

as well. When a person accepts a call to inner conversion, the Spirit of God will work in the person's heart bringing peace and love in place of the desire for conflict and hate. Fears of differences will slowly diminish and restored trust will emerge (Gal 5:22f).

In the end, we recognise the promise of a new heart and reconciliation as gifts offered to us in Christ. Living out of a new heart will introduce us to "a spirituality of reconciliation that reflects the glory of the resurrection" (Stevens, 82). If we are to follow God's call

to be transformers of broken hearts and societies, our Christian vocation of reconciliation will have to be expressed through an engaged spirituality. Ken Newell once said, "While prayer is vitally important, it is no longer enough to pray without action." It is not enough "to wait for God to send revival when what he clearly demands in scripture right now is the forging of new, healthy relationships and positive Christian attitudes" (Stevens 109). Without these relationships and attitudes, the hope for reconciling our societies has no future.

This message is not only valid for Christians; the language of love is universal. The call to love our enemies and to bless those who curse us, in order that they may be transformed through God's love (that we have received), is also universal. The decision to follow Jesus on the road of reconciliation is ours. However, if we, Christians, who have received the message "first," do not take it seriously and do not allow God's grace to work in and through us, we are not to expect that others will follow also (or instead).

Bogdan Ioan POPESCU

From Constantinople to Geneva:

The Symphonic Cooperation between Church and State

The cooperation between the Church and the State was not only a Byzantine tradition. The old pattern took a different shape, suited to the new reality of the beginning of XVIth Century, the Reformation. One of the most interesting patterns concerning the relation between the State and the Church which also had a considerable influence on the construction of the modern society began in Geneva, and was promoted by Jean Calvin. The message of the Gospel was no longer considered a private option, but rather it became the ideology of the state and a source of inspiration for the civil laws. Many scholars related his ideas to the principle of symphony, arguing that a Reformed Byzantium was born in the fragmented Western Europe.

THE REFORMED COOPERATION

In his book *Institutio Christianae Religionis*, Calvin promotes the idea of two realms that are interdependent and cannot survive without mutual help. Theology has to influence ideologically the political system and the state must protect its source of inspiration. God is the absolute sovereign and naturally His word also becomes law in the political world.

The Church did not constrain the State to be Christian because this cooperation was thought to be natural and of divine origin. Calvin emphasized the Biblical example of king Saul and the prophet Samuel and argued that force was not necessary to impose this alliance, which is wanted by God. According to Calvin, the tasks of the secular government are to protect external worship, to

defend the purity of doctrine, as well as to guard general peace and tranquility. The earthly power is not incompatible with the message of the Gospel. Without cooperation with the State, Christians cannot fulfill their journey in this world. Only a Christian State, and a Church defended by it, can overcome the anarchy of the wicked. The protection offered by the political power is considered to be one of the elementary needs of this life: "Mankind derives as much benefit from it as it does from bread, water, sun and air and its dignity is far greater than any of them...it prevents idolatries, sacrileges against the name of God, blasphemies against his truth...it makes possible innocent contacts between people."

Suggested reading

JUSTINIAN I, *Novella VI*. In *From Irenaeus to Grotius. A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought*, Cambridge, 1999.

CALVIN Jean, *Institutio Christianae Religionis*. In *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority*, Cambridge, 1991.

MEETER Henry, *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism*. Grand Rapids, MI, 1990.

BAKER Derek (ed.), *Church, Society and Politics*. Oxford, 1975.

Bogdan Ioan POPESCU was born in Bucharest, Romania on August 30, 1976. He graduated from the Orthodox Seminary of Bucharest in 1996 and from the Orthodox Faculty of Theology (Bucharest University) in 2000. He has a Master's degree from the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey (University of Geneva) and he defended his Phd thesis last year in Sibiu, with the title *Patterns of Relationship between Church and State during the first five Christian Centuries*

and Their Significance for Today. He was a lecturer in Church History at the Cernica Seminary. He works currently as an inspector in the Department of Education of the Romanian Orthodox Church and is the coordinator of the Theology Interest Group of WSCF-E.



