

# THE COLLAPSE OF HIERARCHICAL SOCIETY

## AND THE TRANSITION TO A NON-HIERARCHICAL ORDER

### 0. INTRODUCTION

The consciousness of the individual and of human society as a whole is like a constantly transforming and evolving mechanism.<sup>1</sup> It is a turbulent spiritual river gradually restrained in its bed by dams and locks, human and religious rules, traditions, and laws.<sup>2</sup> However, many of these regulations are overly simplistic, and some are even myths. Yet they all served or still serve their purpose. Although after a certain period of time they begin to hinder necessary development, and abruptly releasing these dams poses a threat of flooding.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, those who called for their release too loudly or too soon (i.e., proclaimed the truth),<sup>4</sup> had to pay a high price for their calls. Nevertheless, their sacrifices had a profound meaning and ultimately bore excellent fruit.

**Note:** It is important to realize that humanity has been in a state of emergency since the beginning. This makes these regulatory measures all the more urgent. Sometimes, “whatever was at hand” was used. Politicians, and not only them, are aware of the state of human society and, as an emergency solution to problems and crises, have learned to use deception, which is only a small step away from lying and abusing cunning for personal gain.

This harsh reality of our world only illustrates the bleak spiritual state of human civilization and the immense difficulty of its education and correction.

### 1. SECURING SOCIAL STABILITY

History teaches us that if the relevant social conditions are not met, the development of society can take a moral step backwards.<sup>5</sup> Society has a self-regulating or safety mechanism for this case with an excessively long “time constant” exceeding the length of a human generation. The phenomenon of free will is not limited in this way. The measures mentioned, which are restrictive to a certain extent, were therefore truly necessary for the successful development of humanity.

**Note:** A biblical example of such a social regulation can be found, for example, in the entire range of commandments, necessary actions, and prohibitions of the Old Testament. As is well known, this regulation was formally abolished after God’s people reached a certain spiritual maturity. This revolutionary change was very painful. The release of those metaphorical barriers initially caused outrage and horror among many. The Apostle Paul therefore recommended caution in individual cases (1Co Chap. 8; Ro 14:20,21). In Jerusalem, he submitted himself to the Law (Ac 21:21-24) and even had Timothy circumcised out of consideration for the Jews. It was not God, but this situation itself that necessitated the issuance of an apostolic decree that “ordered” non-Jewish Christians to continue to observe certain provisions of the Law (Ac 15:15-29).

This is how it is in the hierarchical structure of society. That is why the Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome:

Ro 13:1,4	<i>“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. ...” [NIV]</i>
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<sup>1</sup>The mechanism can literally be called “physical” or instinctive in its early stages.

<sup>2</sup>If we want to compare the development of humanity with the development of a river, we must imagine both “flows” from their prehistoric beginnings. People do not yet know the rules of coexistence and do not have the necessary social habits, and the river has not yet carved out its bed.

<sup>3</sup>This, in turn, is a source of anxiety for those on the other side of the “barricade”, the powerful ones.

<sup>4</sup>At this point, without wishing to offend historians and political scientists, the description of this whole situation is greatly simplified for the purposes of popular interpretation. The calls used to be also very well-founded, e.g., Jan Hus, and others. Nevertheless, this did not change their impact.

<sup>5</sup>For example, the world before the flood, Sodom, the Canaanites, the medieval church, but also some political regimes, etc.

## 2. HOW IT ALL BEGAN

After the change of circumstances in Eden, God could certainly foresee the further development of Adam and Eve's thinking.

The sequence of Adam's thoughts might have looked like this:

*"First, Eve insisted that we do not have children, and then that we eat from the forbidden tree. Her decisions brought us to the brink of disaster. It is better not to listen to Eve. I am stronger, so I will decide how we live our lives."*

**Note:** The main reason they had not fulfilled their task of bearing children until then must have been the woman. She was punished, among other things, with labour pains, which must have served some educational purpose. This interpretation is also explained by her words after the birth of her first child.

Ge 4:1	"... I have acquired a man with Jehovah." [DBY] <sup>6</sup>
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In other words: *"I have regained the favour of both my husband and God."*

Therefore, God could say to Eve:

Ge 3:16	"...and your longing will be for your husband, and he will dominate you." <sup>7</sup> [NWT]
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Similarly, all other hierarchies arose when the more intelligent or experienced, and therefore generally stronger individuals, simply had to start ruling over the less intelligent or inexperienced if they wanted to move their community forward or avert impending danger. Communication in an equal relationship is difficult and inevitably failed. Rampant hierarchies were clearly not planned for humanity. This can also be seen in the situation at the time of the Judges, when the Israelites wanted to establish a human king over themselves. God tried to dissuade them from doing so (1Sa 8:7-18).

