RevEleTeo

A visão da cosmovisão cristã sobre o conceito de pessoa e o princípio da dignidade humana

The perspective of the christian worldview on the concept of person and the principle of human dignity

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Resumo:

Objetiva-se apresentar o pressuposto sobre o sentido de ser humano no interior da cosmovisão cristã e a maneira como ela pode influenciar o processo de observância do princípio da dignidade humana. Não se busca fazer analogias e nem mesmo confrontamentos com outros sistemas de crença. A intenção perseguida tem natureza contributiva diante das discussões constituídas em diferentes campos do saber, podendo ser essa, mais uma maneira de olhar, investigar, trabalhar e analisar o conceito de pessoa. A pergunta norteadora é: de que maneira a cosmovisão cristã, ao definir o conceito de pessoa, pode contribuir eficazmente com a sua observância, atendendo ao princípio da dignidade humana em prol da valorização da vida? Lança-se mão do método dedutivo e da pesquisa descritiva a partir de uma abordagem qualitativa. Busca-se compreender a maneira como a cosmovisão cristã estabelece sua lente de interpretação em relação ao princípio de dignidade humana. Conclui-se que a maneira como a cosmovisão se posiciona, influenciará o modo como homens e mulheres formarão e expressarão suas ideias, posicionamentos e atitudes no âmbito da convivência social.

Palavras-chave:

Cosmovisão cristã, conceito de pessoa e dignidade da pessoa humana.

Abstract:

This paper aims to present the assumption about being human throughout Christian Cosmovision; and how the Christian Cosmovision might influence the process of observance related to human dignity principal. Neither analogies nor confrontations have been included against other belief systems. The main intention has a contributive source towards discussions in different knowledge fields, and maybe, this might be a way to check, investigate, work and analyze a person`s concept. The guiding question says: how does the Christian Cosmovision, defining the concept of a person, might contribute efficiently with its observance, serving the principal of human dignity regarding life valuation? Deductive methodology and descriptive research have been used from a qualitative approach. The objective applies in comprehending how the Christian Cosmovision establishes its lens of interpretation related to the principals of human dignity. In conclusion, the manner how the Christian Cosmovision stands up, influencing the way men and women will form and express their ideas, beliefs and attitudes related to human living.

Kew words: Christian worldview, concept of human penson, human dignity.

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Introduction

The concept of a person is one of those recurring themes in history that spans different fields of knowledge, mainly because it is associated with issues of identity, the meaning of being human, social justice, and rights to be observed and legitimized by society and social groups. For this reason, when thinking about the meaning attributed to this concept, it is possible to understand its influence on human actions, decisions, and relationships.

This evidence about the concept can take shape in the way it defines the meaning of being a person. If it values, the social group will respond in one way; however, if it devalues, there will be a different response to this outlined perspective. Paying attention to this is already a path to understanding its insertion into the thinking, doing, and acting of a community.

The presence of a concept in social reality contributes to the notion of the idea to be materialized or even systematized in terms of defining an object. Thus, it is from the concept that references and affirmations can be constructed, which will permeate both the study and its applicability to life.

It is clear that the concept does not assume a deterministic view, as it can change over time. However, it is possible to say that it influences the definition of facts, phenomena, and things, including those affecting life, such as the vision of being human.

From the concept, it is also possible to present characteristics, specificities, and bases that are present in the object or phenomenon to be signified. Indeed, the concept gives meaning to the unknown fact and makes it understandable by bringing it closer to life and the relationships established between subjects and the object of knowledge.

Relationships are, therefore, the crucial point for the act of knowing. They enable the construction of meanings, which are appropriated and legitimized by different social groups. It is within the social group that the concept attributed to objects is expressed and incorporated into the way of being, thinking, acting, feeling, and believing of each individual.

When faced with the concept[1], three distinctive elements are observed that will bring consistency to the process of understanding the object to be known: the referent, the term, and the characteristics. The referent concerns the items to be considered, which are positioned in the field of abstraction, such as ideas, objects, properties, facts, laws.

It is also recognized that the process of systematizing the concept gives rise to terms of a predicative nature, which will be evident in spoken or written discourse, as they assume a representational bias aimed at ensuring the pertinence, consistency, and coherence of what is being referenced. For this reason, it can be said that the concept needs to be connected to the reality in which it was produced and generated (FERNANDES, 2018, p. 50).

It is from concepts that definitions come to life, making them indispensable for the practice of argumentation and the communication of ideas, values, and positions, as they ensure the construction of scientific knowledge (DAHLBERG, 1978). Therefore, the degree of influence of a concept on social reality cannot be diminished, as it is through its action that terms can be described, categorized, and systematized logically and consistently.

In this direction, the purpose of the article is to present the concept of a person within the Christian worldview to verify its impact or influence on the observance of the constitutional principle of human dignity. To this end, the research question to be investigated arises from the following concern: in what way can the Christian worldview, by defining the concept of a person, effectively contribute to its observance, in line with the principle of human dignity in favor of valuing life?

