

Dissertation Abstract

“TOWARDS AN ADEQUATE ANTHROPOLOGY FOR THE REDEMPTIVE ORDER:
A Study of the Pauline Understanding of the Human Person and the Implications for
Evangelization”

Candidate: Stella Marie Jeffrey

Drawing primarily from Paul’s letter to the Romans, this dissertation seeks to articulate some key anthropological principles that inform Paul’s understanding of the conversion/redemption process, in order to ground the “new evangelization.” Fundamentally, Paul held that man is made *imago Dei* (an identity fully revealed in Jesus Christ) and man is fully himself only with the Holy Spirit. Having been initiated in the Faith, Paul relies in an *essential* way upon the Holy Spirit who simultaneously unites him in Jesus Christ to the Church (His Body) and personally dwells within him. Through his *relationship with* and *mediation of* the Holy Spirit with his spirit, Paul participates in the further extension of the redemptive order by bringing others into the same encounter, conversion, and transformative process that he had experienced, been united with, and continues to participate in. For *unbelievers*, Paul also presumes a *connatural* openness (not an indwelling) toward the Holy Spirit, who exteriorly prompts and awaits the person’s “yes” to the Gospel. In sum, for Paul, by grace, evangelization is a co-operative redemptive mission, initiated by God, which constitutively includes the being, operations, and actions of both divine and human persons.

In contrast, the modern view embraces a reductive anthropology, which fails to uphold and enact this essential co-operative nature of the evangelical mission. Consequently, a crisis of faith has arisen. Most critically, there is a dual presumption that *relationship in general* and *relationship between the human and divine* is exterior to man, i.e. ontologically negligible. Neglecting the ontological relevance of *relationship in general*, renders the inextricable *relationship between the human person and God* as unnecessary and leads to over-emphasizing the isolated individual. Isolated as such, each man claims a freedom from God, from others, and from one’s concrete being, claiming an existence consisting of only one’s self-perceived inner core, his “self” or “I.” Thus, his existential “yes” to whatever/whomever he assents to is the only truly important factor in faith. The antidote to this reductive anthropology that debilitates the co-operative mission of evangelization is a return to the full, integrated, and organic anthropology held by Paul and the apostolic church.