

# Catholics VS. Theologians: Anger on the Dereliction of Duty

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## 【Process】

In the LBT professional certification training courses, as required for the internship, Y and I were assigned into a group. During our discussions, Y had described himself as in an angry mood most of the time. He is a devout Catholic and has a long-term commitment to evangelization and pastoral work. He considers Catholic theologians of Taiwan to be a disappointment, citing that they failed to diligently teach and use important Biblical teachings as a powerful tool for evangelization when working. By comparison with the vigorous development and serious attitude of Christianity, he was feeling very disappointed as well as a little lonely and helpless. He was eagerly looking forward to the feeling of forging the people, or "*turn iron into steel*", through Catholicism. This was the main reason for his anger.

In the course of our conversations, Y's body movements and emotions are excited, but on the other hand, when he made a statement, it was with a smile on his face. Therefore, I believe that "*anger*" is true, but these issues were, in fact, already treated in his heart through other means (since he is an experienced professional psychological counselor). LBT will help him to review these matters once again in a logical and professional manner.

Y appeared to experience emotional states such as anger, disappointment, loneliness and helpless. His object/subject is the theologians of Taiwan, and the situation regarding their practical theology. His evaluation is: dereliction of duty among Taiwanese Catholic evangelic workers. Therefore, in his mind there is a premise that was:

The theologians should pay attention to practical theology; otherwise they are in dereliction of duty.

I proposed the following syllogism and discussed it with him:

**If the theologians do not pay attention to practice theology, they are in dereliction of duty.**

**The theologians of Taiwan do not pay attention to practice theology.**

**They are in dereliction of duty.**

**If the theologians were in dereliction of duty, then I feel angry (disappointed).**

**Theologians of Taiwan are in dereliction of duty.**

**I feel angry (disappointed).**

I asked Y, about any ideas he had about this logical formula. He summed up his thoughts through a more extreme premise:

***Theory should lead Practice (theology should lead evangelization)***

He believes that these theologians should study the teachings and practices regarding useful content, so that Christians conduct their work effectively. Some Catholic theologians, he believes, are very proud, narrow-minded, hold a lack of courage and do not learn from others. I asked: In saying, "*theologians should pay attention to practical theology*", what is your definition of "should"? Also in saying, "*theologians of Taiwan do not pay attention to practical theology*", what do you mean by "*do not pay attention*"? He replied: "Maybe they have gone on practicing, but still cannot meet the actual demand of the field. Moreover, I know that some questions about the Bible (Example: Eschatology) have not been explained because the historical context (impact of Godfather philosophy) is dictated through Catholicism. Christianity has no such burden. Secondly, I also know that there is a suitable candidate recently who was sent to Boston to receive theological training practice. This gives me hope! "

After listening to the self-interpretation of Y, I believe his and disappointment has been partially relieved. Therefore, I proposed a Zen classic fable to help him overcome his feeling alone and helpless:

Droplets by themselves feel very lonely in the sea; he was just an insignificant little droplet. The Sea can see his pain, then told him, in fact, you are a part of me; you're the sea.

I said to Y: "If both Catholic and Protestant Christians are with the Lord, then do you still mind that the Catholics do not grow in the same way as the Christians?" he nodded and said: "This is comforting to my loneliness, however, I still have a profound "*nostalgia*" for the Catholic faith, so my mind still feels regret. Things could

have been better!"

### 【Reflection】

Through the statements of Y, we can see his ideas may have a tendency toward "*insistence on perfection*" and "*blame*". In fact, I think his "*irrational*" premise is not obvious. We see his premise through his words such as "*should*" and "*do not pay attention,*" which caused him to consider more extreme judgments, thus creating his strong emotions.

In this experience, I learned how to use LBT steps to help clarify an emotional response in which the intention of a person is conflicted, as caused by a logical fallacy. But, regarding "*insistence on perfection*" and "*blame,*" whose corresponding transcendent virtues are respectively "*metaphysical security*" and "*respect*", I have not had enough time to find the right philosophical antidotes for Y. I will need to add two prescriptions of theological antidotes for devout Christians like Y by writing:

\* For the treatment of "*insistence on perfection*": Obedience

Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

- Luke 22:42

As Christians are willing to entrust their anger and disappointment, I believe the Lord has His arrangements and timetable, rather than our own recognized state.

\* For the treatment of "*blame*": Forgiveness

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sinned against us.

- The Lord's Prayer

People are limited, imperfect, so when we blame others, the Lord wants us to learn forgiveness in His love, and also to get his forgiveness.

In terms of being beneficial, I believe the words of the Bible provide antidotes for Y. *Obedience* and *forgiveness* are two very important Christian virtues; and, since Y should be well aware of his own anger, disappointment and loneliness, he will be able to earn comfort through the love of God!