



*Sárospataki
Füzetek
Alapítva:1857*

KIADJA / PUBLISHED BY: Sárospataki Református Teológiai Akadémia

FELELŐS KIADÓ / PUBLISHER:

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PREPRESS and COVER DESIGN: József Asztalos

KÉSZÜLT A Kapitális Nyomdában

PRINTED BY Kapitális Printing House

Ügyvezető igazgató / Managing Director:

József Kapusi

ISSN 1416-9878

Szerkesztőség címe / Editorial Office:

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PÉLDÁNYONKÉNTI ÁRA / PRICE per COPIES: 500 Ft / HUF
ÉVES ELŐFIZETÉSI DÍJ / ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: 2000 Ft / HUF

CÍMLAPKÉP és fotók / COVER IMAGE and photos: Károly Zsolt Nagy

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From the Editor | Vom Herausgeber

340 years after the Reformation, in the summer of 1857, the Sárospatak Reformed Theological Academy launched its theological journal, entitled *Sárospataki Füzetek*. The intent of the editors was expressed in the subtitle “A Protestant and Scholarly Journal” that wished to publish studies, papers, articles, and reviews on the church, education, science, and literature. Through a wide scale of disciplines (from church and theology, through education and philosophy to arts), the journal strove to set “this weak-minded Protestantism” on its feet. This awakening was to be achieved in the harmony of science and faith.¹

The journal has gone through various phases of renewal concerning its structure and the frequency of issues. However, its purpose has never changed, it has always wished to be the spiritual centre of the Cistibiscan Church District, and its editors have always tried to remain faithful to this mission.

After the years of forced silence, the faculty of the reopened academy decided to relaunch the journal. The decision was made in 1995 to revive the historic tradition; to foster the original mission of the journal; to provide publication opportunities for faculty members; to publish guest lectures; to serve the life-long learning and postgraduate training of ministers; to provide information on the life of the institute (chronicles); and to publish reviews.² It took two more years for these dreams to become true, with the first issue of the new volume being published in 1997.

And now in 2017, 500 years after the Reformation, 160 years after the very first issue, 25 years after the reopening of the academy, and 20 years after the renewed volume, our readers can hold the second international, foreign language issue in their hands. By taking a brief look at the contents, one can immediately judge that the original purposes are still treasured by the editors.

As we move through the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the *Sárospataki Füzetek* has brought together contributions that highlight some main features and the ongoing significance of the Reformation. We invited authors to submit papers under the theme of “Intercultural Dialogue since the Age of the Reformation”. We have sought to consider the cultural challenges that have developed since the Reformation to our present. The reformers offered various interpretations of the dialogue between traditions, as well as between diverse identities – a heritage also visible in political debates and cultural oppositions. Our contributors have responded from various backgrounds: Dutch, German, Swiss, South African and Hungarian. They give insight into Protestantism from an ecumenical perspective, interreligious dialogue, the interrelatedness of religiosity and cultural authentication, the sexuality debate and the Calvinist landscape of remembrance. We have also provided space for our honorary professors, former Erasmus Plus lecturers, former and present faculty

¹ See a historic review in Dénes DIENES: *Sárospataki Füzetek*, *Sárospataki Füzetek*, 1, 1997/1, 2–9.

² Cf. Antal Mihály NAGY: *Lectori salutem!*, *Sárospataki Füzetek*, 1, 1997/1, vii.

members and students. They cover a whole range of disciplines from Biblical studies through systematic theology to church history.

We heartily recommend the *Sárospataki Füzetek* to our readers for the questions of the day and the responses that address the challenges we face in our call to discipleship. We also continue to invite all those who feel to belong to our wider spiritual and scholarly community to share their knowledge with us.

Gabriella Rácsok

TEACH ME THAT I MAY LIVE!

UNTERWEISE MICH, SO WERDE ICH LEBEN!

ANITA BARNÓCZKI



When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.
(Deut 30:1-3)

Anita Barnóczyki

“ACCORDING TO EVERYTHING I COMMAND YOU TODAY”

We often pray for blessing. We ask for blessing because we want to be happy, to live a good life. And then we no longer pray for blessing because we want to be happy and to live a good life. Success is enough.¹ Sometimes we feel we do not succeed in anything as if everything conspired against us. It is not only that we cannot be happy, but we cannot even see a path to take. So we pray for blessing because we want to live a happy life.

Human life is like that. Moving away from God, and then, in the hour of grace, returning to God. This moving away has been there since that very first decision; from the moment the human being began to perceive, desire, and finally use their knowledge of good and evil outside of God. Outside of God; outside of life; now in the valley of the shadow of death.

But the compassionate God came close and chose a people for Godself to show that life and blessing are possible. To show the Way in which God guides the people; to show the Way that yields blessings. God gave law to His chosen people. It was a blessing for the people, but they wanted meat instead, and even more meat, a golden calf, or later a king

¹ The words 'happiness' (boldogság) and 'success' (boldogulás) are quite close in Hungarian.

to become like other peoples. They wanted the blessings of being chosen, but they did not want its purpose.

In the meantime, they experienced blessing and curse; nothing more and nothing else than what the Lord said; growth and glory, scattering and captivity. For the Word of God is certainty. It is reality. It is truth. It is fulfilled.

When the Words of God are fulfilled, God gives us an opportunity to take God's Word seriously. Even when scattered among peoples. Even when finding ourselves at the back of beyond. We know that in Jesus Christ God reaches out to us. In Him God gives us an opportunity to return; and by the Holy Spirit, an opportunity for our hearts and souls to change. This is also the experience of God's people, the experience of the Christian Church.

The story of moving away and returning is the story of God's people. It is the story of blessings and curses. And it is in the returning that this historical experience strengthens us. God's people move away from God, take decisions in their own hands, claim God's church for themselves and abuse her, make the Truth into truths, and make the divine Words into empty words. Finally, they hardly remember where they started from, and where they should return.

But there are Times when God allows us to have a better understanding, which leads to conversion. Such a great historical event is the Reformation in which the distant and abandoning church is given the opportunity to return. According to everything God commanded. The church is given the opportunity to recognize Christ as the only way of blessing. She recognizes the Scriptures, in which God's Word is presented as we should know it. She recognizes grace in the Scriptures. And faith emerges from grace, making God's people God's people; people that want to live as God's people, and devote all their efforts to completing their God given mission.

This year is a special opportunity for retrospection. For it has been fulfilled what God spoke, according to everything God commanded. And the same thing is awaiting for fulfillment today; the same thing, but in a different way, because today we are the ones who should hear the Truth, and once we have heard it, we are to testify to it. So that later on we may be looked upon as a generation in whose life it was fulfilled what the Lord had spoken. According to everything God commanded.

ARTICLES • STUDIEN

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE SINCE
THE AGE OF THE REFORMATION /
INTERKULTURELLER DIALOG SEIT DER
REFORMATION

KÁROLY ZSOLT NAGY
CHRISTOPH SIGRIST
MARGRIET GOSKER
EBERHARD BUSCH
PÉTER GAÁL-SZABÓ
NADIA MARAIS



Károly Zsolt Nagy

LEAVING A MARK: THE CALVINIST LANDSCAPES OF REMEMBRANCE*

Most religions have their sacral spaces and landscapes, that is, the well-defined territories of the physical space which the transcendent power designates for itself according to the given religion, in which it manifests itself, or in which the followers of the given religion recognize the manifestation of the transcendent. These spaces and, of course, the objects, which carry the marks of the transcendent in some way, usually play an important part in the religious practices, rituals, and sometimes even the ordinary life of the given religion. They leave their mark on the community – at the same time, the community using them leaves a mark on them as well. Thus, these spaces and objects considered sacred denote a special relationship between the transcendent and the community and its members. Calvinist theology – as opposed to Roman Catholics for example – denies the possibility of such spaces and objects being the media of the continuous manifestation of the transcendent, except for the Sacred Tent, or Tabernacle, of the Old Testament, and the Temple of Jerusalem. However, it is true in this field as well that the practice does not correspond to the theory. Namely, there are more territorial elements to the Calvinist denominational identity, to which the individual communities relate like the constant carriers of the transcendent's manifestation. At the same time, these spaces and objects are closely related to the history and identity of the given community as well: they are identity symbols that condense the historical experience, and thus function as a place for the community's remembrance.¹ One of the most famous of these objects is the

* The research was supported by the Bolyai Research Fellowship.

¹ Here I discuss remembrance and its places in the sense Assmann (Jan ASSMANN: *A kulturális emlékezet: Írás, emlékezés és politikai identitás a korai magaskultúrákban*, Budapest, Atlantisz, 1999.)

Chair of Lajos Kossuth in the Calvinist Great Church of Debrecen, which was set up in a central position within the church, next to the Lord's table, for decades, and which was regarded by the homepage of the congregation for a long time as one of the most important relics of the church.² Through its placement – the Lord's table is the liturgical center of the Calvinist church, in this case also separated by a bar, which accentuates the sacral nature of the space – and, via its associations, the terms used for referencing it, it is clearly indicated that this object is in some way the location of the transcendent's manifestation. On the other hand, the method of the manifestation is revealed by the common remembrance; after all, this is the chair, in which Kossuth, “the Moses of the Hungarians” leading the Hungarian nations towards the “promised land” of freedom and independence, was sitting at the time of announcing the dethronement of the House of Habsburg. I have already discussed the Calvinist church as a sacral place of remembrance³ elsewhere; now I strive to shortly present how, according to my hypothesis, some peculiarities of the utilization of space in the Calvinist church may be fit into such an interpretative framework.

“Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the covenant law with them in the wilderness. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. After receiving the tabernacle, our ancestors under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for him. However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things?” (Acts 7:44–50)⁴

This quoted text is in the Bible, more specifically in the book of the New Testament written on the Acts of the Apostles. Its narrower context is that it is the final speech of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, which he presented to the so called Sanhedrin, the Jewish religious (and political) leaders, in his own defense. Stephen was put to trial for blasphemy. The (false) witnesses said “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. [...] against this holy place and

and Nora (Pierre NORA: Emlékezet és történelem között: A helyek problematikája, *Múlt és jövő*, 2003/4, 2–16.) use it.

² At the moment the armchair is located in one of the exhibition spaces set up within the church, and the new version of the website avoids this wording.

³ Károly Zsolt NAGY: „Mely igen szerelmetesek a te hajlékaid...”, A református templom, mint a felekezeti azonosságtudat reprezentációja, *Ethno-Lore: a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Néprajzi Kutatóintézetének Évkönyve 32*, 2015, 293–330.

⁴ *Resource for the translation of Bible quotations: New International Version*. Biblica, 2011. BibleGateway.com, www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-International-Version-NIV-Bible/#booklist.

against the law: For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.” (Acts 6:11–14) In his reply, Stephen attested that what Jesus had said was essentially already there in what Moses and the prophets had said; that is, he did not deny the literal truth of the quoted words of Jesus. Actually, Stephen quotes here the book of one of the greatest prophets, Isaiah, where God himself reprehends Israel: “This is what the Lord says: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?’ declares the Lord. These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word.” (Isaiah 66:1–2) This biblical thought is one of the most important constituents of the knowledge related to the Protestant concept of sacrament, and the related manifestation of the transcendent.

According to the Roman Catholic concept, the church can be the place for the manifestation of the transcendent in several forms. On the one hand, it possesses a sacred character in itself, as it is a sanctified space; on the other hand, and closely related to this, the relics of the saints may be placed in it too. However, what is most important for us for the comparison with the Protestant/Calvinist concept, is probably the presence of Christ himself through the host placed in the *tabernacle* of the church. This presence is emphasized by the sanctuary lamp in front of the tabernacle that houses the sacrament; and when the believers bend their knees when entering the church, they salute the Christ present in the tabernacle. In the course of the Roman Catholic liturgy, when the priest repeats the words of institution⁵, the essence of the bread and the wine “turn into the essence of Christ’s body and blood”,⁶ or more specifically: the elements are replaced by each other. This is in short the doctrine of the *transsubstantiatio*, which claims that Christ is actually present in the elements.

The Protestants have discarded the doctrine of the *transsubstantiatio*. Luther writes about the *consubstantiatio*; that is, he believes that the elements do not go through transubstantiation, but in some way both substances (the sign and what it signifies as well) are coexisting in the communion. The Swiss branch of Reformation discards even Luther’s doctrine, and views the communion as a symbol, and talks about a kind of “spiritual presence”; moreover, Zwingli, who had gone even further than Calvin, and who had a great influence on the Hungarian Reformation as well, does not accept any kind of presence, and holds the communion to be only a form of remembrance.⁷ Parallel to this, Calvinist theology discarded all “location-specific”

⁵ “This is my body... [...] this is my blood...” (Matthew 26:26–28)

⁶ The Eucharist in *Magyar Katolikus Lexikon*, <http://lexikon.katolikus.hu/E/Eucharisztia.htm> (Downloaded: March 21, 2017)

⁷ For the Lutheran perspective see Luther’s work written in 1537, the Articles of Schmalcald on the Eucharist in *The Christian Book of Concord, or Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Newmarket, Solomon D. Henkel and Brs., 1851, 299–300. For Calvin’s perspective see Book 4 of the *Institutio*, chapters 17 and 18. John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 2, John T. McNeill (ed.), Ford Lewis Battles (trans.), Philadelphia, Westminster, 1960, 1359–1448.

manifestation forms of the transcendent, while advancing an other tradition, which sees the presence of Christ in this world embodied in the church itself.

The church – according to its Calvinist interpretation – is pointedly not the hierarchy, and not the clergy, but the actual (local) community: Christ's body,⁸ and so the manifestation of the transcendent is tied to the community as well. Thus, anything that is sacred may only be so – that is, maintained and separated for the transcendent, as in the original meaning of the word – if the church, that is, its physical form, the community, uses it. This way not even the building of the church is sacred in itself, as on the one hand, it does not continually contain anything of sacred characteristics (pictures, the sacraments, relics, the Eucharist), but it becomes sacred when the community in which Christ manifests himself gathers inside, and in the Calvinist sense, this is when it becomes “the house of God”.⁹ In the other way around, it results in that any place – a barn, a stable, etc. – may be sacred, should a congregation be formed inside. This logic is applied by Calvinism to the full system of sacral objects – the so called *clenodia* –, the ritual objects, and the *paramenta*, that is, the objects offered for decorating the church.

At the same time, there is “another side” to this concept. Namely, the communal nature results in that the transcendent experience is “location-specific”. Partly, this means the influence of patriotism and local traditions to the recognition of the manifestation of the transcendent; but it also means that the manifestation of the transcendent gains its meaning within the horizon of the local. Thus, the history of the local community and the embedded “individual” experiences become the media of the manifestation of the transcendent, and those places and locations, to which these experiences are tied (for example the church, the *clenodia*, or the appropriated drapery) turn into locations of remembrance.

The professional literature of ethnography and anthropology mostly focuses on the church building, its inscriptions, the memorial tablets placed inside, the *clenodia* and *paramenta*, as well as the written resources created by the church, when trying to capture that remembrance of the community. At the same time, with some generosity, we could also consider a peculiar group of remembrance reflecting the use of the church space, as written resources, which are only rarely examined by the researchers:¹⁰ the scribbles found on the walls, pillars, gallery parapets, and especially the benches themselves. What are these scribbles about? How are they tied to the

Zwingli's teachings are summarized by Ulrich GÄBLER: *Huldrych Zwingli: Eine Einführung in sein Leben und sein Werk*, Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2004.

⁸ “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:27.

⁹ The mutual influence of the different uses and interpretations of the word “the house of God” is rather peculiar, and not insignificant in terms of the issue at hand.

¹⁰ These inscriptions mostly draw the attention of researchers when they are peculiar for some reason. For example, there is a considerable literature of the remembrances written in Old Hungarian script and found in the inside of churches; I will just make note of one here, that of Klára SÁNDOR's book that was published in 2014: *A székelly írás nyomában*, Budapest, Typotex, 2014.

communal remembrance? What, if anything, do they have to say about the manifestation of the transcendent?

Of course it is possible to short-circuit the issue of these scribbles. Most people only see bored youngsters trying to amuse themselves behind these, or the manifestation of the ancient instinct of “leaving a mark” to say the most; a type of “*hic fuit*” scripts which have been around – especially in “indecent” places – since mankind mastered the art of writing. This is how Napoleon’s soldiers scribbled on the ancient works of art in Egypt, memorializing their own particular existence for eternity. And indeed, most of these scribbles contain no more than a name, sometimes just the initials, and a year. At the same time, the question may be raised: why does someone who visits the same church all his life feel the need to leave a notification on the bench to the others with whom he goes there that he was there? And why does this happen more prominently in Protestant churches, particularly in Calvinist ones, than in other ones? In order to answer these questions, it is worth-while to look at the social environment of the scribbles on the one hand, and at the actual context on the other hand.

Namely, the scribbles usually do not appear arbitrarily in the church space. One of the most important aspects of utilizing the church space in Calvinist churches used to be the regulated seating arrangement. This arrangement worked differently in town communities and in villages; moreover, the actual realization was usually location specific, although we can find more or less general characteristics. Together with the social changes of the 20th century, this strict application of this system was attenuated, and even faded away mostly, sooner in urban settings, and later in villages as well, but there are still communities where it is in use.¹¹ The system is basically based on that the seating arrangement in the church reflects the social structure of the community. This reflection may be realized in projecting the structure of the settlement on the church (and the cemetery), but it usually follows the peculiar hierarchy of the church space. The most prestigious part of this space is center of the liturgical space, the Lord’s table and the immediate surroundings of the pulpit (the “marketplace” of the church, as they often call it). This is followed by the benches in the nave of the church (this is the part that is often called the actual “church”), and then the galleries, the spaces under the gallery, the entrances – and the atrium – followed by the entrance halls, and finally the buildings outside the church building. The men and the women usually sat in the nave, separated, on the two sides of the pulpit, facing each other; their order was determined by the position of each family in the social hierarchy, as well as their age and marital status. The youth (many times even the girls) were seated in the galleries. The children were seated variably; for

¹¹ From the rich literature on the church seating arrangement see for example Árpád CSISZÁR: *A régi nemzeti rend nyomai a Felső-tiszavidéki templomokban és temetőikben*, in Imre DANKÓ – Imola KÜLLÖS (szerk.): *Vallási néprajz 1.*, Budapest, ELTE Folklore Tanszéke, 1985, 157–197; István FAGGYAS: *Lakosság és templomi ülésrend*, 1–2. köt., Debrecen, Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem Néprajzi Tanszéke, 1990–1991.

example those preparing for their confirmation were seated on a separate bench, in front of the Lord's table. The peripheral, transitional spaces were used by those on the periphery on society: beggars, gypsies and strangers. Most scribbles can be found on the back benches, the gallery staircases, the galleries, on the top and the inside wall of the parapets of the gallery, and the back side of the organs; we rarely find these on the benches of the nave. This is virtually the same in urban environments as well. In Sárospatak, where students of the College and the town congregation uses the church together, scribbles are mostly in the benches set apart for students, that is, in the benches under the galleries, as well as in the assumed places of soldiers and apprentices, the galleries. In Miskolc, in the Calvinist church in Kossuth Street, we can see lots of scribbles in the last gallery benches maintained for craft-shops; and in the back benches of the second gallery we can find rather elaborate engravings. This would support the interpretation which sees more of a "disorderliness" or "defacement" in scribbles. However, there is the question of what can we add to this based on the context of the scribbles.

Under the context of the scribbles I mean the corpus of texts placed in the church space by the community, usually in a location of high visibility. This context, of course, varies from church to church. The carriers of the texts are for example the *clenodia*, the *paramenta*, the visible surfaces of benches and galleries, possibly the ceiling cassettes, the memorial tablets, epitaphs, memorial stones placed in the church (or many times outside the church on the wall or fence), and often the Scripture kept left open on the Lord's table. In the majority of the texts we see three recurring elements:

- 1) Names, many times not by themselves but in a list. Registers of pastors, deacons, confirmed members, those who died in battle, the victims of disasters, those who donated gifts, and prominent members of the community.
- 2) Inscriptions commemorating certain events, many times just a date, but usually the name of the event as well, or even a longer description.
- 3) Quotations or more rarely paraphrases from the Bible of religious songs, mostly psalms.

An especially important part of the context is the *clenodia* on the one hand, and the so called *paramenta*, which are drapery offered by the community in many regions for decorating the church. Both types of objects gain their significance from that they usually contain all of the above elements at the same time; that is, the inscription captured on the object is usually tied to a – many times relatively¹² determined – date and an denoted event with actual names tied to it, and related to a Biblical context. We find the same about the *paramenta* as well; only, when the latter usually present their message "long-winded", and are on display on each day of the year, the former – obviously due to problems related to the creation – use fewer words and we can see them only on special occasions. It is true for both types

¹² That is, not referencing a year, but the service period of X curator.

of objects, but especially for *paramenta*, that they are donated on the occasion of specific life events. The process of the donation is often almost ritualistically regulated: the donor usually makes preliminary arrangements about the event and the Biblical quotation with the pastor.¹³ The pastor presents the fact of the donation to the congregation, and they present the drapery to the community before putting it into use. After it is put into use, especially where the community owns several such objects, the drapery, based on its nature, is either put on the wall, or it is included in the specific “order” of the table cloths and clothing used to decorate the Lord’s table. This order is organized according to days of celebration or some other kind of logic, but in many places the donated tablecloths are just placed on one another, and so ten or even fifteen table cloths may be in use at the same time. In the case of the communion vessels, the peculiar form of donation is to renew each object by the gracious donations of the consecutive generations of often the same family from time to time. For example, the first generation has a tin cup made; the next generation has it turned into a chalice; the following generation exchanges the tin *cuppa*¹⁴ for a silver one, so that, again, the next generation could leave a certain amount of gold to the congregation in order to have the silver *cuppa* coated with gold. In these cases it may happen that the inscription placed on the object, commemorating the fact of the donation by the previous generation, is expanded by the descendants with their own message, many times noting that the sons did this or that for the glory of God and the memory of the fathers.

Éva Szacsavay calls these *clenodia* and *paramenta* “preaching objects”, as the inscriptions put on them interpret the personal life events through Biblical quotations, or possibly express personal confessions.¹⁵ However, these objects have another function as well, besides the one of confessional or religious representation. Namely, as during a communion the sons, and their sons and daughters, to many generations (as well as the relatives, friends, and other members of the local community network) come into personal contact with them, they are especially susceptible for being the expressions and tools of the bonding with, the commitment to, and of course the representation of the community. This is similar for the draperies as well. The objects donated in connection with personal life events or crises may be interpreted as forms of confession on the one hand, while – being on display continually – they also express the religious commitment of the donating individual or family, together with the communal status, which is based on the symbolic

¹³ As far as I know, no inquiry has been made on the circle of Biblical quotations selected by each community, with the possibly related family traditions, while I find it to be one of the most exciting questions of the whole topic.

¹⁴ The upper part of the chalice, the drinking cup, where the wine is contained.

¹⁵ ÉVA SZACSAVAY: „...Isten ditsősegere adta...”: Református egyházművészet – népművészet, in Attila SELMECZI KOVÁCS (szerk.): *Lélek és élet: Ünnepi kötet S. Lackovits Emőke tiszteletére*, Veszprém, Veszprém Megyei Múzeumi Igazgatóság, 2006, 73–82; idem: *Kegyess adományok: tipológia és topográfia. (A bánffyhunyadi templom térszimbolikájához)*, *Acta Ethnologica Danubiana*, IX. évf., 2007/8–9, 59–78.

capital built on worship and piety. On the other hand, the organizing into a kind of order, and layering on top of each other – similarly to the lists put on display in the church space – may carry a message of integration and continuity, as the one giving the donation (or to whom the donation is tied to) is placed in the line of previous generations and confessor ancestors.

It seems to be inconsistent (but for the same reason, also adequate) to call these objects *clenodia* and *paramenta* in the Calvinist context, given that the original meanings of these words are “relics” and “objects of worship”, as they connect their users with the transcendent the same way the relics of the saints do. While the latter do this directly, because the relic, as part of the saint, inherently carries the transcendent, the Calvinist *clenodia* and *paramenta* gain their sacral characteristics through the remembrance. As locations of remembrance, the accumulating experience of generations regarding the manifestations of the transcendent can be recalled through them, as the events captured on them give an account of these as obvious signs of God’s grace and providence.

Not denying the rather great variability of the motives behind the scribbles, and emphasizing that the circle of Biblical quotations displayed on the *paramenta* can be very different in each community, so that the scribbles may be interpreted in different ways depending on the local context, I still think that we can expand the range of interpretations related to scribbles when putting them into these social and textual contexts. Let me raise now three of these, focusing on the communal existence.

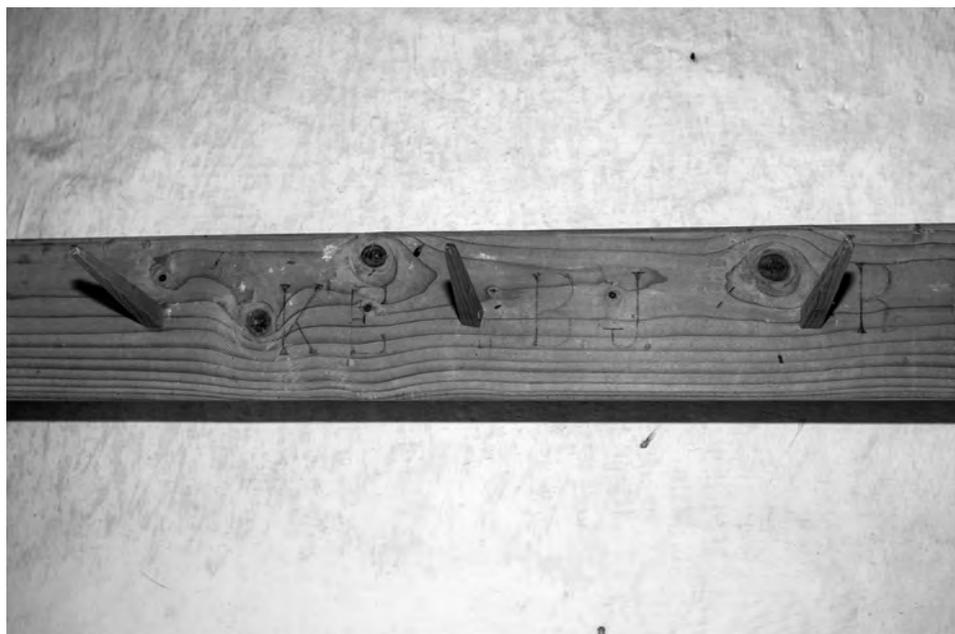
The first is the one of the symbolic seizure of space. Napoleon’s soldiers putting the date and their signatures on the Egyptian ancient works of art was part of the conquest, the occupation, and most probably the humiliation of the enemy. The changing of the doorplates signifying the change in ownership of an area, the attempt to delete the memories of events and persons related to the area via removing the objects of remembrance – or putting it into a different light, rebuilding the remembrance of the place, associating it with events and names, and by putting out signs signifying these –, that is, symbolically occupying the space, is part of the ordinary toolset of conquerors. In this context, putting up names and associated years in a given location may be signifying the fact of ownership as well. And in cases, when the historical consciousness of a community has it recorded that their church had already been taken away from them one or more times (or attempts have been made to do so), this may be viewed as a highly reasonable strategy for them.

The second one is integration. Looking over the names and initials intertwining on the benches and backs of gallery parapets, together with the associated dates – possibly overarching several centuries –, they often seem to assemble into images of clouds. What does it mean to include our name with a date into such a cloud? For example, it can mean the integration into a status group, for example into the group of youth sitting on the gallery, or into the community of college students. On the other hand, this is also an integration into the chain of generations. Engraving my name onto the same board where my father engraved it thirty years before, or marking my

name on the back of the bench among the names of other students of the College, to a place where students put their own names hundreds of years ago, provides a peculiar experience of time and continuity – the continuity of communal life.

Finally, every such cloud, or list, has a secret message reflecting on the transcendent; after all, behind all of them, there is the sense of Providence, of the “Ebenezer”,¹⁶ and the hope that the list will continue to grow. Maybe my son will also engrave his name decades from now to where I have engraved mine.

Images (*Photo credit: the author*)



Hat-rack with initials on the gallery of the Calvinist church of Magyarvalkó

¹⁶ 1 Samuel 7:12. “Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the Lord has helped us.’” The literal meaning of the expression is: “the stone of help”.



Mutually interpretative texts in the Calvinist church of Magyargyerőmonostor



Layered engravings and scribbles on the benches of the Calvinist church of Sárospatak –1



Layered engravings and scribbles on the benches of the Calvinist church of Sárospatak – 2



Christoph Sigrist

GROSSMÜNSTER ZÜRICH – MUTTERKIRCHE DER SCHWEIZER REFORMATION: INTERKULTURELLER RAUM DIAKONISCHER BEGEGNUNG

Das Grossmünster, Wahrzeichen Zürichs und Mutterkirche der Schweizerischen Reformation, Wirkungsort von Huldreich Zwingli und dessen Nachfolger, Heinrich Bullinger, erlebt stürmische Zeiten, und zwar in mehrfacher Hinsicht.

Der reformierte Kirchenraum als polyvalente, mehrschichtige Grösse

In den letzten 15 Jahren ist eine schleichende und sichtbare Nutzungsverschiebung im Kirchenraum spürbar. Wie in den meisten Citykirchen oder Stadtkirchen sind zwar die Zahlen der GottesdienstbesucherInnen am Sonntagmorgen immer noch erfreulich hoch, doch sie nehmen ab. Andererseits kommen an Werktagen jetzt mehr Gäste aus dem Inland und Ausland und suchen den Kirchenraum auf. Im letzten Jahr besuchten über eine halbe Million Menschen das Grossmünster, Menschen jeglicher Kultur, Religion, Konfession und Glaubensrichtungen, auch Atheisten. Dieser boomende Citykirchentourismus wirft in der Praxis organisatorische Fragen der Kirchenraumererschliessung und Kirchenraumführung auf, die uns auf grundlegende Einsichten der Reformatoren weist. In seinen Ausführungen zur Einweihung der Schlosskapelle in Torgau 1544 legte Luther dar, dass der Kirchenraum als Versammlungsort der Gemeinde dienen soll, die sich unter der Auslegung des Wortes Gottes einfindet und die sich im Kirchenraum zum Lobe Gottes und zur Verwaltung der Sakramente sammelt. Aber wie verhält sich die funktionale Auffassung der Reformatoren zur vielgestaltigen Kirchenraumnutzung heute?

Ändert sich die Art und Weise der religiösen Kultur, wenn Menschen individuell oder kollektiv sich vom Kirchenraum und nicht von der Predigt spirituell, religiös oder fromm inspirieren lassen? Welche Konsequenzen las-

sen sich daraus für eine Theologie des Kirchenraumes ziehen, ja, für eine Theologie der Stadt, wenn die Verkündigung nicht mehr „horsesol“, ohne Erdung, geschieht? Predigt heute der Kirchenraum anstelle des Pfarrers früher, die Kunst anstelle der Bibel, die innere Stimme anstelle der Predigt von aussen, von der Kanzel? Hat sich der reformierte Versammlungsraum „rekatholisiert“, verwandelte sich der funktionale Versammlungsraum wieder zur sakralen Topografie in der Stadt?

Das Grossmünster Zürich als reformatorische Mutterkirche ist eine polyvalente Grösse mit einer hybriden Schichtung von kulturellen, religiösen und theologischen Bedeutungszuschreibungen, die eine grosse Herausforderung an die reformierte Identität stellt. Wie kann reformiertes Christsein in unserer pluralen Gesellschaft als Teil von Christsein allgemein, als Aspekt von religiöser Konnotation gesellschaftlichen Lebens innerhalb und ausserhalb von Kirchen wie dem Grossmünster beschrieben werden?

Der reformierte Kirchenraum als politische und diakonische Grösse

Auch vor 500 Jahren zur Zeit der Reformatoren war der Kirchenraum eine polyvalente Grösse. Vorreformatorisch wurde an über 20 Altären im Grossmünster zur gleichen Zeit im gleichen Raum an unterschiedlichen Orten gebetet, Totenmessen gelesen, gebeichtet und an Altarbildern gemalt. Zwischen 1524–1526 wurde der Kirchenraum geräumt und die zentral in den Kirchenraum vorstehende Kanzel gebaut. Dadurch „krümmt“ sich der Kirchenraum um die reformatorische Fokussierung der Auslegung der Bibel. Statt Multiperspektivität gab es von nun an eine zentralperspektiv ausgerichtete Sicht des in Stein gebauten Glaubens. Doch schon zu Zwinglis Zeiten wurde diese theologische Fokussierung kulturell aufgebrochen. Im ehemaligen Chorraum entstanden die Studierstube und das Gelehrtenzimmer für die theologischen Auseinandersetzung und die Übersetzung der Bibel in die deutsche Sprache. Der Versammlungsraum der Gottesdienstgemeinde und der Hörsaal der Universität flossen ineinander.

Dazu kam das politische Moment: Die Zürcherische Reformation war eine gesellschaftliche Transformation, insofern die theologischen Entscheide durch demokratische Beschlüsse der beiden Räte in Zürich herbeigeführt wurden. Die für die Täufer entscheidende Versammlung im Herbst 1525 fand wegen der Menge der versammelten Ratsmitglieder sogar im Grossmünster statt. Im Kirchenraum als dem gebauten Text des Glaubens wurde die Todesstrafe gegenüber anders Glaubenden politisch beschlossen und wenige Monate später, im Januar 1527, an Felix Manz an der Limmat durch Ertränkung vollzogen. Jahrhunderte später, im Sommer 2004, bekannten öffentlich der damalige Stadtrat wie auch der damalige Kirchenratspräsident, also die politische und kirchliche Macht, wieder im Grossmünster unter Anwesenheit von Hunderten von Täufern, amish people und Mennoniten die reformatorische Schuld von Kirche und Staat und setzten ein nachhaltiges Zeichen der Versöhnung und des Friedens im Gottesdienst sowie bei der anschliessenden Einweihung des Gedenksteins am Ufer der Limmat. Seitdem erleben wir am Grossmünster

einen Täuferstrom aus aller Welt. Hinterbliebene hoffen, am Ort des Dramas ihrer Familiengeschichten ein neues Kapitel schreiben zu können. Amerikanisierend überzeichnet und zugespitzt: Die Täufer auferstehen aus dem Fluss der Versenkung, des Totschweigens und der Vergessenheit. Sie stellen als Schwestern und Brüder bohrend die Frage, wie denn das reformatorische Erbe heute mit den Schatten ihrer Ausgrenzung und Verurteilung umgeht. Das Grossmünster ist seit diesem Versöhnungsakt 2004 zum Forschungslabor für interkulturelle und interreligiöse Friedensarbeit im Dialog und im Gebet geworden. Die Teilnahme S. H. des Dalai Lama bei dem interreligiösen Friedensgebet im Oktober 2016 im Grossmünster zeigt unübersehbar diese politische und zugleich heilende, helfende und deshalb als diakonisch zu bezeichnende Wirkung.

Der reformierte Kirchenraum als dialogische, interkulturelle Grösse

In den 15 Jahren meiner Tätigkeit als Pfarrer am Grossmünster habe ich beobachtet, wie sich die Funktion des reformierten Pfarrberufs weiterentwickelt hat: Während ich am Sonntag auf Zwinglis Kanzel in der reformierten Tradition der lectio continua Buch für Buch der Bibel auslege, werde ich während der Woche mit anderen, interkulturellen und interkonfessionellen Ritualen gefordert. Der Sikh aus Indien sucht den Kirchenraum zum Gebet auf genauso wie der Muslim, der keine Zeit hat, zum Freitagsgebet in die Moschee an den Rand der Stadt zu fahren. Die ehemalige katholische Tänzerin heiratet einen muslimischen Marokkaner in Anwesenheit des Imams und des reformierten Pfarrers, das Kind eines koptischen Ägypters und einer katholischen Mutter wird durch den koptischen Pfarrer, den römisch-katholischen Priester und den reformierten Pfarrer getauft. Die russisch-orthodoxe Tochter möchte ihr Gebet 40 Tage nach der Beerdigung ihrer Mutter in Anwesenheit des reformierten Pfarrers im Grossmünster sprechen. Ihre Geschichte von Gewalt, Prostitution und Ausgrenzung schreibt sich im gemeinsamen Gebet heilsam anders weiter.

Die Einsicht in den polyvalenten, politischen, interkulturellen Raum der Mutterkirche der Schweizer Reformation erhellt den Blick auf das Erbe der reformatorischen Transformation der Gesellschaft in Zürich und in den anderen Städten und Kantonen. Das Grossmünster hat sich in den letzten zwei Jahrzehnten zum interkulturellen Raum diakonischer Begegnung entwickelt. Damit reiht sich das Wahrzeichen von Zürich in die Reihe vieler Stadtkirchen unterschiedlicher konfessioneller Ausrichtung ein. Kirchen waren schon immer Räume öffentlich proklamierter, ausgeübter und transformierter Religion. Aus Zürich dürfen diese Veränderungen mit dem Geiste Zwinglis theologisch wohl durchdacht mitgestaltet werden nach seinem Motto: „Tut um Gottes Willen etwas Tapferes.“ Dieser Satz steht in der Sakristei des Grossmünsters und hat sich seit 500 Jahren in die Seele der Stadt eingezeichnet. Die Worte werden zum mutmachenden Fanal, den Dialog zwischen Kulturen und Religionen in Gottes Namen unter kritischer Aufnahme des reformatorischen Erbes weiterzuführen.



Margriet Gosker

ERŐS VÁR A MI ISTENÜNK:¹ 500 YEARS OF PROTESTANTISM IN THE NETHERLANDS IN ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVE²

In 2015, when I started my work for the 500 years of Reformation in the Netherlands, I chose a double focus. On the one hand, I wanted to put the focus on the ecumenical perspectives of the ‘Reformation Year’ in the Netherlands, and on the other hand, I wanted to give special attention to the women of the Reformation,³ because these are the two big topics in my life as a theologian. In March 2017 we organised in the Netherlands an event on the theme *Women of the Reformation*, and in September we shall be organising several events on the theme *Rome-Reformation*. In this article, I focus on Luther, the importance of his work and the ecumenical perspectives of the ‘Reformation Year’ in the Netherlands. Is there willingness to reevaluate the Reformation in an ecumenical perspective? Can we celebrate 500 years of Protestantism?

Ecumenical commitment

The Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN) was born in May 2004. Three denominations: the *Netherlands Reformed Church*, the *Reformed Churches in the Netherlands* and the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands* haven been united as the result of a long process of unification, including a number of French-speaking *Walloon* congregations.⁴ The greater part of our church has a Calvinistic origin.⁵ The Evangelical Lutheran part of our church is relatively small.⁶

¹ Hungarian translation of ‘A mighty fortress is our God’.

