

On the Human Body in Igor Kišš's Humanized Deontology

VASIL GLUCHMAN*

University of Prešov, Prešov, Slovakia

*Address correspondence to: Vasil Gluchman, PhD, Institute of Philosophy and Ethics, University of Prešov, SK-08078 Prešov, Slovakia.
E-mail: gluchmv0@unipo.sk.

The basis for the analysis is the approach of Christian ethics toward the issue of the human body and sexuality. Based on the views of some present-day Christian, especially Protestant, ethicists, the author points out the effort to establish this area in contemporary Christian theology and ethics, which is, for instance, represented by the theology of sexuality and Christian sexual ethics. Consequently, the author pays attention to the opinions of the significant Slovak Lutheran theologian and ethicist Igor Kišš and his theory of humanized deontology. Within this framework, he studies his opinions on the issue of the human body, sexuality, artificial insemination, genetic engineering, and embryonic stem cell research. The author comes to the conclusion that Kišš has created a highly modern and liberal theory of Protestant ethics based on the principle of humanity (love to one's neighbor) as a central principle. The principle of humanity, together with the emphasis on the examination of consequences and a potential need for the lesser evil, aims at giving reasons for a possible diversion from rigorous extreme deontology. This creates space for accepting liberal views within Christianity or Protestantism, which, however, must be in accordance with the value of humanity. The author claims that Kišš's theory of humanized deontology is a theological version of ethics of social consequences (a kind of nonutilitarian consequentialism).

Keywords: consequentialism, deontology, IVF, Kišš, organ donation, sexual ethics, stem cell research

I. INTRODUCTION

It is only in the present era that Christian ethics is able to perceive the value, meaning, and significance of the human body, including human sexuality, more broadly and intensely. The dynamic development of Western society and

the sexual revolution of the 1960s, when the human body and sexuality ceased to be taboo, certainly stimulated contemplation of this topic. Another significant stimulus was scientific and medical advance, which brought an immense number of new challenges for contemporary man, leading to the origination of bioethics and, to a certain extent, also causing Christian Churches to respond more readily to these changes and shifts in the perception of the above issues by believers, as well as by the rest of society. In Western Christianity (especially in Protestantism and to a lesser extent in Catholicism), theology of sexuality, or sexual theology (Nelson, 1995, 46), and Christian sexual ethics originated. A number of authors often find these approaches obsolete and inanimate, unable to respond to the topical problems of contemporary man, as their embedding in a distant past (in biblical texts or teachings of Church Fathers or in authors from the Scholastic period) is a common feature of different approaches.

II. DISCUSSING CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN SEXUAL ETHICS

James F. Keenan admits that Christian ethicists of the past tended, with respect to Christianity or Christian theology, to remain silent or obstruct discussions on sexual ethics (Keenan, 2007, 113). The above approach of Christianity to the human body and human sexuality is also confirmed in a 1995 critique by the American theologian and ethicist James B. Nelson, who claimed that although we were approaching the 21st century, in his opinion, Christian Churches, with regard to corporeality and sexuality, still existed in the 19th century (Nelson, 1995, 39). The English author Adrian Thatcher expresses a similarly strong critical view of the Anglican Church and its approach toward the body and sexuality. In his opinion, within the Anglican Church, there is no real discussion of these issues; there are merely "certain views." He points out the presence of fear and disgust of the church with regard to homosexuality, as, in its documents, sexual intercourse is only "reserved" for matrimony. This, in his opinion, does not take into consideration that the average marrying age in Great Britain is 30 and that a considerable number of young people live in cohabitation. He pointed out that the Anglican Church, in these issues, refers to the "centuries-long experience of the church," while with regard to other numerous topics, such as slavery, apartheid, the divine right of kings, and so forth, it managed to overcome "its centuries-long experience" (Thatcher, 2005, 13–23). Lisa Sowle Cahill expressed the requirement for Christianity to change its approach toward the issues in question by means of Christian sexual ethics socializing the body and, hence, clearly perceiving and interpreting it as male and female body, sexual and parental body, all this in a way that increases the social abilities of Christians to express compassion toward others and contribute to the common good (Cahill, 1996, 164). Similarly, Paul Jersild claims that a considerable change is necessary in the perception of the human body; we have to realize that our body is not a mere physical shrine for the soul but that it also makes us into a psychosomatic being. He considers biological life

an integral part of spiritual life, the physical and spiritual life form a mutual unity, as the body enables spiritual life and, vice versa, spiritual life directs and guides physical life (Jersild, 2008, 51).

