
THE OPPORTUNISTS OF HEAVEN AND THE EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNION. GOD AS A LABEL

Rodica Pop

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Iasi;
Superior counselor for the Iasi County Department for Culture
Carol I Blvd, Nr.11, Iasi, Romania, 700506

Even though God's name is very present in both the academic and political discourse, the reality is that God seems to have indeed «died», as Nietzsche, Sartre or Camus once said, because between the message and the finality of the authors' endeavors there is a gap that places the world under the sign of chaos and pain. I am scanning the degree of honesty of some intellectuals who set the norms of the time, and some politicians who declare themselves Christians and insert in the ideology of their party Christian concepts and values. I have called them «opportunists of Heaven» because these intellectuals have transformed God into a subject of analysis as any other, and the politician utters His name to gain poll success. We see them climbing on the shoulders of God in order to define their careers: the intellectual wants to be accepted by the community of scholars which requires of him to be a free conscience, detached, impartial, independent; the politician wants to win votes from the electorate which asks of him to be moral. The secular state imposes its own moral, which doesn't deny universal values but it actually changes their meaning. The criterion that no one can deviate from is the one of political correctness. In this paper, I shall focus on the way in which the Orthodox Church is involved in solving the crisis of the world, starting from key issues such as the human being, communion and sin. Man is invited to live inside the principle that creates the communion: the Logos. Therefore the solution would be adopting a Christ-centric perspective on life.

Key words: communion, opportunism, Orthodoxy, politics, secularization, state.

INTRODUCTION

A set of questions make up the grounds of the present text, that deals with aspects from the life of man in this globalized, secularized world, in which the public policies and the morals imposed by the state via phrases like «politically correct» forces man into attitudes that no longer harmonize with the private beliefs of the majority and give rise to approaches meant to make us understand that the limits of normality are growing less and less strict: are the faith in the Christ of the New Testament and the experience of communion as traditionally established by the Holy Patriarchs still possible? Could a person be still a member of the Church of Christ and yet still be active in politics, a dignified social being, involved in real estate businesses and yet work in a multinational company? Could biotechnology come to terms with the prayer from the heart? And, last but not least, does man today have a chance to salvation in this world dominated by the «opportunists of Heaven» and still take active part in the political life, without being forced to retreat into the wilderness?

Firstly, we shall attempt a survey of the secularized system and identify a part of the acute problems we are confronted with and, then, pinpoint the manner in which the Orthodox Church contributes to tackling the world crisis we are experiencing nowadays and what the solutions it can provide are. Obviously, we do not claim we shall mention all the issues on the matter, nor that we shall actually solve them in this paper. The approach here is intended to represent a personal form of meditation and involvement.

**«THE OPPORTUNISTS OF HEAVEN»:
A CAREER GUILD OR A PARADOX OF DEMOCRACY**

We are using the phrase — «opportunists of Heaven» — to refer both to part of the contemporary intellectuals who set the trends of this epoch as well to some politicians, because, although the name of God is present in public speeches — of intellectuals or of politicians — God seems to have really died, as Nietzsche, Sartre or Camus stated. We do not wish to refer to the heated debate over the death of God when Nietzsche proposed his belief in the *Übermensch*. Yet, we cannot help noticing that the postmodern intellectual does not have the courage and stamina to assert his position in a fashion matching that of his modern predecessor. They act hypocritically (1), yet inspired by the *Übermensch*, who puts himself at the center as a measure of all things, thus becoming a singular individual, independent from all metaphysical sources of life (2).

The *Übermensch* denied his subordination to the transcendent principle and declared himself god. The contemporary intellectuals approach loosely ideas and concepts but do not fraternize with them. They do not engage in intimate dialogues with their topics. The intellectual has turned God into just another object of study. They do talk about Him, but with a detachment that secures them an apparent independence. Theology (3) itself seems to take its chances at times, retorting to this speculative exercise that lacks the power to uplift us, because it speaks about God, not in God. The thinker seems to have lost faith in his power to transcend the limits of human reason and to relate to something higher than himself, to Divine Reason, to Logos.

