Preprints.org

Article

The Role of The Bible and Theological Education in Preventing and Stopping Individualism and Extremism: Examining the Limited Help of Politics and Economics

Elisei Rusu [*]

Article

The Role of The Bible and Theological Education in Preventing and Stopping Individualism and Extremism: Examining the Limited Help of Politics and Economics

Elisei Rusu

Executive Director of RLM from Illinois and Reference Board Member of EMI, from Ohio; United States of America, Fairview Heights, IL 62208; Institutul Teologic Crestin dupa Evanghelie "Timotheus" din București, Romania; elisei.rusu56@gmail.com

Abstract: In a world increasingly defined by isolationist values and ideological extremism, the question of how to foster a sense of unity and shared purpose is pressing. Political policies and economic structures certainly influence societal well-being, but they often lack the moral and ethical frameworks needed to address issues like individualism and extremism at their core. The Bible and theological higher education, by contrast, offer an alternative approach, encouraging community-centered values, critical engagement with belief systems, and an ethos of compassion. Through this essay the author explores the unique role of the Bible and theological higher education in counteracting the spread of individualism and extremism, while also examining why political and economic measures may provide limited assistance in achieving these ends.

Keywords: Bible; economics; extremism; individualism; politics; selfishness; theological education

Introduction

In contemporary society, rising individualism and extremism have become increasingly urgent concerns. Individualism can erode community values, leading to social fragmentation, while extremism often escalates conflict and fuels divisiveness. Both phenomena threaten social cohesion and can hinder peaceful, cooperative societies. Political initiatives and economic incentives have been deployed to address these issues, but these approaches tend to fall short. Political solutions are often fleeting or polarized, and economic strategies lack the ethical and moral depth needed to address root causes. In contrast, the Bible and theological higher education provide a holistic approach that not only critiques individualism and extremism but also instills a sense of community, shared purpose, and ethical integrity. This essay explores how the Bible and theological higher education play a critical role in addressing individualism and extremism while highlighting the limitations of politics and economics in fostering long-term societal unity.

The Rise of Individualism and Extremism

Individualism, defined as the pursuit of personal goals over collective well-being[1], has intensified in recent decades due to technological advancements, cultural shifts, and global interconnectedness. Digital media, for instance, often celebrates self-expression and autonomy[2], while simultaneously eroding communal bonds. Similarly, extremism, which involves adopting

---

[1] Encyclopedia Britannica. *Individualism*, Retrieved on October 21, 2024.

[2] J. M. Twenge," Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood", 2017. Retrieved on October 21, 2024.

extreme political, religious, or ideological positions, has surged, leading to heightened social tensions and conflict. Extremism thrives in societies where individuals feel alienated, lacking in purpose or community, making them more susceptible to radical ideologies that promise a sense of belonging[3].

These trends are not isolated; they reflect broader global challenges. Economic inequality, political polarization, and the rapid spread of misinformation all contribute to an environment where people either withdraw into self-centered lives or gravitate toward extremist groups. Individualism can lead to social isolation, while extremism fosters an "us vs. them" mentality[4]. Both prevent meaningful engagement with diverse perspectives and empathy toward others, crucial components of a healthy society.

Limitations of Politics and Economics in Addressing Individualism and Extremism

Political and economic approaches have long been considered primary tools for maintaining social order and cohesion. Governments implement policies to encourage unity, discourage divisive ideologies, and promote economic stability, while economic systems strive to improve individual and community well-being through prosperity and growth. Yet, while political and economic interventions are essential, they often struggle to make a lasting impact on the deeply personal and ethical dimensions that drive individualism and extremism.

A. Political Limitations

Politics, by nature, involves governance and the enforcement of laws aimed at shaping social behavior. While political policies are essential for establishing societal norms, promoting justice, and protecting freedoms, they are often limited in scope and effectiveness when it comes to countering individualism and extremism. There are several reasons for these limitations:

1. **Short-Term Focus and Partisanship**: Political agendas frequently shift with electoral cycles and are influenced by party interests. As a result, policies aimed at fostering unity or social well-being can be short-lived, altered, or even reversed when a new administration takes office[5]. This lack of continuity makes it difficult to sustain long-term social initiatives aimed at cultivating community values or preventing extremism. Additionally, partisanship often reduces policies to symbolic gestures rather than practical measures. For example, a social initiative that emphasizes community service may gain support under one administration but be dismantled by another due to ideological differences, undermining its effectiveness.

