

Draft to the 4th conference on Diaconia and Christian Social Practice

Political Diaconia in a new multicultural and more hidden Europe.

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Scope and aim of the essay

- A dialogue with political sociology (Dominique Schnapper) on diaconia's role in a multi-cultural Europe characterized by ethnic and religious resurgences.
- A defence of diaconia's position in Europe as a cosmopolitan project, affirming the need for political service of «hidden people».
- Political diaconia : The provision of diaconia is an interpretative and pragmatic activity where the result is to be fed into analysis, action planning and ethical deliberation.

Schnapper's theses:

- Historically, the idea of an intervening state that transcends particularities, has been correlated with the idea of a transcendent God. This idea of transcendence was professed by state officials that exercised love of neighbor, charity and prophetic or priestly calling in office - services.
- The ties between nation-churches and the states are weakened. This weakens the idea of political transcendence and intervention. Ethnic and religious resurgences is incapable of engendering a political sociality.
- A new fluidity between ethnic, political, religious and social realms makes it necessary to build states that increases the number of its interventions in public and private life as well as it recognizes ethnic - religious particularities.
- Since «the new democratic man» does not want to serve others, the states must concede to finding a balance between claims for fulfilment of desires and political transcendence. Else states will lose its legitimacy.
- She suggests that Europe develops neutral states that breaks the link to the nation state and where all services are publicly established and differentiated by state officials. These states defend values and are in a sense »ethnic«.

Problem and dilemma:

- Problem: Do we still need a political mechanism of diaconia that fuses fulfilment of dignity with nation projects, or should Christlike diaconia rather serve the ethnic –religious ties?
- Can the defense of dignity best be fulfilled irrespective of loyalty to the nation state? What value can be given to the idea that diaconia is a cosmopolitan project (St.Paul)?
- Dilemma: To defend the multiculturalist project will probably weaken the ties to the nation-state. To maintain close ties with the nations- states will probably weaken diaconia since the new developments are post-national. To strengthen diaconia's cosmopolitan identity is a project that is dysfunctional to the claims of the multiculturalists. Or is a strong kosmopolitan incitement the right action?

Counter-arguments:

- The singling out of consciousness as post-national implies a question of the subject or groups that politics is to serve.
- It is false that ethnic and religious resurgences does not engender new social births, these resurgences reproduce composites of belief, feeling and visions that promote human imagination and proposals for living in care of other people.
- There is no such thing as a human being totally enveloped by political democracy, «a new democratic man».
- Diaconia retains the idea of a kosmopolitan apolitical political summoning not to be confined within nation projects. Diaconia serves the human being hidden *under* certain fixed agreements of what *is* a democratic man, an ethnies, *or* a religious group.....

Tentative conclusion:

- Political diaconia has a vocation to explore how ethnic-religious resurgences form world views and proposals for caretaking of dignity.
- Diaconia must weaken its all too close ties with nation-states and proceed for an inter-ethnic and inter-religious understanding of Christ's work in Europe.
- Dignity cannot, however, be fulfilled irrespective of a dialogue with the ethnic and religious resurgences.