to meet social demands and satisfy the human needs of the entire public community.

This is how the state's public sphere and democracy are structured. As Miguel (2022) argues, democracy presupposes equality of value among persons and political equality by transforming everyone into citizens endowed with identical rights, thereby serving as an instrument in the struggle against social inequalities.

Nevertheless, as studies of internal and external oversight demonstrate (Scarpioni; Viana, 2019), DPA does not at all times possess the full organizational structure or sufficient human, technological, and infrastructural resources required to meet all the demands or human needs arising from society during a given period.

Therefore, in order to establish an ideal organizational structure capable of effectively, efficiently, and successfully serving the public community, DPA constantly seeks to procure professionals, goods, services, and supplies—selecting the options most advantageous to the public authorities—from private institutions in the private and third sectors. This is done through the various public procurement procedures⁶ established under Administrative Law, thereby constituting Indirect Public Administration (IPA). It should be emphasized that institutions with legal personality participate in this process regardless of whether their leaders are religious. This is therefore one of the public spaces in which the private sector participates.

With respect to the hiring of public officials, once again the hiring process is governed by the interests, convenience, and administrative discretion exercised by public authorities through Direct Public Administration. In this form of recruitment, religion must not serve as a selection criterion or relevant

seeking to defend their interests and values (politics). Public policy is therefore described in terms of a policy cycle, while actors, their preferences and expectations, [...], issues, rational choice, the public good, conflict, power and power resources, decisions, and nondecisions must also be considered (Rua, 2014, p. 7).

⁶ This is the process through which Public Administration contracts works, services, purchases, and disposals. It is the mechanism through which Public Administration may buy and sell, using a public contract as the instrument governing relations between the parties—whether public-administration agencies or entities and private parties—through an agreement establishing a legal relationship and reciprocal obligations. The new Public Procurement Law, Law No. 14,133/2021, provides for the procedures of competitive bidding, design competitions, auctions, and competitive dialogue.

factor, in accordance with the separationist model of secularity established in Article 19 of the 1988 Federal Constitution.

Nevertheless, no barriers exist—or should be imposed—regarding public officials’ religious expression once they have been hired, including their use of symbolic and religious elements such as images, sculptures, and crucifixes on their clothing or in other shared internal spaces within public offices, as an expression of religious freedom. Brazil does not follow a secularist or even anticlerical model that prohibits all forms of religious expression.

Indirect Public Administration, however, encompasses civil society organizations (CSOs), both secular and religious, which establish contractual ties—provisional legal titles⁷—with DPA for the supply of inputs and goods and the provision of services. These processes are subject to internal and external oversight (Scarpioni; Viana, 2019).

Consequently, once selected and contracted, CSOs in their various forms and legal structures contribute to the implementation, execution, and evaluation of public policies across multiple social fields and for such purposes as health, education, social assistance, and the environment.

However, as Rua (2014) states:

Although public policies may affect the private sphere (family, market, religion), they are not private. Even when private entities [or third-sector organizations] participate in their formulation or share responsibility for their implementation, their ability to do so is grounded in public decisions—that is, decisions made by government officials on the basis of the state’s binding authority (Rua, 2014, p. 18).

It should be noted that religious CSOs, in all their plurality, are not prevented from expressing opinions or influencing the public policy cycle. Nevertheless, a public policy may be established only through public acts carried out by public officials. According to Rua (2014, p. 19), “The state is [...] an organizational system whose regulatory power extends beyond its own organizational boundaries and

⁷ Contracts may be terminated or extended at any time on the basis of public interests, breaches of contractual clauses by the contractor, offenses against public administration, and related grounds.

reaches society as a whole—which is why it is called ‘extroverted power.’” It therefore extends over other private organizational forms in society. Religious and nonreligious CSOs are consequently subject to Law No. 13,019/2014, known as the Regulatory Framework for Civil Society Organizations (Marco Regulatório das Organizações da Sociedade Civil—MROSC) (Brazil, 2014).

It was through this new legal framework for partnerships and legal instruments such as development agreements, collaboration agreements, and other cooperation agreements that mutual cooperation was established between public administration and CSOs for the achievement of purposes of public and reciprocal interest (Pereira, 2024). MROSC thus defined the guidelines governing the classification of civil society organizations for public activity.

In light of this, religious institutions must also be distinguished from religious CSOs. The mere existence of a church, religious temple, terreiro, or center does not automatically make it a religious CSO, much less guarantee its eligibility to obtain funding, enter partnerships, or be contracted by DPA. Professing a faith and engaging in proselytism are therefore insufficient. Distinctive social work is required, supported by demonstrated social interventions undertaken by the religious institution, as well as an appropriate organizational and personnel infrastructure, as described in Article 2, item I(c): “religious organizations that engage in activities or projects of public interest and a social nature distinct from those intended exclusively for religious purposes” (Brazil, 2014). As Vieira (2019) aptly states, “a church is not an NGO, much less does it belong to the third sector.”

In this way, the secular state seeks to provide legal certainty for activities conducted by Religious Organizations that are not essentially proselytizing, but instead involve multiple forms of coexistence and reciprocal interaction among social actors within DPA and IPA. As Burity (2007) emphasizes:

contemporary societies require religious practices to be conceived differently, opening space for movement, blurred boundaries between the secular and the religious, tolerance for coexistence with adherents of other religions (within the family, at work, at school, etc.), and negotiated loyalties among different organizational and ideological demands (professional ethics, political activism, associative life), among other factors (Burity, 2007, p. 23).

Having presented the state's bureaucratic structures (Weber, 2012), as well as their binding yet relative dominance over other social actors through rules, standards, legislation, and related mechanisms, Weber warns: "Let no one be deceived, even for a moment: our entire everyday life is embedded within this framework of bureaucracies" managed by "public officials" (bureaucrats) acting upon the public community. He further problematizes the matter by stating: "The question is always: *who*⁸ *controls*⁹ the existing bureaucratic apparatus?" (Weber, 2012, p. 146). From this perspective, we proceed toward an understanding of the relationships between Religious Organizations and the democratic state governed by the rule of law.