If the intellectual avoid stating religious option (if any), this happens because he risks being labeled as anachronic, tributary to primitive ideas and systems of thinking, bigotist, fundamentalists, lacking the objectivity that could assist him in considering everything clearly and in accordance with the almost overwhelming laws of nature, even within the realm of the sciences of the spirit.

This would be the academic environment of materialist vocation. In order to be credible, or, at least, listened to, the intellectuals nowadays, especially if they are politicians, are asked to be free spirits, detached and impartial.

On the other hand, the politician of Christian orientation appeals to the name of God in order to root his ideology. He makes excessive and lamentable use of the Christian values, in the hope that this is the way he can create a spiritualized image of himself to display to naïve others, the purpose being practical, raw poll success. Reality, though, has often proved that the leaders of some Christian parties, like any other politicians for that matter and who declare themselves free thinkers, are proven criminals, and that alone should determine from the public's part a skeptical attitude towards political life at large. Yet, we can notice that, not only at the level of conjunctural discourse, but also of the legal or public political system, the attitudes and phrasing practiced are based on liberty, equality, fraternity, that is on the principles that protect fundamental human rights and the dignity of the citizen, but the sole criterion that regulates them and rules out any trace of religiousness and any Christian moral values is that of *political correctness*. Normality — or, at least, what has been considered as

such for thousands of years — is thus severely sanctioned. The agreement, be it tacit, be it the effect of a hypocritical reaction or the expression of lacking a firm, perseverant, assumed stand of the politicians of Christian orientation regarding the shift in some paradigms, of some solid traditional values, such as family, proves that the weapons they use with a view to ensuring sympathy from the electorate are deceiving. They deliver a set of principles they have absolutely no remorse abdicating from, as soon as they encounter the bright beacon of the *political correctness* (4).

ADVERTISING AND DEMAGOGY GOD AS A LABEL

So, some intellectuals, in the same manner as some politicians, fall into the category that we may describe as «opportunists of Heaven», because they climb on the shoulders of God for profit. Each of them desire something and knows that the only way to get that something is by retorting to the elements of marketing that could ensure success. Thus, in order to be accepted in the community of scholars, they must prove detachment from God, their attitude should make itself remarked for the sobriety of the man sure of his own power and who does not appeal to an entity that eludes scientific reasoning, but that can be collected with the heart. Consequently, if the politician wishes to gain votes, he must declare his devotion to God in a pharisaic fashion.

Evidently, if the elites make use of deceitful discourse while still getting people to trust them time and time again, this signals that the masses too have a problem in receiving the message or, similarly critical, everybody's axiological systems of reference are up side down. The electorate puts their vigilance to sleep only because the one inviting them to vote mentioned God's name. Otherwise, how could we explain why the politicians who display behaviors in utter divergence from true Christian life are repeatedly voted by the same electors? The crisis is therefore not limited to the level of those we are analyzing here, that is the representatives of the upper classes, but has pervaded the entire society. All these factors have placed the world we live in under the sign of chaos and sufferance although, paradoxically, never before in history has man led a better life, eaten better, traveled more easily all over the planet or into the outer space, had such effortless access to information or had the opportunity to build a career with such efficiency. Despite all of these advantages, man today seems to be sadder, lonelier, emptier than ever. What we should worry about in this respect is not the suffering or the distress of the people in the third world countries, issues that can be explained by extreme scarcity and disease (to which the politician in the contemporary world relates by practicing various forms of demagogy), but about the suffering and pain brought about by depleting man of meaning, this having thus become a standard of civilization and wealth.

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT CHRIST

The historical demise of God that atheists talk about proves to be rather the death of an idea they made in their heads on what God is really like or, even more probably, it represents the despair at the idea of their own death. They were confident they had killed God but they ended up by killing themselves. Yet, the search was never over.

The more man deepened into denial, the more acute his suffering became, because he strayed from the source of love, good and beautiful, that is from everything that can make man happy. We even notice that more and more Christians, in their attempt to find a solution to free themselves from crisis and from the suffering each of them goes through, gives up the traditional ways of believing, reckoning these are no longer easily available, no longer the answer to the requirements of life nowadays or to the imbalance generated by the progress of technology, with its destructive and self-disruptive capacity. They adopt new forms of practice goodness and love towards their fellow men: sindacalization, political projects, protection of the environment, acts of charity (5) precise and punctual tax paying.

