



CAPITALISM AND ITS PROBLEMS: AN APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Oswaldo de Paula Mendonça¹

ABSTRACT

This work discusses the consequences of capitalism in modern society and how the topic can be approached in the discipline of Religious Education. It was sought to base the study on the position of theorists versed in the subject, after having carried out a reflection on the role of Religious Education and the teacher of this discipline, in addition to reflecting on the importance of a deeper reflection on the subject. The work addressed an analysis of the ills arising from capitalism in the prism of Religious Education, listing the problems and spheres of action to be adopted by educators.

Keywords: Religious education. Bads. Capitalism

INTRODUCTION

The state of misery that affects Brazilian society, with all the social discrepancies, the concentration of income in the hands of a small portion of the population, insufficient wages, the growing ghost of unemployment and other human ills affect millions of people, which contributes for the development of other ills related to these first ones: undernourishment, infant mortality, violence, etc.

Bearing this in mind, it can also be said that social inequalities do not merely result from chance or religious factors, as some eastern cultures want to believe. In fact, these inequalities and their consequences are generated by a sum of interrelated factors that encompass all social spheres.

It is known that the capitalist economy excels in the concentration of income and in the exploitation of proletarian labor. Because of this, there are determining factors that result in the poor distribution of income produced and, by extension, in a concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. These factors corroborate for the population to be excluded from government policies

¹ Acadêmico do Mestrado em Teologia da Ivy Enber Christian University



on the sector or, at most, with a scarce supply of resources. This is the neoliberal ideal, so widespread by some right-wing groups.

Despite this understanding, common to those who venture into the analytical study of society, ideas still persist that point to the spiritual origin of the problem generated by the failure of human organizations.

This implies that men still blame the gods for their misfortunes. It is not uncommon to construct theories that exempt man from his responsibility towards society, which delegate control even of the economy to the divine. The truth, however, is that the future of humanity is irremediably compromised by the historical past of producing social inequalities.

Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on the participation of the individual in the construction of his history and this process inevitably passes through the school. The Religious Education teacher needs to approach the problem without commitment to individual religious values, striving for a more humanistic approach, in the sense of learning from the past to build the new.

This work approaches how Religious Education can favor the understanding of the sum of social problems without falling into the mistake of proselytism and promoting a coherent debate in order to form in students a critical social vision, capable of promoting changes and redirecting strategies in the future.

To compose this work, authors such as Gadotti (2007), Carvalho (2007), Silva (2009) and others were used. A bibliographical research was carried out on websites, specialized magazines, such as the USP Virtual Library and Google Scholar, using keywords such as “capitalism”, “illnesses”, “Religious education”. After selecting the relevant texts, we sought to synthesize the doctrine of each author which, once confronted, resulted in the report that makes up this work.



ON THE IMPORTANCE AND OBJECTIVES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN BASIC EDUCATION

Moraes (2003) argues that Religious Education needs to be seen as a subject of the common core of the curriculum and that it is necessary to make an effort to elaborate proposals for contents and teaching methodologies that are more directed with the reality of basic education, of the young people and schools, that is, that they are proposals consistent with the training objectives of adolescents, young people and adults who will be protagonists of their own reality.

Therefore, education in general needs to be of a high level with regard to scientific knowledge, since high school graduates will not always continue their studies to higher education. In many cases, it is also possible that some enter undergraduate courses without much foundation or of a short duration, which sometimes does not guarantee continuous and excellent training to be a well-prepared teacher.

Therefore, basic education needs to guarantee this solidity in scientific knowledge, especially when it comes to the fundamentals of Social and Natural Sciences, the area of activity of Religious Education teaching.

Paulo Freire (2001) teaches that teaching produces learning, which cannot be understood as a lack of need to know the subject being taught. This means that the teacher needs to master the subject, but will invariably learn more and more as he or she is willing to teach.