## 3. THE DIFFICULT ROAD BACK

The traditional hierarchical structure existed on earth for thousands of years. It existed at all levels of society, from families to royal courts. This structure had its own fixed rules, which were reflected primarily in a clearly defined and functioning method of communication, communication based on unequal relationships. For a long time, humanity could not even imagine a different way of communication. Equal relationships and equal communication are not a matter of course, as we may think today, when we have made considerable progress in mastering them.<sup>8</sup> In ancient society, this phenomenon was completely unknown. In those early days, speech conducted in a spirit of equality was probably considered arrogance and insolence. Perhaps it resembled or even encouraged the ways in which the nobility behaved towards their subjects. This led to somewhat bizarre behaviour when two people in otherwise equal positions communicated with each other. The speaker would address the other person in a very humble manner (Ge 19:2; 1Sa 20:5,8; 1Sa 25:24), even when they were in a socially superior position (2Ki 5:15; 2Ki 8:13). This humble behaviour eventually became a kind of etiquette.

**Note:** Today's equivalent, ensuring orderly communication between two people, is the use of formal address. People who address each other formally speak to each other with greater subordination, like the people in our ancient examples. This custom signals that equal communication is far from being a matter of course.

This distinctly hierarchical communication gradually softened. Recently, however, there has been a literal reversal in this area, triggered by the increasingly urgent need to master a new way of communication-communication based on equal relationships. The traditional form of hierarchical relationships has begun to break down.

<sup>6</sup>Darby Bible.

<sup>7</sup>Here, greater interest in the emotional side of life is predicted, with all its demands, which are almost impossible to fulfill in current practice. Greater interest in romance and cultural life among women naturally follows from their more complex psychological (certainly emotional, for example) makeup. According to the principle of God's creative process, the woman, who was created later, was supposed to be a more complex and perfect creature than man. Despite many anecdotes, or in accordance with them, a woman is most likely an improved version of the human being (man). Her superiority in this area will probably be balanced by the superiority of men in other mental areas. Human couples should be able to live in an equal relationship, and such a difference could even help to strengthen it. Because of their different abilities, men and women should respect and need each other.

<sup>8</sup>But only instinctively and insufficiently.

## 4. TRANSITION TO A NEW QUALITY

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The breakdown of hierarchical relationships, accompanied by a feared disrespect for authority, is caused by the fact that people as individuals are increasingly becoming aware not only of their right to freedom, but also of their personal value. However, mastering this new quality inevitably requires intelligent solutions. People refuse to communicate unequally. Who is willing to behave humbly today? The problem is that they are not yet able to behave equally. Sometimes they do not even know that equal communication has its own fixed rules. However, these rules have not yet been consistently formulated, let alone established as valid social norms and introduced into school curricula. This is where contemporary society has a huge deficit.

### 4.1. Potential Risks

In the past, a rigid hierarchical structure brought with it many negative social phenomena, such as injustice that could not be defended against, humiliation of people, abuse of power, exploitation of subjects, etc. Although the demise of hierarchies and authorities wielding power may seem like a self-healing process for these social ills, the opposite is true.<sup>9</sup> The demise of a rigid hierarchical structure poses the threat of very serious social issues, sometimes reaching such proportions that they are beyond any control.<sup>10</sup> Society is threatened by two possible impacts:

- The complete collapse of social order, tyranny, and anarchy.
- Or a descent into totalitarianism.

The hierarchies that have disappeared,<sup>11</sup> which have accompanied humanity and protected its stability throughout its history, were created through a long process of development and were “sanctified” by a long tradition. Once they have disappeared, they cannot reappear with the same authority; it is not possible to return to this certainty. The stability of future society must be built on new foundations of equality.

### 4.2. New Quality of Relationships – Threat to Foundations of Society

Today, the general process of the breakdown of hierarchies is most strikingly evident in the institution of the closest partnership, marriage. Throughout history, this institution has been openly described as hierarchical, as patriarchy or even matriarchy. Today, we are witnessing the demise of this hierarchy. A relatively well-functioning unequal arrangement (not necessarily fair or equally satisfying to both parties) is often being replaced by a dysfunctional equal relationship. The current situation is already critical, as there is an uncontrolled breakdown of hierarchies within families. Given that new male and female roles are not specified, and therefore neither are realistic ideals of masculinity and femininity, disputes over these roles often end in family breakdown.

### 4.3. Rapid Development and Its Causes

Given that our civilization had a high starting intelligence,<sup>12</sup> the social process of the breakdown of hierarchies, as well as scientific and technological development, has been proceeding at a rapid pace.<sup>13</sup> This brings with it a number of other problems, such as those mentioned above concerning communication or the rise of oligarchy, which fought its way to power behind the scenes with the demise of the aristocracy. The natural consequence of this power system in the industrial age is the emergence of a consumer society and the associated threat of a global environmental catastrophe.

