

**International Twin Consultation
Reformation – Education – Transformation
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**Churches in the public sphere – towards a public theology focused on
citizenship**

Rudolf von Sinner¹

Introduction: Religion in the public sphere – positive, ambiguous, nefarious

Dear colleagues, friends, sisters and brothers,

I am most thankful for the invitation to deliver this lecture before you who have come from near and far; it is indeed a joy and a great honour for me. I wish to share with you some reflections about the churches in the public sphere,² in part based on research developed throughout the last 14 years, in part under the impact from of the terrible recent events in Paris and elsewhere. There is no doubt, and Alexandre Brasil Fonseca's lecture made this very clear for the Brazilian context³: Religion is present in the public sphere – in a positive way, in an ambiguous way, in a nefarious way. As for the first, we have examples of the *contribution to citizenship* in many places – let us just remember the fundamental role of wide sectors of the Catholic church in this country in the resistance, practical and theological, against oppression, and in the construction of civil society in the times of the military regime. As for the second, the *ambiguity*, we have not few examples of the presence of churches on both sides of the trench, as was the case both in defence and defiance of the apartheid system in South Africa, especially on the part of the Reformed churches. We should remember the ambiguity in this country (Brazil) between conservative religious moral attitudes and progressive social attitudes, a conflict many times present within the same church. We should also remember the important social contribution from churches, on the one side, and the self-interested corporative religious lobby, on the other. One of the most visible symbols in a search for power, ever more publicly assumed, is the replica of the Temple of Solomon, constructed by the Neo-Pentecostal and multinational Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (*Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* - IURD). Its inauguration on July 31, 2014,

¹ Prof. Rudolf von Sinner is natural of Basel, Switzerland. He holds a doctorate from Basel University (2001) and a *Habilitation* from Berne University (2010). After two years of work in an ecumenical NGO in Salvador, Bahia, he took on, in 2003, a professorship at the Lutheran School of Theology (*Escola Superior de Teologia*), today *Faculdades EST* in São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, where he also acts as director of the Institute for Ethics and dean of post-graduate studies and research. He is an ordained minister of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (*Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil* - IECLB) and moderator of the World Council of Churches' Commission for Ecumenical Education and Formation. Contact: r.vonsinner@est.edu.br. I would like to acknowledge and thank for the critical and constructive return of my colleague Felipe Gustavo Koch Buttelli on a previous version of this text, and for the translation of my doctoral student Raphaelson Steven Zilse.

² Cf. Rudolf von Sinner, *The Churches and Democracy in Brazil: Towards a Public Theology Focused on Citizenship* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2012).

³ See his lecture published in this same volume.

with a massive presence of political authorities, envisioned to position the IURD as the Christian church *par excellence*.⁴

We also have the *nefarious role* of religion. To our horror, there is also violence with religious justification in many places of the world. In Brazil, verbal aggression is constant and, sometimes, also physical, especially against Afro-Brazilian religions.⁵ Looking into the world, we have several conflicts with religious connotations, besides political, economic and social ones – in Mali, in Syria, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Nigeria, to mention but some examples of places where many people die daily, from the same religion of the aggressors or from others. Yes, and this is a scandal, religious and secular: violence and death are a daily experience. The religions, as much as they may declare to be of peace and behave as if they were the owners of ethics, cannot, as it seems, effectively restrain this violence. Worse: there are cases where they, even if not openly, support violence and death as solution of conflicts. The situation of accentuated violence, so well described by Alexandre Brasil Fonseca, has the tendency of establishing itself as normality, and the death of the so-called “marginal” is seen as “natural”, there can even be explicit consent. The victims, in its great majority, poor, young and black, are seen as not having rights to any recognition of dignity. “A good outlaw is a dead one” (*bandido bom é bandido morto*), was made explicit by a recent research as the common attitude of half of the Brazilian population.⁶ And this without mentioning the social and environmental violence that always occurs and occurred these days in Brazil as part of the rupture of a dam in Mariana, Minas Gerais, on November 5, which polluted the Rio Doce for an extension of 500km and devastated this ecosystem for, probably, decades.⁷

