Public Theology: Historical Milestones

Teofil Stanciu*

Abstract:
Public theology is a relatively new theological field, but its themes and concerns are as old as the interaction between the Christian community and society. Different ages prompted different emphasis and approaches. This by far is not a way of pretending that public theology always existed in some form. This article is a biographical and historical investigation in tune with the defining features and interests of public theology and public theologians. The selection of the figures discussed here – without accounting for a complete history – aims to reflect the theoretical, practical, contextual and ecumenical aspects of public theology.
Keywords: Christian history, common good, public life, social action, social ethics, public theology

The historical approach is one of the three directions or types of public theology, according to Harold Breitenberg[1]. In following this approach, theological researcher would look for "some key theologians and theological discourses and their contributions to the formation of public theology" (Kim, 2017: 40). Such a task is not concerned only with legitimizing a relatively new theological field, but also with exploring themes, conceptions, actions, models, methods, seminal reflections that predate the emerging of public theology as academic discipline. For the purposes of this article, we will draw on previous undertakes such as Kim's chapter (2017: 40–66) in *A Companion to Public Theology*, a historical excursus of Duncan B. Forrester (2004: 5 – 19) or the six stories about the origins and development of public theology as told by Dirk J. Smit (2013: 11–22).
In defining the meaning of public theology that will be taken into account for this paper, alongside with the perspective of "critical, reflective and reasoned engagement of theology in society to bring the kingdom of God, which is for the sake of the poor and marginalized"

* PhD Candidate, "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, teofilstanciu@gmail.com
[1] E. Harold Breitenbergjr, "What is Public Theology?", in Deirdre King Hainsworth and Scott R. Paeth (ed.), *Public Theology for a Global Society: Essays in Honor of Max L. Stackhouse* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), Kindle edition.

(Kim, 2017: 40), we must keep also in mind the distinction than Smit is making between a "narrower, more specific meaning", functioning as a normative concept, and a "vaguer, more general meaning", which is merely descriptive. While the first meaning colligates public theology and the proper existence, conditions for and functions of public space in western democracies and the support that public theology could offer to strengthen democratic values, the second focuses on Christian public witness of faith in the Triune God in broader sense and in a more generally understood manner (Smit, 2007: 39-42; quoted phrases: 39, 40).

Even if the short history of public theology notion starts in 1974, with Martin Marty's article about Niebuhr written as a reply to Robert Bellah notion of "civil religion" (Martin, 1974: 332 –359) – or fi we add here contributions made by David Tracy, Wolfgang Huber and theological reflections included in "ÖffentlicheTheologie" series (Smit, 2007: 13–16) – different historical approaches claim predecessors throughout the centuries. Displaying its unintentional tributary to the self-perception and development of western theological paradigm, English speaking researchers' attention is usually oriented towards the Latin branch of Christianity, subsequently ignoring the eastern Greek branch. This is precisely the reason why in this article have been included some orthodox figures from antiquity to 21st century.

Antiquity and Middle Ages

One cannot talk about church and society or church and state from a solid Christian perspective and skip the essential and influential thinker *Augustine* (354-430), the famous bishop of Hippo. While his theological heritage affected virtually any important doctrine of the Latin church, the emphasis will fall here on his seminal *De Civitate Dei*, a work meant "to define the kind of civil community that would enable Christians to engage with the Empire" (Kim, 2017: 41). Written as a response to the sacking of Rome by Visigoths – a disturbing incident that brought accusations on Christians – this cornerstone book took him fourteen years to elaborate. In it, Augustine describe the two cities – of God and of men – from the Creation to the eschaton and their intertwined existence in this fallen world. Although no one can tell exactly where lies the border between these cities, there is an inner desire in each person that trims his/her towards the one or the other, because behind these desires underlie two kinds of love or two "objects" of human love: God and self.

Until the final separation that will occur only at the end of times, the two cities coexist, and Christians are part of both, consequently

having to find a way to deal with this reality. For the use of our main concern here, his contribution can be summarized, as Kim noted, in four key aspects: (1) placing "theology in the wider contexts of politics and society beyond the church as a religious community, matters of faith or the building of a separate exclusive body", thus opening the possibility for a "Christian theology of public life" – in the benefit of both; (2) emphasizing "God's sovereignty over politics and society and exhibited his confidence in Christian faith and authority to bring the whole society under the authority of the church" – an idea based on his conviction that sacred is higher than the secular – signaling the responsibility of the publicly engaged church; (3) his support for "governments and rulers with force to secure and prevent the destructive power of politics"; and (4) the case for the just war (Kim, 2017: 43–44).

Augustine's older contemporary Greek theologian and social-activist, *Basil the Great* (329/330-379) is another key figure for the Christian religion in dealing with societal issues. He was less a systematic theorist, and more a practitioner of *philantropia* (love for humanity) based on God's philanthropy (Rhee, 2008: 2). In a political and social context marked by decisions that promoted Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, the church in general, and the bishop of Cesarea, in particular, faced the challenge to take the responsibility for social services and medical care much needed among the poor, sick, marginalized, and oppressed. For this purpose, he founded his famous Basileias, outside of Caesarea, a place where those in suffering (mutilated, lepers etc.) got medical attention, and those in indigence (elders, strangers and alike) found shelter and food. Although he was not preoccupied with edifying a social-political doctrine, he addressed in his writings, homilies and prayers themes like social injustice, almsgiving, wealth and luxury, famine, inequities and so on – all this could be organized on five directions: (1) attention for needy; (2) attitude toward slavery; (3) charitable activity; (4) the relation with the State; and (5) youth's education (Nistor, 2018: 3). Starting from the original intentions of God at the Creation – and placing his social concern within a cosmological vision (Frangipani, 2020) – Basil taught that all humans share equally the image of God, that the world was originally design "for the great advantage of all beings" (*Ibidem*), which presupposed the "primal common ownership, sharing and equality for the common good" so all can enjoy a flourishing life (Rhee, 2008: 14). This primary vision of God for humankind was altered by the fall, so that it is Christians' duty to live out in a restorative way in regard to that vision by *philantropia* and to grow in virtue – thus putting his teachings in an eschatological framework – by their generous giving and acting

(Rhee, 2008: 14). By introducing the idea of *philantropia* in *anaphora* (eucharistic prayers), Basil linked social activism and social ethics to the most central part of the liturgical worship, providing "substantial resources for displaying God's purposes for the collective life of humanity and how communicants should act in circumstances in which those purposes are not yet fulfilled" (LeMasters, 2015: 187–211).

