
RELIGION AND CLIMATE POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract

In 2019, the European Commission presented the European Green Deal - a package of measures the aim of which was to enable Europeans to benefit from sustainable green transformation. The goal of this strategy is to lead to a situation in which the European Union will be the first climate neutral area in the world in 2050. The necessary actions to achieve this include: ambitious emission reduction, investing in innovative research and innovation as well as environmental protection in Europe. The key to the success of this initiative is the involvement of citizens of the European Union, 70% of whom are Christians (Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox believers), who are expected to change their attitudes to pro-ecological ones and bear significant transformation costs. In the article, we attempt to find the answer to the question of how a professed religion can support the implementation of the EU policy on counteracting climate change by participating in shaping citizens' social attitudes. We focus our attention on Protestantism, because in the ideological circle of Protestantism, the notion of sustainable development has been used for the very first time and current Protestant theology is ecologically oriented.

First of all, arguments for the perception of religion as a factor supporting policies and strategies counteracting climate change were cited. The potential of religion in shaping social attitudes was emphasised. Then, the example of the European Union's climate policy was indicated, the result of which would depend, among others, on social support for conducting a costly transformation towards a climate neutral area in 2050. Finally, the attention was confined to contemporary Protestant ethics, in particular eco-theology. Confirmation was sought for the thesis that religious ethics can be a source of a deep sense of individual responsibility for environmental issues, including climate change, constituting a factor supporting the implementation of the ambitious climate policy implemented in the European Union. Biblical tradition and Protestant ethics convey a message about the care of contemporary people for the lives of future generations. This theme could be very useful in the current course of the EU.

Keywords: climate change, eco-theology, protestant, ethics, politics

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1. Introduction

Climate change, which is considered to be one of the most important challenges of the modern world [1, 2], causes various forms of reaction of international organisations and countries, interest groups or citizens. Its manifestations are, among others: the emergence of an international climate change regime [3; R.O. Keohane and D.G. Victor, *The Regime Complex of Climate Change*, Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements, Discussion Paper 2010-33, Cambridge (MA), January 2010], the European Union's climate and energy policy [4] and national climate policies/strategies [5]. Climate change activates pro-ecological non-governmental organisations [6] and initiates civil climate protests. The European Union, which recognises the anthropogenic concept of climate change [7] and is considered an organisation characterised by above-average political determination in its commitment to climate policy implementation [8], stands out against the global background. In 2019, the European Commission presented a draft of a new development strategy entitled the European Green Deal [Annex to the Communication from The Commission to The European Parliament, The European Council, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of the Regions, *The European New Deal*, COM(2019)640final]. Its goal is to create the world's first climate neutral area in 2050. The involvement of citizens of the European Union, 70% of whom are Christians (Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox believers), is believed to be essential for the success of this initiative. Europeans are expected to adopt pro-ecological attitudes and bear significant transformation costs.

We assume that understanding public responses to climate change and developing solutions to catalyse action is a critical challenge for Social sciences. Among the economic, political, and social factors, ethical arguments can strengthen social attitudes that support the objectives of the European Union's climate policy. Moreover, we assume that religion can be a partner in facilitating more wide-reaching recognition and discussion of ethical issues and responses to climate change [9]. In the case of the European Union, religion can play an important role in enabling European societies and Europeans to take the necessary action to identify the causes, minimise the effects and implement ambitious solutions counteracting climate change in an effective and ethical way.

We focused our attention, firstly, on the issue of relations between religion and climate change policy, and we recapitulated the state of research on this topic. Then we concentrated on the example of the European Union's climate policy, the effect of which depends, among others, on social support for carrying out a costly transformation towards a climate neutral area in 2050. Finally, we considered closely contemporary Protestant ethics, in particular Eco-theology [10], seeking confirmation for the thesis that religious ethics can be a source of a deep sense of individual responsibility for environmental issues, including climate change.

