

Current trends in theological sciences in Costa Rica facing the XXI century

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to provide a documentary reflection of the state of theological sciences in Costa Rica from global trends in the XXI century. A non-exhaustive exploratory research is proposed, based on a compilation and analysis of the literature on the new paradigms of biblical archeology, theological anthropology and a different perspective on the economic discipline, which makes theology unwavering support to proclaim the Good news since its prophetic character. A reflection is offered to contribute to public policy and to the search for the common good.

Keywords: biblical archeology, anthropology and theological economic discipline, subject, education

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Introduction

In the last seventy years, theology has set its sights on biblical archeology, economic studies and anthropological theory to recover the subject as a spokesman for a revealed truth. In this context, theology gives predominant and important emphasis on human beings regarding the social and historical reality of the world in two distinct moments or anthropological twists. Dilthey¹ It established the unity of the human being, as metaphysical and, therefore sensible "And indeed, man as a unity of life is presented to us under the double point of view of our consideration (whatever you want metaphysical reality) as a frame of spiritual facts as far as our internal perception, and as a whole body as far as the sensitive uptake "giving an example of how anthropological twists in the theological sciences gave way to a process sustained recovery the subject as the center of scientific rationality. Recovering the subject is related to the emergence of a global sense, the product of the experience of two world wars, the ransom for the value of human dignity and progress on human rights. It was about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the Conventions that complement, which is introduced into the consciousness universal-including (both Protestant and Catholic) Christian consciousness-an inescapable interpretive hub for theological work: get involved deeply into the problems of contemporary men and women, in their defense of human rights. Theology is for Rahner² an anthropology more as handles and type of problems men and women.

From different theologies (such as liberation theology in Latin America of the 80's) we recognize religious faith, not always oriented towards the human and often locked into dogmatism and an alienating metaphysics. Theology rises from a generic conception of man and God, the realization of a human being, inclusive of women, children and girls, of the elderly, of the black, indigenous, of the poor, the widow, the migrant, among others. God acquires thus a name: the God

of discriminated and dispossessed sectors. More recently theology has given a new anthropological turn to include reflections from the new subjects starring as the sectors discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, women and children in the street, victims of violence in the streets, new cosmologies, etc. We can say that this anthropological turn from some theologies, involves a step further: the need for an ontological turn help you understand, understand and understand the world in their daily lives. However, the trend of churches and different religious groups not to discuss these issues, evidence blocking any possibility of diverging or match and listen to the contributions that other sectors argue about these issues.

A key change in theology has been to assume, albeit belatedly, the defense of the environment. This concern includes the human, but goes further concerns fragmentation of the human detached from the integrity of creation essentially affecting the survival of the human. There is an awareness of global community urgently calls for the need of healing: the neglect of the environment contaminates the whole earth, also that social, poverty, wars, ignorance, consumerism, overcrowding and lack of opportunities violate human dignity, which demands a change that concerns all sciences, but especially, theology reflection. Reconciliation is urgent the man himself himself and other beings. It is important to consolidate the new paradigm of ethics for life, enabling a break with the concept of development and unlimited progress, including criteria such as human development, integrity and interdependence with creation, sustainability and quality of life. This means positioning the human being in a new relationship with himself and other beings from the perspective of sustainability and respect for the dignity of all creation. With much resistance, he has appeared in parallel, a theological current view and worked from the perspective of women, with a view to dignifying incidence and claim their rights. Both in Europe and in the United States and Latin American theology are numerous contributions in this perspective. The transverse axis on gender issues from the perspective of women through theology which enriches the approaches over the past 20 years. In Costa Rica, some emblematic authors of this trend are Elsa Tamez and Ivone Gebara works as *Latin American feminist theology* (1998) or *eco-feminist theology* (1997). Another trend that appeared around the

¹Dilthey Wilhelm. Introduction to the sciences of the spirit. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica. 1949.

²Rahner, Karl, Foundations of Faith: An Introduction to the concept of Christianity. Spain: Herder; 1998.

Second Vatican Council (1963), which has not only maintained but has opened a space until today, is the ecumenical reflection as an approach of different religious experiences to better know and time to work for unity around overcoming prejudices and communion of wills to achieve a better world.

