

# Bulletin 2017

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## **SEDOS BULLETIN 2017**

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## **Economy at the Service Mission**

Dear Readers,

The last SEDOS Bulletin was in preparation for the Residential Seminar on “Economy at the Service of Mission”, held in Nemi from 2 – 6 May 2017. It was a truly universal, intercultural Seminar, which gathered around 140 participants from all over the world.

The opening Liturgy, which centred on “Jesus feeds the multitude”, invited the participants to focus on Mission and enter into the movement and mind-set of sharing, service, communion and community.

This set the atmosphere of the Seminar, its aim being to address the issue of the Economy with a holistic approach; the management of resources at the service of Mission.

Each day, the input was followed by a time of personal reflection and group sharing in small language groups, enabling the participants to deepen the content and share their personal experiences. The groups were then invited to present their reflections in a creative way – power point, design, sketch, song, poem — highlighting the points they felt were essential to retain.

The Eucharist was a culminating moment, offering the harvest of the day to the Lord.

The topics addressed during the Seminary were:

- The cultural influence on dealing with money (panel with participants from the five continents)
- The influence of culture on financial management
- Ecology and sustainability in relation to finance
- Economy and communion
- Corruption, risks and good practices ...

- Implications of the transition from Religious Treasurer to Finance Manager.

The intercultural panel highlighted how much our cultural background, past experiences and the values we have received, shape us and influence our way of considering the economy and our approach to financial management. This is an important factor to bear in mind in international set-ups in which the opportunity to express different outlooks and mindsets can overcome misunderstandings, avoid rash judgements and generalisations, and help each one to understand the background of the other, and so foster greater communion and solidarity.

As each theme was developed the participants were enabled to focus on a different facet of the economy. The importance of “**stewardship**” was highlighted. We are stewards of assets that do not belong to us, but that have been entrusted to us to put at the service of the MISSION, hence the necessity for transparent management, rooted in the Gospel values.

On the final morning, each group was invited to harvest the fruit of the Seminar, by choosing one or two points that they felt were fundamental and that they would like to see developed further and implemented in their various contexts.

**SEDOS thanks ADVENIAT, MISEREOR, and PAX-Bank for sponsoring this Seminar very much!**

**Sr. Daphne Alphonso, MSOLA**  
Moderator of the Seminar



**Daphne Alphonso**

## OPENING ADDRESS

Carissimi fratelli e sorelle, vi saluto a nome del comitato esecutivo di SEDOS. Grazie per aver detto di sì a questo seminario-simposio dedicato al tema ***Economia al servizio della Missione***. Questo tema così attuale ha meritato l'attenzione del comitato esecutivo di SEDOS e di tutti voi e per questo ringraziamo P. Peter e tutto il gruppo. GRAZIE

Il tema è così importante per la vita quotidiana delle nostre comunità, dei nostri Istituti, delle congregazioni, della missione e della chiesa. D'altra parte non è un tema di oggi. Basta citare che nel maggio 2002 si è fatto un raduno all'assemblea del USG, con il titolo ***Economia e missione nella Vita Consacrata oggi*** (Assemblea USG - Maggio 2002) e se pensiamo quello che si è fatto solo tre anni fa e dopo è venuto fuori il documento dalla Congregazione per gli istituti di vita Consacrata e le società di vita Apostolica intitolato:

***“A chiunque fu dato molto, molto sarà chiesto; a chi fu affidato molto, sarà richiesto molto di più” (Lc 12, 48). Linee orientative per la gestione dei beni negli Istituti di vita consacrata e nelle Società di vita apostolica”***

Oggi nella vita della missione, della chiesa e delle nostre congregazioni e i nostri Istituti ci sono nuove e vecchie realtà che sfidano l'economia e la missione

1. La preparazione dei responsabili nell'economia
2. La richiesta di trasparenza finanziaria dalle autorità locali
3. L'eticità degli investimenti che si fanno
4. La gestione dei nostri investimenti
5. I fondi di solidarietà nelle nostre comunità e nei nostri Istituti
6. La condivisione con le necessità d'amministrazione
7. L'interculturalità
8. Le convenzioni con le chiese locali

Proprio quindici anni fa nel 2002 nel raduno del USG si diceva:

*“Senza dubbio vi sono elementi nuovi nella gestione economica delle Congregazioni e nel*

*contesto economico della società nella quale siamo immersi. Ne presentiamo alcuni:*

***Sono molte le situazioni nuove in merito all'acquisto, all'amministrazione e alla destinazione dei beni: la tendenza e la necessità della capitalizzazione, la separazione dei beni tra le comunità religiose e le opere, i cambiamenti nelle strutture amministrative, il ricorso a fondi pubblici (BOT, CCT), l'attenzione ai fondi pensione e le assicurazioni sulla salute, la riflessione sullo spazio che diamo alla Provvidenza, il nuovo rapporto tra economia e povertà, la trasparenza della gestione economica delle comunità religiose, delle opere, delle Province e degli Istituti, la diversificazione delle fonti delle nostre risorse, la creazione di fondi destinati agli aiuti, la gestione di portafogli, le nuove norme del diritto canonico (1983) relative all'amministrazione dei beni, la decentralizzazione dei processi decisionali che fa sì che in alcuni Istituti le decisioni sull'economia si prendano soprattutto a livello provinciale e l'ingerenza delle Amministrazioni generali sia molto limitata... Lo stesso fenomeno dell'inculturazione ha fatto sì che la realtà economica dei religiosi presenti grandi differenze da un posto all'altro; le culture influenzano sul modo di rapportarsi con il denaro e concretamente sul modo di gestirlo.”*** ***Economia e missione nella Vita Consacrata oggi*** (Assemblea USG - Maggio 2002, Numero 16. )

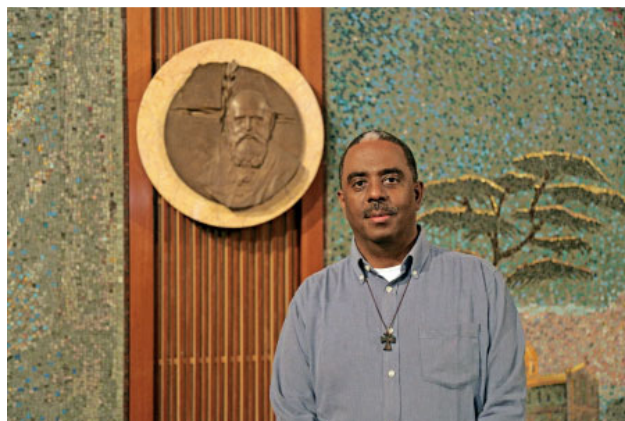
Per tutti noi, questi giorni sono particolarmente dedicati alla formazione permanente sul tema Economia e Missione. Parlando proprio della formazione tre anni fa si diceva così.

*“la Formazione:- La formazione alla dimensione economica in linea col proprio carisma è fondamentale affinché le scelte nella missione possano essere innovative e profetiche. In quasi tutti gli istituti gli aspetti economici sono affidati ad una persona, la figura dell'economo/a, a cui si attribuisce un compito tecnico: questo ha generato disinteresse nei confronti dell'economia all'interno delle comunità, favorendo una perdita di contatto con il costo della vita e le fatiche gestionali e provocando, nella realtà che ci circonda, una dicotomia tra economia e missione.*



*La formazione per gli economi, inoltre, non sempre è adeguata alle nuove istanze e al cambiamento di ruolo dell'eonomo nel passaggio da un'ottica di rendicontazione contabile a un'ottica gestionale. Pertanto: i Superiori Maggiori siano consapevoli che non tutte le tecniche di gestione corrispondono a principi evangelici e sono in accordo con l'insegnamento sociale della chiesa; – la formazione iniziale preveda percorsi di educazione alla dimensione economica e gestionale, ai costi della vita e della missione, come pure di responsabilizzazione nel vivere il voto di povertà nell'attuale contesto socio-economico; – la formazione degli economi sensibilizzi i fratelli e le sorelle ai principi evangelici che muovono l'azione economica e fornisca loro competenze tecniche per poter svolgere il servizio di economato nella linea della gestione; – tutti i membri dell'istituto siano consapevoli dell'importanza di abituarsi a lavorare con budget e preventivi, nella consapevolezza che questi riflettono i valori e lo spirito dell'Istituto, e li assumano come via pratica di formazione alla dimensione economica della missione e delle opere; – gli economi siano aiutati e accompagnati a vivere il loro ruolo come servizio e non come dominio, ad essere generosi e prevenienti nel garantire la disponibilità dei beni per l'apostolato e la missione;" (Linee orientative per la gestione dei beni negli Istituti di vita consacrata e nelle Società di vita apostolica).*

Ringrazio sin da subito tutti coloro che hanno collaborato affinché ci fossero questi giorni di simposio, l'ufficio esecutivo di SEDOS, i nostri conferenzieri, i nostri benefattori e tutti i partecipanti. GRAZIE



**P. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie, MCCJ**  
Sedos Vice-President

## Influence of culture on financial management

### 1. Pax-Bank

Pax-Bank is a bank that was founded in 1917 by Catholic priests in Cologne.

The intention was to establish a self-help institution in financial matters for the Catholic Church. That means, parishes, dioceses, Catholic schools, hospitals, charitable institutions and so on should be offered appropriate and reliable banking products. Today Pax-Bank offers its services in Germany and abroad.

Pax-Bank offers its products and services exclusively to Catholic institutions (entities) and their employees.

Given this fact that Pax-Bank is only addressing this target group, its products and services are tailored to the demands and needs of this clientele. For example, all of our mutual investment funds are considering ethical criteria, in the sense of Christian ideals.

Consequently Pax-Bank does not invest and does not offer investment products that invest into sectors like weapons industry<sup>1</sup>, abortion, contraceptives, pornography, gambling etc.

Pax-Bank does not only work for the Catholic Church but it is also in the property of the Catholic Church. Being a cooperative bank Pax-Bank has almost 2,000 cooperative members, owners, such as some German dioceses - the Archdiocese of Cologne is our biggest shareholder -, religious orders, parishes, Caritas organizations and so on.



Andreas Machnik

In Germany, Pax-Bank maintains seven branches, has approximately 165 employees and a total business volume of approximately 6 billion Euros. Pax-Bank is an officially licensed bank supervised by German and European authorities. However, Pax-Bank only is one out of five Catholic banks in Germany.

Why are there so many Church banks in Germany?

The explanation is simple: the Catholic Church in Germany is financed by a Church tax. Every member of the Catholic Church is to pay a certain percentage of its income tax to the Church. For 27 Catholic dioceses, that makes approximately 6 billion Euros per year. This is a huge advantage for the Catholic Church in Germany. However, this also leads to a very high responsibility to use and manage these funds in a sound way.

A high expectation that not always has been reached in Germany, as you know.

One of the reasons why the Catholic Church in Germany is maintaining its own banks - such as Pax-Bank – in my opinion is to keep knowledge in the field of banking and finances and to invest its funds in accordance with Catholic social teaching.

### 2. Financial Management

What is finance management and why is it relevant for the Church?

**Financial management** is a part of the business planning process of companies. As you know companies are producing goods or are delivering services with the aim to satisfy existing

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis: "It's also important how banks invest money. It must never happen that we are investing in weapons, for example. Never.", in "There is corruption in the Vatican. But I'm at peace.", Interview of Pope Francis by Antonio Spadaro, Corriere della Sera - International, 9.2.2017, [http://www.corriere.it/english/17\\_febbraio\\_09/pope-francis-there-is-corruption-the-vatican-but-m-at-peace-5f115a68-eeaa-11e6-b691-ec49635e90c8.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/english/17_febbraio_09/pope-francis-there-is-corruption-the-vatican-but-m-at-peace-5f115a68-eeaa-11e6-b691-ec49635e90c8.shtml)

human requirements, human needs (and of course to make profit from that).<sup>2</sup>

Or in the words of the “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church”: “In seeking to produce goods and services according to plans aimed at efficiency and at satisfying the interests of different parties involved, businesses create wealth for all of society, not just for the owners but also for the other subjects involved in their activity.

Besides this typically economic function, businesses also perform a social function, creating opportunities for meeting, cooperating and the enhancement the abilities of the people involved”.<sup>3</sup>

Whereas human requirements and needs exist in an unlimited number the resources, i.e. land, financial means and work force (human resources) that are required to produce the needed goods and services, are short, they are limited.

Therefore, the objective to realize prosperity and welfare can be realized only if all involved actors make use of the resources in the best possible way (in the economic process), thus if they avoid waste of resources.

The total of the planned and applied processes and procedures around the production means “financial resources” is called **financial management**.

#### **The main steps of financial management in the economic process are:**

- Financial analysis
- Financial planning (budgeting), because “failing to plan means planning to fail”

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<sup>2</sup> Gaudium et Spes: Nr. 63, “For man is the source, the center, and the purpose of all economic and social life.” Gaudium et Spes, Nr. 64: “The fundamental finality of this production is not the mere increase of products nor profit or control but rather the service of man, (...) with regard for the full range of his material needs and the demands of his intellectual, moral, spiritual, and religious life; this applies to every man whatsoever and to every group of men, of every race and of every part of the world. Consequently, economic activity is to be carried on (...) within the limits of the moral order.”

And the German Episcopal Conference wrote up: “The objective of economy is continuous work to establish those secure material preconditions that enable as well the individual as also the social structures to evolve decent / human developments”, Wirtschaftsordnung und Wirtschaftsethik – Richtlinien der katholischen Soziallehre“, Joseph Kardinal Höffner, Fulda, 23.9.1985

<sup>3</sup> No. 338, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, Città del Vaticano, 2004.

- Implementation of the financial plan
- Controlling<sup>4</sup>

**Financial equilibrium** is the indispensable objective of “financial management”. This objective is independent from the context, the economic system and the culture, thus where and in which circumstances takes place. That means wherever an organization is located, however the economic system or the cultural context looks like, if an organization runs out of funds, then it runs out of funds which consequentially means that it goes into insolvency and has to stop its activities.

What does finance management has to do with the Church?

The Church is requiring resources, such as financial means, human resources and land for the fulfillment of its mission for the benefit of the people entrusted to it. In this sense, the Church is also an economic actor, a service provider that is delivering a certain service.<sup>5</sup>

The better the Church achieves the objective to apply the limited given financial means targeted to its objectives, to manage its assets in a proper and sound way, the more opportunities can be gathered in fulfilling the missionary activities and to influence better on society in present times.

### **3. The culture of the Catholic Church in financial management**

The Catholic church is an organization that is working worldwide, it is a “global player”. In each country, the situation with its challenges and obstacles may be different, economically, politically, culturally and so on.

However, it is my personal experience that many challenges and issues in the field of economics and finances are the same for a Church

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<sup>4</sup> I.e. how the plan has been implemented.

<sup>5</sup> The Second Vatican Council made clear, that the Church is a complex reality with a divine and an earthly / a secular element. The property of temporal goods is justified, is legitimate, if they are used for the purposes of the church: divine worship, for the works of apostolate and of charity, for decent support of ministers (c. 222 § 1 CIC) and for the poor.

entity, independently from its location and independently from its legal status.

Generally speaking I do see a special culture of the Church in dealing with financial resources.

I do see three general characteristics:

**1.** Often there is **too much confidence** in people and that things will turn out well. Consequentially often there are **no or too few binding rules**.

Both together, too much confidence and too few binding rules, do have the consequence that there often is **no existing or functioning management control system**. All the more that control often is understood as a sign of mistrust and not as a measure to provide protection. But there is a true saying: "One can trust in God only - all other things have to be controlled".

This attitude in parts of the world, too much confidence and too few binding rules, maybe also has been caused by the fact that the Catholic Church in the Northern hemisphere has been providing financial support to projects in the poorer countries for decades and up to date.

A great sign of solidarity, but it is unfortunate that man is a creature that gets accustomed to a suchlike support very easily. The continuous support flowing from North/West to the South and East has inevitably influenced mentalities and behavior patterns, thus the culture of the involved organizations of the Church and persons over these many years.

Consequentially, for some recipients, money still seems to be falling from heaven. But this attitude has been stimulated by the donor countries:

Because it is a general finding in economics, that if goods or resources are offered for free or at a price below market price, an excess demand and thus waste of goods and resources is the inevitable result. Consequentially, if financial support is provided too generously by the donor countries, that means without any or without adequate service in return, a waste of financial resources is stimulated as well as the following behavior pattern that has to be avoided at best:

Why should a decision-maker of a Church entity not take over higher risks, for example for a certain building project, if experience shows that he will be allowed to harvest the fruit if the

project turns out to be successfully and in the inverse case, somebody else (e.g. a Catholic Aid Agency) will be paying for it? A suchlike behavior is called "moral hazard" in the economist's language. And if someone takes a position like this he will not see any reason or need to make his own efforts, to install financial management processes and binding rules, to make financial provisions, for example for the pensions of its priests or members, to draw up long-term plans or projections and to install a management control system.