The methodological path to be followed employs the deductive method and descriptive research from a qualitative approach, aiming to reach the composition of the object through the assumptions defended in the Christian worldview about the meaning of being human. The assumptions will signal the defended premises to identify whether they ensure the prescribed constitutional principle.

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1. The concept is thus defined, based on the method presented by Ingetraut Dahlberg, known as the analytical theory of concepts, created in the 1970s. In Concept Theory, the definition is an integral, vital, and fundamental part, as it involves both the establishment of boundaries and the meaning assigned to what is being named or referenced. According to the author, the concept is an abstract entity, a product of human thought, which can be identified in its capacity to think and speak about reality, taking into account one's knowledge. (Tradução nossa).

Regarding qualitative research, it is necessary to say that it aims to validate the data obtained, considering the theoretical foundation analyzed, interpreted, and used by the researcher. According to Minayo (2001, p.14):

> Qualitative research works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values, and attitudes, which corresponds to a deeper space of relationships, processes, and phenomena that cannot be reduced to the operationalization of variables.[2]

Descriptive research, alternatively, aims to work with the object of investigation, based on its qualifications, characteristics, and applications in social reality. According to Barros and Lehfeld (1990, p. 34), descriptive research can help outline scenarios and profiles of the object, which implies thinking in terms of its definition.

The proposal intends a conceptual incursion and does not establish the purpose of advocacy but rather to present how a worldview can impact the way men and women situate themselves in reality and act in the name of the faith they embrace.

Faith is the fuel of any worldview. However, there is a need for a systematization process, which will be structured in the form of assumptions that will define the lens to be used to read and interpret life. Knowing the assumptions of a worldview allows us to understand how men and women face, interpret, and explain their existence while communicating it to future generations.

The meaning of being in a worldview

Before presenting the assumptions upheld in the Christian worldview about the meaning of being human, it is necessary to introduce the concept of worldview and its purpose in the process of adopting an interpretative lens. In this regard, it is important to highlight that there is not just one concept of worldview; however, they converge concerning the sense of direction attributed, which is one of its purposes. Therefore, it is essential to present four pieces of evidence about the study of a worldview.

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2. *A pesquisa qualitativa trabalha com o universo de significados, motivos, aspirações, crenças, valores e atitudes, o que corresponde a um espaço mais profundo das relações, dos processos e dos fenômenos que não podem ser reduzidos à operacionalização de variáveis*. (Tradução nossa).

The first piece of evidence to be established concerns Pearcey's (2012) warning about the meaning of a worldview, which cannot be classified as an abstract or even idealized concept, as it emerges from life and is, indeed, a way of explaining it. Thus:

> The term describes our search for answers to the intensely personal questions we all have to wrestle with – the cry of the human heart for purpose, meaning, and a grand truth big enough to live by. No one can live without a sense of purpose and direction, a sense that life has meaning as part of a cosmic story" (PEARCEY, 2012, p. 61).[3]

It is observed that worldview is associated with the human need to obtain answers, which will give it purpose and direction, that is, a sense of life. Therefore, it will materialize in human relationships, that is, in the processes involving the formation of generations, since one generation transmits its worldview to another.

For this reason, Hiebert (2016) complements that the worldview will develop assumptions on three levels of operation: cognitive, affective, and evaluative. At the cognitive level, it is possible to find themes associated with "the mental and logical categories that people use to think" (HIEBERT, 2016, p. 58)[4], as well as those themes that will form the cultural base to be legitimized. Examples of themes include: time, space, individual, group, world.

The affective level involves themes associated with feelings; these themes act in the adoption of certain attitudes toward tastes, sensations, experiences, postures, expressions, and emphases. These themes "act as a wall, protecting beliefs from internal and external attacks by providing emotional support for their truth" (HIEBERT, 2016, p. 69).

The evaluative level has a normative nature and, therefore, acts in the process of social and moral organization of a particular community or social group. The themes constituted at this level are those that deal with virtue, morality, standards, and customs. They can be located within the culture through the po-

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3. O termo descreve nossa procura por respostas às questões intensamente pessoais com as quais todos temos de lutar - o clamor do coração do humano na busca de propósitos, significado e uma verdade grande o bastante pela qual viver. Ninguém pode viver sem um senso de propósito e direção, um senso de que a vida tem significado como parte da história cósmica (PEARCEY, 2012, p. 61- Tradução nossa).
4. [...] categorias mentais e lógicas que as pessoas usam para pensar (Tradução nossa).

sitions assumed and legitimized in society by different social groups. Thus, "at the deepest level, evaluative assumptions determine fundamental loyalties – the gods people worship, the purposes for which they live" (HIEBERT, 2016, p. 72)[5].

In this understanding, it is comprehensible the positioning of Walsh and Middleton (1984, p. 17), when they state that a worldview can be categorized as a way of seeing life, which imprints fingerprints on the way people are and act, as it signals how they not only perceive reality but make and conduct their choices.