It is no coincidence that in the judgment of the Constitutional Court in Costa Rica, regarding the orientation must have religion courses in schools and colleges, has reached the following conclusion:

It should be made relevant technical studies so that learners are offered, religious education in two stages. The first, for students who profess a religious creed different to the Catholic -duly recognized and accepted by the state, can take lessons from a person who has proven ability to impart and later as they gain greater capacity and relative maturity of receive religious education as an ecumenical and eclectic approach that fosters tolerance, respect for human and fundamental rights, human dignity, religious diversity, non-discrimination for religious reasons, understanding, understanding and friendship between groups religious.³ This ecumenical challenge requires incorporating theological reflection fundamental aspects of a variety of thoughts and ways of approaching reality, which will result in a more diverse theological reflection and also most likely to understand the events that affect humans. Theology has an opportunity to influence positively in Costa Rica, to break with theological models and discriminative proselytizing and thus promote ecumenical theology from the perspective of socially disadvantaged sectors in Costa Rica.

Another theme in theological thinking in recent years has been the need for intercultural dialogue and inter religious. Through globalization we come today to a large gathering; the meeting of cultures in which dialogue and fertilization crossing values, traditions and customs, lifestyles and ways of being is essential to achieve substantial and urgent changes. The current context requires respect for the cultures and values, where equality between them and no superiority for either of them to other states; the approach must be in terms of convergence, providing not imposing any value with aspirations of dominance over other values.

Theological reflection

As globalization unfolds in every corner of the planet calculating profit as the supreme value⁴, Convergence is also given to promote an ethic for life that involves respect for different cultures and religions. In addition, the mechanisms of international law, somehow, have contained the destruction of life on the planet. Kung⁵ one of the theologians most notorious of our time, has pushed an agenda of convergence for building societies with greater human development that would facilitate dialogue, respect for differences, seeking tolerance and respect for diversity of societies and cultures. Kung says that despite the differences, the religions of the world should seek common ground, a sort of common denominator around which there is a minimum consensus, in clear opposition to theological models

that tend to disrespect of cultures and they cause peoples, for example, in indigenous societies, the destruction of their traditions and customs. From a hermeneutic perspective we are in a very different from the biblical context and the historical context of the past five hundred years time. The subject, as a spokesperson for a revealed truth, has enabled the new archaeological paradigm biblical, rather than prove the absolute truth of the Bible, recognize and find the truth from the contributions of scientific methodology, not to justify stories in the Bible, but to find the truth in the face of building a theology that guides the gathering of human beings for the construction of an ethic for life.⁶

The new paradigm Biblical archaeological ventures to interpret the Scriptures from scientific look at the biblical text. The new paradigm has caused a revolution in biblical interpretation and buries (not the whole) old interpretive approaches and all kinds of fundamentalism.

Also the development of the social sciences has imposed on theology substantial changes. It is discovered that in the interpretation of sacred texts socio-analytical instruments, both to understand the current reality so as to approach appropriate to these texts is required.

In the same vein, the contributions of religious anthropology have contributed to revealed truth and not a gift as it established the theological studies. On the contrary, the anthropological science has allowed understanding human being divine bioevolutivo relief as a natural process. Humans, since it uses the brain as a tool to discover the reality, has needed to place its existence in mental contexts and spiritual more complex for the construction of truth, for this reason, religions are different and conditioned by society produces⁷.

The use of anthropology to understand the challenge of theology for religious diversity and cultural existence, requires peaceful and ecumenical coexistence with other religions and cultures. Together all religions seek to find truths of the absolute, either God or the principles and values that encourage cultural values essentially linked to the development of principles such as love, solidarity and respect for human dignity. Sales of authors like Mendonça, Funari⁸Vigil⁹ and Kaefer¹⁰ agree these approaches.

Theology, especially Latin American theology, has resumed energetically committed to working to raise a transcendental and practical category respect for human dignity, eliminate social inequality and poverty, from a new economy, and promote non-discrimination and promotion of human rights. We can not see in theology but a conversion to the values of the Kingdom. An economy like practice of religion must remove criteria of the mythical and instrumental reason to draw categorical interpretation frameworks that will allow humans to build a society in which all men and fit. Remove myths as human sacrifice, which, under capitalism, are required to classes most deprived, not the wealthy classes, to exit the crisis, is

³Constitutional Chamber of Costa Rica, Exp: 08-010483-0007-CO; Res No. 2023-2010.; (San Jose, at fourteen hours and four minutes fifty Feb. 2, two thousand ten). 2010.

⁴Hinkelammert, Franz, Duchrow, Ulrich, Life or capital. Alternative to the global dictatorship of the property. San José: Editorial DEI; 2003.

⁵Küng Hans. A Global Ethic Project. Madrid: Trotta; 2006.

