

Crucified as a Necessity: The Relevance of Moltmann's Theology for Evangelical Believers and their Social Commitment

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Summary

What does it mean today to live as a believer? Or, more specifically, what does it really mean today to live as a follower of Christ? Is our life, the life of those who have decided to take a step to belong to Christ, different from the lives of other people around us, and in what manner? By asking these questions, the author is interested in one distinctive component of our lives: the wider community, living with others, and when we encounter politics, in a somewhat neglected ancient sense of that word. This is where the reality of life meets the crucified Christ because this is the sphere where our values are best reflected because they are shaped by the everyday trials of blending in with the prevailing dictatorship of relativism. The issue of the active engagement of a Christian believer in socio-political life arises as an unavoidable question before many theologians of the twentieth century. Among them, Jürgen Moltmann is certainly a key one.

*This text emphasizes that God's promised future relates to and includes our present: hence, the focus of Jürgen Moltmann's analysis is the crucified one and his invitation to discipleship that requires not only personal transformation and a change in our relationships, but also an active participation in the process of changing existing social circumstances. The article will start from the basic assumptions of Moltmann's theology outlined in his book *The Crucified God*. While talking about God, the author actually provides an answer to the question: What kind of discipleship are we called to today by the one who was crucified? The article will pay special attention to the shift introduced by Moltmann, an entirely different approach or question: If social engagement is*

necessary, how does it relate to the sphere of Christianity, or more specifically, what should Christians be like in order to live in harmony with others?

Key words: crucified, cross, political theology, social engagement, accountability, discipleship, God's future in presence

Inheriting Christ as an Obligation

There was actually one Christian and he died on the cross (Nietzsche, 1999, 22).

A child in one of surrounding villages told me in his bad English that God is prayed here. What would be a better and more challenging definition of the difference between Christian and Muslim or Jew? (Chesterton, 2004, 186).

Theology is not a closed construction or system of knowledge meant only to be studied within a church and/or an academic surrounding. Theology is alive and vivid, an interpretative science stemming from the beliefs of certain religious communities, and seeking public relevance of advocated convictions. Theology should not or could not be separated from actual social situations, therefore, dialogue between theology and society, theology and philosophy, sociology, psychology, history, and politics is certainly desirable and necessary. These questions are surely important, especially in the light of the democratic society in Croatia to which we aspire, but also in the light of liberal capitalism. If evangelical Christianity has nothing relevant to say about today's life, about the values of Croatian democracy, about the challenges of freedom of choice, extreme individualism and personal alienation, about poverty and social exclusion, marginalization and the degradation of different people, then the question arises as to whether that kind of Christianity is really able to do anything about inheriting Christ by allowing positive change in our society.

An encounter between reality and the crucified Christ happens within the framework of political life¹ understood as a sphere where ethics and politics

1 I emphasize here the somewhat lost meaning of politics in terms of life – the social, active participation of citizens - individuals in decision-making at all levels of community, in order to achieve a higher, common goal. Contemporary use of the word “politics” is more often associated with the activities of individuals in terms of achieving immoral personal interests considered above general social interests. For the etymology of this word, see the Croatian Encyclopedia of Lexicographic Institute “Miroslav Krleža”. This term is actually a derivative of the Greek words *tà politiká* (civil authority) and *hē politikē* (political skills), but also *políticos* (civil) and *polítēs* (a member of the polis as a political community – a citizen). It seems that

meet, that is, politics in Aristotle's sense: "Only morally good citizens make their community successful and vice versa, fairness and wisdom of law guarantee the perfecting of citizens" (Senković, 2006, 43). This is an actual sphere where "from *promissio* opened to us by God's future, follows *missio* in the midst of history" (Moltmann, 2009, 216), and therefore, within this sphere, our values are best reflected because they are shaped by the everyday trials of blending in with the prevailing dictatorship of relativism.²

Among contemporary theological reflections on the relevance of theology in relation to social events and life itself, those of Jürgen Moltmann are especially valuable (Hamburg, April 8, 1926). When he reflects on God's future, he also thinks about our present. Therefore, promise, hope and mission, faith and love, acceptance and the responsibility of inheriting Christ occur within the very heart of his theology since the event of Christ (incarnation, life, crucifixion, death, and resurrection) has been perceived as confirmation of the promise related to a radical future of resurrection and life.