2. **Limited Reach into Personal Beliefs and Values**: While political systems can legislate behaviors, they cannot mandate personal beliefs, ethics, or values. Laws and policies focus primarily on external behavior, aiming to prevent crime or promote participation in civic life, but they rarely touch on the internal motivations that drive individuals toward individualism or extremism. Political efforts to promote unity or discourage divisive ideologies often fail to change the underlying attitudes that contribute to these trends. Laws cannot cultivate empathy or a sense of shared purpose; they can only regulate outward actions.[6] Consequently, policies aimed at reducing social isolation or preventing extremism often remain superficial, addressing symptoms rather than the root causes.

---

[3] F. M. Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration", *American Psychologist*, 60(2), 2005, pp.161-169.

[4] *Ibidem*.

[5] M. P. Fiorina, S. J. Abrams, & J. C. Pope, *Cultural War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, London, UK, Pearson Longman, 2005, p. 123.

[6] A. Bandura, "Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities", *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3(3), 1999, pp.193-209.

3. **Polarization and "Us vs. Them" Dynamics**: In many contemporary societies, political discourse itself has become polarized, with partisan media and rhetoric often emphasizing differences rather than commonalities. This "us vs. them" mentality can contribute to social fragmentation, exacerbating feelings of alienation and distrust that feed individualism and extremism. Political discourse that frames opponents as enemies, or that uses divisive language to rally support, often fuels rather than resolves social divisions[7]. As a result, political systems that could ideally promote unity sometimes end up intensifying the very tendencies they aim to mitigate.

4. **Lack of Moral Authority**: For policies aimed at fostering community and unity to be effective, they need to be grounded in a moral or ethical vision that resonates with individuals. However, political systems, especially in secular societies, often avoid promoting specific moral or ethical frameworks. This neutrality can leave political solutions hollow, as they lack the moral authority to inspire individuals toward selflessness or communal responsibility[8]. For example, a campaign encouraging civic engagement may not resonate deeply if it lacks an ethical appeal that encourages individuals to consider the welfare of others beyond self-interest.

B. Economic Limitations

Economics plays a powerful role in shaping individual and community behavior through employment, income distribution, and market incentives. While improving economic conditions can reduce poverty and increase stability, economic strategies alone cannot address the deeper ethical and existential issues that contribute to individualism and extremism. Here are some of the primary limitations:

1. **Focus on Material Prosperity Over Existential Needs**: Economic policies and programs primarily aim to improve material conditions by increasing wealth, creating jobs, and stabilizing markets. While financial security is crucial, it does not address the human need for purpose, meaning, and belonging. Economic systems are not equipped to respond to existential questions or to foster ethical and spiritual growth, leaving individuals vulnerable to extremism or isolation, even if they are financially stable[9]. Extremist ideologies often offer a sense of identity and purpose that is missing in purely economic frameworks. In this sense, economic approaches can only address surface-level needs, leaving the underlying quest for meaning unfulfilled.

2. **Consumerism and Its Impact on Individualism**: In market-driven societies, economic growth is often fueled by consumerism, which promotes individual choice and self-interest as central values. This emphasis on consumer culture can foster individualism by encouraging people to prioritize personal desires over collective well-being. Advertisements, lifestyle marketing, and social media often emphasize self-expression, personal success, and competition, which may inadvertently weaken community bonds[10]. While economic systems reward individual achievement and self-sufficiency, they rarely incentivize community-building, empathy, or altruism—qualities that are essential for countering individualism and extremism.