Given this, the second piece of evidence emphasizes that a worldview influences not only human behavior but the process of identity formation, as it provides lenses that will support how men and women will position themselves in relation to reality. This positioning is specific to each group, characterizing its identity as a community.

Sire (2004) is another theorist who conceptualizes worldview. He adds to the objective concept the role of subjectivity, as he defines it as a commitment made by the heart. This commitment is what will guide the way of reading, interpreting, and defending the adopted assumptions. Therefore:

> A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, which can be expressed as a narrative or as a set of presuppositions (assumptions that may be true, partially true, or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or unconsciously) about the basic constitution of reality, and which provides the foundation on which we live, move, and exist (SIRE, 2004, p. 122).

From Sire's concept, one can extract subjective and objective aspects present in a worldview that affect both mind and heart, such as feelings, desires, expectations, experiences, thoughts, and positions, which are anchored in the form of narratives or presuppositions. These aspects are correlated to the cognitive, affective, and evaluative levels explored by Hiebert (2016), which justify how social groups contemplate and ground their essence and existence.

Another perspective given to the worldview is that of Nash (2012), who explains the purpose of systematizing the chosen beliefs. Therefore, it is defined as: "[...] a set of beliefs about the most important issues of life [...] it is a concep-

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5. *[...] no nível mais profundo, os pressupostos de avaliação determinam as lealdades fundamentais - os deuses que as pessoas adoram, os propósitos para os quais elas vivem.* (Tradução nossa).

tual scheme through which, consciously or unconsciously, we apply or adapt all the things we believe in and interpret and judge reality" (NASH, 2012, p. 25).[6]

In this sense, the worldview would function as a structured and organized conceptual system, which is applied in day-to-day situations. This indicates the presence of reasons that gain significance as they are appropriated as a basis for understanding life by individuals or social groups.

Miller (2003) aligns with Nash by stating that the worldview serves to offer lenses that help read and interpret reality. These lenses are structured and organized in their assumptions, and therefore, it is possible to find different perspectives depending on the lenses chosen and legitimized in the field of human relationships. He reiterates that "each person and culture has its own worldview"[7] (MILLER, 2003, p. 35). Furthermore, regarding the assumptions, it is worth mentioning:

> [...] that a group adopts concerning the nature of reality and uses to organize its life. It involves the images or mental maps that people create of the reality of all things that humans employ to live their lives. It is the cosmos considered true, desirable, and moral by a community (HIEBERT, 2016, p. 31).[8]

Once again, the direction, organization, and systematization of a worldview are emphasized, highlighting its place in life and human relationships, showing what is valued, defended, and legitimized, thus attributing validity and a degree of reliability. This perspective is shared by Ryken (2015), who states that a worldview directly impacts how one conceives the origin of the family, the formative process of the human being, the economy, the field of ethics, politics and justice, language and communication, culture, the environment, history and cultural heritage, and the composition of the state.

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6. *[...] um conjunto de crenças sobre as questões mais importantes da vida [...] é um esquema conceitual, pelo qual, consciente ou inconscientemente, aplicamos ou adequamos todas as coisas em que cremos e interpretamos e julgamos a realidade (NASH, 2012, p. 25)*. (Tradução nossa).
7. *[...] cada pessoa e cultura têm sua cosmovisão*. (Tradução nossa).
8. *[...] que um grupo adota em relação à natureza da realidade e que utiliza para organizar sua vida. Ela envolve as imagens ou mapas mentais que as pessoas fazem da realidade de todas as coisas que os seres humanos empregam para viver sua vida. É o cosmo considerado verdadeiro, desejável e moral por uma comunidade (HIEBERT, 2016, p. 31). (*Tradução nossa).

Now, it is necessary to present the third piece of evidence regarding the purpose of a worldview, since it can be altered in its foundations. This shows that a worldview does not assume an ad aeternum standard; instead, it is subject to changes in its structure and organization due to discoveries, reflections, and reasons to believe and validate new ideas.

It is also possible to say that a worldview affects how the foundations that support arguments, beliefs, values, and positions of individuals and social groups are constructed. It involves the ability to think about life and judge it based on established references. A worldview also defines the meaning of being human, which is why it is so important to understand its foundations, i.e., the lens used to interpret the world.

The fourth piece of evidence to be considered is that a worldview, in seeking to provide sincere answers to the essential questions of life, does so based on the assumptions that will give rise to the lenses of interpretation. These lenses will enable the reading and adherence of individuals and social groups to the explanations provided. They bring profound questions about the origin of life, human identity, the laws that govern the world, the role of ethics and history, death, and the reality of the universe.

Of course, each worldview will shed light on these issues, creating the assumptions that underpin its vision and position concerning reality. Here, one can observe different compositions of answers, which may be divergent, producing what has been called the clash of worldviews.

In one way or another, what can be inferred from the meaning of being in a worldview is that it ensures identity, affinities, and bonds of faith among people, considering that the sharing of the vision will occur through affinity and adherence. Regarding humanity, worldviews will present their assumptions, which answer whether the human condition is free or imprisoned, whether its nature is only material or spiritual or physical-spiritual, and whether physical death is the end of its existence (NASH, 2012, p. 43).