One of the Three Holy Hierarchs (alongside Basil the Great and Gregory of Naziansus), *John Chrysostom* (347-407), a friend of Basil, became famous in his days because of the riot in Antioch when citizens mutilated emperor's statues. As a deacon at the cathedral, John preached a series of homilies that resulted in a less severe punishment decided by the emperor against the inhabitants of the city. His attitude in "political and social crisis" (Radke, 1988: 36) is of a particular interest from public theology's perspective. Cool-headed and knowledgeable, he became a guiding mark for virtually everyone in Antioch, Christians and pagans alike, and people could rest upon his words in counteracting rumors and fears. His speeches, exhibiting a refined rhetoric, were delivered in a language that could be easily grasped by audience regardless of one's religious belief. His confidence inspired encouragement, and his accurate information proved valuable in the middle of uncertainty and social anxiety (*Ibidem*: 139–140). This ability to offer relatable answers in complex situation and to talk for the church and society simultaneously enhanced his reputation (*Ibidem*: 141–143) and could became a useful resource for Christians in handling sensitive and complex situations in a rational and wise manner.

The apprehension manifested in Antioch's crisis proved to be crucial for his election as Constantinopolitan archbishop/patriarch, later on (*Ibidem*: 169). As the most important ecclesial leader in the largest city of the empire, the challenges he had to face were different, but his zeal and rectitude didn't change. Having to denounce public sins as greed, injustice, lie, luxury, idolatry, he raised his voice even against the empress Eudoxia, compelled by the biblical exigences (*Ibidem*: 37–38), confronting the highest authorities in the name of the Gospel.

Back in our times, a contemporary theologian considers Chrysostom's homilies on Epistle to the Hebrews as a Christian starting point– combined with Giorgio Agamben ideas and elements from Stanley Hauerwas' theology – towards a new model, epitomized by the image of "strangers and sojourners", of "politics of inoperative" (Bekos, 2018: 290). It is a form of subversive relation that "rend inoperative apparatuses of the dominant politics" and "every aspect of human life", reflecting the dialectical tension between the two citizenships of Christian. This poses the Church as a force opposing the State, since

"the *politeuma* of Christians that is in Heaven is a *politeuma* of an alternative politics, that frees man from the *polis*, the *oikos* and the market" (Bekos, 2018: 291, 294). If this conception was the foundation for Chrysostom's relation to authorities, then it is possible to see here the source for his uncompromising stances no matter who was in power and what threat was looming over his future.

In another crisis of a different kind, one millennium later, *Nicholas Cabasilas* (1319/23-1391) emerged as a prominent theologian who set up a spiritual program for laity that was meant to affect not only every social interaction, but also the Creation itself. It seems quite unlikely for an orthodox mystic, that took monks' side in hesychast controversy, to talk about a spiritual life that is equally accessible to every lay person, opening up the way for spiritual ascension to all Christians, if "sacraments and prayer" are safeguarded as common elements and content of any true Christian spirituality (Nellas, 2002: 149–154).

The premise of spiritual life is salvation, its nature is life in Christ, deification (*theosis*) seen as "Christification" is the content of this life, and its fruits display in the transformation of the entire created order (*Ibidem*: 127). Flash, sin and death separate the human being from God, whereas incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ made available the possibility of overcoming those indissoluble obstacles. Baptism, as an ontological event, marks the beginning of the new creation for each Christian. But this new nature was inaugurated by the hypostatic union of Christ's humanity and divinity through which our own humanity is endowed with a new ontology – the first dimension of salvation. The appropriation of this restored (authentic) humanity, started at baptism, and of the life of Christ (these two being inseparable), is possible through permanent nourishment with sacraments in church – the true body of Christ made visible by Holy Spirit. The transformation affects virtually every dimension of human being – be that physical or spiritual – but necessarily the essence of person resulting in steadily growing knowledge of Christ and a never-increasing submission of human's will to God's will. Eucharist is an essential element in this process, because it gives humans access to the time (*kairos*) of church, independent of chronological sequential (*Ibidem*: 128–145). The consequence is that all the fundamental relations of human being are reorganized, because, through the church, Christ is present in a transforming way into the world. That is, any historical existence of any believer is seen as a way of uniting the entire created order with Christ. Refusing his/her autonomy – the root of all sins – any person can live out a theocentric humanism that affects every aspect of life, offering a solid foundation for a Christ like existence in private and in public (*Ibidem*: 156–163).

Nellas will build on this theological fundament a truly public engagement from an orthodox perspective in his times, as we will see below.

Reformers and their heirs

The united contribution of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and, in soft voice, of anabaptist is summarized by Kim in three essential acquisitions for public theology: (1) their challenge to political and ecclesiastical authority; (2) "their contribution to the development of modern democracy through the concept of the 'priesthood of all believers'"; and (3) "the modern idea of individualism", based on direct relationship between individual and God, that undermined the monopoly of politic rulers (Kim, 2017: 43). But if "Protestant theology strikes unique balances between liberty and responsibility, dignity and depravity, individuality and community, politics and pluralism" (Witte, 1998: 261) then this rich heritage worth exploring in more substantive ways at least for the broader meaning of public theology that Smit pointed out.

Even if we accept the notion that *Martin Luther* (1483-1546) was not a public theologian, *per se*, and that he could not offer a model for public theology, because he would see theology as *the* public voice, not just *a* voice (Jorgenson, 2004: 365), it still remains the fact that the prominent reformer took public stances – largely based on his doctrine about the two kingdoms, independent, but correlated, with Christians being in ambiguous position as citizens in both realms (George, 2013: 98–103) – on different public matters and was an important public figure in his times[2]. Jorgeson admits however that a "theology of the public" can be underpinned by looking at "Luther's treatment of ubiquity" (Jorgenson, 2004: 352), a theology that offers just a theological reflection on public realities, based on the notion of presence and its modes. In the eucharistic context, the three modes of presence (taken into account by Luther as admitted by scholastics) are: circumscribed (normal human presence), definitive (in angels' case, when "two substances can share one space") and depletive, the last one being "unique to God", and the other two are available for believers, in church, through Christ (*Ibidem*: 362, 366). Using ubiquity in a different register, as a category of eternity, not infinity, Luther proposed that "Christ is present in the form of hiddenness" which is "the most significant mode of presence" (*Ibidem*: 363). The consequences are,

[2] It's enough to illustrate this with title such as: *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, *Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed*, *Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved*.

firstly, that the church is not limited to what can be seen, and if its presence is in the mode of absence, it creates space where vocations can be professed. And secondly, definitive presence is not dependent on the circumscribed one, which makes the church "not anxious about its place in the world", resulting in the possibility for the church being "hidden in, with and under a seemingly ambivalent culture" (*Ibidem*: 367). This "peculiar" mode of present would definitely have an impact that nevertheless could influence the way public theology is to be practice.