⁶Salts Mendonça Elcio Valmiro. O Novo Pradigma Arquelógico Estudos e os Bible. Voice Magazine. 2015;XXXVIII:25-39.

⁷Armstrong, Karen, *The Great Transformation. The principle of our religious traditions*. Barcelona: Polity Press. 2007.

⁸Funari, Pedro Paulo, "Archeology at the service of Faith and Science" (Voice Magazine, Volume XXXVIII, Number 2015-3 & 4, July-December, Brazil, 2015, Printed), 15-25.

⁹Vigil José María. The new archaeological and biblical paradigm. *Voice*. 2015;38:1-54.

¹⁰Kaefer, José Ademar. A Bible as historical fonte. (Voice Magazine, Volume XXXVIII, Number 2015-3 & 4 July-December. Brazil, 2015, Printed), 39-53.

an example of how theology can contribute to building the Kingdom. Do not forget that sacrifice as economic value¹¹. Also it characterized by the category of the sacred religious.¹² By which those who hold power in a society, tune the value of individuality in humans, to link more precisely the power on a specific social conglomerate and ask a whole society the sacrifice of all for a few. An example of sacrificial type is the discussion of the fiscal plan in Costa Rica. You are asked to sacrifice the people for the collection of taxes the country to achieve economic stability; However, there are tax exemptions for some sectors of the economy, exceeding the year 2018, the €8.943 billion cease to enter into the coffers of the State¹³.

It is impossible to relate theology to the absolute value of Christ without the values of the Kingdom. A related theology with the Kingdom is far from being a reality as has not been able to share the good news of salvation to all nations and cultures of the world as noted by the Gospel. In cultural diversity as unity around these objectives of human development of our country is designing what we want each and all Costa Ricans. Violence in all its forms (domestic, civic, drug violence, labor, internal and international wars, etc.) requires the theology addresses these issues from the perspective of seeking a peaceful conscience in search of justice. Citizen violence in the country requires a response from the theology of Christian tradition, but it is a challenge for all religions and all cultures in the country because it affects us all in some way. Theology and religions in general have in their values and principles of peace and historically (not always) have promoted a peaceful spirit¹⁴. Costa Rica live weighed down by violence that threatens our physical integrity and our institutions, including our democracy. The Costa Rican people, despite their democratic ruptures, has had a clear peaceful conscience. Theology must provide the need to oppose violence and make new proposals in the consolidation of this value.

Promoting peace challenges theology to promote theological reflection on this issue and the realization of pastoral proposals fully identified with the sectors suffering such violence, such as women and children victims of domestic violence, family members. They have suffered aggression and even death for their children, parents or siblings, road violence occurring on roads and cohabiting drug violence in every corner of the country. Theology can play a role to unravel the origins of violence from its roots and reasons that encourage this violence. Theology must venture into the spirit and logic of violence, the use and abuse of power. Should reflect on the values that promote peace, such as tolerance and respect for religious pluralism. Can do it, with the use of social sciences, political science and other related sciences, including psychology and sociology, which enable to provide inputs important in-school training, ethical field and and to forge a promoter consciousness of peace, justice and progress material. Latin American theology has been able to promote a new awareness in sectors of the regional population, promoting the construction of a liberating process consciousness promoter oriented towards achieving peace and justice.

¹¹Smith Adams. *The Wealth of Nations*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica. 1776/1979.

¹²Durkheim Émile. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life: The totemic system in Australia* (and other writings on religion and knowledge Mexico. *Printed Fondo de Cultura Económica*. 2013.

¹³Ministry of Finance Assessment system of exemptions made by the DGH, 2010-2017 (Costa Rica: Ministry of Finance, 2018, Printed).

¹⁴Küng Hans. *A Global Ethic for the economy and politics*. Mexico: Fund of Economic Culture. 2000.

Important in a context of secularization and, above all, substantial changes in the autonomy of a discipline long trapped by dogmatism, has started a space for theology of doing theology from a secular perspective¹⁵. There is a coincidence renovated with state universities Costa Ricans for their founding documents, in favor reflection from the perspective of the Costa Rican people who for many years has been subordinated in theological terms of the discourse of theologians and theological institutions of their churches. This has been due to the existence, since the establishment of Christianity in various societies, a theology that favors the Church as a theological place, understood this as the defense of the institution to ensure adherence to the truths of faith, being the Church instance mediation in the interpretation of it. With the Reformation and the rise of modernity, elsewhere in the theological work are introduced, I lay gaining importance as a theological place.

