

# CRISIS AS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON IN A BRIEF THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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## **ABSTRACT: Crisis as a Global Phenomenon in a Brief Theological Analysis.**

The present work aims to provide an answer to the crisis situation found in the world. There are many types of crisis: economic, political, social, religious, ecological, humanitarian. There is a cause of the crisis, regardless of its manifestation: it is the lack of dialogue with God and between people. Haric dialogue is missing in the world and in its place is the selfish monologue of the consumerist man. The first cause of the crisis is the removal of God from the life of society. Returning to the dialogue with God and creation, in the state of prayer and grace, may be the only chance to recover the world from its fall.

**Keywords:** *crisis, dialog, logos, consumerist.*

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It has become a subterfuge for any failure of society to be caused by the idea of "crisis". Everything starts from the crisis and somehow hides behind it. There is certainly a great deal of truth in this statement, because the crisis in third millennium society is obvious and manifold. It manifests itself in different forms and shows that the world has become too exposed to social, economic, medical, educational, political, globalist viruses and can no longer seem to react against them. Humanity seems to be losing its sense. "Clinging to the yoke of time and space, man drags the universe along with him. Where to?"<sup>1</sup>

A world living from crisis. Today everyone talks about crisis, and it seems as if this expression hides all the shortcomings of humanity. Everything we can't do or do wrong, we blame on the crisis. All the scars of

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<sup>1</sup> Iustin Popovici, *Omul și Dumnezeuul-Om. Abisurile și culmile filosofiei (Man and God-Man. The Abysses and Heights of Philosop)*, Sibiu, Deisis Publishing, 1997, p. 41

history are part of the crises of humanity and this crisis is part of a whole history. Surely there is truth in this equation of crisis in human history. And the answer is only one: the crisis of humanity is in fact the crisis of the rupture between man and God. From the moment when the communion between God and man breaks down or is altered, the crisis of humanity actually begins, and there were many crises.<sup>2</sup>

We can speak in history of a crisis of man in relation to man. By losing the relationship with the Creator, man loses that creative bond with man. Man without God is in a permanent state of crisis. In other words, the crisis does not come from outside man, but from within him, through the loss of the relationship with God.

The current crisis of humanity is very broad in scope, like a virus attacking the whole body. There is almost no area in which the crisis is not felt in one way or another. In the case of man, everything seems to be affected: his consciousness, his identity and even his existential meaning, almost to the point of annihilation and annihilation of the human condition, i.e. to the question of whether man is human in this crisis. And it all stems from a superficiality with which the human condition is viewed, whereby man seems almost incapable of recovering. And yet no fall can be so abysmal that it is not recoverable through Christ.

We usually blame secularisation<sup>3</sup>, globalisation<sup>4</sup> and digital development so fast. Beyond these factors I believe that the lack of dialogue with God and between people is the primary cause. People have lost their prayerful state and resort to this secular postmodernism whereby they believe that full life is only here on earth. Telestial fulfilment is a chimera, because whatever the body offers is only perishable and temporal. Rene Guenon concludes that humanity today no longer relates to God as the supreme, spiritual authority, because the human replaces the divine.<sup>5</sup> In the

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2 See in this sense Davor Džalto, *Anarchy and the Kingdom of God. From Eschatology to Orthodox Political Theology and back*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2021.

3 Ioan-Gheorghe Rotaru, "Aspecte ale secularizării și ale omului secularizat" ("Aspects of secularisation and secularised man"), *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai, Theologia Orthodoxa*, (2006), L-LI, nr.1, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj University Press, pp. 251-266.

4 Ioan-Gheorghe Rotaru, "Globalization and its effect on religion", *Jurnalul Libertății de Conștiință*, Mihnea Costoiu, Liviu-Bogdan Ciucă, Nelu Burcea (eds.), Les Arcs, France, Iarsic, 2014, pp.532-541.

5 Rene Guénon, *Criza lumii moderne (The crisis of the modern world)*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing, 2008, p.121.

