

Some Theological Elements in Economic Explanations

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Abstract

The current crisis is the expression of “fall of man”, expressed through excessive greed and freedom, deficit of faith, love and responsibility, market without morality, science without humanity, politics without principles. The article shows that the current economic conditions of the world cause the man to live many “murderous passions”. The crisis maintained through these passions is likely to be solved through spiritualization, by returning to Christ. Only by adopting a Christocentric model can we turn to a life full of God’s love, to a fulfilled life. Such a model causes a leap of consciousness, that metanoia that leads us to the state of peace and happiness.

Keywords: *economic crisis, Christocentric model, spiritualization, suffering, education, human progress, consciousness.*

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*“Be always with God if you want
God always to be with you.”
St. John Chrysostom*

Introduction

We speak and write a lot about the global crisis. The well known physicist Fritjof Capra, in his paper *The Moment of Truth*, “considered the crisis to be unprecedented in human history”. Its multidimensionality lies in its moral-spiritual “root”, atrophied more and more by the process of secularization¹ and social development, consistent with an *anthropocentric model*. Such a model supports the idea that man does not need God anymore, that he alone can solve everything by using *science, reason*. Essentially, this model reflects the separation of sacred, separation from God’s Grace, of creation.

Philosophical and sociological studies concluded that the process of *social reconstruction* is doomed to failure if it does not begin with the moral rebirth and spiritual ordination of youth.

¹ Taşnadi, A., Zamfira, M., *Spre o educație creștină într-o lume secularizată*, Conference Educația din perspectiva valorilor, Chișinău 4-5 octombrie, 2013.

In fact, young people represent the window through which the future enters into the world. It is true that economic and technological progress has brought prosperity, but it "did not make the man more human", as Pope John Paul II said. On the contrary, we witness his dehumanization, his pronounced "fall" reflected by: excess of greed, scarcity of faith, love and hope, the will to power and domination, wealth without honest work, science without humanity, politics without principles, free market morality, "faceless" (as Pope Francis 1 said in a speech).

The Anthropocentric Model

Embracing the *anthropocentric model*, human being inclines towards a dark, negative freedom, seeking new idols close to the "killer" passions that dominate him:

- o love of Silver (MONEY);
- o the love of worldly glory (social ascent);
- o the love of pleasure (as a remedy for "existential vacuum" ²)

Even more, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, PF Daniel said: <<The financial and economic crisis in which the world is today is largely the result of greed and unfair gain, of financial speculation, worldwide tax evasion (see "tax havens" - emphasis added). When the rush for the material profit gained (which has become more important than the human person – emphasis added) *at any price*, without measure and without morality, becomes *a tyranny of the soul*, the capitalism becomes "wild" and it manifests as a passion for greed, "scientifically organized."... More damaging than poverty, like the lack of the material ones, is now, in times of financial and economic crisis, *the crisis of humanity*, meaning the weak will to be *honest and upright, industrious and generous*>>.

Why did we get here? Because we live by this model that generates fascination for other idols that replace God and seem to give hope, especially to young people: money, success, power, pleasure, position, possession etc. Living by this anthropocentric model, in heart of many is a sense of loneliness, of emptiness and inner desertification. Therefore, man is in a constant search for compensation from these idols that pass.

The human person needs another sanctuary built on the roots nourished by the lifeblood of the Christian faith. These roots take the form of intangible values that are in the spiritual heart of a nation, in its memory kept by its wise people: spirituality, charity, solidarity, communion, fraternity, joy, justice, goodness, beauty etc.

A social reconstruction based on these intangible values can be achieved only through a *leap of consciousness* from *the anthropocentric model* to a Christocentric one. This leap involves triggering a complex process of spiritualization³. At a theological level this means a process of assimilation of the teaching of the Holy Gospel, which teaches the coming back to the first love – God.

In fact, a shift, an awakening, a resurrection to a different lifestyle led by the *Christocentric model* assumes that the human person, immersed in this secular society, to live again *the joy* of the presence and closeness of God's love in his life.

Therefore, adopting the *Christocentric model* involves the orientation of man towards a rejuvenated obedience to Christ's teaching, in order to introduce in the social freshness the newness perennial, the fascination of the laws of the Scripture. The *spiritualization* process is leading to such a model, seen by us as the small solution to solve the global crisis.

² Frankl, V.E., *Omul în căutarea sensului vieții*, Meteor Press Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009, p. 119.

³ Popescu, C., Taşnadi, A., *Respiritualizarea. Învăță să fii OM*, ASE Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009.

