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ECOLOGY OUTSIDE OF THEOLOGY

The Paradox of Theological Education in Belarus

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13.1 Introduction

In the 1990s, Belarus became a champion of teaching ecological awareness courses in the university framework: compulsory courses were introduced in the curriculum, and, in 1992, a unique ecological research and educational institution named after Soviet human rights activist and dissident Andrey Sakharov was established. Involvement of the Belarusian Orthodox Church and its units in raising eco-awareness is also significant, e.g. vast foreign church-related humanitarian aid and ecumenical cooperation connected to ecological topics, a unique department on ecology of the Hrodna diocese[139] and visible presence of

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[139] Ecological department of the diocese of Hrodna, official web-site, http://www.orthos.org/eparhiya/otdely/ekologicheskiy (accessed 27 July 2016). That is the only diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church were such a

events with strong ecological content in the framework of activities of the Youth Union of the Belarusian Orthodox Church and Synodal Department for Youth Affairs of the Belarusian Orthodox Church.[140]

13.2 Ecological Topics in the Curriculum of Theological Education: Focus on Security and Radiation

Paradoxically, eco-theology was at the same time rather absent from theological education in Belarus. Ecological topics were included in theological modules of the faculty of theology (European Humanities University) only in 1998 with the introduction of the first educational standard of theology: of the Moral theology course Church and ecology was merely the last topic.[141] This was an achievement, which, however, diminished in the following years.

After the Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church[142] were accepted in 2000, this document started to play an important role in the framework of Moral theology. The document was promising for boosting eco-theology as it included a whole chapter dedicated to relations of the church to ecological problems. The Russian Orthodox Church declared its "deep concern" for ecological problems as

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department exists. Since 9 years, Hrodna diocese organises annual Orthodox ecological youth gatherings.

[140] See "The Church and Environment Program (Main activities: 2014-1016)", http://tvorenie.by/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Church-and-Environment-Program-2014-2106-1.pdf (accessed 27 July 2016).

[141] Образовательный стандарт. Высшее образование. Специальность Г.01.02.00 Теология.
Утвержден и введен в действие приказом Министра образования от 30.12.98 г. № 697 [Educational Standard. Higher Education. First Degree. Speciality Г.01.0 2.00 Theology. Adopted and enforced by order of the Minister of education 30.12.1998 г. № 697].

[142] Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2000. Web-site of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/3/14.aspx (accessed 27 July 2016).

"the problems generated by the contemporary civilisation" (XIII.1). It proposed theological reflection on the relationship between humanity and nature (XIII.2) as well as unity and integrity of Creation as a basic principle to address ecological issues (XIII.4) and it took responsibility to raise public awareness on the problems of ecological crisis and insisted on the necessity "to introduce ecological education and training" (XIII.3). However, in the new educational standard of theology adopted in 2008[143] the only related topic in the framework of the Moral theology course with reference to the social document of the Russian Church was bioethics, while Church and ecology completely vanished. In the latest standard of 2013[144] there was no more space, neither for the course on moral theology at all, which used to be the last resort for possible eco-theological reflections, nor for any other form of eco-theological topics.

Educational standards which are the legal document setting requirements to the content and amount of information to be delivered in the curriculum of the specific courses consist of three parts: a general scientific module, a humanitarian module and a professional specific

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[143] Образовательный стандарт Республики Беларусь. Высшее образование. Первая ступень. Специальность 1-21 01 01 Теология. Квалификация теолог-религиовед. Преподаватель этики, эстетики и культурологии. Утвержден и введен в действие постановлением Министерства образования Республики Беларусь от 12.06.2008 г. № 50 [Educational Standard of the Republic of Belarus. Higher Education. First Degree. Speciality 1-21 01 01 Theology. Qualification specialist in theology and religious studies. Lecturer in ethics, aesthetics and culturology. Adopted and enforced by decree of the Ministry of education 12.06.2008 № 50].