According to a 2012 study about religiosity in the European Union (EU) by Eurobarometer 2015, Protestants made up 12% of the EU population. According to Pew Research Centre, Protestants constituted nearly one fifth (or 17.8%) of the continent's Christian population in 2010 [J. El-Menouar, *The religious landscape in Europe*, <http://www.europe-infos.eu/the-religious-landscape-in-europe>, accessed on 10.03.2020]. Protestantism of the Lutheran tradition predominates in the central, eastern and northern federal states of Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Latvia; Calvinist and Presbyterian traditions have the greatest number of followers in central and northern Holland, eastern Hungary and Scotland, and Anglican in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

2. Religion and climate change

The role of religion in shaping social attitudes is not a rare and unprecedented topic of scientific research [11]. Social research on religion and climate change is a direct result of previous generations of research on the relationship between religion and environmental attitudes. Research conducted, principally in the United States and Europe, has indicated that religious affiliation is a key factor to take into account in developing climate change policy and designing messages about the policy [12]. W. Jenkins, E. Berry, L.B. Kreider present a review of the current state of knowledge on this subject [13]. The authors emphasize the need to deepen scientific reflection on answers to questions on how interpretations of climate change shape arguments within and between religious traditions, change matter for arguments about what religion is and how it relates to categories of science, the secular, and indigeneity as well as to climate change factors in the emergence of new religious formations. In turn, a collective work edited by R.G. Veldman, A. Szasz & R. Haluza-DeLay, adopting the perspective of social sciences, explains the ways in which religions help cope with climate change. Representatives of social science also indicate how religious institutions, groups and individuals respond to this problem, what impact religions have, what barriers they face or create, and what this means to the global fight against climate change [14]. Among many publications devoted to the potential role of religion in combating climate change, we also find those that focus on analysing the positions of church authorities on the issue of climate change. The results show that most of them support the need to counteract climate change [15]. Letters addressed to church hierarchs and followers are also researched. For example, the authors of research into the impact of the Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si* from 2015 on public interest and support of climate policies came to the conclusion that the findings suggest that sustained exposure to compelling climate messages from trusted sources can increase the performance of activism behaviours [16].

Another area subject to scientific analysis is the assessment of the impact of specific theological positions on public opinion about the issue of climate change.

In the European Union, 70% of Europeans declare a Christian denomination. Among them, Protestantism, whose theology is ecologically oriented, presents a special attitude towards environmental problems. From the point of view of the aim of our publication, an important question is whether the protestant tradition has a possibility to affect shaping social opinions supporting policies and strategies against climate change [17].

The notion ‘sustainable development’ belongs to the language of the 21st century. It was used for the very first time in the ideological environment of Protestantism, in the practice of Saxon court. The idea of sustainability was created and introduced by Hans Carl von Carlowitz (1645–1714), a German clerk in the Saxony administration, the author of the first scientific treatise about forestry titled *Sylvicultura Oeconomica*. For Carlowitz, sustainability (German: Nachhaltigkeit, nachhaltige Entwicklung) was a process of the forest management method that would allow to continuously rebuild the forest. Carlowitz, as a graduate of the Lutheran City College in Halle and the University of Jena was shaped by the ideas of Protestant theology and Humanism [18]. His theory of forest administration was adapted as ‘Sustained Yield Forestry’ in the British context in the 19th century. The roots of the concept of sustainability - ‘Nachhaltigkeit’ are referred to in the concept of ownership formulated by Martin Luther (1483-1546). The reformer conceived an idea that property has a functional character. The almighty God bestowed goods on humankind; property is given well by God in order to be able to share it with others. According to Luther, proper administration of things defines our approach to our neighbour and the whole work of creation. The man should not forget that all goods are entrusted to him only by God. This was referred to in theology as the theory of trust or stewardship [19]. Later, the notion ‘sustainable’ was taken by the ecological movement and afterward also reintroduced into the political debate in the 1980s.

Since the early 1970s the concern for creation has belonged to one of the most important topics of Christian theology especially in the Protestantism. Already, in 1971, American theologian, environmentalist and preeminent person in the process philosophy, John B. Cobb, asked a question, ‘Is it too late for rescue for creation?’. He also doubted if the Christian tradition is capable of real engagement in environmental care [20]. Cobb’s book was the first single-authored publication that discussed Ecological ethics and Theology and the beginning of broad reflection about philosophical, theological, and ecological issues for Christians and other concerned citizens in Western civilization. In 1973, Jack Rogers (1934-2016) introduced the term Ecological Theology as permanent care of creation in the spirit of sustainable development. Rogers’ study reveals the theological search for a ‘suitable theological model’ that adequately assesses biblical data about the relationship between God, people, and nature. From now on we can talk about Eco-theology [21].