Amidst this daily violence, in the centre of attention these days is the terror lived in Paris, in November 13, with the suicide attacks assumed by the self-entitled Islamic Estate. It is calling attention that the attackers killed without specific targets and did not demonstrate mercy for no one, not even for themselves. In the middle of the perplexity and the chaos in one of the most important western capitals, other historic moments come to mind that put this vulnerability on the edge, such as the infamous “9/11”. Even with different proportions, as much as in 2001, the apparently inconceivable happened. The reaction, besides the terror and the grief – but also with signs of solidarity and of courage from the people in carrying life onward –, also have some parallel points, not at last in the rhetoric of the country’s president: There would be, said François Hollande, a “war”, a fight “without grace” for the “eradication” of terrorism.⁸ It is less loaded with the religious overtones than what had been the rhetoric of George Walker Bush, for whom, initially, the intent was to establish “infinite justice”, and after, in a softer tone,

⁴ The inauguration ceremony can be visualized on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2D6neIIZ03I>, accessed on Nov. 20, 2014; see also Andreas Heuser, ed., *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2015).

⁵ Cf. Vagner Gonçalves da Silva, ed., *Intolerância religiosa: impactos do neopentecostalismo no campo religioso afro-brasileiro* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2007).

⁶ Rogério Pagnan, Metade do país acha que ‘bandido bom é bandido morto’, aponta pesquisa. *Folha de São Paulo online*, 5 out. 2015, 02h00. Available at: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2015/10/1690176-metade-do-pais-acha-que-bandido-bom-e-bandido-morto-aponta-pesquisa.shtml>, accessed on 15 nov., 2015.

⁷ Eduardo Geraque and Fernanda Mena, Tragédia em Minas Gerais deve secar rios e criar ‘deserto de lama’. *Folha de São Paulo online*, 15 de nov. 2015, 02h00. Available at: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2015/11/1706510-tragedia-em-minas-gerais-deve-secar-rios-e-criar-deserto-de-lama.shtml>, accessed on Nov. 19, 2015.

⁸ Cf. Andreas Ruesch, Terror in Frankreich: Das Echo des 11. September. Post of the day of November 17, 2015, 21.57 hours, http://www.nzz.ch/meinung/kommentare/das-echo-des-11-septembers-1.18648189?extcid=Newsletter_18112015_Top-News_am_Morgen, accessed on Nov. 18, 2015.

“lasting freedom”.⁹ With or without religious implications, the words indicate toward the same direction: the military, police, and intelligence force should now resolve the matter. Violence should be resolved with violence. In the present situation, certainly such measures will have wide support from the population, even dealing with actions that in normal times would be rejected. Looking forward, however, concerns arise on the possibility of maintaining a democratic, constitutional State in good balance with the extended powers of the State and its armed branches. Should it tilt towards the latter, the so-called Islamic Estate would have made its greatest gain, for it would, in fact, have hit the democratic, constitutional State in its core. Very worrying, furthermore, is the water that is falling on mills already very active of prejudice and xenophobia, rising even more the rejection, discrimination and exclusion of migrants in Europe – many of which are themselves victims of the Islamic Estate.

Discourse, dialogue, rational argument as emancipation

Facing these parallels between 11/13 and 9/11, I read again the already well known and often cited discourse by Jürgen Habermas on “faith and knowledge”, pronounced when receiving the peace prize of German editors, on October 14, 2001.¹⁰ We can notice in Habermas, since then more clearly than before, the search for comprehending what had happened by force of a destructive religious imperative. Even before this, his continuous search for a dialogue based on communication by argument, and not by decree, and much less by the language of weapons, has been visible. It is something, it seems to me, that is also imposed on us, representatives of church and academies of Christian theology. We need, in our midst, but with effect beyond it, to overcome the decree, the absolutism, the radicalism, the fundamentalism that does not allow us to see the aspect of God’s love, but only his anger and demand.¹¹ According to Luther, we are related to God, the God of love and mercy, by faith, to our next by love.¹² Precisely the unilateral emphasis on truth, understood as clear and unique, to the detriment of love, is what produces acts like the ones we have seen.

In this, it seems to me that Habermas calls attention with reason: There is the need for communication, discourse, not to the least the need to have rational argument that can be tested and contested. Where decree and authoritarianism normally reigns, the rational argument has a true emancipatory power, as defended in a recent doctoral thesis, in a dialogue between Habermas and Latin-American theology, Lutheran theologian Eneida Jacobsen.¹³ Religious fundamentalism, in turn, thinking it makes a

⁹ Cf. Infinite Justice out – Enduring Freedom, in. Post of September 25, 2001, 22:21 hs GMT, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1563722.stm>, accessed on Nov. 19, 2015.