[144] Образовательный стандарт высшего образования. Высшее образование. Первая ступень. Специальность 1-21 01 01 Теология. Квалификация теолог-религиовед. Преподаватель этики, эстетики и культурологии. Утвержден и введен в действие постановлением Министерства образования Республики Беларусь от 30.08.2013 №87 [Educational Standard of higher education. Higher Education. First Degree. Speciality 1-21 01 01 Theology. Qualification specialist in theology and religious studies. Lecturer in ethics, aesthetics and culturology. Adopted and enforced by decree of the Ministry of education 30.08.2013 №87].

module. Being absent from the professional theological and humanitarian modules, in all three above mentioned educational standards, the ecological courses at the same time were included in the general scientific part. The standard of 1998 contained two compulsory courses on ecology:

Basics of ecology, consisting of 32 hours[145], and Protecting inhabitants and economic objects in emergency situations (including radiation security), consisting of 68 hours.

To be graded for the first course, students were required to know the ecological consequences of professional decisions of specialists (meaning their own decisions as theologians), to analyse the ecological life of society as well as to know about the influence of human activities on the environment and about scientific and practical measures to protect plant and animal kingdoms. The program of the course of Basics of ecology touched upon the following topics: the general idea of an ecosystem, energy and nutrition cycles, soil, climate, ecology of community and successions and – the largest topic – radiation and Chernobyl: radiation, ionising radiation and its doses, natural sources of radiation, the anthropogenic radiation background, the situation with radioactive emission in Belarus before and after the Chernobyl disaster. The second course on emergency situations focused on the Chernobyl disaster more closely and had practical orientation: medical consequences, radioactive hygiene, norms of radioactive security and sanitary rules of work with radioactive substances, use of radiometers and dosimeters. Not surprisingly, Chernobyl was not only the centre of ecological education, but became its over-expanded centre covering the course almost entirely.

[145] In Belarusian academic system length of the course and its components is counted in hours (1 academic hour consists of 45 min). Auditorial hours are the lectures, seminars and practical lessons delivered in the university.

The educational standard of 2008 was adopted when the theological faculty was transferred from the EHU to the Belarusian State University and transformed into the Institute of Theology. In this standard, the course Basics of ecology got the following addition in its name: and of saving energy. The course was enlarged in length, now consisting of 52 hours (34 auditorial). It became larger than Moral theology (46 hours and 34 auditorial) but continued to be one of the smallest courses of the entire curriculum. It now aimed at developing skills of theological students in "finding foundations for ethical approaches and the role of Christian organisations in solving environmental problems" and it lost topics connected to radiation. The latter were completely erased from this basic course and moved to the second one Protecting inhabitants and objects in emergency situations. Radiation security (102 hours; 68 auditorial) which had more of a civil defence training character.

Basics of ecology and saving energy included the following issues: principles, approaches, laws of ecology, the relationship of man and nature in their dynamics of development, basic concepts of classical ecology (environmental factors, biosphere, ecosystem, biocenosis, population and others), socio-environmental laws and norms of behaviour that allow the continued existence and development of mankind, the global environmental crisis, its causes and consequences, the measures necessary to overcome it, the ecological situation in the Republic of Belarus, renewable and non-renewable energy sources and, lastly, the concept of energy security of Belarus. The student was expected to learn the following issues: cosmic conditions which provide life on Earth, the doctrine of biosphere, the law of unidirectional energy flow in the biosphere, the doctrine of the noosphere, the sequence of concepts describing the functional ecosystem of any rank, historical types of interaction between society and nature, socio- and ecological systems and their components, biospheric functions of mankind and the

notions and concepts public health, demography, urbanization and urban ecosystems and, furthermore, scientific, philosophical and religious grounds of environmental values. The course was expected to develop the following skills: to orient oneself in the specificity of structure and specific problems of classic ecology, and ecology of human being, both global and social, to be able to find ecological components, ecological interactions, ecological conflicts, to explain the chemical basis of substance cycle and of energy conversion, to explain causes of diversity of living substance and individual ecosystems, to use information on the greenhouse effect and environmental pollution to prevent environmental hazards, to explain the role of population and organisms in an eco-system, to explain the causal relationship of ecological and evolutional phenomena and the human impact on ecological effects, to explain and justify the idea of the path of 'sustainable' development, environmental activities and culture as well as possible ways of their implementation and to show the role of economics and law in dealing with environmental problems. The content of the course seems to be very rich, addressing not only practical, but also theoretical problems, but being one of the smallest courses in the curriculum hardly all of these topics can be covered in detail.