According to Freire:

The ethical, political and professional responsibility of the teacher places on him the duty to prepare, to qualify, to form before even starting his teaching activity. This activity demands that your preparation, your qualification, your formation become permanent processes. Her teaching experience, if well perceived and well lived, makes it clear that she requires a permanent formation of the teacher (FREIRE, 2001).

The individual's religious nature is closely linked to other knowledge. So, the study of Religious Education will only make sense if it is delimited



within a broader objective of education, of acquiring sociological knowledge for individuals with transforming potential.

This means that it is necessary to break with the paradigm that religious education is just part of a division of the curriculum, which becomes a mere discipline and object of dispute between educators as a mere “breadwinner”.

In fact, the Religious Education teacher needs to understand the discipline as a tool for promoting social changes, from the moment he works on the individual's values. After all, as someone has already said, education does not change the world, educated individuals do.

In this sense, the teaching of Religious Education in basic education should provide for the construction of an investigative and critical character in the individual, taking him out of social conformism and political stagnation. In fact, it is part of the school's role to train students so that they can question social inequalities, investigate their causes and establish opinions so that they break with the economic model that enslaves, exploits and reduces the individual to the condition of a thing, within an ethical perspective that goes against the religious and family values that he already has.

To this end, Religious Education can and must work together with other disciplines, enabling a deepening of scientific knowledge and giving opportunities for experiences in other fields of knowledge, especially ethics and commitment to non-negotiable values.

THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHER IN BASIC EDUCATION

For Gadotti (2007) contemporary society experiences a series of learning opportunities, which he calls “learning society”. According to the author, the consequences for the school and the actors involved in education are not favorable. He thinks that students need to learn to think autonomously, that is, without being given pre-established guidelines.



In the view of religious education, this presupposes that the cultural knowledge of each individual, their ethnic and religious origin, their behavioral patterns and creeds are recognized.

Gadotti (2007) also thinks that the student needs to know how to communicate, know how to research, know how to do and present a logical reasoning that allows him to acquire knowledge in a broader and more independent way. This means that this student must learn to synthesize information and organize knowledge, in order to open up mental space for new proposals, new interpretations and, with that, be able to relate knowledge to each other and to the world.

Therefore, the Religious Education teacher must always encourage his students to make their own considerations about the contents studied, without directing them to pre-established social interpretations or previously formed concepts. It is not without reason that proselytism has been proscribed in the school environment, or at least there is an effort in this direction. Students must come to their own conclusions, based on observing the behavior of individuals and society and, with this, develop a critical and transforming spirit.

According to the Curriculum Guidelines, there are several problems in teaching Religious Education and one of the most evident has been the simple adaptation of contents and practices for each student (BRASIL, 2006).

There are many higher education professors who do not know teaching methodologies aimed at the average student. So, the Religious Education class is born suffering from prejudice, labeled as “boring” and often uninteresting for young people. This is due to the lack of strategies and resources. that allow making the class more interesting and more profitable or because it simply stems from a history of contempt for the content.

For the National Curriculum Guidelines:



it is ignored even that the lecture is a case, perhaps the most recurrent, but not the only one, with which the teaching contents can be worked; prejudice is due to resistance to didactic or methodological concerns with regard to teaching, believing that it is enough to have knowledge – information? – so that someone can be taught something (BRASIL, 2006).

In these terms, the Religious Education teacher must contemplate his students with a current, comprehensive content, free of historicity and names, as it happens in history. It is no use for the student to know about the practices of Buddhism or important dates in the history of the prophet Mohammed and Islam without understanding their legacy for the present day. Nor is there any value in studying the bibliography of Martin Luther without glimpsing his contribution to the understanding of modern society.

In fact, students need to go through the schooling process knowing how to form their own social opinion, establish their cultural parameter and be able to inquire, disagree and transform the society where they are inserted. To this end, it is up to the Religious Education teacher to provide means for this training, to direct without inducing, to demonstrate without establishing concepts, to educate religiously without promoting conversion of creeds.

