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THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION OF CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY

Abstract

This article suggests that different definitions of sociology follow from the different interpretations of its essence. The article points out also that a common flaw of many definitions of sociology is that they omit the *intention and purpose* of sociological science. Thereby, definitions of sociology by R. Kocharyan and A. Jijyan are presented, which explicitly mention the intentions and purposes of sociology. On the above basis, a preliminary definition of Christian sociology is suggested. Aimed at further elaboration of the subject, the authors consider the position of the Christian church regarding capitalism and socialism, the problem of free will, and certain aspects of Christian socialism related to the emergence of the social state in developed countries. This brings to a new understanding of the highest goal of the Christian religion – the salvation of the human soul – in the realities of the modern world. Accordingly, a definition of Christian sociology is presented with a detailed expression of its intention and purpose.

Keywords: definitions of sociology, preliminary definition of Christian sociology, Christian church and socialism.

Introduction

By the start of the 20th-century, sociology was introduced in hundreds of US university curricula (Bernard, 1909). Nevertheless, to this day, as true philosophical science, sociology remains divided into many different schools. Since an understanding of issues under investigation gets its concise formulation in scientific definitions, this multi-faceted structure of modern sociology is unavoidably accompanied by an unrestricted number of explicit and implicit definitions of sociology. This circumstance hampers finding acceptable solutions to quite a number of severe, sociological severe problems. Consider just a few of them:

- Are there objective laws of social-economic development?
- What is the role of the charismatic person in modern societal developments?
- Could be there an optimal social-political mo-

del for all nations and countries?

- Are social-political ideas omnipotent, or the social-economic factors are equally important?
- In the modern age of a social state, could sociology be transformed into an instrument of social security?
- Could be there a harmonic society if people lack the feeling of brotherly mutual care?

Christianity is directly related to the problems of social life, primarily with its concern for the fate of the disadvantaged, orphans and widows. The revolutionary social innovation in the way of social life is also widely known: some early Christians, including the apostles, began to live in communist communities. We will dwell on the significance of this social phenomenon below.

It would seem that the magnificent achievement of twentieth-century social progress – the general recognition of *the concept of the social*

state and its practical formation in many developed countries of the world - should have facilitated an explicit definition of Christian sociology. However, it turns out that there are several serious difficulties associated with the highest goal of the Christian religion - the salvation of the human soul. In particular, this imposes responsibility on the world Christian community to develop an adequate social strategy in a modern, dynamically transforming society. The salvation strategy must be based on a modern understanding and interpretation of the intentions of Jesus Christ regarding the earthly life of people.

Historically, a popular concept was “that sociology cannot develop a view of society which is acceptable to the Christian. Instead, the Christian must mould the field in terms of his own views” (Heddendorf, 1962, p. 1). The concept of *Christian sociology* is usually used intuitively as a sociological theory closely related to the Christian faith. We meet an explicit definition only by George W. Barger (1982): “Christian Sociology is the systematic study of the social order that, in its theory, methodology and reporting is explicitly related to the framework of understanding that is identifiably Christian”. This definition does not seem to us acceptable since the final clause “identifiably Christian” is equivalent to “being Christian”, which brings the definition too close to tautology.

In general, since humans are not given reliable knowledge of the divine intention, and as well humans are not given to know the hidden evil behind the destructive forces of modern time, then Christians need:

- Live in firm faith in Jesus Christ, pray and ask for mercy and salvation of the soul,
- Strive for a virtuous personal life,
- Actively participate in the good Christian ordering of the life of society.

Definitions of Sociology

The founder of the theory of definition, Aristotle, pointed out that the correct way of defini-

tion is when we first point out the *genus* of the notion and then attach to it *characteristica specifica*. Despite the simplicity of the Aristotelian formula, scientists often suggest different definitions for the same notion. This partial ambiguity is caused by scientists’ different interpretations of the essence of the concept to be defined.