Therefore, it is about discovering in the *Christian life* the focus of God's love, the Law of love, as sources of *life* and *joy*, as ferment of faith and our hope. If the Church wants to signal its presence in today's world, then we must assume a missionary role taking alongside servants of the Lord also *lay apostles* to confess God, to drink from the abundance of His teaching. Through these lay apostles or *intellectuals – witnesses*, the "Word" can become "food" for believers. Their meetings with the believers, their experience is modelling souls using the word can strengthen this process of spiritualization and so believers can see that Jesus' words are spirit and life⁴.

Re-Spiritualization, in a holistic approach resulting from the faith-philosophy-science dialogue, carried by these *lay witnesses apostles* is developed as a process because the Word of Scripture is presented as attractive, wonderful, full of life. Adopting the *Christocentric model* means to enter on a new path in order to find Christ. Walking next to Him (see the motto), as a friend, you can find answers to the deepest *anxieties* that were induced by this global crisis and discover the true sense of *the meaning of your life*.

This friend is the Way, the Truth and the Life; He is the only one capable of removing the deepest poverty of human person, such as the inability to joy, indifference and resignation, sadness and boredom of life.

In a secular world, that revolves around the *anthropocentric model*, *human life* appears absurd and contradictory. This can be told to man only by the person who has the Life, who is the Tree of Life, who is the wellspring of *love for life* and who can show him the true meaning of his existence.

We support *the belief in the certainty of hope*. What does this mean? It means to always have in the heart this certainty: God walks with us (see the motto) and He never *abandons* us. If He is the Hope, then transition to a life in Christ, to a *Christocentric* life makes us always keep hope alive, never extinguish it from our hearts.

On the road of life there might be trouble, difficulties, suffering. The crisis is a suffering that throws man in anxiety, depression.

Let us ask: Before 2008, when there was no crisis, did it all go well? A large part of the people of the nation has suffered. Did the words of Vicentele Ettiene Davignon, the President of the Bilderberg Group, make people feel better? Overcoming the crisis in 2014, will they live without agony, without anxiety, without fear for tomorrow? If we are on the brink of depression, are these the effects of the crisis or of this anthropocentric model?

In a book⁵ there is a made a reference to the words of an author: "Better send people to church than to a shrink!" This is what we say too. Hopelessness and depression spring from the lack of faith. In other words, if they had believed in God, in their Heavenly Father, their spirit would have been different and they would have changed.

We can not solve the crisis with the same thinking that created it (Einstein). Therefore, we need another thought, another leap of consciousness that makes us return to everyday actuality of virtues and Christian traditions.

This global crisis is testing our feelings, faith, sacrifice, selflessness, the extent to which we show mercy towards our peers, the extent to which we have a heart, we are generous, moved by the poverty of peers.

⁴ Holy Scripture, John, 6:33 (Sfânta Scriptură, Ioan, 6:33).

⁵ J e n s o n , R, *Piramida succesului. Organizațiile de succes prin oameni de succes*, Coaching Institute, CODECS Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004.

An *anthropocentric model* accepts the antinomy happy-unhappy. I wonder how can you feel happy knowing that the other is unhappy? Naturalness requires the following statement: I am happy if those around me are happy! How can one be happy living in such an unfair society?

The Switching to a Christocentric Model

We often define crisis as a result of imbalances that disturb the homeostasis of social economic system⁶. This is what St. John Chrysostom said while he was bishop of Antioch: "Know this: because we give preference to the earthly and corruptible, not spiritual ones, because we do all backwards, *distresses* come into our lives! (suffering caused by the crisis). We reversed the hierarchy of values, we messed up the order and natural harmony of things and that is why are all full of *disorder*".

Profesor Constantin Popescu⁷ refers to the reflections of a known psychologist who said that life is 10% of what happens to us and 90% how we respond to what happens to us. Therefore, the problem does not represent all, but the way we deal with the problem. Important is not the **crisis**, but our position towards the crisis! And positioning depends on the philosophy of life. An accurate positioning complies with teaching and living the Holy Gospel. The crisis means 10% and 90% is the way, the optics through which we see the crisis. This 90% is our choice, our attitude.

This attitude is the window through which we look at the world. *A clean window* can be kept like this just by claiming the Truth, the teaching of our Savior Jesus Christ. That is why we propose switching to a *Christocentric model*. "Seek first the kingdom of God and all will be added to you"⁸.