THE EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

It is necessary that educators unite in a teaching project that contemplates young people with achievable challenges and proposals for reflection that are not completely foreign to them and that are not too out of line with their interests. Therefore, any activity, experience or reflection needs to be in tune with these young people's values, expectations and needs. For a student who lives in a small town in the interior of Minas Gerais, the analysis of a religious phenomenon in India will not be very meaningful. Likewise, for the average student in a large Brazilian urban center, it is difficult to study the process of origin of an eventual ethnic conflict in the Balkans. This does not mean that these issues cannot be addressed, but that they must be given relevance.



On the other hand, it is expected that the study of the student's personal reality will be able to contemplate him with a discursive and analytical potential that will allow him to question values and conditions of other cultures in order to develop in this individual the critical sense sufficient to deconstruct false realities or realities distorted by the media.

It is expected that the fashionable individual will be able to critically reflect on the religious ethical formation process, infer values of social justice and develop capacity for political and social argumentation, thus producing a rare type of citizen: the tolerant one.

Religious Education needs to provoke a change of attitude in the student. One can no longer agree with an educational model that strives for pre-established values, favors creeds and places ethnic minorities on the margins of society. In this sense, it is imperative to develop in students the ability to question the position of the State as guarantor of the constitutional right of individual belief, giving new meaning to the concept of individuality.

SOCIAL DISEASES IN THE APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Social inequality is a problem that especially affects developing countries or those that are underdeveloped, where there is no balance in social relations and in the lives of its citizens, with regard to the economy, education, professionalization, gender parity, etc.

The ills arising from social inequality are especially known due to economic inequality, which encourages and increases them whenever income is poorly distributed in society, generating distinct and heterogeneous social classes.

Among the factors that generate the ills of social inequality is the uneven distribution of income and the lack of investments in social policies to correct the problem.



Social inequality is part of the society represented by the absence of quality education, with few or no opportunities for placement in the labor market, discouragement for the consumption of cultural goods and others.

There are those who say that the vertiginous growth of social inequality began with the advent of capitalism, with the accumulation of money and private property. Economic power would have been concentrated in the hands of a minority, while poorer families were marginalized in society.

Social inequality is the mainspring of other types of social ills, such as gender, racial, regional inequality, etc. As consequences, it is possible to contemplate the emergence of several other social problems that affect society, especially the less favored.

FAVELIZATION

The emergence of slums in a given city or area is one of the biggest social problems of modern times. These dwellings are constituted from unfavorable economic, historical and social contradictions, resulting in the formation of dwellings without minimal planning, in general from invasions or irregular occupations.

The problem of the formation of slums in urban space is directly linked to other correlated factors, urbanization and industrialization.

From industrialization, the relationship with the formation of slums rests in particular on the phenomenon of rural exodus in search of better living and working conditions in the urban space. This phenomenon, also a result of the processes of mechanization of rural production and the formation of large estates, leads workers, before going to the countryside, to reside and look for work in the city.

Therefore, it can be said that the favelization process strongly expresses the consequences of social inequalities that mark the delimitation of space and contribute to the urban and cultural segregation of the less favored classes.



In countries like India, the problem is aggravated by ancient religious values that indicate the state of poverty and slums as a result of karma. In Brazil, however, the Christian majority does not share this idea, but neither does it always seek reflection on the problem. In this sense, Religious Education needs to address the social responsibility of the State, even if it is in conflict with religious parameters.

URBAN SEGREGATION

Urban segregation or socio-spatial segregation concerns the marginalization of certain social groups for various reasons, although the most common are economic, cultural, historical and racial factors.

In Brazil, some of the most common examples of urban segregation are the formation of slums, but there are also ghettos and occupations in buildings under construction and even occupations of productive land for political reasons, which is not worth discussing at this moment.