The contemporary citizens face one dilemma in particular. As long as they believe they respect the love Commandment, why would they need intervention from the Church, the Holy Service or partaking in the Holy Housel? The general trend is that of taking distance from the traditional way of expressing belief in God. In fact, believing in a personal God poses a serious problem in contemporary thinking. Taking into consideration the scientific discoveries and the absolutely amazing and fascinating progress in technology, aspects that make our lives easier and seem to help us contact the Universe in a more conscientious way, the person believing that wine could become the Blood of Christ and the bread, the Body of Christ risks to appear ridiculous, primitive or a prisoner of superstition.

The problem of the world we live in is represented by a barely detectable mix of deceit and truth, as the secularized man does not deny universal values but wishes to separate them from God, for they want to be good, generous, unitive, but *parallel to* Christ, not *alongside* Him. The morality of the secular state does not deny the existence of God, but shifts the significance of some consecrated concepts. That happens because, although it proposes some morals, the secular state is essentially separated from Christian morality which aims at everybody's redemption, be them rulers or ruled over, givers or receivers. A relevant example is that of marriage, that, in Orthodox Church, represents the secret union between a man and a woman, union motivated by love and intended towards redemption, whereas secular morality considers it a consensual partnership, irrespective of the partners' gender [2], a principle that makes the homosexual matrimony possible today. The acceptance of abortion is the form in which the secular state offers the woman the right to decide by herself in matters of private and intimate life, the same way suicide assisted by doctors contributes to maintaining and sparing the dignity of a person. Religion is only admitted as a support for weak people, thus being stripped of the «majestic attribute of truth» (Father Stăniloae) and is, at most, charged with the quality of useful. Obviously, the words that have so far had a certain semantic charge transform their content so as to align themselves to the morality of the secularized state. Mark J. Cherry [2] gives us an example of high relevance. The terms *holiness* and *holy* no longer characterize those who lead lives impregnated with the Holy Spirit, but refer to those «*extremely kind or highly patient*». More concretely, in the *Oxford English Dictionary* [3], holy person is one «*of extraordinary meekness of living*». Sometimes, ironically, a person that «*displays piety publicly*». Also, in colloquial speech, «*an extremely kind person or one who suffers for a long period of time*».

This attitude to the description of a term translates into fear of the presence of God, even at the level of discourse. He must be completely obliterated.

And that is how all the premises for founding and practicing a Christ-less Christianity are set. A monstrous entity, as sick as the world that made it possible, for it lacks that element which gives meaning to Christianity — love: «If I gave away all I have... but have no love, I gain nothing» (1 Cor 13, 3).

THE ALIBI-CONSCIENCE OR WHAT DO THE NON-BELIEVERS BELIEVE IN?

In a dialogue [1. P. 60, 71, 74] with Umberto Eco, the cardinal Carlo Maria Martini is right to wonder what is the ultimate justification given to their own actions by those who guide themselves in accordance with an ethical certainty that is not rooted in a transcendent imperative, a metaphysical principle, a personal God, neither in «universally valid absolute imperatives». On what do these people found their need for solidarity and closeness with their fellow men? God is absent in their actions and seems to have died together with the death of the reality of redemption. And, maybe, things would not be that bad if the secular state did not try to impose its morality as the only one to be observed. *Politically correct* is, as we have mentioned, the only criterion a correct citizen may guide himself in order to stay within the permitted frameworks. The fundamentalist secular state, with its establishing through law a certain secular morality, seeks to cover all areas, to give its own definition to human good and flourishing, to restructure society and the human interactions on its own terms of interpreting liberty, equality and human dignity (6).