If the philosophy of our lives is rooted in the *Gospel* then we have the most precious wealth. Seeing life in the light of Christ we prioritize things from above, the spiritual food changing the philosophy of life. And so, according to the Law of Sowing and Harvesting we become what we think. Hence, attention to the mind, to the thought.

In their studies, psychologists and psychoanalysts believe that all problems, feelings, spiritual infirmities are controlled by the mind. According to the Happiness Index⁹ - adopted as a methodology by Buthan, in the undeveloped states people are happier than in the West. There, people show more intense "affection for Creation", smile more, are more cheerful. They do not stay around their walls, or behind the curtains at the window. They live in harmony with the Heaven, nature, with others and with themselves.

Considering education as a result of the quadrilateral: Family, Church, School, Media, we want to support the belief that the greatest destruction of the human psyche, in the human mind is made by the Press. This induces in human mind anxiety, fear, hopelessness, resignation. The media has as victims many "living dead", meaning spiritually dead people. Much of the "military" who serve Press destroy the truth, pervert it by promoting the lie as a way of life.

A common saying claims: God forbid the evil. In other words, *evil's enemy is worse*. And there is always something worse. And you never want *what is worse*. For example, does the crisis

⁶ Popescu, C., Taşnadi, A., Stanciu, M., *De la valoarea libertăţii la valoarea armoniei. Abordare ecologică*, ECOTREND 2012, "Constantin Brâncuşi" University, Tg. Jiu, 23-24 November, 2012.

⁷ Popescu, C., *Viaţa ca optimism tragic*, ASE Publishing House, Bucharest, 2011.

⁸ Matthew, 7:33

⁹ Popescu, C., *Despre viaţă şi economie*, ASE Publishing House, Bucharest, 2012, cap.VI - Viaţa şi fericirea, p. 231-280.

concern you? Is it bothering you, makes you suffer, causes you worries every day? Think of *the worst*.

Let us reflect to the words of the Holy Father¹⁰: "There are many difficulties in everyone's life and however great they may appear, God never leaves us to be immersed by them".

Mother Teresa always said that the hunger of love is bigger than the hunger of bread. We understand that love is connected to "to be", and bread to "to have". In our opinion, the *anthropocentric model* led to a deep rift between "to have" and "to be" that has degenerated into a deep crisis of moral and spiritual nature.

Adopting a *Christocentric model* requires harmony between "to have" and "to be", completed by "to do" and "to revive". Only a state of harmony can keep the freedom of "having", like the survival and the liberty of "being", for fulfilment.

The *Christocentric model* that is to be adopted through *spiritualization* is spreading the energy of life over the world reaching the state of peace that is wanted by the *real man*. The biblical principle "do to the others what you would like done to you"¹¹ means the end "of the war between the two". A crisis fuelled by the mentioned "murderous passions" can be solved only through a profound change of our position towards life. And this positioning means *being aware* that without Christ there is no light, no hope, love or future. In other words, all the necessary ingredients for building a *Christocentric savior model*.

The Belief in the Certainty of Hope

We remind you a famous line from the movie "The Sound of Music", with July Andrew: "Where God closes a door leaves open a window". People were left staring at the "closed door" (anthropocentric model). They got tired of looking for fresh air, light, dawn of a new era in which the spirit was coming back to the "first love". And the sentence that will be printed on the new model are the known words of Mary at the wedding in Galilee: "Do whatever He tells you!" Indeed, the release from the suffering of crisis will come when people commit to do what Christ will tell them. And they will do this with a strong belief in the certainty of hope.

It is about the hope anchored in the promises of God and which have as *certainty* the resurrection of Christ. This hope is the base of any *human progress*, the principle of any authentic Christian culture. Therefore, it means that the key root of the proposed model is of Christological nature because through the Word of God we light the flame for a new heart, stimulated by the Holy Spirit. Only adopting the Christocentric model does reality become the invitation that Jesus addressed to Nicodemus – and therefore to us – "to born again"¹². The spirit of the new model means giving up passions, sin and alienation from God in order to enter a relationship of love and friendship with Him.

Troubled by the crisis, on the brink of depression, those who go to the new model of existence, the Christocentric one, are supported by the friend who goes with him. "Come to me all those burdened and weary and I will give you rest", says the Gospel¹³. This means that those who follow Christ receive the inner peace that only He can give them. It is the peace through the great love. Living in the spirit of the *Christocentric model*, to harness at the "yoke" of Christ means denial of arrogance, of pride, act gently, being humble and human.

¹⁰ Pope Francis 1's Homily at the Mass from Aparecida, July, 24, 2013.