Nevertheless, it is also in Protestant Churches, within Protestant ethics, where a sufficient number of conservative views regarding perception of the body and sexuality can be found, although it could generally be stated that Protestant Churches are, in most cases, more liberal than the Catholic or Orthodox Church. The American Lutheran author James M. Childs, Jr. admits that such issues as same-sex marriages will also have to be dealt with; however, he does not express his opinion, but rather takes a wait-and-see position (Childs, 2004, 64). Timothy J. Wengert points out, somewhat indirectly, in connection to the previous opinion that one of the fundamental books on declaration of faith in the Evangelical Church, *The Book of Concordia*, emphasizes the meaning and value of matrimony as exceeding all cultures and societies; marriage enables people to embark on the journey of life. He considers matrimony the noblest and most universal way of life (Wengert, 2009, 16). A similarly careful statement can also be seen in another American Lutheran author, Gilbert Meilaender, who prefers adoption to biomedical experiments of the IVF (in vitro fertilization) type. He interprets the desire to have one's own biological child, which parents wish to fulfill by means of artificial insemination, as a reproductive project. In his opinion, the child is not a gift but a product; he questions its dignity (based on Kantian dignity), as, in his opinion, this does not concern life but project realization. If there are people whom God did not bless with children, they should not keep trying newer and newer reproduction technologies and aim at exceeding the limitations of their bodies; they need to make their peace with it and use adoption as the way of realizing God's intention in their lives (Meilaender, 2004, 121–4).

III. KIŠŠ'S CONCEPT OF HUMANIZED (HUMANE) DEONTOLOGY

It was not until after 1989, or possibly until the turn of the 21st century, that a modern, or more liberal, perception of the human body and sexuality became "topical" in Central European Christian theology and ethics, more so in Protestant than Catholic and Orthodox environments. The Slovak Lutheran theologian and ethicist Igor Kišš (1932–), the author of many works on various issues within contemporary ethics and bioethics or medical ethics, is definitely one of the most significant contemporary Protestant bioethicists in Central Europe. In his works, he also touches upon the issue of the body and the possibility of interference in its natural form (Grešo and Klátik, 2004, 11–24, 266–290). Kišš devoted himself to these issues most systematically in his work *Social Ethics* (2006), the second most extensive part of

which is a chapter on medical ethics. It is especially (although not only) in this reasoning where his viewpoint, which he calls humanized (or humane) deontology based on ethics of commitment toward the commandment, is expressed most markedly. On the other hand, he claims that if love toward thy neighbor calls for it and it is supported by other ethical values, in certain situations, we have to divert from the commandment and not assert unwaveringly on the rigorous form of the commandment. In his statement,

Deontology...must be ridded of rigidity and, based on ethics of values and good, taking the given situation and teleological viewpoint (consequences) into consideration, while emphasising intentional ethics, it has to be humanised. Therefore, we suggest the principle of humane deontology as the solution to the problem of norm determination. It is...teleological deontology. (Kišš, 2006, 60)

The meaning and purpose of the notion of humane or humanized deontology could be considered disputable. At first, it might appear mutually incompatible. However, if there is Kantian utilitarianism (R. M. Hare), Kantian consequentialism (D. Cummiskey), utilitarianism or rule consequentialism (R. B. Brandt, B. Hooker), and so forth, why should humane or humanized deontology, or teleological deontology, not be accepted. Based on the cognition of all his relevant works in ethics, I am of the opinion that Kišš merely uses deontology as a primary framework or a starting point for his ethical and moral ideas. Teleological, or directly consequentialist, arguments are critical criteria for evaluation and conclusion drawing. According to him, in ethics, it is incorrect to meet any requirement dogmatically and regardless of the circumstances. One always has to bear in mind the consequences to which a particular action leads (Kišš, 2002, 5). This can also be seen in his attitude toward gene technology (Kišš, 2006, 206–7) and embryonic stem cell research (Kišš, 2006, 215–6; 2009, 211–9). In spite of the fact that, to give reasons for his viewpoint, Kišš uses theological argumentation, in a vast majority of cases, there are consequences that are given priority ahead of strict or even dogmatic keeping of rules. Rules are merely a framework for reasoning and decision making. When analyzing Kišš's opinions expressed in his works of, approximately, the past 15 years, I came to the following conclusion: in the presented viewpoints, much more teleology (and possibly even consequentialism) than deontology can be found, and it would probably be more appropriate to name the theory in question deontological teleology. To me, it appears as a better representation of the order of importance of criteria and their role for the final decision making in and evaluation of individual ethical and moral issues. Igor Kišš himself is not against such a conclusion, which is also confirmed by his statement that, in a part of Protestant theological ethics, of which he is also a supporter, there is an effort to merge correctly understood deontology and teleology with consequentialism (Kišš, 2011, 16). In such a case, the above theory of humanized deontology could even be named a theological form of ethics of social consequences (Gluchman, 2008, 161).