Bearing in mind that the primary interest of this article is the issue of a believer's engagement in light of the call raised by the crucified God to follow him, our key focus will be the book *The Crucified God* which begins and ends with issues of love and the dialectical inner being of God himself, and moves to determine the relationship between the crucified one, God, and the cross as a place of continuity and the personal identity of the crucified and resurrected Christ, and ends in inviting the individual to act responsibly. Therefore, the article will be comprised of three parts: the first part is about God as love, human's companion and fellow sufferer; the second part is about the crucified one and his cross, his dialogue and passionate relationship with God the Father and the Holy Spirit; and the third part is about humans as responsible to God because the call of the crucified one was accepted and consequently involves the believer in society.

civil society organizations follow the idea of revitalizing the original/first meaning of "politics", and they are calling citizens to participate in decision-making processes at all levels of society. See Research and Studies: G. Bežvan, S. Zrinščak, M. Vugec, "Civil Society in process of gaining confidence in Croatia and developing partnerships with government and other stakeholders", CERANEO and CIVICUS, Zagreb, 2005; J. Balaban, *In search for identity. Comparative Study of Values: Croatia and Europe*. Golden Marketing - Tehnička knjiga, Zagreb, 2005 etc.

- 2 Here I have in mind the concept of ethical relativism penned by Pope John Paul II in *Centesimus annus. Lettera enciclica nel centesimo della Rerum Novarum*, 1991, where the pope warns about forms of manifestation of this totalitarian attitude in negation of truth, negation of person, negation of primary human rights, natural laws, etc. See: Ivan Fuček, "Može li se Bog opravdati?" (Can God be justified?), article available at: hrcak.srce.hr/file/84683, accessed on February 16, 2014.

God as Companion and Fellow Sufferer

Moltmann's books *Theology of Hope*, *The Crucified God*, and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* written in 1960-1980 may be viewed as a trilogy with a central focus on the crucified Christ. These are books in which Moltmann speaks about a different God, one that was not only crucified outwardly, but also inwardly. He speaks about a God who is abandoned, about a suffering God divided within himself, but also about a God who is inseparable – one in the Holy Spirit and, as such, closest to humankind (Volf, "Afterword", in Moltmann, 2005, 380).

Moltmann affirms the idea of a concrete-human God and God as a fellow sufferer. His approach opposes abstract existence; God is located within human existence that is internal and concrete, but also, more specifically, within the horizon of suffering! Moltmann does not anticipate God as definitive (factual) and passively present within an overall system, but as someone who is in constant communication, in relationship with himself and creation. As *Communio* (Dogan, 2006, 3), God is a trinity presented in a trinitarian love relationship, and self-surrender becomes the key element in understanding him. For these reasons, the same author in another text will say that the relationship between God and human is a continuous dialogue, not just any dialogue, but a conversation enabling the "realization" of humans, a permanent process of creation through changing, learning and adjusting through a multitude of "errors and a lot of effort" (Dogan, 1993, 13). Such a dialogue is ultimately possible because a human is a "person" (Dogan, 1993, 13) representing a reflection of divinity. This kind of relationship is possible also for another reason: God's compassion manifested in God's co-suffering! Jesus' death represents "God's self-declaration within history" (Rahner, in Dogan, 2006, 4), God's testimony and the manifestation of his love for himself and for humanity (Dogan, 2006, 4). Therefore, trinitarian theology according to Moltmann is actually presented by the Father who gives the Son, and the Son who gives himself. The Holy Spirit stems from that sacrifice in trinitarian unity.

This thesis is a "hard" one (John 6:60), even "ultimate" (Fuček, 1978, 4). It nullifies common thinking about God created on the basis of the human experience of one God who is other than a human, timeless, immense, eternal, independent, sovereign, free, perfect, and holy, an absolute creature which creates everything but was created by noone. Such qualities characterize a philosophical image of God created by the Greeks, developed by neoplatonism and medieval scholasticism, and inherited and adopted even today. Kierkegaard was right when he said that faith appears as a final act of surrender, actually as an act of abandonment of reason and its requirements, by accepting its limitations and opening itself to God's action (Kierkegaard, 2000).

Christianity is a distinctive lifestyle which necessarily exceeds church sur-

roundings and enters the world, permeating the profane with the sacred, the “here” with the “upcoming”. In this context, Moltmann emphasizes the concept of Shekinah by saying that Israel’s covenant of promise relates to the promise of residence, but also to the promise of egress because “the eternal One comes down and shares Israel’s fate in order to lead His people to freedom.” It relates also to the promise of exile because God is “present in obedience and the Š’ma Israel prayer” as a “companion and fellow sufferer of His people in the foreign lands of this world”. Ultimately, it relates to the glory of his presence “that fills with happiness and life within the misery of exile” (Moltmann, 2009, 215). Therefore, Christian theology is a theology of God’s presence (Shekinah) in us which is manifested in our lives and actions in relation to society and history because his presence “embodied God’s promise and the presence of the Spirit of the upcoming God” (Moltmann, 2009, 215). Therefore, evangelical Christians should not follow the way of hostility, but the way of “intelligent love”, an effort of “enabling co-existence” with the enemy, possible only by tearing the devil’s circle of “hate and contra-hate, violence and contra-violence” that leads to death. Evangelical Christians should cover everything with the “love of life, love of life together” (Moltmann, 2010, 169). Moltmann thinks that political engagement in terms of the public engagement of each citizen, but especially evangelical Christians, is a necessity. Christians do not live in a vacuum, but in a community, and their faith permeates all aspects of social and public life. Therefore, Moltmann critically shouts out, “there is never a true faith in Christ without obedient Christian discipleship within the framework of personal and political life,” because Christ is known “not only by mind and heart, but by living life” (Moltmann, 2010, 169).