If a system of control is permanently missing, this opens the gate to very serious problems, such as misuse of money and corruption.<sup>6</sup> But integrity, supervision and transparency are becoming more and more critical because the demands of civil society regarding a good and sound financial conduct of the Church are constantly increasing. The readiness of civil society to forgive any mistake of the Church has been decreasing rapidly.<sup>7</sup> This means that it is necessary to realize a clear system of authorizations<sup>8</sup>, internal control systems, clear structures, proper documentation and record keeping of financial transactions. All that has to be understood not as a sign of mistrust but as a commitment to work in full transparency, in compliance with canon and civil law. And in my opinion financial support should never be provided without service in return, whatever it will be, except in emergency cases. Financial support for so called income generating projects should be offered only by loans, because:

"something which has no price has no value" and therefore often is not handled with respect.

**2.** As I worked out, the overall objective of the administration of Church money and property must be to manage and employ the property and funds of the Church in the best possible way.

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<sup>6</sup> Pope Francis: "There is corruption in the Vatican" in "There is corruption in the Vatican. But I'm at peace.", Interview of Pope Francis by Antonio Spadaro, Corriere della Sera - International, 9.2.2017, [http://www.corriere.it/english/17\\_febbraio\\_09/pope-francis-there-is-corruption-the-vatican-but-m-at-peace-5f115a68-eeaa-11e6-b691-ec49635e90c8.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/english/17_febbraio_09/pope-francis-there-is-corruption-the-vatican-but-m-at-peace-5f115a68-eeaa-11e6-b691-ec49635e90c8.shtml)

<sup>7</sup> Consequentially, each and any mistake can substantially undermine the reputation of the Church.

<sup>8</sup> For example every bank has to implement the so-called "man-rule" by law.

A good practice in dealing with property and money **requires the necessary expertise**. It is unfortunate but within the Catholic Church, the **financial knowledge** is not evenly distributed and not of the same quality either. According to my experience, many mistakes about finances in the Church are not caused with intent. Often people just do not know how to do, are not experienced or even afraid to take over responsibility. This is not surprising because decision-makers in the Church are often not trained adequately in the field of economics and finance management.

Besides a better qualification and training of the clergy and religious, it is also important to admit to them the opportunity to practice, I mean to give them the possibility to make their own professional experience, thus to advance on the learning curve. Additionally to a better training of the religious in economics/management, the involvement of experienced laypersons could be of help.<sup>9</sup>

It is true, not in every place and not always, it is possible and reasonable to count on voluntary services of lay experts. And it is a platitude that “a good quality, here the service of lay experts, has its price”.<sup>10</sup> Consequentially, salaries paid by the church, have to be in line with the market. All the more, not paid or underpaid staff members may be tempted or may feel impelled to cover their living costs otherwise, which

could be of risk for the Church entity and which could undermine the mutual trust.<sup>11</sup>

In my opinion all this has something to do with an **unclear understanding of the role of money and economy in the Church**. Sometimes money is considered as something dirty or nasty.<sup>12</sup> What could be the reason for this unclear understanding? Well, you all know the following quotation from the Gospel:

“No one can serve two masters. (...) You cannot serve God and mammon.”<sup>13</sup>

This is the reason why the sole existence of a Catholic bank often is considered to be a contradiction to the gospel.

And this (negative) understanding of money often is the starting point of serious financial problems when financial means are entrusted to a third, a foreign person, a “good friend” or consultant who will discharge, relieve the Church entity from the duty to handle the “dirty money”, but who is not supervised accordingly and maybe is following more his own advantages.<sup>14</sup>

Maybe this negative understanding of money also is one of the reasons why staff members of the Church often are not remunerated adequately for their work force, which they are placing to the service of the church.

<sup>9</sup> “Given the complexity of the economic and financial issues with respect to the management of good and works, it is now almost impossible to do so without the collaboration of professionals (and) the laity.”, Guidelines for the administration of the assets in institutes of consecrated life and societies of Apostolic life, Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Vatican City, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> However, it is true, that financial expertise is not only depending on the good will to educate the decision-makers within the Church in financial knowledge, but also on the quality of the available structures. The quality of the structures does mainly depend on the financial resources that are available to realize them.

That means a Bishop or Superior will only be able to establish and equip a financial department with qualified experts, when he can afford this. That means, without sufficient financial means one cannot involve or educate experts and without experts one cannot achieve sufficient financial means. In some countries this seems to be a dilemma for the Church.

<sup>11</sup> For service-providers the quality and thus the attractiveness of their services mostly depend of the quality of its staff members. This means to my opinion, that the Church should set much more value on the quality and qualification of its lay employees as well as on their working conditions.

<sup>12</sup> But it is also true that greed, thoughtlessness and delusions of grandeur not only exist in banks, but sometimes also within the Church, especially for so-called “income generating projects”. Decision-makers of the Church sometimes tend to begin with much too big and thus unmanageable and risky projects. Here it is to ask if these “income generating projects” will ever generate income.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew, 6:24

<sup>14</sup> Pope Francis: “Sometimes religious congregations are accompanied by an administrator considered a “friend” who then leads them to financial ruin”, in “There is corruption in the Vatican. But I’m at peace.”, Interview of Pope Francis by Antonio Spadaro, Corriere della Sera - International, 9.2.2017, [http://www.corriere.it/english/17\\_febbraio\\_09/pope-francis-there-is-corruption-the-vatican-but-m-at-peace-5f115a68-eeaa-11e6-b691-ec49635e90c8.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/english/17_febbraio_09/pope-francis-there-is-corruption-the-vatican-but-m-at-peace-5f115a68-eeaa-11e6-b691-ec49635e90c8.shtml)



Only rarely money is considered as what it is: an instrument, a means to the end that simply is needed to “operate” the Church.

Or as St. Clement of Alexandria once asked: “How could we ever do good to our neighbor if none of us possessed anything?”<sup>15</sup> And of course money is not falling from heaven, someone had to work for it. Insofar it can be considered as “clustered work”. Consequentially money should not be demonized nor glamourized. **Money can be a good servant, but it is always a bad master!**<sup>16</sup>

Therefore the quotation from the Gospel “No one can serve two masters...” is correct in my opinion.

Also “profit” as such is not bad.

The “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church” formulates: “The social doctrine of the Church recognizes the proper role of profit as the first indicator that a business is functioning well: “when a firm makes a profit, this means that productive factors have been properly employed”. But this does not cloud her awareness of the fact that a business may show profit while not properly serving society”.<sup>17</sup>

The lack of knowledge and experience and an unclear understanding of money, profit and economy in my opinion are reasons for many misunderstandings and wrong decisions.

By the way: In his interview Antonio Spadaro asked the Pope: “Holy Father, as in the Church, also religious communities are committed to addressing cases of sexual and financial abuse with transparency and determination. (...) What measures can you suggest to prevent such scandals in our congregations?”.<sup>18</sup> And Pope Francis answered: “Let me say however that the Lord strongly wants consecrated people to be poor. When they are not, the Lord sends a bursar who leads the Institute to bankruptcy! (...) However, the fundamental criterion for a bursar is not to be personally attached to the money”.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> No. 329, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, Città del Vaticano, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> “L’argent peut être un bon serviteur, mais il lest toujours un mauvais maître”. Philippe Cardinal Barbarin, “Les religions et l’Argent” dans “Challenges - le news de l’économie”, Septembre 2015.

<sup>17</sup> No. 340, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, Città del Vaticano, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> “There is corruption in the Vatican. But I’m at peace.”, Interview of Pope Francis by Antonio Spadaro, Corriere della Sera - International, 9.2.2017.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

One example for the different perspective of an economist and a theologian:

You all know the legend of St. Martin. Born in Hungary he later moved to France. If you want an early wanderer between East and West. Well, you all know what happened. He was riding on a horse in a cold winter night when he saw the poor man sitting in the snow. And he cut his coat in 2 pieces and gave half of it to the poor man.

It is true that St. Martin did not have the time to work out a business plan how to help the poor man at the best because it was an emergency case. However, an economist would say that St. Martin maybe did not take the best decision. Because after this both were suffering from the cold because each of them only had half of a coat.

What would he do in a world and economy of today? Maybe he would provide the poor man with a voucher for the next Caritas store where he can get a whole coat for his own. Or, especially in developing countries, he would grant a microfinance loan to the poor man in order that he can buy the necessary material to produce a coat on his own. Additionally he would advise him before to learn how to produce a coat, not only for him but also for other poor people, thus to start a small business. From this business idea other people could take profit.

In some countries resp. church organizations there is a very strong, sometimes maybe **too strong hierarchy in the Church**. Consequentially subjects are not discussed in an open atmosphere, there is no struggle for the best solution and **no appropriate system of checks and balances**. In my opinion this can cause serious problems, at least in the field of economics and finances, where decisions have to be taken very often under time pressure, decisions, that do have a big impact on the organization, and where different scenarios have to be discussed and valued. I think that nowadays many decisions and the way to these decisions have to be explained and justified, internally, to avoid a lack of motivation within the organization, but sometimes also externally, i.e. to the public.

There is a danger that leaders, in the Church or other organizations, whose decisions are never scrutinized will become someday advice resistant.

To avoid that, a management system that is based on the principle of collective responsibility could be of some help, at least for certain decisions (so for example in an investment committee). I do not know if that has something to do with a too strong hierarchy, but it is my experience that if a mistake occurs in the Church, for example, money has been lost due to abuse of power or lack of control, the decisions-

makers are often not held responsible. That means no sanctions will be taken in the case of misuse of money (resources) or power.

What I miss is a **culture** to go along with mistakes and errors in a way that enables the Church to learn from its mistakes and thus to advance on the learning curve. In my opinion, it is not possible to learn if one sweeps mistakes and their reasons under the carpet. In my opinion this requires a less strong hierarchy and more diffusion of power.

#### 4. Questions to be discussed

1. Is man a creature that is “coined” by his culture his whole life? Or is it possible to change his culture, to be educated in a foreign culture, thus to be inculturated in another culture? So for example an African, Asian or Latin-American priest or religious who is a member of the leadership team of an international congregation.

2. People are affected by their culture. And culture does have an enormous influence on the development of an organization such as the Church and of a country as a whole.<sup>20</sup> From

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<sup>20</sup> There are also other opinions, such as in “Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty”, Daron Acemoglu, James A. Robinson, 2013: “Why Nations Fail answers the question that has stumped the experts for centuries: Why are some nations rich and others poor, divided by wealth and poverty, health and sickness, food and famine? Is it culture, the weather, geography? Perhaps ignorance of what the right policies are? Simply, no. None of these factors is either definitive or destiny. (...) Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson conclusively show that it is man-made political and economic institutions that underlie economic success (or lack of it).”, <https://www.amazon.de/Why-Nations-Fail-Origins-Prosperity/dp/0307719219>

“Acemoglu and Robinson's major thesis is that economic prosperity depends above all on the inclusiveness of economic and political institutions. Institutions are “inclusive” when many people have a say in political decision-making, as opposed to cases where a small group of people control political institutions and are unwilling to change. They argue that a functioning democratic and pluralistic state guarantees the rule of law. The authors also argue that inclusive institutions promote economic prosperity because they provide an incentive structure that allows talents and creative ideas to be rewarded.

In contrast, the authors describe “extractive” institutions as ones that permit the elite to rule over and exploit others.

time to time there are cases, in which African leaders of the Catholic Church show a different, a special understanding of and behavior with financial recourses entrusted to them. Money is being used for their own interests, such as their families or tribes, there is nepotism, thus corruption and so on. One reason for that could be that for example Africans grow up in countries where corruption happens much more often.

Recently the German Minister of the “Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development”, Dr. Gerd Muller, Christian Democratic Party, launched a so called “Marshall plan with Africa”. At an international conference he said: “When an African woman earns 100 dollars...she brings 90 dollars home. When an African man earns 100 dollars...what does he bring home? 30 dollars. You can be sure of what he uses the rest for: alcohol, boozing, drugs, women of course”<sup>21</sup>. Since then Muller has said he was sorry for his “not very nuanced” comments. However, it seems to be true that the behavior of women in dealing with economy and finances is different from men and that it would be better to entrust finance management to women.<sup>22</sup>

And only some weeks ago I was talking to two African members of an international congregation here in Rome. Both were somehow in the leadership team. I asked them if they feel more bound to their congregation or to their families and quick as a shot they answered “to our families”, and expressively this also includes financial help to their families as they said. Furthermore the understanding of the term “family” is much broader in Africa than for example in Europe.

What is the general understanding of economy, finance and money in developing coun-

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Nations with a history of extractive institutions have not prospered, they argue, because entrepreneurs and citizens have less incentive to invest and innovate. One reason is that ruling elites are afraid of creative destruction—a term coined by Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter—the ongoing process of annihilating old and bad institutions while generating new and good ones. Creative destruction would fabricate new groups which competing for power against ruling elites, who would lose their exclusive access to a country's economic and financial resources.”, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Why\\_Nations\\_Fail#Content](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Why_Nations_Fail#Content)

<sup>21</sup> [www.alafrica.com/stories/201611160150.html](http://www.alafrica.com/stories/201611160150.html) .

<sup>22</sup> “Investing in girls is the right thing to do. It is also the smart thing to do.” Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director, World Bank, [http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/BIAAG\\_Summary\\_ENGLISH\\_lo\\_resolution.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/BIAAG_Summary_ENGLISH_lo_resolution.pdf); .

And obviously microfinance institutes (MFI) trust more in women than in men.

tries, for example in Africa? What is the understanding of the terms of family and tribe in the “African cultures” and the impact on economy, finances and maybe Church finances? What is the role of women in this context?

3. In the field of economics, finance and money, we all know what the “Western and European culture” stands for.

Well, I would say in general, because despite of a general common understanding in Europe and the Western world we also know that the national understanding, the national cultural identity in economics can be quite different as we for example experienced during the financial crises.<sup>23</sup>

For example the attitudes of European governments towards their spending policies. Please think of the deep differences during the ongoing financial crisis, between a so called Northern European approach of “austerity” where the state only plays a very weak role, represented by countries such as the Netherlands, Germany or Austria, and a Southern European approach of “deficit spending” where a stronger role of the state is desired, represented for example by Italy.

However, the overall concept of the “Western or European culture of economy” is the same in Europe and has been built on the idea of **Adam Smith** of a free market economy.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Also its national strengths (success factors) and weaknesses. For example for Germany David Audretsch and Erik Lehmann see the following culture, the following success factors: 1. Small and medium-sized companies (“Mittelstand”) with very loyal employees and excellent work ethics 2. Professional and academic training 3. Location and regulatory policy (e.g. knowledge of foreign languages) 4. Infrastructure (Highways, trains, cooperative banks), creativity and structuredness 5. Diversity 6. Balanced relation of productivity and labor costs 7. “It is fun to be German” (optimism); in “The seven secrets of Germany. Economic Resilience in an Era of Global Turbulence”, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016.

<sup>24</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam\\_Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_Smith):

“Adam Smith FRSA (16 June 1723 NS (5 June 1723 OS) – 17 July 1790) was a Scottish economist, philosopher, and author. He was a moral philosopher, a pioneer of political economy, and was a key figure during the Scottish Enlightenment era. He is best known for two classic works: The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759), and An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776). The latter, usually abbreviated as The Wealth of Nations, is considered his magnum opus and the first modern work of economics.

According to this, market economy is driven by **division of labor**, **self-interest** and **competition**. Together with some institutional preconditions (e.g. property rights) market economy enables efficient markets and thus wealth of a nation and overcoming mass poverty.

A real free market economy, a laissez-faire economic liberalism, cannot be the target to overcome mass poverty but a so called **socially orientated market economy**, as it is known for example in Germany. The socially orientated economy was strongly inspired by Catholic social teaching and is considered to be a third way between liberalism and socialist economics.<sup>25</sup>

Compared to Adam Smith, the famous economist Joseph Schumpeter (1883 - 1950) saw the requirements for economic growth more in **innovations**, “**creative destruction**”<sup>26</sup> and the

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Smith studied social philosophy at the University of Glasgow and at Balliol College, Oxford, where he was one of the first students to benefit from scholarships set up by fellow Scot, John Snell. After graduating, he delivered a successful series of public lectures at Edinburgh, leading him to collaborate with David Hume during the Scottish Enlightenment. Smith obtained a professorship at Glasgow teaching moral philosophy, and during this time he wrote and published The Theory of Moral Sentiments. In his later life, he took a tutoring position that allowed him to travel throughout Europe, where he met other intellectual leaders of his day.

Smith laid the foundations of classical free market economic theory. The Wealth of Nations was a precursor to the modern academic discipline of economics. In this and other works, he developed the concept of division of labour, and expounded upon how rational self-interest and competition can lead to economic prosperity.

<sup>25</sup> “The social market contains central elements of a free market economy such as private property, free foreign trade, exchange of goods, and free formation of prices. In contrast to the situation in a free market economy, the state is not passive and actively implements regulative measures. Some elements, such as pension insurance, universal health care and unemployment insurance are part of the social security system. These insurances are funded by a combination of employee contributions, employer contributions and government subsidies. The social policy objectives include employment, housing and education policies, as well as a socio-politically motivated balancing of the distribution of income growth. In addition, there are provisions to restrain the free market (e.g., anti-trust code, laws against the abuse of market power, etc.). These elements help to diminish many of the occurring problems of a free market economy.”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_market\\_economy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_market_economy)

<sup>26</sup> Creative destruction (German: “schöpferische Zerstörung”), sometimes known as Schumpeter's gale, is a concept in economics which since the 1950s has become

“**culture**” of the “intellectual elite”. In this context, mentioned cultural requirements are “openness for critical thinking” instead of “exaggerated reverence for the wisdom of ancestors” and the hope to reach economic progress through **accumulation of exploitable knowledge**.

