

HOW DOES RELIGION SHAPE SOCIETIES? –

On the relevance of religion for
transformation processes

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- 1) The empty space of religion in critical social sciences
- 2) Christian religion in Latin America: accomplice and critic of colonial rule
- 3) Christian religion, liberation practice and social transformations

1) *THE EMPTY SPACE OF RELIGION IN CRITICAL SOCIAL SCIENCES*

- secularization thesis has not occurred globally
- secular norm in Western social sciences:

„something deemed private with no public or development implications, or something deemed superstition which would disappear as people became more educated“ (Deneulin 2021: 1)

- Limitation of the view of the potential of religious perspectives for the critique of social inequalities and for processes of liberation and transformation

*2) CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN LATIN AMERICA: ACCOMPLICE
AND CRITIC OF COLONIAL RULE*

*ANTONIO DE
MONTESINOS 1511
IN SANTO
DOMINGO*

“You are all in mortal sin and live and die in it because of the cruelty and tyranny you use against those innocent peoples. Tell me, by what right and with what justice do you hold those Indians in such cruel and terrible slavery? Are they not human beings? [...] Are you not obliged to love them as yourselves? You do not understand that? You do not feel that?”

GUAMAN POMA

DE AYALA 1615

"It is well known that the rich and arrogant despise the poor, and they think that where the poor are, there is neither God nor justice. On the contrary, faith clearly teaches us that where the poor are, there is Jesus Christ himself; where God is, there is justice. So, Christians, do not despise the poor of Jesus Christ, but rather see how you persecute the poor."

(1980, 917)

SOR JUANA INÉS

DE LA CRUZ,

1691

"What I will not deny (partly because it is known to all, and partly because God has shown me the grace to give me a great love of truth, although it is directed against me) is that, since the light of reason struck me, the inclination to write has been so vehement and strong that neither external reproofs - of which I have experienced many - nor my own reflections - of which I have made not a few - have been sufficient to dissuade me from following this natural impulse which God gave me: Your Majesty knows why and wherefore; and you know that I have asked you to extinguish the light of my mind, leaving only what is sufficient to keep your law, for the rest, some say, is unnecessary in a woman; and there are even those who say that it does harm."

Respuesta de la poetisa a la muy ilustre Sor Filotea de la Cruz

*3) CHRISTIAN RELIGION, LIBERATION
PRACTICE AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS*



"The development of inwardness and a spirituality of deep connection with all that exists can be extremely revolutionary. People who listen to their hearts, who are contemplative and reflective, and who are guided by their inner voice and not by the dictates of the market and consumer society, are neither comfortable nor profitable for the patriarchal capitalist system. Therefore, one of the issues that plays a role in the practice of ecofeminism is everything that helps us to inhabit and cultivate our inner space. [...] But this spiritual search is also appropriated by the capitalist system, which openly turns it into a profitable business [and] [...] invalidates the transformative and countercultural energy of spirituality."

(Céspedes Ulloa 2023,20)