IV. MEDICAL ETHICS IN KIŠŠ'S THEORY

Within medical ethics, Kišš deals with highly topical issues of the present day, which, to various extents, stir up emotions in the countries of Central Europe, such as abortion, euthanasia, organ transplants, IVF, genetic engineering, embryonic stem cell research, and so forth. In connection to his standpoint on humane deontology, he usually formulates two positions with their own relevance and justification; however, they can lead to two different (often contradictory) conclusions. In Kišš, two forms of ethics are concerned: absolute ethics (for the Kingdom of Heaven and its ideals) and relativist ethics, based on man's weakness, his imperfection, and inability to fulfill unconditional orders or meet ideals, creating space for such people to be able to live in accordance with moral requirements not as strict as those of absolute ethics (Kišš, 2002, 21–38; 2008, 411–3). Kišš's relativist ethics is human, adjusted to the potential and abilities of man; it is liberal and is of this world. This, with regard to the issues of medical ethics in question, means that, in a way, absolute principles and norms refusing abortions, euthanasia, genetic engineering, embryonic stem cell research, and so forth, are formulated. Then, it is quite natural that Kišš claims "*Lutheran ethics is fundamentally against abortion, provided no especially justified case is concerned, as it is in contradiction with God's will to maintain life*" (Kišš, 2006, 182). Similarly, with regard to euthanasia, the following statement can be found: "to take a man's life, from an ethical viewpoint, is not homicide (such as in the case of an animal), it is murder. This is where we come into conflict with God's 5th commandment '*Thou shall not kill*'. It is not allowed [...] to take another man's life" (Kišš, 2006, 186).

On the other hand, he bases his thoughts on the idea that a strict standpoint grounded in biblical or Christian arguments in society cannot be legalized in the form of a law, as there are also non-Christians living in this country. This could be considered praiseworthy, as it respects society's heterogeneity in its worldview. He, however, consequently, morally justifies the use of liberal law also by Christians. I would have to state that Kišš has found a way for abortion and euthanasia to be accepted, or morally justified, also from a Christian viewpoint, provided strictly defined conditions are met. At present, he pays the closest attention to such topical issues as IVF, genetic engineering, and stem cell research. With regard to these issues, Kišš, on the one hand, strictly, in the intentions of his standpoint of humanized deontology, points out that

God is predominantly a Preserver of this world. This is, therefore, also a programme for biotechnology. Biotechnological interference cannot get into contradiction with the maintaining of the universe, it cannot ever serve for the destruction of the universe or man. Should there be something which serves humanity and man, it is also acceptable for biotechnological actions. Humanity must become litmus paper for the approval of even daring biotechnological projects. (Kišš, 2006, 206)

Kišš bases his viewpoint not only on theological, ethical and moral but also on social and sociological grounds connected to his perception of the Church and his attitude toward it. In his opinion,

The Church should not be set upon ethical norms whose validity is questionable, if love for thy neighbour requires their reinterpretation. It is not good to provoke people by extreme ethical requirements, since it might embitter people towards the Church. The Church should not go against common sense represented by so many governments in the world. (Kišš, 2006, 216)

However, a question and a doubt arise whether the decision of a government, that is, the law can justify a moral standpoint. I am not sure about that; it appears to me that Kišš succumbs too excessively to legal justification. On the other hand, by doing so, he gains advantage in the defence in face of conservative authors since he finds support for his opinions in the decisions of governments.