Urban segregation is the spatial and geographic representation or reproduction of social segregation, and in general is directly associated with the process of division of wealth and class struggle. As a rule, the poorest population tends to live in more remote areas and with less accessibility to public services. Added to this, they tend to be excluded from master plans and almost always labeled as marginal, unemployed, etc.

These segregated spaces have a low availability of urban infrastructure, like the slums, without paving, basic sanitation, health centers and others. This happens because cities are constituted from their central area, expanding from there.

However, the economically more affluent classes tend to occupy this central part, since they are more expensive and valued. A cultural context is formed there, where those who live in such a place are “better” than the “little people” of the periphery.



Religious Education needs to deal with values inherent to the human being, to humanity in general, and to the principle – including the constitutional one – of equality for all. This implies holding a frank discussion with the clientele, evoking ethical and social values that go far beyond an abstract theory. It is necessary to develop in students a real empathy for the problem.

POVERTY

Poverty has decreased considerably in recent years in the country, but there are still a large number of families living in extreme conditions. Due to its history of colonization, late development and economic dependence, Brazil today has a very high share of families living below the poverty line.

Pena (2016) says that

It is worth mentioning that, despite the historical problems, Brazil has been advancing in the area of fighting hunger and poverty in the country. According to a report released by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), the number of people who left poverty in Brazil in 2012 exceeded 3.5 million. In that study, the criterion for extreme poverty was even higher than the one mentioned above: R\$75.00 per family member (PENA, 2016 p. 2).

However, there is a large number of families that still live on the margins of society in Brazil, with gross income equal to or less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the minimum wage, a value that was established to qualify the condition of poverty. Therefore, it is very difficult to solve the problem with just the promotion of welfare programs (SANTOS, 2012; SILVA, 2010).

In fact, the main challenges in overcoming these problems have made timid advances in recent years, removing some families from poverty, but only as a palliative measure (SILVA, 2010).

For some experts, it is necessary to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty with the development of dignified working conditions and employability. What is proposed is the entry into the capitalist system through qualified and productive labor as a solution to the problem created by capitalism itself (SANTOS, 2012).



It is in this scenario that Religious Education needs to foster the idea that the individual is important, despite the goods he owns and that the right to work and income are non-negotiable prerogatives, breaking down cultural barriers that foment poverty and, curiously, capitalism as well. .

It is known that working the idea of meritocracy in a society marked by unequal opportunities is not an easy task, but it must be noted that work is a factor of human dignity. Having access to it is another discussion.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The term alludes to the lack of formal work, although some thinkers expand the concept to the absence of any work activity that an individual performs (GOULART, 2014).

The unemployed, therefore, will be the individual who is part of the population of working age, but who for some reason is not active, or who is looking for a job without success. This situation makes it impossible for the individual to pay for his own survival and/or that of his family, resulting in subhuman conditions or other problems.

Unemployment is sometimes synonymous with unemployment and not infrequently, vagrancy. In older times, especially with the emergence of neoliberal policies, unemployment was seen as a vice, a shameful situation that marginalized the individual when it did not put him in an illegal situation (GOULART, 2014).

In one way or another, all these forms of unemployment are the result of a maladjustment caused by social inequality and it is up to the educator to foster a critical spirit in the student in the sense that it is necessary to fight for their rights.

Religious Education also needs to address this issue. One cannot stand idly by waiting for the “miracle” to happen. It is necessary to encourage entrepreneurship for a change in reality. If there is no work, it is necessary to create new opportunities.



INCREASE IN CRIME

Daily the media has reported the increase in criminal actions both isolated and in groups. Almost always, the news involving crimes comes from areas of social risk, slums, irregular occupations or peripheries with little or no assistance from the State.

Victims are usually those individuals who most need protection and who least receive it, that is, the poor, indigenous people, black people, young people and professionals whose work is directed towards them: lawyers, religious leaders, union leaders and the society itself. police (BRITO, 2014).