On the European continent, the most important issue in the ecological debate was Jürgen Moltmann’s book published in 1984 [22]. The concept presented in the book *Gott in der Schöpfung. Ökologische Schöpfungslehre* has

been up to now the most comprehensive Christian analysis of the ecological crisis. In the beginning of the 21st century, Eco-theology, also called ecological theology, is the most influential contextual theology and a stable part of academic Theology [23].

The roots of Cobb's, Roger's, and Moltmann's thoughts can be found in the biblical narration and in the reformation teaching of Martin Luther. The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century caused ground-breaking changes in the way of thinking about God and man's place in the world as well as his responsibility for the world.

3. Europeans towards the European Union's climate policy

The European Union's involvement in combating climate change is a dynamic and evolutionary process [24]. Its beginning dates back to the late 1980s. The EEC explicitly supported binding commitments on the reduction of greenhouse gases and the setting of specific dates for their fulfilment. It also accepted the argument about the historical responsibility of developed countries for greenhouse gas emissions and recognised the special duty of these countries to initiate actions to combat climate change. At the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, the EEC played the role of a 'pusher', despite the differences of interests of several Member States. The energy/climate change package adopted by the European Council on 11-12 December 2008 during the French Presidency, assuming a 20% CO₂ reduction target by 2020 was a confirmation of the ambition to keep a leadership position and testimony to an accord on a new long-term European energy policy [Council of the European Union, *Presidency Conclusions from 11-12 December 2008*, Brussels, 2009, 17271/1/08 REV 1, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/104692.pdf, accessed on 20.03.2020]. In this way, the European Commission in fact separated climate policy from environmental policy, and at the same time linked climate aspects with energy policy [25]. The European Union Emissions Trading System became a tool for achieving climate goals, climate policy obtained the legal and treaty basis given by the Treaty of Lisbon, and climate goals came to be one of the goals of the Europe 2020 development strategy [*Europa 2020. Strategia na rzecz inteligentnego i zrównoważonego rozwoju sprzyjającego włączeniu społecznemu*, Bruksela, 3.3.2010, KOM (2010), 2020] and the main objective of the European Union's future development strategy - the European Green Deal.

In the years 2008-2019 eight specialist studies on public opinion were carried out (Special Eurobarometers) dedicated entirely or partly to Europeans' perception of climate change [Europeans' attitudes towards climate change: 300(2008), 313(2009), 322(2009), Climate change: 372(2011), 409(2013), 435(2015), 459(2017), 490(2019), Future for Europe: 479(2018), <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/yearFrom/1974/yearTo/2019/search/climate%20change/surveyKy/2>, 212, accessed on 20.04.2020].

The overall results show the increasing seriousness of climate change for respondents. This is reflected not only in the increase in personal actions to fight climate change, but also in widespread support of national and EU-level measures to tackle it. Climate change is increasingly seen by EU citizens as one of the most serious challenges facing the world as a whole. Since 2017 it has overtaken the rise of international terrorism, and now ranks as the second most serious problem after poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water. An increasingly large majority of respondents see climate change as a serious problem. Furthermore, the proportion of those who consider it a very serious problem has increased for the second consecutive survey: up five points since 2017 and ten points since 2015, to almost eight in ten (79%) in the current survey. Almost all respondents (93%) think climate change is a serious problem. As was the case in 2015 and 2017, respondents think that national governments, business and industry and the EU are the main actors within the EU responsible for tackling climate change. There is consistent support among the majority of EU citizens support actions that will help move the European economy towards climate neutrality, such as increasing public support of the transition to clean energies. Large majorities also agree that reducing fossil fuel imports and promoting EU expertise in clean technologies can have an economic benefit for the EU. More than nine in ten (92%) agree that greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced to a minimum and the remaining emissions offset to make the EU economy climate neutral by 2050 [Special Eurobarometer 490. Summary, Climate Change, April 2019, 21, doi:10.2834/00469].