God’s travel with people will be manifested through God’s involvement in human history. In this sense, living and doing theology should be open for understanding a complex relationship between God and people (and if we want to get closer to the true beginning, a relationship between/within the Trinity) which actually leads to correct self-understanding, but also an understanding of the diversity of the societies we live in and the ethical requirements related to specific social situations rooted in the Scriptures and evangelical Christian traditions. As R. Bauckham highlights, Moltmann thinks that the political engagement of a believer and Christ’s follower is not a substitute for religion, but one of the main modes of a believer’s active involvement in society, the basis for critical reflection on his/her actual political surroundings, but also for critics of theology itself (Bauckham, 1995, 99). These theses are not new to Moltmann. In *Experiences of Theology*, *Theology of Hope*, and in his articles, Moltmann emphasizes that “whoever believes in Christ and whoever succeeds Him in life, walks the path of non-violence and peace.” Non-violence and peace in this context are not empty phrases, but ethical principles of life in renunciation because they can be

achieved only by overcoming inner personal hostility, and later, by overcoming hostility in others (Moltmann, 2010, 169).

As a response to criticism of the book *The Crucified God*, Moltmann says that a theological existence requires even more rights to be subjective and to deal with problems, especially if they are perceived as personal. This would provide justification as to why Volf named him the “political theologian”. He continues to emphasize his commitment to approach theology openly and through constant conversation, facing opposite and opposing sides/opinions in order to avoid “acting in a spirit of totalitarianism” (Moltmann, 2005, 381-383). And even more, he insists on speaking about God in ways that go beyond a dogmatic framework or philosophical definitions of God. He insists on speaking about an alive and living God who loves in a way that “within a world of subjugation and oppression, his love has to ... take the form of governance which liberates through voluntary service” by becoming, not a servant, but a friend, a co-partaker in God’s goodness formulated as “God is love” (Moltmann, 2005, 392). Finally, he insists on the Trinity issue because he considers only this kind of understanding of God’s freedom: the Trinity immersed in suffering and resistance could “pave the way for theological ethics which does not blur social ethos, nor provide a manual for finding answers to crucial questions, but shows the path from captivity to life in freedom” (Moltmann, 2005, 407). But what kind of action are we really talking about here?

Jesus’ Cross and Discipleship

While talking about the political or public engagement of theologians/believers in society, Moltmann has in mind dealing with actual problems of the society in which we live, no matter what type of regime prevails. He is referring to institutions, rules of law, human rights, the struggle for peace, opposing arms and destruction, as well as maintaining an ecological balance. He also keeps a critique of capitalism in mind (his closeness to the liberal theology of Latin America and certain currents of Marxism is obvious in this context), as well as a critique of revolutionary-regime narrowness in relation to respective social-governmental systems, but also a narrowness of theology and church (Moltmann, 1969, 38).

Moltmann insists on cooperation between Christians and others in order to be involved in the struggle against oppression. His vision anticipates the possibility of change from the bottom up, starting in small communities and even in the church itself, rather than a change imposed from above by the regime. In this effort, Christians are supported by dialectics of the cross and resurrection: if resurrection represents the final act of a great drama (with crucifixion as its climax, of course), then the cross logically emerges as crucial in understanding our respon-

sibility and active involvement in the world. Because of the resurrection, we are able to participate in the creation of the upcoming kingdom, and we are invited to participate in providing support to the needy and socially marginalized; their needs becoming a priority for us (Scott R. Paeth, 2008, 13). Christ becomes a model of desired change because “with Christ, relationship between the content of essential divine and related ideas changes”: Definitely, he IS God (Žižek, 2008, 143). On the other hand, radical change occurred in the relationship between divine and human because with Christ, “each strive toward some general perfection is off,” and only in Him, “God becomes incarnated” (Žižek, 2008, 143). The relationship between God and human is a “passionate love drama, a drama between the one who loves and the beloved one, a drama in which emotions are not experienced only by man, but also by God” (Berđajev, 2007, 213). That is why God expects us to participate in the creation of the world, or as Berđajev would say, he expects “effort of creativity” which would be determined by “how we think about Christ” because it is related to “how we think about man.” We cannot “fulfill the commandment to love God without fulfilling the commandment to love man,” or vice versa (Berđajev, 2007, 235-238).

