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# The Christianisation of Philanthropy in Ioannes Chrysostomos

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### Abstract

This study presents the manner in which St. John Chrysostom turned the pagan concept of *euergesia* into a Christian virtue. In paganism *euergetes* bestowed their favours on clients from the upper classes in order to maintain their reputation and to capitalize political approval. St. John transfers the classical thought patterns into a transcendent and eschatological framework. Charity thus becomes a means to achieving true respect, freedom from burdensome sins and ultimately perfection. Chrysostom is convinced that human beings receive the power of creation from God in order to make more out of the earth than just a materially conceivable world, namely heaven on earth. For the great Church Father, the place where such a metamorphosis is already happening is paradigmatically the Church.

### Keywords

St. John Chrysostom, *euergesia*, pagan, Christian

## I. Introduction

When talking about the significance of theology for our contemporary society and culture, it is helpful for the church historian and patristician to take a look at late antiquity. At a time when Christianity was striving to

penetrate and shape society ever more deeply, how did people manage to convey its significance for it?

As is well known, Christianity has been able to make its social relevance clear, especially in the area of charity. Christians, their congregations and community leaders have not only offered religious alternatives to ancient religiosity. Rather, out of their religious convictions, they have reacted to social needs and tried to remedy them. In doing so, they embarked on paths that were completely new in ancient society. Of central importance here is the question of how they justified their charitable actions. If one examines this question more closely, one can see that theologians certainly took up ancient patterns of charitable action, but transformed them significantly. In the following, I would like to investigate just such a transformation using the example of the “apostle of charity” in late antiquity, the Antiochian theologian and Constantinopolitan bishop John, called Goldmouth. For this contribution, I will leave aside the question of the exact historical location of Chrysostom’s individual remarks and rather attempt to trace some central ideas of his thought. In principle, the former deacon’s accession to the episcopate has certainly modified his concept, but not fundamentally changed it. Important impulses for today’s debate on the role of the Church in society can still be gained from this concept. In the following, I will concentrate primarily on the question of how John took up the ancient idea of *euergetia* and transformed it into Christianity.

## II. Criticism of the classical *euergetai*

The *euergetes* classically came from the upper classes of Roman society. They bestowed their favours on clients from the upper classes in order to maintain their reputation and, if necessary, also their political approval. Bread and games were often promoted, but also buildings. Above all, however, clients were also supported by patrons through donations. Chrysostom is very clear about the latter. In his 61st homily on the Gospel of Matthew, he criticises the behaviour of the landowners, from whose circles the *euergetes* came, in particularly harsh terms<sup>1</sup>. In doing so,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 61, al. 62,3, PG 58,591s. On the homilies

he focuses above all on the fact that they constantly burden the needy with taxes. Some rich people even deliberately let grain and wine spoil in order to drive up prices on the market<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, Chrysostom asks the question of justice: “Can there be any more unjust people than the owners of land, who draw their wealth from the earth?”<sup>3</sup> Chrysostom assumes that wealth is not to be regarded as rightful property – rather, it had been stolen at some point by one of the ancestors<sup>4</sup>. Nevertheless, Chrysostom also makes more moderate statements. In his homilies to 1 Corinthians, he states that wealth actually belongs to God<sup>5</sup>, but that private property is not bad. It is only bad not to give it to the poor or to use it