Definitions of sociology usually mention for the *genus* the concept *science*. On some occasions, *social science* is used as the genus. The founder of sociology Auguste Comte wrote: “Sociology is a scientific study of society”. Though this sentence is true, nowadays, it could not be considered a correct definition since we know a number of sciences belonging to the scientific study of society. Here we would like to fix that phrases “social science”, “science of society”, “social life”, and “the scientific study of society” are equivalent expressions for the *genus proxima* of sociology.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857) is widely accepted as the founder of sociological science though he formulated only the tusk of the new science and did not suggest either its principles or a completed theoretical system. His efforts in developing the system of theoretical sociology brought to the formulation of the Law of three stages of progress of Humanity (Comte, 1853). Eventually, the goal of creating sociology as a type of a new religion was proclaimed. In M. Bourdeau’s words (2021), “Positivism transformed science into philosophy; *complete* positivism now transforms philosophy into religion”.

As mentioned above, many definitions comprise a diverse set of characteristic features for sociology apparently influenced by the author’s concept of social phenomena. J. S. Mill wrote in 1843, at the dawn of the science of sociology: “Next after the science of individual man comes the science of man in society – of the actions of collective masses of mankind, and the various phenomena which constitute social life” (as cited in Little, 2009). For J. S. Mill, the essential feature of social phenomena was the collective masses’ actions.

For Herbert Spencer, sociology was a study of society considered a living super-complex organism undergoing evolutionary change. The social Darwinist approach is apparent here.

The founders of Marxism – Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), did not use either the term *sociology* or its soviet time equivalent *historical materialism*. Nevertheless, it is a purely Marxist principle that objective laws of the historical process would crush the capitalist world of exploitation of working classes and build the happiest future society – communism where each citizen will enjoy life according to his demands. The driving forces of societal progress have been declared, using modern terminology, technological innovations. In the 21st century, hardly ever one could reject the dominant role of technological innovations. One should keep in mind that technological innovation could not be produced utilizing production by technology as such. The thought and talent of engineers and designers produce innovations and bring to life technological revolutions. “The moving force of ideas conceals the basis producing it”, mentions Erich Hahn (Hahn, 1967).

Karl Marx rejected the social teaching of August Comte and did not use the term *sociology*. However, some authors regard Marx as the “true father” of sociology. If asked for a definition of sociology, K. Marx could suggest a formula: sociology is the science of *class struggle and proletarian revolution*. Just these two concepts are the cornerstones of the *Marxist theory*.

The following formulation could summarize this short discussion. Marxist sociology is scientific teaching presuming the action of objective laws of social progress, based on the principle of the adequacy of economic relations to the level of development of means of production and stating that the moving force of social progress is the class struggle between the owners of means of production and the exploited workers.

All other names of the history of sociology

became prominent figures due to a new feature of this theoretical science important for building the holistic picture of society. Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) founded in 1895 the first French *department of sociology* and then established the journal *L'Année Sociologique*.

The prominent sociologist Emile Durkheim insisted: sociology is the study of *social facts* through social *institutions*. A pretty natural interpretation since Durkheim developed the notion of *social facts* to serve as an empiric basis for sociology.

Max Weber (1864-1920) emphasized the task of developing *understanding sociology* oriented to revealing the subjective meaning and purpose that individuals attach to their actions.

For Max Weber, sociology was “the science whose object is to interpret the meaning of *social action* and thereby give a *causal explanation* of how the action proceeds and the *effects which it produces*”. Since to interpret the meaning of *social action*, one should *understand* it. Thus we reach quite close to Weber’s idea of *interpretative sociology*.

Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) declared the goal of building a universal system of sociology but instead suggested a new strand – *action theory*. Karl Popper (1902-1994) developed a conception of liberal democratic society (open society) that later became the theoretical basis of the cold war against Soviet totalitarian ideology (Popper, 1945). In the 1960s, Pitirim Sorokin and Jan Tinbergen suggested the idea of “mutual convergence” of capitalist and socialist systems that later got a persuasive wording – using the best features of socialist countries (like economy planning) in capitalism and, respectively, free-market efficiency in socialism (Sorokin, 1960; Tinbergen, 1961). Nevertheless, even by the start of this century, the capitalism-socialism convergence appeared only partial (Rosefelde, 2019). The US President Lyndon Johnson has never been interested in sociological science and was not helped by a sociologist developing his concept of *Great*

Society and becoming the first state leader in the history of humankind who has won the war against poverty (Rector & Sheffield, 2014).

