

PRAYER IN THE IMMIGRATION CRISIS

Christian Response to Threat

Banska Bystrica, 27th September 2015

Rom 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Rom 15:4 ὅσα γὰρ προεγράφη, εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν ἐγράφη, ἵνα διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχωμεν.

1Tim 2:1-4 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³ This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Παρακαλῶ οὖν πρῶτον πάντων ποιεῖσθαι δεήσεις προσευχὰς ἐντεύξεις εὐχαριστίας ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, ² ὑπὲρ βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ἵνα ἡρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διαγάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι. ³ τοῦτο καλὸν καὶ ἀπόδεκτον ἐνώπιον τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ,

Lev 19:34 You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

כְּאֶזְרָח מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֵן הֲגַר הֲגַר אִתְּכֶם וְאַהֲבַתָּ לּוֹ כְּמוֹךָ

Ex 12:19 If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land.

בֵּינָר וּבְאֶזְרָח

OUTLINE

0. INTRODUCTION:

- 0.1. WHAT I CANNOT DO
- 0.2. WHAT I WANT TO ACHIEVE

1. DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND HUMAN MIGRATIONS

- 1.1. GOD'S INVOLVEMENT IN HISTORY
- 1.2. JUDGMENT/OPPORTUNITY FOR EUROPEAN CHRISTIANS

2. WHAT CHRISTIANS CAN DO TODAY

- 2.1. GUARD YOUR HEART!
- 2.2. GET SERIOUS!
- 2.3. LEARN!
- 2.4. DO NOT SPREAD PANIC!
- 2.5. PREPARE FOR PROBLEMS AND SACRIFICES!

3. TO REMEMBER

0. INTRODUCTION:

- extremes: (1) panic; xenophobia; hate; anger (2) compassion; idealization; naivety;
- state sovereignty vs. human rights (azylum; detention...)

- **1Tim 2:8** I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands **without anger** or quarreling
- More than 4 million Syrians have been registered as refugees, and most are *not* headed to Europe.¹
- Germany to spend \$6.6 Billion on 800,000 Refugees and Migrants²
- “Thus, according to the explanation by Imam Ibn Qayyim, the Muslims were first (1) restrained from fighting; then they were (2) permitted to fight; then they were (3) commanded to fight against the aggressors; and (4) finally they were commanded to fight against all the polytheists.”³ (Wiki: The notions of "houses" or "divisions" of the world in Islam such as Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb does not appear in the Quran or the Hadith. Early Islamic jurists devised these terms to denote legal rulings for ongoing Muslim conquests almost a century after Muhammad.)
- Have to be careful – sth more important may be going on that does not get attention!

0.1. WHAT I CANNOT DO

- This sermon is not about politics/national security/economics! – no suggestions for the politicians, police or army...
- Neither philanthropy nor physical defense is enough...

0.2. WHAT I WANT TO ACHIEVE

- belief in prayer and its power in history → can I *really* pray?
- effective intelligent prayer of faith: (1) for our leaders, (2) for the migrants, (3) for repentance in Europe (4) for ourselves

0.2.1. WHAT ARE WE INTERESTED IN?

- **bourgeois** *status quo*? (Richard WEAVER: “Loving comfort, risking little, terrified by the thought of change, its aim to establish a materialistic civilization which will banish threats to complacency.”⁴) – the poor and the powerful have different attitude to undisturbed existence – more open to danger and change – the middle class is complacent
- **spiritual powers** in history – danger of too much ↔ the danger of too little...

[CHESTERTON *Heretics*] We think that for a landlady considering a lodger, it is important to know his income, but still more important **to know his philosophy**. We think that for a general about to fight an enemy, it is important to know the enemy's numbers, but still more important to **know the enemy's philosophy**. We think the question is not whether the theory of the cosmos affects matters, but whether in the long run, anything else affects them.

0.2.2. WHAT IS MY RELATIONSHIP TO GOD?

- formal religion → Islam
- apostasy → need for repentance

1. DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND HUMAN MIGRATIONS

- the space we occupy is a gift from God
- by way of punishment or of blessing we may lose or acquire living space on God's earth...

1.1. GOD'S INVOLVEMENT IN HISTORY

- *History* – one of the channels of God's revelation to humans

¹ <https://www.minnpost.com/foreign-concept/2015/09/european-immigration-crisis-how-we-got-here>

² https://www.reddit.com/r/OutOfTheLoop/comments/3jqkv/a_summary_on_the_current_immigration_crisis_in

³ QUTB, S. *Milestones*, Birmingham : Maktabah, 2006, p. 74.

⁴ WEAVER, R. *Ideas Have Consequences*, Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2013, p. 34-5.

1.1.1. THE BIBLE

- **pilgrims** [Abraham] & **wanderers**, fugitives [כַּיִן וְעֹרֵב] Kain
- salvation & judgment (Israel from Egypt – Israel to Assyria/Babylon)
- Philistines from the Crete (**Amos 9:7** "Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the **Philistines** from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?")