With this direction, the meaning of the Christian worldview is presented next, preliminarily recognizing that "Christianity thinks of individual humans not as mere members of a group or items on a list, but as organs in a body" (LEWIS,

2017, p. 240)[9], in which each contributes and participates according to their abilities, developing their mission and reflecting their love for God.

The Christian worldview is a system of beliefs, presenting assumptions that will form the lens of interpretation to be applied in reading reality. Among the assumptions is the one that answers the essential question: what is a human being? From this answer, it is possible to correspond it with the principle of human dignity. This is the proposal.

Concept of person within the christian worldview

Unlike Pascal[10]'s idea (1965, p. 68) that human beings are like reeds, thinking reeds, the Christian worldview assigns to them a position of value, considering their divine origin, created[11] in the image and likeness of the Creator. In this sense, "man not only lives, but also loves and reasons: biological life reaches its highest level in him that we know of" (LEWIS, 2017, p. 210)[12].

Moody (2010, p. 42) emphasizes that the act of creating human beings is considered the climax of this process, as it is special and unique. After all, God, by creating human beings in His image and likeness, endowed them with attributes and characteristics related to spirituality, nature, and morality.

> In his spiritual likeness, man as a regenerated being can have communion with God. In his natural likeness, man possesses intellect, emotions, and will to know and communicate with God; in his moral likeness, man can know and obey God's precepts (MOODY, 2010, p. 42-43).[13]

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9. *"o Cristianismo pensa nos indivíduos humanos não como meros integrantes de um grupo ou itens de uma lista, mas como órgãos integrantes de um corpo" (LEWIS, 2017, p. 240) (Traduzido do original em língua portuguesa).*

10. The idea of the reed draws an analogy to human fragility, while simultaneously recognizing its finitude, demonstrating an awareness of its destiny. This highlights its limitation in the face of life, while also testifying to its vulnerability in the face of the universe.

11. From the creationist perspective, there are theories that shape studies on the origin of life: evolutionary creationism, scientific creationism, and intelligent design. Based on the adopted theory, the premises will present their justifications and defended foundations. The intention of each is to demonstrate evidence for the raised premises. However, this article does not utilize these theories but rather the assumptions that guide the chosen lens: the Christian worldview.

12. *[...] o homem não apenas vive, mas também ama e raciocina: a vida biológica alcança o seu nível mais alto nele de que temos conhecimento" (LEWIS, 2017, p. 210 Tradução nossa).*

13. *Em sua semelhança espiritual, o homem como um ser regenerado pode ter comunhão com Deus. Em sua semelhança natural o homem possui intelecto, emoções e vontade para conhecer e comunicar-se com Deus; em sua semelhança moral, o homem pode conhecer e obedecer aos preceitos de Deus (MOODY, 2010, p. 42-43). (Tradução nossa).*

Regarding the human being as the image of God, it is necessary to understand that its meaning is associated with the capacity to reflect, feel, act, and decide. In this sense, the image reflects in the personality, spirituality, and sense of morality attributed to the human being. It is because of this that there is a desire to seek to live freedom with significance, maintaining the perspective of otherness (we, prevailing over I) and rejecting the idea of imposing behavioral order.

Keller (2014, p. 42) reaffirms the origin of the human being, stating that he came from God; however, he was not left to his own devices, rather the Creator developed a relationship with him, indicating that his relational nature is inherent. After all, humans learned from God the initial notions of coexistence. Within these notions lies the freedom to decide whether or not to follow what was taught (ABRAHAM, 1985, p. 104). It is within coexistence that the formational process of the human being occurs. Interestingly, modern educational theories concentrate their efforts on this aspect.

Sire (2001, p. 31), in agreement with the divine origin of the human being, emphasizes that in the process of creation, "human beings were created good, but through the Fall, the image of God was disfigured. Through the work of Christ, God redeemed humanity",[14] signaling a true change from the fallen state. This demonstrates the existence of purpose, mission, and hope given by God to humanity, which can be translated into a practical application of sacrificial love.

The act of human creation brought with it responsibilities. One of them can be evidenced by the cultural mandate, which is defined as "part of God's original plan for the world. Salvation does not negate it; on the contrary, it fulfills it. Being cultural creators is intrinsic to human nature. Human beings have the mandate given by God to develop creation" (WALSH; MIDDLETON, 2010, p. 53).[15]

The Christian worldview argues that "the human being is not an accident or even an event. He is in the world because he has a purpose" (BALANIUK, 2022, p. 266)[16]. This purpose highlights reasons for his existence, which is why his life is so valuable to God and those who are with him. This importance indicates

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14. *[...] seres humanos foram criados bons, mas pela Queda, a imagem de Deus foi desfigurada. Pela obra de Cristo, Deus redimiu a humanidade. (*Tradução nossa).
15. *[...] parte do plano original de Deus para o mundo. A salvação não o nega, pelo contrário, cumpre-o. Ser formadores de cultura é intrínseco à natureza humana. Os seres humanos têm o mandato dado por Deus de desenvolver a criação.* (Tradução nossa).
16. *[...] o ser humano não é um acidente e nem mesmo um acontecimento. Ele está no mundo porque tem um propósito. (*Tradução nossa).

that "the Creator has given him dominion over the earth. And this dominion should be interpreted as the ability to govern and manage with responsibility" (BARBOZA, 2022, p. 281)[17].