It could, thus, be stated that Kišš brings to his understanding of ethics based on Christological love or love of God a significant secularized element, which seemingly weakens the theological dimension of this theory; on the other hand, it also increases the possibility of its acceptance outside the religious or theological environments, within philosophical and secular thinking in general. Teodor Münz also claimed that Igor Kišš has been dealing with science, technology, and medicine for a long time; he largely tries to support secular solutions with theological ones, which, according to Münz, proves that Lutheran theology and ethics in Slovakia are trying to run with the times (Münz, 1998, 93–5).

V. SEXUAL ETHICS WITHIN HUMANIZED (HUMANE) DEONTOLOGY

According to Kišš, there is some (although not absolute) connection between morality and man's health, and, to prove it, he provides examples from Italy (the negative example of mafia members) and the United States (the positive example of healthier people living morally). Then he claims that moral life is rewarded with longevity (Kišš, 2006, 13–4). A natural part of moral life is also sex, which, in his opinion, is something given to man by the Creator.¹ Mankind must reproduce. Efforts to suppress sexual desire as a manifestation of Christian perfection, predominantly preached by medieval ascetic devotion, is, in his eyes, unreal for a majority of people; it is an illusion.² If sex is a physiological need in an ordinary healthy person, then, according to Kišš, not even priests can be made celibate en masse. Those who can truly be celibate should become celibate priests. However, those who cannot physiologically manage should pursue a virtuous priestly marriage rather than a hypocritical breaking of celibacy. If sex is a physiological need for most people, then the question should be asked whether the Roman Catholic Church, requiring all priests to be celibate without exception, is

not actually inhumane toward its priests. Lutheran ethics, thus, considers compulsory celibacy unethical (Kišš, 2006, 156–7). Kišš is truly a very liberal Protestant theologian exceeding common boundaries of Christian ethics, or, rather, common sense morality, who breaks the “taboo” of sex, often still persisting in the Roman Catholic Church.

Kišš’s above viewpoint corresponds, to a considerable extent, with J. B. Nelson’s idea and his perception of sexual theology, since, according to Nelson, the core of sexual theology does not lie in one-sided lectures by theologians about the need to “moralize” our body, but rather a conversation, which also implies the need to listen to our body, to think theologically about and with our body. According to him, sexuality is a source of our desire, joy, and pleasure, but also shame and pain, which is why it has to be in the centre of our attention and also that of theology, without suppressing it or considering it bad and sinful (Nelson, 1995, 46).

Kišš also takes a highly interesting approach to the issue of homosexuality. According to him, one must differentiate between two kinds of homosexuality. He calls one type a self-indulgent homosexual or lesbian way of life. On the other hand, he claims that there is also inborn homosexuality. A man is simply born that way. He states many of these people feel really bad when, in their youth, they realize this strange tendency in themselves. They would like to be freed of it. And, still, they are not able to achieve it. It seems that they were given it at their birth. This is not self-indulgent homosexuality (such as when someone immorally consorts with people of the same sex), but inborn homosexuality, sexual deviation, with which a man was born and which he cannot help. Many are really brave in fighting homosexuality. Instead of showing resentment toward such people in the Church, Kišš recommends feeling grateful we are not in their shoes. He points out that society is getting humanized, which is why attitudes toward homosexuals are becoming more relaxed. Many countries have passed antidiscrimination laws that protect homosexuals from being affected at work or socially. He remarks we should not forget that the Nazis sent homosexuals to concentration camps where they were killed. This is no longer the case (Kišš, 2006, 161–3). It must be asserted that, in Kišš’s case, these are very up-to-date liberal opinions, far ahead of majority standpoints of Christian ethics, or theology, especially in Central Europe, which intensely irritate Catholic and other conservative Christian authors.³ According to Kišš, there are, however, *two kinds of moral liberalism*: we can talk about liberalism of boundless disdain of moral command without any ethical restraint; on the other hand, there is Jesus-like “liberalism,” which enables the respect of serious moral reasons in fulfilling the commandments in a different way, giving priority to the love of thy neighbor (Kišš, 2008, 413). It is, however, questionable whether the first type can be considered liberalism at all, or whether it should be called nihilism or axiological anarchism instead, as it is difficult to identify liberalism with the idea that, actually, “anything is allowed.”