CHRISTIANITY/CHRISTIANITIES, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, AND CSOs—EXPANSION, ACTIVITIES, AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS

There is currently a body of information concerning Christianity and Christianities in Brazil and their influence on politics¹⁰. In addition, quantitative factors characterizing their expansion and fluctuations, as well as records concerning institutions and related matters, provide indications for reflection on Christian leaders' involvement in the development of religious CSOs.

We therefore seek to identify, within this expansion, how progressive religious leaders manage their Religious Organizations—which are not churches, temples, or places of worship—in responding to demands arising from the public community, regardless of whether users belong to the same religious segment, to other religious segments, or identify as having no religion.

To this end, we begin with an overview of the expansion of Christianity and Christianities, a phenomenon taking place throughout Latin America. As Rivera (2023) describes:

⁸ Emphasis in the original (Weber, 2012).

⁹ Emphasis in the original (Weber, 2012).

¹⁰ Politics is understood here in its broader sense as encompassing parliamentary discussions, debates, and decision-making in political arenas, public spaces, and the public policy cycle—problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation—among other processes. This context also includes participatory democracy, in which public officials actively listen to social demands and claims.

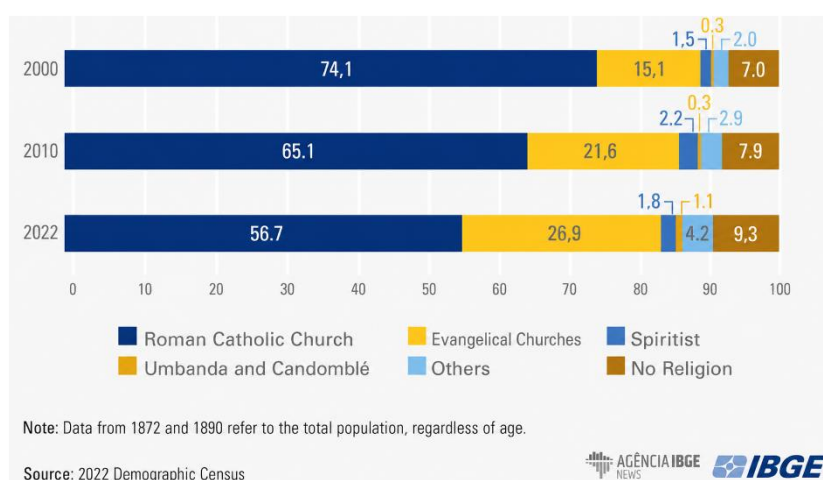
Evangelicals and Pentecostals are growing, but they are also fragmenting. They enter politics as is their democratic right, although they generally do so more as believers than as citizens, even placing religious explanations before political arguments. In any event, they contribute to broadening the meaning of “public space,” frequently “remoralizing” it (Rivera, 2023, p. 9).

Brazilian society has witnessed both the quantitative growth of these Christianities and an increase in institutions promoted by Evangelicals, encompassing churches, temples, and civil society organizations. This enables us to reflect on religious social activism and, in the case addressed here, an emerging “religious environmental activism,” as will be demonstrated below.

The three most recent censuses conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2000; 2010; 2022) show Christianity and its various expressions to be predominant in comparison with religions of non-Christian origin, as reflected in the combined number of Catholics and Evangelicals¹¹ —including Protestants, Pentecostals, and Neo-Pentecostals—among others.

Figure 1

Quantitative census data on Christianities



Source: Adapted from 2022 Census, IBGE, 2025 (translated for clarity).

¹¹ These groups were selected without including Spiritists. Although Spiritists affirm belief in and respect for Jesus Christ, they also believe in reincarnation, as distinct from resurrection, and in spirit incorporation, which is not limited to the Holy Spirit. It is nevertheless true that images of worship services and religious practices in Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal institutions circulate in ways comparable to ritual practices found in religions of African origin.

The number of adherents to these Christianities and their prevalence over non-Christian religions therefore remain notable, although the Brazilian religious field is undergoing transformation. It should be emphasized that the statistical data do not distinguish between conservative and progressive Christianities, creating a gap that suggests new avenues for research.

When socioeconomic profiles and other census indicators—such as education, household income, and housing—are examined, however, one finds that, among Evangelicals in particular and in general terms, social groups below the highest income brackets or above-average income levels predominate.

According to sociological and anthropological studies organized by Rivera (2012; 2023), Evangelicals, particularly Pentecostals, are more heavily concentrated on the urban peripheries of both São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, to cite only two examples. These data indicate that such groups may be proportionally more likely to request and rely on public services in areas such as health, education, social assistance, and transportation, revealing a more intense dependence on government public policies.

It must therefore be emphasized that urban peripheries—understood beyond their geographical meaning to encompass sociological and anthropological dimensions—are the regions most acutely affected by the absence of public initiatives, with considerable precariousness and deprivation. At the same time, they have a prominent presence of NGOs, neighborhood associations, religious institutions, and their networks of solidarity and reciprocity (Rivera, 2012).

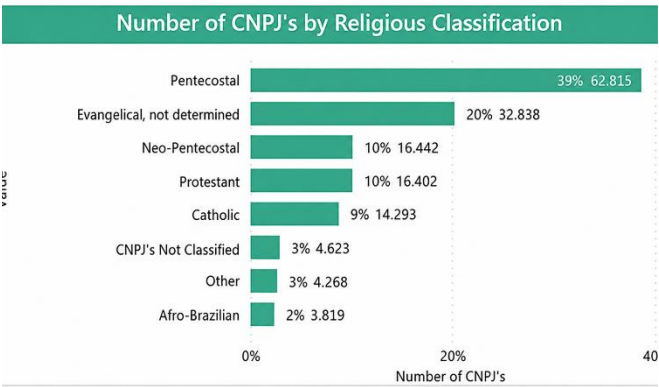
Other data directly related to Christianity, and more specifically to Evangelicals, concern the registration of newly established religious institutions, as presented in a technical note issued by the Center for Metropolitan Studies (Centro de Estudos da Metrópole—CEM) in São Paulo.