Moltmann emphasizes not only the God who suffers, as Volf affirms in the “Afterword” of Moltmann’s book, but advocates such a God that remains a true God although in suffering, the God of the Holy Trinity (Volf, “Afterword” in Moltmann, 2005, 380). According to Moltmann, the suffering of God has been articulated as an intimate disharmony of the one and unique God: abandonment of Jesus and his pain on the cross represent a moment of his identification with humans as preconditions for God’s Tri-unity and his solidarity with us. This is an image of the Christian God who is not distant or inaccessible, an absolutely monadic and pure act, and therefore, incapable of suffering, but an image of a merciful and loving God. “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6, 36), instructs Luke the evangelist. He directly connects mercy and poverty. In fact, the word “mercy” is a derivative of *Misericordia*, the Greek word for “misery”. This word would be used in the sense, “taking to heart the misery of another” with an intent to provide comfort and relief. So, to be merciful like God means to take over someone else’s pain. That is exactly what our Lord did for us, but he asks us to do the same. This is not just an act of presentation, a demonstration of love, but an act of pointing to the right way of living and being a true Christian. Therefore, Moltmann insists on the fact that the cross “is not loved and cannot be loved, and yet only the crucified One creates a kind of freedom that can change the world because the world is no longer afraid of death” (Moltmann, 2005, 9). His critique of society and political systems arises from this particular position, as well as his criticism of the church. He advocates that the church and theology today must turn to consider the crucified Christ more closely in order “to show His offer of

freedom.” This is most important if they are willing to become “what they claim to be: the Church of Christ and Christian theology” (Moltmann, 2005, 9). This hard position is correlated with Moltmann’s belief that if we truly and sincerely pledge to belong to Christ, then we must not forget that we are referring to “our harshest judge and most radical liberator from lies and arrogance, from striving for power and inner anxiety” (Moltmann, 2005, 10). Moltmann emphasizes this while keeping in mind that the crucified one is an actual “criteria of truthfulness”, but also the “ultimate critique of untruthfulness” in the church and theology (Moltmann, 2005, 10).

Discipleship is for Moltmann directly related to the proclamation of Jesus’ suffering and his invitation to disciples (Mark 8:31-38). Therefore, it is summarized in two basic actions: denial of self by accepting his call and a takeover of “his cross” by accepting his suffering. Denial will be necessarily connected with a loss of identity: if Christian existence can stand under the cross, then it can only negate self-identification “with the requirements and interests of society.” Therefore, neither should the church seek its identity in solidarity with social authorities, but within the criticism of all regimes and “in solidarity with democratic and socialist forces” (Moltmann, 2005, 27). By illustration of his disciples, Moltmann actually provides concrete instructions to Christians on how to live Christ-like: if everything begins with Christ’s call and our acceptance of that call, then our reply must be unconditional and responsible, without any “subsequent foundation” (certificate, proof), because the invitation was sent by “God himself”, and by that call, one does not become a disciple of Christ, but his sibling! This is all because “discipleship is a sign of God’s kingdom,” because it represents “command of an eschatological moment,” a command which cannot be morally understood, or within a context in which renunciation gets its full meaning (breaking ties with family, career, with one’s personal self, denying/hating personal self). Finally, it is all about the “call for suffering under the cross of Jesus” (Moltmann, 2005, 67).

Going even further in his explanation of suffering, Moltmann directly points to Bonhoeffer and says that within the concept of appropriate understanding of suffering, the main accent must be on the suffering of the one who was rejected: the suffering of Christ cannot be admired or celebrated. It does not represent a heroic event in a romantic sense of the word. It is a suffering of rejection. Its sign is a cross. This is a suffering of ultimate abandonment, and finds reconciliation only through resurrection. Christ’s brothers and sisters do not take upon themselves his cross, but their own cross of rejection and suffering, recognizing that by this step, they are not separated from God any more, but enjoy communion with him, and their personal suffering “is prevailed by suffering and becomes a way of communion with God” (Bonhoeffer, according to Moltmann, 2005, 68). But personal transformation does not end here. Both authors consider it only to

be a necessary first step when accepting the call to belong to Christ. The next step is baptism which is a symbol of personal obedience and participation in being crucified with Christ. Baptism is also a symbol of new life and a new person, and it is closely associated with the Lord's Supper which recalls the memory of Christ. Personal transformation is finally fully rounded at this point. One becomes crucified for the world, crucified for laws, for sin, for power and death (Galatians 6:14), and in that very moment, the greatest virtue of discipleship is born: humility (*humilitas*) as obedience to God and contempt for the world, as well as silence (Moltmann, 2005, 73).