But let's consider now Calvinist tradition for the use of public theology. *John Calvin* (1509-1565) dedicated his last chapter from *Institutes* to the civil government, where he develops the idea of twofold government, both legitimate, both ordained by God. He postulated the necessity and depicted the role of civil government in its relation to God, laws and citizens. The three parts of civil government are the magistrate, the laws and the people[3]. When talking about the authority of the king or the secular authority in general, Calvin seems to ask unconditional submission from the people no matter how iniquitous the ruler is[4], but interestingly enough he opposed to those tyrants "avengers from among [God's] own servants", because "he Lord takes vengeance on unbridled domination", appointing another kind of authority (such as magistrates) "to curb the tyranny of kings"[5]. He admits though an important exception, namely when "they command anything against Him let us not pay the least regard to it"[6]. This is just a sample for the usefulness of Calvin's seminal views in our own contexts.

Calvin's theological and ethical heritage was credited – more than any other form of Christianity – with the necessary ethos for development of the "spirit of capitalism" (Weber, 1930: 43–44). On the other hand, "Calvin's most original and lasting contribution to the Western tradition of liberty lay in his restructuring of the liberty and order of the church", and, by finding a third way between subordination of the church to state and withdrawal of the church from the society, he gave "the church a moral responsibility within the entire community" (Witte, 1996: 400). Far from being without fault, Calvin's model is critically evaluated precisely in its Calvinistic affiliation in order to instill awareness of a complex and ambivalent legacy (Mouw, 2009: 431–446). Mouw features the "two Calvins" (*Ibidem*: 433–436) image,

[3] John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.20.3, trans. Henry Beveridge, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1989.
[4] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.7, 4.20.27.
[5] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.30-31.
[6] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.32.

that could explain the antagonistic readings and interpretations among Calvinists in the following centuries.

Radically critical and rather sectarianin their relationship with authorities were *Anabaptists* in their early days, but the legacy developed by their heirs could inspire an author like Yoder to write a book about politics in Christian perspective (Yoder, 1972). If we admit that the four central elements for the anabaptist faith are (1) independence from the state and their challenged of the social and religious order; (2) the refusal of any war – in the name of God – and sometimes of any participation in government structures altogether; (3) the preeminence of the community in hearing God's voice and the conjoining challenge of hierarchical authorities that turned the logic of power on its head; and (4) the challenge to the economic order and its underlying principles (Grimsrud, 2004: 344), then they may appear again as some kind of anarchists. But the public space could benefit from anabaptist legacy in order to strengthen the "democracy story" and weaken the "empire story", thus contributing to a more democratic participation of citizens in public affairs and to fighting against imperialistic tendencies (including wars) (*Ibidem*: 346–349). And if the entire anabaptist tradition is considered – with all its sometimes strange and eccentric figures – this could urge to pluralism, a greater respect for other sand undermining hegemonic Christianity; a rejection of sectarianism followed by assuming some responsibility for the well-being of the society; church partnerships with different institutions for the common good in a "creative infidelity" in regard to tradition (Holland, 1994: 171).

Another offspring of radical reformation are the *Baptists*, with their important contribution to the religious freedom, a pre-condition for professing any kind of public theology. Fighting in their history to gain recognition and the liberty to worship according to their faith, they brought an important input to the religious freedom in America and this was later exported worldwide (Land, 1995: 45–55).

Freedom was also at stake in the painful and horrid issue of slavery. Two noted Christians were involved in that fight in England. The first is *John Wesley* (1703-1791). His case against slavery – in an age when some tried to defend it theologically or to envision an ethical slave trade – was based, strategically, on natural law and natural freedom of every human being, considering slavery "unjust and immoral" (Field, 2015: 3–6). But underlying this defense on non-religious rationale was his theology of sanctification, his understanding about the former grace and about the man created as image of God (Field, 2015: 6–7). Wesley "incipient public theology", although imperfect, has a strong prophetic

thrust, adopting "a discourse which resonates with both the public that is being addressed and with central theological convictions of the public theologian"; displaying solidarity with victims and giving a voice to their muted sufferings; analyzing the issue in depth; combining discursive approach and practical involvement (*Ibidem*: 7–10, quote p. 8). His last letter was addressed to Wilberforce.

William Wilberforce (1759-1833) took up the mission and, in the company of the Clapham Sect (or Clapham Saints), and stimulated also by John Newton declared: "God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners" (Wilberforce apud. Rhys Bezzant, 2013: 3). Being a high society evangelical and a skillful politician (aware of radical social shifts in France), he embraced a theology of hope and simultaneously shared rather static social expectations, but nevertheless supported "social transformation when the transformations are incremental, and especially if they can be achieved without government sponsorship" (Bezzant, 2013: 6). As for slavery, his primary argument was to appeal to the universal equality as described in the Genesis 1–2. British context in his time proved useful, and abolitionists were interested in promoting free trade as well (*Ibidem*: 7). This combination of factors and motifs was employed by Wilberforce for the benefit of his cause. It is important to emphasize the role played by his supporters, starting with Wesley and Newton and ending with Clapham Saints reformists. In Romanian context, where politics is under permanent suspicion, the personal and community support for important and wise undertakes could be quite underestimated.

Confronting a secular world

The dominant cultural paradigm in the days of *Walter Rauschenbusch* (1861-1918) – father of "social gospel" – was characterized by "the immanence of God, the belief in progress and the perfectibility of man, the theory of society as an organism, and the hope for the realization of the. Kingdom of God on earth" (Strain, 1978: 23–34). In his search of a solid premise for social involvement of the evangelical Christians, he tried to find a new way not liberal, and not conservative, and also in a language accessible to his contemporaries (*Ibidem*: 26–27). Much the same struggle that every public theologian faces in trying to find his/her way out from a conservative background and stay true to the Gospel's message. Aware of the impossibility of eradicating evil by any form of social organization, and seeing the spirit of capitalism as antagonistic to the spirit of Christianity, he argued for a (temporary?) Christian socialism – but he is careful to distinguish it

from dogmatic Marxism or other socialisms, criticized because their materialism, catastrophism or alienating solution for social ills – aimed to gradually transform America in an industrial democracy (*Ibidem*: 29–30). Although his model is venerable, his critical reflection, his interaction with ideologies and theories, his appeal to wisdom from other ages, his detachment from the dominant paradigm and his struggle to issue(out of his Christian convictions) a solution for the common good of the many has something to offer to any public engagement today (*Ibidem*: 32).

