
Essay on Anthropocentrism and Idolatry

Eseja par antropocentrismu un elkdievību

Skaidrīte Gūtmane, Dr. philol. (Latvia)

By developing and studying European Social Agenda in the context of humanism and human rights, people have not observed that there have been created – from the perspective of the Christian Church – a stable and lasting heresy – anthropocentrism. Deification of a human being leads to consequences that deform the term *freedom* and along with that also the term *human rights*. This is what this essay is about – closing the Scientific Proceedings of Latvian Christian Academy.

Key words: anthropocentrism, humanolatry, anthropological crisis, human rights, freedom, truth, deification of man

People of today live by conviction that the key factor defining human life and consequently that of the whole society is a “man himself”. Until then people were sure that the law of God as mandatory guides a human life, and life of society is guided by protonorms or moral law written down in consciousness of every human being. People tried to respect the order of reciprocal understanding established by God. – Whereas today society stands firm on authority of a single individual personality. Special rights are required for the man, namely, the rights to define what is right and what is wrong. The universal criteria to define the Truth is a man along with rights and freedoms assigned to him or her. Standing against authority of the God’s truth and erasure of God as Triune God from the life of a man and society is happening mightily and revolutionary and it is not a slow development. The process has overshadowed Western Europe, USA, also Russia. Idea about life without God is speeding up on a global scale. What is happening may be described as competition to impose human rights to make free choices – to choose whatever, also those phenomena, which are in open conflict with the category *sacred* and the Person of God Himself: de-Christianization of society is on the way.

Idolatry, not humanism

The mentioned ideology can be described as *humanolatry* (term used by Patriarch Cyril of the Russian Orthodox Church) – a new form of idolatry pushing God out from lives of people. The phenomena on such scale has never been present in a human history before. In this situation, a dialogue with active involvement of Caritative social workers is needed.

Humanism as ideology of respect and freedom is not a heresy; humanism may turn into heresy when passions of consumerism are supported along with propaganda of beastly instincts, which turn freedom into permissiveness.

Truth always has been opposed by two heresies with twisted interpretations of what Christianity teaches about a man. They have tried to present the Word of God as just another “religious version”. It is often forgotten, since phrases “God is one” and “there are many ways to God”, and “all religions are truthful ways to reach God” are heard. On the contrary – either the Truth is one and it can be revealed, or there is no Truth at all. The Truth is complex and paradoxical – difficult to grasp by mundane human reasoning, e.g., Christian recognition of God as Triune, both Divine and Human nature of Christ, – these are complex ideas. However, there is no other way.

Discussions about God are outlawed by discussions about man. Old heresies are substituted by the new and powerful one – that of anthropocentrism and deification of man. How this false truth is manifested? – The point of reference for ideas and principles is man rather than God, and it is because the existence of God can be doubted whereas human existence cannot. In order to “meet God” some human efforts and blessed revelations of God are required, whereas his or her existence everyone can touch and confirm.

Cogito ergo sum – “I think, therefore I am”. The Doctrine of Human rights is written down, and it is a request for maximum of welfare and comfort. Within the frame of the liberal concept, freedom is right to do anything that doesn’t disturb the ego freedom of the other. Humanity as wholeness of people sharing heartbeat of mutuality is transformed into aggregation of single and separate individuals avoiding to disturb each other. For that goal protonorms of human mutuality or reciprocity and solidarity, namely, unity of nation, maximal protection of the poor and weak, understanding of traditional family and marriage, importance of the Church doctrine are sacrificed. Following that progression, humanity may turn into evaporating smoke or rather band of self-penetrating individuals having no connections between them. As well-known Latvian poet Rainis ironically put it, they “would like to move around, to eat and feel, and to be”.

Do human rights in real world remind us about that? To my mind – no, they don’t.

As in all utopias, also here people must overcome various difficulties in order to enter “the glowing kingdom of human rights”. Liberalism as every false theory has been struck by recognition that there is no such thing as unified and easy-to-understand human being – a being, which would serve as a measure of all things; there is no such being. One cannot define human being without Divine fundamentals, without meta-world. That is because no human being is self-sufficient: everyone is closely tied with his or her Creator, God, and has inherited sin, which calls for abstinence from God.

Concept of a “normal human being” released by first anthropocentrists during Renaissance period was the product of Christian civilization. These people were educated on foundation of the God’s given law or, better say, norms of humanity: thou shall not kill, steal, commit adultery, thou can’t reject other people without loving them, you must help the weak... Once the order set by the Divine protonorms was doubted in principle, the “normal human being” disappeared and his place was taken by notions of “marginal”, “genderist”, “transsexual” etc., – they all are products of the freedom created by the modern-day Babel.