If following Christ means to believe, then to believe cannot represent anything other than an "existential unity of theory and practice." While explaining this attitude, Moltmann draws attention to two important moments: the difference between Christ's suffering and his cross and the suffering and cross of his followers, and "How does Christ's cross look today, and how does it look to be a disciple in present times?" (Moltmann, 2005, 74). In contrast to Bultmann's vision of the cross as an "eschatological event" which is linked to the historical event of the "crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth" which, in turn, refers to "being crucified with Christ," Moltmann refers back to Paul and his Epistle to the Romans by creating a link between the statements "we with Christ" and "Christ for us." Moltmann reverses the perspective of the cross and places Jesus' death in the center of consideration: only from the perspective of Jesus' death on a cross does the co-crucifixion of believers get its full meaning; only from the perspective of his abandonment and suffering can believers enter into communion with the crucified one and his discipleship; "when Christ took our cross as his own (author's highlight), it becomes meaningful to take over our cross of discipleship" (Moltmann, 2005, 76) because what is accepted represents much more than what can be followed or what seems sensible to be followed. LOVE for others is accepted, particularly love for rejected people, the outcasts and the oppressed, love which eliminates loneliness, but also love which calls to revolt. Ortho-praxis happens at this point, the unity of theory and practice whereby "being crucified with Christ does not mean any more merely a private individual and spiritual issue, but ... political theology of being a disciple of the crucified One" (Moltmann, 2005, 77). Thus, brotherhood with Christ has been established by obedience of faith "in a world full of idols, demons, fetishes and superstition," by vivid and active testimony of his reign, by kissing abandoned, despised and betrayed people, by offering resistance sensitive to the "sighs of enslaved creatures" (Moltmann, 2005, 79).

To achieve this, one must take a step into the sphere of criticism. Critique starts from the crucified one and focuses on the self-anticipating individual, while a basic "cognitive interest" has been repealed. The quest for God must stop

in the Law, which means a consistent enforcement of justice as an exclusively correct way (self-justification). Also, it must stop “in the will for political power and ruling the world” (self-exaltation through power) because we look at an impotent and crucified God. It stops also in human examples of history and cosmic order, in a desire for an “immediate self-creation of God” (illusory self-creation of God). Theological criticism as theory and practice finds itself in its inherent polemics and dialectics: it represents “crucifying and also liberating theology,” it is the “theology of the cross” that is the “letter of the cross” critically positioned toward wisdom (1 Corinthians 18 ff), and therefore leads to a “critique of the self-exaltation of the non-human and his liberation, directly dependent upon a selected way of a man’s life and practice in the community of poor, lowly, and despised” and repeals “prevailing social relations that establish aggression of non-humans”, persevering in an effort to overcome them (Moltmann, 2005, 86-87).³

Moltmann insists on the involvement of Christianity in politics and social life in general because it does not matter who rules, but what matters is our responsibility in relation to power and those having no power. Regardless of the type of governance, by setting up Christ on the first place, Christians are called to reject loyalty to authorities and to point persistently to those without rights. If the church identifies with government, or even more, with a particular party and its ideology, then it actually replaces the reign of God with the reign of humans, creation, an idol. In these circumstances, the church loses its sharpness and becomes irrelevant in the fight against systems which degrade human values. On the contrary, the Christian church and Christian theology “become relevant in tackling problems of the modern world only when they reflect the ‘solid core’ of its crucified Christ identity and through him question themselves and the society in which they live” (Moltmann, 2005, 11). Therefore, Moltmann insists on the cross which represents freedom, truth, but also (and exactly for these reasons!) criticism of each system, of each individual believer, and of the church as a whole. According to Moltmann, politics and ideology can criticize the church. They can even force the church to “manifest its own and to hide not behind something else owned by others in past and present.” But it is not enough. In order to display what it really believes, the church has to point also to practical consequences arising from that particular kind of faith. “The crucified Christ alone challenges Christian theology and the Church which dares to bear his name” (Moltmann, 2005, 11).

3 In his speech on explanations of the “theology of the cross”, Moltmann explicitly refers to Paul and Luther. He emphasizes that in his Heidelberg discussion in 1518, Luther refers to Paul rooting his knowledge of God in the sufferings of Christ and the cross, “polemically opposing the knowledge of God anticipated in His action in creation and history.” See: Moltmann, 2005, 86-93).