When "the most comprehensive documentation" of catholic social teaching (Kim, 2017: 47) was published, in 2004, it has been passed over a century since the *Rerum Novarum* (1891), Encyclical Letter of Pope Leon XIII, the official modern starting point in catholic social reflection. Meanwhile a dozen other Encyclicals and official documents – including those after Vatican II – discussed different relating topics before the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* was published, and it was followed by three more Encyclicals in the same direction[7]. No wonder that the *Compendium*claims "to present in a complete and systematic manner, even if by means of an overview, the Church's social teaching" and to offer "a complete overview of the fundamental framework of the doctrinal corpus of Catholic social teaching"[8]. The "key principles" that substantiate the*Compendium* are the *common good*, *subsidiarity* and *solidarity* (Kim, 2017: 47), and they areall grounded in the notion of human person as *imago Dei*whereas "the whole of the Church's social doctrine, in fact, develops from the principle that affirms the inviolable dignity of the human person"[9]. It starts with a chapter about God's love for humanity and ends with the idea of "civilization of love". The main chapters are dedicated to the family, human work, economic life, political community, international community, environment, promotion of peace and a call to ecclesial action.

Solidarity – consisting in new relationships of interdependence – is seen as a moral-ethical virtue, and as a social principle. As social principle, it has to deal with the "structures of sin", that has to be transformed into "structures of solidarity", which presuppose an active

[7] https://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/principles/documents/, 25 mai 2020.
[8] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*:
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html#At%20the%20dawn%20of%20the%20Third%20Millennium, 25 mai 2020.
[9] Pontifical Council, *Compendium*, § 90, electronic edition.

involvement for changing policies, institutions. As moral virtue, it has to do with an active responsibility for all, and commitment to the common good of the many.[10]*Subsidiarity*, a real hallmark for catholic social teachings from the beginning, is intended to promote and protect human dignity by fostering civil society's "intermediate social entities". The positive meaning of *subsidiarity*, is that these social entities had to be sustained, developed and assisted institutional and legal, whereas the negative meaning entails the requirement to "the State to refrain from anything that would de facto restrict the existential space of the smaller essential cells of society", so has a protective scope.[11] The *Compendium* defines the *common good* as something that belongs "to everyone and to each person" and still being common, and the "primary goal" of any "society that wishes and intends to remain at the service of the human being at every level".[12] Nevertheless, common good is a concept interpreted in various ways, but there are some directions of consensus in using it (Kim, 2017: 47). One of this consensus line deals with state and politics, considering that common good is the purpose of the state and also "a comprehensive means to organize political life regardless of political orientations", but it could be pursued without sacrificing anyone "for the sake of the state and for the good of majority" (*Ibidem*: 48–49). Another direction deals with finding a way to reject "extremes of individualism and collectivism", for the sake of "communality and relationships", that goes beyond the different kind of benefits, and entails assuming actual responsibilities for this common project or quest for the common good, but with global perspective, not limited to the local or national dimensions (*Ibidem*: 48–49).

The 20th century new challenges compelled many theologians and Christians to take public stances or actions on different topics and in various contexts. *J.H. Odlham* (1874-1969) and "The Moot" are called up as Christian intellectuals concerned with "the Church's voice in public debate" (Forrester, 2004: 11). Attentive to social sciences and theories they invited specialists and people from decision making institutions – but not the primary recipients of those strategies – to their conversions, in order to avoid naïve or utopian approaches, accepting theologian's limits of competence, in search for a "middle axiom" approach (*Ibidem*: 12–13). Public Christians are in debtto *William Temple* (1881-1944) for highlighting the "intermediate groupings" – family, church and voluntary organizations – placed between state and individual and for his accent on freedom, choice and responsibility. He

[10] Pontifical Council, *Compendium*, § 193.
[11] Pontifical Council, *Compendium*, § 185-186.
[12] Pontifical Council, *Compendium*, § 164-165.

also set off three principles for public engagement of the church: freedom, social fellowship and service (Kim, 2017: 51).

Karl Barth (1886-1968) is a reference point for theology in modern era. Confronted with his teachers' submission to Kaiser and his colleagues to Führer or to bolshevism, he pleaded for a Christian contribution to public debates "firmly rooted in the heart of the Christian faith, that it should be confessional, a way of proclaiming the Gospel, rather than a commentary on current affairs from a Christian standpoint" (Forrester, 2004: 8). Without diminishing his fundamental contribution to theological ongoing dialogue and to specific areas of Christian theology, his reflection can be pursued for the specific use of public theology. The bilinguality (Bedford-Strohm, 2007: 38–39) required to public theology can be traced back to Barth's successive clarifications "for theology's double responsibility within the context of the church and within the context of its contemporary public(s)" (Harasta, 2009: 188). There are some important distinctions he made between Gospel and Law, on the one hand, and between prayer and proclamation, on the other, and, later in his writing, between Christian community and civil community (replacing the Church-State bionomy from earlier writings). Keeping Christ's person in the center of his thinking, he suggests that the distinction between these two kinds of communities – that are like concentric circles – lies in their direct attitude towards Christ, not to each other. Both of them are under his authority and the Christian community must remind to the civil one about its center. When choosing proper language, the main emphasis lies on prayer, as a way to bring to God civils or state problems. And proclamation does not necessarily entail an evangelistic or missiological thrust, but a secular witness that nevertheless preserves Christ's centrality. So, the communication between church and the world is mediated through Christ and is carried out without suppressing the distinction that set them apart and without the illusion of a realized eschatology.

The figure of *Reinhold Niebuhr* (1892-1971) is a landmark for public theology's historical roots. Starting from liberal theology he embraced a "Christian realism" under the influence of Augustine and the Reformers thinking (Forrester, 2004: 10). He wrote on morality, powers, social ethic, secularism, history and of course, politics and he was an important public American intellectual in his days. He was a theorist but as well a practitioner. His growing understanding regarding the indissoluble nature of evil, sin and limitations of human nature made him aware that no system would be able to eliminate or pull down these problems. Nevertheless, he saw the need and the obligation for social action, and, while facing Lutheran pessimism that was interpreted as

promoting indifference to social action and a mistrust in human achievement (Marsden, 2010: 493), he appealed to Calvinism to justify it and to legitimate human quest for justice by making use of the "triangular covenant of justice", spelled out by Calvin, between God, ruler and people (as already discussed earlier) (Kim, 2017: 52). He emphasized that in human relationships it not just order and peace that counts but also justice – and this should function as a criterion for evaluating political power and that "democratic criticism becomes the instrument of justice" and if we are aware of the peril of anarchy or tyranny, we must consider seriously "creative possibility of justice" (Reinhold Niebuhr apud. Kim, 2017: 52). In relation to the state, he saw the "tension between prophetic criticism and priestly sanctification" and considered that Christian have two attitudes to authorities: there are those who see this authority as God-ordained and attributed to God and those who consider that authorities are under God's power and could be judged because of their actions (Kim, 2017: 52). Interestingly enough, due to his influence and positive image especially in the international affairs circles there was a group named "Atheist for Niebuhr" (Forrester, 2004: 10).