² Rev. Harvey Richardson, Methodist minister in Britain, corrected my English. I thank him for his kind help.

³ M. GOSKER: Vrouwen van het Protestantisme: Tegen draads, *Ouderlingenblad*, 94, 2017/1081, 10–13.

⁴ A. PLAISIER – L. J. KOFFEMAN (eds.): *The Protestant Church in the Netherlands: Church Unity in the 21st Century*, Zürich/Berlin, Lit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG Wien, 2014, 11–37.

⁵ M. van VEEN: *Een nieuwe tijd, een nieuwe kerk: De opkomst van het ‚calvinisme‘ in de Lage Landen*, Zoetermeer, Meinema, 2009.

⁶ M. van VEEN: *Luther en calvinistisch Nederland*, Zoetermeer, Boekencentrum, 2017.

The process of unification has taken more than forty years and was closely linked to Jesus' appeal for unity.⁷ In our country, we organised the 'Luther Year 2016–2017' in an ecumenical way, because we think this is our ecumenical task, and as the Germans say: *Gebot der Stunde*. From the very beginning, the PCN worked together with the *Council of Churches in the Netherlands*, with the Dutch part of the well-known *Refo500 International Platform* (with 160 partners all over the world), with the *Catholic Association for Ecumenism (Katholieke Vereniging voor Oecumene)*, with the *Ecumenical Women's Synod in the Netherlands (Oecumenische Vrouwen Synode in Nederland)* and with the Roman Catholic organisation named *Marienburg Association (Mariënbuurgvereniging)*.

Celebrate or commemorate?

The PCN as a whole is ecumenically involved, but there are also wings within the PCN thinking less ecumenically. Those who are not so much ecumenically involved, or those who want to use (or misuse) this 500 years in order to promote especially their own church, may preferably speak of '500 Years of Protestantism' or a 'Jubilee Year', and emphasize only the positive side of the Reformation. From this viewpoint, it is emphasised that God granted our church many blessings in the 500 years of Protestantism. It is the time to be deeply grateful for all the efforts and the fruits of the Reformation and to celebrate the jubilee. I agree of course: we have so many reasons indeed to celebrate. To the crown jewels of the Reformation I count: the focus on the Holy Scriptures, the Priesthood of all Believers, the Freedom of a Christian, and, last but not least, the emphasis on God's free amazing Grace. But we also recognise that the Reformation brought many things which fill us with shame. There was much misunderstanding, prejudices and many struggles. Consequently, others prefer to speak of the 'Reformation Anniversary' or the 'Reformation Commemoration'. This is because they have developed an ecumenical sensitivity, thereby teaching us that we cannot just look back and celebrate the fruits of the Reformation. We must also be aware of some dark aspects of the Reformation. Can we celebrate? Hardly, I say.⁸ And according to René de Reuver, General Secretary of the PCN, it seems inappropriate.⁹ Also our own Roman Catholic bishop for ecumenical affairs, Mgr Hans van den Hende, said the same. If we realize that Protestants and Roman Catholics have been divided and have gone separate ways for the last 500 years, we must regret our failures and confess our guilt. Therefore it is rather difficult to celebrate the 500

⁷ K. van den BROEKE: Preface, in PLAISIER – KOFFEMAN, *The Protestant Church*, (1–2), 1.

⁸ M. GOSKER: 500 Jahre Protestantismus in den Niederlanden, in H.-G. LINK – D. SATTLER (eds.): *Zeit der Versöhnung*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017 (88–93), 91. F. TRENTO: *500 Jahre Reformation sind kein Grund zum Feiern*. <https://www.kath.ch/newsd/500-jahre-reformation-sind-kein-grund-zum-feiern/> (9 August 2017).

⁹ R. de REUVER: Protestant: samen één: Oecumene behoort tot het DNA van het protestantisme, *Woord & Weg*, August, 2017, 16.

years as a festivity.¹⁰ Cardinal Kurt Koch, the head of the Vatican Pontifical Council for promoting Christian Unity, said in 2016, at the opening of the Plenary Assembly, that the schism of the Churches turned out to be exactly the opposite of what the Reformation was supposed to be. The 500 years of Reformation can be commemorated but hardly celebrated, because of the pain and the guilt of the separation.

Blessing in disguise

It is clear that Luther and the other great Reformers did not want to divide the church. They just wanted renewal, refreshment. They wanted to reset the church, as we would say today. Luther knew how much the church needed reformation. As an ecumenical theologian, he just wanted to make the church more catholic,¹¹ but he was also well aware of his own frailty. He knew very well that the Reformation of the church is not our human work but it is God's own work.¹² Unfortunately, we are all aware that the Reformation was also the work of sinful human people. Despite all good intentions, the Reformation brought the Netherlands and Europe many struggles, divisions, much violence and aggression. People were called heretics and were sentenced to death. The iconoclastic fury in the Netherlands (1566), for example, was outrageous. There was conflict without communion everywhere. Everything was focused on heresy and heretics. Both parties emphasized the things that separated us from each other instead of looking for what united us.

“We accepted that the Gospel was mixed with the political and economic interests of those in power. Their failures resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. Families were torn apart, people imprisoned and tortured, wars fought and religion and faith misused. Human beings suffered and the credibility of the Gospel was undermined with consequences that still impact us today. We must deeply regret the evil things that Catholics and Lutherans have mutually done to each other.”¹³

However, all things considered, the Reformation can be seen as a blessing in disguise. I am very grateful for the fact that for the first time in history, we can commemorate the Reformation centenary in a truly ecumenical way. We cannot just celebrate, and if we do, we do it in a different way than in previous times and contexts. “What

¹⁰ G. BAUSENHART: *Feiern oder begehen?: Eine katholische Perspektive auf 1517/2017*, Ökumenische Rundschau, 61, 2012/1, 6–22. V. LEPPIN: 2017 – ein Jubiläum, Ökumenische Rundschau, 61, 2012/1, (23–35), 23.

¹¹ J. VERCAMMEN, Archbishop of the Old Catholic Church in the Netherlands during a Summer School of the Protestant Theological University, gathering in the Dominican Monastery in Huissen, 11 July 2017.

¹² H. J. SELDERHUIS: *Luther: Een mens zoekt God*, Apeldoorn, Uitgeverij De Banier, 2016, 71.

¹³ *Common Prayer: From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran–Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*. Text by the Liturgical Task Force of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, 14.

happened in the past cannot be changed, but what is remembered of the past and how it is remembered can, with the passage of time, indeed change. Remembrance makes the past present. While the past itself is unalterable, the presence of the past in the present is alterable.”¹⁴ We are not able to tell a different history now, but we are able to tell that same history differently. This is precisely what we should do. The Reformation anniversary 2017 is different from the previous Reformation centenaries. The first centenary of the Reformation took place in 1617 on the eve of the Thirty Years’ War, with numerous victims. In those circumstances, we can imagine that all parties emphasized their own identities. During the second centenary (1717), Luther was ‘praised to the heavens’. Both in Germany¹¹ and in the Netherlands¹² a lot of commemorative medals were made, bearing a text in the honour of Luther and his teachings. During the third centenary in 1817 (after the French Revolution and the fall of Napoleon), Luther was portrayed as a truly strong national hero. And in 1917 (in the middle of the first World War), Luther was considered – together with Bismarck and Hindenburg – as one of the founding fathers of the National German Empire, and the Luther song *A Mighty Fortress is our God* was misused as a military song.¹⁵ Of course, it was not seen that way in the Netherlands. Although we are mainly Calvinists, the Luther song was also popular in the Netherlands until c. 1970. I think we should reinstate it in an ecumenical way, as a song against the power of all evil in the world. In 2017 the Reformation centenary in the Netherlands is mainly celebrated in an ecumenical context. Our Roman Catholic friends are greatly interested in it. If I was asked by them to briefly explain the significance of Luther and the Reformation, what would I say? It is impossible to be comprehensive, since there are so many themes and biographies,¹⁶ but I would mainly tell them the following.

Luther’s theses

I would say: the Reformation is not just a date but an ongoing process, and we are obliged not only to look backwards but also to look forwards – a new era has begun. What we now call the Reformation started in Wittenberg, and soon spread out across the whole of Germany, Europe and later throughout the world. We can hardly overestimate its significance for the life of the church, for politics, culture, music and for all kinds of art, sculpture, architecture and painting. On 31 October 1517,

¹⁴ *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran–Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*. Report of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, Leipzig, 2013, II, §16.

¹⁵ K. BREITENBORN: Zwei „Deutsche Eichen“: Bismarcks 100. Geburtstag 1915 und das Reformationsjubiläum 1917 im Zeichen des Ersten Weltkrieges, in F. KADELL – B. KIESSLING – B. LÜDKEMEIER (eds): *Lutherland Sachsen-Anhalt*, Halle, Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2015, pp. 301–327. I thank Dr. J. D. Wassenaar who draw my attention to: Michael FISCHER: *Religion, Nation, Krieg: Der Lutherchoral ‘Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott’ zwischen Befreiungskriegen und Erstem Weltkrieg*, Münster, Waxmann, 2014.

¹⁶ S. HIEBSCH, MARTIN van Wijngaarden: *Luther, zijn leven, zijn werk*, Utrecht, Uitgeverij Kok, 2017. L. Roper: *Luther: Een biografie*, Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Ambo/Anthos, 2017.

Luther nailed his famous 95 theses¹⁷ to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church. Probably he never did so literally, because no historical evidence of it has ever been found. But the 95 theses were published immediately after Luther wrote them, and they rapidly spread throughout Europe. And so – to Luther’s own surprise – a crisis arose. Luther wrote his 95 theses in Latin in order to start a discussion with his colleagues at the University of Wittenberg about the indulgences trade, a practice which brought the church of the 16th century a great deal of money. Ecclesiastical punishments were imposed on the people, and no one could escape this regime. Many people thought by buying indulgences they could save their souls and secure a place in heaven. Luther knew very well that this was not the official teaching of the church. No Pope could impose or waive punishment other than that which he himself had imposed. But Luther criticised anyone who claimed that fines for the dying were valid in purgatory. In his theses he stated: “Ignorant and wicked are the actions of those priests who impose canonical penances on the dead in purgatory” (thesis 10). “This changing of the canonical penalty to the penalty of purgatory is quite evidently one of the tares that were sown while the bishops slept” (thesis 11). “In former times the canonical penalties were imposed not after, but before absolution, as tests of true contrition” (thesis 12). So in fact Luther was defending the church’s authority, and he was deeply disturbed that the ecclesiastical authorities thought differently. Division in the church was the last thing he wanted. He wanted to renew the church from within. In his own specific and pertinent way, Luther protested loudly against the trade in indulgences and other abuses in Roman Catholic theology and practice. Ordinary people still had the idea that they could earn their eternal salvation with good works or buy it with money, and so they paid promptly. Luther knew that our eternal salvation is only in God’s hands and that it is impossible to pay an amount of money for it. But Luther also saw quite sharply how greed is the twin brother of money. Money is a good servant but a bad master, and the love of money is the root of all evil, even within the church.

Three important texts

Who was Martin Luther (1483–1546)? What was it that drove him? He was a gifted writer, that is for certain. In April 1518, he wrote a pamphlet about the indulgences: *A Sermon on Indulgences and Grace*.¹⁸ Within two years it was printed 22 times. This sermon has been seen as the start of the Reformation movement. In 1520, Luther produced twenty titles. Three of them were the most important and fundamental treatises – in Latin as well as in German – that characterized his theology of the Reformation. In August 1520, an open letter appeared: *To the Christian Nobility of the*

¹⁷ H. J. SELDERHUIS: De 95 stellingen (1517), in H. J. SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, Deel I, Utrecht, Uitgeverij Kok, 2016, 35–45. Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum, WA 1, 233–238.

¹⁸ C.-J. SMITS: Een preek over aflaat en genade: Stellingen over de vergeving van zonden (1518), in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, I, 112–121. *Ein Sermon von den Anblass und Gnade*, 1518, WA 1, 243–246, WA 1 630–633.

German Nation.¹⁹ It was already obvious that the ecclesial hierarchy did not listen to his complaints. Consequently, Luther now approached the political leadership and asked the secular authorities to support him in his attempt to reform the church. If the church leadership did not wish to cooperate, there was only one way to proceed: the Reformation should be supported by ordinary believers, especially those who had influence and authority. Two months later came *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (October 1520).²⁰ Here Luther was severely attacking the papacy. In his view, the pope and the Roman Curia misused their power by numerous unbiblical regulations and traditions, and were transforming church governance in a sacramental system of coercion and control. The papal absolutism also claimed a lot of privileges for its own sake. Then a third important text was published in November 1520: *On the Freedom of a Christian*, wherein Luther expressed the total freedom for every Christian life.²¹ A Christian is the most free of all and subject to no one, but at the same time the most humble servant of all and a servant of everyone.

Martin Luther, a phenomenon

Luther was a gifted writer. He wrote an endless stream of publications during his lifetime. He was a fascinating personality, a great theologian and a hard worker. He was spiritual and creative, he had a musical talent, he was intelligent and humorous, but, on the other hand, also quicktempered and obstinate. He had a rich vocabulary, a great faith and deep insights, but he was not diplomatic. Sometimes it would have been better if he had kept his mouth shut! He had a coarse tongue, had a difficult character and he did not make things easy for himself or others. With advancing years, things became worse than ever. The most interesting insights were discussed during meal-times. In Luther's household, the meals were often shared by students, colleagues or visitors from abroad. These conversations (*Table Talk*) became world famous. Luther loved the good life, he was certainly not an ascetic. He had a gigantic self-awareness and a big ego. He had a phenomenal knowledge of the Bible, a wonderful way of preaching, and he gave fascinating lectures to his students. He had so many new thoughts and ideas. And what he said was heard indeed, not only in Wittenberg, but all over Europe. Almost everything he stated was immediately printed and distributed throughout Europe, thanks to the invention of the printing-press some decades earlier. It was also very helpful that, from 1516, everyone could use the National Post, which was founded in 1491. This gave 'wings' to the Reformation.

¹⁹ D. TIMMERMAN: Aan de christelijke edelen van de Duitse natie, over het herstel van de christelijke stand (1520), in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, I, 211–300. *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung*, WA 6, 404–469.

²⁰ H. J. SELDERHUIS: De Babylonische gevangenschap van de kerk (1520), in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, I, 301–407. *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium Martini Lutheri: Von der babylonischen Gefangenschaft der Kirche*, WA 6, 497–573.

²¹ C. BOERKE: De vrijheid van een christen (1520), in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, I, 408–451, *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, WA 7, 49–73.

Luther was neither an angel nor a saint. He was a man full of errors, and he made many mistakes. He was a sinner ‘first class’, so to say. He was very much aware of his own shortcomings and therefore he was constantly struggling with himself. But he had to accept himself and others as well. “You have to take him as he is”, John Calvin once said.²² Nearly everyone had quarrels and disagreements with Luther, included his own family, especially his father, who had a difficult personality too. It is obvious where Luther got that from!

As early as 1519, he wrote a sermon about marriage as a precious gift of God.²³ Six years later, he married Katharina von Bora (1499–1552) in June 1525.²⁴ This caused a major scandal. No wonder: how could a former Catholic monk – already middle-aged – marry a former Catholic nun sixteen years his junior? Two years earlier Katharina von Bora – together with eight other nuns – escaped from the monastery Marienthron in Nimbschen and fled to Wittenberg. Katharina was a fine partner for her demanding husband. She was intelligent, selfconfident with a critical discerning mind, and she really settled everything on his behalf. At the same time, she always could bring out the best in him. He called her affectionately *Herr Käthe*, and that is significant. Of course Luther received contradictions, objections and protests not only from his own wife. He endured many attacks during his lifetime, and he had to be on the defensive constantly. He withstood princes, nobles and other persons of high rank. He was persuasive and stuck firmly to his principles: *Here I stand. I can do no other*. He wrote some very beautiful spiritual songs, but he could also be incredibly sniping at everything and everyone. What he wrote about Jews, especially in 1543, *About the Jews and their lies*, is disgusting and indefensible. Luther’s appeal to burn their synagogues and schools can never be justified.²⁵ In short, Martin Luther was a man with many flaws and defects, but also blessed with a deep faith and a huge persuasive power.

The young Luther

Luther was baptised on 11 November 1483, the name day of Saint Martin and therefore he was called Martin. He was born a day earlier on 10 November. His mother was Margarethe Lindemann, his father Hans Lüder (Loder, Lotter, Lutter, Ludher or Lauther).²⁶ They lived in Eisleben. As a child Luther grew up with a strong devo-

²² SELDERHUIS: *Luther: Een mens zoekt God*, 7.

²³ T. NOORT: Een preek over de huwelijks staat, in H. J. SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, Deel II, Utrecht, 2016, 1044–1052, *Ein Sermon von dem ehelichen Stand*, WA 2, 166–171.

²⁴ M. TREU: *Katharina von Bora*, Biographien zur Reformation, Wittenberg, Drei Kastanienverlag, 2010⁷. H.-C. SENS: *Katharina Luther und Torgau und weitere Beiträge zum Katharina-Luther-Haus*, Torgau, Torgauer Geschichtsverein E.V., 2006.

²⁵ K. H. BÜCHNER – B. P. KAMMERMEIER – R. SCHLOTZ – R. ZWILLING (eds.): *M. Luther, Von den Juden und ihren Lügen (1543). Erstmals in heutigem Deutsch mit Originaltext und Begriffserläuterungen*, Aschaffenburg, Alibri, 2016. M. MULDER: Over de Joden en hun leugens (1543), in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, I, 645–663. *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen*, WA 53, 412–552, 655.

²⁶ SELDERHUIS: *Luther: Een mens zoekt God*, 12.

tion to the Virgin Mary. But in his theology, Mary had a different place, and later he rejected the practice of praying to Mary. He brought her high position down to earth, because he wanted to give all the glory to God. But he also acknowledged that God had done great things through Mary, the mother of God (*theotokos*). He wrote a beautiful commentary on the *Magnificat*. Everybody should know that God chose a Cinderella (Aschenbrödel) to become the mother of God (Immanuel).²⁷ But to the fundamental insights of his theology also belonged the conviction that Jesus Christ was central. God gives us all the space and the grace and the freedom in Jesus Christ and in Christ alone. According to the legend, he prayed in that famous storm: Holy Anna, help me, I will become a monk. Was the young Luther more attached to Saint Anne than to the Virgin Mary?

Luther grew up in late Medieval times, a period filled with many new inventions, but also with devils and witches, as we know them from the paintings of our Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch. People were frightened at that time. They feared the Last Judgement, and priests were preaching hell and damnation. Also the Black Death was ravaging Europe.²⁸ Sometimes – at a rough estimate – a third of the European population died from this terrible plague. Times were hard and a culture of fear ‘ruled the roost’. In the church, much emphasis was laid on sin, repentance and confession. People had to confess and atone for all their sins. The young Luther was suffering under this burden. He was a serious young man, and he wanted to do all that was right. He did his utmost, but if it went wrong time and time again, it often made him desperate. His father wanted his son to study Law, in order to ensure a good future for him, but after a spiritual experience during a violent storm, Martin decided – against the wishes of his parents – to follow his calling. He would go into the monastery and be a monk.

Luther became a monk

In 1505, he entered the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt.²⁹ There he got supposedly, for the first time, a Bible in his hands, and his eye fell on the book of Samuel. He found it captivating. He read and read and read. He exercised himself in the biblical texts and in the scholastic theologies of his time: Johannes Duns Scotus, Gabriel Biel, William of Ockham, Petrus Lombardus,³⁰ and he read also Thomas Aquinas, at least

²⁷ J. BOENDERMAKER: Het Magnificat: Luthers uitleg van de lofzang van Maria (1521), in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, II, 812–868, 812, WA 7, 545–601. *Het Magnificat in de volkstaal overgezet en uitgelegd door Maarten Luther (1521)*, Met een inleiding van prof. H. Riedlinger, Antwerpen, Unistad, 1983.

²⁸ F. KADELL: Blicke auf das Alltagsleben Martin Luthers und seiner Zeit, in KADELL – KIESSLIN – LÜDKE-MEIER (eds.), *Lutherland Sachsen-Anhalt*, (108–147), 114.

²⁹ The oldest report of Luther's entrance into the monastery comes from Crotus Rubianus, confer C. AUGUSTIJN: *Luthers intrede in het klooster*, Kampen, Kok, 1968, 6.

³⁰ G. den HERTOEG: Disputatie tegen de scholastieke theologie (1517), in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, I, 25–34. *Disputation gegen die Scholastische Theologie, 1517*, WA 1, 224–228.

according to O. H. Pesch.³¹ As a young theologian, he developed an aversion to the philosophy of Aristotle, which was very much in vogue, yet he still retained something of Aristotle.³² But Luther had a genuine preference for Augustine. In 1507 he was ordained priest. And even long after 1517, he remained a monk. He wore the monk's habit even until 1523. The regular monastic life, the seasons, the prayers, the fasting, the liturgy, the awareness and respect for sacred things and holiness formed him, but his fears did not leave him alone. He suffered under his thought, convinced he was not good enough. For God you never do well enough, however much you try to pray and follow all the rules. God's punishing justice pursued the young Luther. Christ was for him the severe judge, who will judge every man on the day of his Last Judgment. Thereby Luther suffered under self-blame and self-torment.

Luther's discovery

Luther studied the Bible and gradually discovered its liberating message that God does not want us to be perfect, but accepts us in grace (*sola gratia*). God gives us all the space and freedom in Jesus Christ and in Christ alone (*solus Christus*). He learned and taught that we come to Christ through the Bible (*sola Scriptura*). Luther recognised something which is still very real every day – the actuality of our justification.³³ We are both justified and sinful at the same time (*simul iustus ac peccator*). For God we are good as we are, even if we make big mistakes. Christ has taken the burden from us and therefore we are free. Free for God and free for each other. Luther also said that no one has the right to rule over someone else. No one is ever somebody else's servant. At the same time, he stated, a believer is always willing to help. Voluntarily. A lovely paradox! Luther's big discovery was that God is not always demanding and judging us. The righteousness of God is a gift for all believers in Jesus Christ. We get everything, just for nothing. Romans 1:17: "The righteous will live by faith." By faith alone (*sola fide*), Luther stated and he resisted vehemently, after being criticised, that in his Bible translation he had smuggled in the word *only*. That was true indeed, because *only* is not in the original Greek Bible text. But in Luther's opinion a Bible translation had to be clear and in this way he provided clarity. So he persisted: *by faith alone*. We are all sinners. Even if you do things wrongly or worse, even if you show criminal behaviour, Jesus is our Saviour. By faith alone you receive God's goodness. God will give you his love and grace, you only need to open yourself for it. If you are doing well, do it happily. To do good works is not a *conditio sine qua*

³¹ O.H. PESCH: *Martin Luther, Thomas von Aquin und die reformatorische Kritik an der Scholastik: Zur Geschichte und Wirkungsgeschichte eines Missverständnisses mit weltgeschichtlichen Folgen*, vorgelegt in der Sitzung der Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften vom 1. Juli 1994, 12, 1994, 3, Hamburg, 1994.

³² E.H. ERIKSON: *De jonge Luther*, Amsterdam, De Arbeiderspers, 1967, 94.

³³ H. de LEEDE: *De theoloog van het kruis spreekt de werkelijkheid uit: De prediking van de rechtvaardiging van de goddeloze, Kontekstueel*, 31, 2017/3, (10–13), 13.

non, but a sign of joy and gratitude.³⁴ We are not righteous or holy from ourselves as we are, but in Christ we are made righteous and holy. We were poor sinners. Christ was righteous. Christ took our sins upon himself and brought salvation and freedom for all believers: *the wonderful exchange*.³⁵ This is our faith, and thanks to God's grace, we bring glory to God (*solī Deo gloria*). The five *solas* are seen as the crown jewels of the Reformation.³⁶ Luther himself did not say or write it that way, but it is certainly derived from his mental legacy.³⁷ In 1517, Luther decided to write his name in the future as *Luther*. Luther is similar to the Greek ἐλευqέριο, which means: freed.³⁸ From now on Martin Luther was a free and freed man, living by grace alone. But at the same time always in temptation (*tentatio*) and standing under the Cross.³⁹

Luther not the first one to reform the Church

Of course, there were in Europe many predecessors of the Reformation who also wanted to reform the church. The Reformation is not a date. It is a process of renewal that had already started well before 31 October 1517, and is still going on.⁴⁰ In Italy, Francis of Assisi wanted a church without great pomp and circumstance like Petrus Valdes in North of Italy. In Bohemia, Johannes Hus fought against abuses, such as the trade in church posts, relics and indulgences. The English reformer John Wycliff wanted to go back to the Bible and the Church Fathers. It is interesting that in our country, Geert Groote and Thomas à Kempis were pioneers of an important spiritual movement (*Devotio Moderna*), which pursued Church renewal and personal sanctification. This Modern Devotion movement has actually been the real Reformation movement in Netherlands, you could say, with far more influence than Luther ever had in our country. Luther fought against the trade in indulgences, but Geert Groote protested in 1374 against the construction of the famous Domtower in

³⁴ R. den HERTOOG-VAN ,T SPIJKER: Over de goede werken (1520), in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, I, 126–210. *Von den guten Werken*, WA 6, 204–250. C. P. BURGER: Over de goede werken, in J. T. Bakker – K. Zwanepol (eds.), „Door het donkere venster van het geloof”, Zoetermeer, Meinema, 1993, 115–124.

³⁵ R. SCHWAGER: *Der wunderbare Tausch: Zur Geschichte und Deutung der Erlösungslehre*, München, Kösel, 1986. J. T. BAKKER: Beeld dat blijft spreken: De vrolijke ruil, in K. ZWANEPOL (ed.): *Luthers erfenis*, Teksten van het Luthercongres 22 Februari 1996 te Kampen, Zoetermeer, Boekencentrum, 1996², 88–106.

³⁶ H. Zorgdrager, *Lecture at the Reformation Event of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands*, held on 4 March 2017, in Appingedam.

³⁷ But it is also said, that they are exclusive (Exklusivpartikel) and their sharpness needs to be softened. It should be: Christ with the Church, Grace with Freedom, the Word with the Sacraments, the Holy Scriptures with the tradition and Faith with Love. C. LINK: Umstrittene Reformation – Thesen zum Jubiläum 2017, in LINK – SÄTTLER (eds.): *Zeit der Versöhnung*, (15–20), 19.

³⁸ LINK: Umstrittene Reformation, 17.

³⁹ T. KARTTUNEN: Die Luther-Lektüre Bonhoeffers, in K. GRÜNWARD – C. TIERZ – U. HAHN (eds.): *Bonhoeffer und Luther, Zentrale Themen ihrer Theologie*, Hannover, VELKD, 2017, (9–31), 13–14.

⁴⁰ It is often forgotten that also a reform movement at the Roman Catholic side came under the inspiring leadership of Carolus Borromeus (1538–1584) and later Franciscus de Sales (1567–1622).

Utrecht. He wrote a protest note: *Contra Turrim Traiectensem*. Money, intended for the poor, should not be used for the haughtiness of that monstrous tower. So he was strongly opposed to the collection of the money which was held in order to pay for its construction, and nobody should obey the bishop, when it came to such overly expensive buildings. But Geert Groote was no Luther. In order not to risk his church career, he never published the document. Only one manuscript was preserved, and it finally resurfaced after six centuries.⁴¹ All these forerunners paved the way to what became the Reformation in the end. But it was Luther, who hit the nerve. He went to the heart of the matter. The effect of his 95 theses was – so to say – more by luck than judgement. You might call it an accident, because of all the additional negative consequences, such as schisms, the hunting of heretics, the Inquisition, iconoclasms and pyres. But one thing is for certain the time was ripe for Church renewal. Somebody had to show up. Someone like Martin Luther, who had the faith, the personality, the intelligence, the energy, the character structure and the intransigence to say: *Here I stand, I can do no other*. Admittedly, he needed to be corrected by his friend and fellow reformer Philipp Melanchthon, who was much more subtle. But Luther was the man who hit a nerve. He said exactly what was needed to be said at the time. He was unsurpassed. He touched the core, and so he got a Reformation movement going, which changed Europe forever.

Luther excommunicated, but the Reformation goes on

Popes and emperors had to determine their position in front of the man from Wittenberg. In June 1520, Pope Leo X sent Luther a warning: *Exsurge Domine*. The bull's name is derived from a Psalm text: "Arise, O Lord against the enemy." It was clear who the enemy was. Luther now had to revoke his position. If not, things did not look good for him. But Luther did not think of it! He burned the papal bull on 12 December of that same year.⁴² On 3 January 1521, Luther was resolutely excommunicated by Pope Leo X. His excommunication was formally pronounced in the bull *Decet Romanum Pontificem*. For political reasons, Emperor Maximilian had not taken action in the former years. His successor Emperor Charles V was crowned in October 1520. Three months after the papal excommunication, Luther was interogated at the Imperial Diet in Worms by Emperor Charles V, who placed Luther under the Imperial Ban. From now on he was an outlaw. Anyone could kill him, unpunished. These were the rules in the *Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation*. Sometimes even this assumption emerged: if the Dutch pope Adrianus VI had not died so early after a short papacy (he became pope on 9 January 1522, and died on 14 September 1523), could he have prohibited the schism and could he have saved

⁴¹ Geert Groote's Treatise '*Contra Turrim Traiectensem*' was found back in 1967. http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/grot001rrpo01_01/grot001rrpo01_01_0002.php (3 Augustus 2017).

⁴² M. RAVELING: *Waarom de boeken van de paus en zijn volgelingen door doctor Martin Luther zijn verbrand (1520)*, in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, I, 452–463. *Warum des Papstes und seiner Bücher von D. M. Luther verbrannt sind*, 1520, WA 7, 161–182.

the renewal of the Church?⁴³ I doubt it, for it was already too late. Pope Adrianus (Adriaan Floriszoon Boeyens) was not insensitive to the abuses of the past. He was well aware of the need for reform. He even composed a *Confession* of the sins of the hierarchy and had it read at the Imperial Diet in Nuremberg on 3 January 1523 by his legate, Chierigati.⁴⁴ But the pope would not hear of any compromise. On the contrary, he wrote letters to Erasmus and Eck, asking them for their help in the battle against Luther. And he also confirmed Luther's condemnation. Luther was furious and wrote a pamphlet against him, calling him *The Antichrist* and the *Donkeypope of Leuven*. Luther was lucky to have the strong support of the powerful Elector of Saxony Frederick the Wise, who always remained faithful to the Mother Church. Nevertheless, he was Luther's patron, and as a precaution he arranged for Luther to be kidnapped, and Luther was kept in the Wartburg Castle, under the name of *Jonker Jörg*. It was here that Luther had time and opportunity to translate the Bible into the vernacular German language. In eleven weeks, the New Testament was ready. Quite a performance. Luther's opposition to the trade in indulgences was the immediate cause of the Reformation, and his protest was very effective. But also some opposing forces manifested themselves. In 1529, the Reformation was threatened to be nipped in the bud. A violent protest came up from princes and cities, who disagreed with the decision to curtail religious freedom. This is known as the Protest of Speyer. And so the word *Protestant* was born. Not only those following the Reformation, but also those who remained in the Roman Catholic Church had to deal with the situation. Erasmus remained a Roman Catholic, but he developed many innovative thoughts. A common saying is: "Erasmus has laid the egg of the Reformation and Martin Luther has hatched it out".

Luther's spirituality

What can we say about Luther's spirituality? His life was a big search. He was looking for God, all his life. He struggled with the big question: how do I find a merciful God? He wrote numerous spiritual songs, many of them are still in our Dutch Worship Book and are sung in our services. Luther was also a comforter.⁴⁵ He wrote in July 1523 a comforting letter to fellow believers in the Netherlands. After the Imperial Diet in Worms, the Antwerp Augustinian monastery was destroyed by the Inquisition, and those who were in sympathy with the Reformation had to flee or recant. Hendrik Vos and Jan van Esschen did neither. They were burned as heretics

⁴³ H. BERKHOF: *Geschiedenis der kerk*, Nijkerk, Callenbach, 1950⁵, 197–198. T. GEURTS: *De Nederlandse paus, Adrianus van Utrecht 1459–1523*, Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Balans, 2017. A. Bodar and P. van Geest also take this position.

⁴⁴ H. Scott HENDRIX: *Luther and the Papacy: Stages in a Reformation Conflict*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1981, 142.

⁴⁵ A. BAS: Troost voor wie ten zeerste aangevochten wordt, in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, II, 1090–1093, WA 7, 785–789. S. HIEBSCH: Een kort troostbriefje voor christenen, dat zij zich in het gebed niet van de wijs laten brengen, in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, II, 1094–1096, *Ein kurzer Trostzettel für die Christen, dass sie sich im Gebet nicht beirren lassen*, WA 51, 455–456.

on the marketplace in Brussels. As Luther heard of it, he was very distressed. He wrote a consoling song.⁴⁶ And he also wrote a comforting letter *To the Christians in the Netherlands*.⁴⁷ Luther also knew about mysticism, though he was not a mystic himself. And he was a man of prayer. For him prayer was of vital importance. On 18 January 1518, he wrote to his friend Georg Spalatin, who was the secretary of Frederick the Wise, that it is impossible to understand the Holy Scriptures solely by keen insight. Prayer. You must always start with prayer, asking the Lord that something will really happen with his words. Not for your own glory, but to the glory of the Lord.⁴⁸ And you should pray all the time, everywhere, but prayer is most powerful and strong if people are praying together.⁴⁹ For Luther the celebration of the Eucharist was really intense and holy. He was extremely nervous when he celebrated the Eucharist for the first time. But theologically he saw the sacraments misused as chains, and so he developed a different view on the sacraments and introduced the term *Supper*, which is not a biblical word. Not only the clergy, but all believers could now receive both the bread and the wine, he argued in *De Captivitate Babylonica*.⁵⁰ The Bohemian reformer Johannes Hus had already introduced this earlier. Luther was certainly familiar with mysticism, and he could also appreciate it. He knew the works of Bernard of Clairvaux, Johannes Tauler, Meister Eckhart and the work *Theologia Deutsch*, that he wrongly attributed to Tauler. Luther was also familiar with mystical language. The Lutheran theologian H. M. Barth gave us a good example of it. In a sermon on Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:17),⁵¹ Luther writes in this mystical language. In those few sentences, we recognize great mystical words, which were important in medieval mysticism, like pouring, sweetness, comforting, creature,

⁴⁶ „Ein neues Lied heben wir an, – das walt Gott, unser Herre – zu singen, was Gott hat getan zu seinem Lob und Ehre. Zu Brüssel in dem Niederland wohl durch zwei junge Knaben hat er sein wunder g'macht bekannt, die er mit seinen Gaben so reichlich hat gezieret.“ SELDERHUIS: *Luther: Een mens zoekt God*, 182.

⁴⁷ Luther wrote “allen lieben brudren ynn Christo, so ynn Holland, Barband, und Flandren sind”, *An die Christian ym Nidderland*, WA B 12, 73–80.

⁴⁸ S. HIEBSCH: „Luther en de Schrift”, *Alleen de Schrift*, 1, 2017, 15–22. J. P. BOENDERMAKER: *Luther: Brieven uit de beslissende jaren van zijn leven*, Baarn, Ten Have, 1982, 79–81, <http://www.theologienet.nl/documenten/Luther%20brieven.pdf>

⁴⁹ „Man kann und soll überall, an allen Orten, und alle Stunden beten; aber das Gebet ist nirgendwo so kräftig und stark, als wenn der ganze Haufe einträchtiglich mit einander betet.“ M. LUTHER: *Predigt Dr. Martin Luthers gehalten am 5. Oktober 1544 zur Einweihung der Schlosskirche Torgau*, A. ROTHE (ed.), Torgau, Druckerei Kopselski, 2006, 7.

⁵⁰ H. J. SELDERHUIS: *De Babylonische gevangenschap (1520)*, in SELDERHUIS: *Luther Verzameld*, I, 301–407, 311. WA 6, 497–573. C. J. MUNTER: *Het avondmaal bij Luther*, Groningen, Drukkerij Oppenheim, 1954, 11. WA 6, 507.

⁵¹ In einer Predigt über “*Dies ist mein lieber Sohn*” führt er aus: “Mit diesen Worten macht Gott aller Welt Herz lachend und fröhlich und durchgießt alle Kreatur mit lauter göttlicher Süßigkeit und Trost... Nun wie könnte sich Gott mehr ausschütten und lieblicher und süßer dargeben? Müsste uns da nicht das Herz “vor Freude in hunderttausend Stücke zerspringen?” Denn da würde der Mensch “in den Abgrund des väterlichen Herzens sehen.” H.-M. BARTH: *Mystik bei Luther*, in *Luther, Zeitschrift der Luther-Gesellschaft*, 88, 2017/1, (48–58), 55.

abyss. Luther himself also has had a special mystical experience. He went up into the third heaven. Yet Luther was not woolly or bigoted. It is well known how he disliked and fought against what he called the “Schwärmer”. He just wanted to base his theology on the Scriptures, and he avoided the pitfall to rely more on mystical experience than on faith. For him, it remained anyway: *Sola fide*. By faith alone. Luther died in 1543. I saw his handwritten testament with my own eyes in Budapest. Katharina was the only heiress, but she did not get anything, because Luther’s will was against the law of that time.⁵²

Renewed ecumenical commitment

After 500 years, Luther is still speaking to us. His strength, his faith, his theology and his songs can inspire us to be free Christians willing to serve the world. As protestants we are various and always different. Diversity is typical protestant, in a positive and a negative way, but in our times the search for unity gets stronger.⁵³ The Reformation year can be used to strengthen our ecumenical relations and ties. We are grateful for the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church in 1999.⁵⁴ In 2017, also the World Communion of Reformed Churches signed the Agreement. In the Netherlands, we want to use this Reformation year for the healing of memories,⁵⁵ and the removal of misunderstandings and prejudices. We work cooperatively together with a new ecumenical vision. Cardinal Koch reminded us that ecumenical commitment is one of the main priorities.⁵⁶ Ecumenism as an essential part of the church’s mission. Without hope for unity, faith would be lost. In Amsterdam at the start of the Reformation Year, it was emphasised that, for the first time in history, the Roman Catholic Church is officially taking part in the commemoration of the Reformation.⁵⁷ The church leadership of both sides emphasizes this with joy. On the same day, 31 October 2016, Pope Francis came to Sweden to be present at the opening of the Reformation year in Lund. Modern technology is wonderful, so we could follow this significant event partly by streaming on a screen in Amsterdam. A new ecumenical liturgy was celebrated in Lund: a common prayer, specially made for this occasion by the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for promoting Christian Unity. It ap-

⁵² S. HIEBSCH: Maarten Luthers laatste wil, in K. ZWANEPOL (ed.): *Luthers erfenis*. Teksten van het Luthercongres 22 Februari 1996 te Kampen, Zoetermeer, Boekencentrum, 1996², 145–156.