According to CEM researcher Victor Araújo, “between 2000 and 2016, Evangelical churches experienced their greatest cycle of growth since the beginning of the observed series (1920–2019)” (Araújo, 2020). The author further reports that in 2019, the final year of the series analyzed, 6,356 Evangelical churches opened in Brazil, averaging 17 new temples per day. The five federative units with

the highest number of Evangelical churches per 100,000 inhabitants were Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Mato Grosso do Sul, Rondônia, and São Paulo.

The Observatory of Religion and Intersectionalities at the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning (CEBRAP) likewise reports a highly significant number of religious institutions, totaling 162,427 registered CNPJs as of 2022.

Figure 2
Information on the registration of religious institutions



Source: Adapted from Observatory of Religion and Intersectionalities – CEBRAP 2022 (translated for clarity).

As striking as the figures concerning the expansion of Evangelical Christianities and the registration of religious institutions may be, the overall number of registered civil society organizations is even more remarkable. Throughout Brazil, there are 955,440 registered CSOs, of which 685,817 are active¹², 6,264 are suspended¹³ and 270,086 are deemed noncompliant¹⁴, according to data released by the CSO Map, managed by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2025).

Among this vast array of civil society organizations across the federation are NGOs and religious associations. Thus, “17.4% are religious organizations; in other words, nearly 142,000 NGOs throughout

¹² Indicates that the organization is compliant and operating regularly (IPEA, 2025).
¹³ Occurs when the organization is in a temporary state of noncompliance (IPEA, 2025).
¹⁴ An organization is declared noncompliant because of a failure to fulfill the obligation to submit one or more required declarations (IPEA, 2025).

the country were created by institutions linked to churches of various origins, although their primary activity is not religious but social” (Vergueiro, 2024).

The author further states that no Brazilian city lacks at least one nonprofit institution. São Paulo is identified as the state with the highest number of registered NGOs in the country, while the city of São Paulo has the largest number among municipalities, totaling 50,021.

However, when the legal nature and purposes of ROs are examined, the data differ considerably from those concerning other forms of CSOs. We therefore extracted data from the CSO profile report produced by IPEA in 2025 and made available through the CSO Map,¹⁵ as presented in the table below.

Table 1

Legal Nature and Purposes of ROs Compared with Other Forms of CSOs

Field of activity	Total (%)				Total
	Private Foundation	Religious Organization	Social Organization	Private Association	
Brazil	12.128	179.308	2.114	724.315	917.865
Health	1.406	5	180	16.689	18.280
Culture and recreation	701	4	227	90.660	91.592
Education and research	1.536	51	170	29.729	31.486
Social assistance	1.172	53	236	30.851	32.312
Religion	1.787	178.947	45	101.111	281.890
Business and professional associations	190	2	38	31.977	32.207
Development and protection of rights and interests	2.631	93	775	308.534	312.033
Other associative activities	2.705	153	443	114.764	118.065
Note: Data updated through February 2025. Source: Map of Civil Society Organizations. Prepared by IPEA.					

Source: Adapted from Chapter 6, “Legal Nature of CSOs,” Table 6.4, MROSC Report (IPEA, 2026). Prepared by the author, 2026.

¹⁵ This is a digital platform managed by a federal government agency, the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), which monitors civil society organizations. The platform nevertheless allows organizations to interact with it, since they may register and enter self-declared data, which are subsequently analyzed by the institute’s public officials. Although many gaps remain to be filled on the digital platform, it makes it possible to examine RO registrations.

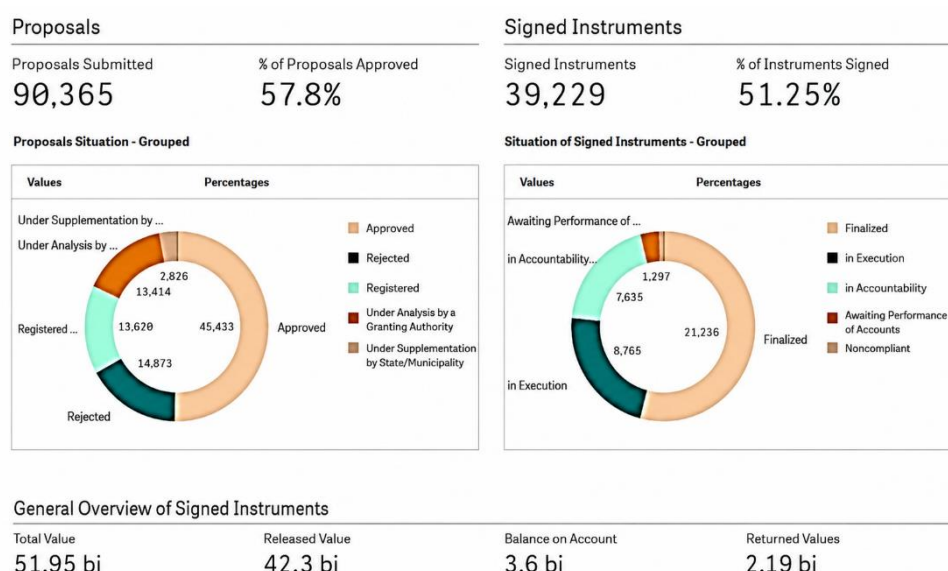
It can be seen that the predominant purpose ascribed to ROs is “religion,” in contradiction with the provisions of MROSC and in contrast with other private institutions, foundations, associations, and related organizations.

More broadly, however, other information also leads us to examine the relationships between Christianities and ROs, including budget transfers, public expenditure, and the use of public funds. Such information can be consulted through the dashboard¹⁶ of federal budget transfers to CSOs maintained by the Ministry of Management and Innovation in Public Services.

On this platform, users can consult the number of proposals submitted, proposals approved, instruments signed, signatures on those instruments, and the budget amounts transferred. It is therefore possible to verify information concerning ROs, their proposals, transfers, and contracts that have been established and remain in force.

Figure 3

Excerpt from the infographic on budget transfers to CSOs



Source: Adapted from Federal Budget Transfers to CSOs Dashboard 2026 (translated for clarity).

¹⁶ A digital platform displaying all information concerning federal budget transfers made to CSOs when a submitted proposal is approved and the relevant management instruments are signed (MGISP, 2026).