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and their significance for the philanthropy question, cf. Peter BROWN, *The Body and Society. Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, New York, 1988, p. 309: “In one series of sermons on the Gospel of Saint Matthew, he touched on the issue of almsgiving on forty occasions, thirteen times on the state of the poor, thirty times on avarice, and twenty times on the abuse of wealth”.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in 1 Corinthians* 39,8, PG 61,344. Cf. also Rudolf BRÄNDLE, *Matth. 25,31-46 im Werk des Johannes Chrysostomos. Ein Beitrag zur Auslegungsgeschichte und zur Erforschung der Ethik der griechischen Kirche um die Wende vom 4. zum 5. Jahrhundert*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Biblischen Exegese 22, Tübingen 1979, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 61, al. 62,3, PG 58,591.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Homilies in 1 Timothy* 3:1,1, PG 62, 563: Εἰπέ γάρ μοι, πόθεν σὺ πλουτεῖς; [...] Παρὰ τοῦ πάππου, φησί, παρὰ τοῦ πατρός. Δυνήσῃ οὖν μέχρι πολλοῦ τοῦ γένους ἀνίων, οὕτω δεῖξαι τὴν κτήσιν δίκαιαν οὖσαν; Ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἂν ἔχοις, ἀλλ’ ἀνάγκη τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτῆς καὶ ῥίζαν ἀπὸ ἀδικίας εἶναι τινος. [...] ἔχεις μὲν γὰρ ἐκ τῆς ἀπαργῆς, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ἤρπασας σύ. Eng. “Tell me, where did you get your wealth? [...] From your grandfather, you will say, from your father. Can you perhaps, by tracing the preceding generations, show that these possessions are rightful? You cannot. The beginning and root of possession infallibly go back to an injustice. [...] You possess what was stolen, although it was not you who stole it”. Cf. Mihai VALICA, *Eine heutige Philanthropiewissenschaft und Diakoniethologie im Kontext der orthodoxen Lehre und der Tradition der Rumänisch-Orthodoxen Kirche*, Diss. Freiburg 2008, p. 153. The Stoic Seneca takes a markedly different view of wealth, insofar as he assumes that it can certainly be acquired legitimately and so be used for almsgiving, cf. SENECA, *De beata vita* u.a., 23,4-24,3 (ed. Manfred ROSENBACH, L. Annaeus SENECA, *De vita beata*, Darmstadt 1993, pp. 58-60). According to J. LÉCUYER, “Saint Jean Chrysostome et l’ordre du diaconat”, in: *Mélanges liturgiques offerts au R.P. Dom Bernard Botte OSB*, Louvain, 1972, S. 295-310, 302, the homily on the Epistle to Timothy was written in Antioch.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 66 al 67,4 PG 58,631, where Chrysostom assumes that the rich are only stewards of the gifts God bestows upon them.

badly<sup>6</sup>. Chrysostom accordingly distinguishes between the rich and the unmerciful (ἀνελεήμονες). Participation in the affliction of the poor is the highest honour (τιμή) for the benevolent supporters<sup>7</sup>. Already with such statements the Church Father transformed classical ideas. The rich do not receive honour by supporting their own class, but especially those who are in essential need of support.

### III. The benefits of supporting those in need

For Chrysostom, helping the needy is a merit with God. In any case, it is meritorious to give for the sake of God<sup>8</sup>. If one gives to the poor, however, one cannot immediately expect a return gift from them. In the sense of classical euergetism, it made no sense to give support to needy people who had involuntarily fallen into poverty. Nevertheless, the ethos of wealthy people in Chrysostom's environment continued to be shaped by the practice of *euergesia*. Similar to Cyprian of Carthage, Chrysostom also had to tie in with the ancient ethos on the one hand, but at the same time transpose it into a Christian system of values. In any case, ancient euergetism was still firmly anchored even among rich Christians<sup>9</sup>. Accordingly, the Church Father had to make it clear that even the involuntarily poor are able to make a return gift to their patrons, at least indirectly, and that their support is accordingly not a one-way street for gifts that ends in a deficit<sup>10</sup>. Rather – thus formulated with regard to Paul's support of the "saints" in Jerusalem – the support of the needy is useful (χρησίμως) and noble (συμφερόντως), indeed the expenditure (ἀνάλωμα) is ultimately a revenue (πρόσοδος)<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in 1 Corinthians* 13,5, PG 61,113.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *De Eleemosyna* 1, PG 51,262s. Chrysostom also argues with honour in view of Mt. 25 – it would be an honour to turn to the one who condescends so far, cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 79,1, PG 58,718.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Genesis* 48,3, PG 54, 48.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. A.[lain] L. NATALI, "Église et évergétisme à Antioche à la fin du ive siècle d'après Jean Chrysostome", in: *Studia Patristica* 17 (1982), pp. 1176-1184, 1179s.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Wendy MAYER, "John Chrysostom on Poverty", in: Pauline ALLEN u.a. (Hrsg.), *Preaching Poverty in Late Antiquity*, Arbeiten zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte 28, Leipzig 2009, 154.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *De Eleemosyna* 3, PG 51, 266.

