

BOOK REVIEWS

Matthias HARTMANN, Vasile STANCIU (eds.), *Das Leben als Geschenk Gottes. Christliche Verantwortung im Angesicht des Todes*, Seria: Biblioteca teologică germano-română, Editura Schiller Verlag, Bonn-Sibiu, 2018, 216 pp.

Under this title, the 4th Theological Consultation took place at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca: *Viața ca dar al lui Dumnezeu. Reaponsabilitatea creștină în perspectiva morții* (*Life as a Gift from God. Christian Responsibility in the Perspective of Death*), in bilingual edition: German and Romanian, as evidenced by the volume with the title above. It is a collaboration in the field of social assistance between the Deaconry Institute of Neuendettelsau - Germany and the philanthropic activity of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

As the editors of this volume mention, the purpose of the Theological Consultation in Cluj-Napoca was “to elaborate fundamental reflections and ethical support, which should focus on this fundamental character of life gift, in a social and economic environment that is oriented to the profit and utility of all things and even of life itself above all. Knowing that all participating Churches and the Deaconry Institute face these challenges, the participating theologians sought the rules for a responsible approach and mode of action, in the perspective of the death horizon starting from the interpretation of the Holy Scripture and on the basis of their own theological tradition. Thus, it was concluded that it is the duty of Christians in this world to provide assistance and protect life even at this time” (p. 12).

Thus, beyond the theological dialogue, existing between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Church in Germany, since 1979, there is another kind of dialogue between these Churches, namely, in the field of social assistance or Christian philanthropy.

The 4th Theological Consultation in Cluj was preceded by three others, starting in 2008, when the series of these Consultations began.

Therefore, the first Theological Consultation between representatives of the two Churches took place in Neuendettelsau (Germany), with the theme: “Every Deaconry Starts from the Altar”. The Social Activity of the Evangelical Church in Germany and of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

The second theological consultation with the theme: The Holy Spirit - our Sanctification, took place at the Brâncoveanu monastery from Sâmbăta de Sus (Romania), in 2011.

The Third Theological Consultation took place in 2013 in Neuendettelsau and focused on: Understanding Man as the Image of God.

The Deaconry Institute in Neuendettelsau is one of the most representative philanthropic establishments in Germany, covering over 200 social establishments with over 7,800 employees. Within the competence of the Deaconry of Neuendettelsau there are 40 schools and services for the elderly in as many establishments in Germany and Poland. The Deaconry Institute in Neuendettelsau has several clinics in Ansbach, Neuendettelsau, Nuremberg, and Schwabach, providing care to more than 2,000 people. More than 1,000 children attend kindergartens and afternoon schools in the Nuremberg metropolitan area.

The structure of this paper mirrors the Greetings of the hosts and guests, after which the conferences held by theologians of the two Churches are integrated.

Thus, Rev. Prof. Dr. Christian Strecker presented the topic: The Treasure in Clay Pots. About the Dialectic of Death and Life in the Theology of St. Paul.

Rev. Prof. Dr. Ioan Chirilă held the conference: Heroes, Martyrs and Confessors: the Prayer of the Liturgy to Them - Argument of the Universality and Koinonicity of the Holy Liturgy.

Rev. Dr. Peter Munzert presented the conference: When Life is Unbearable and Death Impossible. Spiritual Assistance in a Borderline Situation.

Rev. Dr. Ștefan Iloaie focused on the topic: Euthanasia - “Lost Death” - Between the Freedom to Die and the Compulsion to Live.

Rev. Dr. Friederich Heckmann focused on the issue of Christian ethics in the conference entitled: Christian Ethics and the Responsibility of Churches to the Process of Death in a Secular and Postmodern Society.

Finally, Prof. Dr. Sebastian Moldovan focused on the meaning of the phrase: “Death Voluntarily”. The Significance of a Christian Ideal for the Contemporary Problem of Voluntary Cessation of Life.

The editors of this volume placed a relevant appendix, which takes into account the recommendations made by the Conference of Orthodox Bishops of Germany, together with the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD), to the members of the two Churches, in the context of this paper and placed under the generic: “So as not to grieve...” In this Document there are several guidelines, which the leaders of the two Churches have made for the Church ministers and for their faithful... Some of these should be mentioned: accompanying the sick to death and their relatives, prayer for the dying patient, forms of burial, death in exceptional situations, etc.

All these theological contributions have highlighted the fundamental coordinates of understanding life from a Christian point of view, in order to later capture the way in which death is understood on the horizon of the gift of life. The book is worth reading, because it brings many explanations for contemporary man, faced with easier or heavier suffering, and, finally, with the reality of death.

The merit of this paper is also that it highlighted that in addition to inter-Christian theological dialogue, the cooperation in practical terms is of great practical importance, ie in terms of serving one’s fellow man, according to the Model of Jesus Christ, Who came in the world, to serve and save the world.

Rev. Prof. Dr. Ioan TULCAN

**Andreas ANDREOPOULOS and Demetruos HARPER (eds.),
Christos Yannaras, Philosophy, Theology, Culture,
Routledge Publisher, England, 2020, 222 pp.**

The volume *Christos Yannaras, Philosophy, Theology, Culture*, edited by Andreas Andreopoulos and Demetruos Harper represents a major contribution to the knowledge of the thought and work of Christos Yannaras, one of the most significant orthodox theologians of the contemporary world. This work is a natural concretization of the growing interest in the renewal of theological thinking proposed by Yannaras, a renewal that proposes both the assertion of a cultural identity characteristic of Eastern theology and the openness to initiate a dialogue with modern Western