

"God is dead. God remains dead. And we killed him."

Friedrich Nietzsche¹

Nietzsche's statement best captures where people's thinking and relationship to God has reached after several centuries of growing intellectual opposition to religion and feudal absolutism. But Nietzsche died more than a hundred years ago, and we can safely say with the apostle Paul: "*Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*" (1K 1,20). Yet it is good to know where the foolishness came from and how faith has disappeared from the lives of so many in Christian nations. Therefore, in this first installment on the deceptions that threaten our future, we will try to describe very briefly at least some of the ideas that have led to the present spiritual condition of Christian nations.

The alienation from God, which culminated in the denial of his existence in atheistic ideology, began slowly during the Renaissance (15th-17th centuries), which is said to have been a watershed period that laid the foundations of modern Europe, science, art and philosophy. Among the figures of the Renaissance were Leonardo da Vinci, Niccolò Machiavelli, William Shakespeare. The Renaissance was followed by the Enlightenment, whose representatives included Voltaire and Immanuel Kant. Enlightenment leaders embarked on an even more open opposition to the Church and the feudal system. The main features of the Enlightenment are the emphasis on reason, the criticism of the Church and absolutism, and the struggle for freedom of thought.

The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (lived 1844-1900) is a representative of an intellectual milieu influenced by previous periods. His work significantly influenced thinkers of the late 19th and the entire 20th century.

The ideas that emerged from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment appealed mainly and primarily to intellectual and political circles, but also to some nobility and to the wealthier strata of society. Nietzsche probably wanted to express that people killed God in themselves by beginning to displace him from their lives in their minds and hearts. At the same time, hand in hand with man's growing self-confidence, even pride in his Creator, and his desire to take justice and his destiny firmly into his own hands, the conditions for the weakening and

¹ Under his words that God is dead, someone is said to have written: God is not dead, Nietzsche is dead.

eventual overthrow of the feudal lords and the weakening of the Church were created. One can say that one of the fruits of this spiritual current is the secularization of society and also the form of democracy (Montesquieu - the separation of powers as the basis of modern democracy.). Today's state of affairs has not come about out of nothing, but through the gradual questioning of the truthfulness of the Church's teachings, the emphasis on freedom of thought and speech in contrast to the absolutist structure of society in which this freedom has been denied to many people.

Implications

Under the influence of thinkers spreading in the last five hundred years (mainly in Europe) ideas directed against the Church, its doctrines and its guidance to blind faith and obedience, and ideas inspiring opposition to feudalism, the attitude of man towards God in Christian nations has been changing from one of natural humility and respect for his Creator to one of complete independence from Him. This did not happen by itself, but it is not the purpose of this work to analyze in detail the causes of this development. The apostle Paul points out this development as early as the first century (2 Thess. 2:3-12). We see the concrete consequences firsthand. F. M. Dostoevsky put it almost prophetically when he wrote (The Brothers Karamazov) "If God does not exist, then everything is permitted." and this is happening today to an ever-increasing degree. One reason for this is that for a long time most people had no idea that God, His Word, and the teachings of the churches are not the same thing.

The starting point - realization of true freedom from God, faith in salvation, forgiveness and hope through Jesus Christ

There was little knowledge of the Bible among believing people in past centuries. Today, because of the availability of the Bible in many national languages, many people are beginning to realize that God's Word and the faith based on it are not quite the same as church doctrine. Individuals and Christian groups are beginning to awaken among Christians, influenced by God's real thoughts, stories, and wisdom that they read about in the Bible, and realizing God's real love for us, demonstrated in Jesus' sacrifice of his life by willingly undergoing execution by nailing to wood, even though he did nothing wrong. By this unquestionable act, he paid the ransom for our lives, redeeming our hope of forgiveness for our sins. Accepting this hope by faith is one of the basic starting points of overcoming death and judgment by mercy and making a better future possible for those who have died.