The governance capacity assigned to the human being requires the use of logical reasoning, which is not limited to the use of intelligence, "but also includes word, language, communication, relationship, freedom, interiority directed towards the whole" (FERNANDES, 2018, p. 51)[18], adding creativity to this list.

Shockenhoff (1997, p. 135) presents the concept of person within the Christian worldview, attributing it to something that surpasses an existence determined by a force of nature. For him, the concept of person is embedded in the Creator himself, making the human being the interlocutor of the creative act, involving him in all his dimensions, whether bodily, psychic, or spiritual. In this sense, it can be said that the human being in the Christian lens is a concrete being, an individual of the human species, a subject endowed with reason, emotion, will, and spirituality.

In light of this, the concept of person within the Christian worldview draws attention to the following issues: origin; mission, responsibility, and capacity for choice and action, translating that the person is a "rational being, endowed with intelligence and a free will, not subject to the blind force of instinct as are other animals" (MOURA, 2002, p. 75).[19] These requirements make the human being different and distinct from all creation, recognized and described in Scriptures as its crown (1 Corinthians 11:7).

It is in the sense of distinction from creation that the human being is called to fulfill his mission. This assures him rights and duties to be observed, while also impacting his action in society through relationships established for the sake of communion. In this lies his role in the world: to responsibly care for creation, while also maintaining a doxological[20] posture towards the Creator. Therefore:

17. *[...] a ele foi concedido pelo Criador o domínio sobre a terra. E esse domínio deve ser interpretado como a capacidade de governar e administrar com responsabilidade. (*Tradução nossa).
18. *[...] mas abrange também palavra, linguagem, comunicação, relação, liberdade, interioridade voltada para o todo. (Tradução nossa).*
19. [...] *ser racional, dotado de inteligência e de uma vontade livre, que não está sujeita à força cega do instinto, como estão os outros animais*. (Tradução nossa).
20. Doxological, here, assumes the meaning of worship. Therefore, in carrying out the entrusted mission, human beings recognize God's providence, as well as His sovereignty and authority over all existence, thus offering praises to the Lord, the Creator of life.

> This calling grants us the right to utilize the resources of creation for the benefit of humanity and for the glory of God, but not to abuse the environment in ways that would cause harm to God's creatures or hinder the development of future generations (RYKEN, 2015, p. 54).[21]

With this view of responsibility, it is pertinent to present what is considered the essence of personhood. In this regard, "the person is identified as a unique being, with individual personality and characteristics" (CAVALCANTI, 2012, p. 39)[22]. From this, it can be inferred that the human being, as a person, is irreplaceable, which makes them unique—there is no one else like them. Even in cases involving twins (identical or not), distinctions in personality, attitudes, stance, and aptitudes exist.

The concept of personhood should not be conflated with human nature, as "the person encompasses their concrete determinations, not only in essence (rationality, sociability), but also in accidents that necessarily accompany the realization of this essence (health limitations, intelligence, etc.)" (CAVALCANTI, 2012, p. 40).[23]

From this concept, one can visualize its alignment with the principle of human dignity, perceiving it as identity, rationality, and potentiality—essentially, a complete and unified whole. "Dignity thus demands recognition of the human being as a person, an experience that transcends reality and is independent of external aspects and the judgment of others" (CAVALCANTI, 2012, p. 40)[24]. For this reason, men and women are "urged to seek an eternal peace where everything will finally be in its rightful place; where perfect order, both in the world and in the soul, will be achieved" (NASH, 2012, p. 67).[25]

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21. *Esse chamado nos dá o direito de usar os recursos da criação para o bem da humanidade e para glória de Deus, mas não de abusar do meio ambiente de formas que venham provocar danos às criaturas de Deus ou obstruir o desenvolvimento nas gerações que virão (RYKEN, 2015, p. 54).* (Tradução nossa).
22. *[...] identifica-se a pessoa como ser único, com personalidade e características próprias.* (Tradução nossa).
23. *A pessoa abrange suas determinações concretas, não só na essência (racionalidade, sociabilidade), mas também nos acidentes que acompanham necessariamente a concretização dessa essência (limitações de saúde, inteligência, etc) (Tradução nossa).*
24. *A dignidade exige então o reconhecimento do ser humano como pessoa, que é em si uma experiência que transcende a realidade e que independe de aspectos externos e do julgamento do outro.* (Tradução nossa).
25. *[...] são incitados a procurar uma paz eterna onde tudo estará finalmente no seu devido lugar; onde a perfeita ordem, tanto no mundo como na alma, será alcançada.* (Tradução nossa).