It is known that the aggressors can also be agents of the State, police, jailers and others, disguised and with the self-declared premise of vigilantes. Of course, there are notable exceptions, but in general this is due to the policy of impunity that still prevails for most crimes against life and human rights and which not only benefits the aggressor but also reverses the social order, letting the criminal loose and the good citizen under house arrest.

As a result, forces soon emerged in cities that began to exploit the social disintegration of the urban environment, to impose their own norms of social regulation. The increasing distances between rich and poor, combined with the marginal activities of organized crime and the availability of weapons, created conditions for an explosive mixture, implementing the collapse of social violence around the world, especially in Brazil (BRITO, 2014).

Only understanding the harsh social conditions to which these actors (good and marginalized citizens) are subject will be able to shed light on the understanding that society is irremediably sick and is moving quickly towards bestiality. Here comes the work of the educator again.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Despite being a global problem, domestic violence affects around 2 million women in Brazil each year. About 60% of these women never make official the complaint against their aggressors and the reasons are almost



always the same: fear, certainty of impunity and economic dependence on the aggressors (ABRAMOVITCH, 2015)

The fear of death is the main obstacle for these women to hand over their aggressors, but other factors weigh in on the decision. According to Abramovitch (2015):

Women need to understand that jealousy of their mates is not a sign of love. A man who thinks he has possession of his partner tends to be violent in order to maintain that possession, and our society, sexist par excellence, will turn a blind eye if the victim does not speak out. This means that no one will defend her if she does not demand her defense (ABRAMOVITCH, 2015 p. 45).

Domestic violence has many facets, all of which have serious consequences for the physical and mental health of its victims. Abused women tend to suffer from depression, anxiety and other psychosomatic problems. The problem is even greater when the aggressor is the man with whom they maintain or have maintained an affective relationship, who often becomes the main supporter of the family.

An eventual discovery of cases of domestic violence can help to understand and intervene in the insufficient performance of that student who, not knowing how to express his anguish, falls into stagnation.

Once again, the action of the educator is paramount. It is no use passing on ethical and spiritual values when one is not willing to intervene in injustice. Of course, there are safe ways to promote this intervention, but the educator can never avoid doing something in this case. Otherwise, the professional becomes a mere propagator of theories.

FINAL REMARKES

The Religious Education teacher can no longer be that individual who passes on content, dictates biographies of thinkers or the one who simply follows the adopted textbook to the letter. Instead, he needs to be able to foster in the student a real interest in the place he occupies in society.



Likewise, the Religious Education class can no longer be a mere curricular element where the student learns concepts with which he cannot deal, merely to fulfill stages of acquiring information.

In fact, the Religious Education class needs to be a sublime moment of reflection and sociological participation, where the student identifies himself as an actor in all social movements, as a builder of his own identity and as one who respects and is respected in the field of religion. spirituality.

So, it is necessary to transpose knowledge beyond the school organization. The student needs to see Religious Education as a liberating discipline from the social stigmas and paradigms that the colonizing culture suffered by the country imposed. For such an undertaking, the methodology needs to contemplate what the clientele expects, solid and well-grounded training, where the elf herself helps to build knowledge through observation, action and, above all, through the affirmation of her values.

Developing work of this nature in a pluralist community is just one of the training mechanisms available to Religious Education teachers. It is necessary to study the class, its aspirations, its expectations in relation to the country and its community. Always dialoguing with the class helps to form a fine line between the professor's academic knowledge and the student's common knowledge. And both complement each other.

It is also imperative to develop other reflection activities with the effective participation of students. You only learn by doing and Religious Education is no different. The pedagogical practice shows the student who he is in society and what he can become with his work.

Much more important than learning is knowing how to apply the learning and in this sense, the actors need to be always dialoguing. In addition, everyone needs to be able to transform with the social environment where they live, breaking paradigms and overcoming the limitations that the patriarchal and conservative system imposes on contemporary thought.



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