



HISTORY OF THE CHURCH: RELIGIOUS INTEREST X POLITICAL INTEREST

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ABSTRACT

We are in a period where religion and politics are in different fields. I make a presentation of the historicization process of the church since its advent (1st century) until the period of the crusades, showing how important the Catholic Church was for the formation of humanity and how its presence is continuous in the world political scenario, especially in Europe. The object of this study is to analyze the history of the Church in a panoramic view between Church and State. The secularization of the State's juridical-political preparation, in addition to once again repeating the autonomy and supremacy of law in relation to other forms of normative orders, would reduce the pretension of religious groups to infuse their norms to the whole of society. Even though the country's constitution and laws solidly affirm the separation between the political and religious fields, the interchange and multiple consequences between these two vehements of social life are very present. The relations between religion and politics, in Brazil, exceed different periods and contexts, affecting consecutive readaptations and transformations and dialoguing closely with social, political and economic categories.

Key-words: Church; Religion; Policy.

INTRODUCTION

We are in a period where religion and politics are in different fields. I make a presentation of the historicization process of the church since its advent (1st century) until the period of the crusades, showing how important the Catholic Church was for the formation of humanity and how its presence is continuous in the world political scenario, especially in Europe.

In this way, Jumper (2004) says that many people today, by naturally consenting that religion is a particular choice that does not allude to the government and rulers, have no idea how much this appreciation is today in the history of humanity. For ancient men, the characterization between a religious sphere and a non-religious one would make no sense, since everything was supported by the sacred. In general custom, in the pre-Hebrew

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period, the relationship between religion and the state (king) focused on a close union of the two forces, the state usually being the dominant partner.

The object of this study is to analyze the history of the Church in a panoramic view between Church and State.

The historical secularization of the Catholic Church is understood as a social process in which “religious thought, practices and institutions lose their meaning for the operation of the social system” (WILSON, 1998, p. 49 apud Oliveira, 2011). In the same sense, Zepeda (2010: 129) perceives secularization as the “set of changes through which religion loses its social, ideological and institutional relevance”. In this context, considering that this process is very unequal or distinct between different countries and regions of the world, but with a wide polysemy: where religion would lose its hegemonic status in social life and would be more limited to subjectivity and private life, separating itself also from the state.

Until the eve of the realization of Enlightenment conceptions, religion was a state matter. Although there were exceptions and regional strategies, which cannot be disregarded, it was up to the subjects to follow the official religion legitimized by the government power.

Oliveira (2011) informs that from the 18th century onwards, in some countries there was the advent of the separation process between State and religion, where the first becomes secular and the second, a private matter. In this case, in theory, belonging to a religion had become a conduct of free choice. Thus, religion would become something of an intimate nature, a consequence of the social process of secularization, where churches and states would become autonomous.

HISTORY OF RELIGION AND CHURCH POLICY

It is necessary to introduce, before dealing with the theme, to know about the period described. Prehistory designates everything that happened since the advent of the first being with an upright posture, until the time when



writing appeared. The term was shaped with the preconception that, if there were no writing, there would be no story to tell. However, this way of thinking has not been considered for a long time. The development of archeology, paleontology, anthropology, and several other fields, provides a deeper analysis and understanding of the life of prehistoric man. The difficulties are great, but it should be remembered that even written texts are subject to mistakes, because the version of those who write is not the absolute truth (BEZERRA, 2011).

However, according to Duarte (2013), it is not yet known for sure at what historical moment man starts to have his critical sense, having an interest in observation, objectivity and this interest and/or concern for objectivity was a fundamental trait manifestation of human rationality. In light of that,

rationality is not everything for sense and its productions. Human actions, especially those of ancestors, are mysterious and unpredictable, and seem to result from a relationship that is not always explicit between the strength of passion and the discernment of the intellect. The justifications for the troubled relationship between passion (Eros) and intellect (Psyche) varied according to the beliefs of the people. Who can foresee someone's judgment? Each human brings their own understanding of things and therefore everything falls into the relative, the personal or the subjective (GOMES, 2004 p. 33).