MAN AND GOD — AN INVITATION OPEN TO EVERYBODY

Orthodoxy takes part in this debate and tries to make its own contribution from a Christ-at-the-center perspective. A true Christian is a person free from all clichés in judgement, from any prejudice and who is not afraid of anything. That is why the Orthodox Church may speak with serenity and gratitude about the real (historic) death of God, that it commemorated on Good Friday. There is no anger, no proclamation of the independence of man, neither a declaration of war against Heavens. The response to the news of God's death — says the Greek theologian Panayotis Nellas [5. P. 52—58] — is the gospel of man's resurrection. Moreover, the ideal of an *Übermensch* proves superfluous, as man was created in God's image and likeness and was invited to become god himself (7)! Saint Gregory of Nyssa [6. P. 96] reminds us that the goal man aspires to ever since creation is the Creator Himself, «because immanent in and in accordance with nature is to man the life similar to divine nature». The problem is that, after the fall of Adam, man no longer finds himself in a situation of authenticity. The fall re-orientates him, drags him down a tragic condition, unveiling to him the temporal dimension, hurling him, as it has been said before, into History, that is leaving him at the mercy of or prey to his own liberty. His tragedy commences when he positions himself on a standpoint contrary to that determined by the image of God inside of him.

Yet, he is left with something extremely important, with the gifts of the image: love, dignity, liberty, will power, simplicity of the soul, the idea of any other good [7. P. 22; 8. P. 191; 9. P. 131—132] — gifts that are never lost and are manifest even in the souls most broken and distant from God. So, there is an answer for Cardinal Martini, a reply about which not even the ones representing his subject of interest are aware of. The need for solidarity, closeness and love are nostalgias over his divine origin, even in the case of a person educated to live and think inside an apparent void of any metaphysical substance. Anyway, the questions/answers regarding the private motivation that drives man into action remain open.

Orthodoxy does not propose a philosophy or an ideology, but a true history where the divine and human realities can co-exist without conflicting with each other, can have a dialogue without arguing, can create synergically without destroying each other. We consider that the impotence derived from the way man today sees himself comes from the cleavage between the historical and the transcendent, the ephemeral and the eternal, the earthly and the heavenly. At the origin of God's death lies the idea that eternity and time, the afterlife and the present, God and man are opposite couples. Panayotis Nellas [5. P. 50] agrees that theologians and — we might add — the intellectuals and politicians ought to speak the language of the times, adapt their discourse to the rigours of this age, but they understood that by adapting it, by having the core of Christianity eliminated, as it is represented by Christ's historical existence, that is the living belief that the Logos indeed came from heaven above, embodied out of the Holy Spirit and Virgin Mary, healed the sick, brought dead people back to life, died and resurrected, thus granting us access to Eternal Life, and maintains His actual presence through the Holy Housel.

Even from this world, it is possible to communicate with the transcendent when man places Christ at the center of his life and assigns an absolute sense to the status as a person, as opposed to that as an individual the state reduces it to. The difference comes from inner freedom, that ontological gift man received once with the image within him and that helps him live a serene, free existence, even in the most authoritarian of political systems (8). Yet, inner freedom is something to be regained and cultivated — at an individual level and, thus, transferred to the level of the entire community, — actually reactivated, for it is never lost but rather kept in a state of stand-by because of repeated compromise and sin. Under any circumstances, in any political regime or in this swirl of duties in a world dominated by technological progress and profit, the criterion of just faith is affirming and communicating — by any means possible — love, peace, sacrality of the human person, liberty of human rights [5. P. 260]. So, the solution comes from an attitude animated by love. And the proof of love is given within the group, the community. That is because love needs at least two people. In this way, the Orthodox citizen will not get isolated from society, will not retreat from the world, for his redemption is only possible in togetherness with others. Withdrawal from political life or total rejection of politics is considered by the Orthodox Church a mistake even from the part of the most fervent or enlightened believer who is otherwise perfectly capable to justify his attitude of rejection towards the political class.

POLITICS AND CHRISTIANITY — NON-ANTAGONICAL THESES

The Redeemer Himself offers a model of relating to this exact matter: «Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's» (Mt 6, 33). That, at a first glance, means that it is a good thing to fulfill our duty both to the establishment and to the things of the soul. Yet, Nikolai Berdiaev [10. P. 364] believes that what Jesus intends is rather help us avoid confusion and distinguish between the two worlds, two essentially different realms. Even the way we look at the church is misleading and confusing, as the misunderstandings, the fractures and the need from the Church's part to organize itself first appeared during the imperial rule of Caesar, not of God. To restrict the person of Jesus or the Church, which represent both ontological realities, always ecumenical, to nationality, to geographic or ethnographic perimeters, means to set limits to the conscience of the Church (9) and a «fall into darkness» [11. P. 28] or, even worse, it is «a blasphemy to turn the Church into a national institution, to limit its purpose to mean, limited and ephemeral purposes. Its real purpose is supra-national, ecumenical and panhuman: that is of unifying in Christ all men, all without any exemption dictated by nationality, race or social status» [12. P. 55].