¹⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *Glauben und Wissen* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2001). Habermas makes, at the same time, requirements for the “religious conscience”: (1) it needs to adopt a posture of dialogue, in a plural situation, with other religions; (2) it needs to recognize “the social monopoly of knowledge over the world” by sciences, and (3) obey the precepts of a constitutional, liberal State, constructed on the base of “a profane morality”.

¹¹ For a recent and current approach of God from the Bible, cf. Reinhard Feldmeier and Hermann Spieckermann, *God of the Living: a Biblical Theology*, translated by Mark E. Biddle (Waco, Tx.: Baylor University Press, 2011).

¹² Martin Luther, On the Freedom of a Christian, Luther’s Works, edited by Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), vol. 31, pp. 343-77; see also the Sermon on the Third Sunday after Epiphany, quoted in Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, *Public Church: For the Life of the World* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004), p. 52, p. 88 note 14: “By faith we receive blessings from above, from God; through love we give them out below, to our neighbor.”

¹³ Eneida Jacobsen, *Teologia e teoria política: aproximações críticas entre correntes da teologia contemporânea e o pensamento político de Jürgen Habermas*, doctoral dissertation (São Leopoldo:

literal and true reading of its doctrine, written or not, shows itself, on the contrary, as a very peculiar perception of religious truth.¹⁴ Instead of listening to it, it silences the Spirit's voice by the doctrine or letter understood very unilaterally. Where there is no love, this "truth" becomes absolute, violent. The indispensable and urgent task of the churches and of the theological education is to foment love, dialogue, forgiveness, reconciliation. Only on this fundament can there be debate over truth. Jon Sobrino, a well known theologian of liberation, precisely defined the centre of liberation as love: "The theology of liberation is before anything else an *intellectus amoris*, intelligence of fulfillment of the historical love to the poor of this world and of the love that makes us related to the reality of the revealed God, that definitely consists in showing love to the human beings".¹⁵ What would be, then, from this fundament and from a critical perception of the lived reality, the educational role of churches?

Three positions of church as related to education – traditional, modernizing and prophetic

The great Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921-1997), while working in the World Council of Churches in Geneva, wrote, in 1972, a seminal text entitled "The educative role of the churches in Latin America".¹⁶ Here, he distinguished three church positions in view of its role in education. It is clear that he said this in that very moment and with the terminology that was dominant at the time. But I believe that the tendencies indicated are pertinent still today and helps us in our reflection and positioning. Freire first names the position of a *traditionalist Church*, based on a dichotomy between the world and transcendence, searching to live in a supposed purity in contradiction to the world seen as dirty. These churches serve, according to Freire, as "balm" to the "existential tiredness" of the oppressed, a "refuge of the masses", as formulated by Genevan sociologist Christian Lalive d'Épinay.¹⁷ At the same time, this is a form of "culture of silence" as to the oppression. Freire recognizes this posture as a form of tacit resistance, refusing the world dominated by the lords. But he considers it as a "salvation without liberation", resulting in a "quietist" and "alienated" church.¹⁸ Another church position is called *modernizing*, reformist, obeying an "ideology of development",¹⁹ then *en vogue*, searching to surpass the perceived delay of Latin America by a technical-professional education. It is an advance, it raises the efficacy of the church, but, for Freire, it does not produce real liberation and this position is compromised with the elite and not with the oppressed. The third line or church position is the *prophetic*, "as old as Christianity itself, without being traditional, as new as it,

Faculdades EST, 2015), available at: http://tede.est.edu.br/tede/tde_arquivos/1/TDE-2015-09-29T135041Z-597/Publico/jacobsen_e_td134.pdf, accessed on Dec. 9, 2015; Deliberative public sphere: The rereading of Habermas's theory in Brazil and its significance for a public theology, in *Missionalia* 43/5, pp. 493-512.

¹⁴ Cf. e.g. Martin Dreher, *Fundamentalismus tötet*, in Franz Gmainer-Pranzl and Eneida Jacobsen, eds., *Deslocamentos - Verschiebungen theologischer Erkenntnis. Ein ökumenisches und interkulturelles Projekt* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 2016), pp. 195-233.d

¹⁵ Jon Sobrino, *Teología em um Mundo Sufriente: la Teología de la Liberación como Intellectus Amoris. Revista Latinoamericana de Teología*, 5/15 (1988), pp. 243-266, here p. 259.