⁵³ GOSKER: *500 Jahre Protestantismus in den Niederlanden*, 88.

⁵⁴ *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church*, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_cath-luth-joint-declaration_en.html, (16 August 2017). H.-G. LINK: Aufbruch zu einem „Jahr der Versöhnung“ zwischen den Konfessionen: Ein Vorschlag im Namen des Altenberger Ökumenisches Gesprächskreises für das Jahr 2017, in LINK – SÄTTLER (eds.): *Zeit der Versöhnung*, (27–42), 27.

⁵⁵ M. HEIN: Impulse aus der Reformation für die Zukunft der Kirche, *Perspectief*, 37, 2017, (27–38), 29.

⁵⁶ We can read it in the first sentence of the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 21 Nov. 1964, <https://www.rkddocumenten.nl/rkddocs/index.php?mi=600&doc=618>.

⁵⁷ http://www.raadvankerken.nl/pagina/4179/oecumene_bij_jubileum-500, (20 July 2017).

peared together with a new Study Document: *From Conflict to Communion*. Now it is time to put our conflicts behind us. “*Restoration of Unity is today’s Reformation.*” These words come from a joint declaration in the Netherlands, which came out on 18 March 2017.⁵⁸ Another (new) ecumenical joint declaration will be released in Utrecht on 31 October 2017. I hope, this will be more innovative and more courageous than the earlier one. If Protestants and Roman Catholics could finally know, recognize and accept that what unites us is greater than what is dividing us, we will be more and more aware of the gift of God, and that we are one in Christ. In *From Conflict to Communion*,⁵⁹ we read: “The Church is the body of Christ. As there is only one Christ, so also he has only one body.” In the programme of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands which we are organising in September 2017, there is a rich and varied Reformation Programme with several activities, focusing on the relationship between Protestants and Roman Catholics.⁶⁰ I find it really wonderful that so many Roman Catholic people (including bishops) want to give their cooperation to commemoration of the Reformation 2017 in the Netherlands.

*Jesus Christ, Lord of the Church,
send your Holy Spirit!
Illumine our hearts
and heal our memories.
O Holy Spirit: help us to rejoice
in the gifts that have come
to the Church through the Reformation,
prepare us to repent for the dividing walls
that we, and our forebears, have built,
and equip us for common witness
and service in the world.
Amen⁶¹*

⁵⁸ This declaration was presented in Nieuwkuijk by G. de Korte, bishop of ‘s-Hertogenbosch and K. van den Broeke, President of the General Synod of the PCN.

⁵⁹ *Common Prayer*, § 219.

⁶⁰ Activities in Bergen op Zoom, Oosterhout, ‘s-Hertogenbosch and Gennepe. Speakers: Prof. Dr. Martin Hein, Lutheran Bishop of the Evangelical Church of Kurhessen Waldeck, Mgr Dr. Hans van den Hende, Bishop of Rotterdam, Dr. Arjan Plaisier, former General Secretary of the PCN, Mgr Dr. Jan Liesen, Bishop of Breda and Mgr Dr. Gerard de Korte, Bishop of ‘s-Hertogenbosch.

⁶¹ *Common Prayer*, 12.



Lucas Cranach the Elder, The Reformers Luther and Hus Giving Communion to the Princes

Eberhard Busch

DIE TOLERANZ CHRISTI: WAS VON KARL BARTH FÜR DEN HEUTIGEN INTERRELIGIÖSEN DIALOG ZU LERNEN IST

1. Die Religion und die Religionen

Christen auf anderen Kontinenten stehen schon länger in der Situation, die nun auch die unsrige in Mitteleuropa wird: die christliche eine Religion neben anderen! Die abendländische Einheit von Gesellschaft, Kultur und Christentum zerbröckelt. Die Selbstverständlichkeit schwindet, dass unter uns Geborene Christen sind. Schwund des Christentums und Pluralismus der Religionen – das hängt zusammen. Hat Karl Barth recht, wenn er schon zu seiner Zeit sagte: „Das christliche Abendland ... existiert nicht mehr“¹, dann meldet sich bald die Frage des Verhältnisses zu Andersgläubigen. Aber ist dafür etwas von Barth zu lernen? Sein berühmter Satz „Religion ist Unglaube“, sein Pochen auf Joh. 14, 6 in der von ihm verfassten Barmer Erklärung vom Mai 1934 scheint zu bedeuten, dass er vom Christentum so hoch und von den anderen Religionen so verächtlich gedacht hat, dass man bei ihm in dieser Sache nur vor verschlossene Türen gestellt zu werden scheint.

Nun bemerkt die Christenheit auch bei uns den Wandel nicht erst seit heute. Man greift ja heute bei der Behandlung des Problems zurück auf Konzeptionen in *der* Epoche, die der dialektischen Theologie Barths voranging. Durch das Hinausgehen über den abendländischen Kreis entdeckte man schon damals das Problem des Verhältnisses zu anderen Religionen.

Nach Barth wäre es „nicht in Ordnung gewesen, wenn die Theologie an dieser Entdeckung nicht teilgenommen hätte. [...] Ein unwissendes oder verstocktes Vorbeigehen an den Sorgen und Hoffnungen der jeweiligen

¹ KD IV/3, 603. Barth hat dabei nicht nur die Pluralität der Religionen, sondern auch die der „Weltanschauungen“ in der westlichen Säkularisierung im Blick.

Gegenwart ist wirklich nicht das, was von der Theologie um der Kirche willen zu erwarten und zu fordern ist.“² Indes: „Etwas anderes ist es, für die Anliegen [...] einer bestimmten Zeit offen zu sein, etwas anderes, sich ihre Anliegen zu eigen zu machen, sich ihrer Dämonie gefangen zu geben“ (319). Barth ist *auch* für dieses Anliegen offen, doch so, dass er sich zugleich mit der *Weise* auseinandersetzt, in der man sich in seiner Vorzeit damit befasste.

In § 17 seiner Dogmatik sagt er: „Neuprotestantismus heißt »Religionismus«“ (316f.). Denn der nehme Religion als den Grund aller Theologie an: sie als eine dem Menschen eigene Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit, sich zu einem Transzendenten eine Beziehung zu setzen. Sofern die Religion zur inneren Ausstattung des menschlichen Wesens gehört, fühlte man sich immun gegenüber der Religionskritik Ludwig Feuerbachs oder Sigmund Freuds. Die bestritten auch nicht das Phänomen „Religion“, nur deren Deutung, es darin mit einem vom Menschen real Verschiedenen zu tun zu haben, das dem Menschen frei von sich aus begegnet und ihn damit aller erst erschafft. Mehr beunruhigte die Frage, wenn *Religion*, warum dann *christliche* Religion? Die Doppelfrage von David Friedrich Strauß deckte den wunden Punkt auf: Sind wir noch christlich? Antwort: Nein! Sind wir religiös? Antwort: Aber ja!³ Das problematisiert das beliebte Verfahren, die Christlichkeit der Religion mit dem Datum der abendländischen Tradition zu begründen, in dem Moment, in dem diese Tradition weithin abbricht (während anderwärts Menschen Christen werden, ohne durch solche Tradition dazu bewegt zu sein!). Erst recht wäre es ein Trugschluss zu sagen, die Leute bei uns seien christlich, weil sie religiös sind oder gar, wenn man sie religiös bedient unter Zurückstellung des Christlichen. Im Rahmen des Religionsbegriffs konnte das Christentum nur als Religion neben anderen Religionen verstanden werden.

Man konnte jetzt das Recht der eigenen Religion nur so verteidigen, dass man das Recht von Religion überhaupt und so das gute Recht auch anderer Religionen verteidigte. Und man musste nun alle christlichen Grundbegriffe wie Offenbarung, Gnade, Glaube, Kirche, Bibel in den vorgegebenen Rahmen Religion eintragen, um sie als etwas Mögliches erscheinen zu lassen; die Möglichkeit mußte ihre Wirklichkeit garantieren. Man entdeckte damit, dass die eigene Religion relativ und also vergleichbar oder vermischtbar ist mit anderen Religionen. Auch wenn Christen einen eigenen Standpunkt haben, so doch nur unter der Bedingung, wie Ernst Troeltsch sagte: dass er „von der Form des Absolutheitsanspruches“ abgelöst ist. Das Christentum sei so neu zu fassen, dass die Christlichkeit „gewahrt (ist), auch wenn sie von den alten Offenbarungs- und Erlösungs-, Alleinwahrheits- und Erbsündentheorien gelöst wird“⁴. Nach Barth sind die Resultate solcher Religionswissenschaft „ruhig anzuerkennen“:

² *KD I/2*, 319. Die im Folgenden in Klammern geschriebenen Zahlen weisen auf diesen Band *KD I/2*.

³ David Friedrich Strauß: *Der alte und der neue Glaube: Ein Bekenntniß*, 3. Aufl. Leipzig, Verlag, 1872.

⁴ Ernst Troeltsch: *Die Absolutheit des Christentums*, Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1912, 145.

„Was wir Offenbarung nennen, scheint von dieser Seite gesehen notwendig als ein Besonderes auf dem Feld des Allgemeinen, das man Religion nennt: [...] » christliche Religion«, ein Prädikat an einem Subjekt, das auch andere Prädikate haben kann“, das „zwar eigenartig, aber nicht einzigartig ist“. „Überhaupt scheinen sich die Menschen – und das sogar mit einer gewissen Notwendigkeit – bestimmten, über ihr eigenes Leben und das der Welt erhabenen und es beeinflussenden Mächten gegenübergestellt zu fühlen.“ „Wann und wo wusste man nicht um die Verpflichtung des Menschen, dem Gott oder den Göttern seine Verehrung darzubringen in Gestalt konkreter Kulte: durch Beschäftigung mit den [...] Symbolen der Gottheit, durch Opfer, Sühnehandlungen und Gebete, durch Gebräuche, Spiele und Mysterien, durch Gemeinde- und Kirchenbildung? [...] Ist der Veda den Indern, das Avesta den Persern, der Tripitaka den Buddhisten, ist der Koran seinen Gläubigen nicht in der gleichen Weise ‚Bibel‘ wie uns das Alte und Neue Testament? Sind nicht mindestens die Elemente [...] der Weltanschauung aller Religionen: Weltanfang und Weltende, Entstehung und Wesen des Menschen, sittlich-religiöses Gesetz, Sünde und Erlösung identisch mit denen der christlichen Glaubenslehre? Kann und muss man nicht auch die *christliche* ‚Frömmigkeit‘ [...] in einer Skala sehen mit den Formen der Frömmigkeit überhaupt? Und gemessen an welchen Kriterien müsste ihr hier notwendig gerade die höchste Stufe zugewiesen werden?“ (306f.)

Barth kritisierte daher den neuprotestantischen Versuch eines Nachweises, die christliche sei die höchste Religion: weil sie den Begriff von Religion angemessener ausfülle als die anderen Hochreligionen, geschweige die primitiven Religionen der „unzivilisierten Völker“, die „nichts für die Frage nach den höchsten religiösen Werten bedeuten“.⁵ Barths Kritik setzte allerdings voraus, dass die biblisch bezeugte Offenbarung Gottes sich dem Versuch entzieht, sie in den Rahmen von „Religion“ einzuordnen.

2. Die maßgebliche Offenbarung

Barths theologische Leistung bestand *nicht* darin, gegenüber dem Begriff Religion den der Offenbarung zu betonen.⁶ Die auf dem Religionsbegriff fußende Theologie macht ja vom Offenbarungsbegriff durchaus regen Gebrauch. Nach Barth erzwingt die biblisch bezeugte Offenbarung aber eine Umkehrung der *Reihenfolge* der Größen „Religion und Offenbarung“. Und so sehr unsere Erkenntnis der Offenbarung von ihr selbst unterschieden ist, so erkennen wir sie nur, wenn wir ihre Umkehrung im Verhältnis Religion und Offenbarung anerkennen. Sonst würden wir sie nicht mehr erkennen, sondern sie umdeuten. Erkennen wir sie, so buchstabieren wir es ihr nach:

⁵ Ebd., 61.

⁶ So Wolfhart PANNENBERG: *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1973, 321, der bestreitet (was Barth so nun nicht tut), dass man „die göttliche Offenbarung für sich“ in den Blick nehmen kann, um damit freilich erneut die Reihenfolge Religion-Offenbarung zu begründen.

Nicht ist die Gegebenheit von *Religion* der Rahmen, in dem so etwas wie Offenbarung vorkommt; die *Offenbarung* ist die Voraussetzung, von der her das Phänomen von Religion und Religionen wahrzunehmen ist. Sie sagt, dass Gott keines der Elemente dieser Welt ist, auch keines ihrer über sie hinausweisenden Elemente. Er wird uns nur bekannt, indem er sich zu ihr in Beziehung setzt. Und so ist die Offenbarung nicht nach Maßgabe der Größe „Religion“ zu erfassen. Was Religion ist, ist nach Maßgabe der Offenbarung zu verstehen. *Also* ist das Maß, mit dem die Religion gemessen und definiert wird, allein in Gottes Hand. Auch unsere Erkenntnis von diesem Maß untersteht seinem Urteil.

Die Frage ist nicht, „ob Gottes Offenbarung auch als menschliche Religion und damit als Religion unter anderen Religionen zu verstehen ist“. Die Frage ist, ob dieser Satz bedeutet: „dass uns das, was wir über Wesen und Erscheinung der Religion zu wissen meinen, zum Maßstab und Erklärungsprinzip für Gottes Offenbarung zu dienen hat, oder umgekehrt: ob wir die Religion: die christliche Religion und alle anderen Religionen von dem her zu interpretieren haben, was uns von Gottes Offenbarung gesagt ist“ (309). Verstanden ist die Offenbarung „nur da, wo zum vornherein und, ohne dass es in irgendeiner Hinsicht auch anders sein könnte, mit ihrer *Überlegenheit* über die menschliche Religion gerechnet wird, mit einer solchen Überlegenheit, die es uns gar nicht erlaubt, die Religion von anderswo als von der Offenbarung her auch nur als Gegenstand ins Auge zu fassen, geschweige denn Feststellungen über ihr Wesen und über ihren Wert zu machen. [...] Verstanden ist die Offenbarung nur da, wo das erste und das letzte Wort über die Religion [...] nur von ihr erwartet wird.“ (321f.).

Unter Offenbarung versteht Barth das in der Heiligen Schrift bezeugte Faktum, dass Gott in einer konkret-partikularen Geschichte *gesprochen hat*: in der „Fleischwerdung des Wortes“, in der Gott sich selbst definiert hat als der, der sich selbst zur Gemeinschaft mit Sündern und sie zur Gemeinschaft mit sich bestimmt hat. Nach Barth ist dieses uns bezeugte Faktum der unbedingte Ausgangspunkt für das christliche Nachdenken über das Thema Religion. Das meint anderes als das, dass im Dialog der Religionen jede Seite ihren je eigenen Standpunkt einbringen darf. Solch ein eigener Standpunkt ist immer etwas Relatives. Sicher, die christliche Theologie hat die Aufgabe, mit dem von Gott mit dem Menschen gemachten Anfang ihrerseits anzufangen, auch wenn sie das nur in der Relativität menschlicher Erkenntnis tun kann. Aber auch das stellt den von Gott gemachten Anfang nicht in Frage. Denn dieser göttliche Anfang ist kein Standpunkt, auf den sich die Theologie stellen kann. Ihn als Gegebenheit behandeln, mit der unsereins direkt anfangen kann, also ein Offenbarungspositivismus ist durch die Offenbarung selbst ausgeschlossen. Die Wahrheit dieses göttlichen Anfangs kann niemand beweisen außer Gott. Den Verdacht, die Offenbarung sei nur ein Selbstgespräch des Menschen, kann auch niemand ausräumen, außer indem Gott selbst jenes Faktum bewahrheitet, in dem er sich selbst gültig kundgetan hat. Die christliche Theologie kann den von Gott gemachten Anfang nur *gelten* lassen und *so* ihrerseits damit anfangen. Und tut sie das, so prägt sich

das aus in charakteristischen Denkstrukturen. Sie kann dann nur von der *Wirklichkeit* ausgehen, dass Gott damals und dort gesprochen hat, um von da aus nach der Möglichkeit zu fragen, wie das Menschen in und außerhalb der Kirche vernehmlich wird. Sie kann dann immer nur bei der *partikularen* Geschichte der Kundgabe Gottes ansetzen, um daraufhin nach deren *universaler* Tragweite zu fragen.

Gott bekundet sich in der „Fleischwerdung des Wortes“, das heißt, Gott erscheint menschlich unter den Menschen, als ein Relatives inmitten von anderem Relativen. Es tritt „das göttlich Einzigartige in einem menschlich bloß Eigenartigen“ auf (307): in *einer* Reihe mit anderem Eigenartigen und damit verwechselbar. So ist Gott in der Welt der Religion *gegenwärtig*, aber so, dass das göttlich Einzigartige in jenem bloß Eigenartigen *verborgen* ist. Ist er selbst darin *gegenwärtig*, dann ist es Gott nicht abträglich, sich dem Relativen auszusetzen.⁷ Gott ist *frei* dazu; und sofern *Gott* dazu frei ist, wird er dadurch kein Gefangener des Relativen. Ist Gott *dazu* frei ist, so wäre seine Offenbarung geleugnet, wenn ihre Menschlichkeit geleugnet würde. Insofern gehört zur Offenbarung ihre Verborgenheit im Relativen, in der Möglichkeit, verkannt zu werden oder als ein Phänomen unter anderen in die „Religion“ eingeordnet zu werden. Sie ist uns als Offenbarung nicht direkt anschaulich. Daher können wir die an uns gerichtete Offenbarung unsererseits nie in Besitz nehmen. Dass *das* geschieht: angesichts des *Fleisch* gewordenen Wortes „wir *schauten* seine *Herrlichkeit*, wie sie der einzige Sohn von seinem Vater hat, voll Gnade und Wahrheit“ (Joh. 1,14), dazu bedarf es dessen, dass die Offenbarung sich selbst aus ihrer Verhüllung enthüllt. Das ist nicht Resultat unseres Deutens. Das ist das freie Werk Gottes des Heiligen Geistes. Die Offenbarung ist eine „nur von innen her zu eröffnende Pforte“.⁸ Wir können an sie nur anklopfen, im Wissen, dass wir sie nicht öffnen können. Aber wenn sie sich von innen her öffnet, dann zeigt sie ihre Einzigkeit in ihrer Eigenartigkeit. Dann stellt sie klar, dass Gott in ihr sich selbst definiert hat. Dann macht sie sich geltend als Maßstab und Erklärungsprinzip für die Religion, in Bestreitung dessen, dass die Religion sich als Maßstab und Erklärungsprinzip für die Offenbarung Gottes behauptet.

3. Die Kritik der Religion

Die Maßgeblichkeit der Offenbarung Gottes für die Religion erweist sich darin, dass sie von ihrer Maßgeblichkeit *Gebrauch* macht. Sie tut es so, dass sie der Religion Maßgeblichkeit hinsichtlich der Offenbarung *abspricht*. Das ist die Religionskritik der Offenbarung. Und die kann nur sie vollziehen.⁹ So wenig die Offenbarung ein

⁷ Wolf KRÖTKE: *Der Mensch und die Religion nach Karl Barth*, ThSt 125, Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 1981, 18–20 sieht hier den Unterschied Barths zur Religionstheorie von Ernst Troeltsch und Paul Tillich, nach denen der Eingang des „Absoluten“ in den Bereich des „Relativen“ automatisch eine selbstentfremdende Verzerrung Gottes bedeutet.

⁸ Karl BARTH: *Das Wort und die Theologie*, München, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1924, 175.

⁹ Schon hier gehen die Wege Barths und Ludwig Feuerbachs so gründlich auseinander, dass man nicht einfach sagen kann, Barth habe Gott das Subjekt der Religionskritik sein lassen, das nach Feuerbach der aufgeklärte Mensch ist. Barth bestreitet die hinter Feuerbachs Religions-

Spezialfall von Religion ist, so wenig ist ihre Religionskritik ein Spezialfall von sonstiger Religionskritik. Sie ist also auch keine von Christen vollzogene Kritik an anderen Religionen. Sie ist die Kritik an der *Religion* in den Religionen und ergeht so „über *alle* Religionen“ (327). Die Religionskritik gehört so zur Offenbarung, dass sie geleugnet wäre, wenn ihre Religionskritik geleugnet würde. Zur Offenbarung gehört die Aufdeckung dessen, dass der Mensch, dem Gott sich öffnet und den er für sich öffnet, von sich aus für Gott nicht offen ist. Die Offenbarung trifft auf einen Menschen, der Gott widerstrebt und - der nicht weiß, dass er Gott widerstrebt, weil er vielmehr Gott entgegenzustreben meint. Es muss ihm offenbart werden, dass er für Gott verschlossen ist. Und das *wird* ihm offenbart, indem Gott sich dem Menschen erschließt und damit ihn für sich erschließt. Hier setzt das Problem der Religion ein.

Gilt *sie* als der Rahmen, innerhalb dessen die Offenbarung gesehen wird, dann ist das eine „Nostrifikation“¹⁰ der Offenbarung, ihre Vereinnahmung durch den Menschen. Sie ist dann die Lüge¹¹, in der er ein Nicht-Eigenes als sein Eigenes behauptet. Und so nimmt er Gottes Offenbarung in Anspruch als Synonym für die Behauptung seiner eigenen Gottoffenheit (328-331). In der Religion verbirgt der Mensch sich seine Verschlossenheit für Gott. Die Offenbarung entlarvt die *angebliche* Gottoffenheit des religiösen Menschen als seine *tatsächliche* Verschlossenheit für Gott. „Es wäre darum verkehrt, sich zwar über den Atheismus zu entrüsten, in den Religionen aber so etwas wie Wege oder doch Vorstufen zur Bekanntschaft mit Gott und dem, was er mit den Menschen will und tut, ... erblicken zu wollen.“¹² Die Offenbarung knüpft nicht an sie an, sie widerspricht ihnen (331). Darum der in der Anerkennung der Offenbarung Gottes begründete Satz: „Religion ist Unglaube“, ist „*die* Angele-

kritik stehende Grundannahme, „dass der Mensch das Maß aller Dinge nicht nur, sondern der Inbegriff, der Ursprung und das Ziel aller Werte sei, die Anschauung von der Berechtigung und Gesicherheit der menschlichen Existenz und ihrer Bedürfnisse, Wünsche und Ideale.“ Aber Barth bestreitet das nicht, um vor dieser Kritik „einen Gott“ zu retten, sondern um im Aufblick zu dem von uns gar nicht zu bedrohenden, lebendigen Gott die Menschlichkeit des Menschen in Acht zu nehmen vor seiner Selbstbedrohung durch ein solches Selbstverständnis. „Feuerbachs schwacher Punkt“ ist: „ob der Feuerbachsche ‚Mensch‘ denn auch *wirklich* der *wirkliche* Mensch sein möchte.“ Vgl. Karl BARTH: Ludwig Feuerbach, in *Die Theologie und die Kirche*, Ges. Vortr. 2, München, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1928, 236–238.

¹⁰ Vgl. Karl BARTH: Das christliche Leben, *Die Kirchl. Dogm.* IV, 4. Fragmente, hg. von Hans-Anton DREWES und Eberhard JÜNGEL, Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 1979, 214.

¹¹ Bei Barth tritt an die Stelle von Feuerbachs These von der Religion als *Illusion* die von der *Lüge*, die allein angesichts der Begegnung mit der Wahrheit (also nicht mit einer Illusion) möglich ist. Sie ist darum so gefährlich, weil sie nach Wahrheit duftet, sie nicht leugnet, sondern umdeutet (vgl. *KD* IV/3, 502–504).

¹² AaO, 213.

genheit des *gottlosen* Menschen“ (327).¹³¹⁴ Dass Gott sich in der Fleischwerdung des Wortes verbirgt in der Welt der Religion, das sanktioniert also nicht diese „Welt“; das steht im Zusammenhang seines gnädigen Widerspruchs gegen des Menschen Verbergen seiner Verslossenheit gegenüber Gott durch Religion. Aber genau so ist Gott nicht ferne dem, der sich ihm zu entziehen sucht und nur vergeblich sich ihm entziehen kann. Das kritische Urteil der Offenbarung über die Religion ist schon deshalb zutiefst ein barmherziges.

Darum ist der Satz „Religion ist Unglaube“ differenzierter zu verstehen, als er sich zunächst anhört. Wenn Barth von der „Nicht-Notwendigkeit“ der Religion spricht (344), so redet er nicht von ihrer Abschaffung. Und wenn er dann auch „*wahre* Religion“ kennt (356), so ist Religion nicht *notwendig* Unglaube.¹⁵ Sie ist wohl nicht von sich aus anderes als das. Dass sie auch noch anderes sein kann, das ist aber von der Offenbarung Gottes in der Fleischwerdung des Wortes her zu sagen. Denn darin erscheint der, der „das wahrhaftige Wort ist, das alle Menschen erleuchtet, die in diese Welt kommen“ (Joh. 1,9).¹⁶ Das sagt nach Barth: Aufgrund der seinsmäßigen Beziehung Gottes zum Menschen ist von einer geradezu ontologischen Gottbezogenheit des Menschen zu reden.¹⁷ Der von *Gott* bleibend gut geschaffene Mensch steht „strukturmäßig notwendig zu ihm in Beziehung ..., so dass ‚sein Herz unruhig ist, bis es ruht in Ihm‘.“¹⁸ Kommt das Wort Gottes „in sein Eigentum“ (Joh. 1,11), so stülpt es den Menschen nicht etwas ihnen notwendig Fremdes über. Allerdings, indem es unter uns wohnt, deckt es auf, dass es *faktisch* so ist: „Die Welt erkannte ihn nicht, [...] und die Seinen nahmen ihn nicht auf“ (Joh. 1, 10f.). Nicht notwendig, aber faktisch ist „die Religion Unglaube“. Zwar beseitigt die Sünde in den Religionen nicht jenes Verlangen nach Gott, in dem das Herz unruhig ist, bis es ruht in Ihm. Aber sie überfremdet es in der Weise, dass sie die Offenbarung im Rahmen und nach Massgabe jenes Verlangens fasst, statt jenes Verlangen im Rahmen und nach Massgabe der Offenbarung.

Weil Gottes Offenbarung die faktisch in Religion versteckte Verslossenheit des Menschen für sie aufdeckt – und überwindet, darum vollzieht in Wahrheit nur sie die Kritik der Religion. Daraus folgt erstens: Solche Kritik ist nicht mit einer Ver-

¹³ Man wird bei der Rede vom „gottlosen“ Menschen mitzubedenken haben, dass für Barth der gottlose der – trotzig oder bedrückt – für sich allein existierende „einsame Mensch“ ist. Vgl. Eberhard BUSCH: „Der Mensch ist nicht allein“: Das Problem der Einsamkeit in der Theologie Karl Barths, in *Hören und Lernen in der Schule des Namens*, FS B. Klappert, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1999, 238–253. Und so wird man das obige Zitat auch so zu verstehen haben: der „allein“ von sich aus Gott finden oder haben wollende Mensch ist der gottlose.

¹⁴ Das entspricht dem auch im Licht der Offenbarung gesprochenen Satz von Franz ROSENZWEIG: *Die Schrift*, hg. v. K. THIEME, Frankfurt o.J., 170: die auf die Begriff der Religion fußende Theologie sei atheistisch. Ähnlich Franz OVERBECK: *Christentum und Kultur: Gedanken und Anmerkungen zur modernen Theologie*, hg. von C.A. BERNOULLI (1919), Darmstadt 1963, 15f.

¹⁵ Vgl. Karl BARTH: *Gespräche 1959–1962*, Zürich 1997, 277: Religion ist nicht „notwendig böse“.

¹⁶ BARTH: *Das christliche Leben*, aaO, 30.206.

¹⁷ Vgl. *KD III/2*, 83, und: KRÖTKE: 25–29.

¹⁸ *Das christliche Leben*, aaO, 192.

achtung der Religionen zu verwechseln. Sie bedeutet „keine Bestreitung des Wahren, Guten und Schönen, das wir bei näherem Zusehen in fast Religionen entdecken können“ und, fügt Barth spitz hinzu, „das wir natürlich in unserer eigenen Religion [...] in besonders reichem Maße zu finden meinen“. *Wir* dürfen „das göttliche Urteil: Religion ist Unglaube nicht [...] in die Form bestimmter Abwertungen und Negationen übersetzen“ (327f.). Dann sind aber auch die beiden Gestalten des menschlichen Versuchs zur Aufhebung der Religion vergeblich (348ff.): der *Atheismus*, der die Religion als Spiegelbild menschlicher Bedürfnisse und Fähigkeiten ausgibt, und die *Mystik*, die die Religionen als relative, nur relativ verschiedene Äußerlichkeiten auf dem Weg in das inwendige Schweigen auffasst. Beide wollen, aber können nicht die Religion aufheben. Bieten beide heute nicht sogar die Argumente, um das Christentum mittels Religion zu retten? *Hier* das Argument, sich Gottesbilder zu erschaffen, in denen „ich“ selbst mich wiederfinde und so mein tiefstes Bedürfnis befriedige. *Dort* das Argument, die Religionen als bloße Symbolisierungen eines ewig unaussprechlichen, also nie offenbaren Letzten aufzufassen.

Zweitens: Ist die *Offenbarung* die Ursache der Religionskritik, dann trifft ihre Kritik am direktesten die, denen sie sich kundgibt. In ihrem Licht wird erst recht sichtbar, worin der Unglaube besteht, als den die Offenbarung die Religion aufdeckt: in Götzendienst und in Werkgerechtigkeit (328ff.), in der Behauptung einer Eignung *und* eines Verdienstes zum Empfang der Offenbarung, im Versuch, sich einen Gott zu machen nach seinem Bild *und* sich von sich aus mit dem Göttlichen zu vereinigen. Im Licht der Offenbarung wird es dem von ihr getroffenen Menschen verwehrt, die Religionskritik der Offenbarung zu einem christlichen Urteil über Nichtchristen zu machen und sich damit von ihnen abzugrenzen.

„Vielmehr wird es unsere Sache gerade als Christen sein müssen, dieses Urteil zuerst und am schärfsten uns selbst [...] treffen zu lassen, die anderen, die Nicht-Christen aber nur insofern, als wir in ihnen uns selbst, d.h. die Wahrheit dieses uns selbst [...] treffenden Urteils der Offenbarung wieder erkennen, in der Solidarität also, in der wir uns, in der Buße wie in der Hoffnung ihnen vorangehend, unter das Urteil beugen, um eben damit auch der Verheißung der Offenbarung teilhaftig zu sein.“ (358f.)

Unser Christentum ist daher „mit dem Menschenwerk anderer Religionen auf *einer* Ebene sichtbar“. Ja, *gerade* in ihm ist „der Widerspruch gegen Gottes Offenbarung und also der Götzendienst und die Werkgerechtigkeit“ manifest (358f.).

Darum zeigt in der Bibel bei der Anklage des Götzdienstes und der Werkgerechtigkeit der Finger zuerst in das Volk Gottes hinein. Und wenn der Finger auch auf andere außerhalb dieses Volkes zeigt, dann nur, weil die „Entstehung der Religionen“ voraussetzt, „dass sich die Welt objektiv, faktisch mit dem wahren, lebendigen Gott konfrontiert findet“.¹⁹

¹⁹ AaO, 213.

4. Die Toleranz Christi

Religionskritik heißt nach Barth allerdings nicht Beseitigung der Religion, sondern ihre Zurecht-Weisung durch Gott in seiner Offenbarung. Barth hielt Bonhoeffers These von der Religionslosigkeit des modernen Menschen nicht für richtig: nicht nur, weil der Mensch die Religion nicht aufheben *kann*, sondern weil es eine Toleranz gibt, auf Grund derer sie nicht beseitigt werden *muss*! Das ist gesagt in einem Verständnis von „Toleranz“, die nicht auf Kosten der Wahrheit Platz greift. Barth mustert drei Auffassungen von Toleranz (326): 1. im Sinn von Mäßigung des (zwar heimlich weiter glimmenden) Eifers für die eigene Religion, infolge der Einsicht, Liebe sei besser als Fanatismus; 2. im Sinn eines besserwisserischen Abwartens, dass sich aus der Fülle der Religionen allmählich eine vollkommene Realisierung von Religion entwickle, wobei man sich selbst an der Spitze des Fortschritts platziert. Und 3. im Sinn einer unbeteiligten Skepsis, die nach wahr und unwahr auf dem Feld der Religion nicht fragt, weil sie Wahrheit nur als ihren Zweifel an aller Wahrheit kennt. Nach Barth ist eine so oder so verstandene Toleranz „faktisch die schlimmste Form von Intoleranz“, weil dabei „die Religion und die Religionen und also der Mensch gar nicht ernst genommen, sondern im Grunde souverän übersehen werden“ (326).

Demgegenüber macht er einen Begriff von Toleranz geltend, der im Licht der Offenbarung interpretiert ist. Der bekommt seinen Sinn aus der darin erwiesenen Toleranz, der Geduld *Christi* und nimmt von *da* aus die Religion und die Religionen und also den Menschen ernst. Die dadurch bestimmte Toleranz stammt aus dem Wissen darum:

„dass Gott den gottlosen Menschen samt seiner Religion aus Gnade versöhnt hat mit sich selber. Sie wird ihn, wie ein widerspenstiges Kind auf Mutterarmen, getragen sehen. [...] Sie wird ihn also im Einzelnen weder loben noch tadeln, sondern sie wird seine Situation verstehen, darum, weil sie von außen, nämlich von Christus her Sinn bekommt. Sie wird diesem Gegenstand gegenüber aber auch im Ganzen nicht jenes falsch-sanftmütige oder hochmütige oder müde Lächeln einer ganz unangebrachten Nachsicht zeigen, sondern sie wird den Menschen verstehen als begriffen in einer Handlungsweise, die nur insofern als recht und heilig erkannt werden kann, als sie zuvor und gleichzeitig auch als ganz und gar unrecht und unheilig erkannt ist. Zu der so zu übenden Geduld und also zu theologischer Betrachtung der Religion wird [...] nur der willig und fähig sein, der sich samt seiner eigenen Religion [...] mit jedem Menschen gemeinsam zu beugen bereit ist in der Erkenntnis, dass er mit seiner eigenen Religion zuerst und vor allem Geduld, diese kräftige, tragende Geduld nötig hat“ (326f.).

Die Geduld Christi, die solche Toleranz begründet, bedeutet, dass das kritische Urteil der Offenbarung über die Religion zugleich *barmherzig* ist. Ihrem kritisch-barmherzigen Urteil entspricht der Doppelsatz: „Keine Religion *ist* wahr. Wahr [...] kann eine Religion nur *werden*“ (356). Sie kann nicht sich selbst wahr *machen*; ihr

Wahrwerden lässt sich irdisch auch nicht in ein Wahrgewordensein transformieren. *Wird* sie wahr, dann hört sie nicht auf, Religion zu sein, und wird nicht als Religion beseitigt. Wahr *wird* sie, indem sich die in der Welt der Religion verborgene Offenbarung enthüllt. Wahr wird sie durch die Akzeptanz, die ihr damit ohne Eignung und Verdienst widerfährt. „Die wahre Religion ist wie der gerechtfertigte Mensch eine Geschöpf der Gnade“ (356). Die Wahrheit der wahren Religion gleicht den Mutterarmen, die der Widerspenstigkeit des Kindes trotzen und es gerade so tragen. So widerspenstig der Mensch auch sein mag, dieses Tragen richtet doch etwas bei ihm aus. Es überwindet seine Verschlossenheit für Gott, indem es ihm die Augen dafür öffnet, dass das die Situation in seiner Religion ist: die des Widerspenstigen, der doch getragen wird. Und insofern in der christlichen Religion dafür die Augen geöffnet werden, ist nach Barth zu sagen: „Die christliche Religion ist die wahre Religion“ (357). Das ist kein arroganter Satz.²⁰

Denn ihre Wahrheit ist so wenig auf ein immanentes Heiligsein begründet, wie „eine andere Religion kraft ihrer immanenten Vorzüge den Anspruch erheben kann, die wahre Religion zu sein. Es ist vielmehr gerade die dem christlichen Glauben unvermeidliche Preisgabe dieses Anspruchs, das gerade für den Christen unausweichliche Bekenntnis, dass er auch in seinem besten christlichen Tun ein Sünder ist, [...] das *Symptom* der Wahrheit der christlichen Religion. Diese Preisgabe, dieses Bekenntnis kann ... anzeigen, dass die christliche Kirche der Ort ist, wo Menschen, mit Gottes Offenbarung [...] konfrontiert, durch Gnade von Gnade leben“ (370f.).

Zu dieser Preisgabe gehört auch die auf den Anspruch der Religion, Maßstab für die Offenbarung zu sein. Dass die christliche Religion in *diesem* Sinn wahre Religion ist, heißt nicht, dass außerhalb der Kirche kein Heil ist. Von diesem Satz nimmt Barth Abschied.²¹ Außerhalb der Kirche gibt es Heil nicht einmal nur durch Vermittlung der Kirche. Wie Gott in seiner Offenbarung verhüllt ist in der Welt der Religion, so ist die Wahrheit der christlichen Religion verborgen in ihrer Religion. Aber dementsprechend dass Gottes Offenbarung im Heiligen Geist aus ihrer Verhüllung tritt, darf die Kirche Stätte der *Erkenntnis* des Heils sein, dem zum Trotz, dass sie stets auch Stätte der Not ist, die sie sich selbst bereitet (369). Sie ist Stätte der Erkenntnis des Heils in dem Maße, wie sie erkennt, dass die christliche Religion der Rechtfertigung und Heiligung bedürftig ist, dass sie durch den, den sie erkennt, aber auch der Rechtfertigung und Heiligung gewiss sein darf. Ist sie *so* wahre Religion, so muss

²⁰ So auch Chr. DAHLING-SANDER – G. PLASGER: *Hören und Bezeugen: Karl Barths Religionskritik als Hilfestellung im Gespräch mit den Religionen*, Waltrop 1997, 27, und sie sagen weiter: „Vielmehr lädt dieses Urteil Gottes einerseits ein zum Rückblick und lässt erkennen, dass das götzenbildnerische und werkgerechte Streben nach Gott letztlich nicht tragfähig ist, und eröffnet andererseits Zukunft, denn der Mensch ist nicht ontologisch als Sünder, sondern [...] als freies Gegenüber Gottes, als Gott-offenes Geschöpf Gottes geschaffen und zu diesem bestimmt.“

²¹ KD IV/1, 769.