That means, which distinguish the Western/ European culture from other highly sophisticated cultures are **openness**, the **idea of progress** and the **development of natural sciences**.<sup>27</sup>

Can we at all expect that Western belief in the advantages of market economy and its success factors such as division of labor, self-interest, competition, openness for critical thinking (in socially orientated system also among others: academic and professional education/training for everyone, social security system, distribution of wealth among all members of society, fair, i.e. progressive taxation system etc.) will be ever accepted in cultures and its elites as we find them in the global south? And what about the Church as an organization and economic actor with an apparently own culture in the field of economics?<sup>28</sup> And if yes, what is the realistic

time frame knowing that in Europe we needed more than 200 years from Adam Smith till today? We all know that the role of Africans in the Catholic Church will continue to increase. Whereas in the Western hemisphere we suffer from lacking vocations, Africa enjoys to continue to have plenty of them. Therefore it is only a question of time that African Sisters and Fathers will get into leadership teams in religious institutes, all the more that members from the West are getting overaged.

What could be the response to members of religious communities that are afraid of that, that are afraid that members from the global south will become responsible for their patrimony? And what can be done that such a shift from the North to the South can be managed better?

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most readily identified with the Austrian American economist Joseph Schumpeter who derived it from the work of Karl Marx and popularized it as a theory of economic innovation and the business cycle. According to Schumpeter, the "gale of creative destruction" describes the “process of industrial mutation that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative\\_destruction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_destruction);

The Circular letter „Guidelines for the Administration of the Assets in Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life“ formulates: “To be attentive to the sustainability of the different works; if not assured, review the works”. “Determine, which (...) activities should continue, which should be eliminated or modified”, Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. Vatican City, 2014

<sup>27</sup> Joel Mokyr: “A culture of growth. The Origin of the Modern Economy.” Princeton: Princeton University Press 2016, and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, “Kultur und Wohlstand – Warum der Westen einzigartig ist“, 10.4.2017.

<sup>28</sup> By the way: I think that the Church and its values still have a lot to contribute to the proper functioning of free market economy and thus the welfare of the people.

To give you 3 examples: You all heard about the scandal of Volkswagen. What it is about? It is just about the 8th commandment “do not lie”. If the managers of

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Volkswagen would have paid more respect to that commandment the company would not have run into these troubles. Another example is the financial crisis. As you recall, it started with these toxic securities that were sold at inflated prices. Nobody, neither the involved banks nor the rating agencies told the truth about the poor quality of these securities. They just lied. Or the 7th commandment “do not steal” which is about private property rights. Private property rights are the precondition for the proper functioning of market economy. Because “who will sow or plant if others come first at harvest?” This was the major problem under communism. So Christian values are decisive, they are most important for the welfare of a society.



Obiora Ike

## Reflections on Culture

*“People who do not look to posterity and their ancestors cannot comfortably look forward to prosperity and their children’s future”* (100 year old man, Ozor Neife Ozoike, from Umana Ndiagu, Nigeria)

### 1. The debate and confusion around culture

Today we cannot remain unconcerned by the debate that is going on around us on culture, on our cultural heritage; on the church and culture and the adaptation of Christianity to indigenous cultures; on the relationship between religions, cultures and civilizations; on whether or not Christianity as we got it from Europe is trans-culturally viable; on whether or not missionary work as we have known it is still justifiable.

There is a lot of confusion in the present times in our society because of the lack of orientation and certainty as to what constitutes culture or even the concept of the Common Good. This situation mirrors the lack of a definite and sure guide for people’s lives, lifestyles and social destiny as to what is useful, correct, ethically imperative, humanly elevating, culturally acceptable and socially unifying. There were times, understood as “in those days” when people were sure of their beliefs and the customs of their ancestors and motherland. The traditional answers in the present times seem redundant. Thorny questions occur with ever increasing frequency. Somehow in many societies, the vocabulary of Right and Wrong, of Duty and Neglect of Duty; of Sin and Shame; of Good and Bad has become difficult to use.



Obiora Ike

Our age is confronted with decisions which previous generations did not really have to face. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that many people have rejected the traditional sources of ethical illumination. Today, the old certainties are virtually gone. Shame is seemingly gone. Truth is somehow not fashionable. Integrity and credibility are strange words for some. Dignity and decency are no more very clear and living in deceit and debauchery happen to be relatively fashionable, albeit for just a short period because truth and its search is unquenchable in the human soul and psyche, no matter what pretence any person may try to make of it.

### 2. Culture matters in the realm of meaning

History records show that Culture matters and the relationship and interaction of the world of human beings to transcendence, translates to the search for meaning and happiness which all people seek. It also translates to lasting values which concern God and the metaphysical beyond the physical; the noumenon beyond the phenomenon; the Kairos beyond the Kronos.

Several questions emerge and some people say: Culture is a thing of the past. Yet the question needs to be asked and it is this:

“In the light of the moral diversity and the proliferation of moral languages issuing from our plural and global world, what must remain central to humanity after the fact of relativity is acknowledged. Nothing?, Something? What could it be? Could legislation cover these ambiguities in life? Are any ethical principles universally applicable and what are they? How do we cope with the contending characteristics of our



age? its ethical pluralisms; its rapid social change, its linguistic distrust of centralistic claims?

This is the challenge young people face as they leave home for the first time from their parents in one week or semester in school. They imbibe the new slogans, lose their roots and end up neither being European nor being authentically African, like the bird called "Usu", (Bat). Some join bad company and lose "direction".

### 3. The philosophical definitions and concept of Culture

Let me begin with some analysis and interpretation of the philosophical hermeneutics concerning the concept of culture. In his "Notes Towards the Definition of Culture", the Nobel-prizewinning poet and literary critic T.S. Eliot asserts that the term culture has three different associations according to whether we have in mind the development of an individual, of a group of class or of a whole society. As my teacher Prof Monsignor Theophilus Okere has written in his book "Culture and Religion" (1974; pp 9ff), "when we talk of culture here, we mean it first and foremost, but not exclusively, in the sense it is understood by cultural anthropologies".

In this meaning, culture is the way of life of a people. It includes the sum total of their mannerisms, beliefs, music, clothing, religions, language, behavioural patterns, food, housing, agricultural methods including their traditional behaviour in a broad sense, including their ideas, arts and artefacts. It is the social heritage which an individual acquires from his or her group and which heritage classifies a people as belonging to a group. Culture makes it possible for us to distinguish between a Chinese, a Briton, a Swede, Russian, American, German, Frenchman, Igbo, Yoruba and Idoma to mention but a few.

Culture "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitude towards life" (Religion as a cultural system, C. Geertz in *Anthropological approach to the study of religion*, p. 3).

Culture in contra-distinction from nature is that part of his milieu which man himself created. Why we must eat in order to survive, is a question of nature. Why the Igbo fulfils this duty with "Ukwa" and "Okwuru" and the English with "Bread and Tea", is a matter of Culture.

*"That man must enter into marriage with woman is altogether natural. But that an Englishman thinks monogamy the only reasonable and normal type of marriage whereas an Igbo-man thinks polygamy just as reasonable and normal, if not more so this is a matter of culture, which always means: this is the way they have been brought up. Culture is a way of thinking, feeling, believing. It is the accumulated experience, knowledge and lore of social group stored, for future use, in the memories of men, in books, in objects"* (Okere, T; Ibid).

Since culture is a way of life, the form in which culture is expressed, its symbols are the objectivities of the life of a people. Though incarnate in symbols and the various elements of culture the very heterogeneous character of these element-social organization, art, religion, ideas, etc, show that the idea of culture is an abstraction, a working hypothesis like evolution or relativity. No one can see them but they help explain observable facts. Culture is therefore a theory designed to yoke together these heterogeneous elements into one common system, purposely vaguely described as a people's way of life. Culture is distinct from society. It is society's way of life. Hence society can remain when its culture has changed. culture is specifically human. It is learned and not instinctive. It varies from group to group and from one period of time to another within a single group. Customs, beliefs, social structures and institutions can change.

In the functionalist view, all these elements of culture are closely integrated and any change will involve a dislocation of their delicate equilibrium, a modification of the entire culture.

Though cultures are continuously changing, they are essentially conservative. There is no change except on continuity. No African culture

has remained totally unaffected by European contact (Bascom and Herskovits: continuity and change in African culture) but there is none which has entirely given way before it. Here in Igbo land, we have incorporated foreign elements like tobacco, cassava and maize, the school, the motor car.

But native law and custom exists side by side with European law, just as European medical practice exists parallel to indigenous medicine. Polygamy is still competing with monogamy and traditional religion coexist with Christianity, often in the same individual but especially in society at large where religious pluralism has emerged as a social novum. These examples show not only that all change is in continuity, but also that most changes are selective.

And rather than substitute a new item for an old one, cultures often prefer to add the new one to the old. Akwete cloth has not been chased out of the market by European made cloths, nor have Awka blacksmith gone out of market because of the influx of European made ironware. Our people reckon their week according to both the European and native calendars (Afor, Nkwo, Eke, Oye) and many of us have learned to enjoy the music of Beethoven without growing any less enthusiastic of Atilogwu, Ijele dance, Egwu Ukwu and Nwokorobia.

#### 4. Culture and Development

Culture change is a principle of cultural development. For culture, the law also holds that “unless a grain of seed dies, itself remains alone, but if it dies, it generates new life” (Wisdom words of Jesus Christ in the Bible).

Development means self-unfolding of what is contained in germ, and who would deny that some cultures need this development? For too long, African cultures remained alone and isolated, merely identical with themselves, and cut off from the main stream of world cultural development. They could be called culture only in the most general sense of the term, the way of life of a people. Thus invited though without justifying it, is the terrible indictment of Hegel on Africa, the continent, he said, where the spirit has not yet become conscious of itself.

Of Africa, Hegel writes:

*“It has no historical interest of its own except that we see man here living in barbarism, in savagery and where he does not yet furnish any ingredient of culture. Africa is, as far back as history goes, separated from the rest of the world.”*

*It is El Dorado closed in upon itself, the land of children, which lying on the antipodes of the daylight of conscious history is hidden in the black colour of the night”*

(*Vernunft in der Geschichte*, p. 214).

Here Hegel is of course a philosophical racist but I used this rather brutal example to introduce another meaning of the concept of culture. Here we associate it with conscious development. But to think of culture in terms of development is to think of culture with a richer meaning, beyond the merely descriptive and qualitative neutral “way of life of a people”. It is culture in the original sense of culture, colo- colere- colui- cultum to cultivate, to till; to tend from where we have agriculture and horticulture. Culture here involves a conscious effort, a common pursuit, a forwards march towards higher values, towards more refinement. It is this sense that Herbert Marcuse defines culture as:

*“A humanizing process, characterized by the collective effort to preserve human life, pacify the struggle for existence or hold it down to controllable limits, secure a productive organization of society, develop the spiritual capabilities of man and minimize and sublimate aggression, brute force and misery”.* (H. Marcuse: *Kultur Und Gesellschaft II*, p. 148).

Here culture comes very near to being synonymous with civilization. In this sense, culture is guided by development, a conscious collective effort, a productive appropriation of one’s social heritage, with a view to refining, to humanizing it.

Culture is a project and as such is not merely what it actually is, a people’s way of life, but also what it can become, the level it can attain, its potentialities yet to be developed. To pursue the vocation to culture is to heed the injunction of Goethe:

*“Mensch werde was Du schon bist”. Man become what you already are!* (quoted in M. Heidegger: *Sein und Zeit*, p. 145).

It is in the light of such cultural development that cultural change is understandable and desirable. If it were so understood, there would be less lamentation and wailing as “things fall apart”, since this can be prelude to a stronger and higher synthesis.

## **5. Absence of culture leads to the denial of Truth**

In an earlier work I wrote on the theme of “Development is People; Business is Ethics” (Ike/Nnoli 2003, p. 95), I stated that a source of complication in these discussions around culture is the new global and pluralistic environment. We live in a meeting point and global village environment.

As Henry Novak, the American Christian theologian and Founder of the Enterprise Institute has severally written and argued, to undermine culture is to undermine truth and therefore perform the work of tyrants, In his Templeton address Novak argues that the arguments teachers give the young today are completely misleading, such as:

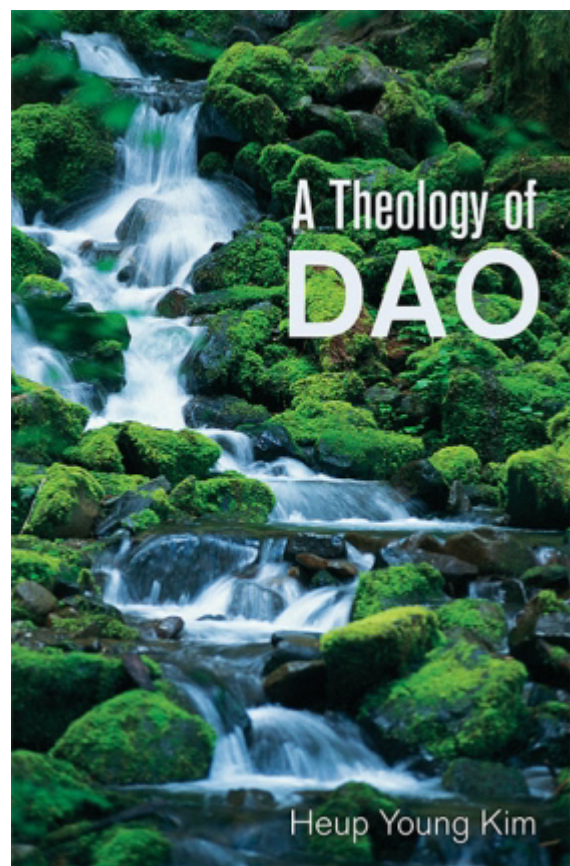
*“there is no such thing as truth, they teach even the little children at school. Truth is bondage. Believe what seems right to you. There are many truths as there are individuals. Follow your feelings. Do as you please. Get in touch with yourself. Do what feels comfortable. This is the language of the times and they speak thus who prepare the jails for the young. Even under conditions of nihilism, Fidelity to Truth is better than cowardice. If we remain faithful to the truth, inner liberty is obtained. Vulgar relativism and its subjective culture so undermines the culture of liberty and knowledge that it is preferable to take a position on an issue than to remain neutral. Even for those unsure whether there is a God or not, a truth is different from a lie”.*

In conclusion, Novak notes that torturers can twist your mind, even reduce you to a vegetable, but as long as you retain the ability to say yes or no as truth alone commands, they cannot own

you. To obey truth is to be free, and in certain extremities, nothing is dearer to the tormented mind, nothing more vital to the survival of self-respect, nothing so important to one’s sense of remaining a worthy human being, of being no one’s log, part of no one’s machine, and register to death against the kingdom of lies – nothing is so dear as to hold to the truth.

These reflections correspond to the philosophical consequences of cultural debates, their denial, acceptance or adherence. It is therefore important for humanity in international dialogue and debates to engage on a dialogue around culture for CULTURE MATTERS.

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# **“Economy and Mission” as solidarity and stewardship in financial management**

## **An African point of view**

### **1. Why this topic?**

Management of the resources of congregations and their assets are not normally the first things religious think of in the context of their piety, mission and the practice of their spiritual lives as religious brothers and sisters. So why focus on “Economy and Mission”? The question can be put in another manner: How are you managing the responsibilities entrusted to you as a religious at every level of responsibility? And since some of these assets are material, a clear answer necessarily links the topic of Economy and Mission. In view of global climate and socio-political and economic challenges, there is a worldwide concern about the care for our resources and for the environment. People are thinking of the future in ways that was some years earlier presumed as certain. Religious life is moving from the global North to the global South after several years of dominance and presence of the centres of religion and political dominance in these centres. Just like a well that watered other countries and farms in the past, it is clear that the North must let go so that the younger mission countries find their own sources, resources, and personnel to thrive and grow new fruits. It is a difficult task to let go, therefore several discussions are happening about the Future and the responsibility all of us have for this Future. Pope Francis has called all to become Good Stewards. The simplest way to formulate this question is to ask the following to the brothers and sisters: “How do you start your day? Do you have any plans? Or do you just wake up in the morning and watch the day pass by, waiting for things to happen? And the Religious are specially invited to raise awareness

about the importance of good stewardship, become better stewards in areas of competence and serve Christ better.

Let it be said - we live in a reality that is often far removed from our ideal. Worldwide, cases of corruption abound. Poverty increases alongside wealth and many die young. There is constant news on abuse of resources and its depletion; of lack of transparency and the growth of nepotism, mediocrity, unethical dealings, or just indifference to the world around us. What is our role in all of this? How do we bring this reality closer in view of rising depletion of resources, climatic changes, disasters such as floods and acid rains, global warming and lack of access to required knowledge and adequate funds to make things better? How do we build bridges across cultures, religions, sectors to ensure stewardship as a Gospel value? And the bottom line is this: Building a bridge from the reality to the ideal requires a plan. And Sedos is invited to contribute to this plan.