French philosopher's view, humanity's great misfortune is the confusion of values. People no longer know what is good and what is bad, what is moral or immoral, everything is relative and this relativity leads to an ambiguity of meaning. Greed and materiality has atrophied the human creative sense.<sup>6</sup>

Today more than ever, it seems that democracy no longer means a moral and value-based society and we live in a non-value-based society or a society with distorted values. Democracy today no longer means governing the people through moral laws towards their perfection, because everything is confused and meaningless. In fact, we can speak of a crisis of meaning and human identity. There is more and more talk about the impersonality of society, which appears as a melting pot of human persons, who ultimately become impersonal. In other words, society has the role of levelling human personality to the point of making it impersonal, an amorphous mass that is easy to manipulate through sensualism and materialism. The crisis of human meaning gives it a strictly telestial orientation through which man fails to discover the horizon of his eternity.

Even in crisis, man remains a seeker of the "beyond", i.e. of the transcendent. "When man seeks God he is the one found by God. When he follows the divine Truth, he is the one who catches it and raises it to his level"<sup>7</sup> But the painful part is when the transcendent is no longer a step towards God, but only an exit from us to matter and then back again to our own pleasure. That is, a hedonism defined as transcendence in matter. It is too little and too dangerous, because man becomes like the guinea pig running in a wheel, constantly searching for meaning but never reaching it, because it is just a useless run to nowhere. Everything becomes an illusion and man lives in his own maya, in which he believes he has discovered perfection.

There are enormously many facets of the crisis and however we argue, we are witnessing a social anemia, which seems to have no antibodies to fight the crisis, which manifests itself as a multiple virus, with variable forms of infestation and action. I would like to make a brief but theological analysis of these forms of crisis.

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6 Anastasios Yannoulatos, *Ortodoxia și problemele lumii contemporane (Orthodoxy and the problems of the contemporary world)*, (trad. rom.), Bucharest, Bizantină Publishing, 2003, p.191.

7 Paul Evdokimov, *Prezența Duhului Sfânt în tradiția ortodoxă (The Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Tradition)*, Bucharest, Anastasia Publishing, 1995, p. 43.

First of all I would talk about the anthropological crisis and I would stop at the crisis of the young. Man has been a dialogical being since creation. Man does not whimper, he makes noises as animals do. Man dialogues on the model of the Holy Trinity, conveying feelings, reasoning and desires. Man expresses his being through dialogue, but he also completes himself through it, expressing the experiences of his being. When the young person is formed, he enters into dialogue with those around him. The lack of this dialogue leads to anxiety, forced internalisation, then neurotic repression and social maladjustment. In Romanian, he becomes a man who no longer finds his place. Dialogue is the form of fulfilment of man from all points of view. Through dialogue he knows, feels, experiences his feelings, transmits his thoughts and structures himself as a human being. Through dialogue he becomes that logosiatic being, on the Christic model. Man lives his existence through logos. This is precisely where the tragedy of young people arises: the fact that they no longer have *logosity*.

What does this state of “logosity” mean? First of all, it is that connection between us and the divine Logos, from which all our existence comes. “Through his incarnation, God the Logos revealed that logosity is the essence of our nature, the foundation of our human being, the basis of our life and existence”.<sup>8</sup> We live and pass into eternity because we were created by Logos, for Logos and with Logosity. This is the soteriological itinerary of the Christian man. Logosity is our form of dialogue with the Triune God. It is more than a simple dialogue, a verblativity between two entities. Logosity is a communion with the other. People through logosity come to commune with each other and especially with the divine Logos. Without this logosiatic dialogue, man cannot be complete. The human logos can be defined as the word imbued with grace and holiness, that is, that word or dialogue by which man sanctifies himself and ascends epectatically to heaven.

