

STATEMENT

by Assoc. prof. Teodor Bozidarov Stoychev

member of the Jury in the competition for the award of the degree of Doctor of Science in 2.4 Religion and Theology/Pastoral Psychology

for the Dissertation of

Krasimir Nikolov Ivanov

"Pastoral care for families in psychosocial therapy of addictions",

Faculty of Theology of Sofia University "St. Climent Ohridski"

The topic of the presented dissertation is of indisputable importance not only for our contemporary society, due to the spreading forms of addictions, but also for our native Church, due to the lack of a systematic presentation of the problem. In this regard, I would define the topic as dissertable.

The Introduction covers the scientific criteria. The content also follows well-known and established requirements. Makes one impression by the content and exposition that the author ties the addicted to the family to which he belongs. Thus the thesis is advanced that the whole family somehow necessarily participate in the addiction. This axiomatically posited commitment is, in my opinion, difficult to prove.

Chapter One, titled "**The Pastor and Pastoral Care for the Family in the Context of the Orthodox Church**," the PhD student reasonably argues the question of pastoral ministry. What I think is highly inconsistent with the nature of the text is that it not only goes into topics that are unnecessary from the point of view of the dissertation, such as that of the relationship between the New Testament shepherding and the Old Testament priesthood, but it also goes to the wrong conclusions.

K. Ivanov brings out idealized postulates, which I am not convinced have any relation to real shepherding. Among them are sagacity, infinite love, material and immaterial transformation of the human environment, etc. He mixes mystical elderhood with the real life situation that should be the basis of his study. I also think that the dissertation devotes too much space (about 30 pages) to an overly familiar exposition. In this way, it assumes information that is part of other types of topics.

In my manuscript there is a discrepancy between the content and the subpoints in the exposition. In the content stands 1.6. ("The Family and its Pastoral Care"), and in the exposition it is 1.3.

Part of Chapter One is devoted to the addiction: "The Addiction as a Human Condition and Objects of Dependency" (1.7). I think this section should be relegated to another part of the presentation, as it proceeds to a completely different topic. I would define this as a serious methodological flaw.

Chapter 1.7.2 ("Defining addiction"), in addition to defining addiction, reflects on the symptomatology and criteria defining dependence. I think a methodological differentiation of the objects of study should be followed. Part of the exposition, I think, should be in the next chapter, "Explanatory Models of Addiction". There are other structural gaps that I do not want to dwell on.

The Second chapter is entitled "**The Doctrine of Man and his Vocation according to holy fathers in relation to psychosocial therapy of addictions**". The PhD student discusses the dignity of the person before moving on to the main issue regarding psychosocial therapy of addictions. The topic of human dignity is undeniably relevant when it comes to the consequences that follow dependency, but unfortunately the PhD student has gone into an unjustifiably extensive exposition that I believe only conveys a volume of exposition, not a meaningful unfolding.

Furthermore, the language is too vague: "Human feeling and sensation are a wondrous and terrible gift, by which hell is hell and heaven is heaven. Their original property is logosity and paradise is the sense of God. By His Incarnation, the Saviour restores to human sense and feeling the original logosity which had been suppressed by sin..." (p. 70). I took the liberty of quoting verbatim to illustrate the manner of expression that runs throughout the text.

In point 2.3. issues more immediately relevant to the topic are addressed. Methods known to the author are taken into account. In point 2.4. "Spiritual Healing of Addiction", it makes an impression that PhD student again resorts to discussing issues he has already dwelt on - topics from the field of Orthodox anthropology. Furthermore, I don't see objective spiritual practices that are relevantly tied to scientific ones. If this was not the Krasimir Ivanov's desire, and I think it was not, then he should have focused mainly on the experience of the Church.

Particular attention is paid to the therapeutic community as an approach, which, it seems, the PhD student prefers. Clearly he speaks from personal experience, which is evident in the following sentence: „Conversations about change are part of everyday life for all of us“ p. 94.

The third chapter is entitled: „**Family therapy in the context of psychosocial therapy of addicted persons**“. Here K. Ivanov turns to the topic of codependency, the stages of its development and the therapy to be conducted. This is an important part of monographic research. Although the PhD student was guided by a desire for a comprehensive exposition, unfortunately, due to very limited source material, he has reduced everyone in the addict's close circle to the category of "addict." In my opinion, it is unjustified to treat everyone in the same way. There are conventions that I don't think are emphasized.

In general, the presentation is not analytical, comprehensive and does not show knowledge of the experience in Western countries. This, in my opinion, is

due to poor use of foreign language literature related to the topic. It is true that the author's desire is tied to the Orthodox experience, but the title does not set this necessary perspective. I don't think the author is familiar with the theological statement, in fact I'm convinced it eludes him.

In conclusion: Taking into account the above, I give a negative assessment to Krasimir Nikolov Ivanov.

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/Assoc. prof. Teodor Stoychev/