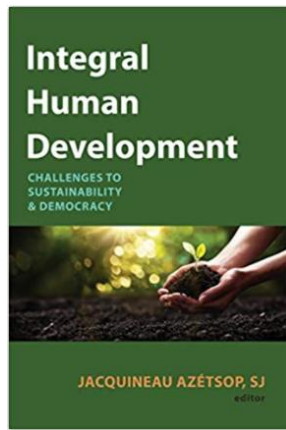


BOOK REVIEW

Integral Human Development. Challenges to Sustainability and Democracy

By Jacquineau Azétsop SJ (Editor)

Reviewed by Carlos Timaná Kure



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The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25: 40)

How do Christians, when undertaking any social initiative, ensure that they do the most possible good for others? Such an ethical question, one that embraces the practical behavior of any follower of Jesus Christ, requires deep reflection, based partly on one's own tradition and personal experiences, but also on the contributions from other religious and thought traditions. For example, there is much similarity in Abraham Kuyper's argument for "Soevereiniteit in eigen kring" (sphere sovereignty), as formulated in 1880 in his speech at the opening of the Free University of Amsterdam and the papal encyclical, *Laudato Si*, written by Pope Francis in 2015. Both traditions, Reformed and Roman Catholic, argue for social engagement and human development.

Integral Human Development is rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition and asks: what is integral human development and how can we achieve it in this third decade of the 21st century? That is the main question Editor Jacquineau Azétsop, SJ seeks to

address in its twelve chapters, most of which address some key aspect of Catholic Social Teaching. Each chapter has a different author, while Azétsop, SJ, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Pontifical Gregorian University, writes the introduction.

Chapters are organized into three main sections, the first providing an anthropological framework for integral human development in light of the most relevant challenges of our time. The second section focuses on the problems of integral human development with respect to democracy and governance. And the third section emphasizes the social, political, and cultural issues that make sustainability so difficult.

The impetus behind the book is to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Saint Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples)* in 1967. This seminal encyclical introduced the concept of development in the magisterium of the Catholic Church with the well-known formula "of each person and of the whole person" (14). The book revisits many of integral human development's key themes as they develop over time, up until the publication of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si* (Praise be to you). This most recent contribution to Catholic Social Thought's thinking on development argues for the inclusion of an integral ecology that invites everyone to a lifestyle that sustainable with the entirety of God's creation.

One of the most important elements the book addresses is the diversity of contexts in which integral human development can take place and the challenges it faces in each one of them. For example, considering some different national contexts, Silvana Sciarra addresses the relationship between governance and democracy in a sustainable European Union, Ludovic Lado, SJ presents an historical and conceptual analysis of governance, leadership, and social justice in Africa, and Anthony Dias, SJ wrestles with India's cultural diversity and the principal issues that affect political culture on the subcontinent.

Taking a more historical approach, Simona Beretta shows how the idea of development has

changed from the end of the Second World War up through the millennium's second decade. Fausto Gianfreda, SJ offers a conceptual analysis of how integral human development relates to integral ecology, focusing especially on the relationship between governance and sustainability. Jeffrey Sachs, Professor and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, presents linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals and integral human development. And Monica Romano builds off of previous fieldwork experiences to illustrate how rural poverty can be reduced and integral human development promoted through bottom-up efforts and grassroots institutions-building initiatives.

The most interesting contribution is by Stefano Zamagni, professor of Ethics and Markets at the University of Bologna. In his chapter on "The ethical challenge of convergent technologies," he argues for a model of integral human development based in a multiplicative relation rather than an additive one. For three key dimensions of integral human development, economic, socio-relational, and spiritual well-being, if one dimension comes to zero, the whole result comes to zero.

Zamagni also points to different kinds of new challenges for integral human development in the present and in the near future as the fourth Industrial Revolution unfolds. These challenges include transhumanism, the gradual transformation of the educator into the reduced role of a facilitator or mediator in self-learning processes, the transition from an "internet of things" to an "internet of beings," and cyber-physical systems, among others.

Overall, the book is provocative for those who want to delve into a Christian anthropology for the 21st century. This book will be a valuable contribution for those seeking to respond to various challenges in a society that is constantly changing and always demands thoughtful engagement illuminated by the gospel.

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