Religion also nicht Unglaube und Sünde sein. Dann dürfen Menschen so frei sein, Religion auszuüben: in Gebet, in Gotteslob, in bestimmten Riten und Praktiken; und in der christlichen Religion darf man dann so frei sei, sich dabei nicht notwendig unterscheiden zu müssen von ähnlichen Praktiken in anderen Religionen, auch wenn es dort Praktiken gibt, die dabei fremd bleiben müssen. Die Wahrheit ihrer Religion kann sie jedoch so nicht garantieren. Sie würde, wenn sie das versuchen wollte, aufhören, wahre Kirche zu sein. Das ist die unaufhebbare Schwäche der christlichen Religion, gerade wenn sie wahre Religion ist unter der anderen Religionen. Der Glaube eines Christen beweist vielmehr seine Kraft darin, dass er ihn „dauernd nötigt, über sein religiöses Bewusstsein hinaus zu denken und also auch mit der Relativierung seiner christlichen Religion durch Gottes Offenbarung ständig zu rechnen. [...] Starke menschliche Positionen sind immer nur die Gott gegenüber völlig preisgegebenen“ (363). Dieser Glaube bezieht sich ja auf die Rechtfertigung der Gottlosen. Und ist es *sie*, die die christliche Religion zur wahren macht, dann ist sie frei von dem Abgrenzungsdrang, in dem man sich kraft seines religiösen Selbstbewusstseins von anderen zu unterscheiden sucht. Dann ist das in allem der leitende Gesichtspunkt: „Nicht Menschen bekommen da Recht gegen andere Menschen, nicht ein Teil der Menschheit gegen Teile derselben Menschheit, sondern Gott gegen und für alle Menschen, die ganze Menschheit“ (392). Dann hat die Kirche das anzuerkennen. Und ihr Dienst inmitten der anderen Religionen ist dann der, den Namen Jesu Christi zu bekennen und so in seinem Dienst Zeugnis zu geben von dem Gott, der gegen und für alle Recht bekommt.

5. Der christliche Umgang mit anderen Religionen

Ist das Christentum eine Religion unter anderen, die nur aufgrund von Gottes Rechtfertigung der Gottlosen wahre Religion ist, so ergeben sich einige Grundlinien für den Umgang von Christen mit Vertretern anderer Religionen.

1. Sie haben im Verhältnis zu den anderen *Solidarität* zu bewahren. Diese Solidarität ist nicht in einem übergreifenden Religionsbegriff begründet; Barth fürchtet, dass der vielmehr zu falschem Streit führt. Denn er erlaubt den Religionen, sich auf eine „ihnen immanente Wahrheit“ zu berufen, um dann kämpferisch oder auch in höflichen Formen (325) „in der Kraft des religiösen Bewusstseins“ über die anderen zu „siegen“. „Das Christentum kann sich an diesem Kampf nicht beteiligen“ (364). Es hat Grund zum Verzicht darauf, sich als die Beste unter den Religionen auszugeben. Denn was in jene Solidarität drängt, ist die sich ihm öffnende Solidarität *Gottes* mit *Sündern* und ist somit dies, dass das darin sich vollziehende religionskritische Urteil zuerst gerade das Christentum trifft (358). Daher sagt Barth: Mit dem Satz der Theologischen Erklärung von Barmen (1934), dass Jesus Christus das eine Wort Gott ist, „trennt sich der, der ihn bekennt, in keiner Weise von denen, die ihn nicht bekennen.“²² Indem Gott in der Offenbarung seiner Sündergnade gegen alle und für

²² KD IV/3, 100. Adriaan GEENSE: Der Dialog der Religionen und das Bekenntnis der Kirche, *KuD* 26 (1980), 264–276 arbeitet Barths Verständnis von „Solidarität“ weiter aus zu einem Begriff

alle ist, kann es der Kirche im Verhältnis zu Nichtchristen nicht darum gehen, dass Menschen gegen andere Menschen Recht bekommen, sondern darum, die „Solidarität der Heiden drinnen mit den Heiden draußen“²³ zu betätigen. Diese Solidarität ist unablässig von der den Christen selbst gemachten Zumutung, in deren Perspektive sie dann auch die anderen zu sehen und ernst zu nehmen haben: dass auf der Ebene der Religionen nicht religiös Habende anderen religiös Habenden begegnen, die ihre verschiedenen Besitz- und Reichtümer vergleichen, behalten, austauschen oder zusammenlegen. Hier begegnen geistlich Arme anderen geistlich Armen.

2. Es erlaubt und gebietet dieselbe Sündergnade, die anderen im Lichte einer großen *Hoffnung* zu sehen. Der Grund dafür ist nicht das religiöse Selbstbewusstsein auf der einen oder anderen Seite. Der Grund dafür ist derselbe, aus dem die Offenbarung der Sündergnade Gottes in Christus nicht in einen christlichen Offenbarungsbesitz übergehen kann. Gemeint ist nicht eine abstrakte Unverfügbarkeit. Es geht darum, dass die Wahrheit der Offenbarung Gottes ihrer Erkenntnis bleibend vorangeht. *Wir* können sie darum nur *erkennen* und das nur dann, wenn sie sich uns erschließt. Doch sie bleibt auch wahr, wenn wir sie falsch oder nur bruchstückhaft oder gar nicht erkennen. *Darum* dürfen wir glauben, dass derselbe Gott, der in Jesus Christus der Gott mit uns ist, auch mit den Menschen anderer Religionen ist. Barth sagt: er hat sich auch ihnen bekanntgegeben, so wahr Gott in der Geschichte Jesu Christi „der endgültig, total, definitiv *wohlbekannte* Gott geworden“ ist.²⁴ Aus diesem Grund wird ihnen dann, wenn ihnen für ihn die Augen aufgehen, kein heteronomer Zwang übergestülpt. Sie stehen unter der Verheißung, dass zwar keine Religion in sich wahr ist, dass sie es aber *werden* kann (356). Auch sie können das Wahrwerden der Religion sich nicht selbst erschaffen. Auch ihnen widerfährt das rein aus Gnade. Denn wahr ist Religion nur „im Rahmen der *justificatio impii*“ (370). Aber darin ist die Hoffnung für alle Religionen begründet. Kraft dieser Hoffnung gilt, was Barth von der Nächstenliebe sagt: sie sei „die Bekundung meiner Gemeinschaft mit dem, in welchem ich einen Bruder Jesu Christi und also meinen eigenen Bruder zu finden erwarte“ (487).

3. Ist die christliche Religion im Rahmen der Rechtfertigung des Gottlosen wahre Religion, dann *hat* sie keinen sogenannten Wahrheitsanspruch. Aber dann kann sie der sie wahrmachenden Wahrheit des Evangeliums nicht neutral und sprachlos gegenüberstehen. Dann erhebt die Wahrheit des Evangeliums auf sie Anspruch, sie zu beantworten. Jesus sagt uns: „Ihr seid das Licht der Welt“, so dass die Leute eure

von einer Gemeinschaft mit Vertretern anderer Religionen; er sieht dabei als die praktische Konsequenz von Barths Lehre von Offenbarung und Religionen: „Offenheit, Menschlichkeit, Herzlichkeit, Solidarität, Verstehenswille, nicht trotz, sondern kraft der festen Bindung an Jesus Christus“ (264).

²³ Vgl. Karl BARTH: *Theologie und Mission in der Gegenwart*, in ders., *Theologische Fragen und Antworten*, Zollikon 1957, 102.

²⁴ BARTH: *Das christliche Leben*, aaO 204 Vgl. ebd. 205f.: „Unkenntnis Gottes ist, indem Gott sich in Jesus Christus inmitten der Welt bekannt gemacht, zu einem grundsätzlich überholten, jedes Sinnes und Grundes baren factum brutum geworden.“ Beleg mit Joh. 1,14.

guten Werke sehen, die dann gute sind, wenn sie – nicht euch, sondern euren Vater im Himmel preisen (Mt. 5,14-16).²⁵ Die Streitfrage, ob Christen Mission oder Dialog aufgetragen ist, ist müßig, sofern es ein Streit ist um das Maß des Grades, in dem sie in der Begegnung mit Menschen anderer Religionen die *eigene* Überzeugung nicht unter den Scheffel zu stellen haben. Es geht aber nicht um die Mitteilung *ihres* Selbstbewusstseins. Es geht darum, dass sie *Zeugnis* geben von *dem*, der die Wahrheit des Evangeliums ist.

Dieses Zeugnis wird, „ungerechtfertigt in sich selber, [...] keine selbständige Rolle und Bedeutung, sondern es wird nur dem es allein rechtfertigenden Namen Jesus Christus zu dienen haben. Es wird diesen Namen nie [...] verdrängen können durch seine eigene Substanz, sondern es wird ihn nur bezeugen“ können. „Es wird an der Wahrheit gerade nur so viel Anteil haben, als es auf sie hinweist und sie verkündigt. Und es wird auch zu diesem Hinweisen und Verkündigen keine eigene Macht und Autorität haben und in Anspruch nehmen, sondern es wird reden aber auch schweigen, wirken aber auch ruhen [...] kraft der in der Ausgießung des Heiligen Geistes wirksamen Macht und Autorität des Namens Jesus Christus“ (394).

Dieses Zeugnis ist nicht beklemmend, weil es den anderen gegenüber „Anzeiger ihrer eigenen (!) Wahrheit (ist), der gegenüber ihre Augen verschlossen sind“.²⁶ Solches Zeugnis wird so seinen Adressaten auch ärgerlich sein: wegen der Zumutung, dass die Evangeliums-Wahrheit ihre *eigene* Wahrheit ist und dass sie eben die doch nicht erkennen. Darum tritt dabei an die Stelle der falschen Konkurrenz „der echte religiöse Streit, wo [...] die Verkündigung der Gnade Gottes gegenüber allem Religions-tum als die Wahrheit der christlichen Religion auf den Plan gestellt“ wird (325). Und dabei wird solches Zeugnis in der Begegnung mit anderen darin bestehen, es in der Solidarität mit den anderen immer noch einmal von neuem zu verstehen.²⁷

4. Ist Gott in seinem Mensch gewordenen Wort verborgen in den Religionen gegenwärtig, und zwar, bevor ihre Vertreter ihn erkennen, dann haben Christen dafür offen zu sein, dass er denen nicht *nur* verborgen sein muss. Nicht, weil die dafür geeignet sind, aber weil das „wahre Wort“ sich auch in ihnen widerspiegelt (Joh. 1,9), dürfen Christen erwarten, dass sie dort – eingehüllt in wieviel Verkehrung auch immer – auf „wahre Worte“ stoßen.²⁸ Und sind sie wahre Worte, dann haben Christen

²⁵ Vgl. KD I/1, 50; KD IV/1, 868.

²⁶ KD IV/3, 713.

²⁷ Vgl. Karl BARTH, *Theologie und Mission: Mission heisst nach Barth für Christen: In der Weise die Herrschaft Jesu Christi zu bekennen, dass sie jene „Solidarität der Heiden drinnen mit den Heiden draussen“ betätigen* (aaO, 102), und das so, dass dabei die Botschaft des Evangeliums „nicht Wiederholung, sondern Anfang“ ist (108).

²⁸ KD IV/3, 128: sie sind wahr als Gleichnisse des Himmelreichs, vgl. 152. Vgl. ders., *Das christliche Leben*, 213: „Auch in der Religion bekennt sich also die Welt – ohne zu wissen und zu wollen, was sie tut – dazu, dass Gott ihr nicht nur unbekannt, sondern auch bekannt ist.“ Indem sie die Augen verschließt vor dem, was sie da doch bekennt, verschafft sie sich dafür Surrogate. Nach

davon zu *lernen*. Wahr sind sie nicht, weil deren Sprecher sie für wahr halten. Wahr sind sie auch nicht, weil Christen darin wiederfinden, was sie schon wussten. Sie mögen dort auf Gleichnisse des Himmelreichs stoßen, deren Wahrheit sie durch eigene Verkehrungen verdrängt haben. Das ist nach Barth hier allein das Kriterium für wahr oder unwahr: ob sich das da Gesehene als Gleichnis der Wahrheit des Evangeliums erkennen läßt und ob die Christen also durch solches Lernen nicht von dieser Wahrheit weg, sondern näher zu ihr hin geführt werden. Hier hat der *Dialog* seinen Ort – nicht der, der mit der Ideologie der verschiedenen Wege zum selben Ziel belastet ist, aber *der* Dialog, als dessen erste Formen Barth nennt, dass man den anderen in die Augen sieht und sich von ihnen sehen lässt und dass man miteinander und zueinander redet.²⁹ Christen sind zu solchem Dialog frei, weil sie darauf vertrauen dürfen, dass die gültige Wahrheit Gottes für sich selbst sorgen wird.³⁰ Christen, die sich der *Offenbarung* nicht bemächtigen, sind in solchem Dialog frei, sich anderer Religionen auch nicht mit dem Begriff „*Religion*“ zu bemächtigen, sie darin einzuordnen und zu werten, frei, jede Erscheinung, die sich Religion nennt oder die eine verkappte³¹ ist, in ihrer Eigenart wahrzunehmen, frei auch von dem Schema der Unterscheidung zwischen *sogenannten* höheren Religionen und primitiven Religionen,³² frei auch, sie nicht auf in ihnen aufzuspürende Missbräuche festzulegen. Führt solches Lernen nicht zu einem Synkretismus? Der ist ein ambivalentes Phänomen. Er kann einen profanen Sieg des Christentums über das Fremde bedeuten, aber auch, dass es (indem es vielleicht äußerlich siegt) innerlich von dem ihm Fremden besiegt wird.³³ Aber er könnte seinen guten Sinn auch in einem Lernen haben, in dem Christen

Chr. LINK: Das menschliche Gesicht der Offenbarung. Bemerkungen zum Religionsverständnis Karl Barths, *KuD* 26 (1980), 277–302, ist die mit Joh. 1,9 begründete Auffassung der Religionen als Gleichnisse des Himmelreichs Pointe von Barths Religionsverständnis.

²⁹ *KD* III/2, 299–312.

³⁰ Vgl. DAHLING-SANDER – PLASGER: *Hören und Bezeugen*, aaO 50: „Dieser Dialog findet statt im Rahmen vorgegebener Wahrheit.“

³¹ BARTH: Das christliche Leben, aaO 212: Unter verkappten Religionen versteht Barth solche, in denen – i. U. zu Religionen „im üblichen Sinn“ – „säkulare Werte (wie Macht, Besitz, Bildung, Fortschritt und dergleichen)“ eine höchste und *insofern* quasi „religiöse Auszeichnung, Verehrung und Pflege“ finden. Barth visiert damit die Säkularität in den westlichen Ländern an. Vgl. dazu KRÖTKE: aaO 35–42. Die Nicht-Notwendigkeit der Religion bedeutet für Barth *auch*, dass „die aktuelle Befriedigung des religiösen Bedürfnisses [...] nur eine relative Notwendigkeit“ ist: dass die Gottesgedanken der Religion „auch ungedacht“, dass ihre Riten „auch unvollzogen“, ihre moralischen Vorschriften „auch unbeachtet“ bleiben können (*KD* I/2, 344f.). Barths Sicht erlaubt, die scheinbare Religionslosigkeit der „verkappten Religionen“ in ihrer Eigenart wahrzunehmen, ohne zu meinen, dass sie sich der „Religionskritik“ der Offenbarung entziehen könnten; die bezieht sich hier auf ihre „Auszeichnung, Verehrung und Pflege“ säkularer Werte. Dass sie aber der Offenbarung Gottes in seinem Mensch gewordenen Wort nicht entzogen sind und nicht in einem gnadenlosen Raum leben, bedeutet, dass auch in ihrer Profanität „wahre Worte“ hörbar werden können. Vgl. KRÖTKE: aaO 33: „Die ‚wahre Religion‘ im Sinne Barths wird auf alle Fälle über die Muster hinausgehen, die die Religion als solche zur Verfügung stellt.“

³² BARTH: Das christliche Leben, aaO 212; vgl. *KD* I/2, 306f.

³³ Karl BARTH: Das Evangelium in der Gegenwart, *TEH* 25, 1935, 31.

reicher in der Erkenntnis der Wahrheit des Evangeliums und näher zu Menschen in anderen Religionen geführt werden.

5. Was ist das *Ziel* aller „interreligiösen“ Begegnung? Von der Antwort darauf hängt ab, wie die Wege zu diesem Ziel zu bestimmen sind. Das Ziel ist nicht *unsere* Herstellung *einer* „Weltreligion“,³⁴ in der entweder eine siegt oder einige „Hochreligionen“ sich verbünden auf Kosten anderer. Das Ziel ist nicht von uns zu machen durch einen Religionsmix oder mit dem Gedanken, dass angesichts der westlichen Säkularisierung alle (noch) religiös Gesinnten sich verbinden sollten. Das Ziel kann nach christlicher Erkenntnis von *Gott* allein herbeigeführt werden – so: „Er kommt und mit ihm jener ‚Friede auf Erden unter den Menschen seines Wohlgefallens‘ (Luk. 2,13), d.h. unter den von ihm geschaffenen, geliebten, geretteten und bewahrten Menschen. Dieser Friede auf Erden, verwirklicht, indem Gott [...] ihn schafft [...], ist das *Reich Gottes*.“³⁵ Sein Kommen hat *sammelnde* Kraft. Nicht was sie immer schon wollten, setzt sich durch. *Er* setzt sich durch, zu ihren Gunsten, gegen das, was sie verkehrt wollten.³⁶ Die Erwartung *dessen* soll bestimmen, was sie *jetzt vorläufig* tun. Dem erwarteten Frieden entspricht es, dass sie Menschen anderer Religionen in *Respekt* begegnen, ohne „gegenüber der menschlichen Größe, wie sie uns gerade auf dem Feld der Religion so ergreifend begegnet, [...] ein christlicher Herostrat zu werden. [...] Im Raum der Ehrfurcht vor Gott wird die Ehrfurcht vor menschlicher Größe immer ihre Stelle haben müssen“ (327f.). Jenem Frieden entspricht ferner, dass solcher Respekt in erster Linie dem *Menschen* in seiner Religion gilt.

„Wo würde nämlich der Mensch dem Menschen in scheußlicherer Weise zum Wolf als da, wo er ihm im Namen irgendwelcher Absoluten [...] entgegentreten zu sollen meint?“ Weil es Christen um den Menschen geht, können sie zu allen Absolutheiten nur relativ Ja oder Nein sagen. „Der Mensch selbst *leidet* und wehrt sich mit Händen und Füßen dagegen, das auch nur sich selbst“ einzugestehen. „Dieser Leidende ist der von Gott geliebte Mensch selbst. Ihn in dieser seiner Not, aus der er sich nicht selbst, aus der Gott allein ihn erretten kann, zu sehen und zu verstehen, ihm offen willig sich zuzuwenden, ihm barmherzig zu begegnen, das ist die Aufgabe.“³⁷

Und ferner: Als Ankündigung des von Gott kommenden Friedens, in dem Gott gut macht, was wir nicht gut machen, darf es in allem höflichen oder streitbaren Nebeneinander auch auf irgendeinem Sektor zu *Kooperationen* kommen: in ethischen

³⁴ Vgl. BARTH: Das christliche Leben, aaO 157: Weiss die Christenheit, was das einzige ist, was eine Religion zur wahren macht, dann wird sie nicht davon träumen, „irgendetmal die triumphierende Anhängerschaft einer sogenannten ‚Weltreligion‘ zu werden“.

³⁵ AaO 405.

³⁶ Immerhin führt dieses eschatologische Ereignis „die Einheit von göttlicher Offenbarung und menschlicher Religion“ herauf: ein erst zu vollendendes Geschehen (KD I/2, 323), dem entgegenzuhoffen ist, aber auf das zu hoffen das schon vollendete Geschehen der Menschwerdung Gottes in Jesus Christus erlaubt.

³⁷ Das christliche Leben, aaO 465–467.

Herausforderungen der globalen Bedrohungen, in gutnachbarschaftlicher Konvi-
venz, in Aktionen gegen Fremdenhass und Religionsfeindschaft, vielleicht sogar in
stammelnden Versuchen eines sorgfältig koordinierten Gotteslobs.³⁸ Barth hat für
derlei Fragen das Kriterium hervorgehoben, das den Ausschlag gibt, was Christen
hier mutig wagen dürfen oder mutig zu unterlassen haben: Sie haben dabei niemals
ihren einen Vorzug preiszugeben, sondern immer neu zu bewähren – den Vorzug,
„den Namen Jesus Christus zu kennen und selber nach ihm genannt zu sein“ (397).

³⁸ „Sorgfältig koordiniert“ heißt, es ist nicht begründet mit dem aufklärerischen Schema der ver-
schiedenen Wege zum selben – unaussprechlichen – Ziel. Es ist dabei zu bedenken, dass zwei,
wenn sie dasselbe sagen oder machen, nicht dasselbe sagen oder machen. Der Grund kann
für Christen nur das Vertrauen darauf sein, dass Gott gut *macht*, was wir verkehrt machen, was
ja nicht heißt, dass Gott damit das Verkehrte gut *heißt*. Vgl. zum multireligiösen Gebet: *Zusam-
menleben mit Muslimen in Deutschland: Gestaltung der christlichen Begegnung mit Muslimen:
Eine Handreichung des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*, Gütersloh 2000, 41–45.

Péter Gaál-Szabó

AFRICAN AMERICAN RELIGIOSITY, CULTURAL AUTHENTICATION, AND THE BLACK CHURCH

Religiosity has been both the primary signifier of cultural distinctiveness and, in this way, also the carrier of cultural authentication for African Americans. For long within the white church and outside it in a less formal fashion, religiosity shaped the African American consciousness besides other important factors such as the disruptive encounter with mainstream American culture and has continued to do so until this day. Ever since the birth of the black church in the late 18th century, the church has proved “the defining reference of the black community”¹ in all spheres of life: besides being a religious institution, it has played a major role as a social, political, and cultural force in the community.

Religiosity, Authentication, and Cultural Projection

Authentication is beyond doubt one of the functions of religion in the African American community, but to understand its complex nature and to map its orientations and procedures, it is necessary to identify formative influences. As Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer insist, in establishing African American religiosity one must take into consideration the African heritage of African Americans, the European influence, as well as the African American minority position,² that is, African American experience in the Americas. Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price point out that scholars like to identify a “generalized West African cultural ‘heritage’” or one cultural

¹ C. ERIC LINCOLN: Introduction, in Andrew BILLINGSLEY: *Mighty Like a River: The Black Church and Social Reform*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1999, xxiv.

² HANS A. BAER and MERRILL SINGER: Toward a Typology of Black Sectarianism as a Response to Racial Stratification, in Timothy E. FULOP and Albert J. RABOTEAU (eds.): *African-American Religion: Interpretative Essays in History and Culture*, New York, Routledge, 1997, 261.

group as the origin of African Americans.³ Melville L. Herskovits, also analyzed by Mintz and Price, and a key person in the debate whether African Americans suffered cultural erasure in America or else distinct African roots can be identified, lays emphasis on a unifying grammar of culture in West Africa.⁴ He advocates in this way a direct continuation of an African culture among the North American slave population. Mintz and Price rather stress the “ethnic heterogeneity of Africans”,⁵ which is why Africans cannot be treated as a community⁶ since it evolves only later as a new culture commenced⁷ through “both continuity and change”.⁸

The dynamic process of acculturation and enculturation involved also the persistence of existing religious patterns and forms as well as the appropriation of a new religiosity such as Christianity – not disregarding the fact that Africans may well have encountered Christianity in Africa and a considerable number among the slaves were Muslims.⁹ Charles H. Long, basing his insight on the similarities of, for instance, rhythm, dance, and religious forms¹⁰ confirms the African roots of religious patterns and emphasizes that “the slaves did not confront America with a religious *tabula rasa*. If not the content of culture, a characteristic mode of orienting and perceiving reality has probably persisted.”¹¹ Furthermore, he insists that in studying African American religiosity one has to ascribe a dual function to Africa: “historical reality and religious image”.¹² Long goes on to conclude: “The black community has confronted the reality of the historical situation as immutable, impenetrable, but this experience has not produced passivity; it has, rather, found expression as forms of the involuntary and transformative nature of religious consciousness.”¹³ African American religiosity was practically the only way of deliberate alteration, which has since proved also a source of resistance and political power:

Slave music, slave religion, slave folk beliefs—the entire sacred world of the black slaves—created the necessary space between the slaves and their owners and were the means of preventing legal slavery from becoming spiritual slavery. In addition to the world of the masters which slaves inhabited and accommodated to, as they had to, they created and maintained a world apart which they shared with each

³ Sidney W. MINTZ and Richard PRICE: *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*, Boston, Beacon, 1992, 7.

⁴ MINTZ and PRICE: *The Birth of African-American Culture*, 81.

⁵ MINTZ and PRICE: *The Birth of African-American Culture*, 14.

⁶ MINTZ and PRICE: *The Birth of African-American Culture*, 18.

⁷ MINTZ and PRICE: *The Birth of African-American Culture*, 44.

⁸ MINTZ and PRICE: *The Birth of African-American Culture*, 59.

⁹ C. Eric LINCOLN: The Muslim Mission in the Context of American Social History, in FULOP and RABOTEAU (eds.): *African-American Religion*, 281–283.

¹⁰ Charles H. LONG: Perspectives for a Study of African-American Religion in the United States, in FULOP and RABOTEAU (eds.): *African-American Religion*, 25.

¹¹ LONG: *Perspectives*, 5.

¹² LONG: *Perspectives*, 5.

¹³ LONG: *Perspectives*, 28.

other and which remained their own domain, free of control of those who ruled the earth.¹⁴

An inherent part of African American religiosity, therefore, is the experience of the white culture and religiosity. Religion for African Americans has never been solely an ontological or phenomenological treatise or, in anthropological terms, a field of acculturation, but rather a political engagement fame-marked by appropriation and resistance, the precipitate being “the involuntary structure of religious consciousness in terms of oppugnancy”.¹⁵ The oppositional conception of the black (cultural) self in rhetoric and practice has been a characteristic maneuver.

The result precipitates that African American cultural implosion proves to be both other-oriented in the sense that it is in constant dialogue with white culture and centripetal at the same time. Religio-cultural projection is therefore essentially a political assertion since it denotes “an activity engendering culture [as] a part of the struggle against the stereotypes created by a dominant social group”,¹⁶ and thus it aims at the establishment of a cultural space that can be juxtaposed with the dominant cultural space. From this viewpoint, religiosity becomes a means of revitalization but also the foundation of negotiation. Due to the challenges exerted by the dominant culture especially initially, African American struggles reflect a certain dialogicity between the two cultures through acculturation and projection, while the dominant white society has also had to anticipate cultural communication with the African American community: “Though power originated at the top of the system, it could not be applied without taking into account the nature of *response*.”¹⁷

The experience of a significant cultural other and the formative European and African influences rendered a hybrid identity inevitable. Thus, it is only partly acceptable what Lawrence W. Levine claims concerning cultural communication: “Blacks shared with a number of other minorities a deep ambivalence concerning the degree to which they desired to enter the mainstream white American culture because they shared [. . .] a strong centripetal urge which continually drew them back to central aspects of their traditions even as they were surging outward into larger society.”¹⁸ As hybridizing African American religiosity was the result of appropriation of European values and of accommodation to the American context and, furthermore, black appropriation and accommodation were also accomplished in view of the African heritage, centripetality can only be considered in view of some degree of intercultural interference – despite the fact that the two cultures, the dominant white

¹⁴ Lawrence W. LEVINE: *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977.

¹⁵ LONG: *Perspectives*, 27.

¹⁶ András TARNÓC: *Erőszak és megváltás: Az indián fogságnapló mint az amerikai eredetmítosz sarokköve*, Eger, Líceum Kiadó, 2015, 103. The translation is mine.

¹⁷ MINTZ and PRICE: *The Birth of African-American Culture*, 27.

¹⁸ LEVINE: *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 444–445.

and the emerging African American, maintained self-identification by contrast. As Gunnar Myrdal points out, “[. . .] even the positive movement away from American culture has its source in that culture. Negro race pride and race prejudice serve to fortify the Negro against white superiority. *In practically all its divergences, the American Negro culture is not something independent of general American culture. It is a distorted development, or a pathological condition, of the general American culture* [sic].”¹⁹ In a likewise fashion, black civil religion and Black Muslim theology must be seen in relation to American culture as both reflect “a pattern of simultaneous acculturation and revitalization”,²⁰ even as the latter evolves via the admonishment of separatism of an autonomous cultural self from the mainstream background. Most prominently, in the case of Black Muslims, the acquisition of a religio-cultural identity is achieved through an (imagined) transpatial cultural memory.

African American religiosity does not only comprise black Christianity and Black Muslims. After abolition, but mainly starting with the 20th century, the monolithic position of Christianity was shattered and religious diversity and religious pluralism came to characterize African American religiosity. Black Jews, for instance, clustered in The Church of God and Saints of Christ, or the Original Hebrew Israelite Nation.²¹ Religious cults such as Father Divine were striving in the first half of the 20th century.²² Furthermore, African religions gained ground. Root doctors and conjuring were inherent in African and slave culture,²³ but voodoo has survived to flourish even today in the New Orleans region. Voodoo has been a means of cultural implosion and a political device especially in Haiti, where Europeans dominated well into the 20th century, so much so that in 1987 voodoo became Haiti’s national religion.²⁴ Cults and tribal religions have not taken ground in the African American community, though these forms of religiosity have contributed to a significant extent to the African American cultural heritage. Only two religious forms can claim a significant number of followers: the Black Church and the Black Muslims.

The Black Church and “Black Sacred Cosmos”

While the importance of the Black church in the construction of black cultural identity is beyond doubt, it is not at all easy to determine what is meant by the Black Church *per se*. Just as there are different forms of African American religiosity, African American Christianity cannot be treated as a single homogeneous entity, either.

¹⁹ Gunnar MYRDAL: *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, New York and London, Harper and Brothers, 1942, 928.

²⁰ LEVINE: *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 444.

²¹ BAER and SINGER: *Toward a Typology of Black Sectarianism*, 266.

²² see Jill WATTS: *God, Harlem U. S. A.: The Father Divine Story*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1995, x.

²³ Yvonne P. CHIREAU: *Black Magic: Religion and the African American Conjuring Tradition*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2003, 21.

²⁴ see Gerdes FLEURANT and Michel CLAUDINE: *Vodou*, in *Microsoft Encarta Africana Third Edition*. CD-ROM. Microsoft Corporation, 1998–2000.

One has to distinguish between institutional forms and non-institutional, i. e., folk religious phenomena. There are regional differences as well as denominational diversity. Most importantly, the different churches take different attitudes toward their societal roles.

Hart M. Nelsen and Anne Kusener Nelsen describe ultimately three models, the assimilation-isolation, the compensatory models to characterize the relationship of African American churches to society,²⁵ and the ethnic community–prophetic model²⁶ to emphasize the church as “a base for building a sense of ethnic identity and a community of interest among its members”.²⁷ Based on Nelsen and Nelsen’s last model, C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya establish their own, the dialectic model²⁸ to illuminate the dialectic tension within the Black Church that emerge between priestly and prophetic functions; other-worldly and this-worldly orientations; universalism and particularism; the communal and the privatistic; charismatic and bureaucratic; resistance and accommodation.²⁹ Importantly, Nelsen and Nelsen’s last model and Lincoln and Mamiya’s models conceptualize the Black Church as an autonomous cultural institution with a primary focus on African American culture and not on the racial binary. Another classification lays emphasis on the conduct of the pastor of the particular church. Forrest E. Harris offers four models: he distinguishes between pastoral, prophetic, reformist, and nationalistic churches.³⁰ Andrew Billingsley gives a trifold differentiation based on the degree of social activism in the specific church, distinguishing between conservative churches, moderate, and activist churches.³¹

If one is to establish a common denominator, it evolves through the genealogy of African American Christianity depicting a cultural universe. It includes what W. E. B. DuBois delineated as the three major constituents: the preacher, the frenzy, and the music.³² Indeed, the preacher’s oratory, the dramatic treatment of the subject matter, and the central position in the liturgy as well as in the life of the community; the ecstatic feature of the African American worship; and – perhaps the most African feature for DuBois – the spiritual-bred gospel music emphasizing both the individuality and communality of the worship through the juxtaposition of solo and choral music reminiscent of West African antiphonal pattern³³ still cover the Black church remarkably well today.

²⁵ Hart M. NELSEN and Anne KUSENER NELSEN: *Black Church in the Sixties*, Lexington, The University Press of Kentucky, 1975, 9.

²⁶ NELSEN and KUSENER NELSEN: *Black Church in the Sixties*, 8–9.

²⁷ NELSEN and KUSENER NELSEN: *Black Church in the Sixties*, 11.

²⁸ C. Eric LINCOLN and Lawrence H. MAMIYA: *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1990, 11.

²⁹ LINCOLN and MAMIYA: *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 12–14.

³⁰ Forrest E. HARRIS, Sr.: *Ministry for Social Crisis*, Macon, Mercer University Press, 1993, 93.

³¹ BILLINGSLEY: *Mighty Like a River*, 185.

³² W.E.B. DuBois: *The Souls of Black Folk*, New York, Dover, 1994, 116.

³³ Molefi Kete ASANTE: *The Afrocentric Idea*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1987, 92.

As elaborated on before, African American religiosity cannot be separated from the broader context, that is, white Christianity and white culture in general. Interaction between the two cultures delineates involuntary interaction and deliberate appropriation taking place simultaneously for the simple reason that a relevant number of African Americans and whites lived in one conglomerate in the South during the time of slavery and until the first decades of the 20th century, and not separated in the first place, for example, in slave quarters. Even if there were separate cultural practices, a hermeneutical separation was an impossibility: cultural interaction was inevitable. In fact, until the end of the 18th century when African Americans began to establish their own churches, converted African Americans and whites attended the same churches, even if not as equals. This granted African Americans patterns of liturgy, theological teaching, and denominational/institutional particulars – while it also provided a prime tool for slave-owners to achieve and maintain docility. Besides, slaves also integrated, as Levine points out, European folk beliefs analogous to African convictions into their worldview.³⁴

The ultimate commonality between African American churches is, without doubt, the experience of a minority position and, with that, the experience of slavery. Chattel slavery meant for African Americans human debasement and constant brutalization. Beyond that, however, the experience of slavery developed a unique strategy of cultural implosion with which the enslaved could retain their humanity and develop a culture on their own. It was valid for their institutions, too. The Black Church became the token of cultural revitalization, social activism, and political mobilization. For long the church was for African Americans the only societal space, which allowed African Americans to act as agents, thus the only frame of liberation individually as well as collectively. As Aldon Morris notes, the black church was the “ideological framework through which passive attitudes were transformed into a collective consciousness supportive of collective action.”³⁵ It is especially plausible in the 20th century when African Americans formed other, more politically aware organizations such as Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA; founded in 1914) or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP; founded in 1909). In the peculiar institution, however, the church emplaced in a subversive web of power represented the only relatively autonomous segment for African Americans. Thus the church was not only an ideological framework but, in Adolph Reed’s words, “the spiritual and institutional adoption of Afro-Americans to an apparently inexorable context of subordination and dispossession.”³⁶

The African American theologian, C. Eric Lincoln describes African American culture and religiosity as the “Black Sacred Cosmos”, which has a spiritual and a public realm.³⁷ His insight establishes a dialectic in the function of which the Black

³⁴ LEVINE: *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 60.

³⁵ qtd. in LINCOLN and MAMIYA: *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 165.

³⁶ qtd. in HARRIS: *Ministry for Social Crisis*, 44.

³⁷ LINCOLN: Introduction, xix.

Church can be approached in depth as both realms, the public, e.g., social activism, and the spiritual, e.g., the church service, bear distinctively African American characteristics. In many respects, the social commitment of/in the black church to the African American community leads back to Africa, as “basic to the African heritage is the emphasis on togetherness”.³⁸ However, in the times of slavery social commitment could only be realized with limitation. Lincoln and Mamiya explain that at an early stage “the survival strategy in the everyday economic life of black people was just to get by or ‘surviving’ one at a time”³⁹ – one reason why the Black Church has been charged with otherworldliness. Quite the contrary, however, the centripetality attested in the black community and the church can be taken as a clear sign of adaptation and appropriation that undoubtedly has undergirded the social awareness the church. For Melvin D. Williams, this shows the human imperative that “[. . .] all human groups attempt to structure life so that they can perceive and experience pleasure, meaning, and reward” and concludes that “Blacks have traditionally achieved this by intensive interaction”.⁴⁰ Social activism evolved, in this way, through “conscientisation”⁴¹ that made African Americans realize the potential of ministry as “a liberating [political] activity that forms an inclusive community of non-racism, non-sexism, and non-classism”.⁴²

The doctrinal differences between black denominations may blur the spiritual side of cultural implosion. Even though differences are to be observed in the theology between the various denominations [here I refer to the historical black denominations: in the first place, the black Baptists, the African Methodist Episcopal church (A. M. E.), and the black Pentecostals], in all of them at least some of the expressions of African American spirituality can be detected such as the emphasis on emotionality, the intensity of worship, the magnitude of volume, or the liberty of motion, referring, beyond the “text-context application”, i. e., the application of the Scripture to everyday situations⁴³ to a “performance style”.⁴⁴ One of the most typical characteristic element of the “cultural tool kit”⁴⁵ is the call-and-response. It includes the responsive reading of the Bible, during which the pastor reads one part and the audience answers by reading the next. Primarily, it refers to the dialogue between the pastor using a “spiritualized language”⁴⁶ and the congregation in the delivery of the

³⁸ J. Deotis ROBERTS: *The Prophethood of Black Believers: An African American Political Theology for Ministry*, Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 1994, 100.

³⁹ LINCOLN and MAMIYA: *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 240.

⁴⁰ Melvin D. WILLIAMS: *Community in a Black Pentecostal Church*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974, 12.

⁴¹ HARRIS: *Ministry for Social Crisis*, 41.

⁴² HARRIS: *Ministry for Social Crisis*, 43.

⁴³ Albert J. RABOTEAU: *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African-American Religious History*, Boston, Beacon, 1995, 143.

⁴⁴ RABOTEAU: *A Fire in the Bones*, 143.

⁴⁵ Sandra L. BARNES: *Black Church Culture and Community Action*, *Social Forces*, 84, 2005/2, 970.