The Responsibility of a Believer – Moltmann's Relevance Today

Even today, 42 years after the first publication of Moltmann's book *The Crucified God* in German, his words are relevant for believers, for the church, and for theologians who are still thinking about faith in God after Christ's crucifixion.

Moltmann's theology can be read in different ways, keeping in mind that he anticipates a "few keys or hermeneutic strongholds" (Pehar, 2010, 425): his reflections start in God, a search for an inner definition of God as love, as a companion, and fellow sufferers of humanity, continuing in reflections on the concept of Christian hope in the resurrected one, and closely related to the concept of solidarity. This topic has been complemented with the subject of the redemption of offenders themselves. Moltmann completes his quest through political theology, emphasizing the believer's responsibility in relation to the accepted call, everything in light of the belief in the return of Jesus (parousiā). His focus on society and people's sociability is not accidental. Therefore, his orientation is not surprising, an orientation toward analyzing contemporary societies and the secularization of political power, as well as politics as a means of achieving greater freedom and human rights, as a dynamic and constant process (Moltmann, 1993, 199-200). In fact, viewed through the horizon made of faith and hope, he insists on human's orientation on the worldly reality, actually representing a "spirituality of open senses (sensitivity to other people's pain and every kind of suffering and injustice) and the messianic prayer for God's arrival and the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven" (Pehar, 2011, 20). In this sense, the realization of mission, human involvement in the creation of God's kingdom on earth, cannot happen without accepting pain and suffering, without fighting for those who do not enjoy any rights, those who suffer and victims. In this way, "suffering ceases to be a necessity of man's inability and starts to realize itself as a choice of love, modeled according to the life of God himself" (Pehar, 2011, 20).

By studying the life of Jesus, Moltmann starts to speak about Jesus as a blasphemer in relation to the Law, as a rebel in relation to public authorities, and as abandoned by God in relation to God. His own death, according to the author, should be understood "in the context of conflict between him and his surroundings" as a result of his life and work (Moltman, 2005, 145). As a blasphemer, Jesus set God "and Himself" above the authority of Moses and the Torah. He behaved differently, even contrary to what was generally acceptable. Jesus ceased to be a teacher, and thereby terminated its relationship of subordination to the authority of Moses. He ceased to be a prophet and rose "over boundaries of contemporary ways of understanding the Law." He manifests this by forgiving sins and by pointing to "God's eschatological right to show mercy to those who do not respect and violate the Law" (Moltmann, 2005, 147). Therefore, Moltmann argues that the

life of Jesus is an actual “theological clash between him and the dominant system of understanding the Law,” and out of that clash “arises a legal process between the Gospel and the Law in relation to issues of God’s righteousness” (Moltmann, 2005, 153). He died like a thief by shameful death, and his crucifixion is the result and consequence of his previous actions. According to Moltmann, this liberation from law preached by Jesus necessarily leads to punishment, not because Jesus advocated revolution as a violent change of government, but because while he proclaimed God who forgives and loves, he acted directly against the dominant system by insisting on a new and different kingdom (Moltmann, 2005, 164). Finally, all these elements led to the situation that Jesus “dies differently”. By quoting different parts of the gospels, Moltmann lists various descriptions of Jesus’ last moment: he died in trembling, hesitancy, soul confusion, with cries and tears, with a strong and articulated cry, “with all kinds of expressions of deepest fear” (Moltmann, 2005, 169). He died with rebels, outcasts, “without judging”, but offering grace and salvation. The deepest communion between the Father and the Son is actually reflected here, a communion which is “no longer mediated by Covenant, by people or tradition” (Moltmann, 2005, 171). This abandonment on the cross can be understood only as “God’s event in God himself, stasis in God - God against God,” as complete hostility (absolute negation), having its only possible solution in the “resurrection in the glory of the Father.” A step of “folly” (Moltmann, Dogan) is truly needed here in order to accept such an unreasonable “act of faith” (Kierkegaard): in the moment of crucifixion “God is ... No-God” because the scenery is dominated by “death, enemy, no-Church, a state of injustice, wickedness, soldiers – Satan’s triumph over God.” However, it is even more unusual, more unreasonable and crazier to proceed to believe “when atheists consider it over ... in all roughness and force representing the night of the cross, abandonment, temptation and doubting anything that exists” (Iwand, quoted by B. Klappert or Moltmann, 2005, 46-47). Therefore, Moltmann considers a “Christian concept of God a rebellion” against all dominant concepts, requiring an entirely different response from its followers (Moltman, 2005, 175).