VI. ETHICAL AND MORAL ISSUES OF ORGAN DONATION

Kišš's attitude toward organ donation is also very important. He has come to the conclusion that donating something of one's own life for the life of others is analogical to Christ's deed, who sacrificed himself for the eternal life of others. This is what we should be concerned with: an effort to renew humanity in mankind, so that we realize that all people are one large family and each should help the other. We should not egotistically put human bodily organs in the ground or on fire in crematoria, but, if possible, they should be used as transplants and help others. On the other hand, he remarks "... donating a bodily organ, although a highly moral deed, is not a moral obligation" (Kišš, 2006, 194). According to Kišš, donation of bodily organs after one's death for the benefit of others is an altruistic act, which should be highly valued but cannot be enforced. The moral value of this act lies in the fact that it is completely voluntary. From an ethical viewpoint, it is, therefore, impossible to sell bodily organs or pay for their provision for transplantation. In this way, they would lose their ethical value (Kišš, 2006, 194).

Although Kišš's standpoint is, in many instances, very liberal, or even consequentialist, it is in contradiction to the views of the American Protestant ethicists Larry Torcell and Stephen Wear. These authors are of the opinion that selling organs for transplantation is in accordance with Protestant emphasis on individual choice and autonomous responsibility of an individual in front of God, which means prioritizing one's free choice. According to them, no one can make the donor accept money, but, on the other hand, no one can make him behave in a certain predetermined way. This, however, is not the final solution to the lack of organs for transplantation but merely one possible answer or alternative (Torcello and Wear, 2000, 168). Nevertheless, in both attitudes, an emphasis is laid on the consequences resulting from organ transplants, which all above authors find unambiguously positive. A dismissive Catholic attitude toward selling organs for transplantation is expressed by William E. Stempsey, who finds the preservation of human dignity based on the integrity of the body and soul more important than free will in disposing of one's body, and also the possibility to sell one's own bodily organs (Stempsey, 2000, 203). At first, it could seem that Kišš's opinion is, in this case, closer to the Catholic than the Protestant position. Nevertheless, his older opinion should be remembered, dismissing cold rigor and formalism of extremist deontology, "... as it lacked humanity and love towards man in his, many a time, complicated life situation", in spite of this position being often, in his opinion, glorified as principled and highly ethical (Kišš, 1996, 134). I am of the opinion that, according to Kišš's humanized deontology, selling organs for transplantation could be even, possibly, accepted and justified morally or considered right action. According to him, what should come first is love for one's neighbor and, although in this case the love is not altruistic, its outcome is still so much needed help to a suffering person. It seems that Kišš, in his statement on the

possibility of selling organs, puts deontological standpoint before teleological, which I do not find consistent with his initial principles.

VII. IVF FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF KIŠŠ'S THEORY

In connection to the topical matter of IVF, Kišš has come to a clear conclusion that children bring joy and fulfillment to married life, and therefore, the church should not dogmatically prevent achieving family happiness. He claims that adoption preferred by the Roman Catholic Church and some other conservative authors (such as the above Meilaender) is not identical with the joy a woman experiences when bearing a child and feeling happy when it is born. According to him, the Church should be happy for those who feel joy and not obstruct them in doing so, or threaten them with excommunication. Based on his initial proposition on prioritizing humanity, he came to an extraordinary conclusion:

Love for our neighbour binds us to not pose fake moralising obstacles to IVF by pointing out the death of redundant embryos. Here, a clear priority should be given to the lesser evil (that a redundant embryo dies) before the greater evil (that a new person will not be born). In Christianity, love for our neighbour is the major ethical commandment and all secondary arguments must step aside for it. This new possibility of a new life being born, which, otherwise, would not happen, was given to us by God by means of science and we must not refuse it. This is what Christ did too when, for the love of his neighbour, he was willing to break the Sabbath law (Kišš, 2006, 201).

Kišš formulates the principle of love thy neighbor and the lesser evil in various connections as the initial principle of his social ethics, and he also applies it consistently to the area of medical ethics (Kišš, 2008, 413), which, undoubtedly, creates conditions for exceeding limits, overcoming prejudice or obsolete conservative standpoints of Christian ethics in the Central European religious environment.