⁴⁶ Gerald Lamont THOMAS: *African American Preaching: The Contribution of Dr. Gardner C. Taylor*, New York, Peter Lang, 2004, 49.

message, during which the pastor often descends among the worshippers. Rooted in pervasive folk traditions, these types of services maintain such elements as the building up of tension during the sermon, often with the pastor singing the sermon⁴⁷ and the altar call at the end of the service – elements and devices to “create temporary release from ‘troubles of this world’.”⁴⁸ Simultaneously, believers oftentimes work themselves up into an ecstatic dance. Music in black churches representing “scriptural redaction based on the African American experience”⁴⁹ is, in general, the binding element between the constituents of the liturgy, penetrating all aspects of the service. Jon Michael Spencer calls attention to the importance of the rhythm in all aspects of the life of African Americans, thus in their churches, too. He contends that rhythm affected their life so much that even their language has become musicalized.⁵⁰

In all this, the spiritual and public realm of the individual churches does not work toward divergence. In fact, the doctrinal differences between the denominations as well as differences in piety do not prove relevant from the point of cultural authentication. Eric C. Lincoln’s and Lawrence H. Mamiya’s concept of the “Black Sacred Cosmos” illuminates that cultural implosion is a phenomenon emerging on the basis of a common heritage and rendered consciously centripetal and conceptualized in contrast to whites.

Conclusion

In the 19th century, African American conception of black Christian identity incorporated a messianistic aspect, “a moral authority”.⁵¹ African Americans transcended the Gospel to refer to transcendence and the here-and-now. As Ron Rhodes points out, Jesus was conceptualized as the Savior and a “fellow sufferer” and the Paradise denoted for them the afterlife as well as the liberation from the bondage of slavery.⁵² The African American subject has thus rejected religious colonization and developed a genuine sense of God that has always reflected the African American sense of identity – even if in “an introspective mood”.⁵³

In the 20th century, African American identity was problematized with societal integration in focus. In contrast to the Black Muslim alternative, the NAACP leadership including black mainstream thinkers and the clergy sought equal citizenship

⁴⁷ RABOTEAU: *A Fire in the Bones*, 144.

⁴⁸ THOMAS: *African American Preaching*, 49.

⁴⁹ BARNES: *Black Church Culture and Community Action*, 970.

⁵⁰ Jon Michael SPENCER: *The Rhythms of Black Folks*, in Alonzo JOHNSON and Paul JERSILD (eds.): *‘Ain’t Gonna Lay My ‘Ligion Down’*: *African American Religion in the South*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1996, 43.

⁵¹ RABOTEAU: *A Fire in the Bones*, 63.

⁵² Ron RHODES: *Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience*, in *Reasoning from the Scriptures Ministries*. <www.home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/BlackTheology.html>. 12 Jan. 2015, par. 12–13.

⁵³ J. Deotis ROBERTS: *Contextual Theology: Liberation and Indigenization*, *Christian Century*, January 28, 1976, 64–68. <<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1843>>. 12 Jan. 2015, par. 2.

in the first place through legal desegregation,⁵⁴ for example, of public facilities.⁵⁵ In fact, until the 1960s culture was not overtly employed in the political struggle for civil rights. It was then that cultural projection was employed increasingly as a tool and as the goal of self-assertion, as the black response concentrated on the cultural self. (Christian) culture became the cohesive device in political mobilization as well as the continuing explanation of moral authority. At the same time, culture became conveyed as a token of difference, while shared humanity remained the common denominator for reconciliation.

Authentication of black identity has evolved in strong connection with the black church, signifying an authentic black institution – the public realm – as well as the node of black spirituality encompassing both folk religious and theological entities. Roberts, too, likes to make the distinction between black folk theology and formal, systematic black theology.⁵⁶ This distinction is important in that it reveals a tradition of a distinctive African American folk religiosity with African roots and with a tradition of methodology such as the self-help organizations or spiritual liberation. Beyond the persistence of distinction between black and white on a religious scale, however, the conscientization of the folk starting in the 19th century and peaking in formal black theology in the 20th does not mark transpatiality of an (imagined) cultural memory as among Black Muslims, but an emerging religio-cultural stability within/without the black church deriving from the embracement of a black cultural identity.

⁵⁴ Gilbert JONAS: *Freedom's Sword: The NAACP and the Struggle against Racism in America, 1909-1969*, New York, Routledge, 2005, 32.

⁵⁵ JONAS: *Freedom's Sword*, 176.

⁵⁶ ROBERTS: *The Prophethood of Black Believers*, 13.



Nadia Marais

SAVING MARRIAGE? THE SEXUALITY DEBATE IN THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA*

* Draft paper presented at the Joint Stellenbosch-Glasgow Conference Series (24 March 2017), with the theme “Reformed Communities in Changing Societies: Dealing with Conflict and Change”. The title of the paper presented there was “Love and Marriage? Dealing with conflict and change within the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa.” This paper was thereafter also presented as an Erasmus guest lecture at Sárospataki Református Teológiai Akadémia in Hungary (4 May 2017). My sincere thanks to Karen Minnaar at the Dutch Reformed Church’s Archive in Stellenbosch, for her help in finding decisions in the archived material relating to the church’s decisions pertaining to so-called ‘mixed marriage’ (“gemengde huwelike”). My arguments and evaluations of the church’s decisions are, of course, my own.

Introduction

The well-known South African comedian Trevor Noah, whose father is Swiss and whose mother is Xhosa, jokes that he was ‘born a crime’ – this is also the title of his autobiography¹ –, which calls to mind two of the central apartheid laws of pre-1994 South Africa, namely the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (first passed by the South African parliament in 1949) and the Immorality Act (first passed by the South African parliament in 1950).² This is a well-known part of South Africa’s apartheid past, and two of the most infamous laws that would give form to the apartheid government’s policy of segregation and separation.³ What is perhaps lesser known is the role that Afrikaans churches – and in particular the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa, also known as the NG Kerk – would play in the birth of these two laws. And what is of interest for me, in this paper, is the Dutch Reformed Church’s changed and changing theological portrayals (in official policy documents and synodical decisions) of marriage – particularly within the intense conflict over same sex relationships that the church faces.

¹ Cf. Trevor NOAH: *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*, New York, Spiegel & Grau, 2016.

² W. L. von R. SCHOLTZ: Die rol van politieke opvattinge en sosiaal-ekonomiese faktore in die ontstaan van die wette, In Etienne De VILLIERS – Johann KINGHORN (eds.): *Op die Skaal: Gemengde huwelike en ontug*, Kaapstad, Tafelberg Uitgewers, 1984 (11–28), 11.

³ Murray H. COETZEE – Ernst M. CONRADIE: Apartheid as Quasi-Soteriology: The Remaining Lure and Threat, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 138, 2010 (112–123), 119.

#liefdeisliefde?⁴ The debate on (homo)sexuality in the Dutch Reformed Church

The Dutch Reformed Church is in the midst of an intense debate about sexuality, as are many churches – and, indeed, Reformed communities – across the world. It is a debate deeply marked by the challenge of dealing with conflict and change, with as yet no resolution to the conflict in sight. At the recent General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (Leipzig, 29 June to 7 July 2017), a recommendation on the discussion of communion and sexuality – which would request “dialogue and discernment... in a spirit of consensus building where there are no winners and losers, where no one is excluded, where all are protected and where mutual challenge, mutual accountability, and grace become key values” – served. However, around the reference to ‘sexuality’, a number of amendments were proposed and debated; including a suggestion to change the reference from ‘sexuality’ to ‘sexual diversity’. Eventually the reference to ‘sexual’ was removed altogether, and only the reference to ‘diversity’ remained. The very mention of ‘sexuality’ was thereby removed from a recommendation that was intended to enable discussion of sexuality in Reformed churches. This already illustrated the complexity of talking about sexuality in churches.

In the Dutch Reformed Church, the debate about sexuality would start almost 30 years ago, in 1986, just as the debate on race relations in apartheid South Africa would reach a climax. In fact, 1986 would prove to be a decisive theological turning point for the Dutch Reformed Church. Not only would the Belhar Confession be officially adopted by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in that year, or the Kairos Document⁵ – with the significant subtitle “a challenge to the church” – be published, or the Dutch Reformed Church distance herself from (the application of) apartheid for the first time, but this would also be the year in which homosexuality would first appear on the agenda of the Dutch Reformed Church.

At the General Synod of 1986 a commissioned report on homosexuality, entitled *Homoseksualiteit: Wat sê die kerk?* (homosexuality: what does the church say?), the Dutch Reformed Church would admit to the reality of homosexuality – but would judge homosexuality to be a deviant form of sexuality (“n afwykende vorm van seksualiteit”), and ‘homosexual practices’ and homosexual relationships as against the will of God.⁶ A number of decisions in 1998, 2002 and 2004 would provide

⁴ The social media handle #liefdeisliefde (or #loveislove) would be used throughout the 2015 and 2016 debates in order to lobby for the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa’s official recognition of same sex relationships. However, not only on social media – and with the support of a major faith-based NGO, with the name *Inclusive and Affirming Ministries* (IAM) – for supporters of the 2015 decision would also attend the 2016 General Synod wearing t-shirts on which this slogan would be printed. For more information on this organisation, see their website at <http://iam.org.za/>.

⁵ *The Kairos Document: Challenge to the church* (revised second edition), A theological comment on the political crisis in South Africa, Johannesburg, Skotaville Publishers, 1986.

⁶ *Die NG Kerk: Die pad na selfdegeslagverhoudings*, Report commissioned by the Dutch Reformed Church’s General Synod of 2015 and prepared by the task team for doctrine and life

guidance on a variety of matters relating to the church's debate on (homo)sexuality, including pastoral care and counselling, the authority and interpretation of the Bible, and (sexual) ethics.⁷

Yet it would be the decisions of 2007 that would indicate the most decisive departure from the church's 1986 view of homosexuality, moving from the conviction that homosexuality constitutes a deviant form of sexuality to acceptance of homosexual members into the church (albeit begrudgingly, as acceptance 'in spite of sexuality').⁸ An important impetus behind the discussion at the 2007 General Synod would be the legalisation of same-sex marriage in South Africa in 2006, when the Civil Union Act was passed by parliament. The intense conflict over homosexuality, within the General Synod of 2007, would finally require the intervention of the

(compiled by Ben du Toit), unpublished, 2015, 4–5; cf. also *Handelinge van die Algemene Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika* (proceedings of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 1986, 355–363, 672.

⁷ A brief description of the church's debate on (homo)sexuality between 1986 and 2007 follows. After 1986's decision it would only be some years later, in 1998, that homosexuality again appears on the agenda of the General Synod, by request of the Cape Synod and in particular in a discussion of another commissioned report on homosexuality, entitled *Die Pastoraat aan Homoseksuele Lidmate* (pastoral care for homosexual church members). The 1986 decision, namely that homosexuality is a deviant form of sexuality, would stand but greater emphasis would be placed on pastoral care and the recognition of the human dignity of all people (*Die pad na selfdegeslagverhoudings*, 4,6). This would lead to the insight, in 2002, that ethics – and thereby the interpretation of biblical texts as basis for a sexual ethics – would require attention, and the synodical task team for doctrine and life would receive the brief to provide the next meeting of the General Synod with a report on sexuality, and an ethical approach to homosexuality in particular (*Die pad na selfdegeslagverhoudings*, 4,6). At this same meeting of the General Synod, in 2002, the Dutch Reformed Church would distance itself from the 1986 decision (as well as the report that served at that particular synod) and would declare itself open to the possibility of a new, revised decision at the next synod (*Die pad na selfdegeslagverhoudings*, 7). At the General Synod of 2004 (1) the authority and interpretation of the Bible would become a central point of focus, and (2) the synod would apologise for any and all pain and injustice experienced due to unloving and unkind behaviour of the Dutch Reformed Church toward gay members of the church and their families (*Die pad na selfdegeslagverhoudings*, 4,11). In the 2004 decision on homosexuality, which replaces the decision of 1986, marriage is still only understood as the relationship between one man and one woman, but the reality of homosexual relationships – and the love of God as (only) basis for membership within the Dutch Reformed Church – is acknowledged (albeit not without outspoken critique against 'heterosexual as well as homosexual promiscuity') (*Die pad na selfdegeslagverhoudings*, 11).

⁸ However, the task team that was given the task of compiling a report on homosexuality – and which included gay church members – was completely divided with regards to their theological views, hermeneutical approaches, and ultimately the formal recommendations presented to the synod. For this reason a report with two addenda were submitted to the General Synod of 2007, wherein one group asked for the full inclusion and acceptance of homosexual members into the Dutch Reformed Church, and another group argued for a(n additional) celibacy requirement for all homosexual members (because of the view that homosexuality can ultimately be 'cured' or 'corrected'). (*Die pad na selfdegeslagverhoudings*, 15).

so-called ten moderators – moderators of the various regional synods as well as the moderator of the General Synod – in order to formulate a proposal of compromise, comprising of various recommendations received from the task team responsible for the report on homosexuality that would serve before the synod. The General Synod would accept the proposal of the moderators at this meeting. However, two central points held this delicate decision together: (1) that *only* the union between one man and one woman is regarded as a marriage (which means, the decision states clearly, that same sex unions and marriages cannot be considered as ‘alternatives to marriage’ (“dat... homoseksuele verbintenisse en huwelike nie as ‘n alternatief vir die huwelik aanvaar kan word nie”), and (2) that *only* homosexual candidates for ministry who ‘practice a celibate lifestyle’ (“wat ‘n selibate lewenstyl beoefen”) will be allowed into ministry.⁹

In 2015 the General Synod would – after much debate, many recommendations and finally two major proposals on the table (that again articulates the two positions reflected in the 2007 report, namely for and against official church recognition and support of same sex relationships) – decide to recognise ‘the status of civil unions between persons of the same gender that is characterised by love and faithfulness’ (“die status van burgerlike verbintenisse van persone van dieselfde geslag wat gekenmerk word deur liefde en trou”) and grant permission to ordained ministers to confirm such unions.¹⁰

⁹ *Die pad na selfdegeslagverhoudings*, 17; cf. also *Handelinge van die Algemene Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika* (proceedings of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 2007, 110. Available: <http://www.ngkerk.org.za/sites/default/files/Uploads/Handelinge%202007%20%20%28C-E%29%20p83-p192%20Notule%20Verslae%20Tydelike%20Kommissie%20Groetboodskappe.pdf>. This would mean, as became evident in the application of this decision (particularly within the various faculties of theology where candidates for ministry in the Dutch Reformed Church would be trained), that a deeply inconsistent, untenable, and unsustainable situation arose within the church: namely, (1) that church members are neither allowed to be in sexual relationships with a person of the same gender, nor allowed to marry a person of the same gender; and (2) that church members are allowed full access to the sacraments and offices of the church, *except* the office of minister – which has the additional requirement of celibacy, in the case of homosexual candidates for ministry. At the General Synod of 2013 there would be an attempt to correct this imbalance in requirements for access to ministry and ordination, by requesting further study about the status of same sex relationships and by stipulating that homosexual and heterosexual students that are preparing themselves for ministry in the Dutch Reformed Church are required to hold to the same Christian-ethical standards in availing themselves for legitimisation (*Die pad na selfdegeslagverhoudings*, 15-16; cf. also *Handelinge van die Algemene Sinode*, 2013, 47).

¹⁰ *Die pad na selfdegeslagverhoudings*, 17; cf. also *Handelinge van die Algemene Sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika* (proceedings of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 2015, 40. Available: <http://www.ngkerk.org.za/sites/default/files/Uploads/VOLLEDIGE-HANDELINGE-ALGEMENE-SINODE-2015.pdf>. The decision upholds previous definitions of marriage as only the union between one man and one woman, and would therefore not fundamentally change the official definition given to marriage, but merely provided official (church) recognition to

In 2016, this decision was, however, recalled on a technical point – after an extensive church legal process was followed to invite appeals, petitions, recommendations, and requests for revision of the 2015 decision. A special synod was held at the end of 2016 in order to deal with the various submissions – which comprised of more than 800 pages! – in response to the 2015 decision. Many rounds of letters and correspondence followed directly after the 2015 General Synod, when the executive of the synod (the “Algemene Sinode Moderamen”) decided to suspend any and all executions of the 2015 decision on same sex relationships. The suspension was in place until the recalling of this decision in 2016. The decision of 2016 reinstated the celibacy requirement for homosexual ministers and denied the theological legitimacy (and indeed, possibility) of same sex marriage.

Yet the question would eventually arise, already at the 2015 General Synod: With all of this talk of marriage and the repeated emphasis placed on the desirability of marriage, how has the Dutch Reformed Church portrayed marriage in her own past discussions? Is there anything to be learnt from our own history – perhaps even our own theological fault lines in this regard?

In the midst of the 2015 debate on same sex relationships, I became intrigued by these questions, and in particular by the previous round of debates about marriage in the Dutch Reformed Church – namely, so-called mixed marriage, which the church vehemently opposed throughout the early part of the 20th century. Could the history of theological reflection on marriage amidst the debate on mixed marriage become a resource for future reflections on marriage amidst the debate on same sex marriage? Are there any possibilities for learning from the marriage rhetoric, and trajectory of theological arguments that underlies the Dutch Reformed Church’s official views on marriage, that could at the very least help us *avoid* repeating historical mistakes? And, even more worryingly: has the Dutch Reformed Church’s theological grounding of marriage changed at all since its support of the prohibition of mixed marriage in from the 1930’s to the 1980’s – or would the theological presuppositions remain the same, by simply replacing the category of race with the category of gender?

Models of marriage?¹¹ From mixed marriage to same sex marriage

The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa’s support for the apartheid policy of

civil unions between persons of the same gender that South African law allows. While the church in reality did no more than admit to the reality of civil unions in South Africa (the definition and requirements for marriage remained unchanged), an important change involved the removal of the celibacy clause from the requirements put toward homosexual candidates for ministry.

¹¹ John Witte has pointed out that marriage itself has taken on various forms or models throughout different church traditions including: (1) a Catholic sacramental model, (2) a Lutheran social estate model, (3) a Calvinistic covenantal model, (4) an Anglican commonwealth model, and (5) an Enlightenment contractarian model (John WITTE Jr.: *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion and Law in the Western Tradition*, Louisville, Kentucky, Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, 2–12). These have provided a “rich and diverse Western theological heritage

the National Party is well-known.¹² For this reason – and because there are simply too many aspects, arguments and analyses to attend to in order to do any discussion of apartheid and anti-apartheid theologies in the Dutch Reformed Church justice – I will not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of anything that falls outside of the scope of this paper. Much of what can be said about the Dutch Reformed Church and her theological justification of apartheid has been written and has been said by theologians far more involved and experienced in the debates around such policy documents as *Ras, Volk en Nasie* (officially adopted in 1974, revised and re-adopted in 1978)¹³ and *Kerk en Samelewing* (officially adopted in 1986, revised and re-adopted in 1990)¹⁴ than I.¹⁵

of marriage” that influences our debates on marriage today, argues Witte (WITTE: *From Sacrament to Contract*, 15).

¹² See, for instance, the collection of essays edited by Johann KINGHORN, entitled *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid* (the Dutch Reformed Church and Apartheid) (Pretoria, Macmillan Suid-Afrika, 1986); the World Alliance of Reformed Churches’ analysis of church relations in South Africa entitled *Farewell to Apartheid? Church Relations in South Africa* (Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches 25, the WARC Consultation in South Africa, 1–5 March 1993 in Johannesburg, edited by Páraic RÉAMONN, Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1994); and the Dutch Reformed Church’s own description of its journey with apartheid, edited by Frits GAUM and entitled *Die Verhaal van die Ned. Geref. Kerk se Reis met Apartheid, 1960-1994, ‘n Getuïenis en ‘n belydenis* (Opgestel in opdrag van die Algemene Sinodale Kommissie van die Ned. Geref. Kerk., Wellington, Hugenote-Uitgewers, 1997).

¹³ *Ras, Volk en Nasie en volkeverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif* (revised and reprinted in 1978), Kaapstad, Nasionale Pers, 1974. The English version of this document was published two years later, under the title *Human relations and the South African scene in the light of Scripture*, Cape Town, National Book Printers, 1976.

¹⁴ *Kerk en Samelewing – ‘n Getuïenis van die Ned. Geref. Kerk* (revised and reprinted in 1990), Bloemfontein, NG Sendingpers, 1986.

¹⁵ See, for instance, the doctoral dissertation of Johan VAN DER MERWE (who is Professor in Church Law and Church History at the University of Pretoria as well as former elected church law official of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church), entitled *Ras, Volk en Nasie en Kerk en Samelewing as beleidstukke van die Ned. Geref. Kerk – ‘n kerkhistoriese studie* (the *Human Relations and Church and Society* documents as policy documents of the Dutch Reformed Church – a church-historical study) (1990). An English article based on his dissertation is published in the collection of essays entitled *Reformed Churches in South Africa and the Struggle for Justice* (cf. Johan VAN DER MERWE: The Dutch Reformed Church from *Ras, Volk en Nasie* to *Kerk en Samelewing*, in Mary-Anne PLAATJIES-VAN HUFFEL – Robert R. VOSLOO (eds.): *Reformed Churches in South Africa and the Struggle for Justice: Remembering 1960–1990*, Stellenbosch, SUN Press, 2013, 52–66). See also the impressive doctoral dissertation by Murray COETZEE, of the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology at Stellenbosch University, entitled *Die ‘kritiese stem’ teen apartheidsteologie in die Ned. Geref. Kerk (1905–1974) – ‘n Analise van die bydraes van Ben Marais en Beyers Naudé* (the ‘critical voice’ against apartheid theology in the Dutch Reformed Church (1905–1974) – An analysis of the contributions of Ben Marais and Beyers Naudé (Wellington, BybelMedia, 2011). And of course the South African theologian John DE GRUCHY’s classic book entitled *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, is an authoritative work for analyses of apartheid and anti-apartheid theologies (25th Anniversary Edition, with Steve de Gruchy, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Fortress Press, 2005).

The influence of the apartheid laws, especially after the National Party's victory in 1948 at the election polls, would be widely criticised by churches, also internationally – but welcomed and received with thanksgiving by the Dutch Reformed Church.¹⁶ Of the apartheid laws, those pertaining to mixed marriage were some of the most devastating.¹⁷ An important publication that would weigh the moral, political and social implications of the laws prohibiting mixed marriages and extra-marital sex appeared in 1984, aptly named *Op die Skaal* (on the scale), edited by the Dutch Reformed Church theologians Johann Kinghorn and Etienne de Villiers.¹⁸ The historical developments that gave rise to the respective laws – namely, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and Article 16 of the Immorality Act (1957) – is discussed at length herein, including that marriages between persons of different races were fairly widespread,¹⁹ especially in the Cape and especially before the 1930's. Although there would be sharp criticism against so-called mixed marriages in the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, no laws against marriage across racial lines would be passed. This would change in the 1930's, when Afrikaner nationalism would increase in intensity (particularly from 1933 to 1939) and, consequently, a sharp rise in requests for such laws would be seen – which would lead to the passing of the respective laws in 1949 and 1950.²⁰

¹⁶ COETZEE: *Die 'kritiese stem' teen apartheidsteologie in die Ned. Geref. Kerk*, 98.

¹⁷ COETZEE: *Die 'kritiese stem' teen apartheidsteologie in die Ned. Geref. Kerk*, 104. See also the chapter entitled "Mixed Marriages and Immorality Acts" in the book *Apartheid, Change and the NG Kerk* (J. H. P. SERFONTEIN, Pretoria, Taurus, 1982, 144–148), for a historical overview of the most important ecumenical discussions on the laws pertaining to mixed marriage.

¹⁸ Etienne DE VILLIERS – Johann KINGHORN (eds.): *Op die Skaal: Gemengde huwelike en ontug*, Kaapstad, Tafelberg Uitgewers, 1984.

¹⁹ W. L. von R. Scholtz points out that marriage between colonists and freed slaves were fairly common, particularly where both parties were Christian, even if such relationships were frowned upon. By one count between 7.2% and 9.2% of all marriages in the Cape before 1807 were so-called 'mixed marriages' (SCHOLTZ: *Die rol van politieke opvattinge*, 12). He argues that the official numbers with regards to mixed marriages confirms not only that racial integration was already limited *before* the passing of the laws on mixed marriage and sexual immorality, but that marriages between persons of different races would from the 1920's onwards decrease dramatically (SCHOLTZ: *op. cit.*, 21): from 1925 (0.9%) to 1930 (0.6%) to 1940 (0.4%) to 1945 (0.3%) the number of mixed marriages registered would decrease, within 20 years, rapidly.

²⁰ SCHOLTZ: *Die rol van politieke opvattinge*, 12–14. Scholtz attributes this to various factors, ranging from attempts to give new content to concepts like 'people' (volk) and 'nation' (nasie) and Afrikaner nationalism (particularly by young academics of the time that were deeply influenced by the idealism of fascism and national socialism in Europe) to the fear that poor white persons (so-called 'armblankes') will be integrated into multiracial communities and 'racial purity' will be compromised (1984a:14 – 15). See also John de Gruchy's description of the historical origins of the church struggle in his classic work, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 1–50.

The pressure on government came also from the so-called Afrikaans churches.²¹ From 1915 onwards,²² synods of the Dutch Reformed Church²³ would submit repeated requests that marriages between people of different races, and particularly between white and non-white, would be prohibited.²⁴ The Cape Synod would be particularly vocal in its requests that the government of the day prohibit so-called mixed marriages, also as the first synod to formally request this.²⁵ To this chorus of voices would be joined that of the Synod of the Free State.²⁶ Not only would these

²¹ Johann KINGHORN: Die belangrikste kerklike argumente en motiewe voor 1950, in DE VILLIERS and KINGHORN (eds.): *Op die Skaal*, (37–53), 37.

²² It is noteworthy that in 1917 the congress of the National Party, which by then had not yet won the general election, officially sided against the confirmation of racially mixed marriages (albeit without requesting that a law against mixed marriages be passed) (SCHOLTZ: Die rol van politieke opvattinge, 13). Moreover, although the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act is first passed in 1949 (shortly after the National Party would win the general election in 1948), it is also important to note that the Immorality Act would be passed long before 1950 and without much debate in parliament, already in 1927 (SCHOLTZ: *op. cit.*, 13–14).

²³ The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa only gained its autonomy from the Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands in 1824, and thereafter constituted its own synod (the so-called 'Cape Synod') to conduct its own affairs (DE GRUCHY: *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 3). By the 1920's the synods of the Dutch Reformed Church would comprise of four synods: the Cape Synod, the Transvaal Synod, the Natal Synod, and the Free State Synod. There would be no General Synod until its formation in 1962, so the decisions cited here necessarily are those that were taken by the four synods described above.

²⁴ Johan A. HEYNS: *Gemengde huwelike, n.d.*, available: verbumeteclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/download/915/1315 (16–28), 24; P. A. VERHOEF: *Matrimonium Mixtum, Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* 2 (3), 1961 (153–169), 153; SCHOLTZ: Die rol van politieke opvattinge, 13.

²⁵ *Handelinge van die sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika* (Kaapse sinode), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 1915, 28; *Handelinge van die sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika* (Kaapse sinode), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief 1936, 244; *Handelinge van die sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika* (Kaapse sinode), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 1940:155; *Handelinge van die sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika* (Kaapse sinode), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 1945, 353.

²⁶ Cf. *Handelinge van die sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika in die Oranje-Vrystaat* (Vrystaatse sinode), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 1940, 336, 443; *Handelinge van die sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika in die Oranje-Vrystaat* (Vrystaatse sinode), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 1948, 472. The exact decision, as formulated in the Afrikaans minutes of this synod's meeting in 1948, reads as follows:

"Die predikante van Bultfontein en Reitz stel voor en die Vergadering besluit:

'Aangesien daar jaarliks byna 100 gemengde Huwelike plaasvind.

Aangesien die selfbehoud van die Blanke beskawing daarmee tenseserste gemoeid is.

Aangesien die persone wat die gemengde Huwelike aangaan, gewoonlik buitekant die invloedseer van die Afrikaanse kerke om beweeg.

Aangesien tienduisende immigrante die land binnestroom en hulle minder krities sal staan teenoor die kleurskeidslyn, vanweë hulle onbekendheid met die Afrikaanse volkstradisie en volksaard.

Aangesien die kleurvermenging reeds 'n volksprobleem geword het. –

So versoek die H. E. Sinode die Hoog Edele Regering om wetgewing daar te stel wat gemengde Huwelike sal verbied.'

synods request that mixed marriages be prohibited, but also that extramarital sexual relations between white and non-white persons be prohibited.²⁷

The Dutch Reformed Church theologian Pieter Verhoef points out that the understanding of ‘mixed marriage’, until fairly recently (at the Dutch Reformed Church’s synod of 1834), would not be interpreted according to race but in terms of religious affiliation – primarily as the marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian.²⁸ He remarks that, in the official documentation of the Dutch Reformed Church, it is only from 1915 onwards that there is a consistent interpretation of mixed marriages as the marriage between persons of different races. It is, moreover, ‘a fact’ – he writes²⁹ – that the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (number 55 of 1949) is the ‘result of consistent pressure from the side of churches on government’. This would take place not only by way of synodical decisions, outlined above, but also by a delegation from the Afrikaans churches – including the Dutch Reformed Church – that would visit the Minister of Home Affairs, T. E. Dönges, on 18 February 1949 to implore him to present a law to parliament that would prohibit mixed marriages.³⁰ Another Dutch Reformed Church theologian (and previous moderator of

Hierdie besluit sal ook aan die leiers van alle politieke partye gestuur word.”

²⁷ *Handelinge van die sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika* (Kaapse sinode), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 1949, 29, 297. The exact decision, as formulated in the Afrikaans minutes of this synod’s meeting in 1949, reads as follows:

“In verband hiermee [gemengde huwelike] stel ds. P. W. Jordaan en oudl. J. G. du Toit voor en die Vergadering besluit dat die Sinode die dank en waardering van die Kerk aan die Regering oorbring vir sy moedige optrede teen gemengde huwelike; en verder beleefdlik versoek dat die Regering, ten einde rassevermenging in al sy vertakkinge aan bande te lê, die volgende stappe sal doen:

- (a) Wetgewing indien om ook buite-egtelike verkeer tussen blankes en nie-blankes te verbied;
- (b) Die segregasie van blankes, naturelle en kleurlinge in aparte woonbuurte so spoedig moontlik verpligtend te maak;
- (c) Die aanwakkering van ’n gesonde rassetrots by blanke en nie-blanke rasse in alle blanke en nie-blanke staatskole aanmoedig.”

²⁸ Verhoef is highly critical of the fact that a racial shift in interpretation became evident in reference to mixed marriage, instead of what he regards as the authoritative *church* and *spiritual* interpretations, wherein the ‘mix’ refers to a difference in church affiliation (in particular Reformed-Catholic) or religious affiliation (in particular Christian-Jewish) between spouses (VERHOEF: *Matrimonium Mixtum*, 153).

²⁹ VERHOEF: *Matrimonium Mixtum*, 153–154.

³⁰ VERHOEF: *Matrimonium Mixtum*, 154; footnote 2. This is also exactly what the minister would do, shortly after this visit. Scholtz writes that Dönges presented the act to parliament on 19 May 1949 and argued that the goal of this law would be to prevent the mixing of blood and to preserve racial purity as much as possible (the exact words used in his speech, in Afrikaans, is as follows: “Die doel van hierdie wetsontwerp is om soveel moontlik bloedvermenging teen te gaan en om soveel moontlik rassesuiverheid te bevorder”) (SCHOLTZ: *Die rol van politieke opvattinge*, 27; see, in particular, footnote 75). There is indeed reference, in the minutes of the Dutch Reformed Church’s Free State synod, to a meeting that has been organized with the First Minister, during which delegates insisted on a law that prohibits mixed marriage (cf. *Handelinge van die sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika in die Oranje-Vrystaat*, Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 1948, 129, 335).

the DRC's General Synod), Johan Heyns, points out that the Cottesloe Consultation (1960) would already criticise the Dutch Reformed Church's theological justification for the prohibition of mixed marriage, by stating that there are no Scriptural grounds for such a prohibition.³¹

However, it is in the description of marriage that this paper is particularly interested. Johan Heyns gives an exceptionally eloquent theological portrayal of marriage as 'the free and consistent loving commitment of two (believing) persons that fit together and complement each other' ("die vrye en blywende huweliksverbintenis... van twee bymekaar passende en mekaar aanvullende (gelowige) persone").³² Moreover, he clearly states – and in this seems to reflect the Dutch Reformed Church's conviction³³ – that the state cannot determine the meaning of marriage, even if it can (and should) intervene in organizing marriage by way of its laws.³⁴ But how is marriage itself portrayed?

³¹ HEYNS: *Gemengde huwelike*, 27; footnote 9; cf. also A. H. LÜCKHOFF: *Cottesloe*, Kaapstad, Tafelberg Uitgewers, 1978, 86 and E. DE VILLIERS: *Kerklike standpunte sedert die instelling van die wette*, in DE VILLIERS and KINGHORN (eds.): *Op die Skaal*, (54–77), 72. Heyns would make the point that a great variety of types of mixed marriages could be distinguished because differentiation between people can take place based on a variety of factors (HEYNS: *op. cit.*, 16). He differentiates between three types of mixed marriages, namely based on (1) church, (2) religion, and (3) race (HEYNS: *op. cit.*, 16). In each of these, he argues that homogenous marriages may indeed be easier and that the practical implications of different churches, religions and races – that may also include difference in other factors as well, such as worldviews, cultures, and social-societal backgrounds – may complicate a mixed marriage to the point where the lack of mutual fulfilment, belonging and flourishing of the partners may make such a marriage 'undesirable' (HEYNS: *op. cit.*, 22). Yet, he qualifies, it is not necessarily true that mixed marriage – and here he has in mind *racially* mixed marriage – has negative consequences, and is therefore undesirable; for this, he points out, is an extremely relative and completely historically determined view ("[d]it is 'n uiters relatiewe en volledig histories-bepaalde uitspraak") (HEYNS: *op. cit.*, 22). In short, he argues that *faith* becomes the primary and crucial motivation for the restriction or support for marriage – including mixed marriages (HEYNS: *op. cit.*, 21).

³² HEYNS: *Gemengde huwelike*, 21.

³³ In the minutes of a meeting of the Dutch Reformed Church's Transvaal synod in the 1940's, the synod expresses its disappointment following a decision of the Department of Home Affairs to regard the official confirmation of marriages as primarily a civil issue – which may or may not be followed by a church's blessing, as part of the wedding ceremony (*Handelinge van die sinode van die Nederduitse Hervormde of Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika*, "Verslag van die afgevaardigdes na die Raad van Kerke," (63–66), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 1944, 65). Herein marriage is described as 'not only a civil issue but also a church-religious, and therefore holy, commitment' ("[d]ie huwelik nie slegs 'n burgerlike saak is nie maar ook 'n kerklik-godsdienslike en daarom 'n Heilige") (*Ibid.*).

³⁴ HEYNS: *Gemengde huwelike*, 22–23. However, Heyns qualifies this remark by stating that governments should not intervene – and may not intervene – in the free choice of marriage partner by adult persons just because such persons may have different skin colours. He warns that, if the state should intervene unnecessarily and in an unjust manner, that this would be nothing less than discriminatory behaviour by government. In short, he argues that it is not the task of a government to protect the biological identity of a particular race or people. (HEYNS: *op. cit.*, 23)

Marriage, reads a report from 1945,³⁵ is a 'holy' and 'God-given institution' ("die huwelik [is] 'n instelling van God... [en] die Kerk... [is] getaak daarmee] om die heiligheid van die huwelik te beskerm"). The Dutch Reformed Church herself would admit, already in the policy document *Ras, Volk and Nasie* (1978), that the Bible "made no pronouncements either in favour of or against mixed marriage",³⁶ while still retaining the position in this particular document that mixed marriages were 'undesirable' ("ongewens") as well as 'impermissible' ("ongeoorloof").³⁷ Pieter Verhoef points out that delegates to these synods were apparently convinced about the 'non-salvatory consequences' ("onheilsame gevolge") of such marriages, and that convictions such as these formed the background to church discussions about the question of mixed marriage.³⁸

However, it would be exactly on this point that critics of apartheid theology, like Ben Marais and B. B. Keet, would invoke *soteriology* as the highest goal of theological endeavour and scriptural interpretation.³⁹ Direct theological directives concerning 'national, biological, economic and cultural matters'⁴⁰ – such as those that shaped the Dutch Reformed Church's debate on mixed marriage or same sex marriage – are therefore highly suspect if these do not account for the good news of the gospel and the gift of God's grace that is not thwarted by gender, race or sexual orientation.

Saving desire? The same sex debate as a soteriological dilemma

A recent publication on sexuality and a theology of desire has the intriguing title *Saving Desire*.⁴¹ Invoking soteriology in a theological portrayal of desire, as "a redemptive force" that expresses "the enlivening and enlightening experience of grace",⁴² is certainly – in the words of the introduction to the book – 'seductive'.⁴³ Jan-Olav Henriksen points out that desire is deeply soteriological, in that it is both *given* and

³⁵ *Handelinge van die sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika* (Kaapse sinode), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 1945, 63.

³⁶ SERFONTEIN: *Apartheid, Change and the NG Kerk*, 146.

³⁷ VAN DER MERWE: *Ras, Volk en Nasie en Kerk en Samelewing as beleidstukke van die Ned. Geref. Kerk*, 117; DE VILLIERS: *Kerklike standpunte sedert die instelling van die wette*, 64.

³⁸ VERHOEF: *Matrimonium Mixtum*, 154; cf. also *Handelinge van die sinode van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika* (Kaapse sinode), Stellenbosch, NG Kerk Argief, 1936, 244.

³⁹ DE VILLIERS: *Kerklike standpunte sedert die instelling van die wette*, 57–58.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ F. LeRon SHULTZ – Jan-Olav HENRIKSEN: *Saving Desire: The Seduction of Christian Theology*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011.

⁴² SHULTZ – HENRIKSEN: *Saving Desire*, vii.

⁴³ The intentional ambiguity behind the book's title involves "both rescuing the concept from its imprisonment within repressive, individualistic, and rationalistic categories as well as emphasizing the power of the phenomenon of desire for engendering human flourishing in relation to God" (SHULTZ – HENRIKSEN: *Saving Desire*, vii). Theological exploration is therefore 'seductive', by being both 'dangerous' and 'delightful', by which the editors of the book means that "[t]heology is interested in the origin, condition, and goal of desiring, in the infinite ground of the human experience of being-interested" (*Ibid.*).