The perception above portrays that even with the in-depth studies of psychology in search of the advent of the human psyche, it was not possible to state exactly when human rationality was achieved. It is a mystery that has not yet been discovered, it is only known that there was a differentiation in the cranial box of primitives and other primates allowing prehistoric men to be provided with elements such as: the increase in the visual area, the activation of the hand, visual memory, ability to start a task, to pay attention to it while it is being performed and to persevere in it (Bronowski, 1997, p.19 apud Duarte, 2013, p. 147) that characterized them differently from the others animals. These elements were responsible for the presence of rationality, conscience, intelligence, perception, discernment, passion, hate, love, ethics, morals and all the feelings and rules present in the lives of human beings that bring knowledge (DUARTE, 2013).



For a better understanding of this long historical period, it was divided into Paleolithic and Neolithic periods. The first begins with the advent of hominids around 4 to 2 million years ago until 10,000 BC, the date on which the ice at the ends of the globe melted, modifying the planet's climate. The second considers this climatic change until the production of writing, around 4000 BC. (BEZERRA, 2011).

From the biological changes in the primitive man's brain, it was possible to verify in fact his development in terms of his senses that were not well developed before, such as vision and hearing, that is, man's ability to refer to his senses was limited and it did not come from the selection of sounds and elements that make up nature (DUARTE, 2013).

Through this more developed ability of their senses, the human being ceases to be an intrinsic element of nature and becomes an active and transforming agent, the human being still needs nature for his survival, but seeks to expand its restrictions to impose himself on nature aiming to unravel it to decipher its enigmas that are imposed on it. In this way, it can be said that it is through knowledge that man executes conditions for his survival and thus elaborate action plans and predict situations not experienced (DUARTE, 2013).

Another point to clarify is that the chronology adopted, that is, the one used by academics, is based on the first events that occurred on the globe. For example, when we say that prehistory ended the use of writing, we automatically declare that some Brazilian indigenous people lived in prehistory until recently. But this does not denote inferiority in relation to our indigenous peoples. It is important to understand that each human group in its geographic territory has developed in its own way, according to its needs. One group is not superior to the other because it has more technology. The climatic, geographic, hydrographic condition, among others, of the inhabited territory, is what drives human activities. The land of Brazil offered the Indian a rich natural diversity, giving him the privilege of a rich life, without major complications (BEZERRA, 2011, p. 03).

The Neolithic is the last phase of the prehistoric period and extended from 10,000 BC. up to 3000 B.C. These dates (which are estimates) depict two essential milestones in the history of human development. First, there was the



advent of agriculture, a fundamental milestone for man's survival, and finally, there was the development of writing.

With the development of agriculture, man radically modified his lifestyle, since agriculture allowed man to settle in one place (sedentary man), surviving on everything he produced. The mastery of agriculture also led man to deforest the forest and develop plantation fields. (SILVA, 2018).

This new perception brought profound changes, which served as a stimulus for the creation of new beliefs in the spiritual universe. During this period, this relationship with the sacred was motivated by the appearance of the plants that served as food, which was so significant that the myth of the theft of cereals when delivering grain resembled Prometheus stealing fire to give to man. Therefore, the advent of cereals was something divine or a mythical drama that entailed sexual union, death and resurrection, the discovery of the plow, agricultural work and assimilated it to the sexual act (ELIADE, 2010, p.19). Therefore, the female role was seen as sacred, a symbol of fertility, they were the ones who discovered agriculture and took care of the family's subsistence. (VIERA, 2016).

Agricultural cultures elaborate what we can call cosmic religion, since religious activity is concentrated around the central mystery: the periodic renewal of the world. Like human existence, cosmic rhythms are expressed in terms taken from plant life. The mystery of cosmic sacredness is symbolized in the world tree. The universe is conceived as an organism that must periodically renew itself; in other words, every year (ELIADE, 2010, p.52 apud Vieira, 2016, p. 02).

