"OVIDIUS" UNIVERSITY IN CONSTANTA

DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

DOCTORAL FIELD THEOLOGY

THESIS

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THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN PSYCHO-PEDAGOGY IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE. INTERCONFESSIONAL APPROACH

Summary

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Content

Modern psychology has amputated the transcendent side of man, because it promoted a reductionist vision in which the soul is limited only to irascibility and lust, to its irrational side, without even questioning the idea of a religious man or with aspirations towards religious education.

Educational psychology refers to the soul primarily through the mind, which limits the capacity for introspection. The mind also deals with the perception and understanding of psychological experiences, the knowledge of the truth, but it is an incomplete perception, compared to the treasure of experiences, knowledge and religious symbols that the universe of faith offers.

All cognitive processes and psychological theories fail to trace the religious identity of man, created in the image and likeness of God. "The modern secular school only partially responds to the spiritual needs of the child; it interprets culture only imperfectly. The current modern secular instruction does not open the way for the child's life at all, it sends him to a crossroads of humanism on the one hand, as well as Christianity on the other. She describes the Christian way as abstract and unreal, therefore incapable of life".

What Christianity has always testified to is the personal character of the human being, a human being who has an image after the image of the Son of God. Through such considerations, a fault is created in psychology and religion, of which the most damaged is man, reduced to only a rational being. The process of deification of man is non-existent in modern psychology.

For this reason, any form of psychological therapy does not correspond to a holistic view. Certain consequences can be observed following psychological phenomena, whether individual or collective, but they cannot provide a complete answer to a situation that falls under the magnifying glass of psychological research. Moreover, psychotherapy either does not work or the results obtained are not long-lasting. In the religious field, the mystery of repentance bears fruit in all forms of psychological impasse, especially since that is where divine grace intervenes.

Psychology, through its promoters, looks at spiritual art with a certain air of triumphalism, either because it considers itself superior, or because it would lose its identity through a closeness

to Christian spirituality. Only, by approaching the spiritual art of the great Christian clergymen, they would acquire new methods of guiding people towards a spiritual and mental balance. In this way, the frames of a personal development by itself would be overcome and a deeper understanding of man's likeness to God would be acquired.

This vision is essential in the field of religious psychology, and constitutes a mandatory landmark in order to achieve the proposed goals in terms of the educational act or the therapeutic act in human life: "We sow, we water, we care, but only Christ the Pedagogue has the power and it makes people grow in perfection to the likeness of God". Divine grace is the connecting element of man with the Kingdom of God, grace which the Holy Fathers say is "intrinsic to human nature... it is not a gift added to man". Even the greatest sinner on earth is not without divine grace.

God's mercy or indulgence offers every person, through grace, a return to faith. Unlike those who deny the existence of grace through deeds contrary to faith, those who value the uncreated divine grace through acts of love and faith will have a much deeper knowledge of their own person and will become educational factors of positive contamination in the community from which i belong The pedagogy of salvation has at its center, since childhood, the stimulation towards the knowledge and practice of virtues.

The pedagogic-diaconal mission of ecumenical Christianity represents the Church's fundamental choice to identify with God's ministry of world reconciliation, through word, deed and attitude. In this model, the other, Christian and non-Christian, is conceived first as a person, who is included in God's mission of reconciliation, and therefore he or she is a fellow to be served. In the 19th century, diaconia in mission was mainly understood as a ministry dedicated to the spread of Christianity, and therefore focused mainly on non-Christians. But starting in the 1950s, this changed to a more comprehensive view of diaconia. This holistic interpretation of diaconia as a missionary vehicle of education led to the participation of the Church in the desires of reconciliation, liberation and social changes and led to cooperation with people of other faiths. In evangelical circles this change in the interpretation of diakonia is not shared and the subordination of diakonia under the strict aspect of evangelization is maintained.

The more recent, ecumenical interpretation of the diakonia model, as a way of bringing injustices such as corruption, human rights violations, the plight of refugees and disabled people to the general public, is much closer to the evangelical ideal established by Lord Jesus Christ. This

new interpretation presents a clear sign of the Church's service and reconciliation in society and offers possibilities for cooperation with people of other faiths. The concern for education is, in this sense, a standard of Christian cults in the dialogic mission work carried out throughout the world.

Education, according to Clement Alexandrin, also involves the involvement of all aspects of spiritual life, Christian virtues and charic elements, and through them the psychic phenomena are fully manifested: "Pedagogy is faith in God, it is teaching to serve God, it is training towards the knowledge of the truth; it is righteous living, which leads to heaven". Which will determine a complete vision of human soul therapy. In postmodern times, the idea of spiritual life has been emphasized, but not as promoted by Christianity, but through all kinds of so-called spiritual therapies, methods, techniques and exercises, which have created more confusion among people.

For this reason, psychological theories such as psychoanalysis, positive thinking, etc. were valued. These theories remove man from the source of Christian education, the most suitable for his existence and becoming. Man must be seen as a whole being through all his sides: the material and the spiritual (subconscious, unconscious and transconscious).