In general, contemporary authors feel quite free in formulating their definitions of sociology. Here are some examples:

- *Sociology is the discipline that attempts to understand the forces outside us that shape our lives, interests, and personalities* (Eitzen & Zinn, 2003, p. 4).
- *Sociology is a systematic approach to thinking about, studying, and understanding society, human social behaviour, and social groups* (Farley, 2003, p. 2).
- *Sociology is the scientific study of society and human behaviour* (Henslin, 2003, p. 4).

Franz Adler (1947) has demonstrated that operational definitions hamper scientific advances by their inadequacy in dealing with new situations, with situations not measurable as yet, with improvements of measurement, and with the choice among various available measurements, and by their inaccessibility to constructive criticism. The recent article by Richard Swedberg (2019) discusses the use of definitions in sociology but unfortunately stops short considering definitions of sociology itself. In general, he recommends using stipulative definitions as opposed to lexical and ostensive definitions. However, his main advice (“The definition of a concept used in a sociological analysis has to be sociological in nature, and the concept cannot have the same meaning as it has in everyday language”) sounds rather mild and vague.

A Common Flaw in Definitions of Sociology

Social sciences have several notable features of principle importance. First, human society is changing and developing rapidly. The truth of the past society hardly could be actual for tomorrow. Secondly, change and development in societies are strongly influenced by new ideas. Marxists and likewise positivists were eager to scien-

tifically establish the objective laws of social statics and use them for predictions of social dynamics. Nevertheless, the above two features of social life would never permit Marxists either positivists to reveal the objective laws of functioning of social-economic life and make reasonable conclusions about coming time to the benefit of the proletariat or entire humanity.

Given the specifics of the social sciences, it must be recognized that the main burden in ensuring social progress lies with the creative thought of sociologists. Information technology has reached such a level of development in modern society that a multifaceted study of the most influential factors in social life can be ensured with outstanding reliability in an acceptable time frame. Considering these reliable empiric data of conducted sociological studies, sociologists have to suggest scientific generalizations and, if possible, establish empiric laws. However, sociologists’ heavy and responsible burden is that of using the established generalizations and empiric laws to develop the necessary and preferred recommendations for reforming the social order and achieving the desired goals.

Young Marx stated in “Theses on Ludwig Feuerbach”: previous philosophers wanted to interpret the world, but what really mattered was not trying to interpret the world, but trying to change it. Of course, a good and useful reform should be based on a detailed study and proper understanding of events and tendencies of social life. Nevertheless, the most decisive and creative point is to develop an effective way of reform that would achieve the desired goal of significant material and/or moral-spiritual improvement of society in general and of each individual.

So we see the main flaw of definitions of sociology by many prominent sociologists in that they appear to omit or not to put sufficient emphasis on *the goal of their study and the crucial importance of realizing, bringing to life these goals*. The above said becomes more and more critical in our time when even a delay in proper reforms may have irreplaceable consequences.

Romik Kocharyan's and Anahit Jijyan's
Definitions of Sociology

Romik Kocharyan (2016, pp. 520-557), in his fundamental study of the philosophical-scientific concept of the Father of Armenian History Movses Khorenats'i, has suggested a number of definitions of historical science following the concept of "Definitions of philosophy" by great Armenian 5th-century philosopher David the Invincible (Kocharyan, 2018, pp. 94-108). As presented above, the Aristotelian universal form of definition required to point out the *genus* of the subject and then explicitly formulate its *characteristica specifica*. David the Invincible suggested that to get a *complete* definition of philosophy or any science, and one should include into *characteristica specifica* the subject and fulfilment of achievement. Following David the Invincible's concept, Romik Kocharyan formulated several definitions of history that explicitly included the purpose (intention) of history and its realization (Kocharyan, 2016, pp. 520-557).