Permit me to begin this reflection with a statement made by the Blessed Michael Eneja, Bishop of Enugu 1978 -1996 who addressed religious and priests in Nigeria with these words: *“We as individuals and groups need to be efficient in financial management. Our system must be clear, orderly and transparent. Our reports must be punctual and regular. One must not be satisfied that one is honest to oneself. This is no longer enough. One must also prove that one is honest before others and the Law. It is not just the casual statement “it is between God and me”. In these days, it is the question of “between others, the Law and me”.*

Church stewardship on financial management is a dimension of integral Development. It is the relevance of the link between body, mind and soul and a call to faithful followership.

The Vatican's Guidelines for **Management of Ecclesial Goods of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life** given by Pope Francis delivers the key to the discussions around the topic of Economy and Mission. This was already a topic of much relevance as congregations discuss the very important implication of the Guidelines. Thus we read of the Brothers of Mercy for example: *"When we discuss finances, we talk about our lifestyle and the way of living together and therefore, in particular about the credibility of our religious life. And at the same time we reflect upon the way in which we establish our mission ... the importance of our vocation to be close to the poor"* (Brother Lawrence Obiko, Superior General of the Brothers CMM, at the International Meeting Accountable Brothers – Good Stewardship in Brothers CMM, October 9<sup>th</sup> to 21, 2016; ISSN, 1877-6256, p.4).

The following reflections on the subject of Solidarity and Stewardship in the financial management of the Resources put into our care come from an African cultural point of view.

### **1. Stewardship is responsibility**

The goods of this world have been given to humankind for use and responsible stewardship/management. This mandate to stewardship is grounded in sound reason and common sense and is justified in all cultures, traditions and religions. For Christians this mandate is at the origin of creation in the Book of Genesis chapter 1: *"subdue the earth and fill the earth"*.

True stewardship therefore involves and revolves around the following themes with implications for:

- Preservation of the TRUST delegated to humankind;
- The guarantee of JUSTICE in the Distribution of Goods;
- The promotion of the Common Good;
- Search for the restoration of HUMAN DIGNITY;

- The practice of the Principles of Subsidiarity, solidarity and accountable lifestyles;

The good Shepherd has taught us : "not only in this life, but even in the next shall each person be held accountable for deeds, misdeeds and omissions (Mathew chapter 25). And this portion shows that the accountability shall be based on Truth, Justice and Charity.

### **2. Poverty is not good determined – It is a man-made problem**

Nature has blessed creation with abundance. Scientists, philosophers, economists and simple people know this. There are plenty of resources, natural, human, spiritual, technical and mental to take care of all. But there is unfortunately, the equivalent amount of greed, wickedness, sin and powerful agents who do not wish for a world for everybody. Therefore, we need a new partnership in development co-operation where a coalition is built around those who believe that poverty is not God determined. We are challenged to take a stand on the side of on-going struggle for the eradication of the structures of disease, hunger and ignorance. These calls for acceptance of principles of Solidarity with those in need; promotion of the thinking around subsidiarity which is self – help; responsible management of available resources to avoid waste and recycle them; rejection of lifestyles that are superfluous and mundane to our vocation and identity.

### **3. Project planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluating is the science of development and stewardship**

Failing to plan is planning to fail. This is an old adage and is useful for each planning group. The Lord teaches us in the Gospel of Luke 14. 28 -33 to plan and budget properly. The adage is "Look before you Leap". Planning is an intellectual process, the conscious determination of courses of action, the basing of decisions on purpose, facts, actual situations and considered estimates. Planning could be ad-hoc, short term, medium term, or even long term



depending on the project and problem in view. The advantages of planning are many including offsetting uncertainty, minimising costs or wastes, facilitating control, keeping objectives in view. Good planning under normal circumstances leads to successful results.

#### 4. **Greater coordination and collaboration as communication skill**

Co-ordination calls for mutual proper assessment of targets and goals aligned to expected results. The leaders ensure communication and knowledge of skills, respect, trust, understanding and team work among the stakeholders of a project. Faithful to our mandate to witness to Jesus Christ in our lives and in His Church, the responsibility of co-ordination of various projects and persons responsible for execution appears as the mandate to stewardship and preservation of the goods given to our care. Co-ordination can be internal or external but always implies that the right people be appointed for the right jobs. We call it “putting square pegs in square holes”. It implies ability to maintain a strong communication link among the activities in a particular project in order to get the desired goals and objectives achieved according to plan. Therefore the regular training of the agents and sharing of experiences of projects is critical for success.

#### 5. **Sedos in development cooperation -lessons for the Global North and South-**

In a growing global environment with migrations, influences and interconnectedness on economic, cultural, social, political, technological and market/religious levels, human thinking and development models are changing and rapidly too. Therefore the current era for Economy and Mission within Sedos and the Church communities worldwide are affected and challenged with new approaches. Whereas populations and youthful religious vocations move to the global south, aging populations and wealth stay in the global North calling for all round paradigm shifts. In a paper I delivered in 1997 at Enugu

for Justice and Peace co-ordinators of the Catholic Church of Nigeria and co-organised with Misereor on the topic: “Development strategies and Financial Management of Projects”, CIDJAP publications, 1997, pp 15 to 20, co-edited with Willy Kawohl and Emmanuel Ome, I made the following points which bear repetition here:

- **Development must take place in the global North and the global South simultaneously and on a reciprocal basis. This is based on the Social teaching of the Church which states that Development is integral and is needed by all. “The Goods of this world belong to all”** (Ref. to Gaudium et Spes; John XXIII, Mater et Magistra; John Paul II Laborem Exercens; Paul VI, Populorum Progressio; Pope Benedict XVI, Spes Salvi). This means that development can no longer be understood as something that is almost exclusively necessary for the so called “developing countries”. Co-operative development work has to be re-defined as applicable both to the North and the South with simultaneous inter-dependent challenges.

- **Co-operative Development work in its entirety requires new forms of communication and analyses in which vision, openness and willingness to learn have a place and values as measured solely by the global North do not dominate.** Since development is a complex process, large power plays and cultural influences - social, emotional and symbolic impact it. To be comprehensive, an intensification of the communication between partners in the North and the South is important. Existing power differences must be made visible, transparent and become a subject of discussion.

- **Co-operative Development work has to be more engaged in a just distribution. The imbalance of the distribution of the goods of the universe with statistics that show clear disparity is the bane for Economy and Mission. Whereas some have little or nothing, others have more than they need and even waste it.** The worldwide prevalence of the market economy system also integrates the so-called developing countries into the world market. It is a task for Church leaders to counteract the continuing concentration of economic power in the North. The mutual aims must remain the limitations of unchecked market forces, the re-

distribution of power and wealth at all levels and the strengthening of local and regional structures.

- **The competence to take decisions has to lie with mixed Bodies, with equal representation of the North and South including gender balance and aspects.** This makes for a proper democratic functioning of these organs to realise the common criteria and guarantee the measures for implementation.

- **Co-operative Development work has to occur simultaneously in the North and the South and makes sense when viewed from reciprocity. It needs to really spring from a double approach.** The analyses of the problems, the discovery of potentials and the definition of the goals in a particular area must take place simultaneously. This has implication for parallel measures to realise the defined collective aims. The process is both-And, not simply either/or.

- **Co-operative Development Work is not only the Business of Aid/Development Agencies. Churches, Trade Unions, Missionary organisations and governments are all part of development in its broadest forms.** The aim of this broad based co-operation is an improved coherence in the relationship between the Global North and the rest of the global south.

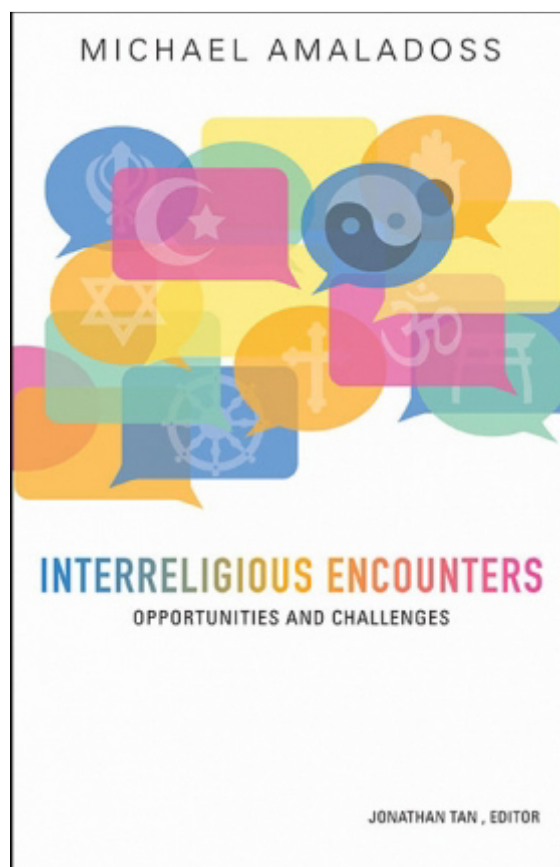
- **The interdependence of the problems of the North and the South demand specific strategies for their resolution.** Changes can be realised by targeted measures that have positive effect on global problems affecting all. Examples include justice questions such as access to Trade and Markets; preventing capital flight from poor countries to the global banks in the north; reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and balancing the overuse of the planet's resources through greening of the environment of the south, etc.

- **The Problems of the North and the South are interlinked. Some of the problems currently existing in the global south have their origins in the structures and rules prevalent in the global north.** These include environmental issues; health problems, cultural alienation and migrations. Many of the goals for development work in the North have relevance also for the South, such as strengthening of

democratic structures, environmentally supportive food production, dealing with terrorism, etc.

- **Interference in a Foreign territory is only justifiable on the basis of reciprocity.** It has become clear that the dominance of the global North over the South is due to economic and military supremacy. Therefore co-operative development work and missionary co-operation has to be decolonised.

- **Making Contact is a concrete way of gaining new experiences.** The simultaneous realisation of these activities makes possible a broader exchange of networks between organisations, missionary groups, apostolates, in the North and in the South within a global framework.



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## Ecology and sustainability in relation to finance

### A Christian social point of view

Ladies and gentlemen,

The concepts of sustainability and ecology play an increasingly important and decisive role in the ethical discussion of economics and economic orders in general and of finance. However, the more often and more widely these concepts are used in the public debate, the less substance and definition they seem to contain. In this paper, I would like to deal in turn with the key concepts of sustainability and - theologically closely linked - with the concept of creation, before turning in the third portion to address, the concept of integral ecology, a concept which is introduced by Pope Francis in the Encyclical *Laudato si*. In this concept there can be located different aspects, which will be presented in their significance for economy and finance.



Ursula Nothelle Wildfeuer

of mocking comments: for example, in 2010, the prestigious daily newspaper, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, commented that the notion of sustainability was an invention of conservatives, used to allow them to sound like progressives.

Witty though it may be, such derision does not do justice to the concept of sustainability, which – especially from a Christian ethical perspective – concerns a concept of re-

sponsibility for creation. I will explain this point more

fully below. I will start by noting that the concept of sustainability has become a subject of special interest in the discourse of Christian social ethics. Scholars in this field have decided to add the social principle of sustainability to the classic social principles of solidarity, subsidiarity and of common welfare.

#### 1. Basic concept of “Sustainability”

The call for “sustainability” is almost universally heard in the day-to-day political rhetoric. There is a wide spread consensus that pensions, financial markets, and all other decisions have to be assessed on the basis of their sustainability. Sustainable development is the motto to which all political and economic designs have to answer.

This leads to the question whether any substance lies behind this term, or whether it has become an empty phrase, employed promiscuously and instrumentally. It is no surprise that the term “sustainability” has become the subject

#### The original context of the term of sustainability

As a first step, let us briefly ascertain where the notion of sustainability actually comes from and what it originally meant. Its source and first development were completely detached from the Christian faith context.

Dating to the 18th century, “sustainability” began as a term in forestry, and referred to the practice of harvesting only as much wood as can be regrown.<sup>29</sup> This pragmatic economic idea, which was born at first due to the scarcity of wood in the 19th century, was enlarged to refer to all functions of the forest, such as the mainte-

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<sup>29</sup> The earliest recorded use of the term was found in Hans Carl von Carlowitz “*Sylvicultura Oeconomica*” which dates back to 1713.

nance of its protective function.<sup>30</sup>– Of course, there is a wide distance between the forester who wanted to conserve his forests, and today's ethical debates concerning the term that was created by Hans Carl von Carlowitz. Nevertheless, its core significance is already embodied in the forester's use of the term. It retains that meaning even for today's discussions, where one is advised to live "from the proceeds of a substance and not of the substance itself, that means the interest rates, not the capital."<sup>31</sup>–It is the question of the right measure, which is at the heart of all sustainability. And the right measure (or balance) is also always in the center of Christian action or thought.<sup>32</sup>

### **The ethical relevance of the term of sustainability**

In the second half of the 20th century, sustainability has become a concept of ethical relevance. In the context of a rising awareness of the responsibility for nature and environment, the claim of sustainable development plays a key role. The beginning of international environmental policy began no later than with the first UN environmental conference in Stockholm in the year 1972.<sup>33</sup><sup>[5]</sup> Thereafter, the notion of sustainability could make its career.

Also in 1972, the Club of Rome published the study "Limits to growth", which explicitly warned against the depletion of natural resources. Even today, the text represents a point of view, which the opponents as well as the supporters of nuclear energy can cite from different perspectives. In this report, sustainable development is also discussed.

The concept of sustainability is also frequently mentioned in the 1987 Brundtland report, named after the former Norwegian Prime Minister. This report, written by the World Commission on Environment and Development, contains the momentous "definition" of sustainable development: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising future generations to meet their own needs."<sup>34</sup> That means it is about respect and preservation of the "basic needs of today and the people living in the future."<sup>35</sup>

A further important expansion of the concept comes along with this often-quoted report, because "for the first time it defined sustainable development in a socio-economic context."<sup>36</sup>

It is also necessary to draw attention to the Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) of the United Nations in Rio de Janeiro. In 1992, the participants in this Conference adopted Agenda 21, which marked the starting point of international environmental agreements in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.<sup>37</sup>

Since then, "Sustainability" is recognized as an international goal, that was able to characterize the environmental and energy discussions in the next few years. By the establishment of the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development<sup>38</sup> after the Rio de Janeiro Conference in 1992, the term sustainability developed from a significant term to an institutionally defined political issue.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Brockhaus Enzyklopädie. 21 Auflage 2006. Band 19. 233.

<sup>31</sup> Grundwald, Armin; Kopfmüller, Jürgen: Nachhaltigkeit. Frankfurt am Main 2006, 14. The German sources quoted in this essay were translated into English by the author, if not stated otherwise.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. <http://www.nachhaltigpredigen.de/index.php/jahresthemen/suffizienz>.

<sup>33</sup> The groundbreaking statement "Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the human environment" is available online at:

<http://www.unep.org/Documents/Multilingual/Default.asp>  
With the founding of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in the year 1972, a considerable step towards raising attention to the issues of environmental protection and "sustainable" energy was accomplished.

<sup>34</sup> The "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future" is available online at: <http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>.

Checked last: 25.3.2017. Cf. 49.

<sup>35</sup> Bayer, Stephan: Nachhaltigkeit. In: RGG. 4. Auflage. Tübingen 2005. Band 6. 11f.

<sup>36</sup> Brockhaus: 233. Cf. also for a detailed overview the documents which have contributed to the development and expansion of the term of sustainable development.

<sup>37</sup> The original version of the declaration is available online at:  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>. Checked last: 20.5.2017.

<sup>38</sup> For more information on the goals, history and the documents of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) compare:  
[http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd\\_aboutcsd.shtml](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_aboutcsd.shtml). Last checked: 20.5.2017.

<sup>39</sup> This becomes especially clear at the conferences on sustainable development which take place worldwide and

## Christian connotations

In the light of this development, it is quite clear how sustainability became frequently employed by many parties and how different connotations of the term developed.<sup>40</sup> It is therefore not surprising that the term passed into Catholic social teaching. This is due to the fact that the imperative, which stands behind the word “sustainability”, certainly bears a resemblance with the concerns of the Christian creation ethics and social ethics.

In 2006, the German bishops wrote in their statement, “Act for the Future of Creation” about global climate change, to name just one example, that the climate change is already reality. People literally feel its impact on their own body: heat, drought, storms and heavy precipitation, glacial retreat and floods, crop failures and spread of diseases. Global climate change represents the most comprehensive threat to the livelihood of present and in much greater mass of future generations, as well as other than human nature.<sup>41</sup> Largely unanimous is the conviction, and we see this also in the current Pope's groundbreaking social encyclical *Laudato si*, that climate change and the concomitant threat to human and non-human nature is caused by the human beings. There are already many catalogues of measures to initiate an adaptation to the consequences of human-induced climate change and to reduce the threat of climate change: greenhouse gas emissions are to be re-

duced drastically, the systematic deforestation of rain forests should be stopped, incentives to purchase renewable energy should be encouraged, etc. The problem of climate change is not the core of the issue, but rather it comes down to a - very obvious and even threatening - expression of an individual lifestyle and an institutional and structural design of social life. In the background stands the fundamental insight by the two churches in their common social Word, which had already been formulated in 1997: “it is not enough to adjust taking action as a response to present needs or to a single legislative period, and also not only to the needs of the present generation. There is sometimes no alternative to short-term crisis management. But the individual and political action must not exhaust itself in it. Someone who postpones reforms or fails to bring them about will run sooner or later into an existential crisis.” (No. 1) Regarding the ecological issues concerning nature and the environment, this leads to the question, what kind of world, what kind of creation do we want to pass on to the following generations, how do we satisfy their claim of justice towards them?