Exceptional times call for exceptional measures – could be an epigraph for *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (1906-1945). Since his own church was using Lutheran theology to decree that submission to Nazis was the right path to follow, he and the Confessing Church had to turn this theology on its head and to use the same theological tradition as a means to oppose the official ideology and the teaching of the servile part of his own church. He called Ecumenical Movement's attention upon this difficult situation and pressed the organization to take sides (*Ibidem*: 8–9). In line with his own tradition, for Bonhoeffer the Church and State are both God-ordained kingdoms (or mandates) and under God's authority; they are not radically distinct, but a single reality in Christ, the one who reconciled the world with God in himself. Generally speaking, the Church must not tell the State has to do but has the right to keep it responsible for its mandate concerning justice and order. When the State acts in an illegitimate way, the Church has three choices: (1) to highlight the responsibilities and make it accountable; (2) to serve the victims of the abusive actions; (3) to impede by political actions. And the decision is called by an "evangelical council" of the church (Johansson, 2015: 272–274).

He prefers to talk about mandates, not divine orders of creation in his attempt to undermine the theology that was confirming the political *statu quo*. Elaborating Luther's doctrine of three estates, Bonhoeffer ranked them not hierarchically, but alongside each other as equal,

warning that none can be isolated and neither put one in another's place. Based on more of his writings, these mandates are culture/work, marriage/family, Church and government. His views on freedom were influenced by his times but he talks about freedom from something and freedom for something as being coextensive so to speak. And as State has a lot of space for its freedom from Church, the Church must have the freedom to protest against the State when faith is obstructed, but when it comes to solution for the State, Church must refrain to suggest them, letting instead the Christian specialist to get in. Teachers of the Church must protest, but deacons should act. The common ground for this communication is human reason, as given by the general revelation. So basically, the Church and State have a mutually limiting role (*Ibidem*: 278). Filtering down Bonhoeffer conceptions through the four models based on Lutheran theology for religion going public[13], Johansson warns against some dangers, based on historical examples, and suggest that the Church must articulate the Gospel without compromise, "testify the limits of the government mandate and borders between different mandates" and contribute with solutions to social issues through its competent members (*Ibidem*: 287–288).

An important name in the preliminary discussions anticipating the official founding of European Union (first ECSC, then EEC) was that of the swiss protestant *Denis de Rougemont* (1906-1985). An important representative of French personalism, influenced by Karl Barth's theology, he was a fervent European federalist who supported a model inpolitics that focuses on the human person and a Europe that has a cultural soul (with pre-eminence over politics or economics). His name is connected to the founding of different European institution (CERN being maybe the most famous) and was a true activist in cultural engagement and a supporter of ecological project later in life (Saint-Ouen, 1995: 7–15). His prodigious public, journalistic, political and institutional activity was rooted in a deep conviction that at the heart of Christian theology can be identified the "revolutionary" notion of *person*, that "finds its prototype in Christ" and it's based on the decisions affirmed at Nicaea and Chalcedon Ecumenical Councils, when the distinctions between Jesus' natures were established and became "decisive options for our European civilization" (Haener, 2011: 12–14). For him, the very definition of common good "is a notion of humans and

[13]Johansson takes up the proposition of Robert Benne and talks about (1) indirect and unintentional influence; (2) indirect and intentional influence; (3) direct and intentional influence; and (4) direct and intentional action (Johansson, 2015: 286–287).

freedom"[14]. A person can be defined only by differentiating with respect to other persons, and each one has a specific vocation – a mission, a calling or a word from God of which one can be aware or not – that strive to its fulfillment in liberty and in an irreducible tension with the due respect for the vocation of others and their freedom. In fact, in every person there are some irreducible antinomies: freedom and responsibility, solitude and solidarity, safety and risk, stability and exploration into the unknown, tradition and innovation. Culture itself needs to preserve these antinomies in a "creative anxiety" (as he calls it Rougemont, 2020: 5) or a "creative discord", maintaining plurality and diversity without suppressing distinctions and without disunity (Haener, 2011: 14–15). This is precisely the reason for Rougemont's focus on *subsidiarity*, interdependence, pluralism, in a federalist political order, fueled by Christian values as present in the very structure of human person. All this entail risk, conflict, courage and respect.

A critical voice of his time was *Jacques Ellul* (1912-1994). An independent protestant Christian thinker, his interests took him towards a wide range of topics such as politics, theology, economy, technology, history, ethics or sociology. As he confessed, Marx's thinking inspired his own revolutionary thinking, before his faith became an important reality (Ellul, 2008: 29). He was a critic of technological society but the term *technique*, in his use, meant "the totality of method of rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency (for a given stage of development) in every field of human activity" (Ellul, 1964: XXV). His intention was not to project a gloomy perspective but to describe the sociological reality and to find if that description is accurate (*Ibidem*: XXVII). Elsewhere however the places technique and/or technology in a discussion about utopian temptation (Ellul, 1973: 115–116) and observes that "modern man had set up technology as a sacred", with technical objects as substitutes for the former religious objects (*Ibidem*: 145), thus submitting it to at least a critical scrutiny. Alongside with the (converted) catholic Marshall McLuhan, who's focus was on media, Ellul was another famous author engaging "technological civilization" from a Christian perspective.

His theological methodology was proposed as a resource for public theology. Ellul's dialectical approach offers the possibility to comprehend complexity and paradox in a "pilgrim theology" that creatively turns to its own advantage crisis, differences and

[14] Denis de Rougemont, "The Adventure of the 20th Century": http://www.cvce.eu/obj/lecture_given_by_denis_de_rougemont_on_the_cultural_implications_of_european_unity_paris_22_april_1948-en-ff3d3e3a-0f5b-41bf-961a-067822bb65ee.html, 25 mai 2020.

contradictions throughout an ongoing dialogue in which the input from outside enriches one's view and push it to a higher level on understanding. This dialogue implies presence and distance, social involvement and biblical or theological integrity. Such theological approach is compatible with a certain type of personality and mind that enables the conversation, choosing wisely and strategically the moment when to speak or to stay silent (Neville; 2008: 177–180). Therefore, Jacques Ellul seem to qualify as an astute example for public engagement.