We will not address this matter in detail, as doing so would require a separate study. It should nevertheless be noted that BRL 50 billion is allocated to CSOs in general, and a portion of this amount is directed to ROs.

Although this overview depicts the expansion of Christianities, the registration of Evangelical churches and temples, civil society organizations, and other information available on digital platforms, it remains general and lacks greater precision or a more detailed understanding of data directly concerning Christianities. Even so, it is possible to suggest that these data are correlated, based on Camurça's assertion that it is necessary to reflect on the following:

rather than being satisfied with the secular/religious distinction as an explanatory category in itself for the relationship between the public sphere and the religious dimension, [it is necessary] to understand how religious and secular actors appropriate the legal and constitutional rules of secularity according to their interests and projects (Camurça; Silveira; Andrade Jr., 2020, p. 988).

In this regard, a detailed search of platformized media networks also makes it possible to observe how progressive Christian religious actors in the Brazilian parliament¹⁷ have operated by proposing bills directed toward the inclusion of religious institutions as religious civil society organizations (ROs) across several fields of activity.

It should be emphasized that this phenomenon has occurred amid the alignment of neoconservative religious institutions with neoliberalism and under the actions of the far right, which has gained increasing prominence on platformized networks.

PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY UNDER “PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN” INFLUENCE

In a preliminary survey, we identified proposals such as those introduced by José Bittencourt,^{18a} state deputy in the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo, which sought to transform religious institutions

¹⁷ At the federal, state, and municipal levels.

¹⁸ According to information consulted through ALESP, José Bittencourt's biography is as follows: a lawyer, theologian, and Assemblies of God pastor, he was elected state deputy in 2002 by the now-defunct PGT (General Workers' Party). This party should not be confused with the Workers' Party, as they are distinct political parties committed to workers' causes. In that election,

into nonprofit institutions—one of the essential characteristics of a CSO—in order to enable them to undertake nonreligious activities and potentially establish ties with DPA. Demonstrating an advocacy effort, his Bill No. 644/2008 and its justification stated:

Religious temples characterized as the House of the Lord bring together nonprofit welfare and philanthropic functions, routinely carrying out, with contributions from the faithful, numerous social activities directed toward all those in need. These include distributing food to the hungry through food baskets, coats, clothing, and other items (Bittencourt, 2008).

Although religious-based social assistance constitutes a practice of human religious solidarity, it is not sufficient to classify or elevate a religious institution to the status of a civil society organization or Religious Organization with religious autonomy. Such status entails activities directed toward various nonreligious social purposes, as established by the MROSC guidelines described above.

The proposal reflects an interest in enabling religious institutions, in addition to operating through symbolic goods, worship services, liturgies, practices of consecration, dissemination of the transcendent and sacred, and intraorganizational assistance, to provide material—that is, secular—services for the common social good. However, Pereira (2024) demonstrates that churches cannot be transformed into ROs because:

religious entities, in addition to adopting the legal form of a “religious organization,” also adopt the legal form of an “association,” or, depending on their chosen legal architecture, are structured under both legal forms, namely: (1) for religious purposes and activities, they adopt the legal form of a “religious organization,” which then legally personifies the religious entity; and (2) for activities in the social field, they adopt the legal form of an “association,” which may also represent the civil legal personality of the religious entity or merely represent entities or civil society organizations established and/or “controlled” by the religious entity for the development of purposes and activities in the social field—charitable social assistance, social solidarity, human development, and related activities (Pereira, 2024).

he received 35,573 votes in his first campaign for a seat in the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo (ALESP). Throughout his political career, he belonged to other parties, including the PTB, which he joined in 2003; the PDT, through which he was reelected in 2006 and 2010; and Avante.

Religious activities and activities responding to secular social demands are thus presented separately, even though both remain under the guidance of religious leaders. In 2012, another attempt was made to recognize religious institutions as nonprofit entities under a recognition-based model of secularity that would necessarily acknowledge religious welfare activities as publicly useful and relevant. In proposing a new Bill, No. 64/2012, in the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo (ALESP), Bittencourt justified it as follows:

Religious temples characterized as the House of the Lord bring together nonprofit welfare and philanthropic functions, routinely carrying out, with contributions from the faithful, numerous social activities directed toward all those in need. These include distributing food to the hungry through food baskets, coats, clothing, and other items.

The official recognition of religious temples as public-benefit entities constitutes an act of justice and respect toward those whose sole function is to spread the word of the Lord. Regarding its merits, we clarify that the proposal resonates with legislation already approved by this House, since various entities have already obtained public-benefit status (Bittencourt, 2012).

These bills proposed by the former deputy remain under consideration through electronic proceedings in ALESP. With respect to proposals directed toward CSOs, one can observe the progressive Christian parliamentarian's interest in transforming religious institutions, or institutions of a religious nature, into nonprofit and public-benefit entities dedicated to promoting social well-being and justice.

Once recognized as such, these organizations would be able to establish contractual ties with the state, as provided for and regulated by MROSC. José Bittencourt introduced a total of 47 proposals, three of which are especially relevant to his region. A selection is presented below.

Chart 1

Proposals by a Progressive Christian Parliamentary Leader in the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo Concerning the Recognition of Religious Institutions as Public-Benefit Institutions (CSOs)

TYPE OF PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL
Bill 691/2004, November 18, 2004	Declares the “Assembleia de Deus Beneficent Association in Taboão—SOBADE,” in São Bernardo do Campo, to be a public-benefit entity.
Bill 258/2011, April 8, 2011	Declares the “Isabel Sartori de Antônio Community Association,” in Santo André, to be a public-benefit entity.
Bill 543/2011, May 31, 2011	Declares the “Mauá Association for Assistance and Support to Persons with Visual Impairments—AMADEVI,” in Mauá, to be a public-benefit entity.
Bill 211/2011, April 1, 2011	Declares the “Philadelphia Christian Beneficent Association for Social Reintegration,” in Itapeva, to be a public-benefit entity.
Bill 181/2012, March 28, 2012	Declares the “Avivalista Social Assistance Association” of the Evangelical Church of Biblical Revival, in Ubatuba, to be a public-benefit entity.
Bill 687/2007, July 11, 2007	Declares the “São Paulo Evangelical Beneficent and Promotional Society—SOBPEP,” in the state capital, to be a public-benefit entity.
Bill 868/2005, December 3, 2005	Declares “OSADI—Social Work of the Assemblies of God of Itu,” in that municipality, to be a public-benefit entity.
Bill 692/2004, November 18, 2004	Declares the “Brazilian Christian Beneficent Society,” in Ourinhos, to be a public-benefit entity.
Bill 570/2003, July 1, 2003	Declares the “Ebenezer Evangelical Philanthropic Community Association—ACEFE,” in Areias, to be a public-benefit entity.