In any case, John states sweepingly in his sermon on alms: “For God has appointed alms not only that the needy may be fed, but that the givers of money may also receive benefits, yea, for their sake more than for those”<sup>12</sup>.

Basically, Chrysostom is thinking primarily of the prayer that the poor can cultivate for their supporters. Let us explore this new orientation of *euergesia* in more detail.

#### IV. Christian versus pagan *euergesia*

The transformation process of classical euergetism becomes clear, among other things, in the 10th homily on 1 Cor<sup>13</sup>. There Chrysostom transfers terms that classically denote the benefactor (σωτήρ, εὐεργέτης, προστάτης) to the Christian *euergetes* who helps the poor<sup>14</sup>. In combination, these terms refer to a rather pagan colouring, which here, however, is probably deliberately adapted in a Christian way<sup>15</sup>. In any case, Chrysostom sets himself very critically apart from pagan euergetism<sup>16</sup>, by making it clear

<sup>12</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *De Eleemosyna* 4, PG 51, 266: Ἐπεὶ καὶ ὁ θεὸς τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην διὰ τοῦτο ὥρισεν, οὐχ ἵνα τρέφονται μόνον οἱ δεόμενοι, ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ οἱ παρέχοντες εὐεργετῶνται, καὶ διὰ τούτους μᾶλλον, ἢ δι' ἐκείνους. Cf. further CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 50,3s., PG 58, 508s. where Chrysostom, among other things, pointedly states: Οὐδε γὰρ σκευῶν χρεῖαν ἔχει χρυσῶν ὁ θεός, ἀλλὰ ψυχῶν χρυσῶν. Ysabel DE ANDIA, “Liturgie, Diaconie des Pauvres et Theologie du corps du Christ chez Saint Jean Chrysostome”, in: *Diakonia, diaconiae, diaconato. Semantica e storia nei padri della chiesa*, XXXVIII Incontro di studiosi dell' antichità cristiana, Roma, 7-9 maggio 2009, *Studia Ephemerides Augustinianum* 117, Rome 2010, pp. 245-260, 251, succinctly summarises Chrysostom's ideas in this homily: “Il y a un scandale à se nourrir du Corps du Christ, à la table eucharistique et à laisser les pauvres mourir de faim, à la porte de L'Église”.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in 1 Corinthians* 10,4, PG 61,88. According to this, the voice of the needy rescued from distress is worth much more than that of the heralds praising the philanthropy of the classical euergetes in the city.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. NATALI, “Église...” (cf. fn. 9), p. 1177. He points out that the terminology is, however, also quite attested in the New Testament, so the σωτήρ-title, but also the process of εὐεργεσία or the title of εὐεργέτης (cf. Act 4,9; 1 Tim 6,2; Act 10,38; Lk 22,25).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. NATALI, “Église...” (cf. fn. 9), who points out that according to In Act Apost 5,3 [correctly 5,4], PG 60,55, Chrysostom was well aware of the use of the terms usually by “pagans”.

<sup>16</sup> Critical of euergetism, even in Christian garb, Chrysostom also remarks that it is

that all boasting and all the pleasure associated with it are ultimately based only on robbery – the benefactors only reimburse what they have previously robbed. Chrysostom counters this with a Christian practice<sup>17</sup>. In his Homily 48 on the Gospel of Matthew, he accordingly calls on benefactors to make their house a church, not a theatre, by showing hospitality to needy, worthy guests. Thus, the devil would flee and Christ would enter with his choir of angels<sup>18</sup>. The service to the neighbour is thus understood – in reference to Mt 25 – as a service to God, as it were.