¹¹ Matthew, 7:13

¹² John 3, 1-8

¹³ Matthew 11, 28-29

The *Christocentric model* can seem pretentious. It can lead you to a new paradigm proposed to explain the evolution of the most beloved works of God: THE MAN.

If we declare ourselves and act like good Christians that means that at the base of our lives we put the Christian values expressed by the triad: *faith – hope – love*. Living in *faith* means that our life will get an even better taste and soon you will discover *its meaning and direction* that will lead to the port where the boat of your life will anchor.

Living in *hope* your future will appear in its true light, and you will not have to wander through the darkness. Living in *love*, your existence will look like a house resistant to storm and strikes, and on the path of your life you will always be accompanied by your friend – true fountain of love.

Adopting a *Christocentric model*, we put Christ in the center of our lives, gaining a friend (see the motto) we can always trust. Placing Christ in the center of our lives, we will live a future *full of joy*, traveling on the vigorous wings of hope.

A *Christocentric model* leads us to a life filled with the love of God, to a fruitful, fulfilled life.

Of course, our arguments make you ask: Why a life based on the *Christocentric model*? Think about it! You follow inertial an anthropocentric model or you are convinced of the need to move to the *Christocentric* one. In whom we trust:

- in ourselves;
- in the temporal, corruptible ones;
- in Christ.

Often we are tempted to say "Me, me, me,..." and advertising reinforces it through the words "because you deserve!" In other words, we fall into the temptation to always put ourselves in the center, confirming a word from the people: "do you think you are «navel» of the earth?" (center of the universe). We believe that only us, the people, are the ones who can build our lives (using science, economics, politics, culture etc.).

We Accumulate More and More

Embracing the *anthropocentric model* we believe that life is fulfilled or happy if we have wealth, money, power. Life can be regarded as "ephemeral" (according to Frankl's conception), fueled with the illusion of happiness. There are moments of drunkenness caused by *passions*. They possess us and determine us to accumulate more and more. We never have enough because the man enslaved by passions is not a *man of will* anymore. There is a boundless thirst for peace and it cannot be found. According to Dostoevski, these dominating passions reflect the *infinite thirst* of man turned in a direction where he cannot find his satisfaction¹⁴. There is much truth in the words of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer according to whom: "we rarely think about what we have, but always of what we lack."

We become "gorged", but not fed. A Christian in thought, word and deed must *feed himself with his faith* and not fill his belly with *pleasures* like the unmerciful rich.

Putting Christ in the center of our lives we put our trust and hope in Him and thus we will not know disappointment.

Faith in the mentioned triad determines in our lives a revolution that we can call the *revolution of consciousness*.¹⁵ Such a revolution accomplished through the cooperation between science

¹⁴see Stăniloai, D., *Despre patimi*, available at www.crestinortodox.ro.

¹⁵Laszlo, E., Grof, S., Russell, P., *Revoluția conștiinței. Noua spiritualitate și transformare planetară*, Elena Francisc Publishing, Bucharest, 2010.

and faith would save humanity. Already, this world dominated by consumerism, hedonism, power of money and worldly glory is heading for *collapse* if we do not abandon the old model of life, the anthropocentric one.

Spiritualization, through which we make the transition from "ANTHROPOLOGY" to "HRISTO" takes us out of the center – we humans – and puts Christ in the center.

The wake up call in terms of Conscience and faith was announced by Vaclav Havel through his speech in front of the U.S. Congress (1992): "Without a *global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness* nothing can change in better and the catastrophe towards which this world goes – the ecological, social, demographic collapse or the general one of civilization – will be unavoidable."

Faith immerses us in the love of God, which is the eternal source of love, providing a greater security (against anxiety), greater strength and hope.

Apparently nothing changes through spiritualization, but everything changes within ourselves. Always change comes from within. When we put Christ in the center of our lives, peace "nestles" in our hearts, affection towards the entire Creation, goodness, courage and joy of living. In other words, many gifts of the Spirit¹⁶.

Adopting a *Christocentric model* of life, our existence *transforms* our way of thinking, choosing and acting is renewed.

Putting faith at the base of the process of *spiritualization* will be reached that leap in consciousness, that revolution that will lead the human person to a life that will make sense and be fruitful. Adopting the new model of life, people will learn the language of love, goodness and beauty. Every man will be able to say that he brought into this world a little light, just because he went through its struggle.

Therefore, the authors urge you to say YES daily and to let yourself to be loved by Christ, a friend who does not disappoint us (see motto).