Moltmann does not remain within a framework of abstract criticism without providing guidelines for action. When he asks himself what it means “to accept the theology of the cross today,” he reflects Bonhoeffer’s question on the relevance of Christ for us today. His response is within “avoiding one-sidedness of tradition” and looking at Christ through the cross as a manifestation of freedom, hope, and criticism. All that means also “to cross over boundaries of salvation doctrine and to raise the question about revolution in understanding the concept of God,” and to ask “who that God is on the cross,” who is that “Christ forsaken by God,” because it means “to cross over concern about personal salvation” and to remain interested in the freedom of humanity in general, to raise questions

about relations between human and society, relations between the individual and the church, and to ask “who is true man with respect to the Son of Man who was resurrected in God’s sovereign freedom?” It means to develop criticism of the church as criticism of society, in light of the following question: “What does it mean to remember the crucified God within one officially optimistic society that walks across corpses?” (Moltmann, 2005, 12). We see that Moltmann advocates not only Christian theological radicalism, but also radicalism of the church and its function in society. Our view is directed at the “dying Jesus” who cries out to God, “Oh my God, why have you forsaken me?” claims a radical, “specifically Christian”, critical, and liberating religion and theology. This view claims another, additional step: the crucified one necessarily becomes the foundation of our existence which openly and actively interferes in the secular, remaining relevant and consistent. And that is really important if we do not want theology and the church to become redundant due to a “loss of contact and blindness to reality” (Moltmann, 2005, 12-16).

Moltmann definitely tries to avoid fundamentalism in Christianity because he considers it a “petrified Bible to rigid unquestionable authority.” He considers dogmatism to be a “freezer of living Christian tradition,” while “common religious conservatism makes liturgy static.” As a result, Christian morality ceases to be a place of love and understanding, or a promotion of universal human values and rights. It turns into “lethal legality” (Moltmann, 2005, 16). Therefore, Moltmann insists on critical and liberating gospel traditions. He emphasizes, “deprivation of relationship would mean death,” and adding this kind of relationism as an ability to overcome ideologies of absolutism insisting on absolute unity, and totalitarian relativism turning uniqueness to absolute fragmentation (Leibniz). These relations are necessary in order to “live in realistic circumstances,” but also “to consider the subject in relation to the object.” They are necessary in order to turn our knowledge into action and experience. As anticipated from this angle, Moltmann raises another critical issue which comes up in relation to the course which critical theology should follow in its relation to the world, and supplements what is meant by “accepting the theology of the cross” (Moltmann, 2005, 20).

Here Moltmann sharpens the issue of church engagement at two levels. On the first level, he wonders what would happen when the church would be involved in the process of change of society, and whether it would lead to a “break out from traditional and established forms of Church towards social and psychotherapeutic engagement ending finally in departure from the Church” while “some others, so-called progressives, establish some new church,” or they disappear, “adopted by other groups and parties having the ability to rationally institutionalize and effectively organize necessary engagement” (Moltmann, 2005, 21). On another level, Moltmann asks conservatives whether their bitter defense of

identity would force them finally to “opt for religion against politics,” but also to connect “socially and politically conservative forces.” He warns them that they are about to chose one particular form of relevance which “one cannot clearly say to be Christian or not.” A resolution to this dilemma is offered in a reformulation: “If social engagement is necessary, then what is Christian about it?” (Moltmann, 2005, 22). Actually, it is what we Christians should be like in order to live with others in harmony (Volf, 1998, 23).

Christianity is not a class or national religion. It was not created in that way. Therefore, Moltmann insists on a Christianity which finds its origins in the crucified one through losing its identity in terms of connection and dependency on political systems. The crucified one is classless God acting outside of political systems. But he is not non-political. As emphasized repeatedly by the author himself, he is the God of the poor, oppressed and subdued. Therefore, the “reign of the politically crucified Christ can be extended only by release from forms of governance causing apathy, as well as from political religions stabilizing them” (Moltmann, 2005, 368).

Conclusion

If Moltmann is considered a political theologian, we must bear in mind that political and/or public theology for him is actually God’s theology, the theology of the kingdom of God (Paeth, 2008, 16), a theology that critically intervenes within the public sphere of society, draws attention to general human values and needs, to marginalized and excluded social groups, to suffering, and refers to God’s commandments and his righteousness, evoking the involvement of Christians in society in order to reflect Christ. The crucified one necessarily remains “internal criteria” of all words and works “referring to him”: when they “point to Him, he checks them over;” when they declare his glory, “he authorizes them” (Moltmann, 2005, 93).