The euergetism practised by the bishop or Christians accordingly took on a new form, as it was characterised by a different programme. Chrysostom was no longer concerned with a “hollow glory” of liturgies and euergetism, but with the true glory of *caritas*<sup>19</sup>. A good reputation (εὐφημία) among thousands is assured to the supporter of the poor anyway<sup>20</sup>. In the face of such a programme, Chrysostom praised the care of 3,000 widows, the visiting of prisoners and of the sick in hospital, and the provision of clothes and food to strangers<sup>21</sup>. Alain Natali interprets institutions such as these as a “war machine”, as it were, against pagan euergetism, even if this was to be regarded as necessarily coexistent with Christian *caritas*<sup>22</sup>. The Church Father now particularly emphasises the reciprocity of the relationship of giving to the involuntarily poor – it is precisely these who are of greatest benefit to the world<sup>23</sup>. The benefactors are given even more

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practised solely out of a desire for fame, cf. *De inania gloria* 4-7.11 (SC 188,74-82; 188,86 Malingrey), and Jean-Marie SALAMITO, “Christianisierung und Neuordnung des gesellschaftlichen Lebens”, in: Charles PIÉTRI u.a. (Hrsg.), *Die Geschichte des Christentum 2: Das Entstehen der einen Christenheit*, Freiburg i.Br. u.a. 1996, pp. 768-814, 795.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Acts of the Apostles* 5,3s., PG 60,54s.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 48,7, PG 58,495.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. NATALI, “Église...” (cf. fn 9), 1179.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 22,9, PG 57,320.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. again CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 66,3, PG 58, 630. On widows in Chrysostom cf. Mayer, Chrysostom (cf. fn. 10), 90-92.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. NATALI, “Église...” (cf. fn. 9), 1179, esp. note 26. Cf. on the setting apart of pagan forms of euergetism, where friends and relatives are in view, Chrys. hom in Phil 1,5, PG 62,188.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in 2 Corinthians* 17,2, PG 61,519s. Chrysostom here speaks directly of ἀντίδοσις.

fame than in classical euergetism, because the *euergetes* can be praised as father and benefactor of all, including the poor. After all, it would be a matter of admiration here, not simply a demonstration of wealth. For this very reason, a merciful benefactor (and not a classical *euergetes*) is assigned attributes not only of pagan benefactors, but also of God, such as saviour (σωτήρα), benefactor (εὐεργέτην) and protector (προστάτην), and not such as miser, proud and glutton<sup>24</sup>.

Occasionally Chrysostom makes very disparaging remarks about the pagan forms of *euergesia* and *philotimia* respectively, contrasting them with the Christian benefits:

“Don’t you see how generous (φιλότιμοι) the spectators are in the theatre, how much they throw out for wooers? And you do not give even half as much, often not even the least! The devil demands that you give to all kinds of people, although he can only offer you hell for it; Christ merely demands that we give to the needy (τοῖς δεομένοις) and promises us the kingdom of heaven in return”<sup>25</sup>.

In the same sermon, he contrasts the politically motivated charities even more clearly with the Christianly motivated ones. There he states:

“Just take a look at the politically motivated charities (λειτουργίας τὰς πολιτικάς). How much expenditure a single family often has to take upon itself without further ado and does not even feel the expense. If every rich man were likewise to pay a tribute (λειτουργίαν) for the poor, he would in a little while usurp the kingdom of heaven”<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in 1 Corinthians* 10,4, PG 61,88.

<sup>25</sup> CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 66 al 67,3, PG 58,629; cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 66 al 67,4, PG 58,630.

<sup>26</sup> CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 66 al 67,4 PG 58,630.



## V. Alms lead to the forgiveness of sins

Similar to Cyprian of Carthage, Chrysostomos also argues – with recourse to the Old Testament<sup>27</sup> – with the effect of alms on the forgiveness of the sins of the *euergetes*<sup>28</sup>. Accordingly, almsgiving can be called an art (τέχνη), even the best of all arts, which produces extremely useful things and thus builds dwellings in heaven<sup>29</sup>. For the possibility of the forgiveness of sins, poverty in the world would be needed, which God has not eliminated even for that reason.