3. **Inadequate Solutions to Social Alienation**: Social alienation, a driving force behind both individualism and extremism, cannot be resolved through economic measures alone. Economic policies may provide jobs or financial resources, but they do not address the feelings of isolation or purposelessness that often accompany modern life. Many individuals are drawn to extremist groups not due to financial hardship but because these groups provide a sense of belonging and

[7] L. Masson, *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.2018.

[8] C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Harvard University Press,1989.

[9] Wilkinson, R., & Pickett, K., *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*, Bloomsbury, London, UK., 2010.

[10] Bauman, Z., *Consuming Life*, Polity Press, Cambridge, U.K., 2007.

identity that they do not find elsewhere[11]. For example, economic assistance programs may alleviate poverty but do little to foster the sense of community and connection that individuals seek when they join extremist organizations.

4. **Economic Inequality and Its Role in Extremism**: Economic inequality, a common feature in many societies, often exacerbates feelings of resentment and disenfranchisement, which can lead to both individualism and extremism. While economic policies may attempt to reduce inequality through welfare programs or progressive taxation, these measures often fail to address the psychological impacts of inequality. When individuals feel they are being left behind or unfairly treated, they may turn toward individualistic survival strategies or adopt extremist views as a form of protest[12]. Economic measures alone cannot address the underlying anger or mistrust that inequality breeds, as they lack the ethical and moral framework necessary to promote genuine social harmony.

5. **Lack of Ethical Direction in Economic Incentives**: Economic systems are largely driven by incentives that focus on profit, efficiency, and competition, often overlooking ethical considerations. While incentives can encourage desirable behaviors, they lack the capacity to promote altruism, empathy, or moral accountability[13]. For example, a government might offer tax breaks to encourage charitable giving, but without a deeper ethical motivation, these incentives may become transactional rather than transformative. Economic measures can motivate outward behaviors but rarely instill a sense of ethical duty or communal responsibility that discourages individualism or extremism.

In essence, political and economic efforts are limited by their focus on external behaviors, material conditions, and short-term solutions. While they are crucial for maintaining social stability, they lack the moral, ethical, and spiritual depth required to foster deep, lasting change in individuals. Individualism and extremism are complex phenomena rooted in the human search for purpose, identity, and belonging—needs that cannot be fulfilled by legislation or financial incentives alone. This gap highlights the need for alternative approaches, such as the belief in the biblical teaching and theological higher education, which can address the deeper ethical and spiritual dimensions that influence individual and collective well-being.

The Role of the Bible in preventing and stopping individualism and extremism

The Bible, as the foundational text for the Christians, can indeed play a complex and influential role in addressing both individualism and extremism. Its teachings emphasize themes of community, compassion, and humility, which often counter the values associated with extreme individualism and extremism. Yet, interpretation plays a critical role; the Bible has been both a source of unity and, historically, at times used to justify extreme ideologies. Here's a closer look at how the Bible can contribute to preventing and addressing these issues:

1. **Emphasis on Community and Shared Values**

- **Collective Responsibility**: Biblical teachings emphasize the importance of community and the concept of collective responsibility. Verses such as "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31) and the notion of the church as a "body" with different members (1 Corinthians

[11] Putman, R. D., *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon & Schuster Publishing, New York, NY., 2000.

[12] Stiglitz, J. E., *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, NY.,2012.

[13] Sandel, M. J., *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux – Macmillan Publishers, New York, NY.,2012.

12:12-27) encourage unity, interdependence, and caring for others, countering the self-centered focus of extreme individualism.

- **Selflessness and Service**: Many passages advocate for humility, service, and caring for others. Philippians 2:3-4, for example, advises Christians to act in humility and look to the interests of others, which can challenge the emphasis on self-interest that often drives individualism, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves."[14]

2. Moral and Ethical Guidelines as a Deterrent to Extremism

- **Principles of Peace and Non-violence**: The New Testament, especially, emphasizes peace, forgiveness, and non-violence, which are directly opposed to extremist ideologies that may justify violence. Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, such as "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9)[15], offer an ethical framework that discourages radical or violent approaches.