Source: Adapted from ALESP, 2026. Prepared by the author, 2026.

Among these proposals, it is also possible to identify ROs whose activities are directed toward other social issues, such as sports and recreation, education—including distance-learning activities and vocational education courses—socio-environmental matters involving the protection of animals and nature, tourism, and the conservation of ecological reserves, botanical gardens, and national parks, as discussed below.

CHRISTIANITY/CHRISTIANITIES AND RELIGIOUS CSOs—THE FOCUS IS NOW ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Socio-environmental crises and “ecological contingencies stimulate new religious conceptions and practices across time and space and promote a shift from institutionalized religion toward a dimension of spirituality” (Silveira; Silveira, 2019, p. 79), introducing it into other social and institutional spaces.

According to these authors, the environmental issue challenges the reflexivity and religious expressions of contemporary human beings because, over recent decades, environmentalism has heightened sensibilities and ideological-cultural dispositions throughout the world. Consequently, neither

Christianity in its various forms nor Religious Organizations have remained untouched by these transformations.

Nevertheless, contradictory statements and resistance concerning Christian engagement with socio-environmental issues can be found, as social scientist Renan W. Santos demonstrates. Such reflections invite us to consider how—and whether—progressive Christian leaders have in fact guided their communities to observe, protect, and defend the environment, as constitutionally prescribed in Article 225 of the 1988 Federal Constitution (Brazil, 1988) and as advocated by environment-related public policies. The environment is, after all, a right of all social actors, whether religious or not, and access to an ecologically balanced environment—as a common good of the people and essential to a healthy quality of life—is guaranteed to everyone.

Santos (2024) reports that, for certain Evangelical leaders, “environmental problems are primarily moral and spiritual in origin.” Ecological practices lacking an “inner transformation of individuals” would therefore be ineffective. This perspective prompts reflection on a possible rejection of urgently needed environmental and ecological action capable of producing results and mitigating environmental impacts. As Santos states:

For many Evangelicals, environmental activism is regarded as a minefield, a terrain full of traps that may lead people to reverse their priorities and “stray” from the path of righteousness by placing the salvation of this world above salvation in the next. Conversely, within the environmental movement, many believe that Evangelicals—because of their emphasis on individual salvation, heightened apocalyptic expectations, or simply a supposedly religion-induced ignorance—are destined to attach little importance to the ecological agenda.

According to the author, moreover, “the prevailing calculation among Evangelical leaders is that it would be ‘better to leave this environmental matter aside,’ because it produces little return—or, in many cases, may even cause losses—in material, political, and religious terms” (Santos, 2024, p. 19).

Yet it is precisely within this context of uncertainty, apprehension, and suspicion that initiatives and actions by progressive Christian leaders addressing socio-environmental issues can be found,

including projects introduced in political arenas and those developed by civil society organizations, particularly Religious Organizations seeking to work on environmental matters.

As Silveira and Silveira (2019, p. 86) emphasize, “despite criticism associating Christianity with anthropocentrism and the environmental crisis, it is possible to consider its role in the development of an eco-spirituality.” Beyond the ambiguities surrounding care for nature, Christian leaders and laypeople have taken positions on environmental issues in connection with matters of social justice (Silveira; Silveira, 2019).

In addition to bills seeking to transform religious institutions into nonprofit institutions, proposals have also been identified that seek to introduce environmental management processes into churches, temples, and related institutions in order to transform them into “green churches.”

In the view of then-parliamentarian José Bittencourt (2008):

The world has faced chaotic times, and because humankind failed to care for the heritage left by God, people have come face-to-face with the consequences: disasters, tragedies, global warming, the greenhouse effect, destroyed natural treasures, pollution, deforestation, and the extinction of countless animals that our children will know only through photographs (Bittencourt, 2008).

Environmental problems of both natural and anthropogenic origin are interpreted here through a theological lens that insists that such problems result from human sin and disregard for the divine commandment to care for creation. This interpretation directly obscures economic relations, consumption patterns, public policies, and other factors that negatively affect the environment.

Nevertheless, the parliamentarian was attentive to post-ECO-92 environmentalism when proposing CSOs whose activities would address socio-environmental issues. He consequently argued that action in the here and now was necessary to preserve the natural environment. In his brief account of NGOs, the progressive Christian parliamentarian stated:

Numerous causes are championed by NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), associations, political initiatives, laws, and projects that create programs such as recycling, which has attracted a significant number of new adherents.

[...] Faced with this situation, Evangelical churches also took action and opened space for ecological awareness, giving rise to Green Churches.

But what does it mean to “be green”? It means clothing one’s very soul in nature; it means striving to preserve our natural environment through intelligent measures, such as joining materials-recycling programs, installing containers within church premises, conserving water and energy, giving preference to environmentally responsible suppliers when making purchases, and disseminating more environmental news on noticeboards, among many other initiatives (Bittencourt, 2008).

He further demonstrates how knowledge and procedures derived from environmental management, when introduced into religious institutions, may benefit not only the institutions themselves but may also potentially generate positive externalities, contributing to the maintenance and conservation of environmental quality in the surrounding urban area.