Going back to the idea of justifying the political aspect, we may mention that Panayotis Nellas adds further arguments from the Scriptures (Rom 13, 1—7; 1 Tim 2, 1—3) to support the validity of politics that «represent a legitimately necessary effort that people do in order to organize and rule their social life, a gift from the seminal Logos, an heritage man took with him when he exited Heaven» [5. P. 243]. At the same time, politics are presumably «a good, positive remainder, an altered yet real image of paradisiacal ontological life communion that, even though unable to transform society, can nevertheless not let it turn into a living hell» [5. P. 243]. Father Stăniloae [4. P. 491—493] has a simpler representation of what politics means and he sees it as «managing the collective earthly life in a way that, just like managing private life, does not necessarily employ things immoral [...]».

On the contrary, fully moral politics — manifested as dynamicity and radicalism (that would not manifest as fanaticism, but as the strong will to achieve the good objectives) — practiced for long periods of time, will surely determine that state to make amazing progress and become stronger. The only way in which the politics may incorporate the religious factor is to never forget that God is at the other end of each of our actions, so, by working for the well-being of the fellow man, we do nothing more than getting closer to God: «between these two sick extremes, individualism and despotism — faces of the same sinful egotism, — lies the tendency of the Orthodox Christianity towards national solidarity, hierarchically organized, in which ruling the state and love are harmoniously intertwined» [4. P. 880].

«THE NATION — A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF DESTINY» (H. SAUER)

There is no political system out there that could circumvent admitting the importance of the human being. When it does, it fails, because every human being asks that their dignity be recognized. Democracy harbors the illusion that it holds the solution,

granting equality in the face of the law while dangerously estranging man from the idea of spirit and transcendent. Paradoxically, Orthodoxy, which is a religion of love and empathy, has the arguments and denounces the collapse of democracy, because liberty and equality are regulated only legally, but lack love and this has resulted in relations between people getting colder and in enlarging the gap between them. It has been proved that equality without love is either unachievable, or, if it does get achieved, it will not secure man the happiness he desires, but broadens the void inside his soul. Father Staniloaie was right to say that «in a democracy, man is alone» [4. P. 872], even if this was stated in the 40's, last century. History has not proved this idea wrong. There is much talk nowadays about one of the diseases today's man suffers from, despondence, caused by loneliness or lack of direction. Justice, liberty and equality are no longer enough and the gap between him and his fellow man gets wider. Used in the key of minus, these core theses of democracy are devoid of content, become cold, immobile, abstract at times, are not inspiring, cannot bond human destinies together. The atheist matter of democracy requires Spirit in order to deliver Liberty. Yet, it is this exact spirit that Christianity is founded upon and it could enrich and strengthen the experiences of communion within democratic policies.

Love is the only tie between politicians and citizens or between people in general. No law will ever determine a politician to be efficient, honest, do his duties, unless he is driven by love for others and that will show he is inclined to sacrifice, understanding and a permanent effort to ensure the welfare of others. The Christian person holds as a duty to get involved and to seek solutions to the problems the society he lives in goes through. And it does not even matter how significant his role or how grave the problems, because «whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little, will also be dishonest with much» (Luke 16, 10).

Farther Stăniloae considers that, unlike other Christian confessions, Orthodoxy, with its organizational structure based on the autocephalous system, has the capacity to understand the nation. Its perspective is rooted in the belief that the highest reality is that of the person and not that of objects and that it is found fully in the communication between people, perfected through the flow of grace. «Christianity is perfection of the natural relation between man and man, perfection of love or the ties of their perfecting. This is only one notch from saying: the most natural of relationships nature requires is the communion with the people close to you, with whom, in all obvious cases, you share the same language, the same history, the same aspirations and the same destiny. Nations are communities of destinies, more stable, crossed by more especially profound linking ties than any other kinds of communities that are ephemeral and shallow» [4. P. 664].

