



Dear friends,

With many of the most basic terms of Christianity we seem to have our problems today. These old phrases are often too far away from the current mainstream in the world we live. Who would in the eyes of the world like to be characterized for example as 'humble', 'chaste' or even 'meek'?

The word 'to serve' also suffers from this shift in language. Serving jobs are poorly demanded. Many of the caring positions in hospitals are held by people from developing countries. The 'servant' became an 'attendant', and the public values the most booming jobs of managers and consultants.

The dominating pursuit of self-realization makes dedicated commitment look stupid. When people shake their heads at and lack understanding for any kind of service without immediate reward, one starts to doubt whether to serve would not be just a sign of weakness.

The crisis of serving is a crisis of humanity. Looking at Jesus Christ who came to serve, service should then be filled with joy. And Christians become once again the leaven of civilization.

*For a new Culture of Life,
Your Europe for Christ! Team*

PS: don't forget the daily Our Father for a Europe embedded in Christian values.

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On Serving
by Dr. Hans Thomas

The word "minister" is Latin and means "servant". That may sound rather farfetched. Today, this may be more distant than ever. To the changes of modernity belongs – along with the pursuit of autonomy of man and the farewell to God – also the shift in comprehension of lordship: lordship over nature and over man. The aspect of serving was more and more pushed back. The totalitarianisms of the 20th century discredited the term even further so that finally "serving" became something negative: something like subservientness or submission.



Also the discussion about elites and all criticism of elites are related to the crisis of 'serving'.

The term elite though it is closely connected to the notion of serving. The question at stake is: are elites those that are supposed to serve in a special way or those who best know how to serve themselves?

The gospel gives a clear answer to that question: "...whosoever would become greatest among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister..." (Mt 20:26f).

Have we forgotten this attitude in spite of a rapidly growing service sector? Did the parting from God also shed a negative light on the term service? This is tragic, especially because of those who wanted to "abolish God".

The main characters of the French Revolution, considered themselves a "serving avant-garde". This avant-garde believed to have a "truly priestly duty", that is, to "exercise a positive authority on society", so Claude Henry de Saint Simon (1760-1825). He congratulated the citizens to their new elites who "will serve you as an avant-garde". To be elite therefore includes being an example, an example in serving.

Reading newspapers or watching TV about daily bribery scandals and corruption involving 'those up there' makes it easy to understand why so many connect with 'elite' those who know how to skim off the top and leave the left-overs to the rest. But what is really troubling about this is the fact that 'those up there' are actually envied in spite of this. The attitude: 'after all, they made it' makes them even role models.

No wonder that in the so-called 'serving jobs' young people are missing, at least statistically. But looking at the next-door mother who cares for her sick child, the doctor who is available also at 3 a.m., the master craftsman or entrepreneur who cannot sleep because of problems to keep all his employees, all those who toil without attracting attention to satisfy clients or employers – above all being friendly and happy – and those numerous married couples and parents who remain faithful in good and bad times, whoever sees and realizes this is touched by so much silent heroism of serving. And this is, in the end, what really counts.

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