In the statements that follow, we can therefore identify a degree of environmental awareness arising from acquired cultural capital and perhaps from elective affinities between environmentalists and religious actors seeking to involve churches in socio-environmental issues. Bittencourt states:

Another intelligent initiative incorporated into the organization of Green Churches is the collection of solar energy, which can provide a continuous supply, day and night, in summer or winter. The system is independent of the electricity grid and does not rely on any polluting source for its supply. As its primary energy source, the system uses photovoltaic cells to capture solar energy. The search for alternative energy systems has grown considerably in recent years because of increased consumption and the world’s dependence on energy generation from nonrenewable sources. I believe that, with all these solutions, Green Churches will make a significant difference by joining this struggle on behalf of nature, and I am certain that we will soon see major results. After all, we are witnessing a scenario of unity and cooperation in pursuit of a noble cause (Bittencourt, 2008).

Another bill by the same author proposed the creation of a type of “certification” for religious institutions that prioritize socio-environmental issues within their communities or among the surrounding public. Bill No. 1,093/2009 would establish the “Green Church Seal,” to be awarded annually to temples

of any faith that distinguish themselves through environmental preservation. An excerpt from the bill is reproduced below:

Article 1— The “Green Church Seal” is hereby established and shall be awarded annually to temples of any faith that distinguish themselves through environmental preservation by developing environmental projects with positive results.

Sole paragraph— The distinction addressed by this law shall be granted by the Secretariat for the Environment, with the objective of encouraging the temples mentioned in the caput to promote campaigns, debates, and activities aimed at implementing projects involving:

1. environmental preservation;
2. dissemination of environmental legislation through courses and lectures;
3. community awareness of the importance of environmental issues;
4. materials recycling;
5. energy and water conservation.

Article 2— A committee shall be established within the Secretariat for the Environment, with the unpaid participation of members of administrative agencies, universities, and entities committed to environmental issues, in accordance with the regulation implementing this law (Bittencourt, 2009).

We therefore present a summary of his proposals concerning the environment through environmental management and environmental education in various institutions and social fields. These proposals sought to participate in and directly influence the public policy cycle of the State of São Paulo across its 645 municipalities. Such interests reaffirm the disenchantment of the world (Weber, 2012) and, through the acquisition and use of technical and scientific knowledge, the process of secularization. A selection of these proposals is presented below.

Chart 2

*Proposals by a Progressive Christian Parliamentary Leader in the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo
Concerning Socio-Environmental Issues*

TYPE OF PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL
Bill 663/2003, August 15, 2003	Provides for the establishment of Environmental Alert Zones.
Bill 920/2003, September 18, 2003	Includes the subject “Environmental Education” in the curricula of state elementary schools.
Bill 1,068/2003, October 17, 2003	Prohibits the disposal of vegetable and mineral oils into the sewage system.
Bill 945/2003, September 20, 2003	Requires the publication, during World Environment Week, of a list of individuals and legal entities that have incurred administrative penalties for conduct proven to be harmful to the environment.
Bill 806/2004, December 18, 2004	Establishes the State Program for the Promotion of the People’s Solidarity Economy—PEFEPS.
Bill 639/2006, October 18, 2006	Requires industrial establishments and residential condominiums with water tanks holding more than 50,000 liters to retain a chemist responsible for maintaining water quality.
Bill 129/2007, March 27, 2007	Establishes the Special Assistance Fund for Victims of Environmental Contamination.
Bill 1,479/2007, December 21, 2007	Establishes the “Rainwater Harvesting Program.”
Bill 1,093/2009, November 12, 2009	Establishes the “Green Church Seal,” to be awarded annually to temples of any faith that distinguish themselves through environmental preservation.
Bill 332/2010, April 15, 2010	Regulates Rural Tourism and the State Policy for the Promotion of Rural Tourism.
Bill 236/2011, April 6, 2011	Provides for the implementation of the State Animal Identification and Registration System.
Bill 1,037/2011, October 27, 2011	Provides for the “Automotive Environmental Responsibility Program” and establishes the “Green Wheel Seal” in the state.
Bill 1,036/2011, October 27, 2011	Establishes the “State Agro-Village Development Program.”
Bill 1,035/2011, October 27, 2011	Declares the Municipality of Cubatão the “Symbol City of Ecology.”
Bill 49/2012, February 11, 2012	Provides for the dissemination of educational messages raising awareness of animal protection.
Bill 186/2012, March 29, 2012	Establishes environmental control procedures for using products and by-products made from native timber in engineering works and services contracted by the state.
Bill 760/2013, October 22, 2013	Establishes the “Sustainable Mobility and Bicycle Use Incentive Policy.”
Bill 219/2014, March 27, 2014	Establishes specific and supplementary provisions concerning the Environmental Regularization Program for rural properties and holdings created by Federal Law No. 12,651/2012, and the application of Federal Complementary Law No. 140/2011 within the state.
Bill 154/2014, March 8, 2014	Requires manufacturers, importers, distributors, and retailers of oils and fats of plant or animal origin to structure and implement reverse-logistics systems for returning those products after consumer use, independently of public urban-cleaning and solid-waste-management services.
Bill 173/2013, March 27, 2013	Declares the Municipality of Diadema a “Sustainable City.”

Source: Adapted from ALESP, 2026. Prepared by the author, 2026.

Other environment-related proposals can also be identified in a highly specific field: tourism.

Tourism is an entrepreneurial and economic activity that can address not only socio-environmental issues but also other religious interests, such as religious tourism, while creating new local social networks of entrepreneurship.

As is widely known, religious tourism essentially encompasses excursions, retreats, spiritual gatherings, and pilgrimages involving moments of contemplation of nature's scenic beauty, places of communion and food sharing, seed planting, and related activities. As Silveira and Silveira (2019, p. 92) observe, "the everyday behaviors of some individuals [...] seek, through food, vegetable gardening, nonaggression toward animals, or ecological tourism, the means to achieve an authentic experience of contact with nature and with themselves." This involves the search for new meanings, among other ecological practices, thereby addressing the demands of religious institutions and their communities, as well as those of the entire public community in the locality and region, through the generation of work, employment, and local and regional income.

In this regard, Bittencourt introduced a total of 41 proposals covering municipalities in the interior of the state and the São Paulo metropolitan region. Among these, we highlight proposals directed toward the Greater ABC region of São Paulo, the parliamentarian's own region, and municipalities in the interior of São Paulo with preserved areas and significant natural reserves of fauna and flora, including Nazaré Paulista, Iporanga, and Itatiba, as described below.