Social issues connected with the pursuance of the European Union's ambitious climate goals have been indicated as very important since the very beginning. Energy transformation in the direction set out by the Europe 2020 strategy and the European New Deal means the need to bear significant social costs. Research on the social effects of implementing the European Union's climate policy leads to the conclusion that well-designed and carefully implemented climate change mitigation policies can potentially generate additional social and economic benefits that can reduce poverty and provide opportunities to redress gender, health and economic inequalities. However, the side effects of climate change mitigation will not be just positive or evenly spread. Some social consequences of the transition to a low-carbon economy on a large scale will affect economic and health inequalities, social cohesion and well-being. To facilitate a fair transition, all stakeholders, including policy makers and civil society members, will need to work together to identify potential negative results at the local, regional and national level, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable groups [26, 27].

In order to ameliorate negative effects of climate policy implementation the European Union has set up instruments to support communities that are particularly exposed. These are, among others, the Just Transition Mechanism, a dedicated just transition scheme under InvestEU and a public sector loan facility with the European Investment Bank backed by the EU budget [European Commission, *Financing the green transition: The European Green Deal*

Investment Plan and Just Transition Mechanism, 14.01.2020, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2020/01/14-01-2020-financing-the-green-transition-the-european-green-deal-investment-plan-and-just-transition-mechanism, accessed on 20.04.2020].

In addition, the European Union made an attempt to solicit social support for the European Green Deal. On 4 March this year the European Commission together with the presentation of the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (the so-called European climate law) initiated the European Climate Pact. Its goal is to inform, inspire and support cooperation between individuals and organisations, starting from national, regional and local authorities to enterprises, trade unions, civil society organisations, educational institutions, consumer organisations, research organisations, as well as engaging them in activities for climate.

In the case of the European Union, which is a supranational organisation, supranational social integration around the objectives of the European Green Deal strategy will be important for gaining the support of the general public.

Religion can play an essential role here. Sociology of religion provides arguments for such a conclusion [27]. Religion unites the community, is a base of solidarity and integrates its followers around values that are important from the point of view of the religion. Sustainable development and care for the environment and living conditions of future generations are at the heart of e.g. Protestant Eco-theology.

4. Biblical roots of the eco-theological identity

The Bible begins with one of the most important texts of the Western civilization related to ecology - the Creation of the World [28]. In *Tanakh*, i.e. the books of the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings, called first by the Apostle Paul of Tarsus the *Old Testament* (2 Corinthians 3.14), we find the idea of transcendent God as almighty, holy Lord. He reveals his name as YHWH and He shows himself as completely different, far from the human being. God's first act was the creation of the whole World. Biblical faith underlines the fact that God is the creator of all things and creation is God's own act [29]. The Book of *Genesis*, known in the Hebrew tradition *Bereshit* (the Beginning), started with the words of God's activity. The story of Creation which told through two narratives: the Priestly source (P) Genesis 1.1 till 2.4 and the Yahwist source (J) emphasize different perspectives of God's activity [30].

The first story of creation (P) shows that God's creation act, that is the creation of inanimate matter and then giving life to all creation, plants, and animals, is far ahead of human presence. The life of other beings is older than human existence and furthermore than human thought. However, it is the human mind that dares to think that it is something most important in the Universe. Hebrew notion *nefeš hajjah* (living being) is a term for man, but also for other living beings. This breath - *nefeš* is not permanently associated with the human

body, it can be taken away from him by the Creator. Man is a link in the chain of creatures. This description of the priesthood tradition is more reserved when it comes to the creation of *homo sapiens*: but here we find the confession that God created man in his own image: "In the image of God he created them. Male and female he created them" (Genesis 1.27). The priestly source lists these two constitutive features of man: *imago et similitudo dei*, which emphasizes human special status with respect to other creatures. Only man was created in the image and likeness of God - this distinguishes him from other creatures and thus constitutes a great moral obligation to care for other beings, not endowed with these qualities.

The second in order, the Yahwist account of creation gave other interpretations of the process of creation. It emphasizes the very special character and place of man among other creatures: it was the Creator Himself who made man like a potter from the dust of the Earth: Lord God (YHWH) formed man and afterwards planted a garden in Eden, and put there the men whom he had formed (Genesis 2.7-8). For the concept of eco-theology and the idea of sustainable development the verse 2.15: "Lord God (YHWH) took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it" is of central importance. The concern of creation belongs to the most important aims of the human being and the Garden of Eden is a symbol of the ecological space [22, p. 247].