Communion is a condition essential to redemption because, how could otherwise a Christian person prove his virtues? Isolation is an abnormal option. The language, the proximity, the common history are but some of the elements that make a Christian person feel connected with his fellow citizens and, under the impulse of the morals he adhered to, gets involved in the good progress of the country. In this respect, Father Staniloaie believes that a Christian person should «be happy for the web of opportunities

granted by his belonging to a national community, so that he may experience in it religious content [...]. Christian belief is to a believer an impulse towards asserting national communion, love above senses for those with whom nature placed him in fundamental relations of living» [4. P. 665].

THE POLITICIAN, AS EMPEROR, PRIEST AND PROPHET

We were saying that the Orthodox Church does not forbid practicing politics but the solution it recommends is extremely hard to accept by today's man, who is so deeply rooted in the here and now. It is necessary that we take a more substantial look into the significance of the *Church, embodiment of the Logos, the Holy Ghost's — Appeaser's descent*. It is also necessary to take a more substantial look into the beyond and to grasp the meanings of the sanctity of the human being, built in a «Trinitarian» fashion. The Christian person sees the Holy Trinity as the archetype of the human society and this dogma might constitute the highest code the political life of man [5. P. 260]. The perspective of the Eastern Christianity makes possible the communication between the natural and the supranatural through the divine energy that sanctifies everything. Thus, the Christian person lives inside two realities: the historical one and the eschatological one [5. P. 252—253]. The employee of the state, as he is of Christian faith, through prayer and mysteries, does in such a way that the effects of a life lived in Christ are at least noticeable, if not secretly influential to the organism it works inside of. The energies of the divine gift can be sensed everywhere, because the gifts of the Holy Ghost have regenerating action.

Panayotis Nellas [5. P. 261] points out three elements related to human dignity and which give man higher powers: man is *emperor, priest* and *prophet*.

As *emperor*, he has the strength to harness his fallen nature, to organize and be master of his own life. «As true emperor, a free personality in control, the believer stands on the same level as the others emperors and shall not bow to the first of the equals unless he sees in that another his own image» [5. P. 261] (10). The Greek thinker might wonder whether this manner of people relate to one another, by holding the image that keeps them together, could not be the basis of true democracy.

In his capacity as *priest*, the believer offers himself God's entire creation, continuing the work that the Holy Housel does in general. Through this daily, small ritual, repeated constantly and with love, evil is exorcised and harmony is restored, «uniting what was divided before». This is the way in which «the souls dedicated to God prevent the world from falling apart completely and, with this small but daily and constant housel, lead it towards its goal, write history in deep lettering» [5. P. 263].

The believer's quality as a *prophet* — claims Panayotis Nellas — makes him a *judge* of the world, *salt* of the earth and *preacher* of the Holy Kingdom. As a *judge*, the Christian person cannot tolerate social injustice, exploitation and that is why he shall seek the source of evil and shall take upon himself to solve the problems of his times. «Godly word is fire that came to light up hearts» (Luke 12, 49) and surgical *sword* and the saints John the Baptist and John Golden Mouth represent the criterion of Orthodoxy,

and not extremes or exception [5. P. 263]. *The Prophet* is the one who discerns, has the capacity to see in external events the hidden part of God's work and message, his life thus being built on this secret canvas, also influencing the lives of others in a beneficial way. Nobody can deny that this quality conveyed through wisdom represents the most profound content of politics.