The oldest evidence of practice related to religion of prehistoric man and woman is burial. Which is intrinsically linked, the oldest and most numerous sources of prehistory, which are the bones. The practice of inhumation already reveals a concern with life after death. This is even more noticeable when looking at the details of preparation and props found in countless graves. For example, red ocher sprinkled on corpses is universally found and can be a ritual substitute for blood, a symbol of life. The position in which the body is found is also covered in meaning. It faces east, marking the intention to make the soul's destiny sympathetic to the course of the Sun, hence the hope of a

rebirth. And it is also placed in fetal form, with the earth, in this case the grave, the symbolism of the uterus (BEZERRA, 2011).



FIGURE 01: Funerary practice in prehistoric times. **Source:** Silva (2003).

Food offerings and various objects of adornment such as necklaces are found deposited in tombs. They also found, carefully arranged around and on the corpses, mollusc shells. These shells are shaped like vaginas, seeming to be associated with some primitive type of female deity worship (BEZERRA, 2011).

These burials agree with Silva (2004) that religion emerged sometime between the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods, as soon as the first human groups became sedentary. The first religious manifestations are tangent with the phenomena of nature, that is, natural phenomena were understood as a divine manifestation. With the development of humanity and the emergence of new cultures, new types of religion emerged in different parts of the planet.

The most numerous, clear forms of male and female religious worship from the Paleolithic to date are dated to around 35,000 BC. They were the caves/sanctuaries with their paintings and the various female statuettes. As the paintings are located very far from the entrance to the cave, with many of them uninhabitable, with access difficulties, the researchers concluded that they are a kind of sanctuary. The paintings further reveal the sacred and ritualistic character of the place (BEZERRA, 2011).



Two themes deciphered and discussed by researchers are ritual dances and shamanic sections. The female figurines represent the “fertility cult” practiced by these beings. Sculpted in stone, bone or ivory, they have well-defined physical characteristics of a human being, such as buttocks, breasts and voluminous bellies, in addition to having the vulva always on display. They represent the “Great Mother” the “Goddess”. André Leroi-Gourhan finds that the art of this period expresses some incipient form of religion, in which female figures and symbols occupy a central position. This thought will be corroborated when discoveries referring to the Neolithic period (BEZERRA, 2011; SILVA, 2004).

Glaciers have retreated, the planet's climate has warmed, and its landscape has changed. Fauna and flora modified, the greatest revolution in human history took place. There was the domestication of plants, that is, the invention of agriculture, the domestication of animals and sedentary lifestyles.[...]

But religious creativity in the Neolithic was awakened less by the empirical phenomenon of agriculture than by the mystery of birth, death and rebirth identified in the rhythm of vegetation. The crises that put the harvest in danger (floods, droughts, etc.) will be translated, in order to be understood, accepted and mastered, into mythological dramas. Women played a decisive role in the domestication of plants, as they knew the “mystery” of creation. Fertile and fruitful like the earth, she was responsible for the abundance of crops (BEZERRA, 2011, p. 2-3).

As it improved, the language increased its magical-religious means, however, this language was not fundamental for the development of its religiosity (ELIADE, 2010, p.38).

It is worth mentioning that time lost its value as sacred when history became dissociated from philosophy. The concept of time has a new model. Time is no longer the natural guide for living beings, including man, to be controlled by tools, first church bells and then clocks. The desacralization of time has made man more distant from the sacred, the more modern it is, the more desacralized it becomes. Time was the primary and elementary causal explanation for primitive peoples. In today's world, time is divided into two categories: Chronological Time – is one of the dimensions to be worked on (DUARTE, 2013).



The time of the clock, the passage of days, events, the sequence of months, years, etc. that follow differentiated calendars such as Gregorian, Chinese, Jewish, whose dates differ by historical referenced by religiosity and culture. And the Historical Time – is the time of the meaning of the processes of technical and productive development, of the dimensions considered relevant by the dominant groups as opposed to the dominated in certain societies (DUARTE, 2013).