Romik Kocharyan and Anahit Jijyan have recently suggested in two joint papers (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2018, 2020) a number of definitions of sociology following these same approaches of David the Invincible "Definitions of philosophy" requiring to include into *characteristica specifica* the couple properties – subject and the fulfilment also (David the Invincible, 1983). Studying the philosophical hermeneutics tradition – the conceptions of Fr. Schleiermacher's "Universal hermeneutics" (1998) W. Dilthey's "Hermeneutics as the universal methodology of the human sciences" (1996), M. Heidegger's "Hermeneutical Phenomenology" (1962), H.-G. Gadamer's "Philosophical Hermeneutics" (2006) and P. Ricoeur's "Phenomenological hermeneutics of text" (1981) – Romik Kocharyan has suggested his conception of "Hermeneutics of Wisdom". By application of R. Kocharyan's (2014, pp. 18-21; 2016, pp. 161-186) conception of "*Hermeneutics of Wisdom*" and the results of his investigation - *twelve twin categories of wisdom in the histori-*

cal-scientific conception of Movses Khorenatsi's (Kocharyan, 2016, pp. 520-557, 2019, pp. 74-89), following David the Invincible's conception, they formulated a number of definitions of "Sociology of Wisdom" (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2009, 2018, 2020) that explicitly include the paired properties of sociology - subject and the fulfilment also. This idea, with a new substantiation and explication of the "social" (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2015, pp. 108-119), gets its representation with a short formula and grows with a comparative discussion with the definitions of sociologists. And we think that following them is preferable for elaborating further the definition of Christian sociology.

Let us consider the following definitions of sociology proposed by R. Kocharyan and A. Jijyan.

Definition 1. *Sociology is a science explicating the truth of the social and spiritual-civilizational significant human interactions and inter-impacts, supporting the necessary and preferable spirit-growing and life-giving good-orderness* (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2020, p. 170).

Definition 2. *Sociology is a science of theoretical and practical wisdom, revealing and enhancing the truth of human life and the possibilities for improvement towards spiritual-civilizational good-orderness* (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2020, pp. 159, 176).

Definition 3. *Sociology is a science of theoretical and practical wisdom that reveals the truth of the decline and rise of the virtues of human life, and therefore the possibilities of improving the human self, life and culture* (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2020, pp. 176, 177).

Definition 4. *Sociology is science revealing the possibilities of study-lover and researcher, creator and career human life-activity to the spir-*

itual-civilizational good-orderness (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2020, p. 167).

Definition 5. *Sociology is a science, by cognition of the imperfections and possibilities perfections of the human civilizational multifaceted life, and by supportive influence leading to the good-orderliness* (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2020, p. 170).

Definition 6. *Sociology is a science explicating and perfectionally realizing the meaning and advice of wisdom, that reveal the truth of the spiritual-civilizational significant events as such, forming the human identity, creative, educational and career human activity to the wisdom, virtue and good orderness* (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2020, pp. 174, 176).

Definition 7. *Sociology is a science that understands and interprets the spirituality and care of the temporal being of the human civilizational identity, life and culture to wisdom, virtue and good-orderliness* (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2020, pp. 171, 172).

Definition 8. *Sociology is a science with a supportive calling and fulfillment of the improvement of humankind's multifaceted coexistence in the near present and foreseeable future* (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2020, p. 172).

Definition 9. *Sociology is the science of theoretical and practical wisdom, understanding and interpreting the human spiritual-civilizational identity, life and culture in their intention, internal improvement and fulfillment to wisdom and virtue and good orderliness* (Kocharyan & Jijyan, 2020, pp. 172, 176).

We hope these definitions, like the above-

presented definitions of sociology, will be helpful in the study of different approaches and cross-sections of modern social life.

A Preliminary Definition of Christian Sociology

The above discussions of sociology allow us to return to the problem of the definition of Christian sociology. The shortest could be considered the following definition:

“Christian sociology is the science of sociology that follows Jesus Christ’s social teaching”.

Explicating its content, we come to a *preliminary definition of Christian sociology*:

Christian sociology is a social science about the necessary and preferred form of good Christian ordering of society as a whole and of the way of life of individuals to save human souls and activate all resources to achieve this goal.