- **Rejecting Hatred and Judgement**: Biblical teachings discourage judgment and hatred. The instruction "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Matthew 7:1)[16] and the command to "love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44) advocate for tolerance and understanding, which can counteract extremist attitudes rooted in intolerance or hatred.

3. Human Fallibility and Humility

- **Recognition of Human Limitations**: The Bible encourages a humble perspective on human limitations, suggesting that true wisdom comes from recognizing one's own faults and being open to correction. Proverbs 3:5 advises, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding," which encourages humility, and dependence on God's guidance in all aspects of life.

- **Warnings Against Pride**: Verses like Proverbs 16:18 ("Pride goes before destruction") serve as warnings against pride, which can lead to individualistic or extreme behavior. This humility-focused outlook can work against self-centeredness and radical self-righteousness, which often fuel extremism.

4. Challenges of Interpretation and Misuse

- **Potential for Misinterpretation**: Throughout history, certain passages of the Bible have been taken out of context and selectively interpreted to justify extreme actions or divisive ideologies. Without a nuanced, contextual interpretation, verses can sometimes be taken out of context to support views contrary to the Bible's overall message of peace and community.

- **Need for Discernment in Application**: Effective prevention of individualism and extremism relies on interpreting the Bible's teachings holistically. Selective, isolated interpretations can

---

[14] *The Life Application Bible,* New International Version (1991). Tyndale House Publishing, Wheaton, IL.

[15] *Ibidem.*

[16] *Ibidem.*

lead to divisive or exclusionary beliefs, whereas broader interpretations that emphasize the Bible's core messages of love, forgiveness, and community are likely to discourage extremism and radical individualism.

5. Building Resilience Against Extremism Through Faith Communities

- **Supportive Community Environments**: Many Christian communities provide a supportive environment where individuals can find a sense of belonging, purpose, and identity in a healthy, constructive way. This sense of community can be a deterrent to extreme individualism, which often leaves people feeling isolated or disconnected.

- **Opportunities for Moral Accountability**: Being part of a faith community offers opportunities for individuals to be held accountable in their beliefs and actions. Churches can provide moral guidance, help individuals navigate challenging issues, and offer support that counteracts both extremism and excessive individualism.

6. Integrating Faith with Broader Social Efforts

- **Encouraging Social and Ethical Responsibility**: The Bible's teachings encourage believers to be active, responsible members of society, caring for the needy and advocating for justice. By linking faith with social responsibility, communities can promote collective well-being, reducing tendencies toward extreme individualism or isolation. Prophet Jeremiah encourages the captives in Babylon, "…seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." (Jeremiah 29:7).

- **Incorporating Faith-Based Dialogue in Education**: Faith-based educational approaches, combined with teachings from other disciplines, can encourage a balanced understanding of values and empathy. This integrative approach can help prevent ideological isolation or extreme individualistic thinking.

In summary, the Bible provides a robust framework for countering individualism and extremism by promoting values of community, humility, and responsibility. However, these outcomes depend significantly on careful interpretation, community support, and integrating these teachings into broader social efforts. When applied thoughtfully, the Bible has the potential to shape mindsets toward unity and mutual respect, acting as a meaningful deterrent to extreme individualism and extremism. In order to acquire these desiderates, theological higher education plays a crucial role in training pastors and church leaders how to study, understand and apply correctly the Bible.

The Role of Theological Higher Education

Theological higher education based on the sound teaching of the Bible, offers a unique framework that nurtures values and perspectives capable of addressing the root causes of individualism and extremism. By focusing on spiritual, ethical, and philosophical growth, theological education provides students with tools to foster a sense of community, develop critical perspectives on ideological rigidity, and build resilience against divisive influences[17]. This approach is distinct in that it promotes holistic character formation, which is essential for both personal fulfillment and constructive social engagement.

---

[17] Smith, J. K. A., *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, Baker Academic, Ada, MI., 2009.