## 2. Basic concept of “Creation”

With the help of the passages quoted above, we can take into view a second important concept, which we need to consider: we have to talk about creation. When we talk about sustainability from a Christian social ethics point of view, then above all we have to talk about the protection of creation - in all its facets. The speech of creation, and especially of its preservation, has boomed - similar and even more than that of sustainability - in the last few decades, ever since the release of “limits to growth” in 1972.<sup>42</sup> A term originally from the Judeo-Christian context is - like almost no other - emigrated from its theological frame of reference and has been profaned. Therefore, it seems especially appropriate as a focal point of the social discourse. The term of creation has now become the antonym of problems and crises of our modern, technological and economic progress of civilization - an application of the term far away

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on a regular basis - for example in Johannesburg (2002), where the participants discussed the handling of resources among other topics such as health and globalization taking from the perspective of sustainability, their goal being the establishment of a just and humane society which stresses the importance of human dignity. The document is available online at: [http://www.bmu.de/files/pdfs/allgemein/application/pdf/johannesburg\\_declaration.pdf](http://www.bmu.de/files/pdfs/allgemein/application/pdf/johannesburg_declaration.pdf). (Cf. esp. 1). Last checked: 20.5.2017.

<sup>40</sup> For an example, compare the manifestos for the elections of the Bundestag in 2009. Not quite surprising, the manifesto of the Green Party talks about the “green principle of sustainability”.

Der Grüne neue Gesellschaftsvertrag. Wahlprogramm zur Bundestagswahl 2009. 12. Available online at: [https://www.gruene.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Dokumente/Wahlprogramm/BTW\\_Wahlprogramm\\_2009\\_final\\_scren\\_060709.pdf](https://www.gruene.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Wahlprogramm/BTW_Wahlprogramm_2009_final_scren_060709.pdf). Last checked: 20.5.2017.

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/catholic\\_teachings/German-Bishops-Report](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/catholic_teachings/German-Bishops-Report).

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Meadows et al. 1972.



from those who are committed to theistic interpretation of the world.<sup>43</sup>

### **The theological hermeneutics of the creation concept**

The notion of creation is – especially in the legal, political and ecological discourse – usually applied in a rather undifferentiated manner “as an ecologically or politically motivated metaphor for the environment, as far as it is seen as vulnerable, threatened and worthy.”<sup>44</sup> All the different profane uses of the term creation have the same substantial meaning: “intact nature.” It often still implies that it is “Nature untouched by humans”. This leads to the following common distinction: “anthropogenic products of culture and civilization are not implied by the term [of creation, author’s note]. For example, the Zugspitze mountain is part of “creation”, but not the cable car as a means of transportation to the top of the mountain.”<sup>45</sup>

However, the actual meaning of the theological notion of creation would clearly be missed, if the term was only used in this ultimately romantic view of nature. In his first social encyclical *Laudato si*, which he published in May 2015, half a year before the UN Climate Conference in Paris took place, Pope Francis highlights this difference: “In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the word ‘creation’ has a broader meaning than ‘nature’, for it has to do with God’s loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance.” (LS 76) This distinction serves as a hermeneutic key to his encyclical. While the reference and framework of interpretation is clearly a scientific and analytical one when speaking of nature, it is a genuinely theological one when speaking of creation: “Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion.” (LS 76) Theologically seen - in contrast to the political or environmental terminology – “‘Creation’ could not be talked about, without at

the same time talking about the creator,”<sup>46</sup> i.e., without the reference to Christ and Trinity. The occupation with the issue of creation is therefore genuine theology. Not from a historical or scientific perspective we ask about the creation of the world, but ideas of creation logically ask about the beginning and the meaningful reason<sup>47</sup> of the current reality. More specifically, you can say that the creation theologies of the Old Testament in the tradition of Israel first and foremost address the righteous and merciful God, because they express the hope that the “God who calls Heaven and Earth from the non-being into existence, [...] (is able) also to bring the dead to life.”<sup>48</sup> It involves two aspects: firstly the emphasis on the “original goodness of creation and thus also of the Creator God”<sup>49</sup> and secondly the belief in God who remains faithful to his creation through history due to this origin.

If now the term of creation means more than the speech of nature, then it follows that creation “in a Christian conviction means everything what is not God.”<sup>50</sup> It is noteworthy that this use which is “different from the ordinary use of language – also includes the cultural and civilizational achievements of the people.”<sup>51</sup> Thus the concept of creation theologically does not differentiate between man and his work, but rather distinguishes man and his work from the divine.<sup>52</sup> Important to the Judeo-Christian definition is the demystification of creation: A mythological worldview sees nature as a wholly sacred area, in which diverse phenomena and developments stand as articulations of different divine powers. In sharp contrast, the Old Testament creation statement emphasizes just the deification of creation: it does not see “nature as divine” (LS 78), “the world came about as the result of a decision, not from chaos or chance”, “(t)he universe did not emerge as the result of arbitrary omnipotence (LS 77). Rather it is God, who in “complete freedom, without any pressure or any need, [...] called the creation into be-

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Honnefelder 2011, 1575.

<sup>44</sup> Schmid 2012, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Predel 2015, 13.

<sup>48</sup> Striet 2000, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>50</sup> Predel 2015, 13.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Hieke 2013, 17f.

ing.”<sup>53</sup> “‘Creation’ encompasses space and time, ‘heaven and Earth’, ‘Spirit’ and ‘Matter’, animate and inanimate beings, the ‘visible and the invisible world’, its beginning, its history and development and finally their eternal completion.”<sup>54</sup> Against this background, creation is “in a universal sense the first and basic revelation of God.”<sup>55</sup>

### **The position of man in creation**

Theological considerations about creation would not be adequate if they failed to recall, apart from the different areas of reality, the special position of the human being within this creation.

The understanding of creation as outlined above entails a corresponding relationship between human beings and the creation: it is God's creation, entrusted to the people – not subject to their arbitrary treatment, but as something to maintain and preserve. The basic idea of the demystification of creation “emphasizes all the more our human responsibility for nature” (LS 78) It is the great merit of the discourse to have brought back into public consciousness the final unavailability of creation for man and likewise his responsibility for creation, despite the ambiguous semantics which often rule in the ecological discourse of creation. Furthermore, this implies that the conservation of creation is not only a human responsibility, but the responsibility of Him, who makes everything grow in the first place. So: sole responsibility no, but responsibility, indeed yes.<sup>56</sup>

The question concerning the specific position of the people, however, remains.

Pope Francis considers in his Encyclical *Laudato si* in an intensive way firstly “(t)he wisdom of the biblical accounts” (heading of LS 65). In the tradition of Christian ethics, speech and thinking were determined by an anthropocentrism which takes into consideration only people, and mankind was often at the ultimate center. In previous church teaching, the book of Genesis, with the creation story, has

been read almost exclusively to support the absolute supremacy of man in consideration of his being a creature made in the likeness of God, and his dignity resulting from this. This aspect is taken into account in the encyclical, in the light of the results of recent research, in a broader context. The matter has been clear for a long time as well in Theology. In the effort to protect creation, it is important to preserve men's living space now and in the future. But the matter is more complex: on the one hand, the special position of the human as the being who “was created out of love,” is emphasized (LS 65), while, on the other hand, the doctrine of the human being is embedded in “three fundamental, closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself” (LS 66). Man is integrated in the relationship with God, in the community of fellow human beings, and in the environment, the world of all other creatures and of inanimate nature. In order to live and survive, he is connected with and stands in reference to all of creation. For the sake of those who now live, but also for the sake of those not yet born, nature and the environment must be protected. Man, as a creature of God, equipped by God with freedom and responsibility, or philosophically speaking, as a moral subject, always as a “special status”, but once again - and this is the flip side of this coin – man has the responsibility for creation. This special position of man is ecologically integrated and networked. Thus, Christian ethics recognizes the (graded) intrinsic value of non-human creation, which exists not just for the benefit of the human. Rather, it is something of a tightrope walk for man to respect and protect nature, which in turn is directed to man and his survival.

In the views of these theological debates, therefore, we should analyze the question of the (absolute) domination of the human being: This is meant by the so-called *dominium terrae*, the much-quoted biblical order to rule which God gave to men: “Subdue the Earth” (Gen 1.28). Eco-theological discussions present the occasion to consider the “indictment of the theology, because the Judeo-Christian faith is responsible for the current environmental crisis, by its separation of God from the world, of creator and

<sup>53</sup> Predel 2015, 13.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 13f.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. <http://www.nachhaltig-predigen.de/index.php/component/content/article/45-predigtanregungen-2015-16/436-02-10-2016>.

creation, by its profanation of nature, it founded modern science. By the doctrine of the ‘dominium terrae,’ the Christian faith had allowed and legitimized the domination of man over nature and even asked for its destruction.”<sup>57</sup>

The accusation which holds the biblical order to rule responsible for the exploitation of the earth, and views it as an argument for human self-importance was first brought forward in 1967 by Lynn White in the U.S.<sup>58</sup> and subsequently raised by Carl Amery 1972<sup>59</sup> and finally by Eugen Drewermann in 1981<sup>60</sup>.

However, by taking a look at Gen 1 from a biblical perspective, we can find evidence which indicates that what is called “(to) reign” and “(to) subdue” is not necessarily the basis for the destruction of the environment and exploitation of nature and therefore does not necessarily lead to the ecological crisis: Man’s right and order to subdue the earth and rule over nature and creature is derived from his having been created in the likeness of God. Therefore, if the human ruler is characterized as God’s representative and governor, and, if moreover, the rule is to be understood as an order given by God to the humans, then this excludes any destructive understanding; in the case of exploitation of God’s order, the human being would lose his “kingly” position. Furthermore, the order to rule is explicitly a blessing (“and God blessed them”) and for this reason is intended only for the good. And finally, the so-called “endorsement formula” allows only for a positive interpretation, which excludes any damage to nature by human rule (“and behold, it was very good”).<sup>61</sup> Therefore, the accusation by White, Amery and Drewermann does not rely on a correct interpretation of the biblical statement. The order to rule does not imply an “absolute domination over other creatures” (LS 67), but rather a predominance (LS 67) – this way the Pope phrases it in *Laudato si* – which means “caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving”. This right to rule is not to be understood arbitrarily or despotically; the other creatures and all of creation is not ruthlessly to be exploited by humans for

their own interests. In contrast to this, the Bible emphasizes the community of all creatures<sup>62</sup> in various images. The reverence for the creator implies above all the reverence for all creatures, the cultural mandate implies a management in trust and care.

Nevertheless, Christians are not entirely uninvolved in the development of exploitation and destruction of the Earth. The Christians and the Church bear a complicity in the ecological disaster, because they have become unfaithful to their biblical foundations. Pope Francis points out “that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures” and that “nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God’s image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures” (LS 67). In modern times, the exceptional position of the human has lost its relational tie to God, and thus it developed into the exploitative despotism over nature, and into a self-righteous arbitrariness. The right to rule and duty to reign are to be understood not as absolute-autonomous, but as relational-autonomous rights and duties. The very case against Amery then is, “to blame the fact that a profound destruction of natural balance found in the wake of the Christian gospel, is not the salvation promises of the Judeo-Christian tradition. [...] rather, these commitments (were) dropped [...] and the biblical intended domination of man over nature perverted into a technocratic exploitation”<sup>63</sup>. The haughty and ultimately harmful claim to power of men is certainly - not only, but especially - a threat today, but, at the same time – and this is something new, a reflection of the debate – a very sensitive consciousness has been awakened. “But man does not escape these problems by abstaining from every intervention in the natural and cultural design.” Not the exercise of culture and rule, according to the biblical command, “but its reversal to a skeptical rejection of God’s intention”<sup>64</sup> has led to the crisis and debate about it.

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<sup>57</sup> Daecke 1999, 62.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. White 1967.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Amery [1972] 1980.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Drewermann 1981.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Daecke 1999, 63.

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Anzenbacher 1997, 194.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 69.

<sup>64</sup> Splett 1982, 193f.

### 3. The concept of “integral ecology”

From this concept of Creation Theology, important consequences for a Christian (social) ethics arise, which was also explicated by referring to some statements of the encyclical *Laudato si*. Here, Pope Francis speaks of the concept of integral ecology (and ethics), and presents it as his own approach. Thus he remarks: “Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in the debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*.” (LS 49) He is arguing for a holistic concept which sees the human and social dimension as intrinsically tied to nature. “It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems. We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time, protecting nature.” (LS 139) Even if it is not mentioned literally, the so-called triangle of sustainability is hinted at in these remarks on the complexity of the approach of the “integral ecology”. The triangle consists of the dimensions of ecology, economics and the social aspects (Pope Francis’ view on the dimension of economy must be talked about, see below). A common statement prepared in 2003 by the German Evangelical Churches and the German Catholic Bishops’ Conference on the reorientation to sustainable agriculture states that sustainability, “is based on a culture of mindfulness and the right measure, where the individual, social, economic and environmental dimensions of life are not set against one another, but recognize their mutual dependence. Sustainability is not just an ecological principle, but rather a basic attitude toward life, which is designed, not to exploit resources, but to deal with living systems in nature and society to en-

sure that they retain their ability to regenerate.”<sup>65</sup>

Important aspects of the concept of “integral ecology” concerning the questions of economy and finance can be derived from the encyclical.

#### Market review

On the one hand, Pope Francis renewed the familiar criticism of the market, which he had discussed in his apostolic letter *Evangelii gaudium*. Here we find the famous dictum, “Such an economy kills.” (EG 53) In the most recent encyclical, we can now read, “Yet by itself the market cannot guarantee integral human development and social inclusion.” (LS 109) From Francis’ perspective, the market only follows the principle of profit maximization, but the crucial questions, according to the Pope, are those about the “more balanced levels of production, a better distribution of wealth, concern for the environment and the rights of future generations,” (LS 109) thus the question of the humane, about social and environmental aspects are disregarded. In this manner, Francis also mentions constructive elements of the concept of an integral ecology for the economy. In many cases, he sees the “technocratic paradigm” (LS 109) at work, which “tends to dominate economic and political life”. (LS 109) Rightly he recognizes as a problem “that some circles maintain that current economics and technology will solve all environmental problems, and insist in “popular and non-technical terms, that the problems of global hunger and poverty will be resolved simply by market growth.” (LS 109)

Referring to *Caritas in veritate* by Benedict XVI, Pope Francis criticizes the existing imbalance between “a sort of ‘super-development’ of a wasteful and consumerist kind which stands in an unacceptable contrast with the ongoing situations of dehumanizing deprivation” (LS 109). He calls it a clear failure that the poorest do not have regular access to basic resources – in the terminology of the latest Christian social ethics, this is an issue of social justice in the form of participative justice.

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<sup>65</sup> [http://www.ekd.de/EKD-Texte/neuorientierung\\_landwirtschaft5.html](http://www.ekd.de/EKD-Texte/neuorientierung_landwirtschaft5.html), no. 44.

One might point out that he postulates an ethical standard – that is what he has in mind when he criticizes “the absence of objective truths or sound principles other than the satisfaction of our own desires and immediate needs” (LS 123): Such an ethical standard must be the irreducible and indivisible dignity of every human being combined with an awareness of the value of each creature, the recognition of which implies that “limits can be placed on human trafficking, organized crime, the drug trade, commerce in blood diamonds and the fur of endangered species”(LS 123).

### **Integral understanding of science**

A second aspect concerns the philosophy of science: Pope Francis describes technology as the fragmentation of knowledge, and he argues that this modern conception hardly can succeed in helping us “to see the larger picture” (LS 110) A science, “which would offer solutions to the great issues would necessarily have to take into account the data generated by other fields of knowledge, including philosophy and social ethics; but this is a difficult habit to acquire today.” (LS 110) This implicates that science needs an ethical or religious horizon, that it requires an instance which argues from the perspective of human freedom, and which is able to broaden one’s mind. In the words of the Pope, “There needs to be a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, distinct policies, an educational program, a lifestyle and a spirituality which together generate resistance to the assault of the technocratic paradigm.” (LS 111) A single technical or strictly economic solution to a problem would mean a one-sided solution, (and thus he makes a connection to his next point of criticism at the same time): “If the present ecological crisis is one small sign of the ethical, cultural and spiritual crisis of modernity, we cannot presume to heal our relationship with nature and the environment without healing all fundamental human relationships.” (LS 119)

### **Integral anthropology**

The third aspect concerns the understanding of the human being. With respect to anthropology, Francis develops a holistic perspective, which involves all dimensions of being human. For his

concept of integral ecology this means that “our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God. Otherwise, it would be nothing more than romantic individualism dressed up in ecological garb, locking us into a stifling immanence.” (LS 119)

### **An integral growth and concept of progress**

Against this background, it is obvious that with the concept of an integral ecology, solutions for problems are looked for, which consider the “interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems.” (LS 139) Francis enumerates various elements, like the environmental, economic and social ecology, cultural ecology, and the ecology of everyday life. The relevance of these various aspects of ecology is crucial. Francis observes that the problems produced by climate change have significantly stronger impacts in the southern hemisphere than in the North, i.e., where people are poor and thus become victims in two ways.<sup>66</sup> One can therefore conclude that “ecological problems [...] increase the world’s unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities.”<sup>67</sup> The “ecological conversion” (LS 216) demanded by the encyclical has to take into account the Christian ethics of property, and particularly their supreme principle, according to which the goods of the earth belong to everyone, as well as the “option for the poor”. It also requires a culture of humility and of frugality (see LS 223 f).