Since Christian sociology did not yet gain the status of sociological science, we took as its genus *proxima* the notion of *social science*. As Christian authors, we are sure that the highest goal of all Christian teachings and theories is and should be the sacred goal of saving human souls. Taking into account the complex social problems arising in our time all over the world, we find it useful to include in the *characteristica spesifica* of the definition of Christian sociology the call for activating all resources to achieve the Christian goals.

Further elaboration of the concept of Christian sociology requires formulating the main difficulties and problems explicitly to be faced on this road.

Problems with the Realization of Christian Social Reform of Social Order

There are wonderful words in New Testament – “man cannot live by bread alone”. Unfortunately, the social “progress” of human society has reached a point when there are millions of hungry children all over the world. For true

Christians, this kind of world order is utterly unjust. The general principle of social justice is naturally transformed into the popular idea of “economic justice” and “social welfare”. How can a worker think up and concentrate on self-improvement if he is jobless and his children cry from hunger? A human should not live by bread alone. But he must have bread. So to save human souls, *Christian sociology must call people to fight hunger, to fight poverty, to fight inequality.*

Which are the factors causing inequality in capitalist society? The basic cause is the immense wealth of the rich. In the economy, wealth inevitably brings massive exploitation of workers by wealthy owners. Eventually, there comes capitalism with crazy competition for making as much money as one can. So to save human souls, *Christian sociology must call people to fight immense wealth, fight exploitation of workers, and fight crazy competition for making money.*

Are these goals compatible with the social philosophy of the Christian Church? Starting from the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* Catholic church denounced the exploitation of workers and the capitalist crazy rush for more and more money and wealth (Leo XIII, 1891).

The encyclical of the Pope is a directive doctrine document binding on all Catholics. The encyclicals of the head of the Catholic Church express the official position of the Vatican on all the most critical issues of social philosophy and policy. The beginning of the formation of the Catholic socio-philosophical doctrine is just the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII “*Rerum Novarum*” (1891), dedicated to the position of the working class in capitalist society at the turn of the 19th century.

The words of Leo XIII to the capitalists are especially instructive. “*Rerum Novarum*” called employers “not to regard the workers as their serfs, but to respect their human dignity”. Evaluating workers solely as a source of profit is “shameful and inhumane”. Pope Leo XIII (1891) cautioned: “To deprive a worker of a portion of the reward due to him is a great crime, appealing

to Heaven for revenge”.

To have a complete picture of the social philosophy of Catholic Christianity, let us present here the harsh criticism by Pope Pius XI of fierce individualistic competition in capitalist society. Human society cannot be based on the opposition of classes; the fierce competition could deform the correct order of economic life. “For from it, as from a poisoned source, all the errors of the individualistic economic doctrine arose and spread” (Pius XI, 1931).

And vice versa, the head of the Catholic Church is ready to regard *the social democratic model of socialism*, which has already abandoned the class struggle, as the first stage in creating the ideal social model of the society: “For if the class struggle refrains from hostility and mutual hatred, it gradually turns into an honest discussion of the differences based on the pursuit of justice, and this is the blessed social world that we all strive for” (Pius XI, 1931).

The most radical critique of capitalist ideology has come from Pope Francis, who claimed that capitalism is “Terrorism against all of Humanity”. Moreover, he has declared that “it is the communists who think like Christians. Christ spoke of a society where the poor, the weak and the marginalized have the right to decide”.

Pope Francis’ reference to the words of Christ is entirely correct. It is well known that Jesus Christ took to his heart the fate of poor people: “Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied” (King James Bible, 2017, Luke 6:20, 21). Jesus Christ’s opinion about rich people is although well known: “Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God” (King James Bible, 2017, Matt 19:24). So many people concluded that Jesus Christ would hate capitalists and capitalism and would like socialism. This view is supported by the evidence of the bible that first Christians, including apostles, had organized small communist communes and lived in them happily. No doubt,

the Apostles were the most trustworthy source of Jesus Christ's views regarding the Christian ideal of social life. Of course, Jesus Christ preached about the salvation of souls of individuals, but he was pretty aware of problems of social life.