The course Protecting inhabitants and objects in emergency situations. Radiation security consists of the following components: characteristics of the source of emergency situations, prognosis of situations during technogenic disasters, individual and collective means of protection against chemical injuries, classification of fires according to fire sources, means and methods of firefighting, fire prevention, protection of population during the war from conventional munitions and weapons of mass destruction, organisation of measures to eliminate the consequences of the accident, methods for detection and measurement of ionising radiation sources, protection against

radioactive radiation and practical recommendations for the population living in the contaminated areas.

In the educational standard of 2013, the shift of basic ecology to the concept of security became quite significant. The course was renamed to Security of human life and activities and inherited the same 102 academic hours in the curriculum, while Basics of ecology and saving of energy were just merged into it. Topics of global environmental problems, ensuring environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources now go hand in hand with protecting the population and facilities from emergencies, first aid in emergency situations, energy-saving technology at home, work security, sanitation requirements for work environment and industrial safety. Concerning radiation issues there was also quite an important shift: radiation safety was balanced with the topic of ensuring energy security and energy independence of the Republic of Belarus. This shift is connected to a governmental project of building a new atomic plant and to the vanishing of the Chernobyl topic from the official public discourse. The knowledge required from the student also became less humanitarian and more normative and legal: legislation in the sphere of fire and radiation security, protection of population and territories from emergencies, main principles, means and methods of protection from emergencies, basics of rational use of environment, measures to prevent ecological adversities of geospheres, priorities of state policy in sphere of energy saving and legislation in the sphere of working safety.

13.3 The Main Factors Shaping Ecological Awareness in Belarus and its Profile

According to Belarusian philosopher Valiantsin Akudovič, the history of Belarus in the twentieth century could be summarised by the following few words: Revolution, War, Melioration, Chernobyl and Independence.[146] Two of these have significantly contributed to the eco-awareness of society, culture and politics, shaping its specific profile.

Melioration is considered by Akudovič to be the greatest apocalyptical event as the landscape of the whole country, its archetype, has been transformed (meliorated means "bettered") from the natural image of forests and swamps to an agricultural, anthropogenic scenery of fields. The intensive draining of swamps, especially in the South-Western region of Palessie in the 1950-1970s, allowed to introduce more than 2 million hectares of lands to agricultural use. Draining was presented by Ivan Mielež in one of the most famous and important Belarusian epics "People of the Marsh"[147] as a great hope of people since it had great economic and social significance. However, melioration lead to the destruction of natural ecosystems, i.e. "radical transformation of hydra, thermal, agrochemical regimes of the territories, profound change of spatial structure and external appearance of landscapes, decrease of biological diversity and abundance of many species of plants and animals, replacement of the original dominant groups with new ones".[148] The economic effect was also diminished as

[146] Акудовіч, Валянцін, "Мэліярацыя", in: Слоўнік Свабоды. XX стагоддзе ў беларускай мове. Радыё Свабодная Еўропа / Радыё Свабода, 2012, 263. [Akudovič, Valiancin, "Melioration", in: Dictionary of Liberty. XX century in Belarusian language, Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 2012, 263.]

[147] Мележ, Іван, Людзі на балоце, Мінск: Попурри, 2015. [Mielež, Ivan, People of the Marsh, Minsk: Popurri, 2015.]

[148] Рассашко, И.Ф. et al., Общая экология. Тексты лекций для студентов специальности 1-33 01 02 «Геоэкология», Гомель: ГГУ им. Ф. Скорины,

after years of agricultural use much of the drained peat soil and its agricultural potential were lost. At the same time, in the common, not philosophical, conscience, melioration was a rather regional and very specific phenomenon, fully outperformed by the other factor – the Chernobyl disaster.