1.1.2. CHURCH HISTORY

- Islam and Christianity – “The Longest War” (Peter BERGEN, 2011)

1.1.2.1. NORTH AFRICA

- ...doctrines of the most abstruse and metaphysical character... → intelligible truth of the Unity of God
- ...asceticism of the grossest type ... → more human morality of Islam.⁵

1.1.2.2. COLONIALISM

[Frantz FANON] So when we hear the head of a European state declare with his hand on his heart that he must come to the aid of the poor underdeveloped peoples, we do not tremble with gratitude. Quite the contrary, we say to ourselves: "It's a just reparation which will be paid to us." Nor will we acquiesce in the help for underdeveloped countries being a program of "sisters of charity." This help should be the ratification of a double realization: the realization by the colonized peoples that it is their due, and the realization by the capitalist powers that in fact they must pay⁶

1.1.2.3. SECULARIZED “CHRISTIAN” EUROPE

- no “God” for the constitution of the European Union
- religion & culture (HUNTINGTON) “Islamic culture explains in large part the failure of democracy to emerge in much of the Muslim world. ... Of all the objective elements which define civilizations, however, the most important usually is religion...⁷

1.2. JUDGMENT/OPPORTUNITY FOR EUROPEAN CHRISTIANS

1.2.1. CRISES = POTENTIALS

- - “crisis” = “judgment” – the time of decision
- God’s laughter at the European dream – no “God” in the constitution
- (1) For the better (the Book of Judges → war, oppression, repentance, deliverance)
- (2) For the worse (Jeremiah...)

1.2.2. EUROPEAN SOCIETY TODAY

- [Max WEBER] „Fachmenschen ohne Geist, Genussmenschen ohne Herz: Dies Nichts bildet sich ein, eine nie vorher erreichte Stufe des Menschentums erstiegen zu haben.“ (Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved.)⁸

2. WHAT CHRISTIANS CAN DO TODAY

- prayer; action

2.1. GUARD YOUR HEART!

- pray without anger (**1Tim 2:8** I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands **without anger** or quarreling)
- pray in truth (**J 4:24** God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship **in spirit and truth**)

⁵ ARNOLD, T. W. *Preaching of Islam*, Westminster : Archibald and Constable, 1896, p. 89-90

⁶ FANON, F. *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York : Grove Press, 1963, p. 102-3. ([Wiki:] Frantz Omar Fanon was a Martinique-born Afro-Caribbean psychiatrist, philosopher, revolutionary, and writer whose works are influential in the fields of post-colonial studies, critical theory, and Marxism)

⁷ HUNTINGTON, S. *The Clash of Civilizations*, New York : Simon & Schuster, 1996, p. 29, 42

⁸ WEBER. M. *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, p. 204

2.2. GET SERIOUS!

- this world cannot stay like this! – be serious about apostasy; lukewarmness; injustice; idolatry...

[HAHNE] “Fast schon symbolisch schaltet der Musiksender VIVA sein Programm für Tage völlig ab. ...Die Vorstellung, dass die Welt gut und alle Menschen lieb sind, die ist endlich wieder zurechtgerückt worden. ...In Wahrheit führt das, konsequent weitergedacht, zur Intoleranz. Denn wenn ich selber ohne eigene Überzeugung bin, billige ich auch anderen diese nicht zu. Kein Wunder, dass intellektuelle Moslems einen Dialog mit Christen als Zeitverschwendung empfinden, solange sie sehen, wie wenig ernst wir unseren eigenen Glauben nehmen.“⁹

- humility – what we’ve been given, God can take from us!
- gratitude – 70 years of peace in our region
- judgment and opportunity → share and witness

2.3. LEARN!

- *Prayer* Read a book about how to pray for your nation... (eg. Derek Prince *Shaping History through Prayer and Fastin* [Modlitby za vladu])
- *Spirituality* The Word of God (**1Pt 2:2** Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk [τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα ἐπιποθήσατε]): (1) Distance; seeing the invisible; (2) Wisdom; thinking, saying, doing the most appropriate things, (3) Miracle; asking God to intervene in favour of the Gospel
- *Apologetics* based on true facts (Quran; the Bible; history)
- *Sociology* Western defective modern theology: the dignity of man without the dignity of God – similar problem of the English with GANDHI and his non-violence movement → manipulation
 - “Ironically, while Western scholars perform intellectual somersaults to demonstrate the compatibility of Islam and democracy, prominent Muslim scholars argue democracy to be incompatible with their religion.” ()
- *Theology* Abrahamic legacy: the conflict of Isaac with Ishmael → Gal 4

2.4. DO NOT SPREAD PANIC!

- (peace-makers)
- Listen to the Spirit first!
- Speak the truth

2.5. PREPARE FOR PROBLEMS AND SACRIFICES!

- Compassion & wisdom (Help without expecting anything in return [FANON])
- Reconciliation & atonement (P.T. FORSYTH *The Work of Christ*, p. 66-67)

3. TO REMEMBER

- Do not fall for any of the extremes.
- Study and listen to the word of God.
- Pray for the profit of the Kingdom of God.

⁹ HAHNE, P. *Schluss mit lustig!*, Lahr : Johannis, 2004, s. 13, 62