The Socialist Trend in Western Europe and Formation of "Christian Socialism"

The concept of "Christian socialism" has already been established in sociological literature, mainly understood as European socialism with Christian morality. A century ago, "Christian socialism" would indeed be regarded as a *utopia*. However, this *utopia* began to take on actual shape in Western Europe after World War II. Thanks to the selfless fight against fascism, the Communist Soviet Union acquired the image of an anti-fascist country. This allowed in the period of the first post-war years, before the establishment of the Cold War atmosphere, to manage to forget the Stalinist dictatorship and soften the confrontation with communist ideology.

After all, not every socialist country was obliged to have its own dictator. On the other hand, it was impossible to hide or not notice the successes of the Soviet Union in education, the elimination of mass illiteracy and the organization of health protection of all the population. After World War II's military devastation, Western Europe had to think about both economic reorganization and social and political reforms. The general trend of sympathy for reformist socialism in post-war European society contributed to the emergence of socialist governments in several countries. Even during the height of the Cold War, the "socialist" Scandinavian countries were seen as satisfying the requirements of "free society".

Social State as the Ideal of Social Security for the Poor

Despite the "socialist" orientation of a significant part of the European electorate, the fo-

cus of socialist parties was on protecting the interests of workers, with little attention to the poor and homeless. Therefore, it will remain a mystery for centuries what has prompted the 36th USA President Lyndon Johnson to set the goal of eradicating poverty. In 1964, as part of the program *Great Society*, President Johnson announced the "uncompromising war on poverty in America". Actively financing social programs aimed at helping the poor, his government increased the funding of social programs from \$ 6 billion in 1964 to \$ 24.5 billion in 1974.

President Johnson paid particular attention to the education of the young generation. He said: "Our main weapon for more effective attacks is better schools, better health, better homes, better education, better work – this is an opportunity to help more Americans, especially young Americans, flee from dirt, poverty and unemployment" (Johnson, 1964). Over the years of President Johnson's reign, the economy has proliferated, and poverty has almost halved. Already in 1967, he proudly reported: "We have improved the education of 7 million deprived children and this year alone we have enabled almost 1 million students to go to college. We have brought medical care to older people who were unable to afford it. ... We have helped more than a thousand local communities to attack poverty in the neighbourhoods of the poor" (Johnson, 1967).

In the 70s, the United States basically eradicated poverty in the country. No one could even conceive of such a radical victory over poverty. Praise and honour to the eminent statesman, President Lyndon Johnson. The main subject of social care of the Christian church, the poor and homeless people, were pulled out of poverty. They gained access to healthcare and spiritual development through free medical care and free secondary education.

There remained only one severe and the almost incurable problem of capitalism – the constant growth of the property polarization of society. Due to the process of economic polarization, in a historically short time, the mass of

property will be transferred into the ownership of a handful of the super-rich. In other words, the process of property polarization engenders the inevitable social impoverishment of the mass of the population.

Property polarization, even in socially oriented capitalist countries, is multiplying. In 2018, the three men at the top of the Forbes magazine list - Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett - held combined fortunes worth more than the total wealth of half of the USA population (Billionaire Bonanza Inherited wealth dynasties in the 21st century U.S., 2018). It seems justified to call such an insane scale of property polarization “zeroing the poor population”.

Mankind Has not Stood the Test of “Free Will”

With a simplified interpretation, the contradiction between the principle of free will and divine purpose is seen clearly. But understanding the subtleties of the problem reveals many points that overcome the apparent contradiction. Christian theologians have found a wise formulation: “To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. When therefore he establishes his eternal plan of “predestination”, he includes in it each person’s free response to his grace” (Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church, 1992, section 600).

The theologians of Christianity also point out the importance of recalling a person and his willingness to recognize divine grace. Making his free decision, a person nevertheless listens to the promptings of God’s word. Even with free will, a person remains in touch with his creator: “When God touches man’s heart through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the man himself is not inactive while receiving that inspiration, since he could reject it; and yet, without God’s grace, he cannot by his own free will move himself toward justice in God’s sight”.