Promoting Community and Compassion

A foundational aspect of theological education is its emphasis on serving God through community, with compassion and selflessness. Through theological studies, students engage deeply with concepts of interconnectedness, human dignity[18], and mutual responsibility. Theological programs often emphasize scriptural and philosophical teachings that highlight the importance of empathy, humility, and service to others[19]. By studying these principles, students are encouraged to place the welfare of their community above narrow self-interest, countering the isolationist tendencies that often accompany individualism.

For example, many theological programs include coursework on ethics promoting compassion and forgiveness. These teachings foster a community-centered worldview, encouraging students to view their lives in the context of collective well-being rather than mere personal success. By emphasizing the moral obligation to serve others and to work toward a more just society, theological education actively counteracts the self-centered narratives that often permeate contemporary culture.

Encouraging Critical Engagement with Ideologies

Theological higher education provides a platform for students to critically engage with various ideologies, encouraging them to question extreme or exclusionary beliefs. Through courses in theology, ethics, apologetics and comparative religion, students learn to analyze complex ideas, consider multiple perspectives, and develop a nuanced understanding of faith and morality. This intellectual rigor is essential in preventing extremism, as it fosters the ability to recognize and reject oversimplified, absolutist ideologies that appeal to fear or hatred[20].

For instance, programs in comparative religion allow students to explore the teachings, practices, and values of various faith traditions, helping them understand religious and cultural diversity. Critical engagement also equips students to challenge the harmful "us vs. them" mentality often used by extremist groups.

Cultivating Spiritual and Ethical Resilience

Theological education also instills resilience by grounding students in spiritual practices, ethical reflection, and community involvement. Many theological programs incorporate spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, meditation, and communal worship, which provide students with a sense of inner peace and clarity. These practices can be powerful tools for developing resilience against extremist influences by helping individuals cultivate a grounded, compassionate identity that is less vulnerable to manipulation or fear-based ideologies[21].

Ethics courses further support this resilience by teaching students to engage with moral dilemmas thoughtfully and to develop a personal sense of ethical responsibility. For instance, students studying Christian ethics might engage with topics such as non-violence, stewardship, and care for the marginalized, building a foundation that discourages destructive behaviors and promotes positive social impact[22]. This practical application reinforces their commitment to constructive social engagement and prepares them to resist extremist rhetoric that promotes division or harm.

---

[18] Rotaru, I-Gh.,"Plea for Human Dignity". *Scientia Moralitas.* Human Dignity - A Contemporary Perspectives 1, 2016, pp. 29-43.

[19] Nussbaum, M. C., *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.,2011.

[20] Volf, M., *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN.,1996.

[21] Palmer, P. J., *Let Your life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*, Jossey-Bass Publishing, San Francisco, CA.,2000.

[22] Sider, R. J., *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience: Why Are Christians Living Just Like the rest of the World?,* Baker Books, Ada, MI., 2005.

The Role of Timotheus Bible Institute in Preventing and Stopping Individualism and Extremism

One example of positive influence of theological higher education is Timotheus Bible Institute of Bucharest (TBI). TBI is one of God's instruments in building His church in Europe on many levels. Taking its perspective from the biblical view of God, mankind, and the world, TBI is committed to stressing Christian doctrine and ethics, Christian service, and academic excellence. TBI's calling in theological higher education is to create an environment that nurture the academic community in and by the truth of God's redemptive love in Christ and to equip its members for lives of dedicated service.

The role of Timotheus Bible Institute of Bucharest, Romania, is synthetized in the following objectives, organized as four beneficial „E":

Through the educational and research activity TBI was been developing its mission with the following objectives:

EDIFICATION in the personal life with God. The students and the whole academical community must grow in the knowledge of God in order to reach maturity.

EQUIPING for any good work. Full equipping of a servant-leader, both theoretically and practically.

EFFICIENCY in the Christian service. The student and the graduates must contribute to the efficient development of God's work serving as: elders – pastors, preachers, evangelists, missionaries, Sunday school – teachers or teacher of Religion in the state educational system.