THE CIVIL AUTHORITY

According to Calvin, the officials of the State must be conscious of the fact that they represent God and therefore have to protect God's interests and act justly. Their functions are not profane but "sacred commissions." They are not allowed to behave despotically because they are "God's legates." If they neglect their duties, they sin against God who instituted the authority and they commit a blasphemy. A theocratic mark can easily be detected in this line of thought: the political power is not just a secular arbitrary means but becomes a religious duty.

The most important element of the State is considered to be the law, which cannot remain a pure secular product but must be impregnated with Christian ideas and values: "No polity can be well constituted, unless it makes duties owed to God its first concern and for laws to attend only to the well-being of men, while disregarding what is owed to God is an absurdity." According to Calvin, no justice can be done if the divine Author of justice is forgotten. God is considered to be the root and the spring of order and harmony, and a society which neglects this truth becomes anarchy. The law can be applied and respected only when it is enlightened by the will of God. The magistrates are not able to operate without the law, because the law is "a silent magistrate" instituted by the Divinity. It is not a simple human invention but a processing and an adaptation of the divine message to human social needs. Inspired by the Old Testament, Calvin divides the law of God into three parts: moral, ceremonial and judicial. The moral aspect reflects the divine will in a pure way: to love and worship God and to respect and love the fellow human. The other two are solely fittings of this will to the needs of the society. The first one is eternal; the other two could be modified and abrogated in different contexts and, in this case, the contribution of the people is necessary. They have to adjust and not to invent. Calvin has no doubt that "individual people have the...freedom to make what laws they see to be expedient

but all of these...must be measured against the law of love. Their form varies, but they all have the same end." The methods and the formulations can differ but the purpose must be the obedience to God's will, the protection of the innocent, and the punishment of wrongdoers. The external means change according to different times and societies: sometimes the severity of the penalties must be increased if the public order is strongly affected and new laws have to be formulated to overcome the new evil. It is clear that the intention of Calvin was to justify the new rules of the "Ecclesiastical Ordinances."

THE USE OF FORCE

In order to protect authority and the values of the law, rulers have the duty to defend them by using force. Magistrates do not sin by punishing the wicked because they do not act on their own initiative, but accomplish God's judgments. In this way, Calvin attempts to solve the contradiction between violence and inoffensive faith. The use of power plays the role of a bitter medicine, which can overcome a dangerous disease. The doctor is not guilty for its bitterness: "Since magistrates cannot carry out their appointed task unless they protect good men from injustices of the wicked and help and protect the oppressed, they have been armed with power, to repress evil-doers and malefactors, whose wickedness disturbs and troubles the public peace." The danger appears when the ruler does not seek to defend the legitimate right but looks for personal revenge. For this reason, Calvin prefers the collective power of the aristocrats to the monarchy.

In the same way, rulers have to fight against external attempts to destroy public order. According to Calvin, wars are justified in cases when the harmony of society is threatened. The ruler fulfills, in this case, the same task of protection, but on a greater scale. The reformer affirms that "from time to time it is necessary for kings and people to take up arms in order to carry out this kind of public vengeance...The wars engaged in for this purpose are legitimate."

A war, however, is considered

legitimate only when all the other means have failed. The war is an ultimate solution and not an ordinary one. In addition, the reason for engaging in a conflict must concern the public welfare and not a private interest.

THE LIMITS OF CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE

In the case of Calvin, it is also important to examine the extent to which obedience to political power can reach. The reformer of Geneva states very clearly that Christians must recognize and respect public institutions as those appointed by God. Citizens should not obey rulers out of fear or consider them necessary evil. In fact, to honor the king is equivalent to honoring God. The rulers are just ambassadors and messengers of divine authority. Even when they are wrong, they must be obeyed. Of course, when the leaders seek their own interests, becoming cruel and unjust, they no longer reflect the image of God, but their authority is still valid. Sinful kings have come about according to divine will also, in order to punish the inequity of the people. Calvin considers that "even the worse of them, and those entirely undeserving of any honor, provided they have public authority, are invested with splendid and sacred authority which God's word bestows on the ministers of his justice and judgement." Calvin gives also several examples, to illustrate his affirmations. According to him, in this way, the Lord ordered to the Jews through the prophet Jeremiah, to pray for Babylon, the city that enslaved them. David also, being persecuted by Saul, continued to consider his cruel king sacred.