Chernobyl, a small town in Ukraine close to the Belarusian border whose name is derived from a wormwood, was an apocalyptical disaster not only in the figurative sense being commonly referred to as apocalyptic[149] and also not only due to the fact that its name partly had black[150] in it, but also because it had a symbolic connection with a biblical disaster found in the Book of Revelation: "The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water— the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter." (Rev 8:10-11) The radiological disaster at Chernobyl atomic electric station had a crucial influence on shaping all of society after 1986. According to the UN report "Chernobyl: the true scale of the accident",[151] there were 200,000 emergency workers, 350,000 were persons were evacuated (116,000 immediately after the disaster) and 270,000 still live in the most polluted territories and, among those, around 100,000 still receive higher doses of radiation. One of the consequences of the disaster was an increasingly

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2010, 216-217. [Rassashko, I.F./ Kovaleva O.V./ Kruk A.V.: General Ecology. Texts of Lectures for the Students of Speciality 1-33 01 02 "Geoecology", Homel: HSU of Skaryna, 2010, 216-217.]

[149] Адамовіч, Алесь, Апакаліпсіс па графіку, Мінск: Беларусь 1992. [Adamovich A., Apocalypse on schedule ,Minsk: Belarus, 1992]

[150] Comp. "черный" ("chernyj", "black" in Russian) with Чернобыль (Chernobyl).

[151] Chernobyl: the true scale of the accident. 20 Years Later a UN Report Provides Definitive Answers and Ways to Repair Lives. Joint News Release WHO/IAEA/UNDP. 5 September 2005, http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2005/pr38/en/ (accessed 27 July 2016).

high level of thyroid gland diseases, including thyroid cancer and leukaemia. However, according to the conclusions of the above-mentioned report, even if in reality direct medical consequences of the disaster were not too dramatic, "widespread expectations of ill health and a tendency to attribute all health problems to radiation exposure have led local residents to assume that Chernobyl related fatalities were much higher than they actually were", and it caused "stress symptoms, depression, anxiety and medically unexplained physical symptoms… including self-perceived poor health… People in the affected areas report negative assessments of their health and well-being, coupled with an exaggerated sense of the danger to their health from radiation exposure and a belief in a shorter life expectancy…"[152]

It was exactly in the framework of the "Chernobyl factor" when in 1991, during one of the UN events dedicated to aiding Belarus to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, a project of the International Ecological College as a tool to prepare professionals in different spheres connected to overcoming Chernobyl disaster emerged. The government of the newly independent Republic of Belarus as well as Chernobyl-aware organisations of civil society supported the project. A college was established and named after Soviet dissident and human rights activist with ecological awareness A.D. Sakharov in the very beginning of 1992. It united many specialists in different disciplines and became a central ecological educational and research organisation, not only in Belarus. In 2005, it received status of basic establishment for all the Commonwealth of Independent States (Organisation of cooperation of former Soviet Republics, excluding the three Baltic States). In 1994, it was transformed to an Institute, and in 1999 to a university. Since 2015, it is merged in the structure of the Belarusian State University.

[152] Ibid.

The institution deals not only with topics concerning radiation, radioactive pollution and its consequences for health and environment but also with other directions like new 'cleaner' energetic methods, energy saving technologies, ecological security, monitoring of environment and dealing with pollution of different kinds, with trash, plastic, etc.[153] This institution played a crucial role not only in preparing specialists in ecology (mainly of scientific direction) but also in promoting the very idea of the importance of the ecological education strongly connected to the reflections and research of the Chernobyl disaster on one hand, and of human rights, activism, advocacy framework on the other hand – the very reference to the name of the Andrey Sakharov, is symbolic for the ethos of the institution.

[153] See the history of the institution at its official web-site: http://www.iseu.bsu.by/institut/istoriya-new

Chernobyl is an important reference point and metaphor in modern Belarusian culture.[154] Chernobyl has traumatised society significantly. Belarusian Nobel Prize winner Sviatlana Aleksijevič dedicated to the traumatic experiences her famous "Chernobyl's prayer"[155] as the

[154] See Yankuta, Anna, About Chernobyl in the Belarusian Literature, http://survincity.com/2012/07/anna-yankuta-about-chernobyl-in-the-belarusian/ (accessed 27 July 2016).