The orthodox theologian *PanayotisNellas* (1936-1986) a truly public workshop for the public presence of the Greek church, "his purpose, his secret ambition was to contribute to establish a real and effective dialogue between the Orthodoxy and the world, a dialogue that would determine, at the same time, a vivification and modern exploit of tradition and a authentic orthodox transfiguration of nowadays society and culture"[15]. Nellas aimed to recover a truthfully orthodox anthropology in a dialogue with Nicholas Cabasilas and to build on this illustrious forerunner a theological platform that would motivate a daily practical involvement in "teaching, work, science, *beaux-arts*, politics" as means for human persons to exert their sovereignty over the world and imbibe it with God's grace in order cu overcome the sin generated decay and reunite all things with and in Christ (Nellas; 2002: 114–115).

Starting from the ideal fellowship of the Church, where the *kenotic* living and beatitudes are the norm, he states a paradigmatic model for politics – a human activity sharing the same purpose for human community with the Church but at a lower level, according to natural laws, namely to draw the society closer to the paradisiacal fellowship or at least to keep it from becoming an earthly hell (Nellas, 2013: 241). In his submission to the authority, the Christian must be sensitive to the any abuse on human rights and freedoms, and to the temptation of Christian domination through a Church-State unlawful " marriage". In fact, the Church must stay out of political games, avoiding political partisanship, otherwise would be in danger to fall into heresy (*Ibidem*: 246–249). The political action is for qualified believer, and the Church must work to help them in their three folded mission: royal (regarding democratic adjustments), sacerdotal (taking creation in front of God and taking God in society) and prophetic (judging the world and being salt for the world) (*Ibidem*: 258–264).

[15]Ioan I. Icăjr, *'Îndumnezeirea' omului*, *P. Nellas şi conflictul antropologiilor*, introductory study in Panayotis Nellas, *Omul – animal îndumnezeit*, p. 30.

The artists

Usually, artists are not a prominent chapter in theological discourse, and especially in evangelical contexts. But if art (Paeth, 2016: 463, 469) is to be taken into account for public theology, there are some nominees for a solid illustration.

The gigantic Russian novelist, F.M. Dostoevsky (1821-1881) is an important candidate for the historical and artistic focus of public theology. If we assent with Smit (2007: 32) or Andries von Aarde (apud Kim, 2017: 13), that the artistic expression qualifies as a form of public theology then Dostoevsky's work is a fascinating place to start with. Although his contribution to afresh public discussion about sin, guilt, faith and individual responsibility could hardly be overestimated – his work drawing attention and curiosity of a wide variety of scholars: philosophers, psychologists, ethicist, theologians and all sort of social theorist – here we will single out his prophetic and visionary program, including a promise for world's redemption, encapsulated in those provoking and mysterious words put in Prince Myshkin's mouth: "Beauty will save the world"[16]. Discussing this phrase, the catholic R. Jared Staudt reads three papal documents (issued by three different popes), in which it is quoted, noting the correlation between beauty and suffering, on the one hand, and, on the other, the fact that "this struggle and tension between physical and spiritual beauty becomes a central motif in the engagement of modern culture" (Staudt, 2020). The same puzzling words, that he confesses to be obsessed with, inspired one chapter in Anselm Gruen's book on beauty. He highlights the idea that there are "two necessary conditions to believe in the healing power of the beauty: love and being Christian" (Grün, 2019: 29). In a dostoevskyan sense, beauty reveals the pain within, the evil that tears soul apart and the despair; there is not an idealized beauty, not one to be admired in detachment, but a beauty that feeds every soul and it is hidden deep inside every (wounded) soul. But if beauty comes from within us; if springs from our deepest convictions; and if it is driven by our most powerful motifs; and if this beauty is "some reflection of eternal Beauty and Wisdom" (Lewis, 1939: 192); and also ,if this beauty entails an unavoidable public dimension, then Dostoevsky's work is – at least for this reason – a "must" for public theology engagement with artistic discourse.

Influenced by Dostoevsky, but having his own powerful voice in literature, the French Nobel 1952 laureate *François Mauria*c (1885-1970) is another suited nominee for artistic expression turned by a deep

[16] In fact, the exact wording sounds like this: "Beauty would save the world" (Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, Free Kindle Edition).

Christian faith. Most of his writings room a more or less developed and visible Christian core. Commonly, his main characters share an openly Christian background, predominantly forged by jansenist movement from Port-Royal. In the important conflict between jansenists and jesuits, on the topic of salvation and free will, Mauriac "reprobated both sides" (Balotă, 2001: 101). In his novels, there could be identified themes and motifs like sin and virtue, love and selfishness, good and evil, confession, paradise (Stanciu, 2013: 137–166). Being a catholic, confession could be singled out like a sort of trademark. And indeed, "all his [Mauriac's] writings form a confession either on human, or on artistic level" (Râpeanu, 1982: 130). His personal choices in difficult times (during WWII) recommend Mauriac as a man of character and integrity.

His work could be also used as a literary mirror for communities that foster a rather legalistic and rigorist environment. One of his most horrid characters, Félicité Cazenave, who pathologically controls his son's life, is rather satisfied when her new daughter in law is dying after giving birth to a dead child but nevertheless pretends to offer her help. Predictably refused, she leaves with a clear conscious that she has done her duty, having nothing to reproach to herself (Mauriac, 1966: 27). This sense of duty void of basic humanity might be posed as a warning sign for every public engagement of the church.

From a protestant tradition, an important exercise of public presence, involving a prophetic[17] thrust, was professed by *C.S. Lewis* (1898-1963). Remembered especially as an apologist – maybe the most important of the 20th century –there is another dimension of his activity that call for attention: his popularization of a "mere Christianity", as a public service for the country in a dire situation, during WWII. His radio speeches gathered later in a book – *Mere Christianity*– were purposely intended as an image of a non-confessional identity to which Christians from different background could relate. Another important book this time for a dialogue that goes beyond Christianity is *Abolition of Man*. Here he talks about "the *Tao*", which is "the doctrine of objective value, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are" (Lewis, 2009). His appeal to an universal set of values and beliefs is similar to Wesley's appeal to naturaland echoes public theology's interest for an

[17] In at least two senses of those proposed by Nico Koopman, (*Public Theology as Profetic Theology*, in "Journal of Theology for Southern Africa", 133, March 2009: 121–129.)

informed discourse that is accessible and could be evaluated from outside the church (Day; Kim, 2017: 15).

Last but not least, it is important to mention here his fiction books – *Chronicles of Narnia, Space Trilogy, Great Divorce, Pilgrim's Regress, Till We Have Faces* or *Screwtape Letters*. His international celebrity and public visibility were much more prompted by this works that touched a wide variety of public, instilling significant messages openly or implicitly Christian. His fantasy worlds work like a standing point of view that enables a critical approach to the world we are living in. And it is important that fiction can speak not only to our mind, but to our heart as well, in a more comprehensive way.

