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New Evangelisation and Culture
The Christian Message and Its Necessity and the Ability of Dialogue in the
Postmodern Society

PhD Thesis

Short Version of the Dissertation

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The Structure of the Thesis:

In terms of structure the thesis, which examines the necessity of the Christian message and the ability of dialogue in the postmodern society, it is built up as follows.

It is to introduce the conceptual and historical definitions as the first larger unit. During the examination of culture and civilization as phenomena it mentions one of the antique concepts of culture, the cultural myth and philosophy of history of the German and Anglo-Saxon romanticism and finally the modern paradigm shift created by cultural anthropology. Looking at the Christian term of culture, it marginally deals with the history of the term, the way of approach from the large medieval unit of *cultura christiana* to today's papal proclamation. During the introduction of this long 'journey', great emphasis is placed on the fracture caused by modernity, the cultural concept of the Second Vatican Council and the ways of the contemporary papal approach.

In the second unit the thesis deals with the evangelization as a social phenomenon. It discusses the question of the dichotomy of Christianity and culture, the protection of faith (the concept, the short history and the changed dialogical role of apologetics), as well as atheist humanism (including its invokers, history, main trends, representatives and epistemological failure).

In the third unit it is to reflect on the Christian message in the dimension of today's culture. It deals with the current situation and attempts to provide answers. Firstly, it reviews the concept of postmodernism and the impact of postmodern attitude towards life on religious thinking. In this context does it discuss the issue of religion and secularization, the role of the church in postmodernism, the false spiritualisms of our time and finally the research and examinational aspects of sociology of religion.

In the second part it mentions the emphases of new theology in the 20th century from the *nouvelle théologie* to the great papal proclamation of the century (*Popolorum progressio, Ecclesia in Europa, Caritas in veritate*).

In the final fourth unit the thesis examines the possibilities for the postmodern society to transmit evangelisation. At first it overviews the 'cultural potentials' of Christianity and its specific mission in European culture in the present day, considering the theological aspects of cultural pluralism, religion as a possible tool of deficit replacement and the new aspects of apologetical considerations. It is to deal with the instruments of Christian testimony and the new evangelisation. Within this topic it discusses the community testimony, the individual and

personal testimony of the man of faith as well as the teaching of papal proclamation after the Second Vatican Council in light of new evangelisation.

The Status of Christianity Today

In terms of content the thesis attempts to reflect on the current situation that on one hand modernity deprived itself from the openness to transcendence, authentically stating for a long time, that humans ought to choose between making progress and the theistic interpretation of reality. On the other hand, in order to achieve its goals it excluded the ideological questions, sacrificing the idea and thought of the unity of knowledge. For the alleged freedom of society the modern state (while concentrating on the law) left answering the questions of the values and moral issues of living the right life to another. The subsystems of science and technology cannot help this vacuum of a world view, they are unable to provide meaningful answers to the emerging problems. This is neither their task, nor their objective. Modern culture is a broken culture; it no longer offers clear rooting and purpose which defines the meaning of life.

The secular state, which sets laicity and pluralism as a dogma, is unwilling to relinquish faith and intellect as 'either-or' alternatives, or it only does so at the cost of the relativisation of faith and of becoming one of the narratives of the divination of truth, or it goes to the hidden concealment of private sphere. An even more concerning interpretation might be that culture, the supported values of intelligence and progress stands on one side and tolerated religion, which cannot break away from the past stands on the other. This type of classification prompts that religion is opposed to the values of humanism and liberal democracy and therefore opposed to equality, freedom and the respect of intellect. It is the task of Christian believers to speak out against this and to remind people that our democracies and modern freedoms have grown out of Christianity and that our societies take their fundamentals of values from the Jewish-Christian tradition. As the thesis presents, without these traditions the state loses its roots and ultimately becomes unsuitable for its own foundation.

Theses:

- *in this vacuum of a world view, which is far more, than a moral or a jurisprudent problem (since it is about the daily experienced lack on the level of human existence), Christianity is able to provide the justification of the funds, it is able to bridge the yawning gap and it is able to provide canons and direction by showing Christian*

charity. Christianity is about preaching the gospel, by the education of cultures and the transfer of values it transforms our culture from the inside and shows the real face of humanism which saves humans from the dark tragedy of atheist humanism.

- in the postmodern, in the world of endless self-reflection our civilisation has come to the syncretic flourishing of replacements and, in parallel to this, to the growing demand for finding holds in the void and canons for its contemporaries. The postmodern syncretism (which says yes to religion, but no to God) is searching for happiness and the psychologised, aestheticized soul, rejecting all types of responsibility and bound. Breaking away from the divine order the organisation of our society has a depressing effect on humans after the initial charm of freedom, because the lonely task of making a concept weighs upon the individual and becomes an unbearable burden. *Neither scientific progress nor controlling more and more areas of human life provides answers to the question of what makes us human.*
- after the miserable failures of the triumphant *modernism* *Christian theology must face the postmodern reality* (which has become an everyday feeling from philosophical theorem) *at the individualistic level*. Cultural apologetics speaks about the gospel of Jesus Christ and presents him as the Messiah in such an environment in which the desire for answers and stability, the openness to the transcendent and to the spiritual is existent as a counter pole to the fear of decision, the revulsion at great narratives and the prioritisation of individual freedom. In this culture, which surmises and seeks the divinity, fears final commitment and questions absolute truth, the protection of Christian faith can approach people by the means of patience and dialogue, showing the gospel of Christ authentically (frequently from the first evangelisation).
- *religion (especially Christianity) can compensate the ideological deficit which developed in modernity and became an existential feeling in postmodern*. Our faith is able to provide real and lasting answers to the correctly formed questions which have been poorly answered by new gnosés and false spiritualism. Christianity can shed light on such human realities, for which culture has been seeking answers but could not find any on its own. The faithful church which testifies of Christ can reveal values for all of us by showing its teaching about covenant, sin and redemption. The theistic perspective offers such recommendations, reference points which view humans together with their freedom, putting them into a world which is to be built as a mission.
- *Christianity insists that religious communities should be considered as partners in the debates on the future and the organization of our societies*, otherwise the criterion of

justice and the basic pluralist attitude itself curtail as they stand with the public invisibility of religion. It engages in dialogue with secular institutions, with the representatives of other cultures and religions, but it does not give up on sharing the gospel (which it received as a gift) with others through the mission and religious education. In spite of the threatening cultural crisis due to the experiences of dechristianisation it asks the question again and again whether it is possible to set a Christian worldview to today's cultural world. It professes that it intends to enlighten every human with preaching the gospel to every creature with the glittering glow on the face of Christ. It wishes to become a sign in our world and, besides working on our communities, it does not forget about the mass of people who does not have a voice, since we live in a fragile society, where people are waiting for the gospel of Christ as a life-giving resource.