VIII. KIŠŠ'S VIEW ON GENETIC ENGINEERING AND EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

Kišš takes a similar standpoint toward genetic research, including research of embryonic stem cells. He claims disapproving viewpoints on genetic engineering, generally based on arguments that man wants to play God, are groundless because an increase in man's scientific potential is in accordance with God's intentions and genetics, which should really be (gen)ethics, and must not be in contradiction with these intentions. According to Kišš, the consequences for mankind resulting from its development are a criterion to evaluate whether genetics is directed correctly:

One must respect that which is naturally given to the world. One should not try to be cleverer than God and create some kind of sub-humans or super-humans. In science, no interferences should be made whose impact is unclear or uncertain. With man's every interference in the living space, the question should be asked whether possible consequences can be annulled or stopped, should they turn out to be harmful for mankind. *As God is love, each biotechnological interference must also be a manifestation of humanity* (Kišš, 2006, 206).

Therefore, the theological standpoint of his view is love thy neighbor and "Jesus-like" liberalism directed at placing the emphasis on humanity and the consequences of our actions, which is the core of the critical relationship toward embryonic research (Kišš, 2009, 211–9). It is then possible to state that consequentialism in Kišš becomes a criterion for the evaluation of gene technologies, and a theological view on this is rather secondary; priority is univocally given to science and the interests of man and mankind. It is up to God to confirm whether it is right and whether it should be accepted and supported. I hold the view that this is, primarily, a secular philosophical rather than theological standpoint. On the other hand, the following should be pointed out: while Kišš is quite careful in his liberalism toward genetic engineering with regard to mankind, he is more liberal toward animals and plants. That is to say that, in his opinion, nothing should stand in the way of man carrying out genetic research on animals and plants, which has human welfare for its goal, such as an increase in food production, treatment of diseases, and so forth. Purposeful genetic engineering should serve people. Another argument to support this view reads as follows: "if a biotechnological intervention on an animal fails, the animal can easily be disposed of" (Kišš, 2006, 207). Kišš, when man is concerned, appeals to a major caution; he places humanity on the highest level, and in all other cases, he is too "liberal," that is, everything else living can be subjected to genetic experimenting for the benefit of man's needs. He thus holds a view that, at first, appears strongly anthropocentrically directed and corresponding with his preferred humanity and man's needs. However, he also points out that even though man is the pinnacle of creation, he has no right to treat animals in an undignified and cruel way. According to him, medical experiments on animals are morally justifiable—only provided they serve treatment or save human lives (Kišš, 2006, 260–1).

In spite of having partial reservations with regard to his opinions, it should be pointed out that, especially in German Protestant ethics, there is a strong tendency to prefer an open approach to contemporary science and medicine on the one hand and secular philosophy and ethics on the other. This can, for instance, be seen in the approach of Ralph Charbonnier, who, in connection to the documents of the German Evangelical Church (EKD), came to the conclusion that the present era requires Christian ethics to provide authentic manifestations of Christian belief based on explanation of the Holy Scripture on the one hand, but, at the same time, also to accept the knowledge contained in law, philosophy, and science, as this is the only way to contribute to a pluralistic

discourse in society (Charbonnier, 2008, 105). On the part of conservative authors, accusations can quite frequently be heard of liberal Protestant ethicists succumbing to secular influences, which, according to Ulrich Eibach, could lead as far as Protestant ethicists finding their way to secular positions, which, allegedly in the case of some bioethical problems, might evoke a connection to supporting Nazi crimes in eugenics (Eibach, 2008, 59). This is certainly an inadequate parable if we think about the aversion of significant representatives of the German Evangelical Church toward Hitler and Nazism, such as in the approaches of Paul Tillich, Karl Barth, Martin Niemöller, and many others. Likewise, Igor Kišš's approach regarding genetic engineering and gene research stimulates critical views among conservative authors in Slovakia. For instance, the Catholic author Igor Smelý, in response to Kišš's older opinions and his liberal approach to modern biotechnology, accused him of genocide, disrespect for human life, easing the situation and consequences which could lead to, for example, killing of the Mozambicans (Smelý, 2003, 69–70).