The pursuit of eternal peace is the pinnacle of human action. In this pursuit, it is essential to discuss the concept of otherness, as it is in encountering the other that one can express and practice the commandment of love. The commandment of love is evidence of the sense and purpose of Christian life. After all, "as individuals, we discover our true selves only in relationship with others, supremely in relationships of selfless love" (HIEBERT, 2016, p. 315)[26]. Therefore, when defending human dignity, the focus is on the value of life, which cannot be subject to negotiation, denial, or alienation.

In the Christian worldview, there is an indication that "relational knowledge breaks down the barrier between cognitive knowledge and affective and moral knowledge. Faith involves truth, love, and obedience" (HIEBERT, 2016, p. 315)[27]. Thus, the Christian lens affirms that all people are created in the image and likeness of the Creator, establishing a primary relationship that identifies them and serves as their reference point. This premise is observed in actions of observation, consideration, relationship development, and adherence to this interpretive lens.

Therefore, before complying with and observing a constitutional norm, within the Christian worldview, there exists a divine commandment rooted in deep relational love, valuing individuals as an essential part of creation. Hence, there are no differences in value based on ethnicity or social status. Individuals are considered worthy from the moment of their creation.

Human dignity within the Christian worldview is an expression of the value constituted by God towards human beings at the moment of creation and restored in Christ Jesus in light of the Fall. This underscores a value that extends beyond the application of a norm, but rather a principle to be observed throughout humanity's journey. To have and live in dignity is to recognize the interconnected and significant 'we' in ongoing relationships.

In the name of human dignity

According to Cavalcanti (2012, p. 40), "human dignity is the origin and foundation of all norms; it is the starting point for any practical, moral, legal,

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26. *[...] como indivíduos descobrimos nosso verdadeiro ser apenas no relacionamento com os outros, de modo supremo nos relacionamentos de amor abnegado.* (Tradução nossa).
27. *[...] o conhecimento relacional derruba a barreira entre o conhecimento cognitivo e o conhecimento afetivo e moral. Fé envolve verdade, amor e obediência.* (Tradução nossa).

political, and economic reasoning".[28] As demonstrated, human dignity plays a central role in the construction of legal frameworks, serving as a foundational and structuring norm, guiding decisions and societal development. But what would be the conceptualization of human dignity?

According to Machado (2002), defining human dignity is not an easy task, given that the outcome must be universally valid, even amidst worldviews pluralism and diverse ethical conceptions. Such a concept is based on an "abstract idea, with vague and imprecise contours, of human dignity, including for the purpose of potentially delimiting, within the legal domain, its scope of protection as a positivized norm" (MACHADO, 2002, p. 358)[29].

Although the concept of human dignity is challenging to define, Sarlet (2001) argues that human dignity can be understood as:

> [...] an intrinsic and distinctive quality of each human being that renders them deserving of equal respect and consideration from the State and the community, implying, in this sense, a complex of fundamental rights and duties that ensure the person against any degrading and inhumane acts, while also guaranteeing the minimum conditions for a healthy life and promoting their active and co-responsible participation in shaping their own existence and communal life with other human beings (SARLET, 2001, p. 60).[30]

Concerning the concept of human dignity, it can be said that the Christian worldview has contributed significantly, not only providing foundations for shaping the conception of the human person, but also for understanding them as inherently valuable. Indeed, in the book of Genesis, chapter 1, verse 27, the biblical text states that God created human beings in his own image, both man

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28. ***[...] a*** *dignidade humana é a origem e fundamento de toda norma, é o ponto de partida de qualquer raciocínio prático, moral, jurídico, político e econômico.* (Tradução nossa).

29. *[...] ideia abstrata, de contornos vagos e imprecisos, de dignidade da pessoa humana, inclusive para efeito de eventual delimitação, no domínio jurídico, do seu âmbito de proteção como norma positivada. .* (Tradução nossa)

30. *[...] qualidade intrínseca e distintiva de cada ser humano que o faz merecedor do mesmo respeito e consideração por parte do Estado e da comunidade, implicando, neste sentido, um complexo de direitos e deveres fundamentais que assegurem a pessoa tanto contra todo e qualquer ato de cunho degradante e desumano, como venham a lhe garantir as condições existentes mínimas para uma vida saudável, além de propiciar e promover sua participação ativa e co-responsável nos destinos da própria existência e da vida em comunhão com os demais seres humanos (SARLET, 2001, p. 60).* (Tradução nossa).

and woman. Therefore, it is undeniable that there is intrinsic value in every human person simply because they were made in the image of God.

With the advancement of Christianity, it became apparent that there is a distinct value placed on human beings compared to the rest of creation. The value of the human being cannot be equated to that attributed to animals or plants, as only humans were created in the image of the Creator.

This fact may seem straightforward or not lead to a significant paradigm shift, but when comparing it to the worldview of other societies such as Greek and Roman, it becomes clear that many rational arguments were formulated to define and distinguish the concept of personhood. However, despite their success in making such distinctions and even coining the term human dignity, it did not achieve the same breath as that given by the Christian worldview.