The concept of integral ecology also implies a broader and more complex understanding of progress and growth. It is obvious that Pope Francis does not only have a quantitative increase of technical or economic opportunities in mind, because that would produce an imbalance of ecosystems (see LS 35) which does not go along “with a development in human responsibility, values and conscience”. (LS 105). Rather he views growth as an “integral development and an improvement in the quality of life” (LS 46), which includes the better distribution of wealth, a responsible treatment of nature and the rights of future generations (cf. LS 109). In his opinion, human freedom is able “to limit and

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Gabriel 2015, 642, also see Vogt 2014, 69f.

<sup>67</sup> Gabriel 2015, 643.



direct technology”; which “we can put [...] at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral.” (LS 112) His speech of an entirely different understanding of progress shows that Francis does not aim at a simple and naive obscurantism of progress, but an understanding of progress, where progress is not an end in itself, but unfolds creativity with an outlook to improving the quality of life and a greater justice.

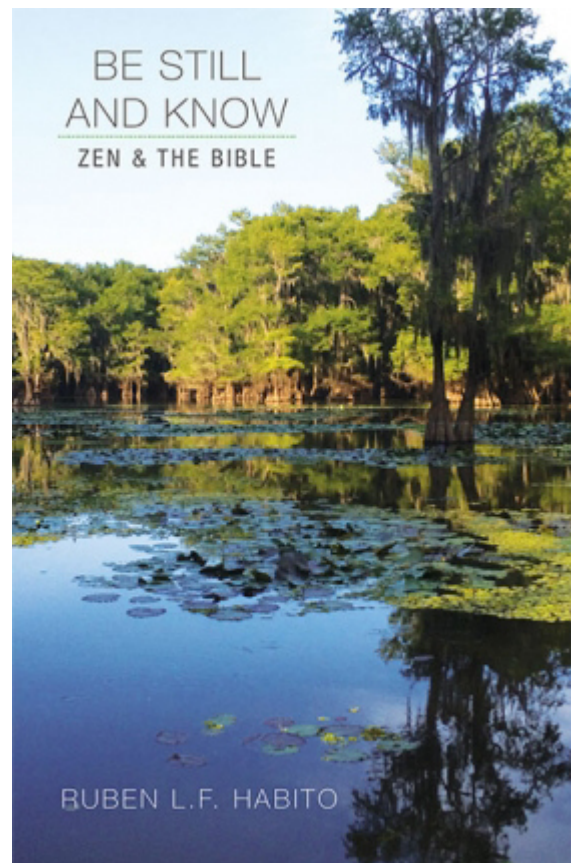
#### 4. Conclusion:

Sustainability does not only stand for ecology, but comprehensively for global, social and environmental justice, the latter implying a long-term perspective and responsibility for future generations in every respect. “The question is: what is just in this society? How can we create the society we want to live in (and we have to add, the society we want to leave to the next generations)? How can we recognize emergency as a criterion for the definition of justice and draw conclusions for our behavior?”<sup>68</sup>—A special concern for creation and the desire to take action to protect it suggests itself from the perspective of Christian faith. In the context of Christian faith, but it is obvious as well that this is not an exclusively Christian issue: “The commitment to sustainability does not prove faith, but life in the spirit of Jesus is not possible without commitment to it”<sup>69</sup>.

Sustainability also reminds us that Christians can make a relevant, constitutive contribution to the public “secular” discourse (such as that of sustainability), both concerning the context of justification and also concerning the consequences. “Sustainability means [...] that I take **responsibility for the present time**”, responsibility with regard to the “quarreling world that longs for peace, (the) desire for the renewal of our world, as well as (the) desires of the poor and vulnerable, (the) justice that is trampled on”<sup>70</sup> and all of creation which is too often ex-

ploited in this common house we inhabit. And it involves the assumption of responsibility for the present time “in the face of eternity – of course in the knowledge that it is not down to me and that I cannot achieve anything without the grace of God. But: Now is also the time of grace, [...] therefore now (and every day, author’s note) may be the day of salvation.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> [http://www.nachhaltig-predigen.de/20112012/2011\\_12\\_25\\_Diringer.html](http://www.nachhaltig-predigen.de/20112012/2011_12_25_Diringer.html).

<sup>69</sup> [http://www.umdenken.de/index.id,736,selid,2902,type,VAL\\_MEMO.html](http://www.umdenken.de/index.id,736,selid,2902,type,VAL_MEMO.html).

<sup>70</sup> [http://www.nachhaltig-predigen.de/20112012/2012\\_11\\_11\\_DrSchorn.html](http://www.nachhaltig-predigen.de/20112012/2012_11_11_DrSchorn.html).

<sup>71</sup> [http://www.nachhaltig-predigen.de/20112012/2012\\_11\\_11\\_DrSchorn.html](http://www.nachhaltig-predigen.de/20112012/2012_11_11_DrSchorn.html).

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Luigino Bruni

## Economia e Comunione

Seguirò uno schema suddiviso in tre parti: un inizio in cui cercherò di dare un contesto rispetto a dove si trova oggi l'economia mondiale in rapporto all'esperienza di chi agisce mosso da un carisma spirituale, che è uno dei miei temi di lavoro, economia e carismi. Secondo, proporrò una riflessione sull'economia vissuta come profezia dal punto di vista biblico, ossia cosa significa oggi un'economia profetica, poiché come dirò, oggi i carismi sono la continuazione del profilo profetico dell'Antico Testamento. Poi concluderò con delle sfide che mi sembrano rilevanti per il mondo, i mondi, in cui vivete e che rappresentate.

In quale contesto ci troviamo oggi nel nostro mondo tremendo e splendido? Parlo di tremendo e splendido insieme poiché la fatica di chi vuole tener

viva la speranza e un'azione profetica nel mondo è di tenere insieme il tremendo e lo splendido. Ossia saper guardare alle ferite del nostro tempo, alle paure, ai peccati e saper anche guardare al fatto che il mondo è un posto meraviglioso, poiché se perdiamo uno dei due poli o diventiamo degli ingenui che vivono in un mondo dove tutto va bene, dimenticandosi dei poveri oppure diventiamo dei pessimisti e dei cinici che non fanno altro che lamentarsi del proprio tempo che forse è un errore peggiore del primo. Infatti se un carisma, una realtà spirituale perde uno sguardo sul mondo bello e buono, si spegne, si intristisce e non svolge più la sua missione e la sua funzione.

I segni più importanti del nostro contesto economico attuale - i segni dei tempi - sono prima di tutto il fatto che in varie parti del mondo, certamente in Occidente stiamo assistendo a un movimento di contrazione, di chiusura dopo

vent'anni in cui si è invece sperato che la Globalizzazione avrebbe aperto le frontiere e aumentato l'incontro fra i popoli. Negli ultimi anni l'Est Europa, ora la Brexit, il Nord America, il dibattito di questi giorni in Francia ma anche in Italia, la crisi umanitaria con i rifugiati, le difficoltà ad accogliere queste immigrazioni, ci dicono che il tempo in cui sembrava che il mondo fosse più unito, più inclusivo, volge al termine lasciando spazio ad una stagione in cui

vediamo tornare i muri e le frontiere. E si tratta di una cosa seria poiché fino a tre, quattro anni fa c'era ancora l'ottimismo che i Popoli potessero incontrarsi. Non possiamo perciò non essere coscienti del fatto che oggi la linea per spiegare il mondo non sembra essere l'unità, la

comunione, ma piuttosto la chiusura, la difficoltà all'inclusione del diverso, la "ferita dell'altro", per utilizzare il titolo di un mio libro: l'altro è più "ferita" che "benedizione". L'umanità vive dei momenti in cui l'altro è considerato Paradiso, dove la vita in comune è vista come benedizione, alternati ad altri in cui l'altro è Inferno, come diceva Sartre: "L'Inferno sono gli altri". In questa fase, l'altro, la diversità è di nuovo un problema e non possiamo non tenere presente la tendenza del mondo a chiudersi più che ad aprirsi, nonostante la Globalizzazione porterebbe invece ad un'apertura.

C'è poi un secondo tratto del nostro tempo: il capitalismo, l'economia, stanno diventando una religione. Si tratta di un tema antico e a tal proposito è nota la frase di Walter Benjamin che nel 1921 affermava: "Il Capitalismo è una religione", poiché esso risponde alle stesse domande e angosce a cui risponde la religione, e



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promette una sua forma di vita eterna.

Il vero contrasto fra Dio e Mammona -come viene chiamato nel Vangelo- fra la vita spirituale e i soldi, è che il denaro, insieme al potere, sono le due realtà umane che più assomigliano a Dio. Il capitalismo è una grande macchina, il fine e non solo il mezzo, e la ricerca del denaro come fine è una costruzione di tipo sacrale religioso. Il mondo che segue alla morte di Dio non è un mondo ateo ma un mondo idolatrico, un mondo che si è riempito di idoli che hanno preso il posto della religione. Uno di questi idoli è chiaramente identificabile con il capitalismo. Gustav Jung commentando Nietzsche dice: "L'uomo senza Dio non riesce a vivere, ma ora che l'abbiamo ucciso, al posto di Dio a livello collettivo abbiamo messo i vari -ismi: il Fascismo, il Nazismo, il Comunismo, che diventano delle alternative al Dio della religione, mentre a livello individuale il nuovo Dio è diventato l'Io, che prende il posto di Dio.

Uno dei nuovi idoli è certamente il capitalismo e questo si vede nella centralità del consumo rispetto al lavoro. Nel XX secolo l'economia era un'economia di lavoro e al centro del sistema economico c'erano i lavoratori, nelle fabbriche, nei campi, negli uffici. Il Novecento era ancora erede di un certo umanesimo biblico che vedeva il lavoro come qualcosa di complicato, di faticoso, ma di buono. Quindi la fatica, la creazione, l'*homo faber*, la capacità di trasformare la terra facevano del lavoro il centro del sistema economico. Nel XXI secolo al centro dell'economia non c'è più il lavoro ma il consumo, e il consumo è il centro di un'economia di puro piacere. A differenza del lavoro il consumo non è faticoso, il consumo è solo piacere ed è l'idolo più tipico perché l'idolo è un'esperienza di solo piacere. Le infinite polemiche di Geremia e Isaia contro Baal erano dovute al fatto che si trattava di culti da cui la gente voleva trarre solo piacere. Un'economia che al posto del lavoro mette il piacere è molto simile al culto di chi cercava nel totem, nel feticcio, il piacere.

La crisi enorme del lavoro, nel nostro tempo, non è soltanto legata ai computer o alle macchine ma anche alla disistima, allo scarto del lavoro e della fatica. In un mondo che capisce solo il piacere, il lavoro non si capisce più poiché il lavoro è faticoso. L'ideale del nostro

tempo è quindi poter consumare senza lavorare. L'invasione di slot machine, di giochi d'azzardo, di gratta e vinci, di video poker che sta mangiando tanti paesi dell'America Latina, dell'Est Europa e anche dell'Italia, non si capisce se non attraverso questa ideologia di puro consumo, poter consumare senza lavorare! La dea Fortuna torna protagonista laddove il grande Umanesimo occidentale aveva detto che la virtù batte la fortuna, ed è la virtù che ci rende felici.

Ci sono due grandi derive dell'idolatria capitalistica, la meritocrazia, grande dogma del nostro tempo e la cultura degli incentivi. Perché la meritocrazia, il far governare i più meritevoli è un problema? La meritocrazia crea entusiasmo perché sembra una forma di giustizia, in parte potrebbe anche esserlo, ma oggi cos'è diventata la meritocrazia? Oggi a definire i meriti sono le grandi imprese e oggi la grande impresa è il luogo della virtù. Nel secolo passato il modello a cui guardare, da cui imparare era la politica, la democrazia, con il dialogo, il dibattito, il voto.

Oggi l'ambito esemplare a cui tutti guardano è il business, la grande impresa e i manager sono coloro a cui guardare, da prendere come modello, poiché sono seri e hanno le virtù giuste. L'impresa definisce con semplicità cos'è il merito e i lavoratori meritevoli dell'impresa sono coloro che raggiungono gli obiettivi dell'impresa stessa. I meriti sono tanti nella vita e una persona è meritevole per tante ragioni: per la sua capacità di compassione, di mitezza, di umiltà, di cura. Questi sono tutti meriti, ma totalmente scartati dall'impresa! Pensiamo all'umiltà: se nell'impresa uno è umile, è un *looser*, un perdente. Quindi prima operazione che l'impresa effettua è di dire: "il merito lo definisco io". Secondo: in un modo misurabile, con un *ranking*, una gerarchia. Ossia posso misurare il merito e ne misuro la parte più semplice, quella traducibile in numeri, obbiettivi, performance. Terzo passaggio: siccome nella vita civile gli altri meriti non sono quasi mai misurabili, quanto vale una persona capace di misericordia? Infinitamente! Non c'è un numero per misurarlo, quanto vale una persona mansueta? Infinitamente! Il merito economico, che invece è misurabile, diventa il merito della vita! Quindi chi è perdente nell'impresa è perdente dappertutto. La conseguenza di questo processo è un forte ritorno dell'ideologia che vede il po-

vero come un demeritevole, un colpevole e che porta a una visione della povertà come colpa. Invece il povero, nel Novecento era uno sfortunato, che aveva avuto dei problemi nella vita, con l'ambiente, e andava aiutato. Penso sempre a Giobbe che lungo tutto il suo libro continua a ripetere: "Io sono solo, disgraziato, ma sono innocente." Si può essere poveri e non essere colpevoli.

Quando penso alla vita delle opere religiose e carismatiche, (in senso Paolino: cioè i carismi che lo Spirito dà alla comunità per il bene comune) per prima cosa mi vengono in mente i profeti biblici: Isaia, Geremia, Tobia, Amos, Ezechiele ma anche Osea e Giona... Queste sono le grandi figure profetiche dell'Antico Testamento a cui si deve guardare se si vuole capire il rapporto fra economia dei carismi e opere religiose. Il primo elemento da apprendere dai profeti è che se la vita e il culto della comunità non mette al centro i poveri, le vedove, gli orfani, in definitiva gli scarti, è immediatamente un culto idolatrico. Questo è un tema che si trova certamente in Isaia e Geremia e anche nelle parole di Gesù. Quindi non si tratta di dire che il culto serve ma è meglio e più importante occuparsi dei poveri. No! Quello che ci viene detto è: se voi dimenticate i poveri e andate nel tempio e se in quel tempio pregate JHWH, voi state pregando un idolo, è la presenza dei poveri che attesta che quella preghiera non è rivolta agli idoli ma a Dio. Quindi una comunità, un popolo che fa tantissime messe, come direbbe Isaia al capitolo primo, che prega molto, non ha nessuna garanzia che sta parlando con Dio invece che con sé stessa o con gli idoli. La premessa perché il culto sia vero, sono i poveri al centro della comunità, questo è il grande messaggio dei Profeti. Si tratta quindi di una cosa molto seria! Quando una comunità non solo è missionaria ma vuole riconoscersi nel messaggio biblico cristiano e si dimentica i poveri, magari ha fatto nascere cinquant'anni prima un ospedale per i poveri, poi quest'ospedale con il tempo cresce, diventa bello, attrae medici bravi, diviene sempre più lussuoso e ci vanno solo i ricchi, (ciò che si chiama la *mission shift*, cioè si comincia con una cosa e poi con il tempo si diventa altro) beh, dice Isaia, qui non c'è più la presenza dello Spirito. Quindi il rapporto, l'amicizia, la fraternità con i poveri è la precon-

dizione per non essere idolatrici. A me ha sempre colpito quanto afferma Francesco d'Assisi nel suo Testamentum, che è una specie di biografia: *io capii di essermi convertito quando andai ad Assisi al Rivo Torto e abbracciai e baciai il lebbroso, perché prima odiavo i lebbrosi ma la conversione mi portò ad abbracciarli e bacciarli*. Mentre lo Stato, il Governo, il Comune possono fare Ong e cooperative senza toccare i poveri, poiché se ne occupano i tecnici, un carisma non cura nessuna povertà senza abbracciare e baciare i lebbrosi. La tipica cura, il tipico carisma di amore per i poveri è un abbraccio, un bacio, la contaminazione con la povertà. Un portarli dentro casa, e non fare Ong per non vederli più, che è poi la cultura dell'immunità: pago fondazioni che si occupino dei poveri per non toccarli, non vederli, perché qualcun altro li tocchi.