ENDNOTES

- (1) How else could we interpret the words of Claudio Martelli: «The Illuminism of Bayle and Voltaire, of Rousseau and of Kant, of Newton and of Laplace is, though critical and skeptical, Christian: heterodox, ecumenical, tolerant, but Christian nevertheless, even though it does not fully believe in a personal God, it does this in preponderant measure and categorically and assertingly theist manner» (*The Lay Creed of Christian Humanism*) in [1. P. 136].
- (2) We focus our attention on the intellectual person as a standard for the wise person, the thinker, the enlightened mind of the society and on the politician in his capacity as a representative of those who rule the state.
- (3) We supply here the example of Rudolf Bultmann, with his famous theory of *demythisation*, theory that proposes to ignore the aspects related to the historical existence of Jesus, the miracles and deeds He performed in the period He took the «image of a slave» and to interpret the Gospels starting from the concepts of existentialist philosophy.
- (4) This is the formula that permits the appearance of excesses from the minorities' dictatorship. The institutions, the structures of decision no longer have the pretence of being democratic, not even at a formal, hypocritical level. For the time being, it is only a savage hunt for opportunities to acquire power and to discover new sources of easy and fabulous gains, despite some absolutely remarkable civil experiences that could function as oases, at least.
- (5) The acts of charity are not always done according to the Christian principle «the left hand shall not know what the right hand does», but their goal is some profit: either related to the public image (so that the events of this kind display people in expensive attires or provide opportunities for manifestations of questionable morality — there are women who offer fabulous amounts of money in order to spend a night with a famous bachelor and that money is then given to, say, children with disabilities etc) or have in view a reduction of taxes or money laundering.
- (6) Mark J. Cherry's idea [2] is very interesting because it draws attention to the perverted mix of truth and lies that can be found in the set of moral principles imposed by the secular state. But more importantly, the American researcher underlines the limits and the helplessness of the secular morality that he considers atrophied both as importance and normative power: «the secular morality no longer has that normativity that derives from being imposed in a coercitive manner by the power of the law and by the public policies of a state. Its highest — actually, its only normative significance is represented by its juridical and political support. In the absence of an anchor in God, the matter of morality is radically shrunken. The sanctions for breaking the norms of moral conduct are reduced to a mere prudential approximation of the punishment one might get according to the law and of the probability to get caught. There is no deeper significance of the dictates of the secular morals as they are merely expressions of individual or group prudential preferences or judgements. The secular morals must be interpreted as that one set of moral intuitions around which a political coalition emerged, efficient enough to succeed in politically institutionalize through the state. The common secular morality becomes that which becomes institutionalized by law. [...] Wherever the distinctive sign of some traditional religious moral understanding is represented by a discourse concerning man's obligations to God, the duties towards the fellow man included, the secular morality

tries to legitimize through a discourse on human rights, human dignity and social justice — project that has failed. The preeminence granted to the discourse on human rights and social justice and its replacing with a discourse about obligation towards God, despite its failing to found a canonical moral perspective, is a mark of our post-Christian, even post-religious era and the triumph of the secular culture». The conclusion is simple: the transcendent can be found in all ideological constructions, no matter how full vanity the edifices of the human mind. Father Staniloaie said that a human effort is the less time enduring the more it opposes God [4. P. 124].

- (7) «Gods you are all and all sons of the High Heavens» (Ps 81, 6).
- (8) «The religious problem of liberty cannot be solved through rational philosophy. [...] Bergson stated that all rational definitions of freedom lead to its disappearance. It is impossible to devise a logical, positive concept of liberty, one that could get to the core of its mystery. Liberty means life, it is accessible only through living and it eludes all categories of reason» [10. P. 141].
- (9) «The church is not separated neither in its ontological [...] nor in its divine truth, but within the humanity that is incapable of receiving the plenitude of Christianity and internalized only fragmentary aspects from the truth. (...) The enmity between confessions is the hatred of Caesar's Empire, of a mankind sunken in this natural world. The spiritual world knows neither enmity nor separation; yet it grew weak itself in the natural world», says Nikolai Berdiaev in [10. P. 363].
- (10) One of the traps a fallen man can get into is that of being slave to his own creations and achievements, successes or scientific discoveries. The politics is a high risk domain in the opinion of J. Mansir: «Any work of man is always at risk of being turned into its self and absolutized... And the greater this work, the higher the risk, the peril. Thus, politics may fall into yet another form of ruthless, appalling religion... In this way arise the cult of personality, blindness, constituted violence, totalitarianisms. Having as its initial mission the liberation from passions and building humanity, politics unfortunately will often become an instrument of alienation and barbarism. It is necessary then to free politics from the chains of sin» — «Consentir a la Politique», in *Vie Spirituelle* (1970). P. 181—182.

