Book Review about

Social Analysis for the 21st Century

written by Maria Cimperman

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Author's Purpose for Writing this Book

- Main Point

The process of the pastoral spiral is to make Christians alive to the world and its people in ways that move and motivate them to do something to improve life and to respond. It helps Christians position themselves and the world with people in ways that move Christians to care and respond in solidarity to see all of the lives as interlinked.[1]

- Desired Impact

Through this book, Cimperman aims to assist movement to create the world that God invites, the world in which people live to their full flourishing, and in which all creation is treated as created by God and thus sacred.[2]

Author's Social Analysis of the Urban Context

1. When people look at the world, what do they see?

Cimperman explains people's specific perspectives not only shape what people understand and do but also determine what people see. Cimperman describes both in turn are influencing together how people respond in societies. Because many factors are continuously involved and moving in people's seeing, Cimperman emphasizes that there is always more to a situation than is immediately visible.[3] For these reasons, the understandings of the complexity of the situation should be needed to help people to gain right and robust perspectives on society.

2. Why are these situations the way they are?

Cimperman asserts people who have examined the situations of the world must begin to ask questions about why these situations are the way they are.[4] Because this question helps to seek out the cause of a situations and gives clues of how to respond to these symptoms in societies. Cimperman indicates the main causes of the problems of the world is the gaps between people include access to resources, power, and opportunities.[5] Therefore, the work of social analysis must be taken on within the context of realities with the understandings of the interrelated

[1] Maria Cimperman, *Social Analysis for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), p.225)
[2] Ibid., 6.
[3] Ibid., 6.
[4] Ibid., 6.

complexity of societies. Also, Christians must have the perspective that the reign of God is both here and not yet in these situations.[6]

<u>Author's Urban Theological Reflection</u>

- Biblical Themes and Principle

"The kingdom of heaven has come near." (Matt. 10:7), "Your kingdom come!" (Matt. 6:10)

The reign of God has happened already and is progressing in the present hour. The reign of God was made visible and tangible by Jesus Christ. Also, it is appearing through the people of God and their way of life. People of God must do their part through participation in the reign to manifest God's love and power in the world.[7] The reign of God as present and near gives the confidence to the people of God to participate in God's transformation of society.[8] The pastoral spiral can be effectively used to respond to this responsibility of God's people.

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

Jesus showed the way of love. Jesus taught people to love God and to love neighbors. No one and nothing escapes this call and command to love in Jesus Christ. The disciples of Jesus must listen and hear the cries of neighbors, of all creation to take the right actions through the transformation of the systems to create a better world.[9] The pastoral spiral is a powerful tool, which can be applied in these transformational processes.

- Theological Framework

The people of God are blessed and called to be stewards to keep and love all God's creations. Despite the rebellion of human beings, God sent Jesus Christ to show His love and to actualize His reign in the world. Jesus taught people to love God and neighbors and showed His love of all creations to the world. As disciples of Jesus, the people of God must follow Jesus' way and have

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[5] Maria Cimperman, *Social Analysis for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), p.9)
[6] Ibid., 4.
[7] Ibid., 41-42.
[8] Ibid., 18.
[9] Ibid., 10.

a responsibility to respond to make a better world for the glory of God. Christians need to pay attention to the problems of the world and must endeavor to remove the reasons to manifest God's love and reign in those situations. The pastoral spiral should be used by God's people for the accomplishment of this purpose.

Author's Theological Implementation

1. Experience

Cimperman encourages people to choose an issue that begins with a conversation among people who see an unmet need or issue of injustice. After choosing the topic, as disciples of Jesus, Cimperman exhorts people to respond in love to change the unjust situation. She asserts that through sharing information and experience, people would open themselves to transformation.[10]

2. Social Analysis

Cimperman emphasizes that during the analysis of specific social situations, Christians must make efforts to bring forth God's kingdom by loving God and loving neighbors as the value of this process. Also, Cimperman advises that bias is usually present in all social analyses.[11]

3. Faith Reflection

Cimperman describes that this stage of the process is the point at which Christians discern the direction they sense that God is inviting them to respond.[12] Cimperman emphasizes that in this stage, participants need openness, radical dependence on, and availability to God and community as followers of Jesus.[13]

4. Action

When Christians move to action, Cimperman teaches that people need to trust the vision that led them here.[14] Cimperman encourages people not to be overwhelmed by adversity. She asserts that

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[10] Maria Cimperman, *Social Analysis for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), p. 58)
[11] Ibid., 81.
[12] Ibid., 126.
[13] Ibid., 145.
[14] Maria Cimperman, *Social Analysis for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), p.149)

people need to anticipate challenges and teaches that people can overcome these fearful factors with the gift of faith, hope, and love in God.[15]

Impression

- Importance of Humility

Through this book reading, I could learn the importance of humility, which is needed in every process of the pastoral spiral. As disciples of Jesus, we, Christians, must pay attention to the marginalized and the disenfranchised in the society with a teachable heart to actualize the reign of God in the world. Without humbling ourselves, we are not able to receive new insights, and we cannot remove our own biases to see different patterns with correctness. Furthermore, without humility, we would not cooperate with other people in every stage of the pastoral spiral because this process cannot be accomplished without collaboration and partnership.

- The necessity of Collaboration and Partnership

In every stage of the pastoral spiral, collaboration and partnership are indispensable for the successful process. To collect accurate information and various opinions, the participation of diverse people and groups is essential and mandatory. Also, to run an effective social analysis, we need broad research and discussion with various specialists and participants. In the stage of faith reflection, communal discernment is crucial to move forward according to God's guidance. When we take action, of course, we act for the community, act in the community and with the community. To create a better world and to implement the reign of God in our society, more and more communities need to be invited to participate in the vision of God's world. Through these collaborations and partnerships, we, Christians, will be able to build one global body of Christ to actualize the reign of God with our love and actions for justice.

Bibliography

[15] Ibid., 166-168.

Cimperman, Maria. *Social Analysis for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015.