Within the Christian educational process, the emphasis is more on sobriety and less on a playful manner. "The pedagogue of mankind, the divine Word, using all the mastery of wisdom, wants with all its power to save babies; advises them, blames them, scolds them, argues with them, threatens them, heals them, promises them, gives them". Through this type of education, children first learn about respect and piety, essential conditions to define an educated person.

In this way, children develop the capacity for social relations through which they will know how to relate to God as well. Through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, children will be guided on the path to perfection by the Holy Spirit through His grace and gifts. Theological disciplines deal with the Christian education of man throughout his whole life, and start from the inside out. That is, it acts at the level of the soul through inner motivations related to acquiring the Kingdom of God.

From this point of view all other motivations find their meaning as long as they are claimed from the perspective of salvation. In the process of Christian education of children, the attention of the little ones is directed towards the model of the supreme pedagogue, Jesus Christ: "Wandering in this life as in deep darkness we need a leader who does not make mistakes, a sure

leader. And the best leader is not man, but the Word". We insistently refer to the two natures of Christ the Savior (Phil. 2, 5-11).

The harmonious development of the child, the spiritual ennoblement also presuppose acts of faith, from the earliest age. From the first years of life, the child must also be guided from the point of view of spiritual life, which will help the child to deepen the mysteries of faith later. The human person is also involved from an affective, emotional and spiritual point of view. "The force of education only flows from the living source of the human personality. No statute and no program, no mechanism of the school institution, no matter how ingenious and well thought out it may be, can replace the personality in the field of education".

In contrast to modern education which is more concerned with intellectual training or the deepening of practical skills in order to obtain a professional certificate. The heart is the center of man and any form of education should have as a benchmark or starting point the development of the personality through a complete education that also refers to the spiritual depths of the soul. Modern education is mainly concerned with the rational part of the soul, by giving priority to some information about the studied subject.

The educational system, in order to achieve its goal, should deal not only with the cognitive, rational part, but especially with the aspects that form the moral character of man. From the emphasis on the moral character, it emerges that man is a social being, in a permanent search for communion with his peers. The goal of education is precisely this state of communion for the human being to reach. Only through this man finds the meaning of existence.

Communion with fellow human beings presupposes a relationship of love, unfettered by any impediment. The current disciplines that students study, elude precisely this drilling of theirs by explaining and deeply appropriating the notion of freedom through love, of communion, the essential frameworks that trace the true identity of man.

Normally, these aspects should not only be present in the theological space, but also in the field of educational psychology. Only then could we speak of a psychology of education that exhausts all sides of the human being in order to give him an authentic and complete identity. This reductionism practiced by the educational sciences removes Christian education from the education system and endangers the beautiful growth of all children.

The family is the child's first educator in terms of the child's religiosity, the way the child will later transform religious teaching into the art of living: "The aim of those who marry, he says, is to beget children, and their aim is to have good children , as for the plowman the reason for throwing the seeds is the care for food, and the plowman's goal in working the land is to gather the fruits".

It is a parental duty that should not be neglected; the benefits of this struggle of the parents for the religious education of the child will be seen in time. The formation and initiation of children in spiritual matters within the family is the foundation of any religious education.

The child will constantly refer to the religious ones acquired in the family, especially since it is not about theoretical teachings, but assimilated through experience. In terms of practicing the virtues, the example of the parents is very important. The child will imitate the behavior of the parents.

Knowledge is supported by several means such as the word, parable, metaphor, symbol, through which the premises of a discursive knowledge are created. Moreover, through the word attention is deliberately directed to the Word of God, the source of all knowledge.

All these ways or means of education open and invite the young shoots towards a universe of divine beauty, which has an overwhelming impact on the educational process, on the process of self-knowledge, on all aspects of life. The ideas transmitted within the educational process find their purpose as long as they shape the moral life of man.

All religious teachings and ideas help man to acquire the Christian virtues which, once planted deep in the soul, will bear fruit in due time for a complete education. In this spiritual depth, well-assimilated information is converted, through revelation, into a fruitful inner life, full of meaning. That is why we can say that religious education "can become an opportunity for inner fortification, for self-identification, for discovering ideals, for reconverting the person to the world of absolute values".

The finality of religious education is the beautiful, balanced, discerning and common-sense, altruistic man. The theoretical part is a premise towards the practical or empirical part. The religious man is not a creation by himself, but emphasizes his identity through permanent reference to God, the source of light and truth.

As the general meaning of education is to make man think, the meaning of the gift of discernment or discernment is to help man know man's true identity. But not of the autonomous man, but of the one who lives in communion with God and fellow men.

From a psychological point of view, religious education does not only deal with the transmission of information of a religious nature, but also considers a "shaping or reforming the person from the perspective of higher value standards". By relating to God as the essential principle of life and spiritual balance, the human person learns to differentiate between what is morally good and what is bad, and to always choose good as the source of his own becoming in Christ.

Currently, the pedagogical character of missionary diaconia is perceived as an independent ministry of the Church. People and societies have always appreciated the educational services provided by all Christian denominations. It must be emphasized that through the dedication of Christian churches, millions of people have been given access to education, guidance and medical care. The impact of this fact cannot and should never be underestimated.

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