Chart 3

Proposals by a Progressive Christian Parliamentary Leader in the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo Concerning Tourism

TYPE OF PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL
Bill 636/2011, June 23, 2011	Classifies the Municipality of Rio Grande da Serra as a Tourist Resort.
Bill 634/2011, June 23, 2011	Classifies the Municipality of Santo André as a Tourist Resort.
Bill 630/2011, June 23, 2011	Classifies the Municipality of São Caetano do Sul as a Tourist Resort.
Bill 736/2013, October 15, 2013	Classifies Nazaré Paulista as a Municipality of Tourist Interest.
Bill 72/2013, February 28, 2013	Classifies the Municipality of Iporanga as a Tourist Resort.
Bill 766/2011, August 16, 2011	Classifies the Municipality of Itatiba as a Tourist Resort.

Source: Adapted from ALESP, 2026. Prepared by the author, 2026.

This would constitute a form of religious environmental activism¹⁹, grounded in or driven by another theology—an ecological theology, environmentalist spirituality, and other forms of religiosity and belief informed by panentheism—or resulting from the dissolution of the boundaries surrounding spaces consecrated for worship gatherings, which are now potentially affected by secularized environmental management processes.

Thus, while persistent attempts are being made to transform religious institutions into CSOs so that they may provide public services in addition to symbolic and consecrated goods, public administrators within DPA, when forming public-private partnerships with such institutions, must be genuinely less concerned with the nature of their legal personality or the beliefs of their members.

The focus of DPA public officials must instead rest carefully on the transparency of the intended objectives; the allocation of RO activities to social interests and purposes; the relevance of the proposed projects or activities; prior experience in the relevant project field; and the concrete actions to be

¹⁹ In our understanding, broadly speaking, this refers to the engagement of progressive religious sectors that seek to incorporate ecological concepts and practical environmental-management activities directed toward environmental care, while claiming that these actions arise from spiritual inspiration rather than secular or nonreligious instruction and asserting a leading role in relation to secularized environmentalism. Nevertheless, the post-ECO-92 environmental paradigm clearly influences various actors and social sectors in society. Brazilian legislation and international treaties to which Brazil is a signatory also establish a duty to defend and protect the environment. We therefore believe that religious sectors likewise commit themselves to environmental defense and protection after coming into greater contact with technical and scientific knowledge from ecology; documents and official information establishing socio-environmental problems widely publicized after ECO-92; and environmental-management practices to be implemented in order to mitigate, reduce, and reverse environmental impacts and their negative externalities for society as a whole.

undertaken with the community. This includes both institutional members and any other persons, including citizens of other religions or those without religion, as expected under the MROSC guidelines.

It is therefore necessary to describe and document the social impacts and actual benefits that interventions by ROs may bring to the public community. The emphasis must consequently be placed on public interests and the provision of goods and services to users under a collaborative model of secularity.

This explains the participation of ROs in public calls for proposals, a procedure intended to select civil society organizations to establish partnerships through collaboration or development agreements. Such procedures ensure compliance with the principles of equal treatment, [...] administrative integrity, adherence to the terms of the call, objective evaluation, and related principles of state bureaucracy.

It can therefore be seen how social and political actors, whether religious or not, are simultaneously embedded in and exposed—or expose themselves—to a public sphere reconfigured by digital platforms through their various organizational forms. For this reason, superficial impressions and interpretations that disregard these public-authority requirements imposed by DPA are insufficient to explain the erosion of boundaries between religion and the state and the resulting departure from a separationist model of secularity.

The media exposure of religious actors involved in these processes results from the requirements governing public-private partnerships and the obligation to publicize public acts under the principles²⁰ of managerial public administration described in Article 37 of the 1988 Federal Constitution. The purpose is to ensure transparency and accessibility concerning actions and interventions within processes of interaction among DPA, IPA, the third sector, civil society organizations, and all end users who access public goods and services in the form of public policies.

²⁰ The Direct and Indirect Public Administration of any of the branches of the Union, the states, the Federal District, and the municipalities shall comply with the principles of legality, impersonality, morality, publicity, and efficiency, as well as the following provisions: wording established by Constitutional Amendment No. 19 of 1998 (Brazil, 1988).

As established in Article 11 of MROSC, “the civil society organization shall disclose, on the internet and in visible locations at its administrative headquarters and the establishments where it conducts its activities, all partnerships entered into with public administration” (Brazil, 2014). This phenomenon must not, however, be confused with the political activities of the conservative far right, which publicly presents statistics on media networks for its own purposes.

CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION WITH AN ENVIRONMENTAL/SPIRITUAL FOCUS—AHE

A consultation of the CSO Map currently reveals nonprofit associations (CSOs) dedicated to socio-environmental issues—including environmental education, environmental management, and environmental conservation—that originated in initiatives undertaken within religious groups and/or by religious leaders, representatives, and communities. One such organization is the Horizonte de Esperança Association (Associação Horizonte de Esperança—AHE).

According to its recent history, AHE began in 2019 under the leadership²¹ of individuals from the Methodist tradition, as a continuation of an initiative shaped by decisive events in their religious spaces:

The first was the possibility of allocating part of an Atlantic Forest area in Santana do Paraíso, Minas Gerais, to a project intended to bring young people into contact with nature. The second was the approval of an environmental protection project, which provided the first source of funding for the future organization. The third was the approval of an environmental education project, which made it possible to establish its structure. [...] The organization was conceived as an open space committed to dialogue with different realities and to bringing people together around shared values, such as care for life, social justice, and environmental protection (AHE, 2026).

AHE was officially and legally structured as a private nonprofit association, established and registered under a CNPJ in 2024, and is currently active (CSO Map, 2026). AHE is an independent civil

²¹ A Methodist pastor, theologian, and holder of a teaching degree in Art Education (President); a United States citizen and Methodist Church missionary living in Brazil, philosopher, and holder of a master’s degree in Christian History and Social Ethics (Vice President); an educator and administrator with more than 20 years of experience who works in Basic and Higher Education, integrating human development, sustainability, and social transformation, and holds teaching degrees in Biological Sciences and Pedagogy (Secretary); and a pastor and elder of the Methodist Church, theologian and pedagogue, with postgraduate training in Psychopedagogy (Second Secretary) (AHE, 2026).

association committed to ecumenism and open to people from different faith traditions and worldviews. It operates in the city of Belo Horizonte, where it has consolidated its work in the environmental field, focusing on youth education and the development of environmental education initiatives.