Drowning of the individual in general, in a multitude without identity, in isolation and individualism, and in the instrumentalization of humanity can be resolved by engagement of this kind of Christian theology in society. Only through faith in approaching God who is present (Shekinah), and through faith in enduring human values and the inherent dignity of all human beings, equality and justice, can we fight against the one-sidedness of contemporary life. Changes evoked by this theology as access or engagement are bottom-up changes: decentralization and globalization take place as parallel processes directing to action which must necessarily begin at the local level and within churches and civil society, wherein the image of the church as a community or brotherhood of Christ (between each other and with others) in accordance with the love commanded

by Christ, becomes an image or a model of common social behavior. Our faith starts, and is being born, in agony and suffering, sensitizing us in order to be able to understand the nature of God and the nature of his work in a deeper and more clear manner, as well as to understand the purpose of our existence and the ways of our actions. We must always bear in mind that the God who suffers is not a transcendent God “who pulls strings from above” only, but a God who “intervenes in history” and is affected by (human) history. God who suffers means that human history is the “place of a real fight” and his fate is decided through such history (Žižek, 2008, 136-137).

On the other hand, we must not refrain from acting and wait for someone else to do the work for us, but “neither should we fall into the trap of perverse self-instrumentalization,” positioning ourselves by “historical necessity” as great task accomplishes. What we must always have in mind is that we represent God’s radically free creations, and through our involvement as an act of free will, we reaffirm our affiliation to God (Žižek, 2008, 39). This is not just any god, but Christ, who “excludes any tendency toward general excellence” in which God’s self-alienation from God and other people happens and resolves itself. God, who seems “unavailable [being]-itself, pure transcendent distant existence,” abolishes our alienation from such a God through crucifixion as an act of self-alienation. Through the divine act of detachment from himself, we become able to realize that the dead creature on the cross is not the “earthly-final representative of God, but God Himself” (Žižek, 2008, 144-154). Christ’s crucifixion and death thus become our way, not only our way to know God, others and ourselves, but also our way to (social) action. The gap between Kierkegaard’s ethical and religious levels has been thus eliminated: we begin to relate ourselves according to the life and message of Jesus Christ and to God who resurrected the one who was crucified, according to Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, according to his mission.

What Jesus instructed in his Sermon on the Mount as love for one’s enemy happened on the cross by his death and by the pain of the Father through the power of the Spirit for the godless and those deprived of love (Moltmann, 2005, 283).

Therefore, we should not be apolitical or nationalistic. We have to strive for justice and peace on earth, and not fall into despair because of disappointment or contradictions and opposition, because we believe in resurrection from death, always having in mind the “suffering of the passionate Christ” (Moltmann, 2010, 172).

So, if one of the key features of present systems is represented by “intellectual hermeticism” which manifests itself as a lack of ideas and tightness, as unquestionable submission to authority which turns out to be undisputed and leads to the acceptance of attitudes without dialogue (Bauman, 1991, 213), we are called

to promote a critical theology which interferes within the spheres of politics and society, but in the church as well.

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Raspeti kao nužnost: Relevantnost Moltmannove teologije za evandeoske vjernike i njihov društveni angažman

Sažetak

Što znači živjeti kao vjernik danas? Ili još konkretnije, što danas znači živjeti kao Kristov sljedbenik? Je li naš život, nas koji smo se odlučili za taj korak biti Kristovim, drugačiji od života drugih ljudi oko nas i u čemu? Postavljajući ova pitanja autoricu zanima jedan osebujan dio našeg života: onog u društvu shvaćenom kao širu zajednicu, s drugim ljudima, gdje se događa naš susret s političkim u pomalo zapostavljenom, antičkom smislu te riječi. Ovo stoga što se upravo ovdje događa susretanje stvarnosti i raspetog Krista, jer je to prostor gdje se

ponajbolje očituju vrijednosti u kojima vjerujemo - jer su u svakodnevnoj kušnji pretapanja s većinskom diktaturom relativizma. Pitanje angažmana kršćanskog vjernika u društveno-političkom životu javlja se kao nezaobilazno pitanje za veći broj teologa dvadesetoga stoljeća, a jedan je od ključnih Jürgen Moltmann.

Ovaj tekst ističe da obećana Božja budućnost uključuje i našu sadašnjost: stoga je fokus analize Jürgen Moltmann, odnosno Raspeti i Njegov poziv na nasljedovanje - koji zahtijeva ne samo osobnu promjenu i promjenu u odnosima spram drugih, već i promjenu zatečenih društvenih okolnosti. Rad će krenuti od osnovnih postavki Moltmannove teologije izloženih u njegovu djelu „Raspeti Bog“. Progovarajući o Bogu, on nudi odgovor na pitanje na kakvo nas nasljedovanje Raspeti danas poziva. Pri tome će rad obratiti pozornost na zaokret koji Moltmann uvodi, jednim posve drugačijim pristupom ili pitanjem: ako je društveni angažman nužan, što je onda u njemu kršćansko. Još konkretnije: kakvi bismo kršćani mi trebali biti, da bismo živjeli s drugima u odnosima sklada.