The liberal world of today is preoccupied with the efforts how to secure rights for the minority and imposing plasticity, as well to impose alienation from protonorms to those few “normal” people who are still there left from the Christian era. We think Descartes was wrong in the first part of his famous phrase “I think...”. He didn’t ask the key question, he didn’t pronounce the essential doubt: “*Who* is the one who thinks? Is this *I*?” Christians of his day and both before and after him would answer: “That’s not me... Not only me.” Let’s remember Rainis again:

*“Where you will go, you living,
When you’ll wake up tomorrow?”*

Or Russian novelist F. Dostoevsky:

“Here devil fights with God, and battlefield is human heart.”

Christianity takes for granted that neither human thinking nor self-consciousness is independent and self-sufficient. Human soul exists amidst flames of temptations and is touched by Divine revelations. Both Divine and demonic, both beastly and human interlock in our thinking. Only blessings received through practice of the art of asceticism and the Spirit of God gives people “discernment of spirits”, discernment between the will of God and whispers of the temptor to a human soul.

To put the inner world of human *ego* torn between contradictions in the center of the world is an absurd. Not a single rule of “human rights” function in reality – right as no models of the “brilliant Communist future” functioned in the past in the USSR. What we should speak about here is demonic arbitrariness. However, the vertical is here present as well: Divine law, teaching of the Church about relations between people and God, fruitful anthropological teaching about the State rooted in the Truth, by which people may stick to God’s given fundamentals in all their life situations.

But what happens now is quite contrary, people turn into ego-monsters with interchangeable organs, interchangeable gender – beings described by the doctrine of trans-humanism where humans are dismantled in the name of post-humanity! According to the Gospel of Christ everyone is a mystery keeping potential for unlimited sanctification within his or her inner self. On the other hand, “dismantled and liberated” people have no neighbors; people are alienated from their own souls, their will and turned into demonic avatars.

Paradox to put a man rooted in tradition in the center of the imagined progress, and to start to “improve” his life is typical for the modern world understanding. Modernism has brought many things good and senseless: antibiotics, cell phones, internet, cars and nuclear weapons. Modern man has become bigger and influential, he or she lives longer and in the welfare states is not afraid of torture and epidemics. But... in the midst of the progress the human being gets lost. More precisely – human beings undergo deep crisis of anthropological identity. Once the concept

of Christian anthropological view of a man is lost, progress becomes malformed. Where there yesterday was fight for equal rights for women, today there is fight for rights to wear *burqa*. Where there yesterday was fight for the world, in which children would grow innocent and pure, today the “sex enlightenment” and “gender information” is introduced even without respect to the age of children. Where there yesterday was fight for freedom to think independently, today there are proposals to legalize dizzy drugs. Where there yesterday were rights and joy of life confirmed, today euthanasia is proposed.

Actually, there is no such thing as “eternal man”, which could serve as an example for a man put in the center of the world. There is only one Absolute Truth, and incarnation of it is the Lord Christ Jesus – the Son of Man and Son of God in One Person. Once people reject God and His revelation, they turn into people of sin whose only perspective is death.

Defense of people and human rights is possible only through defense of sanctification for people. Human progress is possible only on the extent that people decide to keep fundamentals of the Christian tradition, which have opened doors from Europe to become Europe: from Byzantine to Russia, Spain and England.

If we will permit loss of respect towards dogmatic and patristic anthropological tradition of the Christian Church, then the loss of anthropocentrism will cause the loss of humanity and human mutuality or reciprocity. The very essence of humanity will be gone. Caritative social workers must remember that. Everyone who keeps humanity of European civilization dear to him or her should remember that.

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Kopsavilkums

Attīstot un apzinot Eiropas Sociālo programmu humānisma un cilvēktiesību kopsakarā, neesam pamanījuši, ka esam izveidojuši stabilu no Baznīcas viedokļa herēzi – antropocentrismu. Cilvēka dievišķošana ved pie konsekvencēm, kas deformē jēdzienu *brīvība*, un līdz ar to arī jēdzienu *cilvēktiesības*. Par to šajā LKrA Zinātnisko rakstu noslēguma esejā.

Atslēgvārdi: antropocentrisms, cilvēka pielūgsmē, antropoloģiskā krīze, cilvēktiesības, brīvība, patiesība, cilvēka dievišķošana

Dr. philol. Skaidrīte Gūtmane

Rector and professor of Latvian Christian Academy,
Director of Interdisciplinary Research Institute (LCA)

Latvijas Kristīgās akadēmijas rektore, profesore
Starpdisciplinārās Pētniecības institūta direktore (LKrA)

Address: Vienības prospekts 23, Jūrmala, LV-2010, Latvia
E-mail: rektore@kra.lv