*giving*⁴⁴ – and therein an expression of “God’s gifting of the good”⁴⁵ and oriented toward “God as the source of life”.⁴⁶ However, it is in God’s desire for human beings – not human beings’ desire for God – that the gift of grace is fully present.⁴⁷

The *ethical* fault lines in apartheid theology – and particularly the theological opposition to marriage between persons of different races – has been delineated and critiqued,⁴⁸ also in the Dutch Reformed Church’s own policy documents (such as *Kerk en Samelewing*, 1990⁴⁹). So too have the *biblical* justification of apartheid – and again, in particular the theological justification for the prohibition of mixed marriages – been critiqued.⁵⁰

However, the *doctrinal* landscape from which apartheid would be justified theologically would be equally important. The grammar patterns, the theological rhetoric, that justifies theological intolerance in terms of race, gender and sexual orientation must also be analysed – especially if the Dutch Reformed Church would be interested, in any way, in *not repeating a historical mistake*. Whereas the theological *sin* of apartheid would lie within the landscape of ethics – of an unjust system, of violence and acts of violation, of exploitation, of oppression – the theological *heresy* of apartheid would lie within the landscape of doctrine, and in particular the doctrine of salvation. Apartheid theology was condemned as a heresy by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Ottawa, 1982).⁵¹

It is exactly the insight that apartheid was about a distorted soteriology that would provide the theological heart for the church’s struggle against apartheid,⁵² and therein the recognition that “a position against apartheid was not a theological ‘extra’, but something at the heart of the gospel itself”.⁵³ The South African Reformed theologians Murray Coetzee and Ernst Conradie have convincingly argued that it was the portrayal and understanding of apartheid as ‘quasi-soteriology’ or ‘pseudo-gospel’

⁴⁴ SHULTZ – HENRIKSEN: *Saving Desire*, 1.

⁴⁵ SHULTZ – HENRIKSEN: *Saving Desire*, 14.

⁴⁶ SHULTZ – HENRIKSEN: *Saving Desire*, 30.

⁴⁷ SHULTZ – HENRIKSEN: *Saving Desire*, 29.

⁴⁸ Cf. for instance DE VILLIERS – KINGHORN: *Op die Skaal*, 121–146.

⁴⁹ *Kerk en Samelewing – ’n Getuienis van die Ned. Geref. Kerk* (revised and reprinted in 1990), Bloemfontein, NG Sendingspers, 1986.

⁵⁰ Cf. for instance HEYNS: *Gemengde huwelike*; VERHOEF: *Matrimonium Mixtum*; and more recently SAROJINI NADAR: *Sacred Sex, Sacred Text: Queering religious sexual scripts in transforming African societies*, Inaugural lecture (25 August 2016) of Professor Sarojini Nadar as Desmond Tutu Chair at the Faculty of Arts, University of the Western Cape, 2016.

⁵¹ See the WARC General Council’s statement on “Racism and South Africa” in this regard (adopted on 25 August 1982) (John W. DE GRUCHY – Charles VILLA-VICENCIO (eds.): *Apartheid is a Heresy*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1983, 168), and in particular Allan Boesak’s speech at this meeting in Ottawa (DE GRUCHY & VILLA-VICENCIO: *op. cit.*, 1).

⁵² Steve DE GRUCHY – Paul GERMOND: Introduction, in Paul GERMOND – Steve DE GRUCHY (eds.): *Aliens in the Household of God: Homosexuality and Christian faith in South Africa*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1997 (1–10), 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*; cf. also DE GRUCHY & VILLA-VICENCIO: *Apartheid is a Heresy*.

that required condemning the theological justification of apartheid as a heresy.⁵⁴ Yet they speak about the remaining threat and lure of natural theology, which has not disappeared with the condemnation of apartheid theology, because ‘apartheid habits’ have remained – and “may emerge in very different forms” wherever diversity or differences between people become the basis for irreconcilability, so that each group is encouraged to flourish “on their own”.⁵⁵ It is exactly to this assumption that the church struggle, including the Belhar Confession, would speak – namely, that “the reconciliation made possible through Jesus Christ” is “more fundamental than any other differences of race, class, culture, ethnicity, language, gender or sexual orientation”.⁵⁶ And yet exactly herein lies the tragedy of being church, even church that formed part of the struggle against apartheid, namely that

“this church, which fought a successful struggle against apartheid, nurtures within its bosom another fundamental and equally oppressive division: one that divides straight people from gay and lesbian people... [W]e in this church insist on creating a group of second-class citizens in God’s kingdom, strangers in the promised land, aliens in the household of God. If apartheid was such a sin, and its theological justification such a heresy, what does this mean to the way the church practises and justifies its rejection of gay and lesbian people? Is this not also sinful? Is the biblical and theological justification of this practice not a heresy?”⁵⁷

The questions raised here illustrate the same sex debate as a soteriological dilemma. For if “[t]he message of the gospel and the good news of God’s grace is that in Christ all have been made members and fellow citizens of the household of God”, that means that “there are no biblical or theological grounds on which people should be disinherited and made to be aliens in the household of God, because of their sexual orientation” – argues Steve de Gruchy and Paul Germond.⁵⁸ Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu pushes this point even further – he argues that the same sex debates in our churches are neither neutral, nor peripheral; for we too often dabble in natural

⁵⁴ COETZEE – CONRADIE: *Apartheid as Quasi-Soteriology*, 112–113; cf. also 117–123. Coetzee and Conradie explain (117) that it was the trust in apartheid, and in the system of apartheid and policy of segregation, that makes of apartheid a ‘pseudo-gospel’. Apartheid remains a lure, they point out (117–118), because it was concerned about the human flourishing of various cultural groups – and offered to ensure the well-being, peace, and prosperity of people (but Afrikaners in particular) “by separating them from one another as far as this may be possible.” The salvation that apartheid promised was therefore multilayered: (1) political (118), (2) military (118–119), (3) social (119–120), (4) cultural (120–122), as well as (5) ecclesial (122). Practically and strategically, “[a]partheid was indeed regarded as the only available means of ‘salvation’” (122).

⁵⁵ COETZEE – CONRADIE: *Apartheid as Quasi-Soteriology*, 122–123.

⁵⁶ COETZEE – CONRADIE: *Apartheid as Quasi-Soteriology*, 123.

⁵⁷ DE GRUCHY – GERMOND: *Introduction*, 2.

⁵⁸ DE GRUCHY – GERMOND: *Introduction*, 3.

theology, in what he calls “the ultimate blasphemy”: namely, “making the children of God doubt that they are children of God”. And in this, he writes,

“[t]he church of Jesus Christ, far from being inclusive and welcoming of all, has over and over again pushed many to the periphery; instead of being hospitable to all, it has made many of God’s children outcasts and pariahs on the basis of something which, like race or gender, they could do nothing about – their sexual orientation.”⁵⁹

In his well-known Rustenburg speech, wherein he would apologise for apartheid on behalf of the Dutch Reformed Church and all Afrikaners (in spite of not being part of the official Dutch Reformed Church delegation to the Rustenburg conference), Willie Jonker would point out that the church itself also had a critical role to fulfil in society if it is “to be inclusive in the sense that it knows no favouritism, but seeks the salvation and benefit of all”.⁶⁰ Exactly in his resistance to various forms of natural theology – as theology that contemplates God from other sources than the revealed truth in Christ, the gospel, or Scripture (including *ervaringsteologie* (experiential theology) and *volksteologie* (people’s theology))⁶¹ – the importance of theological reflection from the *locus* of soteriology would remind the church, and perhaps in particular Reformed communities in changing societies, that it is the ‘zero point’ of the grace of God which relativises all preferences – even those preferences that we may congratulate ourselves for!

Salvation, as the gracious initiative of God, is the source of Christian joy, happiness and flourishing.⁶² Flip Theron describes this as ‘the grace of the zero point’. This zero point is the point we reach where we place our confidence outside of ourselves and in God’s grace in Christ, explains Flip Theron.⁶³ This zero point therefore culminates, for Jonker, in the reality that we belong to Jesus.⁶⁴ This assurance and this reality is a source of infinite comfort (*oneindige troos*) for believers.⁶⁵ For Jonker, the joy and happiness of the gospel rests on the assurance and confidence with which we may trust God’s promises.⁶⁶ Flip Theron writes, in a sermon on comfort, that

⁵⁹ Desmond Mpilo TUTU: Foreword, in GERMOND – DE GRUCHY (eds.): *Aliens in the Household of God*.

⁶⁰ Willie D. JONKER: Understanding the Church Situation and Obstacles to Christian Witness in South Africa, in LOUW ALBERTS – FRANK CHIKANE (eds.): *The Road to Rustenburg: The Church looking forward to a new South Africa*, Cape Town, Struik Christian Books, 1991 (87–98), 96–97.

⁶¹ Dirkie J. SMIT, ‘Om saam met al die heiliges Christus te ken...’: Persoonlike indrukke van ‘n ekumeniese waarheidsoeke”, in ROBERT R. VOSLOO (ed.): *Remembering Theologians – Doing Theology, Collected Essays 5*, Stellenbosch, SUN Press, 2013 (265–285), 270.

⁶² Willie D. JONKER: *Uit Vrye Guns Alleen: Oor Uitverkiesing en Verbond*, Wegwysers in die Dogmatiek, Pretoria, NG Kerkboekhandel, 1989, 294.

⁶³ P. Flip THERON: Die genade van die nulpunt, in Willem Daniel JONKER – P. Flip THERON: *Vreemde Geregtheid: Oor die regverdiging uit genade alleen*, Kaapstad, NG Kerk-Uitgewers, 1983 (16–21), 19.

⁶⁴ Dirkie J. SMIT: Oordenking tydens gedenkdiens, Willem Daniel Jonker, 31 Augustus 2006, NG Stellenbosch-Welgelegen, Unpublished eulogy, 2006, 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ SMIT: Oordenking tydens gedenkdiens, Willem Daniel Jonker, 2.

‘comfort’ describes not only the entire content of the gospel (*’n troosryke evangelie*), but also the God rich in comfort (*die troosryke God*).⁶⁷ This wondrous comfort (*wonderbare troos*) is safeguarded in the conviction that we are kept safe in the hands and life of the triune God.⁶⁸

Conclusion

It is not altogether clear how a Reformed church, that decided for full inclusion of her homosexual members only to turn around such a decision one year later, can proceed from this conflicted space with theological integrity. It would certainly not be the first time that the Dutch Reformed Church would decide for greater inclusion, would be more open to self-critique, and allow a variety of theological perspectives to inform her self-understanding – only to back away from ‘a moment of truth’,⁶⁹ to become caught up in her own theological incapacity to realize the seriousness of the moment, to find refuge in the familiar theological comforts of creation orders and natural theology.⁷⁰ Such sudden reversals in crucial decisions are, after all, not new to the Dutch Reformed Church – indeed, the well-known Cottesloe Consultation of 1960 (which was organized by the World Council of Churches) itself should have been warning enough that the Dutch Reformed Church could and would reverse important decisions with serious implications, even after having committed herself to greater openness and inclusivity.

Perhaps this is what Jürgen Moltmann meant when he argued that Reformed churches commemorate, in 2017, ‘the unfinished Reformation’.⁷¹ In his address to the WCRC General Council’s meeting in Leipzig in 2017, Moltmann reminded delegates that the gospel is the gospel of life, that God is the living God, and that salvation is the fullness of life. “‘Fullness of life’ is that kind of vision of the future, reaching far beyond what is possible here –into eternal life”, he said.⁷² This, he writes elsewhere,⁷³ calls not only for a reformation of faith – but also for a reformation of hope. Perhaps, the unfinished Reformation may yet lead us to places that we would rather not be – perhaps not only into a reformation of faith, or a reformation of hope, but also into a reformation of love – and ultimately, a reformation of grace. How we deal with sexuality debates in our churches may yet reveal how unfinished we truly are.

⁶⁷ THERON: Die genade van die nulpunt, 16–17.

⁶⁸ SMIT: Oordenking tydens gedenkdiens, Willem Daniel Jonker, 4.

⁶⁹ Cf. G. Daan CLOETE – Dirkie J. SMIT: *A Moment of Truth: The Confession of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church 1982* (Afrikaans and English edition), Cape Town, Tafelberg Uitgewers, 1984.

⁷⁰ CLOETE – SMIT: *A Moment of Truth*, 127.

⁷¹ Jürgen MOLTSMANN – Steffen LÖSEL: The unfinished Reformation, *Theology Today* 74 (1), 2017, 10–21.

⁷² See <http://wcrch/news/the-living-god-challenges-death-and-destruction-jurgen-moltmann-tells-global-gathering-of-reformed-churches>. His full address will be published in a forthcoming edition of the *Reformed World*, which will be available later in 2017.

⁷³ MOLTSMANN – LÖSEL: The unfinished Reformation, 20.



MISCELLANEOUS • SONSTIGES

ROBERT EDSON BAILEY
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SOME REFLECTIONS ON LIFE AFTER DEATH¹

I do not propose to deal with every aspect of the concept of “Life After Death” as that would be quite difficult in such a short lecture. I will try to deal with several aspect in some detail and express some of the other relevant concepts briefly as part of the basis for other remarks on the theological and Biblical areas of the topic. I have spent much time on the Biblical matters of this, and this was my thesis subject at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland many years ago.

It is my belief that the “After” of Life after Death requires an understanding of the Biblical concepts of the nature of the human being, and of the meaning of Life and Death in the Bible. One can then turn to the attempt to deal with the “after”.

The Concept of Man

I will only state what my understanding is of the nature of the human in the Bible. I rely on the teachings of many Old Testament scholars such as H. W. Robinson, A. R. Johnson, J. Pederson and many others. In the Old Testament the human is a unity of personality. Man is an indissoluble unity of body and soul – somewhat like a glass of water. Glass without water is just an empty object, and water without the glass is an uncontained mess. Both are needed: body and soul. One describes the vehicle and the other the life force therein. Other terms as well as these two describe the human from various facets of his being. For example, soul emphasized man as an emotional and living being, an individual, while body (or flesh) describes the physical and weakness of the human and heart is used to describe the mental and will aspects of human existence. It is like trying to describe a building from various viewpoints – each one emphasizes one view of the whole. Man is a creation of God and the Spirit breathed into him not only brings life

¹ Inaugural lecture delivered on 11 September 2017 at the Sárospatak Reformed Theological Academy on the occasion of receiving honorary professorship.

(breath) but also provides the possibility of the essential relationship with God. Does anyone really believe that when Genesis 46:25ff. describes the journey of Jacob and his family as being 66 souls that Jacob was just travelling “light” and planned to pick up the bodies for them in Egypt?

This human, male and female, is not naturally immortal. Life has a beginning and an ending. Between these two boundaries of birth (conception) and death we live. The New Testament ideas of human nature agree for the most part with the Old Testament. Embodiment is not a dreadful necessity of human existence but the God given condition of our living existence and thus a future that requires resurrection is promised. Flesh is used to describe our weakness and sinful nature not because “materiality” is evil but to describe the complete human condition. Some sins are committed in the material sense (e.g., murder, stealing, et.al.) while others are not (such as hate, anger, lust, et.al.). Since all starts with the heart, we are urged to “guard it with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life”.

The Concept of “Life”

The conception of life in the New Testament is in many ways related to the Old Testament concept of life. “Life” is essentially a value statement, not a statement of just being alive in the physical sense of the term. That is to say, life is that which worth living. Correspondingly, death is seen as that which lessens life as well as ends it. Death cuts one off from values and contents of life. Thus, in many ways, the terms life and death are similar in both Testaments. However, the New Testament portrayal of God’s mighty act in Jesus Christ – His life, death and above all His resurrection – affects the New Testament concept in a vitally significant way.

In general, the New Testament idea of life can designate two related conceptions. On the one hand, life denotes life at its highest and best – life that is indeed worthy to be called “life”. This is frequently described by qualifying terms such as the word “eternal”, e.g. Jn. 17:3. Often ζωή is used by itself with the same meaning, e.g. Jn. 10:10. ζωή is also used to denote this present earthly life (e.g. Lk.16:25; Rom. 8:38). Life can, thus, both denote the life worth living – a true life, portraying the contrast between existence and vitality, and being “alive”. A major characteristic of life is that it requires time. Life needs time to grow and develop whether in the natural or spiritual areas. Life also has the characteristic of freedom of movement and development. Life is not pure temporal existence but must develop and move to achieve goals and content. A vital characteristic is Fellowship with God and also with one’s fellow humans or “kin-group”. To live is to live from, with and to God. God is the giver and preserver of life. The individual life is important but not in selfish sense. Only the individual can respond to the call of God to believe and obey. Yet this is accomplished in the community of faith and not in solitary isolation. The Biblical emphasis on life as embodiment means that future life will also require a body and thus affirms resurrection as our future destiny with the resurrection of Jesus as the “first fruits” (see 1 Corinthians 15). In the present time the believer has eternal life now

but its fullness awaits the resurrection. This life is embodied life. Both Testaments agree on this. Corporeal existence is affirmed by the Incarnation. Jesus is born as we were born, of woman, and lives as we live from infancy to adult. The affirmation of bodily existence is seen also in Jesus concern with the needs of human existence in eating, healing illness and injuries among other things. But he does not restrict His ministry to the physical but emphasizes the spiritual.

The Concept of Death

Much of the understanding about the nature of death is in relation to the concept of Life. If vitality belongs to life then impotence belongs to death, for example. Death is the negation of life. Death is the cessation of time. Death is thus the boundary placed on life by God. Death also means the end of movement and development. The time to act and believe is now. There may be no more time in which to act. Now, in this life must one work to achieve the goals of life. Further, death means the loss of community, but not just in this life but also in the afterlife if one has not acted to believe. The dead in the Old Testament are alone, solitary, isolated. They exist but do not live (e.g. Psalms 88:10; 86:13). Both Testaments portray death as a power – the power hostile to and opposed to God and life. As such death reduces life in things like sickness and oppression. Thus recovery from illness or injury is to live. A good example of this is seen in Joshua 5:8 where the men are circumcised and remained until “they lived”. In the New Testament death is taken seriously. It affects the whole human being. It is man who dies not just a part of him. Only when death is taken seriously does the New Testament teaching on death in general and the significance and meaning of the death of Jesus become intelligible.

We now will turn to the DEATH OF JESUS. I will start with a survey of some thoughts on the subject as stated by Prof. Oscar Cullmann in his book *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead* (1958). The starting point for Cullmann is the contrast between the death of Socrates and that of Jesus. Socrates goes to his death in complete peace and composure while conversing with his friends. It is a beautiful death in which nothing is seen of the terror of death. Death because it is the liberator (Savior) from the body is “the soul’s great friend”.² So Socrates teaches, and “so, in wonderful harmony with his teaching, he dies – this man who embodied the Greek world in its noblest form”.³

For Dr. Cullmann, the death of Jesus is quite dissimilar. True, they both expect death, but Jesus, unlike Socrates, begins “to tremble and be distressed” (Mk.14:33). “Jesus is so thoroughly human that he shares the natural fear of death. Jesus is afraid though not as a coward would be of the men who will kill him, still less of the pain and grief that precede death. He is afraid in the face of death itself. Death for him is not something divine: it is something dreadful.”⁴ During his last hours Jesus does not

² Oscar CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, London, Epworth, 1958, 21.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 21–22.

want to be alone – he seeks God as well as the company of his friends. Dr. Cullmann also recognizes the connection between death and sin and death as the enemy – enemy of God, life and man. He states that Jesus cries out to God for “whoever is in the hands of death is no longer in the hands of God, but in the hands of God’s enemy”.⁵ He also states that a further contrast between Socrates and Jesus: the one quietly discussing immortality, the other before His death, “trembles and begs his disciples not to leave him alone”.⁶ With “sublime calm Socrates drinks the hemlock” but Jesus cries the cry of dereliction (Mk. 15:34). “Because it is God’s enemy, it separates us from God, who is life and the creator of all life. ... Jesus suffers this abandonment, this separation from God, the only condition really to be feared”.⁷ Jesus must die thus for victory is possible only by actually dying a real death not just dying in one sense but really “living on as an immortal soul, thus fundamentally not dying”.⁸ Life can only issue out of this dying by an act of creation – a resurrection.

There is much more in Dr. Cullmann’s book, but we cannot deal with nor present all of it in a single lecture. I will comment on some of it. While much of his presentation of the contrast between the deaths of Socrates and Jesus is, to my mind, on the mark I do have some issues with him. One of these is his understanding of the description of Jesus in Garden on the night of betrayal. He takes the words of the text of Mark 14:33 (“deeply distressed and troubled” – NIV) to mean “afraid”. Jesus has the “natural human fear of death”. The Greek word for “distressed” is very difficult to translate, but I cannot find any justification for it meaning “fear” or “afraid”. My own understanding of Mk. 14:33 is more theological than anthropological. What causes the distress and anxiety (my translation of those words in Mk.14:33) is not just Jesus facing death as an end of life but death as the enemy that separates one from God. Punishment for sin is not just dying but separation from God and the utter desolate “aleness” of the dead. The cry of desolation on the cross is key to this interpretation. Jesus dies and takes on the sin of all and endures the separation that sin brings. Our participation in the redemptive event does not depend on what we bring to it – it depends on the incredible grace of God in forgiving us and adopting us.

A further issue with Prof. Cullmann is his tendency to see Jesus as sharing the natural human fear of death (“He is afraid in the face of death itself”). Death to Jesus is not the great unknown, the threat of the end of life. Mt. 10:28 (Lk. 12:4) gives us the clue to Jesus attitude about death: “do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both body and soul in Hell”. Jesus did not fear those who put Him to death nor was he less a man than those martyrs who went boldly to death for their faith. In the Garden, Jesus tremble but when the arresting party comes, His response is “Rise. Let us go. Here comes

⁵ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 23.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 22.

my betrayer” (Mk.14:42). The only answer, to me, to this apparent contradiction of trembling and confident assurance is that Jesus can go forth confident and in complete control is he knows that it is the Father’s will, and this control continues until the cry of dereliction – death is the enemy and the sting of death is Sin. Jesus must encounter and defeat the enemy. I believe Paul’s words in 2 Cor. 5:21 portray this very clearly: “God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God”.¹⁰ In his ministry Jesus fought and rolled back the forces of darkness, evil, sin and even death itself. I believe that while Jesus does feel distress and anxiety before this final encounter with the enemy, death, the primary cause of His greatest distress and anguish is the cup of suffering on behalf of the sins of man.

We now turn to some brief remarks on the subject of Resurrection. Jesus had on several occasions spoken of His coming death and resurrection as something that MUST take place. Mark 8:31 is a good example of this: “He began to teach them that the Son of Man MUST suffer many things” including death and resurrection. Both cross and resurrection are integral parts of His destiny. His ministry of proclamation and healing as preliminary encounters with the forces of sin and death, His death as the final encounter with the forces of sin and death and His resurrection and exaltation in triumph over them are integral parts of His mission. The resurrection of Jesus affirms embodiment as our destiny in Christ. In Platonic-Greek thought the concept of the immortality of the soul is taught. A dualistic concept of man as body (material) which dies and soul immaterial) lives on. The soul’s natural immortality is then freed from this embodiment which hinders the gaining of true life, by death. This would mean then that God can only decide what kind of existence there is in the “After Life” not whether there will be one. Biblical religion does not know of a natural “immortality of the soul” but rather conceives of embodiment as the condition of life. Death strikes the whole man and not just an unessential part of him. In Christ death, sin and evil have been decisively defeated. Death will come but it has no longer its “sting” (1 Cor. 15:55-57). The resurrection of the body is affirmed in all of the New Testament. Jesus even eats with his disciples after He has risen. The scars of his crucifixion can be seen and touched. Yet the Gospels describe a body that is not exactly like ours but is nevertheless recognizable. Paul attempts to give the most detailed description of this ‘spiritual body in 1 Cor. 15. The obvious question about the Intermediate State between death and resurrection is too complicated for me to say much about it now. I will affirm that there is one and some things can be said. I will make some modest remarks on that in my conclusion. Paul describes it as “nakedness” in 2 Cor. 5 and it seems he is stating that without a body we, in whatever form or lack of same we are, are not what we need to be and must therefore hope for God’s act to clothe us. However, it is my belief that the form of the life after death is less important than the contents of that life. It is “life” that is promised not “mere existence”. There must, therefore, be some very positive content to it which means that its length is not the central aspect of it.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Karl BARTH: *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III, part 2, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1960, 603: “In Him God Himself suffers what guilty man had to suffer by way of eternal punishment.”

*Michel and Cullmann on "sleep"*¹¹

Otto Michel in an article in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* argues that the proper Biblical term for the Intermediate State after death is the word "sleep".¹² This word is a better term than the traditional 'Intermediate State', he feels, because it presents the essential NT concept of death and the Christian: viz., the believer has been given the promise of the resurrection. They die a real death but because of the promise they yet live – "the dead sleep".¹³ That death is a sleep is only true of the just, of the believer, for only he stands under the promise.¹⁴ This concept is corroborated, Michel believes, by such Intertestamental literature as 4 Macc. 7:18-19; 16:25; Enoch 92:3; 100:5; Jub. 23:31. Sleep portrays the concept of the resurrection: the sleepers will awake, they will rise.¹⁵ "In the usage of κοιμᾶσθαι-καθεύδειν lies hidden an eschatological mystery."¹⁶

Dr. O. Cullmann also advocates the usage of the term "sleep" as the proper Christian term for the Intermediate State.¹⁷ He writes that "the most usual image for Paul is: 'They are asleep'."¹⁸ Or again, that the expression 'to sleep' "is the customary designation in the New Testament of the 'interim condition' ...".¹⁹ He equates the 'nakedness' referred to in 2 Cor. 5:1-10 with 'sleep'.²⁰ The term expresses the nearness of the believer, even in death, to Christ.²¹ It thus is the term that portrays the certainty of the coming resurrection, the proximity of the believer to Christ and the victory in Christ over death.²² 'Sleep' refers to the *condition* of the dead before the Parousia.²³

Summary of use of the term "sleep" for death

To help us in our study, we now very briefly will summarize the use of the term "sleep" as a designation of the dead. The usage is not unknown in classical Greek literature, examples of which can be found in Homer, *Iliad*, XI, 341; Sophocles,

¹¹ Part of this lecture was published earlier: Robert E. BAILEY: Is "Sleep" the Proper Biblical Term for the Intermediate State?, *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*, 55, 1964/3-4, 161-167.

¹² Otto MICHEL: Zur Lehre vom Todesschlaf, *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 35, 1936, (285-290), 290.

¹³ MICHEL: Zur Lehre vom Todesschlaf, 286.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ MICHEL: Zur Lehre vom Todesschlaf, 287.

¹⁶ MICHEL: Zur Lehre vom Todesschlaf, 289.

¹⁷ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 55ff. So also Aimo T. NIKOLAINEN: *Der Auferstehungsglauben in der Bibel und ihrer Umwelt 2: Neutestamentlicher Teil*, Helsinki, Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1946, 239.

¹⁸ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 51.

¹⁹ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 57.

²⁰ "Particularly in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 we hear why it is that the dead, although they do not yet have a body and are only 'sleeping', nevertheless are in special proximity to Christ." CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 52; cf. 50.

²¹ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 53, 55.

²² CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 52ff.

²³ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 51, n. 6.

Electra, 509; and in epitaphs.²⁴ The term is also found in the OT,²⁵ though without the concept of resurrection, in e. g., Ps. 13:4 (Eng. 3), “Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.”²⁶ In Daniel 12:2 the resurrection is portrayed as an awakening from sleep (“many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake”) and also in Isa. 26:19, if one assumes the latter passage refers to resurrection and not national restoration. In the texts of the Inter-testamental Literature many references to death as a sleep can be found.²⁷ H Macc. 12:45 refers to “those who fall asleep²⁸ in godliness.” Similar thoughts are expressed in 2 Baruch 30:1 (those will rise who have fallen asleep in hope of the resurrection) and Enoch 49:3. ‘Sleep’ here is used of the just and relates, as in Dan. 12:2, the certainty of their resurrection: death is a sleep from which they shall awake. Other passages in the same vein will be found in 2 Baruch 21:24 (The patriarchs and others “sleep in the earth”); Enoch 100:5 (the just “sleep a long time but have nothing to fear”); 91:10; 92:3 (“the just will rise out of sleep”); II Esdras 7:32 (“the earth will give up those who are asleep in it”). It is quite likely that passages which speak of the dead as “resting” (e. g., 2 Esdras 7:91, 95; Jub. 23:31; Wis. of Sol. 4:7) or being in ‘chambers’ (e. g. 2 Esdras 4:42; 7:32,80,95; cf. Enoch 22; 2 Baruch 30:2) express much the same idea as ‘sleep’ in describing the dead. The term ‘sleep’ is also used quite often to describe the dead, usually the just, where no thought of a resurrection is in view (e. g. Jub. 23:1; 36:18 (“eternal sleep”); 45:15; Ass. of Moses 1:15; 10:14; 2 Baruch 11:4; 85:3). In the Rabbinic literature can also be found examples of the use of ‘sleep’ to describe death.²⁹ Some of these express the hope of resurrection (e. g. Tractate Pirke ’abot VI,9b), others only that the just or the patriarchs ‘sleep’ in peace or rest (e. g., Gen. rabba 25:8; Targum Jonathan, Gen. 15:15). ‘Sleep’ could be used as a figure of death and resurrection: as a man awakens out of sleep, so the dead will awake in the future world.³⁰

‘Sleep’ and Death in the Gospels

The Synoptic Gospels present few examples of the use of ‘sleep’ as a designation of the dead. One of these (Mt. 27:52) presents a legendary type of story in connection with the resurrection of Jesus (“many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were

²⁴ See MICHEL: Zur Lehre vom Todesschlaf, 285; Harry Angus Alexander KENNEDY: *St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things*, London, Hodder and Stoughton 1904, 267.

²⁵ See James G. S. S. THOMSON: Sleep: An Aspect of Jewish Anthropology, *Vetus Testamentum*, 5, 1955/4, 421–433.

²⁶ See also Job 14:12; Ps. 3:6 (Eng. v.5); 4:9 (Eng. v.8).

²⁷ On this see esp. Paul VOLZ: *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter nach den Quellen der rabbinischen, apokalyptischen und apokryphen Literatur*, Tübingen, Mohr, 1934, 257.

²⁸ Κοιμωμένοι.

²⁹ See e. g. THOMSON: Sleep: An Aspect of Jewish Anthropology; MICHEL: Zur Lehre vom Todesschlaf; VOLZ: *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde*.

³⁰ THOMSON: Sleep, 430; (from Pirke Eliezer, 33?).

raised”). The text is peculiar to Matthew but the thought that describes death as sleep and resurrection as awakening is a familiar one as we have seen. The only other passage which speaks of death as a ‘sleep’ is Mk. 5:39 par. in Mt. 9:24; Lk. 3:52): the story of the raising of Jairus’ daughter. Jesus says of the child: “the child is not dead but sleeping”.³¹ That a real death is meant has been disputed by some commentators.³² Most commentators agree that a real death is meant although some admit a coma is a possible view.³³ That a real death and not a healing is the situation here is an unquestionable fact to Michel.³⁴ We would tend to agree that a real death is probably the meaning here. Καθεύδω is never used of a coma in the NT, being used mostly of ordinary sleep – only here and in 1 Thess. 5:19 (and possibly Eph. 5:14) is it used of death out of some 21 uses in the NT. The LX X (e. g. Ps. 37:6 and Dan. 12: 2) uses the word also of death. The story is thus a case of a raising from the dead by the power of Jesus. Michel writes of this: “There is therefore according to Jesus’ meaning a dying which is not dying, but is a sleep”.³⁵ This event, like others of the mighty works, is an illustration and demonstration of the power of Jesus in opposition to the powers of sin, death and evil. The dead in the presence of Jesus’ power are only asleep.³⁶ Isa. 26:19 and Dan. 12:2f. are here fulfilled, though only in a preliminary way. The raising of the girl is only a *sign* of the eschatological resurrection – it is not itself the beginning of the eschatological resurrection. Paul, for example, does not point to events such as this in the tradition but rather calls the resurrection of Christ “the first fruits” of the eschatological resurrection (I Cor. 15:29). The girl’s resurrection is a sign of the presence of the kingdom.³⁷ The girl will yet die again, and this is, therefore, not a resurrection in the fully eschatological sense of the term. The Fourth Gospel also uses the term “sleep”³⁸ in reference to the death of Lazarus. The ambiguity of the Markan account is lacking, for it is expressly stated not only that Lazarus

³¹ Καθεύδει.

³² E. g. Theodor H. ROBINSON: *The Gospel of Matthew*, Moffatt’s New Testament Commentary, New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1927, 82.

³³ E. g. Vincent TAYLOR: *The Gospel According to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indexes*, London, MacMillan, 1952, 288, 295; Alfred PLUMMER: *Critical and exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke*, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 28, New York, Scribner, 1896, 237.

³⁴ MICHEL: Zur Lehre vom Todesschlaf, 285; also Erich KLOSTERMANN: *Das Markusevangelium*, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, 3, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1936, 58; Bennet Harvie BRANSCOMB: *The Gospel of Mark*, Moffatt’s New Testament Commentary, New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1937, 95; *et al.*

³⁵ MICHEL: Zur Lehre vom Todesschlaf, 285; cf. KLOSTERMANN: *Markus*, 53 (“Jesus designates this death, which will immediately be annulled by the miracle as something not lasting: the girl is not finally dead, but sleeps so to speak for a time.”).

³⁶ So also Karl Heinrich RENGSTORF: *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, Das Neue Testament Deutsch, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1949, 114; NIKOLAINEN: *Der Auferstehungsglauben*, 17.

³⁷ Matthew places this event in the context of the Messianic signs in the response to John the Baptist’s question (cf. Mt. 11:2ff.). Luke uses the story of the raising of the widow’s son in a similar context (Lk. 7:18ff.).

³⁸ Κοιμᾶσθαι.

has fallen asleep but also that what is meant by ‘sleep’ is death (Jn. 11:11f.). Thus this event is also an eschatological symbol.

Survey of NT usage of “sleep” as a designation of the dead

In the NT, two words are used to describe death in terms of ‘sleep’, both of which are used in a similar way in non-Christian literature.³⁹ Of the two words, κοιμᾶσθαι by far the more prevalent term (14 uses),⁴⁰ usually being used in the passive. The majority of uses are found in Paul (9), with 1 in Mt. (27:62), one in John (11:11), two in Acts (7:60; 13:36) and one in 2 Peter (3:4). The term “sleep” appears very seldom in the Gospels: Mk. 5:39 (& 11s); Mt. 27:62 and John 11:11. The term appears in Paul in only two letters: I Thess. (4 = 4:13,14,15; 5:10⁴¹) and I Cor. (6 = 7:39; 11: 30; 16:6,13,20,61). The term is used mostly to refer to believers (Acts 13:36 refers to David, but as an OT Hero, he probably could be classified as a Saint.). The usual term for referring to the death of the unbeliever is the more direct terminology expressing death or dying in the usual sense.⁴² “Sleep” used of the believer connotes that death is overcome in Christ, who is “the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (I Cor. 16:20). Acts 7:60 is an interesting text in this connection, expressing the manner of death – Steven, dying by stoning, “fell asleep”. Here the term appears to indicate the manner of death – he dies “in peace” even though killed by a violent means. The term κοιμᾶσθαι, “to fall asleep”, appears mostly in the aorist (8 = I Cor. 7:39; 15:6,13; I Thess. 4:14,16; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 2 Pet. 3:4) and perfect tenses (3 = Jn. 11:11; Mt. 27:62; I Cor. 16:20) while the present tense appears twice (I Cor. 11:30; I Thess. 4:13) and the future once (I Cor. 16:61). In the majority of uses quite a good sense results from simply substituting the word “died” or equivalent (e. g., Jn. 11:11; I Cor. 7:39; 11:30; 15:6,18,20,61; I Thess. 4:14,16; Mt. 27:62; 2 Pet. 3:4). To be sure the term would connote, as the term ‘died’ would not, the Christian concept of death – of this we shall speak later. In I Thess. 4:13 only do we find the term in a sense which would clearly indicate the state of the dead in their interim condition: “we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep.” The passage is open to question for some MSS read the verb in the perfect rather than present tense.⁴³

³⁹ See earlier references and also Gerhard KITTTEL (hrsg.): *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, III, Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 957, 13, n. 60.

⁴⁰ Out of about 18.

⁴¹ Καθεύδειν.

⁴² See J. C. BOWMER: A Note on ἀποθνήσκω and κοιμάω in I Cor. 16: 20,22, *Expository Times*, 53 1942, 355–356.

⁴³ K, L, D, G and some minuscules.

Tentative Conclusions

a. The meaning of the term

Cullmann holds the term describes the status of the dead: They are asleep. He writes: “The expression in the New Testament signifies more, and like the ‘repose’ in Apocalypse 14:13 refers to the *condition* of the dead before the Parousia”.⁴⁴ The term for him expresses the closeness of the believer to Christ,⁴⁵ a state of imperfection⁴⁶ and the temporal sense of the Intermediate State. On this latter point he writes, the “expression *to sleep*, which is the customary designation in the New Testament of the ‘interim condition’, draws us to the view that for the dead another time-consciousness exists, that of ‘those who sleep’”.⁴⁷

Michel, on the other hand, denies that the term refers to the *condition* of the dead. It is not a speculation on the nature of the soul, not a conception of immortality that is meant by the term.⁴⁸ The term is not a statement of anthropology. He writes: “It is concerned with the eschatological mystery of the ‘death-sleep’”.⁴⁹ The term ‘sleep’ expresses the promise and expectation of the resurrection⁵⁰ and is, therefore, a theological term.

We would agree with Michel that the term is theological and eschatological, not anthropological. The state of the dead, we would thus conclude, is not a sort of “soul-sleep”.⁵¹ Rather the term is a euphemism for death – a euphemism which indicates the manner of dying to some extent (as in e. g., Acts 7:60) and also the meaning of death for the Christian. The Christian stands under the promise of the resurrection and death has for him lost its power, its sting. Those who die in Christ (I Thess. 4:16) have the terror of death behind them – they are at rest (Rev. 14:13). Because the dead are in Christ they may be said to be ‘asleep’, though outwardly death retains its character as the enemy. Because Christ is risen, the dead in Christ do not perish in death (I Cor. 15:17ff.). The eschatological factor is that Christ is “The first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep”.

b. Is ‘sleep’ the proper term for the Intermediate State?

Michel, Cullmann and others argue that “sleep” is the proper Biblical term to designate the Intermediate state. The use of the term in this way in the Intertestamental period is clearly established. But what is not established is that the term thus portrays the idea of resurrection in the sense of sleep = awake; death = resurrection. As we have seen, the term can be used of death in literature where no hope of a future bless-

⁴⁴ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 51, n. 6; cf. 56.

⁴⁵ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 53.

⁴⁶ A waiting for the resurrection, CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 55.

⁴⁷ CULLMANN: *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead*, 57; cf. 11, where he suggests the dreaming of a pleasant experience may be an illustration of the death-sleep of the Christian.

