

Alexandru Lazar, Maxim (Iuliu-Marius) Morariu, Șamșudean Dragoș, Buta Ioan-Adrian, *Mozaic Teologic: (In)Formare și Digitalizare*, Napoca Star, Cluj-Napoca, 2022, 165 P.

The 2022 volume called „Mozaic Teologic” is an extremely significant contemporary theological work which consists of articles written by theologians like Father Deacon Alexandru Lazar, Father Maxim (Iuliu) Morariu, Dragos Samsudean, and Adrian-Ioan Buta. The work contributes to the world of theological studies and enthusiasts. It gathers together different perspectives concerning faith, spirituality, and ecclesiology. All these genius theologians have large sections of articles in the book, but this specific work will focus exclusively on Alexandru Lazar’s section called, “the End of the Nineteenth Century and the Beginning of the ‘Century of universal salvation’ Possible Causes of the Development of Christian Universalism.” Drd. Alexandru Lazar is a theologian, scientific researcher, PhD student at Isidor Todoran Doctoral Institute of Theology, from Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, graduate of Faculty of Theology, former member of “Star UBB” Institute and Student College of Academic Performance, from the same university. Alexandru Lazar’s section stands out for it profoundly provides the intersections between tradition and modern theological thinking. Among the other writers, Lazar approaches theology not only academically, but also as a living dialogue which comes together with the realities of what humans experience in their lives. Here we will aim to complete an analyzation of his key themes and contributions of Lazar’s section in „Mozaic Teologic” and highlight his approach to traditional theology including its implications for contemporary Christian practice.

One of the main themes in Alexandru Lazar’s writing is the deep interaction between tradition and modernity. His argument is that, while theology has its roots in historic and doctrinal foundations of our faith, it should be adaptable to the ever-changing cultural contexts of modern society. Lazar says that a regular approach can be meaningless, because the Church should interact more with the lived experiences of the actual people in the Church. He emphasizes that essence of theological inquiry is in its ability to ask the questions and challenges brought forth by modern life, including ethical dilemmas, social justice, and dialogue within our faith. In addition, Lazar also continues to elaborate historical examples to show just how the Church had changed through the ages. He talks about the early Church’s response to philosophical challenges brought about by Hellenistic thoughts, demonstrating that adapting to new intellectual areas does not mean that it we leave tradition, but we continue it. This historical point of view helps back up his argument that tradition is dynamic, and it requires constant re-examining and reinterpretation considering when something new is introduced.

Alexandru Lazar begins his section by laying out his theological reflecting in the rich tradition of Christian thinking. His call to integrate historical theological perspectives with modern issues highlights his commitment to a theology that is both relevant and deeply rooted in Christian heritage. His focus at the start of his section is the topic of how exaggerated hell is preached in modern times, and he also reflects on percentages of how people say that they feel they were punished or rewarded by God. The very first phrase of his section (excluding the introduction) is “The English revolution did not radically change the belief in hell but rushed its evolution.” He then continues to use example like the French Revolution and how the Church survived after that by using the motto “not the new.”

Moreover, Alexandru Lazar keeps giving us credible quotes from different priests and bishops which speak of hell. There is a particularly intriguing part of his writing where he provides readers with percentage results on how various people from different countries believed if they have been rewarded by God or punished by Him. The statistics Alexandru Lazar provides indicate that “forty-one percent of adults believe that God rewarded them, while only eighteen percent believe that they were punished by God.” He also says that sixty-three percent of the faithful in Portugal believed that

God rewarded them, and the other twenty-three percent believed God punished them. He also lists other European countries' percentages on a chart in the book. This quote and list alone indicates Alexandru Lazăr's precise mind not only in theology, but in statistics as well, further reinforcing the fact that this writing of his holds a rather significant role in the theological community and anyone can understand him, not just students and teachers, making him highly respected in his field and a great writer and thinker, using exterior facts to prove his own thoughts at will. Later on in his section, Alexandru Lazăr also addresses how doubt in our faith affects us. By depicting doubt itself as a positive force, Lazăr encourages us to embrace our spiritual questions and to look for answers to them since our community is supportive in these instances and we have certain individuals who are very knowledgeable in their respective fields as well, with Lazăr being one of them. This specific approach also promotes a pattern where we can grow in our faith in God. Lazăr criticizes a type of Christianity that is specifically focused on individual salvation.

Lazăr also implies that certain preachers exaggerate their use of describing being a Christian. He says that the preachers say things like, "if you will follow Christ, you will be better." He then elaborates on this by saying that "this gives the impression that 'everyone is alright' and no one is 'lost' or 'broken' by sin." Lazăr then offers that it is not necessarily what the preacher says, but rather what the people hear, or perhaps what they want to hear for themselves. This indicates that people are either ignorant in their belief by interpreting what they hear for themselves, or simply arrogant and not true believers. Lazăr also emphasizes the need for a dialogue between different theological perspectives. He believes that engaging with diverse viewpoints can enrich the Church's understanding of complex issues. For instance, discussions surrounding bioethics, the environment, and human rights benefit from a varied approach that draws on both scriptural insights and historical perspectives. Nevertheless, certain dedicated believers still fight to be good and to respect their faith through confession and participation in Holy Communion, in order to repent and be saved.

In conclusion, Alexandru Lazăr's section in „Mozaic Teologic” serves as a vital contribution to the understanding of contemporary theology. Through his exploration of doctrinal development, ecclesiastical authority, and the role of tradition, he offers valuable insights that resonate with the challenges faced by the modern Church. Lazăr's work encourages a thoughtful engagement with both history and contemporary issues, fostering a theology that is both rooted in tradition and responsive to the needs of today's society. His emphasis on the importance of community and dialogue further enriches the discourse, paving the way for a more inclusive and dynamic understanding of faith in the 21st century. It serves as a clear call for a revitalized approach to theology that is deeply rooted in Scripture, responsive to contemporary challenges, and committed to community engagement. His insights encourage believers to embrace their faith not only as a personal conviction but as a transformative force in society, fostering both spiritual depth and social responsibility.

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