La seconda dimensione che impariamo dai Profeti è che essi parlano con le parole ma parlano anche e soprattutto con i gesti. Isaia per esempio va in giro tre anni nudo per Gerusalemme, per dire: "diventeremo nudi, esuli se non ci convertiranno". Geremia invece va in giro con un giogo sulle spalle per dire: "diventeremo schiavi". Questi gesti sono forti almeno quanto le parole. Una missione, una scuola, un ospedale sono un gesto profetico. Quando una nostra opera, a differenza dei gesti dei profeti, non parla più, occorre capire se è l'ambiente che è cambiato o se semplicemente l'opera è diventata un segno muto, che non è più capace di parlare. Se abbiamo dei segni che non parlano, essi sono inutili. Quindi il senso che ha un'opera economica di un carisma è essere segno, parlare.

Una terza sfida che le opere carismatiche hanno di fronte riguarda il rapporto fra le domande e le risposte. Un'opera economica di un carisma rimane viva se è capace di cambiare le risposte storiche per essere fedele alle domande carismatiche. Pensiamo ad esempio a Don Bosco, ha fatto le scuole perché aveva in mente una domanda, un problema e il desiderio di far rifiorire i ragazzi di Torino, di fargli vivere la loro gioventù. Quindi per rispondere a quella domanda ha fatto delle cose: gli oratori, le scuole. Ma dopo 150 anni se vuoi essere fedele alla domanda originaria del carisma devi cambiare le risposte, perché se ti affezioni alle risposte ti dimentichi le domande: un carisma



muore se si dimentica le domande per affezionarsi alle risposte. Un carisma è vivo se cambia le risposte per essere fedele alle domande.

Riporto ora un mio articolo pubblicato qualche tempo fa su *Avvenire*, dal titolo “Il Controcanto dei Profeti”<sup>72</sup>

*La condizione naturale del profeta è l'insuccesso. Sono i falsi profeti a essere ascoltati e seguiti, a rispondere perfettamente alle aspettative del loro tempo. L'essere seguiti, raggiungere fama e onori, è sempre stato un segno inequivocabile di falsa profezia – e continua a esserlo. I veri profeti, invece, sono sempre fuori tempo, scomodi, antipatici, fastidiosi. Chiedono e gridano la difesa dei poveri, degli oppressi, delle vedove, degli orfani, lottano contro l'idolatria; e mentre lo fanno continuano a vivere in una società dove i poveri sono calpestati e sfruttati, dove gli idoli si moltiplicano. Come risposta alla loro denuncia incontrano persecuzioni, lapidazioni, e non di rado sono messi in carcere e uccisi. Conoscere e ripercorrere la storia dei profeti, di ieri e di oggi, è un grande insegnamento sulle dinamiche del potere, e quindi sulla natura di tutte le ideologie che, nella loro essenza, sono strumenti prodotti dalla classe dominante per accrescere potere e privilegi.*

*I profeti veri non amano la loro condizione di profeta. Non la scelgono, e se potessero farebbero altro. Pensiamo a Geremia e non solo. Però – e qui sta l'essenza di questa specifica vocazione – non possono scegliere. Non riescono a fuggire, anche se ci provano. I profeti non sono né migliori né peggiori di tutti gli altri: sono semplicemente diversi. Alcuni hanno addirittura pensato, e continuano a pensare, che i profeti siano inutili se non dannosi, perché le loro parole sono vanitas che non trasforma il mondo. Finiscono per illudere i poveri e gli emarginati promettendo una salvezza che non viene mai. Alcuni, molti, lo pensano. Ma si sbagliano. I profeti non conoscono soltanto l'incomprensione da parte del popolo, dovuta al loro "canto" in controtempo. C'è anche la persecuzione deliberata e intenzionale da parte di chi li comprende molto bene, e per questo li combatte. I Faraoni e gli Erodi ri-*

*conoscono i profeti, e per questo li temono più di ogni altra cosa. C'è, però, qualcuno che crede e ama i profeti. Sono i poveri, gli oppressi, gli umili, gli scartati, i lebbrosi. E non soltanto perché vedono nel profeta una speranza di riscatto dalla loro condizione ingiusta, ma perché si trovano nelle condizioni antropologiche e spirituali per capire la loro voce. Il Regno dei cieli è solo dei «poveri» e dei «perseguitati a causa della giustizia» perché nella loro condizione riescono a vederlo, a capirlo, a considerarlo.*

*I potenti, invece, amano molto i falsi profeti, fino ad amarli. Sono loro devoti adulatori, perché la falsa profezia confonde la coscienza collettiva e legittima le posizioni di potere. Ieri e oggi sul mercato abbondano intellettuali, scrittori, a volte uomini religiosi, che generano teorie e ideologie al solo scopo di giustificare il potere di chi li sostiene e li alimenta. Quando è troppo costoso o non conveniente eliminare direttamente i profeti, i potenti lo fanno indirettamente, assoldando i falsi profeti. Si comportano così come quelle piante che per difendersi dagli attacchi di alcuni insetti, generano odori e sostanze per attirare altri insetti predatori di quelli che li stanno minacciando. La principale virtù di chi si trova a svolgere una qualche funzione profetica è allora la capacità di resilienza e di resistenza nel perseverare nella condizione di frustrazione per il non ascolto delle parole che per vocazione si trova a pronunciare. Soprattutto quando i tempi diventano lunghi, le persecuzioni non hanno tregua, e la parola profetica deve continuare a essere pronunciata. Ma perché il profeta continua a dire la sua parola se non vede la fine delle ingiustizie né l'avvento di un nuovo regno dei poveri? Non certamente perché spera di convertire i potenti. Sa molto bene, o lo impara diventando adulto, che i faraoni sono inconvertibili. Non spera neanche nelle rivoluzioni dei poveri, perché sa che una volta diventati potenti, i poveri di oggi si comporteranno esattamente come coloro che ieri li opprimevano. Né sono uomini e donne delle riforme dei piccoli passi, che cercano un miglioramento graduale sul piano del possibile, qui ed ora. Questa visione riformista, altrettanto importante e co-essenziale, è quella delle (buone) istituzioni, non quella dei profeti. Il loro annuncio è troppo diverso dallo status quo, e*

<sup>72</sup> Luigino Bruni, *Il contro canto dei profeti*, pubblicato su [Avvenire](#) il 19/06/2016

nessun miglioramento marginale potrebbe rispondere adeguatamente alla loro profezia. Sono eterni insoddisfatti. Perché quello che annunciano è un regno troppo giusto, un Dio troppo vicino, un uomo troppo diverso. Ma la profezia non va confusa con l'utopia, perché a differenza della parola utopica (che spesso viene prodotta per distrarre da quella dei profeti), la denuncia profetica è sempre concreta. Chiama le persone per nome, fa azioni puntuali, compie gesti visibili usando i "vasi" e i "gioghi" di tutti. È un "già" che indica un "non ancora". Per questa ragione la parola dei profeti è sempre tradita, la terra promessa non è mai raggiunta, e la loro esistenza è segnata da una costante e crescente sensazione certa di fallimento e di sofferenza.

Per capire veramente che la felicità non è la cosa più importante nella vita, occorre conoscere i profeti. Il profeta non è felice, semplicemente perché la felicità non gli interessa. Non capirebbe né saprebbe rispondere alla domanda: "Sei felice?". Vuole soltanto restare una "voce che grida nel deserto", senza aspettare né sperare di vedere il deserto fiorito. I veri profeti gridano sempre nel deserto, e il molto caldo e la molta sete non riescono a zittire la loro voce. E quando vedono qualche segno di primavera, si chiedono se quei germogli non sono altro che il segno che la loro voce ha perso verità e profezia. Perché, allora, il profeta continua a parlare, a gridare, a perdere salute, benessere e non di rado la stessa vita? Semplicemente perché non può non farlo. È abitato da un mistero che non possiede, non conosce, che non gli ubbidisce. Ma se non dà voce a quella voce, muore davvero. È questo il triste e meraviglioso destino dei profeti. La splendida vicenda di Giona, nella radicale semplicità del suo genere letterario unico e paradossale, è tra le più rivelatrici dell'essenza di questa dimensione della vocazione profetica (le dimensioni della vocazione profetica sono molte, e non è affatto semplice ricondurle tutte a unità). Giona, come accade sovente ai profeti (Mosè, Geremia, Elia...), non risponde subito alla vocazione. Quando Giona riceve la prima chiamata a profetizzare su Ninive, fugge e si imbarca su una nave nella direzione opposta. Dopo essersi miracolosamente salvato dal naufragio (grazie al pesce), risponde alla seconda chiamata di JHWH e porta

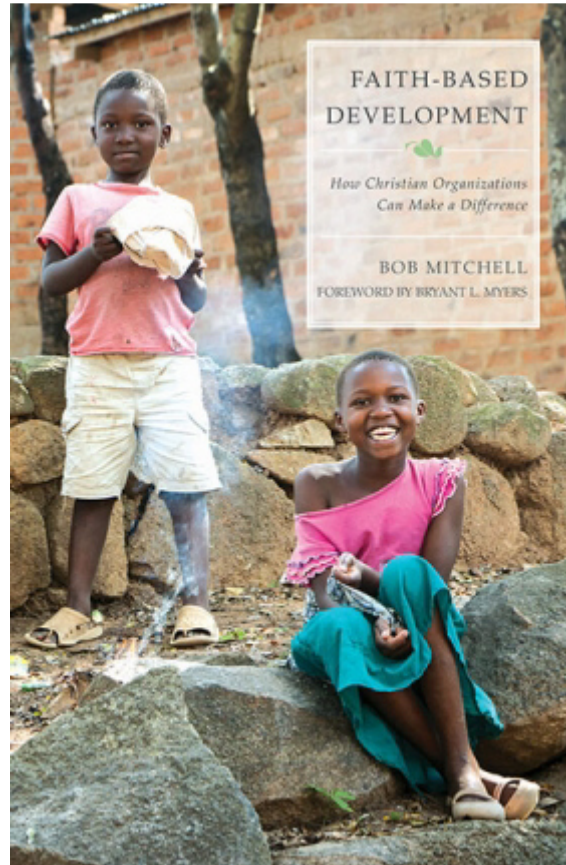
il suo messaggio alla grande città: «Ancora quaranta giorni e Ninive sarà distrutta» (3,4). E, evento eccezionale, la città di Ninive e il suo re si pentono e si convertono totalmente e immediatamente. Osservata la conversione, Dio cambia idea e non distrugge più Ninive, operando diversamente da quanto aveva detto per mezzo di Giona. Nessun profeta è il padrone della parola che deve annunciare per chiamata. Sa che Dio non si lascia ingabbiare neanche dalla profezia, che Lui stesso mette sulla bocca dei profeti.

L'aspetto più misterioso della storia di Giona è la sua delusione e rabbia di fronte al pentimento di Dio: «Ma Giona ne provò grande dispiacere e ne fu sdegnato. Disse al Signore: "Signore, non era forse questo che dicevo quand'ero nel mio paese? Per questo motivo mi affrettai a fuggire a Tarsis; perché so che tu sei un Dio misericordioso e pietoso, lento all'ira, di grande amore e che ti ravvedi riguardo al male minacciato. Or dunque, Signore, toglimi la vita, perché meglio è per me morire che vivere!"» (4,1-3). Questo dolore e questa indignazione di Giona possono dirci qualcosa di molto importante. I profeti sono i grandi amanti della parola. Per questo sono i suoi custodi. Come le donne e le madri sono le esperte e le custodi del corpo, i profeti lo sono della parola. Vivono solo di questo, non sanno fare altro. Ma non sono soltanto amanti e custodi delle parole che dicono: ne sono anche i grandi difensori. Nei confronti degli uomini, ma, ci dice Giona, sono difensori della parola anche nei confronti di JHWH. Siccome non ne sono i padroni, ne possono essere – e ne sono – i protettori. Più di un artista che custodisce la propria opera, il primo compito del profeta è proteggere la parola, anche quando il mittente della parola cambia idea. Se non lo facesse, la parola che annuncia presto si logorerebbe e si svuoterebbe. I profeti possono, difendere la parola di Dio da Dio stesso. La parola è sempre una cosa molto seria: i profeti hanno il compito di ricordarlo a tutti, anche a Dio, pur sapendo che non saranno ascoltati. Se i profeti non amassero la parola che annunciano più di loro stessi, sarebbero falsi profeti, mestieranti di una parola che vendono e non servono. Il paradosso della fine della storia di Giona si apre solo se prendiamo radicalmente sul serio la profezia, e non la tra-

*sformiamo in una faccenda soltanto etica o religiosa. La fedeltà alla parola di Dio è per il profeta più radicale dell'obbedienza a Dio stesso. È in questa fedeltà-obbedienza paradossale che il profeta vero è veramente fedele.*

*Chiunque nella vita abbia avuto un compito, svolgendolo con responsabilità, può intuire questa dimensione misteriosa e paradossale di ogni vocazione. I suoi momenti più preziosi e cruciali sono stati quelli quando ha dovuto proteggere quel compito e quell'opera proprio nei confronti di chi gliela aveva affidata. Continuare a crederci anche quando chi lo aveva "chiamato" non parlava più, o aveva cambiato idea. È su questa fedeltà tremenda e meravigliosa che si gioca molto della verità di un'intera esistenza. Anche per questa loro strana fedeltà non è facile capire i profeti. Ma non è impossibile. Dobbiamo almeno provarci. E così, dopo aver commentato negli anni scorsi Genesi, Esodo, Giobbe e Qohelet, da domenica prossima inizieremo a conoscere il primo profeta scrittore, forse il più grande di tutti: Isaia. E comincerà un nuovo cammino ora imprevedibile, certamente fantastico. Volevo quindi condividere con voi questa esperienza personale sulla dimensione della profezia, paradossale, ma che mi sembra interessante per la vita economica e per le responsabilità di ciascuno.*

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## Corruption risks and good practices in a sustained fight against corruption in ecclesiastical structures

### Statements on corruption by Pope Francis:<sup>73</sup>

“Corruption is worse than any sin because it hardens the heart against feeling shame or guilt and hearing God's call for conversion”.

“The martyrs of corruption -- those who end up paying the price for the politicians, financiers and church officials who abuse their power -- are the poor and the marginalized.”

(Ratification and accession of the United Nations Convention against Corruption by the Holy See on 19 Sep 2016).

### Transparency International

In 1993, a few individuals decided to take a stance against corruption and created Transparency International. Transparency International is a global movement sharing one vision: a world in which government, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption. Transparency International is now present in more than 100 countries.

### Definition of corruption by Transparency International:

“Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”.

It can be classified as grand, petty and political, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs.

**Motivation or pressure** may include financial problems, addictions like gambling, shopping or drugs, pressure to show good performance or results, or just the thrill of being able to get away with something.

Typical motives: College tuition, medical bill, gambling debts, drugs, child support, high lifestyle.

Opportunity is created when there are weaknesses in controls.

Individuals think they won't get caught because

nobody is looking, or reviewing, or performing checks and balances.

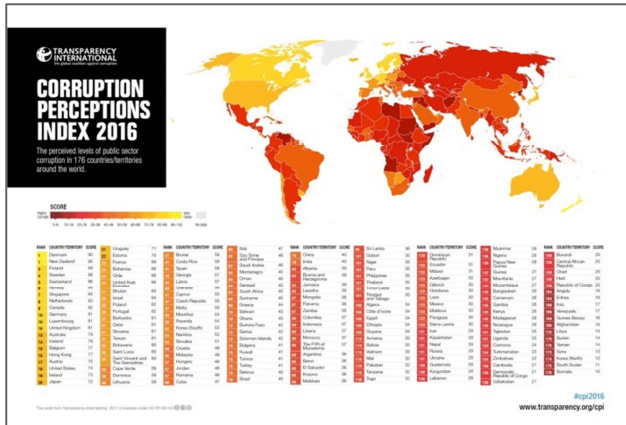
Rationalization is when individuals think they are justified because they are underpaid, or it's for their family, or they need it now but they'll pay it back before anyone notices.



Willi Kawohl

<sup>73</sup> Corruption and Sin: Reflections on the Theme of Corruption by Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, published 2005.





## Corruption takes place most likely in one of six departments:

- Accounting (22%)
  - Operations (17%)
  - Sales (13%)
  - Executive/upper management (12%)
  - Customer service (7%)
  - Purchasing (6%)
- Source: Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE)

## Typical rationalization

- I need it more than the organization
- I'll borrow and pay it back later
- Nobody will get hurt
- The organization is big enough to afford it
- I deserve it
- Everyone else is doing it

## Some typical personal characteristics

- Male, although females are catching up
- Age 31-45
- Married
- Educated-beyond high school
- Been with the organization over five years
- Member of a religious organization
- Socially conforming

Source: Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE)

## Corruption at high-level

Cause the greatest damage to their organizations.

Frauds committed by owners/executives were more than three times as costly as frauds committed by managers, and more than nine times as costly as employee frauds.

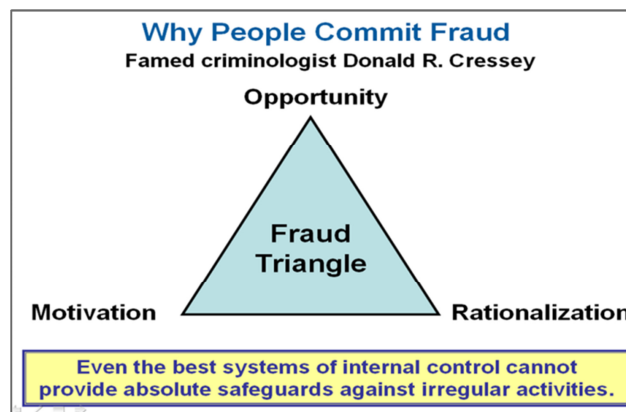
Executive-level frauds also took much longer to detect.