In the middle of the sixth millennium, approximately, the villages defended by moats or walls multiplied, and capable of sheltering up to a thousand inhabitants. Several altars and shrines, and in addition to various objects of worship, testify to a well-organized religion. At Cascioarele Eneological Station, 60 km south of Bucharest, a temple was discovered whose walls were painted with magnificent red and green spirals on a yellowish-white green background. No statuettes were found, but a 2m column and another, smaller one, indicate a cult of the sacred pillar, symbol of the axis mundi on this temple, there was another, more recent, in which a terracotta model of a sanctuary was found. (ELÍADE, 2010, p.58).

THE RELIGION OF THE EGYPTIANS

Egyptians are a people heavily exploited in the media. Its culture is the target of great commercialization. However, few are interested in knowing what they thought and felt about life, in addition to the material products they created (BEZERRA, 2011).

All social segments practiced the Egyptian religion, however, each city paid greater attention to its “own” gods. In general, each temple of the 6 great cities, seats of power, created its own cosmogony with the local god at the apex of the hierarchy.

So here we also find more than one creation myth. One of the most important and ancient tells that in the beginning was Nu, the celestial ocean with its characteristic of immobility and utter static. From its interior came Atum, who created Shu (air) Tefnut (moisture), this couple produces Geb (earth) and Nut (sky). In turn, the latter give rise to Osiris and Isis and to Set and Nephthys. This myth follows that of Osiris, in which he reigned justly with his sister-wife over Egypt. Her



jealous brother Set killed him, but Isis soon made a mummy of her husband, and with her magical powers, brought Osiris back to life. With whom he had a son, Horus. This became king of Egypt, and the pharaohs succeeded him. Osiris became king of the dead, all who die pass by his court (BEZERRA, 2011, p. 6).

Mesopotamia came between two important rivers: Tigris and Euphrates, which had their sources in the mountains of Armenia and flowed into the Persian Gulf (FUNARI, 2010, p.28) the fertilization of the land around the rivers, provided the practice of agriculture. This was indispensable for the settlement of peoples in that region. They were independent communities that lived at subsistence level, until the need for an organization to take care of what was exceeded. There was no political unity nor a centralized state, they were organized in city-states and had their own sovereign and their own gods (VIERIA, 2016).

Thus, influenced by their beliefs to the gods, those who ruled were influenced according to their will, numerous gods arise, characterizing the Mesopotamian religion as Polytheistic. Therefore, the monarch calls himself chosen according to the will of the gods, normally they were priests who understood how this relationship worked, this form of religiosity takes on more rigid aspects, because from now on this dynamic will be representative and chosen. someone to govern the life of the city (VIERIA, 2016).

According to Bezerra (2011), these people were obsessed with eternal life and the perpetuation of the soul. Tombs are more important than the most sumptuous houses and it is unthinkable to economize at the expense of funerary priests. This is noticeable in the well-known pyramids that were the tombs of the pharaohs.

According to Silva (2004), the richer the Egyptian, the more complex the funeral. The priests and priestesses performed daily cults in the various temples spread across Egypt. They prepared the offerings, mostly food, as well as flowers and incense, and chanted. Enchantments are found for various purposes, such as love and health, but they are also used in funeral rites (BEZERRA, 2011).



The king usually acts as the deity's agent and is designated by a title of subordination. The word of the deity has the power to command the forces that govern nature and human affairs, to interfere with the outcome of battles and trigger changes in nature. Consequently, one can speak of a revelation throughout history, as the gods theoretically assisted the upright, loyal, and just king[...] The greatness of the gods was usually reflected in the power of nature or the success of a nation and those associated with it. (SETERS,2008, p.75).

What Seters puts is explained by Vieira (2013) is interesting because the practice of the gods interferes directly in people's behavior, the social life of the city begins to be directed by the "divine will", however, and at that moment that the king legitimizes his power, because now he gets divine means to justify his decisions that don't always favor everyone. Most of the royal inscriptions found in Mesopotamian territory demonstrate this concern of the king: to strengthen his political identity and the role of the gods in his triumph. (SETERS, 2008, p.78).