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<sup>9</sup>Revolutionaries have always thought that it was enough to overthrow tyranny.

<sup>10</sup>How many new and unknown problems has this collapse brought to today's democracies!

<sup>11</sup>Aristocratic, ecclesiastical, administrative cities, etc.

<sup>12</sup>This conclusion is based on the repeatedly proven assumption that God creates increasingly complex and perfect things. Our starting intelligence had to be higher than that of previous heavenly levels. And this will probably also apply to the quality of other things.

<sup>13</sup>The acceleration was further increased by Satan's educational method.

#### 4.4. “The Devil’s Spiral”

The basic direction of social development follows a curve resembling an exponential function, and we are currently in its steepest part. The X-axis (time) coordinate of this curve is shortened due to the aforementioned increased intelligence and the way humanity is raised. Our spiritual growth should be a kind of imaginary boundary, a curve moving parallel to our exponential curve. However, this is slowed down by the influence of original sin. This corresponds to an insufficient and very unbalanced increase in moral (spiritual) quality. The curves intersect, and our civilization, with its rapid development, is overtaking and crossing this boundary. This is a very dangerous situation, as humanity is becoming its own enemy. To make matters worse, this tense situation is leading to a rapid relaxation of the protective measures mentioned at the beginning. This became especially evident in the 20th and 21st centuries with the decline of overarching authorities (hierarchies), the exposing of social taboos, and a general social revolution.

Note: The development of society also proceeds in a secondary direction, namely in a spiral. This leads to a cyclical repetition of key historical events, gradually at higher stages of development, according to exponential growth (Ec 3:15). This law allows God to prophesy and us to similarly deduce the periodic repetition of precedent events.

### 5. TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS, OR TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

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The quality of relationships between people increases or decreases with the quality of their mutual communication. People communicate with each other verbally, orally, or non-verbally, through movements, gestures, and signs. For this purpose, we can divide relationships between people into formally equal (symmetrical), formally unequal (asymmetrical), and informal (friendly). Examples of asymmetrical relationships include king–subject, judge–defendant, boss–subordinate, and doctor–patient. Examples of symmetric relationships include relationships between colleagues at work, classmates, spouses, neighbours, etc. However, even here, due to natural authority or aggression, but mainly due to the inability to communicate on a truly equal footing, a greater or lesser asymmetry in the relationship gradually develops. The relationship between friends is also equal, but unlike the previous relationships, it is not formally bound by anything (contract, law, regulation, place of work). It is therefore the most valuable relationship. It is clear that completely different laws apply in an unequal relationship than in an equal relationship.

#### 5.1. Emotional Balance of Dialogue – The Key to Its Success

Life experience shows that asymmetrical relationships are more stable and sufficiently functional.

Note: This refers to real hierarchies, not the semi-collapsed, pseudo-authoritarian ones we often see today.

The question arises as to what the secret of their stability is. The reason is simple. Although it may seem paradoxical today, a symmetrical relationship is emotionally much more demanding than an asymmetrical one. Why? The stability of any relationship stems from the emotional balance (the resulting feeling or mood) of mutual communication. In an asymmetrical relationship, this balance was ensured by very clear and understandable rules. Subjects were raised to be obedient and respectful to their superiors (Ro 13:7). Superiors were raised to master the art of management and governance. The rules were clearly defined and not open to discussion. Both sides were emotionally balanced with them, as no other principle was known. Problems were therefore not solved through lengthy, emotionally demanding negotiations. They were solved by the nobility, pragmatically (effectively). If both sides behaved at least somewhat reasonably, their coexistence was problem-free. A similar principle worked in relationships at all levels of society, from marriage to the royal court. A symmetrical relationship has no quick safeguards; it is secured by moral quality. Roles, powers, rules, and models of behaviour are not yet clearly defined. Ideas about them vary, and therefore endless, very painful disputes are held about them. People unconsciously turn to old models, seeing them as some kind of ideal, but at the same time they do not want to give up their equality. It is clear that such a combination is not possible. In this way, the problem is unsolvable!

The proposed solution has two basic points:

- It is necessary to abandon established models and the ideals associated with them (e.g., in marriage, the ideal of the real man and the real woman<sup>14</sup>).
- We need to look for new models of behaviour, new rules of communication, and connect them with new ideals.