The dignity constructed from Stoic thought and Marcus Tullius Cicero, for example, though possessing a universal and natural sense, also had a restrictive aspect. It was understood that only certain individuals could be considered worthy of dignity, typically those who contributed in some way to society and possessed wealth and freedom (PIRES; POZZOLI, 2020, p. 7-8).

As Rebouças (2013, p. 75) teaches, they lived under the influence of the "Greco-Roman organicist worldview where, strictly speaking, man did not assert himself as an individual personality, but rather as an integral part of the omnipotent civic community molded in the Hellenic polis and the Latin urbs"[31].

For Marcus Tullius, dignity was understood within this context, whereas the Christian worldview refined part of this concept, also viewing dignity as universal and a natural gift. However, instead of seeing it as relative or subject to restriction, it adopts the perspective that dignity is absolute and inherent to the individual.

From one perspective, the Christian conception acknowledges that all human beings are created in the image of the Creator, yet it also asserts that all, men and women alike, are sinners, deprived of the glory of God (Rm 3:23). It is evident that the Christian worldview does not diminish the value of the

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31. [...] cosmovisão organicista greco-romana de que, em rigor, o homem não se afirmava propriamente como personalidade individual, mas enquanto integrante da onipotente comunidade cívica plasmada na *polis* helênica e na *urbs latina.* (Tradução nossa).

human being as an image of a divine Creator, but considers everyone, regardless of economic class, social conduct, or role played, in the same condition: that of sinners.

Perhaps the significant differentiation lies in the fact that, even as sinners and deprived of the glory of this Creator, all human beings are loved and the object of redemption, undeservedly. Therefore, the person, despite being a transgressor, has value, with a God who, by grace, resolves to reconcile with them through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, whose death and resurrection enable redemption.

Due to this understanding of the person as having value because God has credited such importance to them, and redeemed by the grace of a God who makes no distinction between "Jews and Greeks" in the plan of salvation, it is impossible to speak of relative dignity based on economic origin, race, or color, considering that dignity is determined by someone outside of human beings and the system they have constructed. Precisely for this reason, Rebouças (2013, p. 75) asserts that:

> In the traditional Christian conception, human dignity is ultimately founded and fulfilled in God, such that the human being does not possess intrinsic value by themselves, but rather through their communion with the divine source of their life and destiny; from which they draw the light that dignifies their wandering existence.[32]

And it is because human value derives from God that each person attains intrinsic value, as it becomes impossible to equate people with other living beings, instrumentalize them, objectify them, and dehumanize them. Thus, a concept of dignity is created that is absolute, natural, universal, and whose value is inherent in each individual.

Of course, the Christian worldview was not initially sufficient to prevent slavery for several centuries, but it undeniably played a unique role in its abolition and recognition as an abominable and intolerable practice, precisely because of the attributes it conferred upon human dignity.

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32. Na concepção tradicional do cristianismo, a dignidade do homem funda-se e realiza-se, em última instância, em Deus, de forma que o ser humano não veicula um valor em si por si mesmo, mas, sim, por sua comunhão com a fonte divina de sua vida e destino; da qual haure a luz que dignifica a sua existência errante. Tradução nossa).

It is crucial to note that as a result of secularization, the Enlightenment, Kantian philosophy, among other influences and worldviews that began to impact Western society, the vision of human dignity underwent transformations over the centuries. However, the attributes of dignity constructed by the Christian worldview remained, albeit without attributing to God the source of the intrinsic value of human beings.

In this sense, the first ruptures regarding the dignity constructed under the Christian worldview occurred due to Renaissance anthropocentrism and continued during the Enlightenment, as:

> [...] pre-modern man began to claim his share of inherent light in the world. This evolved into cultural expressions that sought to balance, in a syncretic manner, faith and reason, shifting the gravitational center of philosophical speculations from God to man, without entirely expunging the religious or theological element from intellectual constructions. [...] During the transition from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries, [...] The idea of human dignity was definitively incorporated, as a principle of public life, into the political and legal discourse in the realm of intra-state relations [...] in such a way that it sought to "deify" the virtues of human reason and the idea of the immanence of individual value over transcendence, rejecting any religious foundation in the conceptualization of human dignity (REBOUÇAS, 2013, p. 77-79).[33]

As a result of these transformations, as well as those stemming from classical liberalism, socialism, Marxism, anarchism, and modern liberalism, Barcelos (2002, p. 104) asserts that the value of the human being became an end in itself, becoming "an axiom of Western civilization, and perhaps the only remaining

