



Evangelická teologická fakulta

Posudek oponenta bakalářské práce

Název práce:	Pojem sociální hřích v textech teologie osvobození a dokumentech magisteria
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Studium:	Pastorační a sociální práce

Text posudku:

There is much to be commended in this work, which is of a very high standard for a Bachelor's dissertation. It deals with the question of structural sin, as developed by liberation theology and as touched on in different ways in the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church. The first chapter looks at structural sin in different theologians of liberation and then gives an overview of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to the theme. The third chapter looks at structural sin in a broader context, especially in relation to original sin, and then in relation to Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato si'*. It finishes with two conclusions, which try to relate the work more closely to social work and concrete examples.

The overview of liberation theology strikes me as balanced and fair, at least for the most part. I think the student is a bit hard on Gustavo Gutierrez, though it is true that if one takes the very first edition of *A Theology of Liberation* as his position, it is possible to argue as she does. But even there, the book is clear that salvation is from sin, and sin is not only structural or social – to some extent, the presence of individual sin is not at stake, since in Catholic theology that is taken for granted. It is the “more” that is important. Personally, I would say that Novak is very problematic at many levels, and the history of Latin America in the past twenty or thirty years shows the successes (and weaknesses) at a practical political level of liberation theology, and these should not be ignored.

The overview of Catholic Social Teaching is fine, and I think that it is reasonable to see that social sin is there in some forms – partly because the insistence on the rights of forming unions and the more corporatist approach in *Quadragesimo anno* are in a way social and structural responses that presuppose social / structural sin. The treatment of John Paul II is good, and I think important. John Paul II was a more complex social thinker than he is sometimes given credit for, and he both knew the problems of real socialism and saw (in keeping with his predecessors and successors) the dangers present in ungoverned capitalism.

The attempt to link social sin and original sin is certainly not without its merits. It is, of course, a very Western view, and it is not the only way to read the Bible, but it strikes me as one way of reading the situation. I think that it does demand extending the concept of original sin, but that is something liberation theology would approve of. I suppose the difference is that original sin is nearly always used to talk about people, whereas structural sin especially is, clearly, about structures, which are of course created by people, but are not in themselves people (a bridge is built by people, but it is not a person!). So to be born into structures that are sinful is not quite the same as being born marked by sin, or at least by the effects of sin. But still the argument is fundamentally good.

Finally, the practical part is interesting, and I like the student's reflections. She tries to relate it to more practical matters and sees the relation between questions of social sin and social work well.

I am probably not the best person to comment on language, but I would say that the work was for me very clear to read, and I didn't notice any particular mistakes, though I'm sure there will be some. Footnoting was correct, and the bibliography is more than adequate for the level of

work, with much of it being in English. The argument is clear, and well-constructed, and the dissertation proceeds in an easily understandable way. From the formal point of view, then, the work is of a high standard.

Práci doporučuji k obhajobě

Zdůvodnění, závěr:

This is an excellent Bachelor's level work and far exceeds what is required at this level, and I congratulate the student on all that she has done, and on engaging in the subject in an interesting and convincing way. I would certainly encourage the student to think about doing further work in this area. The following questions and comments are meant to help in this task, but they do not in any way take away from the quality of the work, which in its engagement with the literature and ability to reflect on questions and to apply what is drawn from the arguments is of a very high quality.

Otázky, podněty k diskusi při obhajobě:

Some more critical comments first. As is usual for a Bachelor's work, at one level too much is covered, which means that it will always suffer from being a bit too unnuanced, and the engagement with authors and thoughts is necessarily limited. This has the advantage of offering a good overview, but if the student wants to go further (and I hope she does) she will need to fix on a narrower area. There is a certain amount of repetition and I'm not sure if all of what is here is that necessarily (the overview of early Catholic Social Teaching, for example, is well done, but not entirely relevant). And although I liked the final part, it first contains two conclusions, which is one more than is necessary, and secondly, it was introducing too much new material, and trying to relate things a bit too quickly.


Another problem is, as the student recognises, to do with terminology. She assumes, not altogether unfairly, that "social sin", "structural sin", "institutional sin", "structures of sin", "structures of evil", all mean the same. Although the terms have similar meanings, I am not sure that this is entirely true, and it might be necessary to nuance this a bit more. Social sin and structures of sin emphasise very different elements and some of the critiques of one are not valid about the other. It might be interesting to reflect further on this – structures are even more abstract and explain sin that happens (or appears to happen) regardless of people's desire or intention, whilst social sin emphasises the "social" and "relational" nature of sin.

It would also be a very relevant question to ask why Michael Novak has been translated into Czech, and not Gutierrez, given that Novak is a well-known supporter of the status quo, and of American capitalism (indeed I see one of the publishers is the Liberalni institut). Liberation theology would see this as an example of the structures of sin, not because their work is overlooked, but because in a post-communist society it is the forces of capitalism that are being promoted, with all the injustices they bring.

I would also want to push the student on the connection of social / structural sin and original sin, which I think is a nice idea, but it may leave as many problems as it solves. And finally, are there any examples of structural good?

Navrhované hodnocení: (A-výtečně, B-velmi dobře, C-dobře, D-uspokojivě, E-dostatečně, F-nedostatečně) **A-výtečně**

V Praze dne 1.6.2016

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podpis oponenta