RELIGIOUS INTEREST X POLITICAL INTEREST

The secularization of the State's juridical-political preparation, in addition to once again repeating the autonomy and supremacy of law in relation to other forms of normative orders, would reduce the pretension of religious groups to infuse their norms to the whole of society. "With its secularization, the State, therefore, began to legally guarantee the freedom of individuals to voluntarily choose which faith to profess and the free exercise of religious groups" (MARIANO, 2003, p. 113).

It is noteworthy that Christianity had its advent in the context of a tense relationship between the Jews and the Roman Empire. Jesus clearly taught the principle of separation between the two kingdoms with the famous statement in Matthew 22:21: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." At his birth and at his death, Jesus experienced the wrath of the powers that be (Mt 2:3,13; 27:2,11,37; Lk 23:2,8-12), but his greatest conflict was with the system religious, not with the political system. Other references to rulers in the gospels are found in: Mt 20:25-26; Lk 2:1-2; 3:1-2,19; 13:32; John 18:36; 19:11. (OLIVEIRA, 2011).



Over the centuries, great differences were created between the Byzantine Church and the Roman Church, culminating, in the year 1054, in the first Eastern Schism. The main result of this schism happened due to political differences between the Romans and Byzantines. The pope (bishop of Rome) resisted the Byzantine emperor's insistent attempts to dominate, in parallel, the Byzantines did not accept and did not believe in the figure of the pope as head of all Christians. They also differed over image worship, ceremonies, holy days, and the rights of the clergy. (CARVALHO, 2011).

After the invasions of the Germanic peoples (barbarians) and with the imminent crisis and decay of the Roman Empire, the Catholic Church allied with the barbarians, Christianizing them, dominating and conquering the vast western territories of the Roman Empire. of the Catholic Church in expanding across the regions to provide its dominance and influence across the regions it is clear that political and religious interests are falling side by side alliances were already formed by the interests of the Church.

The main alliances were with the Franks and, later, with the Carolingian Empire (in the figure of its great Emperor Charlemagne). Together with the Catholic Church, they offered to rebuild the magnitude of the Western Roman Empire, the so-called Holy Roman Empire. (CARVALHO, 2011).

In the year 313 Constantine and Licinius, the emperor of the east, met at a meeting in Milan and reached an agreement concerning the Christians. The famous Edict of Milan proclaimed freedom of conscience, granted Christianity free equality with other cults, and ordered the return of all ecclesiastical properties confiscated during the persecution. Eventually, Licinius imposed serious restrictions on the public life of the churches. Uniting political and religious interests, Constantine defeated Licinius in 324, becoming sole ruler of the empire. The churches woke up to the fact that the cause of Rome and the cause of Christ had become one. (JUMPER, 2011).

Jumper (2011) also reports that the transfer of the capital from Rome to Constantinople (330), among other factors, led to a distinct and remarkable



conception of relations between church and state in the eastern region, compared to the west. In the Eastern Roman Empire, later the Byzantine Empire, and consequently in the Orthodox Church, the prevailing theory and practice came to be caesaropapism, that is, the supreme authority imparted by the secular ruler over the church, even in doctrinal matters.

In the west, with the decline of the Roman Empire, the church had more freedom from direct control by civil authorities, which, among other factors, contributed to the strengthening of the papacy. (In the year 476 the Germanic general Odoacer dethroned Romulus Augustulus, the last emperor of the west.) In part because of ineffective imperial leadership and in part because of the inherent authority vested in the church of Rome, the Roman bishops had to assume responsibility for matters judicial, military defense and other secular matters (JUMPER, 2011, p. 03).

It was in this context that Pope Gelasius I first asserted the doctrine of the two swords (494). That is, there are two separate spheres, the church and the state, neither exercising or enforcing the rights of the other. However, the spiritual sphere is acceptedly superior to the temporal, and in conflicts the pope and the bishop are above the emperor because they are responsible for the latter's salvation. This theory was used insistently by the medieval popes.