Ancient Israelites, and later Jews, believed that *nefeš* lives in the blood: "Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life/soul (*nefeš*), and you shall not eat the life with the meat" (Deuteronomy 12.23). All practices related to phlebotomy and kosher food were derived from this as well as the fundamentalist interpretation prohibiting blood transfusions. In addition to the concept of the soul (*nefeš*) in the Old Testament, already in the Pentateuch we find the word *ruah*, usually rendered as a ghost or spirit: "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh!" (Numbers 16.22) *Ruah* is also a concept with a deeply ecological message, it is the breath of God Himself that renews the world: "When you send forth your spirit (*ruah*) they are created, and you renew the face of the ground/earth" (Psalm 104.30). Another important anthropological and ecological term of the Old Testament is the word body (*bašar*), which is a common feature of man and animal, the *bašar* is taken from the dust of the earth, which God made into a human being (Genesis 2.7) and then God breathed *nefeš* there. According to the biblical message, the *nefeš* - life or soul, is also given to animals but is not a part of the floral form of life. It shows the deep nearness of humankind and animals. God's blessing embraces the whole of creation [22, p. 410].

The first global destruction of the relation between human and nature is described in the story of Noah (Genesis 6.5): The Wickedness of Humankind. God recognised the great wickedness of humankind and decided to destroy human beings together with animals, creeping things, and birds, only Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord. God's destructive activity was a consequence of the human pursuit of evil. The text of Genesis does not give a

clear answer about the character of human evil. The global programme of extermination has a warning feature and God promised that he will never do it again. In the ark of Noah, not only humankind but also the whole creation found a place to survive. An important part of the biblical pedagogy is teaching about the consequences of radical parents' mistakes (huge sin) for the children in the third and fourth generation (Exodus 20.4-5).

Biblical Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in harmony with nature, so did the author of the Psalms, King David. The biggest poet of the Hebrew Bible understood himself as a part of God's creation, a special part, but only a part. This conviction illustrates the very famous quote, often used during funerals: "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3.19). The most famous hymn showing God as the ruler of the Universe and the place of the human being in this order is Psalm 8, called by the translator of King James Bible (KJB) *God's glory is magnified by His works, and by His love to man* or in the modern translation (NRSV) *Divine Majesty and Human Dignity*. Psalm 8 expresses admiration of God's creation and asks about the place of man in this order. The psalm gives an integrated view of the environment where the human being received domination over the works of God's hands (Psalm 8.6). For a long time, this verse was misunderstood as a human right for unbounded exploitation of the whole nature [31]. The God of the Old Testament is always on the side of life, which is perfectly illustrated by the quote from the Apocryphal *Book of Wisdom* 11.26: "You spare all, since all is yours, Lord, lover of life!" The killing of animals is only possible for food and cult purposes - that is a rabbinic interpretation of the fifth commandment.

When looking for biblical inspirations, we must emphasize that the New Testament basically took over the vision of man and nature contained in the book of the Tanakh - Old Testament. For the New Testament the spiritual part of human life was much more important than earthly life so highly valued in Judaism. Jesus from Nazareth, the saviour of sinners was not born in wealth, but in a manger, in the company of animals (Luke 2.7ff). The further teaching of Jesus was not focused on the relation to nature, but on showing the spiritual side of humanity. This aspect of human existence is presented in a special way in the fourth Gospel, written by John. The concern of nature, concentration of everyday activities belongs to the path of darkness.

The books of the New Testaments rendered the Hebrew *nefeš* as a Greek *psyche* and the *bašar* as *sarks*. Apostle Paul, however, gave the latter term a new meaning: corporality was conceived of as sinfulness, and in the Pauline interpretation, *conditio humana* is permanently subjected to the slavery of sin. Jesus Christ is the only salvation from this status. A side effect of Paul's anthropology and hamartiology is a tradition which for centuries resulted in a specifically negative attitude of Christian theology to all that is bodily. It was only the Reformation that attempted to restore the dignity of that which is bodily, according to the Old Testament tradition. Ecological motifs in the Bible were something obvious, not requiring deeper reflection for many generations of

Christians. This was also the case during the Reformation when the interpretation of ethics and especially human work found a new interpretation [32].