LAUDATO SI



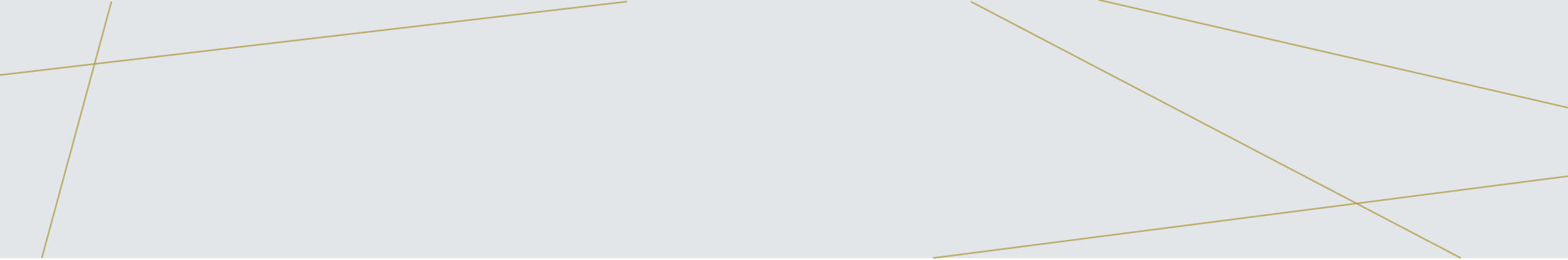
LAUDATO SI' GOALS



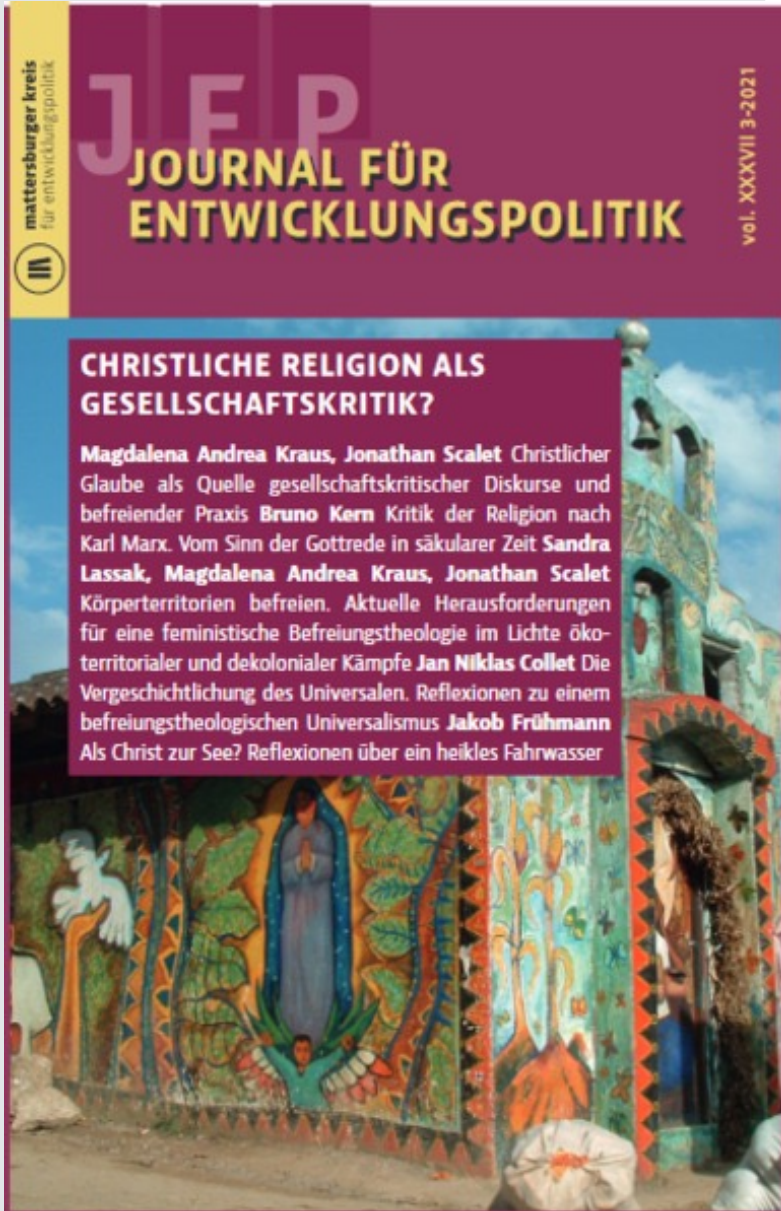
In the spirit of integral ecology, hope for the Earth and the Poor.



„to transform persons out of our [...] indifference, selfishness, and boredom into something alive again. The sermon labors to transform hearers [...] into persons capable of acknowledging the connectedness of all things and of responding to the conjoint demands of love for both human and more-than-human beings in the face of the [...] destruction of the earth herself and all her denizens by profit-oriented, 'modern' technocracy, consumerism, individualism, and capitalism.” (Harraway 2023, 167)



„most spiritual belief systems address relationships between humans and the world around them, including non-human of all kinds, they have something to contribute to how we can reimagine how our societies can be organized and how they can be transformed.“ (Deneulin 2021: 2)



CHRISTLICHE RELIGION ALS GESELLSCHAFTSKRITIK?

Magdalena Andrea Kraus, Jonathan Scalet Christlicher Glaube als Quelle gesellschaftskritischer Diskurse und befreiender Praxis **Bruno Kern** Kritik der Religion nach Karl Marx. Vom Sinn der Gottrede in säkularer Zeit **Sandra Lassak, Magdalena Andrea Kraus, Jonathan Scalet** Körperterritorien befreien. Aktuelle Herausforderungen für eine feministische Befreiungstheologie im Lichte ökoterritorialer und dekolonialer Kämpfe **Jan Niklas Collet** Die Vergeschichtlichung des Universalen. Reflexionen zu einem befreiungstheologischen Universalismus **Jakob Frühmann** Als Christ zur See? Reflexionen über ein heikles Fahrwasser

CONCLUSIO

- “How does religion shape societies?”
- Historical and contemporary relevance of Christian perspectives for transformation processes
- Hidden potential of religion and presence in development practice

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- Laudato Sí Goals: <https://jpicblog.maristsm.org/laudato-si-goals-and-action-plan>
- Donna Harraway: <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000132007321/wichtigste-person-der-kunstwelt-warum-donna-haraway>