¹⁶ Paulo Freire, *O papel educativo das Igrejas na América Latina*. In: *Ação cultural para a liberdade e outros escritos*, 14th revised edition (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 2011), pp. 169-211 [English version: *Cultural Action for Freedom* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard Educational Review, 2000)].

¹⁷ Freire, 2011, p. 188; Christian Lalive D'Épinay, *O refúgio das massas: estudo sociológico do protestantismo chileno* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1970).

¹⁸ Freire, 2011, p. 190.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

without being modernizing”,²⁰ seeking to perceive and put in practice the true liberation amidst the contradictions of history. Being prophetic, as Freire says, is “to be utopian and hopeful”, it is “to denounce and announce”, what requires scientific knowledge of reality.²¹ Such as Christ, the prophetic church should be a “wanderer, constant traveller, dying always and always rising”²² – we hear resonate the *semper reformanda* – and exposing itself to the risk of participating in the dramatic fights of reality. There is no being prophetic without risk. In this line, education must be, in fact, transforming, “in service of the permanent liberation of human beings”.²³

I cite another seminal text, published 22 years later by Hugo Assmann, a Catholic theologian that migrated from the properly theological field to education. His text is entitled “Theology of solidarity and citizenship, or else: continuing the Theology of Liberation”, in a clearly transformed context.²⁴ Being one of the most expressive theologians of liberation, he made a scathing critique of this theology. Between others, he wants to see better, in the concrete, daily and always ambiguous life, the poor people with their genuine desires and aspirations. Thus, he advocated “a theology of the right of dreaming, pleasure, *fraternura* [tender fraternity], *creativiver* [creative living], happiness”, summed up in the concept of corporeity.²⁵ As the poor became, we could say, “disposable” for the dominating capitalism of neoliberal market, they only became visible for the people “converted to solidarity”. For just this reason, consistently, Assmann insisted on the need of educating for solidarity. As Assmann says in another text: “Over the background of the appearance of a learner society, with market economy and mutant forms of employability, there is no doubt that educating is to fight against exclusion. In this context, educating really means saving lives”.²⁶ He also insists that it is necessary “to conjugate solidary values with effective rights of citizenship”.²⁷

Maybe you asked yourselves why, in a consultation on the Reformation, I am giving so much space to Catholic thinkers. The question is legitimate and the answer is easy: Besides being well inserted into the ecumenical dialogue, these are, among many others, thinkers that, in our context of Brazil and Latin America, but also beyond it, immensely fomented reflection over the relationship between religion, education and transformation. Citizenship highlighted by Assmann emerged, after the end of the military regime in Brazil, as democratic key concept, indicating what is needed to conquer. Theologically, I see today the necessity of elaborating this within the perspective of a public theology, a qualified public theology for transformation by conquest of citizenship.²⁸

A Lutheran Public Theology of Citizenship

Citizenship has become the key concept of democracy in Brazil since the 1990’s. It denotes more a conceptual field than a clearly defined concept. It is far from being

²⁰ Ibid., p. 199.

²¹ Ibid., p. 201.

²² Ibid., p. 202.

²³ Ibid., p. 204.

²⁴ Hugo Assmann, *Teologia da Solidariedade e da Cidadania, ou seja: continuando a Teologia da Libertação*. In: *Crítica à lógica da exclusão* (São Paulo: Paulus, 1994), p. 13-36.

²⁵ ASSMANN, 1994, p. 30-31. *Fraternura* and *creativiver* are neologism created by Leonardo Boff and Hugo Assmann, respectively.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 130.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 33.

²⁸ See also Rudolf von Sinner, *Public Theology in Brazil. A First Overview*, in *Toronto Journal of Theolog* 30/1 (2014), pp. 33-46.

something given through a document of national citizenship or written laws. Rather, it is a field of constant struggle of all people in a determined territory for their rights and for the well-being of the society in its entirety, be their members nationals or not. Its effectiveness involves profound transformation of people, society, institutions. For this, the “learning” of democracy²⁹ and education are always of central importance. As law specialist Corrêa says:

Citizenship is [...] the democratic realization of a society, shared by all the individuals to the point that all have their access to the public space and conditions of dignified survival guaranteed, having as its basic value the fullness of life.³⁰