The reformer thinks that citizens should not take into consideration the person of the ruler, but the Person whom he represents. The king must be considered a vase of honor. He could be a bad one, but must be respected for his position. The sinfulness of the leader should not be an obstacle for the spreading of the divine message and harmony.

Like Luther and Zwingli, Calvin identifies only one particular case when Christians have the right

and obligation to disobey the ruler. When there is a conflict between God's commandments and those of the kings, the Christians have only one choice: to be subjects to the King of the kings. It is moral to disobey the earthly lords if their desires clash with the will of the Person Who instituted them and gave them authority: "When His sacred mouth has spoken, it alone and no one else is to be heard. We are subjects to those who have been placed over us, but only in Him. If they command anything against His will it must be as nothing to us."

THE IMPACT OF CALVINISM ON ECONOMIC LIFE

Calvin did not try to build a community of the redeemed outside of public life. His conviction was that the just should be part of society and influence it. They were allowed to use political and social structures to practice trade and to deal with money. While Luther preached the poverty of the Christians, Calvin stressed the importance of material means and their necessity for society. He used the confiscated properties for setting up hospitals and schools, and encouraged economic activity: equitable loan contracts, the productivity of money, the morality

of profit making. In one of his letters he writes, "And what is money not more productive than merchandise or any other possession one could mention? It is lawful to make money by renting a piece of ground, yet unlawful to make it from money? What? When you buy a field is money not making money?" He does not condemn the practice of usury either, but requires a fair administration of it: "I conclude we ought not to judge usury according to few passages of Scripture, but in accordance with the principle of equity." For this reason Calvin was considered a promoter of the capitalist economy. Also, as a sign of subjection to rulers, Christians, like other citizens, have to pay taxes. The princes have the right to use these funds both for public expenses and for the expenses of palaces. They can maintain, in this way, the splendor of their houses as a symbol of the dignity and authority that God has entrusted to them.

CONCLUSION

Through his measures and ideas Calvin influenced and changed Western society. The Christian faith became a norm and its practice a public duty. I do not think that the Geneva of Calvin should be considered a classical theocracy but that the two powers were mixed almost in a "Constantinian" way.

The Church did not replace the civil State, but the Church acted for the State and the State protected the Church. Calvin promoted a close cooperation between faith and power and offered a strong alternative to the dichotomous Christianity of Luther. In this way, a close cooperation between State and Church did not remain just an Eastern pattern, applied by the Orthodox Churches, but flourished also in Western Europe. Civil society, legislation, political life and culture have been dramatically influenced by the Calvinistic thought. Public life was penetrated in all its aspects by the religious element and the life of the Church was increasingly harmonized with that of the State. As in the Byzantine tradition, the two realities formed and acted like one body. The ideas of Calvin remind of one of the famous definitions of this interdependence, given by the Emperor Justinian, who stressed in the sixth Novella that "the greatest of God's gifts among men...are priesthood and empire (basileia), the one in service of the things of God, the other providing government and care for the concerns of men, the two proceeding from one and the same source and together providing the organizing principles of human life...If the priesthood is above reproach from any quarter and stands before God with confidence, and if the imperial authority organizes the commonwealth committed to it rightly and fittingly, there will be a balanced harmony to ensure whatever may be of value to the human race."

Calvin appreciated and used the secular means, adapting it to the Christian perspective, following this old tradition. Even though we cannot speak about a "Byzantine marriage" between the two powers, we certainly can speak about a "Reformed engagement." Therefore, the contemporary secular European politicians should be aware that this tradition is still very strong in Europe and that it does not belong solely to a certain area or denomination. It could be very difficult to build a united Europe without taking into consideration this heritage that influenced both the Eastern and the Western part of the continent.