If this logosiatic word or dialogue is missing, children are frustrated from this spiritual growth and sacred maturity. It is therefore not enough to speak to the child but to speak to him in a graceful way, so that he is strengthened in word and faith. The lack of logosity in the verblativity of parents with children leads to a state of interiorisation and spiritual closure and this is where the crisis of dialogue and personality begins. “Every

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8 Justin Popovici, *Omul și Dumnezeuul-Om (Man and God-Om)...*, p. 58.

man is a thinking word and in dialogue with the personal divine Word and with the other personal human words; every man draws power from the divine Word, but also from the power of things, gathers their reasoning in his thinking and their power in his life and communicates them to others and receives from them their communication and by this deepens his connection with the divine Logos and his understanding of their origin and meaning.”<sup>9</sup>

If the logos disappears and only a dry or even destructive verbality remains, the young person loses the vectoriality of life and becomes a flat existence without the prospect of eternity. His orientation at best is for a humanistic society, here and now, in which people live their ephemerality in the most complex and hedonistic way. If dialogue or the lack of it is destructive, man demonises himself as a behaviour and as a way of living, becoming a *homo homini lupus*, which unfortunately we see more and more often in the competitive society of the third millennium. The tense state of society is the conclusion of a human disjunction, a crisis that is no longer healing because people no longer have that agapic attitude.

Another anthropological crisis, also related to inter-human silence, is the lack of dialogue in the family. The crisis of spouses is also based on the lack of honest dialogue and sincerity between the two, which leads to a crisis of silence and from there each has its own silent world. The world of smartphonics has created this “chance” of individual refuge. We live too isolated from each other even in our own homes and this means a crisis of marital dialogue. Communication also means communion with the other and hence communion with them. This is the true agapic Christic society, whereby people can enjoy and save one another through one another.

The same kind of crisis occurs in the third generation, where the lack of dialogue and empathy leads to isolation and silence. People of this age no longer need clothes, lots of food or money, but only dialogue, the feeling that they are not alone and that someone is there for them. Or this state implies the logos of the other. Without this state, the senior starts to wither away. The phenomenon of introversion appears and the man becomes closed in on himself, taciturn and lacking the desire for dialogue. Hence the loss of the joy of dialogue with God and people. Their way out of the crisis means dialogue with themselves, with their elders and with God.

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9 Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, vol. 2, Bucharest, Apologeticum Publishing, 2006, p. 5.

And the crisis doesn't stop there. Because dialogue with God is lacking, there is the pretence of replacing Him with our pride. More concretely, we put ourselves in God's place and dominate creation. And this is where the ecological crisis comes from. We have been given the gift of "mastering" creation and leading it to perfection. Unfortunately, we have not only failed to bring creation to perfection, we have destroyed it and turned it into a projection of our own greed. The chance of creation was the Incarnation of Christ and at the end all the divine intervention to create new heaven and new earth. Man without God has destroyed and will further destroy. That is why we need that moment when everything will be made anew. The destruction of creation means the destruction of the *oikos*, the living space of humanity. Today we read and worry about the catastrophic statistics the earth has reached but we have no consciousness to change.

The crisis of the earth is in fact the crisis of man and the crisis of man is the crisis of the break with God. The earth was created to become man's heaven. Heaven is not to be sought in some stratosphere, but on the earth, only that man has destroyed his heaven and cut God out of creation. Obviously the return and sanctification of creation will take place when God will present a new heaven and a new earth, that is, when He will cleanse creation of all that is ugly and evil. It is God's final involvement in creation to complete its purpose. From that moment on, humanity and creation will never again come into conflict with God's will, but there will be an eternity of dialogue and divine-human Logos.

Crisis is actually the loss of the graceful state and this means the departure from God and the loss of human meaning. Man loses his roots and without these roots I don't know where he comes from and where he is going. A world without a sense of transcendence tries to make its own meanings and orientations in the space of the matter it deifies. This is where the crisis begins: from the moment we exclude God from our lives. For an entire history, man has struggled with God to put Him aside and to set Him aside from his own existence. In God's place have come philosophies, the human mind's attempt to think of an ideal society. But this society cannot be without God, because the ideal society is only paradise and paradise without Him does not exist. Philosophies have tried to provide that human environment of existence but have ended up becoming ideologies that have subjugated the masses of people.