It is clear that this definition surpasses the matter of rights (and duties) as foreseen by law, introducing a utopian dimension, even eschatological when it speaks of the “fullness of life”, remembering John 10.10, often quoted by Christian movements and Non-Governmental Organizations: “I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10.10). As Christians we know that our earthly citizenship is always precarious, transitory, in the search of forthcoming citizenship in the Kingdom of God. This, however, is not a reason to flee the construction of the earthly city, rather, it underlines the necessity of, inspired by the values of the Kingdom, contributing as Christians in this fight for citizenship, as *parrhesia* and *kenosis*, with boldness and humility at the same time. In this way, I wish to present five elements that I consider central to, in fact and effectively, contribute to conquer citizenship.³¹ They answer to effective problems, which here I can only minimally outline, at the same time that they take up central aspects of theology in the perspective of the Reformation, especially in its Lutheran branch of which I today partake, without any pretension of exclusivism, on the contrary, seeking to foment partnerships.

(a) It is not possible to be a citizen, to feel part of a community governed by justice and seeking the well-being of all without having the perception of one’s own value as a person. In society, value is attributed, in general, asymmetrically, depending on the importance of the family, of the possession of economic goods, of the formal educational level, of skin colour, of gender, among other indicators. Whoever, however, does not meet the expected standard in these valued categories, where should he or she take his or her dignity from? There are many people who were too humiliated to see themselves as citizens, and who think of themselves as not being a part of society. Lutheran theology insists on justification by grace through faith *extra nos*, received as gift, through mere gratuity. Also, the theology of creation focused on the human being made in the image and likeness of God as a fundament of citizenship. Thus, a person is a citizen not by their specific characteristics or merits, but simply by being a human being that has intrinsic attributed dignity. The theology of the Reformation is very rich in seeing a person as unconditionally accepted by a merciful God. But we have to recognize here that it is the Pentecostal churches that, in Brazil, have been most efficient in transmitting a real feeling of dignity and self-respect to people in situations of precariousness and vulnerability. Ironically, in Brazil, these people, are often colloquially called “citizens” (*cidadão*) – people without own name, without roots, without recognition. For an effective citizenship, in the first place, there is the need *to be* citizen and to feel and understand oneself as such.

²⁹ Cf. Paulo Krischke, *The Learning of Democracy in Latin America: Social Actors and Cultural Change*. New York: Nova Science, 2001.

³⁰ Darcísio Corrêa, *A construção da cidadania: reflexões histórico-políticas* (Ijuí: Unijuí, 2006), p. 217.

³¹ I have developed this extensively in Sinner, 2012, part IIIA, p. 281-317.

(b) A second step is to be able to live as citizen, as citizen inserted into a society made possible by solidarity based on bonds of trust. However, trust precisely seems to be what is most lacking in this country: Asked, in a standardized, worldwide applied research, if the interviewed person in general trusts other people, only 7% of the Brazilian population responded in the affirmative. The average in Latin America is 17%, while in Norway it is up to 74%.³² It is not that there is no trust, but it is bound to people in the family, of the immediate surroundings, people one know's personally. In general, distrust reigns, reinforced by constant narratives and news of scam, corruption, deceit, violence. At the same time, the churches are among the institutions considered most reliable, which gives them a high potential and responsibility. The fact that faith, *pistis, fiducia*, means trust in God goes beyond the trust for the construction of citizenship, required for the functioning of democracy, but it can strengthen and renew it. Trust in God can, in an accentuated situation of distrust, turn possible the risk of forgiveness, of reconciliation and of construction or reconstruction of the bonds of trust between human beings.

(c) Here comes the third aspect: How to deal with violence, scam, corruption, the fact that some take advantage of others, the fact that there are, many times, a thousand reasons to distrust? To live in this world means to live in an ambiguous situation. The Bible itself is full of examples of life's ambiguity, of the mixture of good and evil and of the impossibility of staying with clean hands in such situations. With property, Dietrich Bonhoeffer spoke of our existence in the penultimate, even if oriented by the ultimate word of justification by grace and faith, and took the ultimate consequences in this situation which recognized the penultimate, supporting the attempt of murder against Hitler and suffering the consequences of its failure.³³ Our everyday also today, in Brazil and elsewhere, is characterized by the coexistence of good and evil. There are attempts that try not to handle this ambiguity, but run away from it. One option is to point to Christ as the only one able to bring about change on His return – in this case, the whole world is considered to be evil, a tendency present in many conservative and millenarian churches. Alternatively, there is the offer of a total solution, immanent for the problem in a fulfilled eschatology, as preached by the churches that hold dear the gospel of prosperity. Furthermore, a moralist legalism also can be seen as an attempt of surpassing the ambiguity. Instead, it seems to me possible and pertinent, with live and realism, to see oneself and others as *simul iusti et peccatores*, just *in spe*, in hope, and sinners *in re*, in reality, as said Luther.³⁴ Rather than being pessimistic, as some would think, I consider this vision realistic. This also means that trust, as exposed above, cannot be a naïve trust, as if there were no evil and the world were something totally harmonious. For Christians, there is always the distrust before human beings, as much of others as of ourselves, due to their consciousness of the power of sin. Knowing this, but not falling into despair because of the trust in God, allows to endure the ambiguity, the lack of clearness, the constant search for the right path, as an intrinsic part of life. Thus, it is possible to endure as a citizen.