Summarising, we pointed to a long-lasting tradition of the concern of nature in the books of Old Testament, also quite a deeply rooted moral of the limits of human needs. The newly formed Christianity concentrated on the spiritual life of human being.

5. Protestant patterns of the modern European paradigm of the limited development

The world of the 21st century is very different in many aspects from that in which the Reformers, fathers of evangelical spirituality, lived. Although 3 times as many years have passed between the apostolic times and the age of reforms of Christianity as from that period to the modern-day, in many respects, the Life condition of Martin Luther's and Paul of Tarsus' had much more in common than Luther with the current generation. This statement is particularly evident in the case of population, which in mid-2020 reached 7.78 billion people [<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>, accessed on 23.05.2020]. At the time of Jesus, only 250 million people inhabited the entire earth, this number only doubled to 500 million during the Reformation. The number of one billion inhabitants of the Earth was reached already during the period of the activity of the father of Neoprotestantism, Friedrich Daniel Schleiermacher (1768-1834), somewhere around 1820.

For Dr. Martin Luther, ecological issues were *terra incognita*. However, the issue of sustainable development is indirectly deeply inscribed in his ethical reflection. God created the world and the creation was simply good. Material goods by themselves are not good or bad, but the usage of them gives them first the ethical meaning. Man should fulfil his calling in this world. He should learn, pray, work, build, live, implement an ethical programme following formula *fides per charitatem efficax* - faith should be active in love. The concern for God's creation on a global scale was alien to Luther's ethical paradigms.

Luther's house, the so-called black monastery in Wittenberg, ran by his wife Katarina von Bora, was a typical example of a late medieval, open to guests, almost self-sufficient house. In Luther's household plastic was not used, but some waste (natural waste) was produced. The sewage system was unknown there, everything went to the nearby Elbe River, although, as we know, the ancient Romans had already built sewage systems successfully. In winter the house was heated by wood, which was provided by nearby forests without any debilitating effects. Fossil fuels: hard coal and lignite, gas and oil were not used by people at the time of the Reformation, although mining was already practiced. It can be assumed that smog was a phenomenon widely known in the increasingly expanding city - the cradle of the Reformation, but no one paid attention to it. The problems of all medieval cities were water resources and supplies as well as epidemics terrifying people at the time, also known as the

plague. Once upon a time, Luther was even accused of hosting children of people who died of the plague, seeing it as hostile to the city's community [33].

The life of Martin Luther and his family is an example of human activity in harmony with nature. It means that nature, plants and animals, resources of fields and forests appeared to the people of the Reformation as something natural, which has always existed and will always exist - because God created it all so well. It is worth remembering that over 90% of the population of late medieval Europe lived in rural areas. This is the environmental context of the Protestant Ethics which has in many aspects a very revolutionary character [34].

The Ethics of Martin Luther is based on his anthropological assertions of a very pessimistic character. Human nature has completely broken down in consequence of the original sin. As a result of falling into sin, man lost God's image (*imago Dei*) and the likeness of God (*similitudo Dei*). Humankind fell into slavery to sin [35]. Only thanks to Christ (*solus Christus*) did a man become righteous before God. It is, therefore, donated justice, ascribed to man, that is - as Luther puts it - foreign justice. This foreign - Christ's justice is passed onto a man in the gift of faith, which Luther sees above all as trust. Faith, therefore, is not a merit, but only an instrument through which man assimilates the justification given to him in Christ. Luther's ethics emerges from this pessimistic anthropology in his conclusions, which radically breaks with the perfectionist vision of medieval moral philosophy and the moral theology built upon it. In evangelical theology, ethics is inseparably connected with faith. This is exclusive ethics, considering only those who believe in Christ justified sinners. Luther's ethics is addressed to believers free in Christ.