[155] Алексиевич, Светлана, Чернобыльская молитва, Москва: Остожье, 1997.; Алексіевіч, Святлана, Чарнобыльская малітва: хроніка прышласці,

disaster had close connection to spirituality. This led the reflection on the trauma of Chernobyl in deep connection to religion: the famous icon Mother of God of Chernobyl's victims by Belarusian artist Ales Maračkin could be mentioned as an example (see picture), as well as the song "Children of Chernobyl" by Hanna Kazlova, with its presence of the prayer motive "Oh, God, save the destiny of Chernobyl children."[156] Belarusian anthropologist and theologian Elena Romashko considers the religious and mythological connotations of the radiation unavoidable.[157] Yet, this specific Belarusian phenomenon is often out of analysis of Chernobyl's influence on the church and religious life.[158]

Chernobyl children also was an important and archetypical concept in the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s. The foreign aid towards Belarusian government, NGOs and churches was so enormous that it can hardly be estimated. To understand the scale, only one – however the largest – foundation, Chernobyl children, provided humanitarian aid to 2 million people (the whole population is 10 million). 600,000 Belarusian children travelled abroad for health reasons. Only in the 1990s, medical drugs with a total cost of half a million USD were imported; in Germany alone there were more than 250 Chernobyl initiatives, including church ones.[159] Due to the specific organisation of German social system, where

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Мінск: Гронка, 1999. [In English: Alexievich, Svetlana, Voices from Chernobyl, Gessen, Keith (transl.), New York: Picador, 2006.]

[156] "Выратуй, Божа, лёс, дзецям Чарнобыля" (Bel.)

[157] Romashko, Elena (2016), "Religion and 'Radiation Culture': Spirituality in post-Chernobyl World". Web blog post, in: Material Religions. 1 June 2016, http://materialreligions.blogspot.de/2016/05/religion-and-radiation-culture.html (accessed 27 July 2016).

[158] Zwalen, Regula, "Die Russische Orthodoxe Kirche und Tschenobyl", in: RGOW 4, 2016, 22-23.

[159] See more about the activities of the foundation Chernobyl children and its cooperation also with church organisations: Тамковіч, Аляксандр, Філасофія дабрыні: ад катастрофы да Сада Надзеі, Мінск, 2016. [Tamkovič, Aliaksandr, Philosophy of Good: from Catastrophe till the Garden of Hope, Minsk, 2016.]; See about Chernobyl politics: Sahm, Astrid, Umwelt- und energiepolitische

church related Catholic and Protestant diaconic organisations and churches themselves play a very significant role, there was also very intensive ecumenical cooperation as many projects in Belarus funded by Protestant and Catholic partners were implemented in Belarus by churches.[160] Chernobyl aid and references to Chernobyl played a significant role for Belarusian parishes. In the beginning of the 1990s, in Minsk only there were two newly established parishes directly dedicated to Chernobyl: the Parish of the icon of Theotokos "Joy of all in sorrow" – the stone of the monumental church for the victims of Chernobyl was symbolically engraved on the fifth anniversary of the catastrophe, 26 April 1991[161]; and the Parish of the icon of Theotokos "Seeker of the perished" built in the memory of liquidators and victims. The capsule there was engraved by the President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenka himself on 26 April 1996.[162]

Visible change of the official discourse on Chernobyl occurred in the second half of 2000s and was connected to the governmental decision to build a new atomic plant in Belarus. The decision was taken in 2008 and, as a new concept of energetic independence of Belarus started to dominate the official discourse, Chernobyl vanished.[163] This

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Handlungsoptionen in der Ukraine und der Republik Belarus (1990-1995). Ihre Bedeutung für nationalstaatliche Legitimation und überregionale Kooperation, Dissertation, Frankfurt, 1998.

[160] See Тамковіч, Аляксандар, op.cit., Sahm, Astrid, opt.cit., Васілевіч, Наталля, "Сацыяльная работа цэркваў", in: Асамблея (1), 2009, 13-16. [Vasilevich, Natallia, "Churches' social work", in: Asambleja (1), 2009,13-16.]

[161] See history of parish: http://sobor.by/10Years.php?lang=de (accessed 27 July 2016).

[162] See history of parish: http://nevsky.by/hram/prihod-ikony-bozhiej-materi-vzyskanie-pogibshih/ (accessed 27 July 2016).