(d) The matter of motivation for citizenship also deserves to be highlighted, a motivation that does not only consider their own rights, not even their own duties. Such motivation, for which Christians have specific theological foundation, does not fall into

³² See CORPORACIÓN LATINOBARÓMETRO. *La confianza en América Latina 1995-2015*. 20 años de opinión pública latinoamericana. Santiago de Chile: Latinobarómetro, 2015. Available at: <http://www.latinobarometro.org/latNewsShow.jsp>, acceso em 9 dez. 2015. On Norway, see the table on <http://ourworldindata.org/data/culture-values-and-society/trust/>, accessed on Dec. 9, 2015.

³³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (London: SCM, 1955).

³⁴ Martin Luther, Lectures on Romans, *Luther's Works* vol. 25, p. 260.

an autonomy misunderstood as mere individual interest, nor into heteronomy as blind subservience, but seeks service as free in freedom. Through justification by faith, Christians become new creatures, free from the captivity of evil, while they are in a position to serve, amidst sin and evil. In his famous treaty on Christian freedom, Luther clearly shows that such freedom is not, simply, the freedom of choice, but of service; being, at the same, a “free lord” and “to all subject”, by their own will, not by coercion.³⁵ Thus, citizenship can be discovered as service.

(e) Finally, it is important to highlight that some Christian people and churches have a tendency of separating religion and politics, church and State, in a way to be, incorrectly, dispensed from their responsibilities in relation to the ensemble of society. Still others tend to confuse the spheres and seek to impose their faith and church onto others. Both tendencies need to be overcome by the Christian citizen that sees him or herself as serving God under two distinct, but not separate, regimes. For Luther, in an epoch of Christendom, it was clear that God would reign through both the regimes. This cannot be a starting point today, in terms of religious pluralism and in a secular State, i.e., neutral in matters of religion. However, the distinction of roles of the secular power and of the spiritual and ecclesiastic sphere - it shouldn't even be seen as a power, unless understood clearly in a distinct way than the secular power – it still matters today to avoid an improper intromission from both sides. We know that, historically, the called doctrine of the two kingdoms or, more specifically, regiments, brought on several limitations and dangers. However, in a context where there are clear pretensions to power by the church and its leaderships, the distinction of spheres defended by Luther in his writings about this matter acquire a new contemporaneity.

These five aspects, of being, of living, of persevering, of serving and of being under two regiments, of the citizen person are, for me, the nucleus of a theology in the tradition of the Reformation that offers itself today for the transformation of society and that must, evidently, be part of education, not only theological. I was only able to outline here what I developed with much more extensively elsewhere, as indicated. But I hope that these flashes can serve to instigate our discussion of the theme in the following days, what I understood to be my duty. Focusing on the Brazilian context and the Lutheran tradition, I hope that it is also possible to connect from other contexts and traditions of the Reformation, and beyond it.

To speak of a public theology focused on citizenship is something to serve for a refined reflection on the role of religion in the contemporary world, in politics, in society, in the academy, as constructive, critical and self-critical reflection of the churches themselves, communicating with other knowledge and with the real world. As my colleague, Iuri Reblin, based on the Protestant rebel and educator Rubem Alves, well said: “Theology is a game that is played when life is in game”.³⁶ It is a theology of life linked to the God of life seeking to contribute in society so there may be life worthy to be lived by all. Thank you very much.

³⁵ See above, note 12.

³⁶ Iuri Andréas Reblin, who defended his doctorate at EST in March 2012, wrote this in a contribution prepared for the seminary on Public Theology and Citizenship, realized in September 2011, along with colleagues from the Stellenbosch University and from the University of South Africa (UNISA), with support from the Pro-Africa Grant from the National Council of Scientific and Technological Development (*Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* - CNPq).