Luther accepted the existence of property or possession of things as a necessary condition. According to the Reformer, private property has only a service character - man is given God's goods by earth so that he can share with others. Money trading, and business - this is an absolute necessity, not the meaning of life. In the paper from 1524 he wrote: "And those who want to be rich fall into temptation and snares, and into many senseless and harmful lusts that plunge men into doom and perdition. For the root of all evil is the love of money; some, yielding to her, deviated from the path of faith and became entangled in various sufferings themselves." [36] Luther wanted clear rules to apply in the area of free trade and, above all, to include in the calculation the notion of justice and to be aware that all the property we possess is really God's property. This is the idea of stewardship. Luther noticed that buyers when they could, often overstated the prices of the goods they sold, when he proposed a fair price principle. For Luther, the basic form of social and economic life was a family household - headed by a man - to whom relatives and distant relatives also belonged, as well as journeymen, peasants, and servants, and that everyone should receive adequate or fair payment for his work. Luther also strongly opposes world trade, warning against excessive imports, which draws a lot of money from people and promotes unnecessary luxury. World trade, which Luther calls interest trading, is a threat to family businesses and home

businesses. Here is one of the most important patterns of the idea of limited development.

An important place in Luther's economic ethics is the question of understanding work as a vocation (*Beruf als Berufung*). By some interpreters, it is even understood as the central topic of the reformer's economic ethics, which should be seen as its size, and not in questionable economic analyses. According to Luther, work and rest are above all God's commands, complementary elements of human existence. The reformer in the Big Catechism in the lecture on the Third Commandment derives the Hebrew word Sabbath from resting, abstaining from work. This day was of primary importance for regaining strength and not to weaken due to continuous work - as Luther expressed in the *Large Catechism* [37].

It is only in the second meaning that the Reformer writes about the religious, cult dimension of the seventh day of the week. He emphasizes that God's day cannot be a time of laziness, but it should be, above all, a day of communing with the Word of God. For Luther, working is only one of the dimensions of humanity, and the cult of superhuman work is human impoverishment. Work is the implementation of one of God's callings. It is inscribed in the social order, in the teaching of the three states, and should be accepted as God's gift. There is no better or worse job. Therefore, work should be done with commitment, even with passion, especially if in such a way we can carry out God's command to love our neighbour and help others. The cult of work was a perversion of Luther's understanding of work. Man totally devoted to work becomes its slave, he loses his humanity over time. Man as a part of creation is responsible for the humankind and also for the other parts of creation. In this concept we can see the most important Protestant source of the idea of sustainable development [38].

Reformational theology sought to discover all dimensions of human life, which were treated as God's gift. This is the reason why such activities as games with family and friends, singing, playing music, or even feasting are valuable. Summarising, we underline that according to Luther's teaching, the relation of the human being to material goods is the test of his humanity. It defines one's approach to his neighbour and the whole work of creation. Man should not forget that all goods are entrusted to him only by God. This was referred to in theology as the theory of trust or stewardship.

6. Conclusions

The European Union is at a strategic point in the implementation of an ambitious climate policy. Taking on the role of a leader in combating climate change, it set itself the goal of building the world's first climate neutral continent. This goal is to be achieved in 2050. The framework for creating a climate neutral society assumes combining a policy conducive to the transition with the pursuit of acceptance and social justice. It is assumed that transformation towards the world's first climate neutral continent will proceed in

a sustainable way. This means that the implementation of the ambitious assumptions of the New Green Deal will depend not only on political decisions and technological solutions, but above all on human behaviour. In the aspect of everyday life, this means the need to introduce extensive changes in the area of production and consumption. The achievement of success will be associated with assuming shared responsibility, consensus, uniformity of rules and principles, and stability. The first step for the success of the European Green Deal is to gain social acceptance for specific detailed policies that are connected with bearing the costs of transformation. Religion may be a factor supporting the European Union's ambitious climate policy, among others, due to its supranationality and integration function as well as documented impact on shaping social attitudes. One example is the Protestant religion. The European Union's climate policy and Protestant ecotheology are united by a special attitude towards the concept of sustainable development contained in the sentence attributed to Martin Luther: even if I knew that tomorrow the world would cease to exist, I would have planted an apple tree today. Referring to this pattern, it should be pointed out that caring for creation is a multi-generational task [K. Toeplitz, *Marcin Luter wobec sensu życia*, 2017, <https://okis.pl/102017-marcin-luter-wobec-sensu-zycia/>, accessed on 20.05.2020].

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