

# The Church's offer of salvation in a world characterized by capitalism and secularization

LINK: <https://hanglberger-manfred.de/en-saekularisierung-mission-pdf.pdf>

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**Speaker: Manfred Hanglberger**

Pastor and family therapist (ret.), author

[www.hanglberger-manfred.de](http://www.hanglberger-manfred.de)

Analysis and solution of the secularization problem (article) [>>>](#)

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# Secularization: Enemy image or task of the church?

**Old Testament: Gen1:** Sun and moon are not GODS, but "lamps":  
Rational explanation = worldliness = secularization

## **In the New Testament:**

*The "holy place", the temple is "secularized" because its destruction is predicted and because Christ (Rev 21:22) and the bodies of Christians are temples of God (1 Cor 3:16 f.)*

*The "holy times", the Sabbath is "secularized" because "the Sabbath exists for man's sake" (Mk 2:27)*

*In the freedom of the children of God, the Christian is, through Christ, master of the world in which everything is holy and unholy at the same time, depending on how far it is in Christ or under the dominion of sin. (A. Keller)*

## **Secularization = rationalization:**

*This is necessary so that man can be the administrator and designer of the world!*

# Further secularization tendencies in the Gospels

Jesus' parable educates the believers to independent perception, reflection and decision-making competence.

Jesus' new kind of commandments and prohibitions appeals to a soul-spiritual debate, the perception of values and the soul-spiritual development capacity of believers.

*More detailed information on Jesus' understanding of the commandments: >>>*

*“The children of this world are often wiser than the children of the light”  
(Luke 16:8)*

# Secularization tendencies in the Council document “Gaudium et Spes” (1965)

**36.** If by the autonomy of earthly affairs we mean that created things and societies themselves enjoy their own laws and values which must be gradually deciphered, put to use, and regulated by men, then it is entirely right to demand that autonomy.

Such is not merely required by modern man, but harmonizes also with the will of the Creator.

For by the very circumstance of their having been created, all things are endowed with their own stability, truth, goodness, proper laws and order. Man must respect these as he isolates them by the appropriate methods of the individual sciences or arts.

Therefore if methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith, for earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God.

Indeed whoever labors to penetrate the secrets of reality with a humble and steady mind, even though he is unaware of the fact, is nevertheless being led by the hand of God, who holds all things in existence, and gives them their identity.

More quotes: <https://hanglberger-manfred.de/gaudium-et-spes-zitate-en.htm>

# Rationalization has always been part of the Bible and Christianity!

1. But reason has always been linked to faith in the sense of Christological dogma "undivided and unmixed".
2. Reason and faith have always been the two poles of Christian perception of the world and life and their formation.
3. The Church has provoked the absolutization of rationalization through its abuse of power!
4. Suppression of rationality led to the absolutization of rationality in favor of emancipation from the institution of the church, which is experienced as patronizing!
5. Loss of authority of the Christian religion through abuse of power in the past and present: [>>>](#)

# The ideologies of the present: Capitalism and a one-sided rational worldview

## **Capitalism:**

The reduction of being human to those needs whose satisfaction promises economic profit.

## **Secularization (one-sided rational world view):**

One-sided rationalization without spirituality through abuse of power by the church (since 1632)

## **Polar worldview of the Bible = polar worldview of Christians:**

Spirituality and rationality are to be combined!

### ***Spirituality:***

*Connectedness with the world, with people, with God*

### ***Rationality:***

*Understanding the world in order to manage and shape it*

# The abuse of power by the church

1582: The proclamation of the "Gregorian calendar":

The astronomers of the Catholic Church were the best in the world!

1600: Burning of Jordano Bruno in Rome:

*The stars are suns - distributed in an infinite universe:*

*"Democratization" of the cosmos:*

*Hierarchy of the church no longer has a cosmic basis!*

1632: Galileo Galilei is shown the instruments of torture to force him to deny his findings.