EXCELLENCE for our Lord Jesus Christ in all domains. Starting with the TBI leadership, professors, students, graduates up to the administrative staff, each person pursues excellence before God first of all and before people.[23]

Conclusion

Theological higher education based on the sound teaching of the Bible can serve as a powerful force for promoting community, empathy, and resilience against individualism and extremism. By instilling values rooted in compassion, service, and respect for diversity, theological education produces leaders equipped to address the ethical and existential challenges that political and economic systems alone cannot solve. Through real-world applications, theological higher education has the potential to build bridges across divisions and create communities that are resilient against the forces of individualism and extremism.

---

[23] Rusu, I., *Theological Essays: Collection 2014-2018*, Risoprint Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2019, pp. 167-168.

References

1. *The Life Application Bible*, New International Version (1991). Tyndale House Publishing, Wheaton, IL.

2. Encyclopedia Britannica, Online.

3. ANDERSON, H. R., & Foley, E., Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals: Weaving Together the Human and the Divine, Jossey-Bass, 2001.

4. ASTLEY, J., & Francis, L. J. (Eds.), Exploring Ordinary Theology: Dimensions of Everyday Christian Existence and the Life of the Church, Routledge, 2013.

5. BANDURA, A., "Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities", *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3(3), 1999, pp.193-209.

6. BAUMAN, Z., *Consuming Life*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK.2007.

7. DALEY, D., Unrigged: How Americans Are Battling Back to Save Democracy, Liveright, 2020.

8. DURKHEIM, E., *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, Free Press, 1897.

9. FIORINA, M. P., Abrams, S. J., & Pope, J. C., *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, London, UK, Pearson Longman, 2005.

10. GROOME, T. H., Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples, HarperOne, 2011.

11. HAUERWAS, S., & WILLIMON, W. H., *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony*, Abingdon Press, 1989.

12. HEDGES, P., *Controversies in Interreligious Dialogue and the Theology of Religions,* SCM Press (provides insight into engaging respectfully with differing beliefs), 2010.

13. HESCHEL, A. J., *The Prophets,* Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005.

14. KEKES, J., *The Morality of Pluralism,* Princeton University Press, 1993.

15. KELSEY, D., To Understand God Truly: What's Theological about a Theological School?, Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

16. MACINTYRE, A., *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

17. MASON, L., *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press, 2018.

18. MOGHADDAM, F. M., *The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration.* American Psychologist, 60(2), 2005,161-169.

19. NUSSBAUM, M. C., *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach.* Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA., 2011.

20. PALMER, P. J., *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation,* Jossey-Bass Publishing, San Francisco, CA., 2000.

21. PIKETTY, T., *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Harvard University Press, 2014.

22. PUTNAM, R. D., *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon & Schuster Publishing, New York, NY., 2000.

23. PUTNAM, R. D., Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY., 2000.

24. RITZER, G., *The McDonaldization of Society*, Pine Forge Press, 2008.

25. ROTARU, I-Gh., "Plea for Human Dignity". Scientia Moralitas. Human Dignity - A Contemporary Perspectives 1, 2016, 29-43.

26. RUSU, I., *Theological Essays: Collection 2014-2018*. Risoprint Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2019.

27. SANDEL, M. J.,*What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.

28. SANDEL, M. J., *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux-Macmillan Publishers, New York, NY., 2020.

29. SEN, A., *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, 1999.

30. SIDER, R. J., The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience: Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?, Baker Books, Ada, MI., 2005.

31. SMITH, J. K. A., Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation, Baker Academic, Ada, MI., 2009.

32. STIGLITZ, J. E., The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future, W.W. Norton, New York, NY., 2012.

33. SUNSTEIN, C. R., Going to Extremes: How Like Minds Unite and Divide, Oxford University Press, 2009.

34. SUNSTEIN, C. R., #Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media, Princeton University Press, 2017.

35. TAYLOR, C., Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity, Harvard University Press, 1989.

36. TWENGE, J. M., iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood, 2017.

37. VOLF, M., Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation, Abingdon Press,1996.

38. VOLF, M., Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation, Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN.,1996.

39. WILKINSON, R., & PICKETT, K., The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger, Bloomsbury, London, UK., 2010.