Econothology – a New Paradigm

Our belief is that *interdisciplinary sciences* were born, as much as possible, naturally. In other words, they are focused on *solving problems*. This is the way in which occurred, for example: economiphysics, biochemistry, biotechnology, astrophysics, ecolonomy, econothology etc. The problems we face today are so complex that fragmentation, specialization does not provide answers to reality. It requires integrated research programs aimed at solving problems. We refer here especially to *problems of development* (social and economic). If we accept the idea that Western world was built on *Christian values and virtues*, then we also accept the power of words "without Me you can do nothing". In an increasingly *secular* and *individualistic* world, the solution which we advocate is the *Christocentric model*. This essay is a cooperation between science and faith. In this respect, the words of Alfred North Whitehead are relevant: "More than anything else, the future of civilization depends on the way in which the most powerful forces of history, science and religion are established in relation to each other". There are to be mentioned here also the thoughts of Father Patriarch Daniel, thoughts that led to our proposal to use a new paradigm in economics, that we call *ECONOTHEOLOGY*. It is a branch of research in economics that aims boundary problems arising from economics and theology. These thoughts are particularly relevant: "Secular professor or researcher will bring an irreplaceable original contribution to theology. Employed in the world, he can see more of the dogma's consequences on the Christian life and also he can identify problems or aspects that are not

¹⁶ Galatians 5:22

known by the clergy. His role is especially important in problems related to borders¹⁷ ". In this case, it is about *theology* and *economics*.

So, *ECONOTHEOLOGY* is an interdisciplinary field that explains economic and social behaviors through the teaching of Holy Scripture and the patristic. The prefix "econo" followed by the term "theology" represents a philosophical approach in which the arguments are based on a *Christocentric model*, explaining the future *economic development* of the planet.

Let us remember Einstein's words who told us that we cannot solve the important problems that we are facing at the same level of thinking that we were when we created these problems. We agree with these wise words only on condition that *Christ* is part of this "equation". The contemporary man is not looking so much for the presence of *God*, becoming more and more portentous, filling the void left with the cares of this world. He is the *secularized* and *individualized* man who is looking through his science, technology and knowledge for solutions to the problems that surround him, being enslaved by the archetypes of his thinking.

Even the first chapter of the Holy Scripture makes known the purpose of our life – *deification*. That means that God perceived man after "His own image".¹⁸

"After his image" means *charismas* that God has given to man. We mention a few: the rational mind, consciousness, free will, creative power, love, yearning for truth, self-consciousness. By this, he becomes *man* and *person*.

The creator, God by nature, calls man to become *god by grace*. It means, "like Him". As a result, today's secularized man can find the meaning of life by restoring God in being. This is the *essence of the Christocentric model*. Starting with this essence, *ECONOTHEOLOGY* will explain human behavior and the changes required in his conscience and his philosophy of life. We start from the premise that a determinant factor of the direction we follow in life is *the way we think*. Thoughts compose our philosophy which determines *our system of values*.¹⁹

Conclusions

The conclusions that we draw based on the system of values determine how we act every day. We make decisions, we use our free will taking into account the things we consider *valuable*. Therefore, a *Christocentric model of thinking* is based on Christian values and virtues and also on learning the Holy Scripture and the Fathers.

The spiritual dimension should occupy an increasingly important place in *our thinking* and for this we must get inspired from the great reservoir of *Christian values* which is represented by the rich traditions of the Christian religion. Human survival with God's creation²⁰ involves the development of a *creative* and *compassionate* planetary consciousness²¹. We need to redefine the coordinates of our thinking, to leave the traditional paradigm and to believe in our hope, that is Christ²².

¹⁷ Daniel, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, *Teologie și spiritualitate*, Basilica Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010, pag. 271.

¹⁸ Arhimandrit Gheorghe Kapsanis – *Îndumnezeirea – scopul vieții omului*, Evanghelimos Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, pg. 10-11.

¹⁹ R o h n , J., *Cele cinci elemente esențiale ale vieții*, Amaltea Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, pg. 16.

²⁰ R a b h i , P., *Manifest pentru o nouă relație a omului cu pământul*, Basilica Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009, pg. 7.

²¹ L a s z l o , E., *Punctul haosului. Lumea la răscruce de drumuri*, Pro Editură și Tipografie, Bucharest, 2008, pg. 146.

²² T a ş n a d i , A., *Despre credința în certitudinea speranței*. Paper presented at the round table organized by the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University "1 December 1918", Alba Iulia, December 3rd, 2013.

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