The early scientists were all devout Christians!

**The Vatican refused to accept the scientific findings  
and to revise its doctrine of faith  
and its understanding of the Bible.**



# The triumph of rationalization

- **Reason versus faith: Rivalry instead of Polarity**
- French Revolution:  
*Since many clerics were against liberty and equality: 'Cult of reason'*
- Anti-Modernist-Oath: the Church's fight against rationalization
- Reaktion of Church:  
*Devaluation of the world and flight from the world:  
Everything earthly and physical: World of Satan*
- No theology of creation
- No theology of history:
- Alternatives emerge: Communism and Fascism

**Modern world: everything is explained by science:  
Rationalization**

# Religion in a capitalist world

- Awakening beautiful feelings (Christmas)
- Sacraments as beautiful “events”
- Serving private peace of mind
- Considered “unscientific”: for the “exotics”
- Becomes superfluous and outdated for many
- No answer to the question of meaning

# Fundamental tasks of the church in a world characterized by rationality:

1. The historical development of the one-sided rationalization of secularization must be described.
2. One's own guilt for the abuse of power must be confessed.
3. The secularization mandate, which is based on the Bible and in the Church's teaching tradition, must be formulated and made known in a generally understandable way.
4. The Church should have to show in which areas it has already succeeded in positively realizing the secularization mandate:
  - *Formulation and constant updating of the "Catholic Social Teaching".*
  - *The new openness to the world ("Aggiornamento", "Gaudium et Spes") in the texts of the Second Vatican Council.*
  - *The proclamation of the environmental encyclical "Laudato si", which above all once again formulated a spiritual view of the world and contains very practical impulses for global responsibility.*
  - *The church's advocacy for human dignity, human rights and democracy.*

**To the article:** <https://hanglberger-manfred.de/en-saekularisierung-mission.htm>

# Remedy the deficits of the church's secularization mandate!

1. **The polarity of rationality and spirituality must be presented!**
2. Scientific and spiritual interpretation of the world: (doctrine is missing!)  
*The Scientific Worldview and the Christian Faith >>>*
3. Scientific and spiritual interpretation of life: (doctrine is missing!)  
*The psychological maturation, the healing processes and their blockages and their spiritual dimensions >>>*
4. The liturgical texts and the church culture of prayer must be analyzed in terms of world devaluation (valley of tears"??) and with regard to a false understanding of authority ("God rules"??) and must possibly be changed. >>>
5. The church leadership should formulate a doctrine of faith on the topic of "Understanding and practicing authority in the spirit of Jesus".
6. The church structures that still enable and promote abuse of power today must be analyzed and changed!
7. Annual church mourning days are to be used to deal with the historical burdens. More on this: >>>

# The “secularization problem” as a task for the churches in Europe

1. The whole of Europe is burdened by it in a very dramatic way.
2. The problem is now spreading to many countries around the world.
3. The problem also affects the other religions.
4. There is a need for the problem to be dealt with by a European continental synod.
5. It would be a betrayal of the Christian faith and the Christian mission to shape the world not to finally tackle this problem.

# Possible approaches of the church's proclamation: Among young people (1)

1. Some young people ask for a comprehensive meaning in life.
2. Some young people are looking for their own originality and for a responsible belonging to other people.
3. Some young people are burdened by the balancing act between detachment from their parents and a lasting bond with them.
4. Some young people are looking for orientation in the emotional merry-go-round they are experiencing. >>>
5. Some young people know more about psychological repressions and projections than the leaders of the church.
6. That's why they often have more understanding and knowledge about people's destructive behaviors: >>>

# Possible approaches of the church's proclamation: Among young people (2)

1. When young people ask about the meaning of life: >>>  
*Deficits of the church: No message of faith for it!*
2. When young people ask about the work of God in a scientifically explained world: >>>  
*Deficits of the church: No message of faith for it!*
3. When young people ask about man's need for redemption against the background of the knowledge of the evolution of all living things: >>>  
*Deficits of the church: No message of faith for it!*
- 4) This is why the church's offerings, some of which are completely outdated, are more repulsive than attractive to most young people!