Public theology today[18]

Two years after the foundation of Global Network of Public Theology (GNPT) that included tens of institutes or centers from around the world, the *International Journal of Public Theology* (IJPT) was launched and gathered around itthe most important voices in public theology such as Sebastian Kim, William Storrar, Nico Koopman, Clive Pearson, Paul Chang, Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, B. Harold Breitenberg, Dirk Smit, Scott Paeth, Katie Day, Elaine Graham, Gonzalo Villagrán, Gavin D'Costa, Luke Bretherton and many others. They were furthering the work carried out by the"founding fathers" of the domain such as Duncan Forrester or Max Stackhouse, two important leading figures. Of course, there are theologians that, although don't belong explicitly to this inner circle, have important contribution to public theology's discourse, reflection, and action. We can enlist here Jürgen Moltmann, Miroslav Volf, N.T. Wright, Stanley Hauerwas, NimiWariboko or Richard Mouw, to name just a few. The national and local initiative seem to have a good impetus adding specific inputs and enriching global interactions.

In *Romanian context*, there are two main lines that developed in recent years. Chronological priority is to be granted to*Radu Preda* and *PicuOcoleanu* and their "TheologiaSocialis" collection. This series included some 30 titles and featured authors like: Radu Preda, Radu Carp, Mihail Neamțu, MirelBănică or IulianaConovici. The diligent publisher and scholar *Ioan I. Icăjr.*wasreceptive to this theological orientation and in the dawn of the new millennium published an international collective work: *Gândirea social a bisericii* (Deisis, 2002).Also Radu Preda used to teach a social theology course in the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Cluj. Even before these series, there

[18] This section will be developed *in extenso* in another article called *Public Theology: Contemporary Voices*.

were books published on social and public topics from a theological standpoint at Anastasia publishing house. Other established Christian intellectuals manifested interest in public engagement of the church, such as TeodorBaconschi, Adrian Papahagi, Sever Voinescu, Alin Fumurescuor Horia-Roman Patapievici all claiming a Christian identity, usually in orthodox tradition. Some orthodox clerics gained public attention and were featured in mainstream media, with Constantin Necula or Ioan Florin Florescu being among the most dynamic.

In the evangelical context, first steps were made by professors *Corneliu Costantineanu* and *Marcel Măcelaru*, especially since they started to teach at UAV, Arad, in 2016. There are two master programs of public theology (one in Romanian, one in English) and the doctoral program includes a public theology field of research. A short survey on publishing work of professors Constatineanu and Macelaru would highlight topics such as public theology, public faith, common good, human flourishing, social reconciliation, faith in public square, religion and culture, religion and powers.

These development share about more than a synchronizing institutional trend or keeping up with theological fashion of the day. They disclose (and try to tackle) a two folded deficiency (that was identified as opportunity): the need for a theological perspective in public sphere and the need for a public feedback that informs theological reflection. Christian voices have to go public, and recent events proved that this aspect cannot be ignored. There are a lot of issues in Romanian society (corruption, inequity, vulnerable categories, polarization and so on) that could benefit from solid and informed theological contribution. But, on the other hand, churches and theological communities must keep their ears opento what's going on beyond their buildings' walls and sub cultural fences.

Conclusions

This historical journey unfolded subjects and strategies placed at the conjunction of Christian community realm and (civil) society. The presence of God's people and God's kingdom into this world is not a simple matter and demand a contextual reflection that takes into consideration different factors that are cultural, ideological, economic, political, religious, legal, medical, moral and so on. A diachronic undertaking is a useful way to spotlight the struggles of Christian thinkers in their attempt to answer properly and biblically to the challenges they faced. Public theology takes a good advantage of this rich tradition that is embraced critically and creatively translated for our own times.

For the Romanian context, alongside with a portion of church history or a biographical update, we can recover a sense of social involvement and public presence for the church and for the theological reflection. Also, there is a contextual dimension that can be included and built on in a dialog with Orthodox tradition at hand. Not to forget that in our relatively new gained political, social and economic freedom, we still need to reflect on democratic construction of the society and its institutions and that process presupposes supporting laws, securing rights, promoting a salubrious public discourse, challenging powers, confronting institutions and building and advancing Christian alternatives for a wide variety of societal issues. The 20th century theological reflection displays a significant openness towards inter-denominational and/or ecumenical dialogue. This is a crucial aspect for public theology, and this paper draws on and illustrates such kind of beneficial interaction with different Christian traditions. Last, but not least, this article could serve as an introductory guide for students (or other people that try to map de field) to some key authors from the past worth learning about. Without being a comprehensive study, it might prove a useful initiation tool.

REFERENCES:

Balotă, Nicolae, *Istorialiteraturiifranceze de la Villon la zilelenoastre*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Dacia, 2001.
Bedford-Strohm, Heinrich, *Nurturing Reason. The Public Role of Religion in the Liberal State*, in "Neg Geref Teologiese Tydskrif", 48:1, 2007, p. 25–41.
Bekos, John, *Agamben, John Chrysostom and Alternative Politics*, in "International Journal of Public Theology", no. 12, 2018, p. 278–296.
Bezzant, Rhys, "«The Better Hour is Near»: William Wilberforce and Transformative Religion", Evangelical History Association Lecture, 2013.
Breitenberg, E. Harold jr, *What is Public Theology?*, in Deirdre King Hainsworth and Scott R. Paeth (ed.), *Public Theology for a Global Society: Essays in Honor of Max L. Stackhouse* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Kindle edition, 2009.
Calvin, John, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1989.
Day, Katie, Sebastian Kim, *Introduction*, in Sebastian Kim and Katie Day (ed.), *A Companion to Public Theology*, Leiden & Boston, Brill, 2017.
Dostoevsky, Fyodor, *The Idiot*, Free Kindle Edition.
Ellul, Jacques, *Ellul par lui-memes. Présentation et notes de Michel Hourcade,Jean-Pierre Jézéquel et Gérard Pau*, Paris, La Table Ronde, 2008.
Ellul, Jacques, *The New Demons*, trans. C. Edward Hopkin, New York, The Seabury Press, 1973.