In this way, we enter the Middle Ages, a period in which the Catholic Church was ratified as one of the greatest religious and political institutions in the western world. Being the holder of massive land properties and dominating the scope of knowledge, the great medieval libraries and philosophical studies took place in the majority in medieval monasteries. During this period, the copyist monks (who reproduced several copies of the Bible) and the movement known as the Crusades emerged. (CARVALHO, 2011).

Jumper (2011), reinforces that during the Middle Ages, the theory of the two powers was widely accepted and spread, but the question of supremacy still remained undefined. The state was universally seen as a Christian institution, with the mandate to sustain, protect and spread the faith. Canon law said that the state had a duty to punish heretics, and this duty was well accepted by the state. But there was also incessant debate among theologians



and canon jurists about the true meaning of Gelasius's theory of the two swords. Eventually the concept of a single society with two aspects was articulated, each with its own responsibilities.

This is what came to be called the *corpus christianum*: the idea that church and state, while in principle separate societies, were united in one commonwealth. The distinction between them mainly consisted of their separate hierarchies (pope and emperor, etc.), their different functions, and the legal systems they administered. The ideal of many, following the vision of Augustine in *The City of God*, was the existence of a universal Christian community headed by the pope. (JUMPER, 2011, p. 03).

During the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church, aiming to fully portray its political power and also taking into account the belief in the salvation of the souls of heretics, installed the Holy Inquisition or Court of the Holy Office. People accused of heresies were interrogated by members of the clergy, and could be punished by being tortured or burned at the stake. The Holy Inquisition was established for two main reasons: first, the realization of Catholic political power (people who questioned the Catholic faith were considered heretics); and second, Catholics believed they were freeing the souls of heretics, therefore the body would perish, but the soul considered eternal would be saved. With these justifications, Catholics tortured and killed a large number of people. (CARVALHO, 2011).

In the early Middle Ages, the church decided to fight to free itself from the intrusion of secular rulers. After the 6th century, emancipated from direct control from Byzantium, the popes grew in prestige and power, both in the spiritual and temporal areas, thus, it can be said that the political interest was in tandem with the beliefs of Catholicism at the time. The popes came to interact with the strong Christian kingdoms of central Europe, founded by the ancient barbarian peoples who destroyed the western Roman Empire. Such was the case with the Franks, the first barbarian nation to embrace Catholic (ie non-Aryan) Christianity, when King Clovis and his subjects were baptized in 396. A few centuries later, the Carolingian dynasty did great services to the church. and the popes, but he also felt free to interfere in ecclesiastical matters (JUMPER, 2011).



During the Middle Ages, many people felt dissatisfied with this dubious association between church and state, thus, the separation of conceptions and interests of both already began to have disharmony. Different groups of Christians claimed that, since the time of Constantine, the church had succumbed or "sold" itself to the world or conformed to it, compromising its witness, which must have been inspired by the Sermon on the Mount and the standards of the church. primitive. Several non-conformist movements emerged (Cathars, Waldenses, Lollards, Hussites, etc.) that were considered heretical and suffered persecution and sanctions by the church and its secular arm, the state power (CAVALCANTI, 2002; JUMPER, 2011).

FINAL REMARKS

The Catholic church withstood the fall of the Roman Empire, taking its place with the power of information in its hands. In fact, the church usurped Christianity's freedom of preaching in different areas: social, political and economic, resisting all the weather pertinent to kings, nobility and the general population.

Even though the country's constitution and laws solidly affirm the separation between the political and religious fields, the interchange and multiple consequences between these two vehements of social life are very present. The relations between religion and politics, in Brazil, exceed different periods and contexts, affecting consecutive readaptations and transformations and dialoguing closely with social, political and economic categories.

Thus, a broad theological-historical discussion can be suggested focusing on what changed the behavioral aspects of humanity with the separation of the Church from the State.

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