Note: These models do not necessarily have to be new. In ancient history, there were (and in some places still exist) communities that did not have strict hierarchical rules, thus allowing for a freer development of the personalities of both men and women. Certain patterns exist in the human mind. However, these archetypes are often perceived as unattainable ideals. This process, as can be seen in everyday life, is already happening spontaneously, and partners in happier couples are quite successfully finding their places and roles in equal relationships. So, there is a solution.

## 6. PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN – GENETIC BURDEN

Drawing the first, second, or even third line on a white canvas is a significant change from the previous state. In an unfinished painting, you will probably not even notice the new lines unless you witness their creation. The same applies to the genetic records of acquired human traits. At the very beginning of humanity, the behaviour of the first humans strongly influenced the hereditary traits and direction of development of subsequent generations.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, God could even determine a long-term prognosis of human behaviour from individual actions.

Ge 2:24	<i>"That is why a man will leave his father and his mother and he will stick to his wife, and they will become one flesh."</i> [NWT]
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Why?

Every why has its reason and vice versa. Adam left his father, God, because of Eve. God said to her:

Ge 3:16	<i>"...and your longing will be for your husband, and he will dominate you."</i> [NWT]
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These first records not only determined the initial direction of development, but thanks to this direction, they had time to become firmly genetically fixed over the centuries. Social customs, including the negative ones, were also passed on through upbringing. The hierarchical arrangement between men and women was established here, at the very beginning of human history. Men have a genetically strong tendency to consider themselves superior and feel entitled to make decisions. Women, on the other hand, have a fixed sense of inferiority, which is a considerable emotional burden for them today. They realize that this arrangement is unfair; moreover, they must struggle not only with this tendency to feel inferior, but also with the innate male tendency toward arrogance (in relation to women). The emergence of feminist movements and the rise of female resistance is therefore inevitable. This situation is a further complication of the already very difficult process of creating an equal relationship. The Bible points out the aforementioned processes and the problems associated with them well in advance. Jesus already spoke about equality between people, and the Apostle Paul explained it in more detail, surprisingly also mentioning the following problem.

2Ti 3:1,2	<i>"You may be quite sure that in the last days there will be some difficult times. People will be self-centred and avaricious, boastful, arrogant and rude; disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, irreligious;"</i> [NJB]
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Paul claimed that at the end of the 2nd Covenant, children would be disobedient to their parents. This is a painful reflection of the chaotic collapse of the hierarchical structure throughout society. Young people are very perceptive and imitate what they observe around them.

<sup>14</sup>In an equal relationship, the man is not the "strong leader" that the woman desires, because the woman is not a "mere helper" that the man desires. The relationship is symmetrical! However, this does not mean that the roles are the same. They must again be adapted to the physiology of both sexes.

<sup>15</sup>Something similar works in the case of individuals. Our first childhood experiences, joys and sorrows, were probably the strongest and influenced the development of our personality for many years to come.

## 6.1. Christianity and Women's Equality

Although Paul was well aware of the equality of men and women, he also knew that establishing it would not be easy. We can see how he instructs the churches to continue to respect the established patriarchy (Ga 3:26-28; 1Co 14:34). In the difficult times that Christians were experiencing and still had to face,<sup>16</sup> solving this problem would have been too heavy a burden for them (it is a task for several generations). Establishing equal relationships requires not only a high degree of maturity on the part of the partners, but also a true (scientific) code of rules<sup>17</sup> for behaviour in an equal relationship. Later generations of Christians failed to recognize this task, thereby delaying its solution, which is still being addressed chaotically without a plan, even today, when society demands the advent of equal relationships.

Note: This applies primarily to developed societies whose progress was initiated by Christianity. In countries influenced by Islam and various branches of Buddhism or Hinduism, where traditional social structures are being preserved, this problem is not as acute.

## 7. CONCLUSION

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An equal relationship, if not firmly based on knowledge and respect for the rules, is a very unstable state. It tends to slide towards a more stable, yet unequal, asymmetrical state, which is unpopular and rejected today. In order to foster equal relationships across the whole of society, teaching these principles must start in primary schools. Of course, this should be done in cooperation with the family and the Mother Church. This need is becoming increasingly urgent in these modern times.

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<sup>16</sup>God's people waited from the birth of the promised son of the covenant (1st Covenant - Isaac, 2nd Covenant - Jesus) in both cases for about four hundred years of "slavery" (the dominion of Egypt and Rome) before his power was established. The phenomenon of humiliation is part of God's education and all his people and all his anointed ones go through it (Ps 119:71; Heb 5:8).

<sup>17</sup>This code will not be a legislative matter, but will be "written in human hearts" (Jer 31:33). Therefore, it will require a high degree of moral maturity. Although it will have to be developed in some written form, it will serve primarily for didactic purposes. In the case of larger social units, solving the problem will require the development of a scientific project for the administration of a non-hierarchical society.