Submission has led to the establishment of totalitarianism and dictatorships of all kinds. Or man is free by creation and any intervention to dominate him only truncates his personality and personality is the image<sup>10</sup> that God has put in each of us. We each have our own spiritual DNA, which is seen in the personality of the soul through which we dialogue and remain in relationship with God.

Without this personality and freedom of the soul we are spiritual cripples who have no meaning and dialogue. "Eastern anthropology is the ontology of deification, the progressive enlightenment of man and the world".<sup>11</sup>

This is where we have ended up with our society: to truncate people of any freedom and turn them into obedient of a monochrome social. Monochrome or obedient obedience means a lack of verticality. This is precisely what the Christian Church preaches to the world: that we are different, but it is precisely in this difference that it creates harmony between people. Everyone is different, free and dialogical in their own way, and with each of us God finds his form of connection and dialogue. And this divine otherness gives us the infinity of dialogue with a God who is not exhausted in Logos and grace. The world without Logos and grace is a world that withers from within. It appears beautiful, it looks good, illuminated by the flashes of advertising spots, but inside it is dry and parched. People hide behind multimedia anonymity, losing what was a gift to them: their personal uniqueness through which they could converse with God. This prosoponic hiding leads to the creation of a society in which no one sees anyone else, a back to back society, as in a Dostoyevskian hell. And when we are back to back and cannot see each other's faces, we cannot dialogue and dialogue is the mystery of our eternity. "The mission of the Church is to create in every member the conviction that the normal state of human personality is immortality and eternity and not temporality and death and that man is a traveler who through death and temporality, advances towards immortality and eternity."<sup>12</sup> Even prayer is in fact a dialogue between us

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10 The face as transfiguration and divine presence. It is on this theme that C.A. Tsadirikiou, *Icons in Time, Persons in Eternity. Orthodox Theology and the Aesthetics of the Christian Image*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Farnham (England) – Burlington (USA), 2013.

11 Paul Evdokimov, *Iubirea nebună a lui Dumnezeu (God's mad love)*, Bucharest, Anastasia Publishing, 1996, p. 51.

12 Justin Popovici, *Omul și Dumnezeu-Om (Man and God-Om)...*, p. 75.

and God, which we often turn into a monologue or a pouring out of words without the depth of the soul. And then we also enter a crisis: the crisis of prayer and of living the sacred before God. Monologuing before the sacred is in fact monologuing before ourselves, for the Divine is no longer a pro-sonic reality. We are living in this delusion, which is why we no longer have that liturgical sensibility, but everything has become a routine, a set of ritual gestures by which we consider that we have ticked off the religious moment.

The human crisis is in fact the crisis of the loss of the human as a whole. We have remained segmented entities, in which only the body can still be perceived, while the soul has become, in the words of Isaiah the prophet, barely “a smouldering fuse”, without light or warmth. It is the essential part of man that we are losing or atrophying in this soulless, vertical, transcendental world that wants to remain only human, humanistic or post-humanistic, but never theandric or divine-human. And this is because we have lost the divine logos within us through which we could dialogue with the divine Logos of the Trinity. This is a great crisis, because the moment this dialogical state is lost, humans become monads locked in a total and cold egoism. Everything for such a society becomes a statistic. If there is an earthquake in which thousands of people die, it is a statistic; if there is a war in which tens of thousands die, it is also a statistic (we calculate from which side more people died). Accounting figures without feeling, because there is no more compassion or “carrying each other’s burdens”. We no longer carry any burdens, not even our own, and believe with impersonal obedience that there are too many of us on earth and that we need to die in wars and calamities as in “natural selection”. Nothing could be more false and harmful. To argue human selfishness by the necessity of wars and calamities is the height of human wickedness. A society without the agapic state, without the inter-human relationship based on the sacrifice of Christ’s love, is a society of disjunction, a kind of who-for-what, in which only coercive law and obedience can prevail, because there is no human sense and conscience.