## Common risks of corruption

- Trust in employees without proper internal controls
- Lack of proper procedures for authorization
- Lack of clear lines of authority
- No

independent audits and checks on performance

- No separation of accounting duties
- Inadequate documents and records

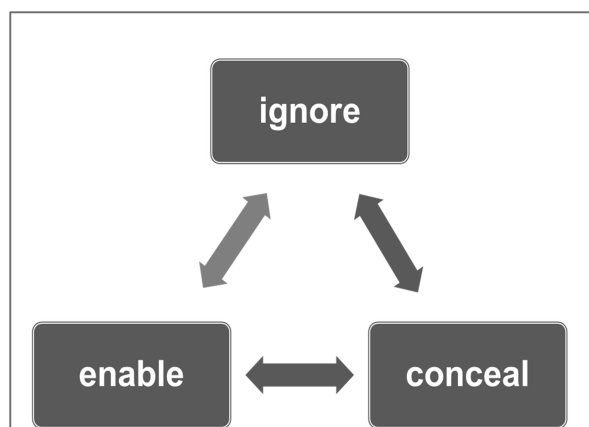


## Warning signs of corruption

- Very Unusual Behavior
- Lack of sense of loyalty
- Missing documents
- General ledger out-of-balance
- Unauthorized or excess purchases
- Ghost employees
- Inventory shortages
- Excessive overtime



## Cycle of corruption



## Three dimensions of integrity

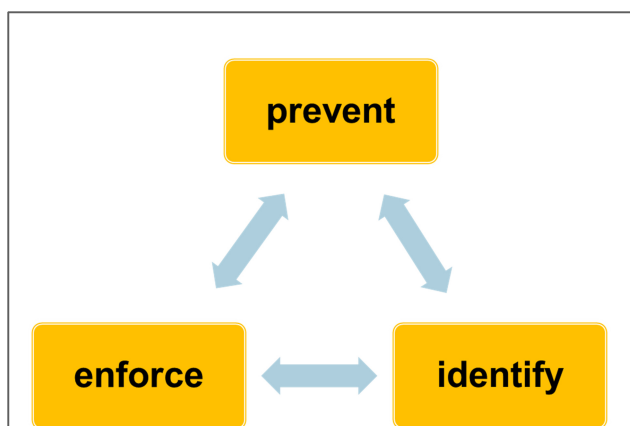
**Individual integrity**, which refers to the traditional understanding of integrity as honesty, appropriate behavior ('doing the right thing') or consistency between words and actions. It means that 'a person has conscious and consistent values that guide his or her decisions and actions'

Individuals are part of institutional structures that encourage or undermine the possibility of acting with integrity.

**Integrity of institutions**, which refers to the integrity on the level of an organisation, where integrity is defined as the correct functioning of the institution and fitness for purpose and being perceived as legitimate.

**Institutions of integrity** referring to the social norms and codes, including legal rules, that 'bind' individual behavior.

## Cycle of integrity



## Good practices in preventing corruption

There is no blueprint for designing and implementing effective corruption preventing practices. However, it is fundamental that these practices are tailored to your provincial context.

## Four key elements for effective practices

**Ownership:** Experience shows that wherever anti-corruption strategies have been adopted as an immediate response to corruption scandals or pressure from donors, rather than based on a genuine commitment, their implementation has mostly failed. Four key elements for effective practices. A successful implementation will depend to a large degree on a committed leadership team.

Participation means involvement of the leadership team and important social actors of anti-corruption strategies.

It is important to ensure the commitment of those involved, and to guarantee that the most pressing issues are tackled and that the diocese has the necessary capacity to implement the agreed anti-corruption activities.

Good knowledge base is particularly helpful in ensuring focused and practical action plans that are in line with main corruption risks. This knowledge base can draw on corruption risk assessments, surveys and feedback from church members and staff, among others.

## **Seven fundamental elements of an effective anti-corruption program**

### Effective training and education

**Orientation and continuing training and education at all levels** are a significant element of your anti-corruption program. Training and education is considered a necessity in order to provide committee members, staff, contractors and partners with the knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities in compliance with all requirements.

### Effective lines of communication

The **officer and committee through a variety of methods communicate to staff**, partners and contractors, the code of conduct, regulatory guidelines, and/or changes in the law.

### Risk Assessment and Annual Work Plans

The officer and committee **conduct on-going risk assessments** to determine the **types of risks the probability** of those risks occurring, and the impact those risks would have. The **committee** quantifies the risks and **develops the annual work plans** that identify those areas that will be monitored or reviewed and the **time-frame** or accomplishing those reviews.

### Enforcement of standards through disciplinary guidelines

Leadership **imposes sanctions** against those who fail to comply with its code of conduct, regulations, policies and procedures. The sanctions will be **appropriate to the severity of the violation**.

### Internal monitoring and auditing

The committee performs a **corruption risk assessment** on an annual basis and develops a **work plan for auditing and monitoring** based on risks identified. The officer supervises and coordinates systems for periodic monitoring and auditing compliance with legal requirements.

### **Anti-corruption program implementation**

Experiences with anti-corruption strategies have shown that **implementation remains a challenge because**,

- sometimes strategies are too ambitious in relation to the available capacity,
- Implementation of strategies require investments in expertise, personnel and technology,
- Implementation is also hampered by poor coordination and a lack of communication.

### **Effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation will depend on**

**Strong committee** responsible for monitoring the implementation of the anti-corruption pro-

gram should have sufficient authority, resources, capacity and backing to carry out its mandate and measures and report on progress.

**Adequate resources and capacities:** the design of the monitoring framework should take into consideration the available capacity and resources. Extensive and ambitious objectives might pose significant challenges to effective monitoring.

**Simple, meaningful, measurable and manageable Indicators** and monitoring and evaluation systems that it is feasible to collect, process and analyze according to the available capacity.

**A variety of monitoring methods** because the reliance on self-assessments can prove to be problematic. Leadership should thus rely on different types of assessment to monitor progress, including internal and external assessments like self-assessments, expert reviews, peer reviews, surveys and feedback mechanisms, among others.

**Involvement of other social actors:** like diocesan organizations, the laity, universities and other external stakeholders can both give credibility to the system and exercise pressure for change

### **Recommendations for best practices**

*(Selected from Corruption-Free Churches are Possible: Experiences, Values, Solutions, Prof. Dr. Christoph Stückelberger, Global Ethics Network)*

- Reflect on and renew the theological basis for overcoming corruption, especially in view of the doctrine of the triune God, in ecumenical perspectives.
- Reflect on and renew the ecclesiological basis for overcoming corruption, especially with the doctrine of church leadership as service and good stewardship, in ecumenical perspectives.
- Reflect on and renew the ethical basis for overcoming corruption in all fields of ethics, especially professional ethics, business ethics, political ethics, environmental ethics and sexual ethics.
- Code of Responsible Leadership for leaders and people in governing bodies of churches and church-related institutions.
- Decide on minimum standards for candidates for elections of positions in churches and

church-related institutions, including an anti-corruption clause prohibiting candidates from buying votes.

- Protect whistleblowers who give hints on fraud and corrupt practices in churches and church-related institutions.

- Manage real estate property (land and buildings) of churches and church-related institutions in an efficient, transparent way.

- Implement independent, credible and published financial audits and performance audits of churches and church related institutions.

- Strengthen sanction mechanisms in existing and new codes for transparency and against corruption and in other administrative mechanisms.

- Bring cases of corruption in church and church-related institutions where necessary to court

- Increase donor coordination, with financial transparency between donors and partners, with comparable reporting and anti-corruption standards.

- Build a network or networks of transparent and corruption-free churches and related institutions for exchange, research and mutual encouragement.

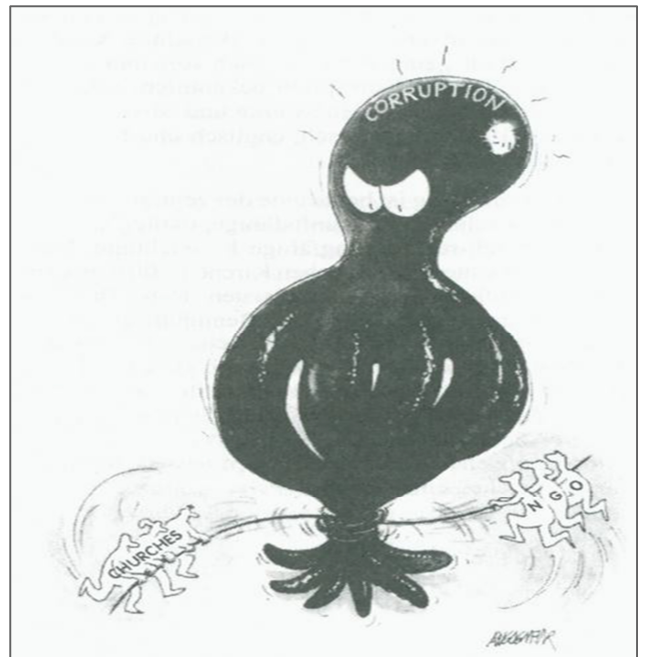
### Some recommended reading

- *Corruption Free Churches are Possible - Experiences, Values and Solutions*, Christoph Stückelberger, 2010 [www.globethics.net](http://www.globethics.net)  
[www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publications/](http://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publications/)

- *Corruption in Development Cooperation -a Problem that equally affects Church Organizations*, Working paper, 2007.  
[www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1403285.html](http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1403285.html)

- Cardinal Pell talks about Vatican reform by X. Rocca, Catholic News Service.

- *Corruption and Sin: Reflections on the Theme of Corruption* by Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina.



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# Some Participants' thoughts



**What are you taking with you from this Seminar?**

**Qu'est-ce que vous prenez avec vous, à la fin de ce Séminaire ?**

**Che cosa porterete con voi da questo Seminario?**

**Que es lo que te llevas de este Seminario?**

**-EN-** *I am grateful for getting such a rich seminar. I got many ideas, suggestions, experiences and enlighten me how to deal finance as a bursar. I am taking with me transparency, sharing and formation.*

**-FR-** *Chaleur humaine – Fraternité – Joie – Courage-*

*Je n'étais pas très chaud pour participer à ce séminaire... Mais Je suis très heureux d'avoir accepté, car c'était formidable... Toutes les conférences étaient intéressantes. J'ai appris plein de choses. BRAVO aux organisateurs, chapeu pour SEDOS et MERCI !*

**-IT-** *La gioia dell'incontro con altri fratelli e sorelle missionari, la ricchezza dei contenuti offerti dai relatori, il tema è stato infatti molto interessante e ho imparato molte cose. Il luogo era bello e l'accoglienza eccellente. Grazie per questa occasione di costruzione di comunione nella Chiesa!*

**-SP-** *Mucha enseñanza para mejorar mi tarea de ecónoma en mi provincia. Buscar ayuda de personas especializadas entendidas de Iglesia, para evitar errores en el cuidado del dinero de la Misión. Capacitar a otras (os).*

**What are the items you do not wish to put in your suitcase?**

**Quels sont des articles que vous n'aimeriez pas mettre dans votre valise?**

**Quali articoli non desiderate mettere nella vostra valigia?**

**Cuales artículos no te gustaría llevar en tu maleta?**

**-EN-** *MISTRUST and DISHONESTY. I do not want to put in my suitcase also misuse, corruption and pollution.*

**-FR-** *Tous m'ont intéressé, Je vais le prendre avec moi. L'influence culturelle, l'éthique, formation, prévention, collaboration, transparence.*

**-IT-** *L'indifferenza rispetto alla rilevanza etica delle nostre scelte.*

**-SP-** *El pesimismo, la sensación de no poder cambiar nada por que las cosas y decisiones escapan de mi mano. La ingenuidad y el pensar que todo esta "OK".*

**What concrete actions are you going to undertake to make known SEDOS?**

**Que ferez-vous concrètement pour attirer des nouveaux membres vers SEDOS?**  
**Quali azioni concrete avete intenzione di mettere in atto per attirare nuovi membri verso SEDOS?**  
**Qué harías tu, concretamente, para atraer nuevos miembros a SEDOS?**

**-EN-** *Share with others the SEDOS publication, make known the website.*

**-FR-** *C'est mon première experience au Sedos et je l'ai beaucoup aimé. Je vais partager ce que J'ai vecu ici aux autres. Ce sont des occasions pour nous religieux d'apprendre et partager ensemble.*

**-IT-** *Condividere l'utilità di questi giorni.*

**-SP-** *Con mi testimonio de haber participado y enriquecido mis conocimientos, compartiré a otros (as) congregaciones que aun no integran SEDOS.*

**Do you have suggestions for improvement? If yes, in which area?**  
**Avez-vous des suggestions en vue d'amélioration? Si oui, dans quel domaine?**  
**Avete qualche suggerimento per migliorare? Se sì, in quale ambito?**  
**Tienes tu algunas sugerencias en vista de mejorar? Si es sí, en que ambientes ?**

**-EN-** *More time for group work. Plenary reporting was good but we could use more time for group discussion and less time for plenary. We could share a lot and be enriched. We could not say everything in two minutes of reporting. But at the same time, creative energy was activated to make a short and effective reporting. Thank You!*

**-FR-** *Parler à d'autres congrégations et personnes et leur envoyer au moment approprié les informations sur les formations programées à SEDOS.*

**-IT-** *Sarebbe stato bello se ci fossero stati suggerimenti più pratici su investimenti etici e anche "ecologici"; su quali banche possano essere considerate validi partners.*

**-SP-** *De cara a la organización que todos los participantes estén alojados en el mismo lugar. Felicitar a los organizadores por la oportunidad de participar y ver tanta riqueza de personas y carismas.*

**Thanks for your participation !**





**SOME PICS FROM  
SEDOS RESIDENTIAL  
SEMINAR**

An initiative of SEDOS in cooperation with USG/UISG

## ***Appreciative Inquiry***

**Two-day Workshop to experience an alternative  
to the problem-solving approach**



by Professor Miriam Subirana Vilanova

***November 10-11, 2017***

**at the Marist Brothers**  
Roma, Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat 2

### **SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH AND SPANISH**

#### **Appreciative Inquiry**

Appreciative Inquiry is a ‘whole system’ process of inquiry into what **MOTIVATES** an organization, community, group and individual. It uses a set of principles to **DISCOVER** what motivates and to **PLAN** and **INNOVATE** what will **ENHANCE** life. Innovation emerges from the system itself. It is a possibilities oriented methodology that uses dialogue as the main tool, based on interviews in pairs, group dialogues and dynamic interaction to expand the dialogue to and beyond the whole group. The Appreciative Inquiry process generates closeness, understanding, connectivity, open communication, generation of ideas, innovation, empathy, trust and ownership of the proposals that are co-created.

#### **Benefits deriving from this way of being, doing and sharing**

- ☐ Improves communication fluency. Increase confidence. Positive dialogue and generative conversations of commitment and concrete actions are encouraged.
- ☐ Alignment with the values of our communities.
- ☐ A shared vision is achieved in which each feels that he/she has contributed and feels it. People are more committed and involved with greater motivation.
- ☐ Increasing the speed of change.
- ☐ New ideas emerge.



- ❑ It improves the climate of exchange and the well-being of people.
- ❑ Greater empathy and understanding is created among all members of the community.
- ❑ Cohesion between people.
- ❑ Clarifies the direction in which we want to move, and coordinates the energy, values, attitudes and practices in the same direction and thus obtain better results, i.e. make a greater impact on society.
- ❑ Promotes a sense of responsibility and an awareness of each other's contribution to work/live /share as a unified and linked group: what each one can add to when done with a systemic vision.
- ❑ Arouses individual and group awareness to the impact and importance of being active in offering deep and impactful solutions that can lead to renewal of practices and create a good atmosphere of coexistence.
- ❑ Explores attitudes that generate well-being, understanding and listening.
- ❑ Seeks to do things in different ways to achieve different results.

*Phase I. EXPLORATION AND DISCOVER*

*Friday, 10 November 2017, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm*

*Phase II. DREAM: VISION AND ASPIRATIONS*

*Friday, 10 November 2017, from 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm*



*Phase III. DESIGN: ARCHITECTURE OF PROPOSITIONS*

*Saturday, 11 November 2017, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm*

*Phase IV. DELIVERY: CONTRACTING THE FUTURE*

*Saturday, 11 November 2017, from 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm*

During this workshop, we will learn about Appreciative Inquiry by applying the whole process to the study of a theme that is relevant to all of us: **INTERCULTURALITY**

***Practical information***

*Venue: Marist Brothers- Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat 2 ROMA*

*Dates: 10-11 November 2017*

*Cost: 35 euro (without midday meal)*

*Participants: 80 maximum*

*Language: English and Spanish (simultaneous translation)*

*Enrollment: send an email to [redacted@sedosmission.org](mailto:redacted@sedosmission.org) before September 15, 2017*



Participants of Sedos Residential Seminar 2017

**THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!**

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**

**SEE YOU AGAIN!**