# Possible approaches of the church's proclamation: Among suffering people

1. **It is important to perceive the external and psychological suffering of people and to offer both practical (scientifically based) and spiritual help for this - in line with a polar Christian worldview.**
2. One of the most important tasks of the church leadership of a country or a cultural area is therefore to perceive the essential suffering of the people there and to specify the salvation offered by faith accordingly.
3. This analysis of people's suffering must of course be developed in a constant dialogue with those affected.
4. As this sufferings can have a different intensity, ranking and distribution in different cultures, it is necessary to adapt the organizational forms of the church, the design of liturgy and spirituality and the proclamation of values accordingly.
5. This difference in the structure of suffering in different cultural areas may therefore require a difference in the church structures, the culture of prayer and the design of the liturgies in order **to realize the same central truths of faith in each case.**
6. **If, for example, many people in Europe experience the greatest emotional pain and feelings of powerlessness in their family and other human relationships,** it is very negative for the reputation of the Church and the Christian faith if the Church cannot offer a contemporary doctrine of faith and a contemporary culture of prayer for this area of suffering.



# Proclamation in developed democratic societies

Especially in developed democratic societies, in which **open dialogue, co-determination and equal rights for men and women** have become everyday values, authoritarian church structures and the exclusion of women from offices and essential decisions paralyze the proclamation and credibility of the Good News.

Of course, reforms in this area, which **would only be an adaptation to values already practiced in society**, will not make the church the "salt of the earth" and the "light on the mountain", but will only remove annoyances and blockages.

The church can rather regain a positive aura by coming to terms with secularization in the proclamation and practical realization of a polar view of the world and of life.

# Solving the problem of sexual abuse (1)

**In the case of sexual abuse and other criminal behavior, it would be important for the church to investigate the psychological causes of such behavior in order to be able to take healing precautions.**

**A therapist who works with perpetrators and victims:**

"It has been scientifically proven that one only becomes a perpetrator if one has previously been a victim, personally - or as a member of a cross-generational chain of victims and perpetrators."

*The trauma expert and system psychologist Professor Dr. Franz Ruppert criticizes the common pathological diagnoses such as "mentally ill", "psychotic" or "psychopath" as meaningless.*

For him, these are nothing more than empty descriptions of symptoms and labels that do not address the fact that perpetrators may be traumatized or even ask the question of the causes.

*"If obvious trauma perpetrators are given pathologizing diagnoses, they appear as incomprehensible "monsters" who can then be viewed with disgust and horror. The perpetrator-victim dynamic that is expressed in the behavior of trauma perpetrators and their own victimhood are not recognized in this way. The behavior of trauma perpetrators appears like an incomprehensible mystery, instead of understanding that their enormous destructiveness is the result of the psychological pain that was originally inflicted on them and that they cannot allow to surface within themselves." (Professor Dr. Franz Ruppert)*

# Solving the problem of sexual abuse (2)

**The Sermon on the Mount says (Mt 7:1):**

*“Stop judging”*

**A Council document states:**

*“God forbids us to make judgments about the internal guilt of anyone.” (GS 28)*

Unfortunately, there is still no doctrine of faith in the Church about the destructive and transgressive behavior of people!

Suggestion: <https://www.hanglberger-manfred.de/en-evil.htm>

Since sexual abuse in the Catholic Church (as well as in the Protestant Church!) is caused among other things by authoritarian structures, these must be investigated and changed in the spirit of Jesus - the same is necessary for the abuse of power: [>>>](#)

Since these cannot be changed everywhere, as the structures of some sports associations show, additional precautions must be taken, such as those already ordered and applied by some dioceses.

**However, these alone are not enough!** It is essential to investigate the psychological causes of sexual abuse and to take precautions!