So what is the mission of the Christian in such a society? I can’t give a strict prescription, because I said that we are all different before God, but I can suggest a few guidelines:

- Returning to the Christian conscience. We live without feeling that we are Christians and our Christianity is just a statistic.



Even when we claim strongly that we are Christians, we are often just poor ritualists, with no sense of communion with God and no love for our fellow man. We need a real, working and active Christian conscience through which we can leaven the world. The parable of the dough is not just a story, but a desideratum. The world must be fermented in a Christic way in order to rediscover its sacred consciousness and change the face of society.

- Sincere faith before God. Sincerity of faith and the assumption of it. We don't get baptized just to be listed in a register and receive a Christian baptismal certificate. Baptism is a new life that we take on. Baptismal consciousness is our identity as some who are not only baptized but also convinced of our faith. Then our faith must be witnessed to the world, whether the world receives it or not. The seeds must be sown, regardless of the soil that receives them.
- Then there is the need for a recovery of a healthy moral life. We live in a society in which moral values are being overturned and we no longer seem to have the ability to discern, especially when society presents sin as a normality or an alternative to Christian morality. Recovering moral meanings, without, however, being very demanding of those who have lost these meanings, but with the desire that all should come to the "knowledge of the truth" is a necessity at the beginning of the third millennium. Truth is not only strictly dogmatic, but also moral and social and human. Genuine human values bring man towards God.
- The reception of Christianity as a cultural landmark of society. People are looking for role models and role models with whom they can identify or who can be their moral support in the search for happiness, because happiness is the goal of life. Every society wants to provide its members with this state of happiness. It depends, however, on how long and lasting this happiness is. Ephemerality does not bring happiness but at best a drug of happiness that does not last but only gives addiction with all its harmful consequences. Matter is not happiness but only a satisfaction of the moment. True happiness is eternal and eternity is lived with the eternal One. And this state of happiness is given by Chris-

tianity. I will not go into other religions, because each one has its own soteriological state, but for the European area, which is based on Christian living, it could not be otherwise, since genetically we are based on Christian living. Even if attempts are made to eliminate the 'Christian heritage', we are too closely linked to Christian teaching in our European being. And this is seen when we come into contact with the Asian or African world that comes upon us. We are something else and this something else means a Christian approach, a way of thinking in which the relational reality between people has a different basis than other ways of thinking that come from outside Europe. Christianity must be rediscovered as a spiritual factor as well as a factor of culture and identity, but we must eliminate from it those tendencies of imposition and harshness that are not Christ's. True Christian history is a history of love and closeness to Christ. Without this state of graceful love, Christianity becomes an ideology or a philosophy among other philosophies. Without this basis of Christian thinking and living we are meaningless Europeans: we do not know where we have come from and where we are going.

In **conclusion**, crisis is a definition of man's break with the dialogical state and the Logos of God.<sup>13</sup> If we no longer speak with God, we can no longer speak with each other, but only monologue selfishly, without any trace of *agape*. From the moment we no longer have that graceful dialogue, everything goes out of balance: man is nothing but an economic profiteer from his fellow man and his workers are exhausted and underpaid (economic crisis). He sees everything as profit and squeezes every resource to ensure more wealth and more money. Nature is weakened by human greed (ecological crisis). Everything becomes hedonism if man forgets true pleasure in God. The body becomes a dominator of life and the soul is almost forgotten and neutralized. The body imposes itself through its desires (family crisis) and those close to it suffer. Man no longer makes sense (anthropological crisis) and then everything becomes chaotic in society

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13 Ioan-Gheorghe Rotaru, "Logosul și înțelepciunea" („Logos and Wisdom”), in Alexandru Boboc, N.I.Mariș (coord.), *Studii de istorie a filosofiei universale (Studies in the history of universal philosophy)*, XIII, București (Bucharest), Editura Academiei Române (Romanian Academy Publishing House), 2005, pp. 295-324.

(social crisis), in politics (political crisis) and in every aspect of human life. Only a return to the divine Logos and to our dialogical logosity full of grace and agape can remove our monadic state in which there is only our own monologue.

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