REFERENCES

- [1] *Martini C.M., Eco U.* What do the non-believers believe in? Translated by Dragoş Zamosteanu. Polirom, Iaşi, 2011.
- [2] *Cherry M.J.* The Secular Fundamentalist State. Text presented at the International Symposium «Religion and Politics. The Relation State — Church: from Constantine the Great to Post-Maastricht Europe» organized by the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University «1 Decembrie 1918» Alba Iulia, in May 2013 and reproduced in the magazine «The Christian Family», translated by Andrei Dîrlău.
- [3] Oxford English Dictionary. Second Edition, 1989; online version dec 2011 — www.oed.com/view/Entry/169847; accessed on Jan 26th 2012.
- [4] *Cultură and Charisma.* The Basilica of the Romanian Patriarchy. Bucuresti, 2012. Vol. II.
- [5] *Nellas P.* Orthodoxy — divine-humanism in action. Transl. Ioan Ica. Deisis, Sibiu, 2013.
- [6] *Gregory of Nyssa.* On the soul and resurrections. Transl. Grigore Teodorescu. Herald, Bucureşti 2006.
- [7] *Gregory Of Nyssa.* Of the making of man. Transl. and footnotes by Teodor Bodogae in the Collection *Church Parents and writers*. Publishing house of the Biblical and Misionary Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church (IBMBOR), Bucureşti, 1998. Ch. IV.
- [8] *Gregory Of Nyssa.* Translation of the Song of Songs. Transl. by Dumitru Stăniloae and Ioan Buga in the Collection PSB. Ed. cit. 1982. Vol. XXIX. Omilia a VI-a.
- [9] *Gregory Of Nyssa.* The great catetethic word. Transl. by Grigore Teodorescu. Herald, Bucureşti, 2006.

- [10] *Berdiaev N. Spirit and liberty. An attempt to Christian Philosophy. Transl. by Stelian Lăcătuș. Paideia, București, 2001.*
- [11] *Pr. Sofronie de Sakharov. We Shall See God as He Is. Transl. by Rafail Noica. Sophia, București, 2005.*
- [12] *Popovici I. Man and God-man. The abysses and the peaks of philosophy. Transl. by Ioan Ică and Ioan I. Ică jr. Deisis, Sibiu, 1997.*

«ОПОРТУНИСТЫ НЕБА» И ОПЫТ ОБЩНОСТИ ВЕРЫ. БОГ КАК ЭТИКЕТКА

Родика Поп

Консультант высшей категории Департамента культуры в жудеце Яссы;
Ясский университет имени А.И. Кузы
бульвар Карла I, дом № 11, Яссы, Румыния, 700506

Несмотря на то, что имя Бога настойчиво присутствует как в академическом, так и в политическом дискурсе, реальность такова, что Бог, похоже, действительно «умер», как некогда утверждали Ницше, Сартр и Камю, поскольку между посланием и настоящими устремлениями его авторов зияет разрыв, который ставит мир под знак хаоса и боли. Я попыталась «просканировать» степень честности некоторых влиятельных интеллектуалов нашего времени и некоторых политиков, которые объявляют себя христианами и привносят в идеологию своих партий христианские понятия и ценности. Я назвала их «оппортунистами Неба», потому что эти интеллектуалы превратили Бога в предмет анализа, подобный любому другому предмету, а политики произносят Его имя для того, чтобы добиться успеха на выборах. Мы видим, как они забираются Богу на плечи, чтобы построить собственную карьеру: интеллектуал хочет признания со стороны ученого сообщества, которое предполагает, что он должен быть беспристрастным, непредвзятым, независимым; политик желает завоевать голоса электората, требующего от него быть нравственным. Секулярное государство устанавливает свою собственную мораль, которая не отрицает универсальные ценности, но, по сути, меняет их смысл. Критерием, от которого никто не может отклониться, становится критерий *политической корректности*. В данной статье я исследую то, каким образом в дело преодоления мирового кризиса вовлечена православная церковь, начиная с решения ключевых вопросов о человеческом бытии, об общности веры и о грехе. Человеку предложена жизнь внутри Логоса — принципа, творящего общность веры. Отсюда следует важность принятия христоцентричной жизненной перспективы.

Ключевые слова: государство, общность веры, оппортунизм, политика, православие, секуляризация.