⁴⁸ MICHEL: *Zur Lehre vom Todesschlaf*, 290.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ MICHEL: *Zur Lehre vom Todesschlaf*, 288.

⁵¹ See KENNEDY: *St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things*, 268.

ed life is found as well as in other literature where such hope is affirmed. It is on other grounds that the hope of the future life is stated, not the use of the term ‘sleep’.⁵² The term does illustrate the concept of death in relation to the resurrection, but it does so by contextual inference and interpretation – it is not an inherent meaning of the term itself. As with other terms, meanings that go beyond the regular meaning must be specifically attached to it in order that the specific Christian sense that one would wish to convey may be understood. The term would not seem to be a satisfactory one as the proper Christian or Biblical term for the Intermediate State because of its interpretive liabilities. For example, how would one who does not mean it to indicate the condition of the dead as being in a sort of “soul-sleep” use the term without the addition of interpretive phrases to indicate what he does mean by the term? In this respect it is no better than the traditional term “Intermediate state”, whose content must also be defined. “Sleep” may be a useful auxiliary term, but not as *the* term to describe the Christian view of the Intermediate State. I cannot, therefore, fully agree with Michel that the term Intermediate State “may now be dropped”.⁵³

When one examines the usage of the term, he is struck by several facts. One fact is the scarcity of usage in the Gospels. Another and even more telling fact is that Paul, who writes more than most other NT authors on the Intermediate State, uses the term in only two letters – both of which are among the earlier ones. This does not seem to indicate that the term is for him the “proper Biblical term” for the Intermediate State! If one should then ask what term is the proper Biblical term, I am not sure how I would answer. If pressed, I must confess that I would probably favour the two terms which Paul uses in earlier as well as later writings, particularly the later ones. These terms are the “in Christ – with Christ” formulae. Both the living and the dead are “in Christ” (I Thess. 4:16, “the dead in Christ”; 2 Cor. 5:17, “if anyone is in Christ”; see also I Cor. 15:18; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 12:2; Rom. 15:17; 16:3; Phil. 3:9; *et al.*) The future life of the Christian is to be “with Christ” (see Col. 3:1ff.; Rom. 6:2ff., 5,8; 2 Cor. 5:8; 4:4; I Thess. 5:17; Phil. 1:23; 3:20f.). C. H. Dodd writes, “Note that Paul constantly uses *with Christ* of the future state of Christians, as distinct from their *present* state *in* Christ ...”⁵⁴ The Christian is one whose life is hid with Christ in God from where he awaits the manifestation of that life at the Parousia (Col. 3:3f.). This the basic Pauline, and Biblical,⁵⁵ affirmation about the Intermediate State.

⁵² Cf. Robert Henry CHARLES: *Eschatology: A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life, in Israel, in Judaism, and in Christianity*, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1899, 127, n. 1. He warns that the term is not to be identified with resurrection.

⁵³ MICHEL: *Zur Lehre vom Todesschlaf*, 289f.

⁵⁴ Charles H. Dodd: *The Epistle to the Romans*, Moffatt’s New Testament Commentary, New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1932, 89.

⁵⁵ See e. g., “today shall thou be with me in Paradise” (Lk. 23:43). cf. Jn. 14:2f,28.

It is very difficult to establish firm conclusion about the Intermediate State as all such statements are subject to varying interpretations. The term “sleep” as a designation, preferred by O. Cullmann and others have some interesting ideas that could be attached to it, such as it is a pleasant sleep with pleasant dreams. It also could convey a time sense in that when we sleep time does pass but we do not experience it upon awaking. That would make the time difference between death and the Parousia more bearable.

Nevertheless, I would prefer some other thoughts on the Intermediate State. One such idea, I believe Paul Althaus has expressed very well when he wrote, “we know nothing before the resurrection than death and that the dead are in God’s hand. That is sufficient.”⁵⁶ This reminds me of Jesus’ statement recorded in John’s Gospel, 10:28 “My sheep [...] and no one will snatch them out of my hand” (MIV). I also would relate this to Paul’s assertion: “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain”. Paul’s frequent use of the In Christ–With Christ concepts present an essential component of the Interim – we are with Christ (see e. g., Phil. 1:23; Col. 3:3). The promise of Jesus to the thief on the Cross that he would be “with me” is for me the promise that best sums up my views and my hope. It is as Jesus promised his Disciples and followers (believers): “that where I am you may be also” (John 14:).

⁵⁶ Paul ALTHAUS: *Die Letzten Dinge: Lehrbuch der Eschatologie*, Gütersloh, C. Bertelsmann, 1956, 159.

διὰ τοῦτο πάντα ὑπομένω
 διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς,
 ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ σωτηρίας τύχωσιν
 τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ
 μετὰ δόξης αἰωνίου
 (2 Timothy 2:10)

Jaap Doedens

“THEY ALSO”: WHO ARE THE “CHOSEN ONES” IN 2 TIMOTHY 2:10?

Introduction: The Chosen Ones and the Authorship of 2 Timothy

Small words can have huge significance in sentences. This is not a very shocking discovery. However, it happens time and again that readers jump too quickly to the most outstanding words in a text, at the same time hardly observing the smaller ones. In New Testament exegesis the conjunction καὶ most of the time has such a humble role, that readers tend to overlook its presence. There are, however, cases in which the reader has to be alert on another function of this small word; it not only functions as the word “and” in connecting words and sentences to each other, but it can also give more emphasis to the following, in the sense of “too, also”. This is how the word καὶ functions in 2 Tim 2:10, “that they *also* (ἵνα καὶ αὐτοί) may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus”. In bible editions, this function is usually not lost in translation. But in the commentaries on 2 Tim 2:10, the word “also” appears to disappear in the thicket of exegesis, without it being given its proper place in determining who are the “elect” to whom Paul is referring.

When I refer to Paul in this short study, the reader is, of course, free to substitute the name of the apostle with the description “the unknown author of this document”, if he or she does not consider the apostle Paul to be the author of the Second Letter to Timothy. For reasons of readability, I will refer to the author as “Paul”. In the second half of this study, I will return to the theme of authorship of 2 Timothy with the proposition that it is

not impossible that Paul himself, rather than one of his disciples or an epigone was the author of this letter. Based on the exegesis of 2 Tim 2:10, I will defend that the content of this verse is consistent with what we know about Paul's approach of this theme from his undisputed letters. In the last part of this study, I will focus on a possible historical reconstruction around Paul's mentioning of Trophimus, whom he left ill at Miletus. This reference to Trophimus and Miletus is usually seen as an indication that the letter cannot originate from the apostle Paul, because it is impossible to give it a proper place within a reconstruction of the last part of Paul's life, unless we suppose a new detention in Rome after a release from the imprisonment which is related in the last chapter of the Book of Acts.

Commentaries

Paul urges Timothy that he permanently has to keep in mind (μνημόνευε, praesens imperfectum), that the Messiah Jesus, who is the descendant of David,¹ has been risen from the dead. According to Paul, this resurrection of the Messiah is the summary of "his gospel" (2 Tim 2:8). This good news is so important for him, that he is willing to endure suffering, even to the point that he is chained as an ordinary criminal (2 Tim 2:9). However, among all this suffering, his sense of humour did not leave him. In a similar way as how he addressed king Agrippa, that he hoped that sooner or later not only the king, but everyone who was listening to him would become like him. And then we almost see the apostle looking to himself with a smile, and hear him adding, as an afterthought: "Well, I was only thinking about everyone becoming sooner or later a follower of the Messiah; not, of course, that everyone who is listening to me now will be in chains as a prisoner" (Acts 26:29). In the same vein, he writes that even though he may be in chains, God's word is not chained (2 Tim 2:9).

After this remark, Paul reveals the source of his perseverance and of his motivation to endure all these sufferings. "I endure everything for the sake of the chosen ones (διὰ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς), that they too (ἵνα καὶ αὐτοῖ) may obtain the salvation which is in the Messiah Jesus, with eternal glory" (2 Tim 2:10).

The main question, here, is to whom the apostle is referring, when he mentions "the chosen ones". The traditional exegesis has two possible solutions: these elect are the people who *already believe*, or the elect are the ones who are *not yet believers*.² According to the first explanation, "the chosen ones" are, here, the believers who are already called to faith, and who by the steadfastness of Paul receive an example how to persevere similarly in faith.³ The second solution presumes that "the elect" are the

¹ See Romans 1:3-4, where Paul expresses similar thoughts.

² For a summary, see P. H. R. VAN HOUWELINGEN: *Timoteüs en Titus, Pastorale instructiebrieven*, Kampen, Kok, 2009, 189.

³ See e. g. E. L. SMELIK: *De brieven van Paulus aan Timotheüs, Titus en Filemon*, Nijkerk, Callenbach, 1961, 104-105; Herman RIDDERBOS: *De pastorale brieven*, Kampen, Kok, 1967, 203. See also Tom WRIGHT: *Paul for Everyone, The Pastoral Letters: 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, London: SPCK, 2003, 103, who suggests that „[i]t is as though he is drawing the enemy fire on to himself, to create a breathing space in which the young church can grow and develop“.

ones who will be called by God by means of Paul's missionary proclamation of the gospel.⁴ The distinction between the two solutions almost becomes the content for a systematic theological discussion, whether Paul is thinking about already believing people or about not-yet-believers, when mentioning the chosen ones for whom he is willing to endure the suffering of imprisonment. However, exegetically, there is not so much difference, and it is even possible to view the expression "the elect" as referring to both categories at the same time.⁵ Moreover, both solutions do not answer the question why Paul emphasizes that he is willing to suffer if the effect will be that the chosen ones, "they too", will obtain the salvation in the Messiah. "They also" – but together with whom? Does there exist still another category of people who will obtain salvation aiming at eternal glory *next to* the ones chosen by God? Of course, one could explain this statement – as many commentaries do – in a way that Paul is thinking about himself and Timothy, the addressee of his letter. In other words, he might want to underline that his aim is that not only they, as the preachers of the gospel will obtain salvation, but "the chosen ones" also. But this seems rather self-evident, otherwise why would he proclaim the gospel to other people? And if he really wanted to say this, does this imply that Paul and Timothy belong within another category than "the chosen ones"? If not, why does he not say "the *other* chosen ones too"? This explanation leaves too much unanswered questions open.

Context

However, when we take a look at the context of this verse about "the chosen ones", a far more elegant solution offers itself. What would happen if we understood the expression "the chosen ones too" as referring to the Jews who did not accept Jesus as the Messiah?⁶ It seems to me, that in this case suddenly all the unanswerable questions disappear, and all the elements of 2 Tim 2:10 fall into place.

What if we would try out as a working hypothesis to solve the exegetical problems of this verse the above-mentioned possibility that "the chosen ones" are Paul's own people (see Rom 9:3-5; 11:1-2.7.28), the Jews who belong to God's people, but did not accept the Messiah Jesus? In his letter to the Romans, Paul uses very similar words: "What is, then, the situation? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain (τοῦτο οὐκ ἐπέτυχεν). The chosen ones among them did (ἡ δὲ ἐκλογή ἐπέτυχεν), but the others were hardened" (Rom 11:7). Here, the word "election" is used by Paul as a category *within* Israel, which is consistent with how the

⁴ See e. g. C. BOUMA: *De brieven van den apostel Paulus aan Timotheus en Titus*, Kampen, Kok, 1942, 281; William D. MOUNCE: *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC 46, Nashville, Nelson, 2000, 514.

⁵ So e. g. William HENDRIKSEN: *Exposition of The Pastoral Epistles*, Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2007 [1957], 254.

⁶ Interestingly, both Van Houwelingen and Mounce are alluding to this possibility without choosing it, see VAN HOUWELINGEN: *Timoteüs en Titus*, 189; William D. MOUNCE: *Pastoral Epistles*, 514: "In this case ἐκλεκτούς 'elect' refers to all Christians and shows Paul's willingness to apply OT terms for Israel to the church".

Hebrew Bible also refers to a “remnant” within God’s people.⁷ The word “election” is also echoed in Rom 11:28, even more in a similar sense as in 2 Tim 2:10: “As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved (κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ἀγαπητοί) on account of the patriarchs”.

In this sense, it becomes understandable how Paul can write that “they *also*” obtain (τύχωσι) the salvation in the Messiah which aims at eternal glory. The expression “eternal glory” refers to the good news that in and through the Messiah Jesus, humans will again display the image of God (Gen 1:27). The reference to Jesus Christ as “David’s descendant” (2 Tim 2:8, cf. Rom 1:3-4) already alluded to the fact that the “apostle to the Gentiles” (Rom 11:13) hoped that the spin-off of his mission among Gentiles would be that his own people too would accept the message of the gospel. After all, Paul had been arrested in Jerusalem (see Acts 21:27-40), because he was thought to be a heretic and therefore a dangerous teacher. Paul had been arrested and in prison already because of the proclamation of the gospel. But now, the suffering of detention in the last years of his life seemed to go on endlessly. And he knew very well that the leaders of his own people were the cause of his ongoing imprisonment and his being treated as a criminal. But exactly for the sake of their salvation, he was willing to endure all this. After all, during the ongoing trials, his opponents were confronted repeatedly with the message about the Messiah Jesus. This was something they could not avoid, because the lawsuit against Paul was an official one. Thus, their hearing of Paul’s message became more than an occasional encounter, and even if Paul’s opponents would not accept it, at least it would become clear what it was all about. Here, in 2 Tim 2:10 Paul says in a very compact way what he explains more broadly in Romans 9-11: “For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race (Rom 9:3) [...] Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry, in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them” (Rom 11:13-14).

Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles, in which he aims to reach his own people too, is not only built on human hope, but can also appeal to God’s promises, as turns out in the following verse (2 Tim 2:11). The expression, which is usually translated as “a trustworthy saying” (πιστὸς ὁ λόγος), can probably be rendered in a better way as: “the Word is trustworthy”.⁸ With this short “slogan” Paul is referring to the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and to the proclamation of the gospel (see 1 Tim 1:15). This good news will have a future, even when, humanly speaking, the situation looks quite different. Thus Paul goes on to say that if we died with Christ, we will also live with him (2 Tim 2:11), for he is the one who has been raised from the dead (see Rom 6:8; Phil 3:8)! If we endure (see Matt 10:22), then we will also reign together with him (2 Tim 2:12; see also Rom 5:17). If we deny him, he will

⁷ E. g. Amos 5:15; Isa 10:20-21; 51:11.

⁸ See Jakob VAN BRUGGEN: *Vaste grond onder de voeten, De formule pistos ho logos in de Pastorale Brieven*, in: *Bezielde verband*, Kampen, Van den Berg, 1984.

also deny us (2 Tim 2:12), as Jesus said according to Matt 10:33. Again, it seems that Paul knew far more about Jesus and Jesus's sayings than often is presumed.⁹

Interestingly, Paul adds the sentence that "if we are unfaithful, he remains faithful – for he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim 2:13). At first sight, this appears to be the opposite of the verse before. If we deny him, he denies us. That is clear. But then, one would expect the next verse to say in the same vein: "If we are unfaithful, he also will be unfaithful." The explanation may be that Paul is referring to the rule from the Book of Deuteronomy, according to which God will be always faithful: if his people will live according to his will, he will bless them, but if they turn against their God, not the blessing, but the curse will be upon them (Deut 28-30). In other words, the unfaithfulness of humans can never cause God to give up his plans. Paul wrote the same things in one of his other letters: "What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar." (Rom 3:3-4). In the same way, but more densely, Paul refers here, in 2 Tim 2:10-13 to the hope of the gospel and the faithfulness of God.

Authorship

If one explains "the chosen ones" in 2 Tim 2:10 as referring to the Jewish people in Paul's time, then this verse displays a well-known Pauline notion. This is, of course, not sufficient to prove that Paul is the author of 2 Timothy. But, perhaps, the possibility of a Pauline authorship has become a little bit more evident. That is why I would like to concentrate on some of the problems which are connected to the question of the authorship of this letter.

Already at a superficial level of reading, the mentioning of numerous persons and places catches the eye:

- Lois and Eunice (1:5)
- "everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes" (1:15)
- "the house of Onesiphorus" (1:16; 4:19)
- the city of Rome (1:17)
- Hymenaeus and Philetus
- the cities of Antioch, Iconium and Lystra (3:11)
- Demas, who went to Thessalonica (4:10)
- Crescens, who went to Galatia (4:10)
- Titus, who went to Dalmatia (4:10)
- Luke (4,11)
- Mark (4,11)
- Tychicus, whom Paul sent to Ephesus (4:12)
- Paul's cloak, his books and parchments, which he left with Carpus at Troas (4:13)
- Alexander the coppersmith (4:14)

⁹ See Jaap DOEDENS: Paul, The Only Stranger in Jerusalem Who Does Not Know the Things That Have Happened? *Sárospataki Füzetek*, 19, 2015/2, 45–56.

- Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus (4:19)
- Erastus, who stayed in Corinth (4:20)
- Eubulus (4:21)
- Pudens (4:21)
- Linus (4:21)
- Claudia (4:21)
- “all the brethren” (4:21)

And then I intentionally did not mention Trophimus, about whom Paul writes: “I left Trophimus ill at Miletus” (2 Tim 4:20). This very reference to Trophimus at Miletus, based on which it seems almost impossible that Paul can be the author of this letter. If we presume that Paul was imprisoned in Rome when he wrote this letter, and if we presume also that this was *not* a second detention, which is not related in the Book of Acts, but this imprisonment in Rome is the same as described in Luke’s second book (Acts 28:11-31), then how is it possible that Paul can write that he “left Trophimus ill at Miletus”? We know from the Acts of the Apostles that it was at least two or three years ago that Paul was for the last time at Miletus (Acts 20:17-38). Moreover, Trophimus, who was from Ephesus, travelled together with Paul to Jerusalem; it was even his presence in Jerusalem that caused that the people in Jerusalem supposed that Paul had brought a Gentile into the temple (Acts 21:29). Thus, according to Acts, Paul did not leave Trophimus at Miletus at all. On the contrary, Trophimus was one of Paul’s fellow-travellers, and was with him at least until the time that Paul was arrested in Jerusalem.

One can, of course, presume that an author who wanted to imitate Paul’s style of writing took all these names from the other letters of Paul that were known to him. But, interestingly, the largest part of these names only occurs in this letter: Lois, Eunice, Phygelus, Hermogenes, Onesiphorus, Philetus, Crescens, Carpus, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia. Other names are mentioned in other letters as well: Hymenaeus (1 Tim 1:20), Demas (Col 4:14; Phlm 24), Mark (Acts 12,25; 15:37.39), Tychicus (Tit 3:12), Alexander (Acts 19:33? 1 Tim 1:20?),¹⁰ Prisca and Aquila (Rom 16:3), Erastus (Rom 16:3), and Trophimus (Acts 21:29).

The list of names, thus, contains a total of twelve otherwise unknown names, and eleven names also known from other New Testament texts. If someone intended to imitate Paul’s style by inserting names from persons who belonged to Paul’s personal circle, it would be wise not to include otherwise unknown names. For there might have been readers who knew that these names were mentioned nowhere else in Paul’s letters. At the same time, it would also be wise to avoid well-known names, especially in a context in which their location was mentioned. After all, there might be readers who had been eyewitnesses, or maybe were good at historical reconstructions. In such case it is rather a risk to invent “historical” situations, clever readers may quickly unmask this as fiction. In short, who wants to imitate someone’s style should express

¹⁰ Alexander is a frequently occurring name, therefore it is not sure whether these texts refer to the same person.

himself as opaquely as possible. Who forgets this "rule" will run into similar problems as the chief priests in Jerusalem after Jesus's resurrection, when they told the soldiers who guarded Jesus's grave what to say: "his disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep" (Matt 28:13). But because people generally use to sleep with closed eyes, it is quite strange that they exactly knew who stole the body from the sealed grave while they were sleeping... An imitator, therefore, has to be sparse with details, or, otherwise, has to do thorough historical research before writing down anything.

But if Paul himself is the author of this letter, then it is totally logical that he greets his fellow-workers and informs Timothy about his situation. Moreover, it is a clever move to tell Timothy that some of the former co-workers are not reliable anymore. From the description it appears also that Paul did not have actual information about the whereabouts of all of his co-workers. In most of the cases it seems logical that Paul mentions the place or the situation last known to him; perhaps between the lines he also asks Timothy to inquire how and in what situation they are.

The detailed personal information points rather into the direction that Paul really is the author of this letter – were it not for the reference to Trophimus, whom he left ill at Miletus, a remark which seems to defy any historical reconstruction. However, this concrete information about Trophimus would be incomprehensible if an epigone is the writer of the letter. Readers could easily "check" from the Book of Acts that Paul not recently had been at Miletus and that Trophimus went with him on his journey to Jerusalem, as I already explained above. Of course, we could presume an undocumented second detention in Rome, after an initial release from prison. This is no more than speculation, therefore any "historical reconstruction" would fit into this "second imprisonment", simply because the data to verify or falsify this "reconstruction" are lacking.

Therefore, if we can find a plausible solution for the information about Trophimus during Paul's imprisonment in Rome which is mentioned in the last chapter of Acts, we would be still closer to a possible Pauline authorship. A look at a map can help us to find a rather simple solution. As I already mentioned, Trophimus went together with Paul to Jerusalem at the end of Paul's so called third missionary journey (Acts 21:29). It is plausible that he went home to Ephesus during Paul's detention at Caesarea, since we do not find his name among the companions with whom Paul began his journey to Rome (Acts 27:2). But on his way to Rome, Paul came relatively close to Miletus, because the ship on which they travelled anchored at Cnidus (Acts 27:7). The distance between Miletus and Cnidus is less than one hundred kilometres as the crow flies. It is quite possible that at Cnidus Paul received a message that Trophimus was ill at Miletus. This means that both friends were not so far away from each other, but they could not meet; Paul was unable to visit his friend, because he was a prisoner, Trophimus, in turn, was hindered by his illness.¹¹

¹¹ For this reconstruction, see VAN HOUWELINGEN: *Timoteüs en Titus*, 248.

As usual, historical reconstructions can seldom be confirmed for the full one hundred percent. But at the end of the day, the reconstruction that includes most of the details in the most straightforward way will win the contest. Anyhow, this reconstruction of how Paul could say that he “left Trophimus ill at Miletus” takes away the obstacle that Paul cannot be the author of this letter because of the reference to an “impossible” situation.

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RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT AT THE LAST SUPPER

The words spoken by Jesus at the evening before his death are often read aloud in churches at the celebration of the Holy Supper or Eucharist. These are the words he uttered during the Last Supper with his disciples, while breaking the bread and passing around the cup of wine. His words while raising the cup mention a new covenant. The content of that cup, the wine, symbolizing the blood of Christ, ‘is’ (that is to say: ‘signifies’) the new covenant. Regular guests at the Lord’s Table have become accustomed to hearing these institution words, and therefore also to the term ‘new covenant’, but what did the Lord mean when he, within the circle of his first disciples, spoke of the new covenant while raising a cup of wine?

It is remarkable that the term ‘new covenant’ (καινή διαθήκη) occurs only in three biblical contexts. First of all, the term is used in Jeremiah 31: 31-34, where God makes the promise to his people Israel of a future renewal of the covenant. This prophecy is literally cited in Hebrews 8:8-12, because Christ is, according to the author of this letter, “the mediator of a new covenant” (διαθήκης καινῆς μεσίτης, Hebr. 9: 15; 12: 24). Subsequently, the term can be found in 2 Corinthians 3, where the apostle Paul labels himself and his co-workers “ministers of a new covenant” (διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης, verse 6). Finally the term still resounds in the familiar tradition of the Lord’s Supper, as it was recorded in the gospels, and also been passed on by the apostle Paul:

“And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the [new] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” (Matt. 26: 27-28; see also Mark 14: 23-24; Luke 22: 20; 1 Cor. 11: 25).

Now, in Greek, the term *διαθήκη* is not generally used to indicate a covenant in the sense of an agreement between two parties. For that, the word *συνθήκη*, ‘treaty’ or ‘pact’, is used, occurring a few times in the Septuagint (especially in the Apocrypha) but nowhere in the New Testament. The Septuagint translators preferred the word *διαθήκη*, uncommon in this context, as a choice for the Hebrew term *ברית*. The general idea is that they, in this way, wished to emphasize that the covenant with God was not a result of negotiations and compromises between two equivalent parties, but exclusively thanks to the Lord’s initiative, as in the Biblical refrain: “I will be your God and you will be my people.”¹

Yet *διαθήκη* in Greek actually means: ‘a testamentary disposition’.² Whether that nuance in meaning resounds in the tradition of the Lord’s Supper in the gospels is not certain, but when Paul writes to the Corinthians about a new *διαθήκη*, his Greek readers undoubtedly heard something in it concerning a new arrangement. This gives rise to several questions. In what respect is the new covenant, spoken of by Jesus when handing out the cup, a new will or testament? What, exactly, does the covenant renewal entail, and when did this new arrangement start? And what does all this still have to say to us today?

To answer these questions, research in the field of biblical theology must be applied. We thereby take our starting point in the supper tradition – the words of institution, in particular regarding the cup – as recorded in the gospels, which can also be found with Paul when he writes to the Corinthians about ‘the Lord’s Supper’ (*κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*, 1 Cor. 11: 20).³

In the following treatment of the supper tradition, three aspects may be distinguished. We consider successively the historical context of the cup circulating at the Passover meal (section 1: the toast), drinking the wine of his blood as a metaphor for a violent death (section 2: the taste), and the power of the Spirit as bonding factor in the new covenant (section 3: the aftertaste).

¹ J. P. LOUW & E. A. NIDA (eds.): *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, Volume I, Cape Town, Bible Society of South Africa, 1989, 452.

² Sometimes ‘last will’ or ‘testament’: Gal. 3: 15; Hebr. 9:16-17. With the collective nouns ‘Old Testament’ and ‘New Testament’, the early church referred to the Bible books belonging to the old or, respectively, the new covenant. See W. C. Van UNNIK: “Ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη: A Problem in the Early History of the Canon,” in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik*. Part Two, Leiden, Brill, 1980, (157-171), 159-164; Rieuwerd BUITENWERF & Henk Jan DE JONGE: “Titels ‘Oude Testament’ en ‘Nieuwe Testament’”, *Met Andere Woorden* 22.4, 2003, (3-11), 5–8.

³ The first Christian author to use the institution narratives is Justin Martyr. He quotes the institution words of Jesus from the written gospels – memoirs of the apostles as he calls them—albeit not verbatim. Concerning the cup with wine, Justin writes: “Similarly, he also took the cup, and after giving thanks said: ‘This is my blood,’ and to them only did he give it” (*1 Apology* 66:2-3; cf. Valeriy ALIKIN: *Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries*, Leiden, Brill, 2010, 125–126).

1. *The toast*

First we must bring to mind the historical setting. In Jerusalem, Jesus had invited his disciples for the Passover meal.⁴ This could be celebrated within the family circle, but also with a group of friends. *Pesach* was Israel's feast of liberation, in which the exodus out of Egypt was commemorated during the course of an extensive meal. This meal lasted the whole evening, and children were allowed to stay up to take part. One followed a fixed ritual with special dishes on the table: bitter herbs, a paste or sauce of fruit and nuts, unleavened bread (*matzah*) and a cup of wine. The father of the house would explain the symbolic meaning of it all. He would point to, for example, the bread crackers and he would say: "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in Egypt." The youngest child would pose the standard question about what was special about this evening, upon which the father would tell the story of the exodus, referring to the *Thora*. During the meal, the cup would be filled and handed around repeatedly, after the father of the house each time uttered a prayer of blessing.

The annual commemoration of the exodus belonged to the prescriptions of Moses. By celebrating *Pesach*, the people of Israel had to continue to remember, their whole life long, how they had been led out of Egypt by the Lord. By keeping those stories alive throughout that night vigil, Israel's liberation became something of the present, as if everything was taking place again (cf. Deut. 16: 3, where Moses urges the Israelites to "remember the day when *you* came out of the land of Egypt").

Jesus was, in fact, celebrating Passover with his disciples. All four gospels mention 'reclining' at a table (ἀνάκειναι: Matt. 26: 20; Mark 14:1 8; John 13: 23; ἀναπίπτειν: Luke 22: 14). What Jesus was doing in this intimate circle was transforming the Passover meal by giving a new meaning to certain ingredients. The significance of bread and cup he related directly to himself: this is *my* body, this is *my* blood. It was the last evening before his death. This was, therefore, also a farewell meal, in which he himself would be handing out the bread and cup to his disciples for the very last time. The Gospel of John mentions only that Jesus dipped his bread in the sauce (in order to unveil the traitor within the circle of disciples, John 13: 26), but the other evangelists, as well as the apostle Paul, mention the actual words spoken at the bread and at the cup.

The passing around of the cup, to which Jesus gave his personal explanation, happened "after they had eaten" (μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνῆσαι, according to both Luke and Paul). Although the designation of this important moment is not entirely clear, most of the interpreters rightly consider this to be the third time the cup was re-filled, with which the supper was officially closed.⁵ After this, the song of praise would be sung (the second part of the Psalms known as the *Hallel*: Matt. 26: 30; Mark 14: 26).

⁴ Regarding the question whether the last meal of Jesus with his disciples was a Passover meal: I. Howard MARSHALL: *Last Supper and Lord's Supper*, Exeter, The Paternoster Press, 1980, chapter 3.

⁵ For the Passover celebration according to the early rabbinic tradition, see David INSTONE-BREWER: *Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament*, Volume 2A, *Feasts and Sabbaths: Passover and Atonement*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2011, 115–200. He contends that the fourth and very last cup ('the cup of redemption') was added to the ritual somewhere around 70

According to the gospel tradition, this third cup circulated after Jesus had said the prayer of thanks, which is the Jewish grace after meals (εὐχαριστήσας; cf. Matt. 15: 36; Mark 8: 6; John 6: 11,23). In the Mishna, the following formula has been fixed: “Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who created the fruit of the vine” (Mishna, *Berachot* 6:1). Paul therefore calls the cup of the Lord’s Supper ‘the cup of blessing’ (τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας, 1 Cor. 10: 16).⁶ And he also says that this cup makes us one with the blood of Christ.

In scripture, a cup can signify several things. God may, for example, give someone the cup of his wrath to drink (Is. 51: 17 and 22; Matt. 20: 22; Mark 10: 38; John 18: 11), and Jesus would be drinking that cup to the last drop, with all the corresponding agony, grief and battle of faith. In Gethsemane, he not only prayed if he could be saved from ‘this hour,’ but he also asked: “My father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (Matt. 26: 39; Mark 14: 36; Luke 22:42 [“remove this cup from me”]; cf. John 12: 27). Yet the cup of God’s wrath did *not* pass from him and he even had to endure being forsaken by God on the cross.

This cup alludes to blood that was shed, according to the significance introduced by Jesus.⁷ His choice of words does not refer to the application of wine, which could also be poured out or shed on other occasions. In this case, the cup of wine is simply meant to be drunk. Jesus is speaking of his shed blood: the cup which he hands out contains ‘blood wine’, and this action symbolizes bloodshed.⁸ Blood stands for the entirety of our being: as long as blood streams through our veins we are alive. Blood is life; it can accomplish atonement and with that, save the life of a sinner (Deut. 12: 23; Lev. 17: 11). Being guilty or innocent of someone’s blood concerns the responsibility for life and death (Matt. 27: 4 and 24-25; cf. Acts 20: 26). In short, thus J. P. Versteeg, the bloodshed that Jesus was alluding to regarded human life that was flowing away into death, and a violent death at that,⁹ as Jesus’ life was about to be taken by means of crucifixion. ‘This is my blood’ then means: *this is me in my violent death*.¹⁰ When the cup, filled with the wine of his blood, subsequently circulates among the disciples to drink from together, following an explicit invitation of Jesus (“Drink of it, all of you”), they in some way participate in the suffering and death of the Lord. This is why Paul emphasizes the unity of believers with Christ (1 Cor. 10: 16).

CE, to prevent the Passover meal degenerating into a drinking bout while the participants lingered at the table, as was the Greco-Roman custom (185–188).

⁶ Cf. *Didachè* 9-10 on the thanksgiving meal and the accompanying prayers in the early church.

⁷ See for the association of (red) wine with blood: Gen. 49: 11; Deut. 32: 14; Is. 63: 3 and 6.

⁸ Jakob VAN BRUGGEN: *Marcus: Het evangelie volgens Petrus*, CNT-3, Kampen, Kok, 1988, 339. The combination of ‘blood’ with ‘pouring out’ or ‘being shed’ occurs more than once in the New Testament: Matt. 23: 35; Luke 11: 50; Acts 22: 20; Rom. 3: 15; Rev. 16: 6.

⁹ J. P. VERSTEEG: “Het avondmaal volgens het Nieuwe Testament”, in W. VAN ’T SPIJKER e.a. (ed.): *Bij brood en beker: Leer en gebruik van het heilig avondmaal in het Nieuwe Testament en in de geschiedenis van de westerse kerk*, Goudriaan, De Groot, 1980, (9–64), 46–47. Cf. Gen. 4: 10; Ez. 35: 6; Acts 12: 24.

¹⁰ Cf. Otfried HOFIUS: “Herrenmahl und Herrenmahlsparadosis. Erwägungen zu 1 Kor 11,23b-25”, in *Paulusstudien*, WUNT 51, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1989, (203–240), 227.

In what manner do they participate? In the night of the exodus from Egypt, blood functioned as a sign and as a mark of security. The Israelites had been ordered to dab the blood of the slain Passover lamb onto the door posts and lintel of their houses. The angel of death would then pass them by; the occupants of a house with this blood mark would be spared (Ex. 12: 7,13,23-28) – and this while all the Egyptian's firstborn were killed that night. Although the red wine was not connected directly with this function of blood, the repeated drinking from the cup did count as a toast to the liberation out of Egypt by God's own hand (cf. Ex. 6: 6-7).

What Jesus here indicates is that the new exodus is approaching: once again there will be a wondrous liberation of God's people from the stranglehold of evil. When drinking this 'blood wine,' all the table companions would have been thinking of the exodus from Egypt. At the same time, Jesus points ahead to his violent death. Not the blood of the Passover lamb, but the blood of God's Son brings true liberation from evil's grip. Jesus' blood is a sign and a mark of security for his disciples. In this way, they will benefit from the suffering and death of their Lord. Thanks to his martyr's death on the cross, where innocent blood was shed, the lives of Jesus' followers will be spared. Our Passover Lamb is Christ, Paul writes (1 Cor. 5: 7). According to Matthew, Jesus actually spoke explicitly about the beneficial consequence of his self-sacrifice: his blood would be shed "for the forgiveness of sins". It is God's forgiveness that makes a new covenant possible (Jer. 31: 34), and with that objective Jesus had come into the world, again according to Matthew (Matt. 1: 21).

The impact of God's forgiveness elucidates also the eschatological promise made by Jesus when he handed out the cup: "I tell you: I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. 26: 29; see also Mark 14: 25; Luke 22: 18; cf. Is. 25: 6).

2. *The taste*

My self-sacrifice, even unto death by crucifixion, brings on the reality of the new covenant. This is the meaning of what Jesus said while raising the cup.¹¹ While Luke and Paul indeed mention the *new* covenant, in Matthew and Mark the manuscript tradition is not univocal: the oldest manuscripts lack the adjective 'new'.¹² Nevertheless, the use of the definite article clearly indicates *the* [new] covenant, a familiar term from Israel's prophetic tradition, from Jeremiah in particular. Jeremiah is the only prophet who mentions explicitly a new covenant, which the LORD was going

¹¹ In the New Testament, apart from in the Holy Supper tradition, the new covenant is mentioned only in 2 Cor. 3: 6; Hebr. 8: 8.13; 9: 15; 12: 24.

¹² Bruce M. METZGER (*Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition, Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994, 95.) suggests that the textual variant *καινης* seems to have been inserted from the parallel passages in Luke and 1 Corinthians. Even then, it sooner appears to be a clarification by the transcribers than that this has to be considered an incorrect interpretation. In both Matthew and Mark, the reading *καινης* is broadly supported by the textual tradition: not only by the majority text (Byzantine tradition), but for example also by

to set up with Israel (the ten tribe kingdom) and Judah (the two tribe kingdom), so that his people were to become one people again.¹³

“The days will come—says the LORD—when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31: 31-34, cited in its entirety in Hebr. 8: 8 - 12 and briefly in Rom. 11: 27).¹⁴

Moreover, Ezekiel prophesied concerning a covenant characterized by peace, which was to last forever (Ezek. 16: 60 and 37: 26; cf. Is. 55: 3; 61: 8; Jer. 32: 40; 1QS 4: 22; 5: 5-6). It was to be so enduring that it need never more be adapted or renewed, as was the case with the old covenant. Both with Jeremiah and Ezekiel, forgiveness of sins was promised within the scope of that new, everlasting covenant: God would never again think about what his people had done wrong and he would make atonement for it (Jer. 31: 34; Ez. 16: 63). In conclusion, a slightly enigmatic text from Zechariah may also be taken into consideration, with a promise of prisoners being set free when the King returns to Zion, “because of the blood of my covenant with you” (Zech. 9: 11). However, this expression is to be interpreted exactly, it is clear that the covenant of God with his people, ratified with blood, functions as a guarantee that this prophetic promise of salvation will be fulfilled.

In sum, the Old Testament prophets promised an eschatological era (“the days will come”), when God will act “in a new way to protect the covenant from the faithlessness of his people, to include the widest range of people within the covenant relationship and to bring forgiveness to all those who stand within this covenant relationship”.¹⁵

This prophetically foretold future is proclaimed a reality by Jesus at that last

the old Latin and Syrian translations. Moreover, in Matthew, this is supported also by various old majuscules, including the codex Bezae (Western tradition).

¹³ In the writings of the Qumran community, the new covenant is repeatedly mentioned, but without reference to the prophecy of Jeremiah (CD 6: 19; 8:21; 19: 33-34; 1 QpHab 2: 3; 1 Q28b 3: 26; 5: 21; 1Q34 3: 2:6).

¹⁴ For a more extensive treatment of this prophecy in Jeremiah, see the commentaries, esp. William McKane: *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, Volume II, ICC, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1996, 817–827; Georg FISCHER: *Jeremia 26-52*, HThKAT, Freiburg, Herder, 2005, 171–176.

¹⁵ Alistair I. WILSON: “Luke and the new Covenant: Zechariah’s prophecy as a test case”, in Jamie A. GRANT & Alistair I. WILSON: (eds.), *The God of Covenant: Biblical, theological and contemporary*

supper. All the more so because his suffering and crucifixion answers to the profile of the suffering servant from Isaiah 53: “he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities, [...] the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, [...] he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors” (NIV). By mentioning at Jesus’ institution words that the bloodshed was meant ‘for the forgiveness of sins,’ the evangelist Matthew makes explicit the relationship with this prophetic tradition from Jeremiah and Ezekiel, supported by Isaiah and Zechariah. The wine of the Holy Supper tastes of forgiveness.