Luther said among its main tenets of faith that “all Christians are indeed of ecclesiastical state and among them there is no distinction.”¹⁶ “Where a space opened to faith and reflection of non-priests, the laity. We are talking about a secular perspective, collective time (the laity) and individualistic (secular), always within an identity with an ecclesial institutions. Thereafter there have been many efforts to give greater importance to the faith of the common people, with historical limits have been for it. A qualitative leap in this direction is the Latin American theology, with its emphasis on the poor and other discriminated sectors or socially disadvantaged. It is a theological task that makes theological discourse from the perspective of these sectors, coinciding it with a rich vein of popular wisdom expressed in religious literature of all peoples of the world.

Changes in the world since half of the twentieth century are manifested in the theologies of secularization. For example, Bonhoeffer in prison by order of Hitler for having questioned, It was the first theologian who supports the need for dialogue with the modern world, recognizes this in one of his last letters from prison (08.03.44): the church is stalling out. We have to breathe fresh air again intellectual confrontation with the world. We even venture to say challengeable things, so we will make are discussed vital issue.¹⁷

Thus, the theological sciences in Costa Rica, should emphasize, from the subject revealed, the tireless work to give voice to the poor, subjugated to the dispossessed; It must speak out against any form of discrimination against women, children, adults, indigenous communities, blacks, street children; You should come out in defense of the environment and of those discriminated against or excluded because of their sexual orientation.

Conclusion

The challenges of theological sciences in Costa Rica can be summarized in the following lines of action:

- i. Intercultural dialogue and inter-religious: it is important to open spaces for reflection not only from the revealed sources of Christianity in its various expressions in order to establish a dialogue with other religions in what unites us in the search for a

¹⁵Second, Juan Luis, *Theology lay open for adult*. IV volumes, Montevideo: Ediciones Carlos Lohl. 1968.

¹⁶Luther Martin. *To the Christian Nobility German nation, on improving the status of Christians*. Mexico: UNAM; 1520/1997.

¹⁷Gibellini Rosino. *The theology of the twentieth century*. Cantabria: Editorial Sal Terrae. 1998;32.

