

DEVELOPING THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: PERSPECTIVES FROM EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015 reflect the conviction – shared by both secular and religious actors – that progress at any cost is neither appropriate nor viable. In order to be sustainable, growth must be respectful of both human beings and nature, and must take into consideration the long-term consequences of human action on every domain of life.

The nexus between the SDGs and theology is not always obvious. With some resistance, religious communities are becoming increasingly recognized as champions and advocates of sustainable development, whenever they act individually, or join the efforts of states, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations. The Christian perspective, offered in the polyphony of voices coming from the Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant traditions, may carry through its truly transformative and prophetic mission, while enriching and challenging the often staid and highly technical language of UN policy-making.

The collection of essays presented in this thematic section originates from the international seminar “Ecumenical Perspectives on Sustainable Development”, held during the 14th Ecumenical Social Week in Lviv, in October 2021. One of the ambitions of this collection is to deepen our discourse on SDGs, and on sustainability in general, by showing that theology can and should be an indispensable partner in the dialogue around the good and the right in all human activities. Both the seminar and the collection are the fruit of cooperation between the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) and the Catholic University of Leuven, joined by scholars from other institutions, and have been supported by UCU’s Research Fund.

For centuries, the churches have been discerning issues that echo SDGs, employing various frameworks, such as the “golden rule” or “common good”. More

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recently, and partly due to the intensification of ecumenical dialogue, theology has been engaged in reflection on “integral ecology”, “integral human development”, and the “stewardship of creation”, to mention a few. The essays bring inspirations from various Christian denominations into conversation, ensuring the ecumenical character of this section of the *Analecta*. At the same time, they offer contributions from both Eastern and Western Europe, familiar with different modes of development and conscious of their vulnerabilities. This collection, published in Ukraine in the midst of war, seeks to be a sign of the connectedness of Ukrainian academic theology with mainstream conversations happening at a global level.

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