Ellul, Jacques, *The Technological Society*, trans. John Wilkinson, New York, Knopf, 1964.
Field, David N., *John Wesley as a Public Theologian: the Case of Thoughts upon Slavery*, in "Scriptura", 114, 2015, p. 1–13.
Forrester, Duncan B., *The Scope of Public Theology*, in Elaine Graham and Esther Reed (eds.), *The Future Christian Social Ethics: Essays on the Work of Ronald H. Preston 1913-2001, a special issue of Studies in Christian Ethics*, 17.2, London, T & T Clark, 2004, p. 5–19.
Frangipani, Joseph Magnus, "The Cosmological Vision of St. Basil and the First Hospital", https://servantofprayer.wordpress.com/2014/04/08/the-cosmological-vision-of-st-basil-and-the-first-hospital/, 15 april, 2020.
George, Timothy, *Theology of the Reformers*, rev.ed., Nashville, Broadman & Holman, 2013.
Grimsrud, Ted, *Anabaptist Faith and American Democracy*, in "The Mennonite Quarterly Review", 78, July 2004, p. 341–362.
Grun, Anselm, *Frumusețea. O nouăspiritualitate a bucuriei de a trăi*, trans. Monica Grigore, Pitești, Paralela 45, 2019.
Haener, Juerg, *De la pensée de Denis de Rougemont au concept decitoyennetéeuropéenne: divergence ou convergence?*, MA thesis, InstitutEuropéen de l'Université de Genève, Genève, 2011.
Harasta, Eva, *Karl Barth, a Public Theologian? The One Word and Theological «Bilinguality»*, in "International Journal of Public Theology", 3 (2009), p. 188–203.
Holland, Scott, *Preaching with Prophets, Musing with Mystics, Dancing with Strangers*, in "Bretheren Life and Thought", vol. XXXIX, Summer 1994, p. 167–179.
Johansson, Torbjörn, *Religion in the Public Sphere – with Dietrich Bonhoeffer towards a Renewed Understanding of 'the Two Kingdoms'*, in "International Journal of Public Theology", 9 (2015), p. 269–288.
Jorgenson, Allen G., *Luther on Ubiquity and a Theology of the Public*, in "International Journal of Systematic Theology", vol. 6, nr. 4, octombrie 2004, p. 351–368.
Kim, Sebastian, *Public Theology in the History of Christianity*, in Sebastian Kim and Katie Day (ed.), *A Companion to Public Theology*, Leiden & Boston, Brill, 2017.
Koopman, Nico, *Public Theology as Profetic Theology?*, in "Journal of Theology for Southern Africa", 133, March 2009, p. 117–130.
Land, Richard, *Baptiștii și libertatea religioasă: trecut, prezent și viitor*, în *Libertatea religioasă. Contribuția istorică a baptiștilor la dezvoltarea acestui concept*, Oradea, Cartea Creștină, 1995, p. 45–55.
LeMasters, Philip, *Philantropia in Liturgy and Life: The Anaphora of Basil the Great and Eastern Orthodox Social Ethics*, in *St. Vladimir's Quarterly* 59:2, 2015, p. 187–211.
Lewis, C.S., *Abolition of man or Reflections on education with special reference to the teaching of English in the upper forms of schools*, New York, Harper Collins, 2009, ebook.

Lewis, C.S., *Christianity and Literature*, in *Rehabilitation and Other Essays*, London, Oxford University Press, 1939.
Marsden, John, *Reinhold Niebuhr and the Ethics of Christian Realism*, in "International Journal of Public Theology", 4, 2010, p. 483–501.
Martin, Martin E., *Reinhold Niebuhr: Public Theology and the American Experience*, in "The Journal of Religion", Vol. 54, No. 4, Oct., 1974, p. 332–359.
Mauriac, François, *Genitrix*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1966.
Mouw, Richard J., *Calvin's Legacy for Public Theology*, in "Political Theology", 10.3, 2009, p. 431–446.
Nellas, Panayotis, *Omul – animal indumnezeit. Perspective pentru o antropologieortodoxă*, trans. Ioan I. Icăjr, Sibiu, Deisis, 2002.
Nellas, Panayotis, *Ortodoxia – divino-umanism în acțiune. Studii și articole*, trans. Ioan I. Icăjr, Sibiu, Deisis, 2013.
Neville, David J., *Dialectic as Method in Public Theology: Recalling Jacques Ellul*, in "International Journal of Public Theology", 2, 2008, p. 163–181.
Nistor, Laurețiu, *Probleme sociale oglindite în opera SfântuluiVasile cel Mare*, Sibiu, Agnos, 2018.
Paeth, Scott, *Whose Public? Which Theology? Signposts on the Way to 21st Century Public Theology*, in "International Journal of Public Theology", 10, 2016, p. 461–485.
Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html#At%20the%20dawn%20of%20the%20Third%20Millennium, 25 mai 2020.
Radke, Douglas B., *John Chrysostom, On the statues: a study in crisis rhetoric*, MA thesis, Portland State University, Portland, 1988.
Râpeanu, Valeriu, *Tărâmul unde nu ajungi niciodată*, Bucureşti, Editura Sport-Turism, 1982.
Rhee, Helen, *Philantropy and Human Flourishing in Patristic Theology*, in "Religions", 2008, no. 9, 11.
Rougemont, Denis de, *The Adventure of the 20th Century*: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/lecture_given_by_denis_de_rougemont_on_the_cultural_implications_of_european_unity_paris_22_april_1948-en-ff3d3e3a-0f5b-41bf-961a-067822bb65ee.html, 25 mai 2020.
Saint-Ouen, François, *Denis de Rougemont*, in "L'Europeen formation", nr. 296, Spring 1995, p. 7–15.
Smit, Dirk J., *The Paradigm of Public Theology – Origins and Development*, in Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, Florian Höhneand, Tobias Reitmeier, *Contextuality and Intercontextuality in Public Theology*, LIT Verlag, 2013, p. 11–22.
Smit, Dirkie, *What Does «Public» Mean? Questions with a View to Public Theology*, in Len Hansen (ed.), *Christian in Public. Aims, methodologies and issues in public theology*, Stellenboch, SunMedia, 2007.
Stanciu, Teofil, *Suflete sfâșiate. Incursiune în universul spiritual al personajelor lui François Mauriac*, în "Plērōma", XV no. 2, 2013, p. 137–166.

Staudt, R. Jared, *Beauty Will Save the World: From the Mouth of an Idiot to the Pen of a Pope*, in "Crisis Magazine", https://www.crisismagazine.com/2013/beauty-will-save-the-world-from-the-mouth-of-an-idiot-to-the-pen-of-a-pope, 7 April 2020.
Strain, Charles R., *Walter Rauschenbusch: A Resource for Public Theology*, in "Union Seminary Quarterly Review", Vol. XXXIV, No. 7, Autumn, 1978, p. 23–34.
Weber, Max, *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons, London, G. Allen & Unwin, 1930.
Witte, John jr, *Moderate Religious Liberty in the Theology of John Calvin*, in "Calvin Theological Journal", 31, 1996, p. 359–403.
Witte, John jr., *Law, Religion, and Human Rights: A Historical Protestant Perspective*, in "The Journal of Religious Ethics", Vol. 26, No. 2, Fall, 1998, p. 257–262.
https://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/principles/documents/, 25 May 2020.