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33. [...] o homem pré-moderno passara a reivindicar seu quinhão de luz própria no mundo. Isso se converteu em expressões culturais que almejaram equilibrar, de modo sincrético, fé e razão, o que deslocou o centro gravitacional das especulações filosóficas de Deus para o homem, sem, no entanto, expurgar completamente o elemento religioso ou teológico das construções intelectuais. [...] Durante o trânsito da Renascença para a Ilustração, nos séculos XVII e XVIII, [...] A ideia de dignidade do homem foi, ademais, definitivamente incorporada, na qualidade de princípio da vida pública, ao discurso político e jurídico no plano das relações intraestatais [...] de forma que tratou de "endeusar" as virtudes da razão humana e a ideia de imanência do valor dos indivíduos frente à de transcendência, rejeitando qualquer recurso de base religiosa na fundamentação da noção de dignidade da pessoa humana (REBOUÇAS, 2013, p. 77-79). (Tradução nossa).

ideology"[34]. Similarly, Agostini (2012, p. 15)[35] states that "this dignity, inherent to all members of humanity, grounds their equal and inalienable rights and guarantees freedom, justice, and peace in the world. This dignity arises from the very nature of the human being and the fact of being a person".

Therefore, other worldviews have altered the foundation of human dignity by treating the value of the human being as an axiom, while simultaneously seeking to maintain the attributes of universality, naturalness, intrinsic individuality, and absoluteness constructed under the Christian worldview.

It is precisely for this reason that it is argued that the Christian worldview did not only play a role in defining what a person is but also helped in the process of influencing and contributing to the construction of the principle of human dignity. This convergence between these fields allows for an understanding of the role of this worldview in shaping the assumptions and categories that still persist in social reality.

One cannot think of the concept of a person in the Christian worldview apart from the principle of human dignity. One cannot understand the principle of human dignity without considering the contributions of the Christian worldview in the process of its materialization in the relationships established among human beings, from a perspective of "we."

Final considerations

In writing the concluding remarks on the developed theme, it is pertinent to address the guiding question that encompassed the process of argumentative weaving. This question attempts to demonstrate how the Christian worldview, in defining the concept of personhood, can effectively contribute to its observance, adhering to the principle of human dignity in favor of valuing life.

Three reasons can be presented in the attempt to answer. First, the Christian worldview values the human being from the moment of creation, seeing them as made in the image and likeness of the Creator. It is emphasized here that the

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34. *[...] um axioma da civilização ocidental, e talvez a única ideologia remanescente.* (Tradução nossa).
35. [...] esta dignidade, inerente a todos os membros da humanidade, funda seus direitos iguais e inalienáveis e garante a liberdade, a justiça e a paz no mundo. Essa dignidade advém da natureza mesma do ser humano e do fato de ser uma pessoa. (Tradução nossa).

presuppositions of the Christian worldview cannot be thought of apart from the revelational character found in the Scriptures.

Secondly, the human being is informed that they have a mission entrusted to them by the Creator. For this reason, they find meaning in life, which is associated with the responsibility to manage creation with diligence, creativity, and commitment. This involves their rational, emotional, social, and spiritual capacities, carried out with a full sense and understanding of being human.

Thirdly, from the beginning of human creation, the Christian worldview, by attributing value to the human being, does not show partiality. Rather, based on this valuation, the Christian worldview sees the person as a subject of rights and duties who enjoys dignity. This demonstrates that the principle of dignity is inherent in the very conception of personhood, making it inappropriate to see humans as objects or inferior beings. They are the crown of all creation. Departing from their dignity infringes not only human law but also the law of God.

The principle of human dignity needs to guide human relations. It is through this principle that violations, which reduce humans to mere objects, disregarding their condition as subjects of rights, can be understood. This alert correlates with the Christian worldview, as it stands against all forms of discrimination and violence against people.

If there is no understanding that the person has value, and if the principle of human dignity is not observed, a process of trivialization of life and dehumanization begins. This can lead to barbarism and processes of degradation of the sense of being human.

Viewing reality through the lenses of the Christian worldview ensures that the human being is respected, regardless of the adopted position, whether or not the presuppositions are accepted. The human being has value, and their life is precious; therefore, it must be safeguarded, respected, and valued. There is no right to objectify the human being.

The principle of human dignity, just like the sense of personhood within the Christian worldview, cannot be reduced to abstract concepts aimed at providing a formal and final definition of the object. Instead, they manifest in life, in all its complexity, making it essential for their applicability to occur in human relation-

ships and experiences. What needs to be preserved as a foundational point is respect and the perspective of otherness.

The presupposition of the human being in the Christian worldview and the principle of human dignity pertain to the condition of human life, which cannot be disregarded. Recognizing this allows society, in general, to offer a way to deal with freedom, the power of decision and choice, and generational formation. After all, society's view of the human being will impact how generations are affected by actions projected in the process of producing culture and history.

What is at stake is not only the observance of a constitutional principle or a worldview presupposition, but the direction attributed to human existence. Neglecting this is a step toward losing one's identity and humanity, which is so dear to the meaning and reason of being human.

It is reiterated that the discussion of the chosen subject did not aim to exhaust the study, the analyses carried out, or impose a single perspective, but rather to provoke reflections that can help humans find themselves, with others, and, from the Christian worldview, with the Creator. Although it is acknowledged that this last point may not be universally accepted by other worldviews, the value of life is intrinsic to the human being, which can be the point of convergence worth defending.

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