- dialogue interreligious and intercultural from consensus that lead to peace. This is not somehow give up the faith of each one, but further reaffirm what we believe.
- ii. Highlight a theology from a historical perspective and from the contributions of the new paradigm of biblical archeology, economic studies and theological anthropology, taking into account the events of world history and Costa Rica. Western theology and mainly Latin American theology has moved following a trend toward historical. In this sense, a contextual or historical orientation, theology tends for many centuries, especially since the Reformation, to have this historical dimension and this has been reflected in biblical hermeneutics;
 - iii. It was oral speech, often public square, closely related to the events of that time (...) There is no more fundamental principle of biblical interpretation that the law of the context¹⁸.
 - iv. Interpret the biblical theological discourse of a God acting within history, embodied in our historical reality, thereby recovering much of the biblical approach that tends to that dimension. In this way I insert sees God as it has been in its full incarnation¹⁹ in human reality and, therefore, concerned human problem: to the things be, human beings turn raises itself and there is nothing more important to God than his concern for the human being.
 - v. The challenge of contextualization of faith. Emphasize a contextual theology in permanent dialogue with the social sciences and the Costa Rican reality, from a popular perspective and with a strong pastoral dimension. Incorporating analysis of reality today constitutes inescapable part of the theological task. What we do theology properly interpreted in recent years has been the increasingly important value that has given this analysis of reality. Both theologies of earthly realities, such as political theology and, predominantly, the liberation theology has seen the importance to account for our faith including analysis of reality. We can not deny that this approach had much to see the development of hermeneutics from Schleiermacher, Dilthey, to Gadamer, Habermas, Hinkelammert and Juan Luis Segundo (and hermeneutical circle). Theology, which once was the mother of science, went to live on the fringes of science to near exclusion, for now, re-articulated back to science via the social sciences for analysis of reality. In the first, help the biblical sciences, hermeneutics and biblical exegesis. Theological truth acquires an impact on the experience of this theological truth in reality. Hence, practice (especially the liberating praxis) becomes a key element of theology and method. It is no longer possible to dogmatic theology detached without impact on historical reality facing human development. The option for the poor, subjugated and dispossessed it requires a true incarnation in the world that God loves: the poor. Lois²⁰ notes that the core of our epistemological point of departure are the poor: "Isolating the theological method of this perspective (historical) is losing the nerve of the issue and relapse into academicism" Why this? Because God's face is more easily perceived, it is better if we live listens to his word embodied in historical reality, in the world of the poor. In a secular theology program orientation, it is necessary a theology with historical dimension.
 - vi. A theology in which subjects are what make the social and cultural changes, changes that the country needs. Critical thinking has made the praxis one of the fundamental principles of the theological task. This is where theology and pedagogy demonstrate the importance of interdisciplinarity around the socio-analytical mediation of theology that guides this interdisciplinary collaboration pointing toward a common task in human liberation.
 - vii. The interdisciplinary nature of theology. Offer a creative approach to theology that dimension aspects of the theological task as creating hope, encourage development of utopias that hope of the Costa Rican people. The theological task includes creating hope, their concern is not only reflection but reflection to find the truth of things and thus promote new utopias, new symbols to guide the human endeavor in solving its fundamental problems. Theologize in this perspective is to deepen the experience of faith and develop spiritualities (ways of living, behaving, of seeing things) that allow a change in our societies towards peace.
 - viii. Theology is the discipline that seeks to liberate human beings from oppression, is therapeutic, it aims to achieve greater human development rather than abstract truths found bordering on alienation ahistorical.
 - ix. The relationship of theology with other human knowledge, both non-theological: philosophy, ecology, biology, economics, cultural studies, politics, ideology, gender studies, migration, and knowledge necessary to provide theology of methodological instruments to address topics such as popular knowledge, hermeneutics, exegesis, church history, catechism, preaching, pastoral, spirituality, and liturgy. In short, theology today seeks not unique knowledge, but a diverse knowledge of new theological approaches. Hence the importance of speaking not of theology but of theologies, diversification of theological approaches. Find new fields of action in the social, cultural, religious and political theology, thus enabling people able to engage in debates,²¹
 - x. Dabble in the relationship between theology and economics. We are facing a catastrophic financial global crisis has highlighted serious shortcomings in this area and the need for regulation, supervision and the importance of ethics for the life of principles and values.²² Theology must reflect and propose a sense of responsibility, solidarity and concern for others. Let us not forget that the financial crisis can be an opportunity to make proposals and new approaches. This is where theology, both in the research field as praxiological level can give a great contribution. Economic crises reveal a crucial flaw in economic models and it is no accident that has been since the theology that have questioned the effects and the imposition of liberal models with great dogmatic content, the economy despite being a discipline that must ensure a fully distributive society according to their need each and every one capacity. Universities have been owing to the inconsistency of making a critique of the current political economy. We underline the inconciencia to face discussion of the fiscal deficit in a structural way on which should include the rational efficiency for state institutions to impact society with quick solutions that benefit the poor and dispossessed.

¹⁸Stam Juan. *The use of the OT prophetic interpretation*. 2011.

¹⁹Jerusalem Bible. BILBAO: DESCLÉE Brouwer. 1998;1:1-14.

²⁰Lois July, *Liberation Theology: option for the poor*. Spain: IEPALA; 1986. p. 257.

²¹Armstrong, Karen. *The Great Transformation. The principle of our religious traditions*. Barcelona: Polity Press; 2007

²²Treasury. Assessment system of exemptions made by the DGH, 2010–2017. Costa Rica: Ministry of Finance; 2018.

- xi. It is important to emphasize the educational dimension of theology. It requires a restructuring of the Costa Rican educational system towards a perspective of promoting values and principles to mold people from an ethical perspective for life. Education should be based on training people with strong social sense. Education as a mechanism for social mobility requires entrepreneurs who promote social responsibility, transparency in labor commitments to workers, truthfulness and commitment to a distribution of income, and sustainability as a way to protect the nature of its possible extinction.
- xii. Theology goes two ways: it is a reflection within academia that can influence the debate on major national issues and thus contribute to public policy and also in the significant transformation of the institutions of the state. And simultaneously, you can have an impact on civil society and thus an impact and strengthening community organization as their participation in improving democracy and, building new country proposals from the communities. Theology in this perspective can give a great contribution in training and leadership in the field of human rights hence the importance of linking the issue Fe and human rights. Christian theology and religions have a common axis claim human dignity, and this forms a common denominator

with what we think of as human rights. Theology historically has had a significant background in the defense of the dispossessed sectors. This can include theological reflection on care for victims of economic and social policies that exclude adequate attention to these sectors: poverty, migration, unemployment, education, health services, housing, among others. You need to give theology programs accompanying the role of these excluded sectors and building community responses and strategies to adequately address these sectors. Many of these initiatives tend to overcome the crisis, very palpable throughout Latin America theological education, possibly because people demand theology relate to contextual issues and dialogue.

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