In general, he assumes a restitution that could already be a hundredfold here, following Mt 6,19f<sup>30</sup>. The prospect of the Last Judgement to motivate almsgiving plays a role for Chrysostom again and again<sup>31</sup>. Thus, he mentions the terrifying Last Day in many places<sup>32</sup>. The poor (πτωχοί) virtually form an army with which they wage a battle against the devil by bringing about God's favour (ἴλεω) through their prayers<sup>33</sup>. Almsgiving is thus ultimately

<sup>27</sup> For Cyprian and his use of the Old Testament cf. Andreas MÜLLER, "Do ut des – evangelische caritas bei Cyprian von Karthago", in: Jan LOHRENGEL/ Andreas MÜLLER (edd.), *Entdeckungen des Evangeliums. FS für Johannes Schilling*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 107, Göttingen, 2017, pp. 27-46, 34.36.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *De Eleemosyna* 3,1 PG 49,293; *Homily on mercy*, PG 60,750 (Spuria!). Here the sin-remitting power of alms is equated with the power of baptism. On the idea that alms blot out sins, cf. again, besides Sir 3,30 and Tob 12,9, also Herm. sim. II 5. On this Peregrine HORDEN, "Alms and the Man: Hospital Founders in Byzantium", in: P. HORDEN and A. PASTORE, *The Impact of Hospitals 300-2000*, Oxford u.a., 2007, pp. 59-76, 62s.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 52 al. 53,3, PG 58, 522.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. on the following CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in 1 Timothy* 11,2, PG 62,555.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. e.g. CHRYSOSTOM, *De Eleemosyna* 1, PG 51, 262; Hom. in epist ad Rom 18,7, PG 60,584; *Homilies in Matthew* 52 al. 53,4, PG 58, 524; *Homilies in Matthew* 66 al 67,4 PG 58,630. In any case, the view of the resurrection makes it clear that the present (τὰ παρόντα) like money and prosperity are nothing. In the same homily he even threatens the last judgement, cf. *Homilies in Matthew* 66 al 67,4, PG 58,631. Cf. further CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 79,1s., PG 58,717-720; *Homilies in Romans* 15,6, PG 60,547s.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 79,1, PG 58,717.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 66 al 67,4 PG 58,631. On the close connection between ethics and eschatology in Chrysostom, cf. Emmanuel CLAPSIS, *The Dignity of the Poor and Almsgiving in St. John Chrysostom*, in: GOTR 56 (2011), pp. 55-87, 60s.: "Thus, for Chrysostom the ethic of compassion and active care for the poor expressed in almsgiving is theologically grounded upon the eschatological vision of



based on the idea of acquiring true property, namely wealth in heaven, by using (χρήσις)<sup>34</sup> and not by possessing (κτῆσις) what are ultimately other people's goods (τῶν ἀλλοτρίων), which pass to others after death anyway. In this context, Chrysostom may once speak elsewhere about an "excellent business" (καλὴν πραγματείαν)<sup>35</sup>.

## VI. Almsgiving leads to *theopoiesis*

Chrysostom thus sees the virtuous man (ἐνάρετος) clearly in contrast to the one who stages his wealth in a classical way<sup>36</sup>. Such adorning oneself with borrowed plumes, a staging on the stage (σκηνή) with boasting (φύσημα) are, in any case, useless to him as mere externals (ταῦτα ἔξωθεν). In general, he states with regard to the ancient practice of inner-worldly *do ut des* that, like God himself, one should not do good deeds for the sake of retribution or even repayment<sup>37</sup>. The Church Father thus connects alms with the idea of *theopoiesis* even more strongly than can be observed in Cyprian's wor<sup>38</sup>. Fundamentally, he states that concern for the benefit of one's neighbour as the most perfect rule of Christianity leads to the highest summit of perfection<sup>39</sup>. Christian *euergetes* become like God in this way,

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the coming reign of God". Already in this world, the poor whom a giver takes into his house stands by him against the devil, cf. *Homilies in Acts of the Apostles* 45,4 PG 60, 320. On the idea that the prayers of the poor members of the congregation benefit the rich as thanks for their support, cf. already 1 Clem 38,2.