[163] See Степанов, Андрей, Политика Чернобыля в Беларуси в 1986-2008 годах: формирование и проявления дискурс-коалиций, Докторская диссертация, Вильнюс, 2010 [Stepanov, Andrey, Politics of Chernobyl in Belarus 1986-2008: formation and expression of discourse coalitions, Doctoral dissertation, Vilnius, 2010].

development also explains the shift from Chernobyl and general ecological topics to security, energetic security and civil defence discourse in the courses on ecology.

The third factor to influence the necessity and content of teaching ecology in Belarus was the popularity in the intellectual circles of the 1990s of ideas of Russian/ Ukrainian philosopher and scientist Vladimir Vernadsky, especially of noosphere,[164] which was closely connected not only to science but also to so called Russian cosmism, which included spiritual, esoteric and even occult elements,[165] and therefore represented an alternative to Orthodox and Christian theology spirituality. And according to Vernadsky, it is neither philosophy, nor religious faith or political doctrine, but science which plays the role of the global "reasonable" force.[166] The concept of noosphere introduced in Soviet discourse and developed by Vernadsky constitutes an optimistic idea of harmony of the co-existence between humanity (life substance) and environment (insentient substance), and manifests a new stage in the evolution of the universe, where the human being plays a role of a geological global force, which also corresponds to the Soviet political model: "the ideas of our democracy are in unison with spontaneous geological process, with laws of nature, they are in accord with noosphere. We can be sure in the future. It's in our hands."[167] On the one hand, Vernadsky's potential for ecological thinking is recognised

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[164] See Фесенкова, Л., "Учение о ноосфере в современной экологической ситуации", in: Высшее образование в России (1), 2008, 142-147. [Fesenkova, L., "Doctrine of Noosphere in Contemporary Ecological Situation", in: Vyssheye obrazovaniye v Rossii (1), 2008, 142-147.]

[165] See Hagemeister, Michael, "Russian Cosmism in the 1920s and Today", in: Rosenthal, Bernice Glatzer (ed.), The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997, 185-202.

[166] See Фесенкова, Л., opt. cit., 143-144.

[167] Вернадский, Владимир (1944), "Несколько слов о ноосфере", http://vernadsky.lib.ru/e-texts/archive/noos.html#tthFtNtAAB (accessed 27 July 2016).

due his conclusions about biological and human influence of the environment to be geologically significant.[168] On the other hand, doubted, due to the utopian character of the noosphere concept.[169] In any case, from the curriculums on ecology we see the significant role of Vernadsky ideas to promote ecological awareness in the post-Soviet situation more influential than Christian eco-theological reflections.

13.4 Conclusion

Ecological topics were in strong focus of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, which took place in Crete, 19-26 June, 2016. Three documents closely deal with them: 1.) the Message of the Council (par. 8), which derives ecological crisis from moral causes, which could be overcome by cultivation of "stewardship" consciousness towards Creation; 2.) the Encyclical of the Council, which not only diagnoses spiritual and ethical roots of the ecological crisis (par. 14), but also blames the development of science and technology as a threat of the destruction of natural environment (par. 11). The latter document deals not only with moral theology and ascetics but also involves liturgical theology and speaks about the sacramental relationship to Creation, which widens the theological potential of ecological matters; and 3.) the document on the Mission of the Church complying the theological triad of morality/ ascetics and sacraments with the dimension of the social and environmental responsibility of the Church (par. 10).

Despite the comparatively important place occupied by the ecologically related course in the university curriculum and the development of Orthodox networks and programs on ecological topics,

[168] Weart, Spencer R., The Discovery of Global Warming, London, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 14-15.
[169] See Фесенкова, Л., opt. cit., 146-147.

eco-theology is almost absent from theological education. However, ecological activities develop on the level of environmental activism. Three leaders of the green movement of Belarus are related to the Orthodox Church: Yaroslav Bekish, coordinator of the Green network of Belarus, is graduate of the Theological Faculty of EHU; Sergej Yushkevich, coordinator of program 'The Church and Environment' of the NGO Centre for Environmental Solutions, is graduate of the Institute of Theology of Belarusian State University; and Eugene Lobanov, secretary of the Youth Union of the Belarusian Orthodox Church, is ecologist and director of the Centre for Environmental Solutions. Hopefully, this church-related environmental activism will become leaven for the development of eco-theology in Belarus, both outside and inside the academia.

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