IX. CONCLUSION

Based on this analysis, it could be stated that Igor Kišš represents the modern, liberal approach of Central European Protestant ethics toward bioethical issues of the present day, including those regarding the perception of the human body and sexuality. By taking a liberal standpoint and drawing liberal conclusions, he even exceeds, in many aspects, the secular philosophical and bioethical way of present-day thinking in Central Europe and is participating in modern theological, philosophical, and bioethical discussions worldwide. He managed to cleverly combine theological points based on the teachings of Jesus Christ with axioms contained in the teachings of Martin Luther and present-day liberal views of Protestant ethics. What I value most in Kišš's theory of humanized deontology is his ability to interconnect present-day theological ethics with contemporary consequentialist ethical thoughts. He created preconditions for modern, topical, and liberal standpoints that also enable Christian believers, especially Lutherans, to make decisions based either on absolute ethics of the Holy Kingdom or on a more moderate position of humanized deontology. At its forefront, there is the principle of humanity expressed by the commandment of love thy neighbor and the right to choose and make decisions based on consequences resulting from our actions. I especially value the emphasis on humanity in every single aspect of the presented ethical theory. Humanity is the alpha and omega of all Kišš's reasoning on the solution of present-day ethical and moral issues and, as a result, in the above theory, becomes a goal to which he subjects everything else, even theology and religion since, in his understanding, Christianity is a religion of humanity. Christianity can be either a religion of humanity, that is, understanding the needs of contemporary man and helping with his problems in order to preserve its existence, or a religion commanding and enforcing obedience,

which could also cause the decadence of Christianity and the loss of influence on the life of Christians and society in general.

NOTES

1. The opinion of the most significant Slovak Enlightenment author of the 18th century, Augustín Doležal (1737–1802), should not be left unmentioned. In his most remarkable work, *Tragedy memorable to the entire world or the versed story of the grievous fall of the first parents (Pamětná celém světu Tragoedia, anebožto Veršované vypsání žalostného Prvných Rodičů Pádu ...)* (1791), he claimed the following through Biblical Eve: “I have found that marital desire (sexual—V. G.’s note) makes God and people happy” (Doležal, 1791, 305). Doležal, therefore, did not perceive sexual love and desire as a sin; on the contrary, together with God, he saw the joy that it brings people. This was truly a very progressive and liberal view for the given era and, especially, for a religious author if we consider the pietistic movement, which, in the period in question, held a significant position in Protestantism. For illustration, the opinion by a predecessor of German pietism, Johann Arndt (1555–1621), can be presented here. He wrote “[...] hate his own life, that is, the fleshly lusts and desires such as pride, covetousness, lust, wrath, and envy; have no pleasure in himself, and consider all his acts as nothing; praise himself for nothing; ascribe no power for himself; attempt to attribute nothing to himself but mistrust himself; die to the world, that is, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life; be crucified to the world” (Arndt, 1979/1606, 42).

2. Richard van Dülmen, with regard to the end of the Middle Ages, writes that the Reformation and modern times brought a new ideal of a Christian person, who was not a medieval monk any more but an active ascetic Christian who conquered the sensual world and also reformed it. Dülmen, however, points out that this was not an effort for a better, happier world, but, more or less, for an ideal of the puritan Christian life that, according to him, determined man’s image until well into the age of Enlightenment (van Dülmen, 2005). As could be seen in the example of Augustín Doležal’s work, Puritanism did not apply to the entire period of the Enlightenment. Doležal, for instance, came to the conclusion that it is wrong to look for happiness only in the soul, because we are not ghosts, we also have a body, and, therefore, to be happy, we need more than mind (Doležal, 1791, 44). Another statement of his sounds similarly modern and progressive, which says that one should also look after his body while we live in this earthly realm and also enjoy pleasure in this sinful vain world (Doležal, 1791, 234). Should Doležal’s thoughts expressed at the end of the 18th century be compared with discussions in Christian ethics, or theology, at the turn of the 21st century regarding its view on the human body or human sexuality, it must be stated that Augustín Doležal by far exceeded his era; his views can be univocally considered almost contemporary, corresponding to topical discussions in Christian ethics.

3. One of the most significant Christian bioethicists, H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., expressed a highly critical statement on Protestantism and Protestant ethics for its fairly frequent liberal views of homosexuality. According to him, because Protestant Churches moved away from their own values and history, they are incompatible with Christianity of the first centuries and succumb to postmodern influences (Engelhardt, 2009, 89).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The article is an outcome of the project VEGA 1/0327/11 *The History of Ethical Thinking in Slovakia in the 19th and 20th Centuries* and project APVV-0432-10 *Situation and Perspectives of Professional Ethics in Slovakia*.

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