<sup>34</sup> Money for Chrysostom is also ethymologically connected with use: Χρήματα λέγεται παρὰ τὸ κεχρησῆσαι, οὐ παρὰ τὸ κυρίουσ εἶναι- καὶ τὰ χρήματα δὲ αὐτὰ χρήσις ἐστίν, οὐ δεσποτεία (CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in 1 Timothy* 11,3, PG 62,556). Cf. on this again CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Quis dives* 14,1.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 66,5, PG 56, 632.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Acts of the Apostles* 45,3, PG 60,318, where the Church Father addresses different forms of hospitality, probably having in view the pagan one in the first: Ὁ μὲν γὰρ τὸν μέγαν δεχόμενος, πολλάκις καὶ διὰ κενοδοξίαν ποιεῖ- ὁ δὲ τὸν μικρόν, καθαρῶς διὰ τὸν Χριστόν.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in 1 Timothy* 16,4, PG 62,586: μὴ εὖ ποιήσης ἐπὶ ἀντιδόσει, μηδὲ ἐπὶ ἀμοιβῇ.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. my article on Cyprian (cf. n. 27).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *Homilies in 1 Corinthians* 25,3, PG 61,208s. However, Chrysostom emphasises that he is not concerned with an individualistic narrowing of the striving for holiness. Cf. on the "social character" as the decisive "standard of perfect Christianity" in Chrysostom,

just as the Roman emperors once did<sup>40</sup>! Whoever loves resembles God in His mercy and longsuffering and accordingly – as also demanded in Eph 5,1f. – resembles Him<sup>41</sup>.

## VII. Conclusion

Are Chrysostom's insights still relevant in a modern society? In several respects they certainly are. Chrysostom's insights are based on general human thinking, as already expressed in ancient *euergesia*. If I do something, I want to receive something in return. But he warns against fixating on earthly recognition and the ever-increasing accumulation of earthly goods. In transforming the classical *euergesia* model, John rather admonishes that the struggle for happiness and contentment should be about more than in pagan euergetism. He stretches the classical thought patterns into a transcendent and eschatological framework. It is about achieving true respect, freedom from burdensome sins and ultimately perfection. This makes it possible for those poor people to be considered through *euergesia* who were not the focus of human activity until late antiquity. Chrysostom is convinced that human beings receive the power of creation from God in order to make more out of the earth than just a materially conceivable world, namely heaven on earth<sup>42</sup>. For the Church

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also Adolf Martin RITTER, "Zwischen «Gottesherrschaft» und «Einfachem Leben». Dio Chrysostomos, Johannes Chrysostomos und das Problem einer Humanisierung der Gesellschaft", in: Angelika DÖRFLER-DIERKEN i.a. (edd.), Adolf Martin RITTER, *Charisma und Caritas. Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Alten Kirche*, Göttingen 1993, pp. 309-330, 313 with further evidence.

<sup>40</sup> In CHRYSOSTOM, *De Eleemosyna* 5, PG 51,269, Chrysostom describes that God highly values the doctrine of mercy (λόγος ἐλέους), thereby placing his mercy towards men and the mercy of men towards their fellow men in one. Cf. on the idea that the almsgiver also becomes like God after Lk 6,36 (θεῶ ὅμοιος), also CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 52 al. 53,4s., PG 58, 523f.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Ephesians* 17, PG 62,115-117.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in 1 Timothy* 15,4, PG 62,585s. There it says, among other things: δίδωμι καὶ σοὶ δημιουργίαν, ποιήσον τὴν γῆν οὐρανόν. Jean-Marie LEROUX, Art. "Johannes Chrysostomus (ca. 350-407)", in: *TRE* 17 (1988), pp. 118-126 even speaks of an "bedingungslosen Utopismus" (unconditional utopianism) in the bishop.

Father, the place where such a *metamorphosis* is already happening is paradigmatically the Church<sup>43</sup>. If it promotes awareness of such values, it still makes a contribution to society and its culture today.

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies in Matthew* 43.5, PG 57,463, which culminates in the injunction: ποιήσωμεν τὴν γῆν οὐρανόν- ἐντεῦθεν δεῖξωμεν Ἕλλησιν ὅσων εἰσιν ἀπεστερημένοι καλῶν. Cf. similarly RITTER, “«Gottesherrschaft»...” (cf. fn. 39), p. 328, who speaks of Chrysostom’s having aimed at a social reform entirely from the Church’s own forces, which has to call for perfection.