Although it does not make its bylaws concerning activities conducted in accordance with MROSC publicly available for transparency purposes, the association states that it has worked to strengthen critical awareness, collective responsibility, and action within local territories, thereby contributing to the construction of new pathways (AHE, 2026).

Its institutional policy therefore presents the following mission: “To promote the integral (re)connection of people with Creation, inspiring actions of care for life and the environment as an expression of faith, justice, and compassionate solidarity.” Its vision is “to be an organization committed to forming people who are aware of their role in preserving the Common Home, promoting socio-environmental justice through collective action and a faith committed to life.” Its values include embodied faith, shared responsibility and socio-environmental justice, service and solidarity, among others.

Through explicit religious environmental activism, AHE presents a set of socio-environmental projects that combine socio-environmental action and religiosity, including: (1) EcoAction; (2) Atlantic Forest Preservation and Restoration; and (3) Production of Environmental Education Materials.

Chart 4*Types of Projects Conducted by AHE*

TYPES OF PROJECTS	CHARACTERISTICS/PURPOSES
EcoAction	EcoAction groups are a central component of the activities of the Horizonte de Esperança Association. The project provides for the establishment of groups of adolescents within different institutions—social projects, churches, schools, youth groups, and others—who are sensitized through content concerning ecology and eco-spirituality and challenged to take practical action by developing projects for the preservation and restoration of nature within their own communities. Eco-spirituality is one of the two pillars of the EcoAction methodology. It is based on the understanding that the environmental crisis is, at its roots, a crisis of values, and that transforming this relationship requires not only ecological knowledge but also a change in how human beings perceive themselves as part of nature. For AHE, caring for the environment is an ethical and spiritual act that connects young people to something greater than themselves. The project seeks to contribute to the formation of a generation of young leaders capable of understanding the balance of nature and actively promoting environmental preservation and restoration in their territories.
Atlantic Forest Preservation and Restoration	This project is led by AHE to preserve and restore an area of approximately 35 hectares of Atlantic Forest in Santana do Paraíso, Minas Gerais. Its purpose is to contribute to the protection, preservation, and restoration of land currently under AHE's care, whose formal donation to the institution is in the process of being finalized, and which is located in a region of native Atlantic Forest.
Production of Environmental Education Materials	This educational project of the Horizonte de Esperança Association is directed toward producing environmental content for publication and use by the national branch of the Methodist Church. Its purpose is to produce environmental teaching materials that promote reflection, awareness, and engagement among Sunday School participants, while strengthening the institutional relationship between AHE and the Methodist Church and contributing to reflection on the environmental crisis within faith communities.

Source: AHE, 2026. Prepared by the author, 2026.

Within this set of activities proposed by AHE, it may be possible to understand, following Silveira and Silveira (2019, p. 80), whether eco-spirituality exists as a diffuse phenomenon, permeated by a translucent and globally oriented religiosity that seeks to respond to the contingencies characterizing global risk society through the “reenchantment” of the relationship between humanity and nature. However, an examination of the academic backgrounds of AHE's leaders and directors reveals the direct influence of knowledge derived from ecology—that is, secularized knowledge.

What actually exists, however, consists of inner-worldly, secular actions that must necessarily remain subject to state secularity. In this context, possible conflicts of interest can therefore be observed in the projects, since they are produced by the Methodist religious institution itself, disseminated through

its own communication network, and intended to serve its religious community. Further clarification is unquestionably required regarding the availability of the educational materials already produced.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Progressive Christianities emerge alongside conservative Christianities aligned with neoliberalism and neoconservatism. Progressive Christianities can likewise be observed establishing a presence and becoming embedded in the public and social spaces that constitute the reconfigured, platformized public sphere. Religious leaders enter the political field, while parliamentarians from the political field enter the religious field, prompting reflection on the boundaries among social fields, religion and politics, and religious, secular, and nonreligious actions.

Within this context, a significant segment of progressive Evangelicals seeks to interact with public authorities in order to access public budgetary and financial resources and, in return, contribute to the provision of public goods and services, thereby participating in the implementation of public policies through secular and nonreligious activities. Representatives of the religious and political fields thus interact in arenas of political dispute or within Direct and Indirect Public Administration.

The identification of the expansion of progressive Evangelicals and their immersion in spaces of dispute and decision-making through a set of legislative proposals intended to secure recognition of their institutions as civil society organizations leads us to reflect on collaborative secularity, without the state diminishing or losing its supremacy over private power within society as a whole.

The state is therefore responsible for ensuring that public agencies possess the structure necessary to provide public goods and services to users regardless of their religiosity, spirituality, beliefs, or related characteristics.

MROSC includes Religious Organizations as one party in relationships with Direct Public Administration while requiring respect for the principles of secularity and recognition of the importance of religious activities beyond proselytism or religious-based social assistance. It consequently establishes

a recognition-based secularity concerning Religious Organizations originating from all religious segments—not only those of Christian origin—with the aim of strengthening a democratic and plural society.

Nevertheless, the information available for consultation on digital platforms and in big-data systems remains opaque with regard to the transparency of these activities and the indicators demonstrating how this vast array of Religious Organizations, their actions, and the services they provide have positively affected public policies or participatory democracy.

It should also be emphasized that environmental issues have increasingly been incorporated into religious discourse and into proposals introduced in public spaces or political arenas. It is therefore possible to identify an emerging “religious environmental activism” among religious representatives in their parliamentary activities as they seek to involve their communities in pragmatic actions for environmental conservation and preservation at the local and regional levels, among others. This is evident in the situations described in projects undertaken by associations under religious guidance that maintain ties with DPA. After all, from a Christian perspective, “before ‘humanity,’ there was the paradise created by God”; in secular terms, however, it has become the Common Home, which must now be cared for.

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