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Ph.D. Thesis

Systems theory and the Catholic Church

(The application of systems theory to church life)

Abstract

To begin with, I will outline the foundations of systems theory and network theory, with special attention to the elements linked to living systems because that's where the two theories can be most effectively combined. It is to be demonstrated that the key points are also present in the teaching of the Catholic Church on the Holy Trinity as well as in ecclesiology. The linkage to theology and the depiction of the sacred will be revealed. Based on this, a few tools for improving the operation of the Church will be presented. System archetypes and learning organizations will be specially dealt with. My research focuses on the relationship system of 881 homepages belonging to the Hungarian Catholic Church. In addition to a qualitative study, I think it is extremely important to analyse and display data visually, too. It can be stated that this relationship system has the same qualities and operating modes as living systems and networks. The network is centralized to a certain degree, which makes the system vulnerable. If we create less centralized subsystems, the website appearance of the Hungarian Catholic Church can be made more effective. The thesis is to show that systems theory will add a new aspect to theological thought, enabling the Church to carry out her mission more efficiently.

Key words: systems theory, network theory, Holy Trinity, Church, learning organization, systems archetype, scale independent network, relationship