Divine thoughts are inaccessible to the humanmind, and difficulties may arise in interpret-

ing the principle of free will just for this reason. Nevertheless, these are only difficulties, and this is not a radical problem. The trouble is that man could not stand the test of free will. Since the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, people have been mired in sin, immorality and debauchery. Money and sex have become the main values in the most developed, most socially oriented countries of the West. What yesterday was a deadly sin is presented today as a norm of behaviour and style of life. Moreover, what will happen tomorrow, scary to think.

The Decline of Moral in Welfare State

J. A. Dorn pointed out at the end of the 20th century that building a welfare state one does not eliminate signs of moral decay like the breakup of families, the amorality of public education, and the eruption of criminal activity. He also underlined the decline in civility, the lack of integrity in both public and private life, and the growth of litigation as the chief way to settle disputes in modern society (Dorn, 1996).

Professor Saul Levine (2017) emphasized 20 years later that words and actions common to modern society “convey anger, rudeness, hate, greed, lying, selfishness, intolerance and callousness... They have become commonplace on television, in social media and in everyday life. These new “moral standards” serve as models of behaviour for our impressionable children and youth”.

As the Harvey Weinstein case showed, it was considered acceptable to go to the screen through the bed, even for Hollywood stars. You can imagine what the position of ordinary artists was and what scale the degree of the moral decline of producers and film directors in undeveloped countries could be assumed. *Pew research centre* published the results of its survey under the title “Technology Triumphs, Morality Falters”. Researchers concluded that “the good life today is being tarnished by moral decay” (*Technology*

triumphs, morality falters, 1999).

The greatest sin of modern man is indifference to the needs and worries of other people. The indifference to one's neighbour is a complete absence of Christian brotherly love and care. A soul, depriving itself of Christian love, cannot rely on God's mercy and salvation.

Everything else - shelter, food, medical care, secondary education, personal security, parental benefit, disability benefits, social pensions - all these material aspects of life today can be provided by the welfare state. However, brotherly care and love can be provided only by a true Christian. We must do this, cultivating a love for our neighbour, and thus earn mercy and salvation.

Conclusion

In modern society, an understanding of the ways to create a socially-oriented state has been achieved. This circumstance has simplified the task of the Christian church as long as the responsibility for the social security of the poor and disadvantaged people is in the management of the social state. On the other hand, it brings a significant rise of the responsibility of Christian church and Christian sociology before the future of humanity, since now much depends on how the right path will be chosen in the practical achievement of the goal of realizing the ideal of Jesus Christ about brotherly love, mutual caring attention and concern of all humankind.

The analysis carried on in this paper allows us to suggest an updated definition of Christian sociology by emphasizing that for our days, the main task of Christian sociology is finding the practical way of implementing the Christian style of life into modern society. Above we have suggested a preliminary definition of Christian sociology:

Christian sociology is a social science about the necessary and preferred form of good Christian ordering of society as a whole and of the

way of life of individuals to save human souls and activate all resources to achieve this goal.

Now we can enrich this definition by explicitly expressing the practical side of the subject:

Christian sociology is a social science about the necessary and preferred form of good Christian ordering of society as a whole and of the way of life of individuals to save human souls and activate all the forces and resources to achieve the intended goal and *putting emphasis on the practical achievement of the goal of translating into life the ideal of Jesus Christ about brotherly love and the mutual care all over the human society*.

This "updated" definition could be given a shorter formulation by substituting the phrase "achievement of the goal of translating into life the ideal of Jesus Christ about brotherly love and the mutual care all over the human society" by an equivalent shorter phrase "implementation of Christian brotherly love into everyday human life". Thus we come to a shorter definition:

Christian sociology is a social science about the necessary and preferred form of good Christian ordering of society as a whole and of the way of life of individuals with the aim of saving human souls by activating all the forces and resources to achieve the intended goal and by emphasizing the *practical implementation of Christian brotherly love into everyday human life*.

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