Hebrews 9-10 elaborates extensively on the aspect of Jesus’ self-sacrifice unto death. That Jesus sacrificed his life to reconcile the sin of God’s people and to achieve forgiveness, the author interprets as the typical task of the high priest. At the same time, Jesus surpassed all earthly high priests, because he gained entrance to the Holy Place with his own blood, after he “had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins” (Hebr. 10: 12). In the last chapter of this letter, covenant terminology is used to allude to the death and resurrection of Jesus: “Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant” (ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου; Hebr. 13: 20). Here the everlasting covenant is the motivation for God’s action.¹⁶

Regarding the expression ‘cup of the new covenant,’ commentaries frequently refer to the moment at which the covenant of the Sinai was ratified by means of a blood sprinkling ritual. They do this with some right. According to Exodus 24: 8, Moses sprinkled the people of Israel with blood and spoke: “Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you” (LXX: τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης). In Hebrews 9: 18-22, this event is brought to memory to demonstrate that there can be no forgiveness without the spilling of blood (αἱματεκχυσία). Blood has binding strength. Despite the fact that in Exodus 24: 8 the words ‘blood’ and ‘covenant’ occur together, there are, nevertheless, three reasons why we should not think merely of this historical context.¹⁷ Firstly, the Sinai covenant was two-sided, an agreement between the LORD and his people, whereas the covenant Jesus refers to has been declared unilaterally by the LORD, requiring no promise from the people. Secondly, the blood sprinkling ritual from Exodus 24 is missing at the Passover

perspectives, Leicester, Apollos, 2005, (156–177), 165. He argues that the prophecy of Zechariah (Luke 1:77) is echoing Jeremiah 31: 34 in the words ‘knowledge’ and ‘forgiveness.’ See in this volume also the contribution of Kim Huat TAN: “Community, kingdom and cross: Jesus’ view of covenant”, 122–155. Peter J. GENTRY & Stephen J. WELLMUM: *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, Wheaton, Crossway, 2012, 433–530, provide a biblical theological overview of the covenant theme.

¹⁶ The Greek preposition ἐν must here be taken as causal or instrumental, comparable with διὰ (F. F. BRUCE: *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Revised Edition, NICNT, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1990, 388, footnote 119). Because Christ has sacrificed his life, God brought him away from the dead on account of his covenant.

¹⁷ Cf. VAN BRUGGEN: *Marcus*, 339–340.

meal – a cup of wine was passed around and no more than that. Thirdly, the expression ‘new/everlasting covenant’ does not occur at the Sinai covenant, as it does in the prophetic tradition.

As far as the biblical background of the blood of the new covenant is concerned, we should therefore also think of the fulfilment of what prophets such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel, supported by Isaiah and Zechariah, have prophesied in line with Exodus 24. “Behold, the days are coming,” says Jeremiah 31: 31, and those days have now come. Good Friday has come, for, according to the Jewish custom, the following day starts after sunset. And it was exactly “at sunset” when Israel had departed out of Egypt (Deut. 16: 6; Jer. 31: 32 explicitly mentions the moment of being led out of Egypt). Centuries later, on this particular evening of Passover, a new day has begun. Jesus will sleep no more. It is his day of death and, at the same time, the moment at which the new covenant of God commences. Forgiveness of sin is what creates a new commitment, after the relationship between God and his people had broken down due to Israel’s continuous disobedience. When God’s Son died for the atonement of sin, this new arrangement came into effect, based on forgiveness.¹⁸ Thus the new covenant had begun, starting on Good Friday.

For whom is the new covenant? Luke seems to place most of the emphasis on that which took place within the group of disciples, as far as farewell emotions are concerned, which is, perhaps, why his rendition is in the second person plural: “This cup that *is poured out for you [all]* is the new covenant in my blood. By giving his life, Jesus founded a brotherhood. As of now, the blood bond between him and his disciples would be unbreakable. Matthew and Mark both emphasize the communal drinking of *all* from one and the same cup. And in their rendition, this ‘all’ is followed by ‘many,’ a reference to Isaiah’s ‘servant prophesies’ (Is. 52: 14-15; 53: 11-12).”¹⁹ These different perspectives in the synoptic gospels do not exclude each other. The supper founds a community, with Jesus Christ at the centre. The new covenant is meant for all his followers, not exclusively for ‘the people of Israel and the people of Judah’ (Jer. 31: 31; Hebr. 8: 8).²⁰ The circle of supper guests was about to extend itself in the future, even to far beyond the borders of Israel, and also for those ‘many,’ Jesus was going to sacrifice himself (Matt. 20: 28; Mark 10: 45; Hebr. 9: 28; cf. John 11: 52; Rom. 5: 15 and 19).²¹

¹⁸ VAN UNNIK: “Η καινή διαθήκη”, 166–167.

¹⁹ The terms ‘many’ and ‘all’ alternate in prophetic texts, says H. DE JONG: *Van oud naar nieuw: De ontwikkelingsgang van het Oude naar het Nieuwe Testament*, Kampen, Kok, 2002, 114, with reference to Is. 2: 2-3 (all peoples, many nations); 53: 6 and 12; Rom. 5: 18-19.

²⁰ GENTRY & WELLMUM: *Kingdom through Covenant*, 497.

²¹ “There is one mediator between God and men”, Paul wrote, “the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:6). Atonement is therefore put into global perspective by John (1 John 2: 2; cf. 4: 14 and John 4: 42: “the Saviour of the world”).

3. *The aftertaste*

What does covenant renewal entail? God wants to make a new start with his people Israel. He does not make a different covenant, with other people as partners, but he lays down a different foundation, to support the relationship with his people. The new covenant is a better arrangement, in the sense that “it is enacted on better promises” (Hebr. 8: 6). It was not the covenant which had ailed, but Israel. In Hebrews 8: 7, the Jeremiah quote is brought forward as a reprimand of the people. The new arrangement God makes here is a better alternative than the Sinai covenant, to achieve the same goal. His relationship with Israel is given more legal force, because the debt of the people has been paid once and for all, thanks to Jesus’ sacrifice to the death. For the day of his death was, paradoxically enough, the moment of the promised covenant renewal.

The heart of the new covenant is that God intervenes personally to repair the relationship with his people. The *Thora*, which structures the covenant, is no longer imposed from outside, as becomes clear from Jeremiah 31: 31-34, but internalized by means of mind and heart. The required obedience is impressed onto the heart, so that the love for God is deeply rooted and emerges from that steadfast basis. Then the old covenant promise will return with renewed strength: “And I will be their God, and they shall be my people”, the result being, that nobody needs to be urged to learn to know the Lord – as in former days. The whole faith community lives in connection with him, from large to small, they know the LORD from personal experience.²² All this becomes possible through the renewing strength of God’s forgiveness: “For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” In the new covenant, forgiveness will be no longer temporary in nature, but definite.

A recurrence and application of the Jeremiah quote can be found in Hebrews 10: 15-17. The new covenant is no longer in the future, the author ensures his readers: our heavenly high priest has brought it into effect by his single sacrifice. Forgiveness is now a fact.²³

What aftertaste does the ‘blood wine’ have that Jesus Christ offers to drink? If God renews his covenant with Israel, then what is the position of non-Jewish believers concerning the new covenant at the time of salvation? Nowhere does the New Testament actually say that they were incorporated into Israel. On the contrary, according to Peter, the Israelites are the ones who belong to the covenant which God had made with their fathers (Acts 3: 25). And Paul writes that the covenants belong to the Israelites (Rom. 9: 4; cf. 11: 27), whereas non-Jews were by nature strangers to the covenant promises (Eph. 2: 12). From, among others, Romans 9-11, however, it is apparent that non-Jews were also welcomed by the God of Israel. He makes no distinction between people who call upon the same Lord (Acts 15: 9; Rom. 3: 22; 10: 12).

For this reason, Paul called himself and his co-workers “ministers of a new covenant” (διακόνιοι καινῆς διαθήκης, 2 Cor. 3: 6). He had been called to be an apostle

²² See H. R. VAN DE KAMP: *Hebreeën: Geloven is volhouden*, CNT-3, Kampen, Kok, 2010, 206.

²³ J. DE VUYST: “Oud en nieuw verbond” in *de brief aan de Hebreeën*, Kampen, Kok, 1964, 232–238.

after Good Friday, with the charge of carrying out this new will of God, not only among the Jews, but also among the nations. Concerning the old arrangement, Paul writes that it centred around the Thora: one had to adhere to the letter of the law (2 Cor. 3: 14: τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης). But in the new arrangement, life through the spirit is at the centre.²⁴ It is exactly there that we find room for salvation of the nations, to whom Paul and his co-workers (in the letterheads of 1 and 2 Corinthians he mentions Sosthenes and Timothy, respectively) proclaim the gospel. They have been equipped to serve the new administration which came into effect on Good Friday. From now on, the God of Israel wants to connect with everyone who bases their life on the death of his Son. Thanks to Jesus Christ, gentiles have the same privileges as Israelites: now they, too, form God's people (1 Petr. 2: 9-10). Thus the new covenant has, in practice, expanded in order to include an enormous range of people.

Although it was always about God's covenant with Israel, Henk de Jong rightly remarks that the new covenant announced by Jeremiah does not receive a national name (such as the Sinai, David's or Zion covenant).²⁵ There was a certain built-in openness, in advance, in the direction of the gentiles. Where the servant from Isaiah 53 must suffer for 'many others,' according to most interpreters one should think here, considering his worldwide charge, of God's salvation for people.²⁶ The manner in which that was to take place is also more or less indicated in the Old Testament. In Ezekiel, God promises to give his people a new heart and a new spirit to ensure that they observe his laws and rules, with as key promise: "And I will put my Spirit within you" (Ez. 36: 26-27): the Spirit as the beating heart of the new covenant. The 'pouring out' of the Spirit onto all, prophesied by Joel, was realized on Pentecost Day: onto the Jews in Jerusalem, as well as in the house of the Roman Cornelius at Caesarea (ἐκχεῶ; Joel 3: 1-2 LXX; Acts 2: 17-18 and 33; 10: 45). And this 'pouring out' of the Spirit corresponds terminologically with the blood of Jesus that is 'poured out' (ἐκχυννόμενον; Matt. 26: 28; Mark 14: 24; cf. Luke 22: 20).²⁷ Poured out blood, poured out Spirit: on Good Friday, Pentecost was made possible!

²⁴ BUITENWERF & DE JONGE: "Titels 'Oude Testament' en 'Nieuwe Testament'", 4.

²⁵ DE JONG: *Van oud naar nieuw*, 155.

²⁶ See for his worldwide task: Isaiah 49:6, cited in Luke 2: 32 and Acts 13: 47. In the second part of Isaiah the nations repeatedly come into focus. Isaiah 52: 15 even speaks of: "many nations".

²⁷ See for the combination of 'spirit' with 'pouring' in the New Testament: Tit. 3: 6; cf. Rom. 5: 5.

Poured out blood

Innocent blood (Mat. 23: 35; Luke 11: 50)

Of Jesus (Mat. 26: 28; Mark 14: 24; Luke 22: 20)

Of Stephen (Acts 22:20); of the saints and prophets (Rev. 16: 6)

Being swift to shed blood (Rom. 3: 15 < Ps. 10: 7)

Poured out Spirit

On the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 2: 17-18 [< Joel 3: 1-2] and 33)

Also on the Gentiles (Acts 10: 45)

Through Jesus Christ (Tit. 3: 6)

Cf. Love of God, through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5: 5)

The combination of prophecies from Jeremiah and Ezekiel is precisely what the apostle Paul also uses centuries later to explain to the Corinthians that the promises of the new covenant also apply to them, as non-Jews. Thanks to their faith in Christ, they live through the Spirit too: “You [yourselves] are a letter [of recommendation] from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Cor. 3: 3; living through the Spirit is also an important topic in Paul’s letters to the Romans and the Galatians).²⁸ Observe the Spiritual power of the new covenant.

Thus it was in Greece, too, that they drank from the ‘cup of the Lord,’ as Paul calls it in his letter to the Corinthians ([τὸ] ποτήριον [τοῦ] κυρίου; 1 Cor. 10: 21; 11: 27). Paul passed on to them a supper tradition which has also been maintained in the gospels and which refers back to the Lord himself (1 Cor. 11: 23a).²⁹ Communal eating and drinking to his remembrance emphasizes the spiritual bond between Christians, who are gathered at the same table, together with Christ, as were the first disciples. He is the head of the congregation. The bond with each other is anchored in him. All drink from the cup of the new covenant in his blood, as a foretaste of the eschatological messianic banquet. Mutual differences fall away against the preponderance of their bond with the host, who according to Paul ‘is all, and in all’ (Gal. 3: 28; Col. 3: 11).

Even today, the death of the Lord, who had his blood poured out for a complete atonement of all our sins, proves to have binding strength. At the celebration of the supper to his remembrance, wine is handed out and is drunk mutually from the same cup. In that way, it becomes an ecumenical communal meal.³⁰ The wine of the

²⁸ According to the Gospel of John, Jesus promised during this farewell meal repeatedly to send the Spirit (John 14-16). On the Pentecost day in Jerusalem, Peter’s words make clear that the work of the Holy Spirit touches the heart of the new covenant (Acts 2: 17-21 [citation from Joel 3 :1-5a],33,38-39).

²⁹ The only places where Paul speaks further about ‘blood’ are Acts 20: 26,28; Rom. 3: 25; Rom. 5: 9 (= dead); 1 Cor. 10: 16.

³⁰ Henk Jan DE JONGE: “The Early History of the Lord’s Supper,” in Jan Willem VAN HENTEN & Anton HOUTEPEN (eds.): *Religious Identity and the Invention of Tradition: Studies in Theology and Religion*,

Lord's Supper can therefore be said to have an aftertaste of spiritual bonding in the worldwide faith community of all who are led by the Spirit.

Perspectives

The preceding can be summarized in three perspectives which arose from this research in the field of biblical theology:

HISTORIC: God delivers his people through the blood of Christ: his self-sacrifice unto death.

PROPHETIC: The promised new covenant commences on Good Friday and includes all the followers of the Crucified.

ECUMENICAL: A worldwide Holy Supper community is being founded by the Spirit.

Assen, Van Gorcum, 2001, (209–237), 210–211, who considers it unlikely that the Holy Supper refers back to an institution by Jesus himself. His position is followed by his PhD student ALIKIN: *Earliest History*, 118–120.

Sándor Enghy

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON MIGRATION: ONE HISTORY, ONE SOLUTION¹

¹ This paper was presented in Amsterdam at the IRTI Summer School 2016 "Migration and the mission of the church" https://www.pthu.nl/irti/IRTI_Summer_School/programme-irti-summer-school.pdf

Introduction

The only aim of this paper is to discuss the matter of migration, in particular a single aspect of it in the Bible regarding the history as it is described there.

Some weeks ago I heard the words of Georg Steiner, rabbi and teacher of the European culture, in a radio interview. He said the following: "I know that Israel is an indispensable miracle. Perhaps my children and grandchildren will one day find their only refuge there. I know all that and I cannot accept it, because I believe that a Jew has a duty: to be a pilgrim, a guest. Throughout being a guest in order to help the people slowly and according to his resources to understand that we all are guests on this earth."

And now I have to ask: are we really guests on this earth? Are we convinced of that? If not, we have no duty and cannot make others understand it. Now I want to prove that we ourselves are migrants on this earth.

The word migrate means to wander, to move from one place to another. Just think of Adam. He is the first person who is moving. According to Gen 2,8 "*ADONAI*, God planted a garden toward the east, in 'Eden and there **he put** the person whom he had formed."² This placing was in fact a movement from one point to another:³

² CJB Taken from *the Complete Jewish Bible* by David H. STERN, 1998. Used by permission of Messianic Jewish Publishers, 6120 Day Long Lane, Clarksville, MD 21029. www.messianicjewish.net. BibleWorks 10

³ WTT *Codex Leningradensis Hebrew Text*. Includes changes as of Westminster Morph 4.14. The WTT Hebrew text is based on the Michigan-C Claremont Hebrew text, encoded in 1981–1982 at the University of Michigan under the direction of H. Van Dyke Parunak (of the University of Michigan) and Richard E. Whitaker (of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont Graduate University) with the financial support of the Packard Foundation.

וַיֵּטַע יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים גֶּן-עֵדֶן מִקְדָּם וַיִּקַּח אֶת-הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָצָר:

Proofs

1a) The first proof of one history is in Gen 2,15 which is **the beginning** of this one history: **וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הָאָדָם וַיַּנְחֵהוּ בְּגֵן-עֵדֶן לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ**: “The LORD God **took the human** and settled him in the garden of Eden to farm it **אֶת** and to take care of it.”⁴ But why can the history of humanity be one history? Because **at the beginning** of the story **יהוה** took **אֶת-הָאָדָם** and settled him in the garden of Eden to farm it and to take care of it. And the description of this taking **is לָקַח**.

1b) The first proof of one history regarding **the ending** of the one story is Psalm 73,24 – **בְּעֵצְתְךָ תְּנַחֵנִי וְאַחֵר כְּבוֹד תִּקְחֵנִי** – “You give me wise advice to guide me. And when I die, you will **take me away [לָקַח]** into the glory of heaven.”⁵ That is what the statement of the psalmist described at the end with the same expression: you will **take me away** into the glory. Consequently, life takes place in fact between these two points of taking – **לָקַח**.

2a) The second proof of the one history concerning **the beginning** of the story is Gen 3,24 where we can read: “So he drove the man out, and he placed at the east of the garden of ‘Eden the *k’ruvim* and a flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the **tree of life**” – **עֵץ הַחַיִּים** – ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς.⁶

2b) The second proof is in relation to **the ending** of the one story is Rev 22,14 – “Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the **tree of life**, and may enter through the gates into the city.”⁷ Or according to another translation: How blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they have the right to eat from the **Tree of Life** [ἐπι τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς – **מִעֵץ הַחַיִּים**] and go through the gates into the city.”⁸ If we concentrate on the tree of life – **לָקַח** – after the phrase of taking, we can conclude that the Life of man goes on in fact between two trees of life. And there is in any case only one history that takes place between these trees.

⁴ CEB Common English Bible, 2011, BibleWorks 10

⁵ NIRV Holy Bible, New International Reader's Version, 1995, 1996, 1998 by International Bible Society www.ibs.org. BibleWorks 10

⁶ CJB, WTT, BGT This database is a combination of the BNT and LXT databases. BNT–Nestle–Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th Revised Edition, (eds.) Barbara and Kurt ALAND, Johannes KARAVIDOPOULOS, Carlo M. MARTINI and Bruce M. METZGER in cooperation with the Institute for New Testament Textual Research, Münster/Westphalia, Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012. Used by permission. LXT – LXX Septuaginta (LXT) (Old Greek Jewish Scriptures), (eds.) Alfred RAHLFS, Stuttgart, Württembergische Bibelanstalt / Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft (German Bible Society), 1935. BibleWorks 10

⁷ NKJ The New King James Version, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc. BibleWorks 10

⁸ CJB, BGT, HNT Hebrew New Testament 1886/1999/2013. Salkinson-Ginsburg edition of 1886, revised 1999/2013 to conform to the Textus Receptus Greek NT. 1999/2013 by The Society For Distributing Hebrew Scriptures. BibleWorks 10

Purpose

1) Only those who do not have a purpose get nowhere. History has a purpose because it is not a race to nowhere. The first proof of the purpose of the one history is described in Deut 8,2 – “And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and to prove thee, to know* – לְדַעַת לְיָסֵתְךָ לְרַעַת – what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep *his commandments*, – [הַתְּשׁוּמָר (מִצְוֹתָיו) מִצְוֹתָיו] or no”⁹; or “whether you would obey his commands.”¹⁰ The purpose of the one history is first of all, proving whether people *keep God’s commandments or obey his commands*, since people manifest in what is in their heart through keeping God’s commandments.

2) There are more evidences to support that there is no history without purpose. In the last chapter of his book, John sees the new Jerusalem with her “life – giving river...with the tree of life along its banks”:¹¹ through the middle of the city’s main street. We find the *tree of life* – עֵץ הַיַּיִם – on each side of the river “which produces twelve crops of fruit, bearing its fruit each month. The tree’s leaves are *for the healing of the nations*.” [εἰς ἰατρᾶν τῶν ἔθνων – לְרִפּוּת הַגּוֹיִם]¹² (Rev 22,2) This *healing of the nations* is consequently the purpose of the one history through the tree of life. What John intends to express regarding history is that it is not an end in itself. *It is in fact like the leaves of the tree of life: for the healing of the nations:* εἰς ἰατρᾶν τῶν ἔθνων – לְרִפּוּת הַגּוֹיִם.¹³ Basically, the whole history is a therapy, and that is the whole purpose of it. This is what God keeps in his mind about everything that happens.

So if the purpose of the one history proves whether people *keep God’s commandments*, whether they *obey his commands*, the only question according to Deut 8,2 is whether people keep God’s commandments, whether they obey his commands – [הַתְּשׁוּמָר (מִצְוֹתָיו) מִצְוֹתָיו] – or not.

Going through this obedience, which is also the solution of the one history, it

⁹ KJA, KJV Authorized Version (KJV) – 1769 Blayney Edition of the 1611 King James Version of the English Bible – with Larry Pierce’s Englishman’s-Strong’s Numbering System, ASCII version. 1988–1997 by the Online Bible Foundation and Woodside Fellowship of Ontario, Canada. Licensed from the Institute for Creation Research; WTT BibleWorks 10

¹⁰ NIRV

¹¹ S. J. KISTEMAKER: *Revelation*, Grand Rapids, 2007, 579.

¹² CEB, BGT, HNT

¹³ „ἔθνος ... those who do not belong to groups professing faith in the God of Israel, the nations, gentiles, unbelievers” – *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition revised and edited by Fredrick William DANKER, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957, 1979, 2000. Electronic text hypertexted and prepared by OakTree Software, Inc. Version 2.1 276.; „a foreign (non-Jewish)” – Strong’s Greek Dictionary of the New Testament (Greek Strong’s) Public Domain Electronic text downloaded from the Bible Foundation e-Text Library: <http://www.bf.org/bfetexts.htm> Hypertexted and formatted by Oaktree Software, Inc. Greek text added by OakTree Software, Inc. Version 2.7 1495 of 5553.

is specified in the last chapter of the Bible: “Blessed *are* those who do [ποιουντες] His commandments [τας εντολας – אֲשֶׁרֵי הַשְּׂמִירִים אֲתִמְצִיתוּ –], that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Rev 22:14)¹⁴ As we see, it is the same wording as it is in Deut 8,2 about the entire journey: God led his people on in the wilderness¹⁵ testing them whether they keep his commandments, or not.

At the end of the history of the entire journey, the summary of the conditions of moving toward the goal of history is mentioned: Blessed *are* those – **goal** – who do – ποιουντες – His commandments, – אֲשֶׁרֵי הַשְּׂמִירִים אֲתִמְצִיתוּ – **conditions** – τας εντολας – that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city – Rev 22,14.¹⁶

Problems

1) But why at all is it necessary to have any solution? Because there are problems. According to Gen 3,24 the primal problem is disobedience.

Problem 1 in the story of Adam (Gen 3,24) is that God “drove the man out [וַיִּדְרֹשׁ – και ἐξέβαλεν], and placed at the east of the garden of ‘Eden the *k’ruvim* and a flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life [וַיִּצְוֶה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַמְּצִיָּהוֹת לְשׂוּמְרֵי הַדֶּרֶךְ אֶל־עֵץ־הַחַיָּה – ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς].”¹⁷

But what is the problem here? He is not included in the garden of ‘Eden anymore. God drove the man out – ἐξέβαλεν. The court was similar as it is written in Rev 11,2: not allowed to be measured: because it was given unto the Gentiles: “But the court which is without the temple leave out [ἐκβαλε] and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months.¹⁸ Man is not included anymore, like something that belongs not to something as part of it. Man doesn’t belong to the garden of ‘Eden anymore.

But through obedience one has the right (is included again) to the tree of life. Rev 22,14 says: “Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may **have the right to the tree of life**, and may enter through the gates into the city” [ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ].”¹⁹ They may **have authority** to the ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς / אֲשֶׁרֵי הַשְּׂמִירִים.²⁰

¹⁴ NKJ BYZ *The New Testament in the Original Greek Byzantine Text Form*, 2005 Compiled and arranged by Maurice A. ROBINSON and William G. PIERPONT. The print edition can be obtained from: www.chiltonpublishing.com; HNT

¹⁵ Scripture quotations marked HCSB are taken from the Holman Christian Standard Bible®, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible Publishers. Holman Christian Standard Bible®, Holman CSB®, and HCSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers. BibleWorks 10

¹⁶ NKJ, BYZ, HNT

¹⁷ CJB, WTT, BGT

¹⁸ KJV

¹⁹ NKJ, BGT

²⁰ ETH *Etheridge Translation of the NT Peshitta* (1849), The text was provided by Janet Magierra of Light of the Word Ministry <http://www.lightofword.org>. BibleWorks 10; BGT, HNT

The secret of being included again moves forward: **Blessed are** – Μακάριοι – אֲשֶׁר־י – Rev 22,14. They are those who do His commandments, and they may have the right to the tree of life – ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς – עֵץ הַחַיִּים – על – and may enter through the gates into the city.²¹

According to the dictionaries the meaning of אֲשֶׁר־י is 'to go forward'.²² Be blessed means in this regard: go forward to the tree of life. **Blessed are** – Μακάριοι – אֲשֶׁר־י means **go forward** on the road to the tree of life; so those who do His commandments, have the right to the tree of life – ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς – עֵץ הַחַיִּים – על and may enter through the gates into the city. We find the same phrase – אֲשֶׁר־י – in the book of Prov 9,6: “Abandon your simplistic ways and live; walk [אֲשֶׁר־י] in the way of understanding”;²³ or „Forsake ye, the simple, and live, and **be happy** in the way of understanding.”²⁴ As we see the different translations, the translators see the relationship between אֲשֶׁר־י – walking and happiness.

2) Problem 2 is in the story of Cain. Concerning this issue, I have checked Gen 4,12. There are two phrases in the text: נָגַע וְנָדָה. These words are differently rendered in different translations. After Cain killed his brother Abel, God said to Cain: “When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you; you shall be a **vagrant and a wanderer** on the earth.”²⁵ In other translations: “When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a **fugitive and a vagabond** shalt thou be in the earth.”²⁶ And in another variation: “When you try to cultivate the ground it will no longer yield its best for you. You will be a **homeless wanderer** on the earth.”²⁷ According to the dictionaries נָגַע means to roam around without house or home,²⁸ vagabond, wanderer.²⁹ נָדָה means to be aimless, homeless,³⁰ wander, flee.³¹ But we read about a sign – אֵימָה – in this story of wandering from place

²¹ MHT *Modern Hebrew New Testament*, copyrighted 1995, revised 2010 by The Bible Society in Israel, 17 Jaffa Road, P.O. Box 44, Jerusalem 91000, Israel. NKJ, BGT

²² E. KÖNIG: *Hebräisches und aramäisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, Leipzig, Dietrich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1936, 30.

²³ CEB, WTT

²⁴ YLT *The English Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* 1862/1887/1898, by J. N. YOUNG. ASCII version Copyright 1988–1997 by the Online Bible Foundation and Woodside Fellowship of Ontario, Canada. BibleWorks 10

²⁵ *Scripture taken from the New American Standard Bible*, The Lockman Foundation 1960,1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1988, 1995. BibleWorks 10

²⁶ KJV

²⁷ NET *The NET Bible*, Version 1.0, 1996–2006 Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. BibleWorks 10

²⁸ HALOT *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Ludwig KOEHLER and Walter BAUMGARTNER, translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. RICHARDSON, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands Electronic text hypertexted and prepared by OakTree Software, Inc. Version 3.4. 681

²⁹ *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Concise DCH), (ed.) David J. A. CLINES, 2009, Dictionary of Classical Hebrew Ltd. Electronic text hypertexted and prepared by OakTree Software, Inc. Version 2.4. 266.

³⁰ HALOT 678.

³¹ *Concise Dict. of Classical Hebrew*, 264.

to place. According to Gen 4,15 “The LORD put a sign [אֹת] on Cain so that no one who found him would assault him.”³² We know about this sign that the bearer of it belonged to a particular protective deity. Scholars³³ highlight that at that time a name, or a letter of a deity’s name was inscribed on the person. So was it on Cain’s face? Of course, we don’t know exactly what it looked like, but what we know is that Cain belonged to God.

אֹת is a mark but it is wonder – אֹת – without ו in the aramaic version With ו we find the form – וֹת – in Gen 1,1 בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: where in the messianic interpretation the word son referring to the son of God occurs twice³⁴ and the son of man is the first and the last, whose sign – אֹת – is the ה in the ancient Hebrew alphabet. According to the theory, the Egyptian cross form became the aramaic ה.³⁵

But solution is included in the wandering situation and which is the consequence of the sign – אֹת. We can read in Gen 4,15: “The LORD put a sign [אֹת] on Cain so that no one who found him would assault him.”³⁶ The consequence of God’s sign is protection = grace. The wanderer sinner belongs to God contrary to the view of man, according to which taking vengeance on him for killing his brother would be the right aftermath. This protection goes so far as Isa 7,14 which characterises this sign during the reign of Ahaz (Isa 7,1) as the sign of God’s presence among his people against foreign powers, saying that he is the only protection: “...the Lord will give you a sign [אֹת]. The young woman is pregnant and is about to give birth to a son, and she will name him Immanuel [עִמָּנוּ אֵל].”³⁷

3) The third problem we find is in the story of Abraham. The speciality of the story is that foreignness in this story is part of the covenant as the beginning of the story of Israel. We can read in Gen 15,13: “Then the LORD said to Abram, ‘Have

³² CEB, WTT

³³ R. W. MELLINKOFF: *The mark of Cain*, Eugene, Or., Wipf and Stock, 2003, 22–39.; R. W. L. MOBERLY: The Mark of Cain: Revealed at Last?, *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 100, No. 1 Jan., 2007, 11–28.; C. OCHS: Nomad and Settler in Patriarchal Religion, *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3/4 Spring–Summer, 1976, 56–61.; http://shammai.org/genesis_4_commentaries.pdf

³⁴ J. BYRON: *Cain and Abel in Text Tradition*, Leiden, Brill, 2011, 119–122. ; E. LEVINE: The Syriac Version of Genesis IV 1-16, *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 26, Fasc. 1 Jan., 1976, 70–78 ; *PEH PEH, PES – The Peshitta* (Aramaic New Testament), The text of the Aramaic is taken from The Syriac New Testament and Psalms, published by United Bible Societies, specifically the Bible Society in Turkey. <http://trivialdevotion.blogspot.hu/2014/05/cain-marked-for-life-genesis-415.html>; <http://rabbimichaelsamuel.com/2009/11/augustine-and-the-mark-of-cain/>; <http://www.biblegemma.com/pi-and-the-bible.html>

³⁵ דְּבַר־נִשָּׂא – PEH; like a Son of Man – Rev 1,13 – CJB; I am the First and the Last – Rev 1,17 – CSB; אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי הָרִי – Rev 22,13 -HNT; J. KLEIN – A. SPEARS – M. CHRISTOPHER: *The Book of Revelation Through Hebrew Eyes, Lost in translation series*, Volume 2 Bend, Covenant Research Institute, 2009, 89–92. http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/alphabet_letters_tav.html; <https://www.hope-challenged.com/the-sign-of-the-cross/> ; <http://gnosticteachings.org/courses/alphabet-of-kabalalah/762-tav.html> 2017. 08. 09. 16:04

³⁶ CEB, WTT

³⁷ CEB, WTT

no doubt that your descendants will live as **immigrants** [גָּרִי – **πάροικον**] in a land that is not their own, where they will be oppressed slaves for four hundred years.”³⁸

What is interesting here connecting these phrases to the New Testament is that being migrant means not being without God, which has always consequences. Being migrant is per se a solution.³⁹ We find the same wording in another context: “So now you are no longer **strangers** [גָּרִים – **ξένοι**] and **aliens** [תְּחוֹשְׁבִים – **πάροικοι**]. Rather, you are **fellow citizens with God’s people** [συμπολίτης τῶν ἁγίων] and you **belong to God’s household** [οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ – **וּבְנֵי בֵּית אֱלֹהִים**].” (Eph 2,19)⁴⁰

If being with God has consequences, then people have duties, because οἰκεῖος in the text is **not somebody who has to be served, but somebody with duty belonging to the house**,⁴¹ and συμπολίτης τῶν ἁγίων – *possessing the same citizenship with others, a fellow-citizen*, that is Gentiles, as were taken in the communion of the saints, namely people consecrated to God.⁴² This communion has to have its necessary consequences.

If we remain in the setting of the story of Abraham, we see that even human conclusion as problem can be part of the solution. But where is the human solution in the story of Abraham? According to Gen 16,6 “Sarai treated her [הָאֵרֶץ] harshly, and she **ran away** [וַתִּבְרַח] from Sarai.”⁴³

Why could anything happen to this human solution that was more than a human solution? Because the LORD has heard about Hagar’s harsh treatment, as we read in Gen 16,11: “The LORD’s messenger said to her, ‘You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You will name him Ishmael **because the LORD has heard** [כִּי־שָׁמַע יְהוָה] about your harsh treatment.’”⁴⁴ It is important here in the text that the Qual perfectum has a determining function for the unfolding of the whole story and the verb form emphasises the person of YHWH. We can find this Hagar in the New Testament as well. In Gal 4,25 “**Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia** [Ἀγὰρ Σινᾶ ... Ἄραβία· - הָאֵרֶץ ... סִינַי בְּעֶרֶב] and she corresponds to the present-day Jerusalem, because the city is in slavery with her children.”⁴⁵

Here we see Arabia:⁴⁶

³⁸ CEB, WTT, BGT

³⁹ The same colours indicate the same wording of the different texts and translations.

⁴⁰ CEB, WTT, BGT

⁴¹ *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 694.

⁴² BGT; *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, by Joseph Henry THAYER, D. D. Public Domain Formatted and hypertexted by OakTree Software, Inc. Version 1.6. 4847.

⁴³ CEB, WTT

⁴⁴ CEB, WTT

⁴⁵ CEB, WTT, BGT

⁴⁶ blob:null/2ae897d4-a80d-41ec-babe-a485d225fcde



If “Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and she corresponds to the present-day Jerusalem, because the city is in slavery with her children” as Gal 4,25 says, then that Hagar as the mother of Ishmael is the mother of the Arabians.⁴⁷ Consequently, Hagar as slave was able to bear slave-children which means in fact that Jerusalem had rejected Christ in the name of the law, which is similar to the human effort involved in the birth of Ishmael.

But according to Gal 4,26 “the Jerusalem that is above is free [ἐλευθέρα – יהושפחה].”⁴⁸ Jerusalem above is free through justification before God, free from human endeavour. I would like to understand it preferably in the context of the national anthem of Israel and hope that people of God will be a free nation – יהושפחה.

It is important in this context according to Gal 3,16 that “the promises were made to Abraham and to his descendant [σπέρματι] ... who is Christ [ὅς ἐστιν Χριστός].”⁴⁹ If the “descendant” refers to Christ, then the covenant which God made with Abraham was fulfilled in Christ and can be given to the Gentiles by Christ, so that through faith we might receive the Spirit promised by God because as Gal 3,14 says: the purpose of the story is “that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles [ἔθνη] through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ CEB

⁴⁸ CEB, WTT, BGT

⁴⁹ CEB, BGT

⁵⁰ NIV Quotations designated (NIV) are from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*, 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by International Bible Society, BibleWorks 10; ἔθνος ... a foreign (non-Jewish) one (usually, by implication, pagan): — Gentile, heathen, nation, people. – *Strong’s Greek Dictionary of the New Testament* (Greek Strong’s) Public Domain Electronic text downloaded from the Bible Foundation e-Text Library: <http://www.bf.org/bfetexts.htm> Hypertexted and formatted by Oaktree Software, Inc. Greek text added by OakTree Software, Inc. Version 2. 7. Paragraph 1484 of 5553

In Gen 16,12 we read the following: “He [Ishmael] will be a wild mule of a man; he [Ishmael] will fight everyone, and they will fight him. He [Ishmael] will live at odds with all his relatives.”⁵¹ Or according to an other translation: “He [Ishmael] will be as free and wild as an untamed donkey. He [Ishmael] will fight with everyone, and everyone will fight with him. He [Ishmael] will have conflicts with all his relatives.”⁵² We can learn from Gal 3,14 that if the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles, there is no better definition of being gentile than the characterization of Ishmael: a wild mule of a man will fight everyone and they will fight him, and will live at odds with all his relatives. This is the best way to characterise somebody who does not believe in God and yet blessing given to Abraham might come to these Gentiles through Christ Jesus.

4) Now let us turn our attention to problem 4 in the story of Jacob. We are still in line with problems within the one story, namely why a solution is needed: Jacob acquires blessing through trickery. According to Gen 27,41 “Esau was furious at Jacob because his father had **blessed him** [בִּרְכָיו] and for the sake of his foul play he had to flee [בָּרַח].”⁵³ The fleeing Jacob will be blessed. Gen 28,14 says that in him and in his seed all the tribes of the earth shall be **blessed** [וְיִבְרְכֶנּוּ].⁵⁴ God tells it to Jacob, the man who for the sake of his foul play has to flee – בָּרַח. What else could it be if not a solution for the fleeing man?

5) Going further with problems within the one story where solution is needed, the next step is Moses. We can find problem 5 in his story. Ex 2,15 tells us that despite the well-intentioned deed, one has to flee. Moses **fled** [וַיִּבְרַח] from the face of Pharaoh.⁵⁵ Why did he have to run away? Because he killed the Egyptian and he flees with the same phrase like Hagar and Jacob [בָּרַח] and this fleeing man meets God and gains his mission. In Ex 3,12 God tells Moses: “certainly I will be with thee [כִּי-אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ].”⁵⁶ I think this is again a sort of solution for the fleeing man in the story.

6) The problems within the one story where solution is needed continue. The next step in connection with it is David. We bump into problem 6 in his story. In 2Sam 15,19 we find the following:

“And the king said to Ittai [אִתַּי] the Gittite, Why dost thou [אִתָּה] also go with us [אִתָּנוּ]? Return to thy place, and abide with the king; for thou [אִתָּה] art a **foreigner**, and besides, thou [אִתָּה] hast **emigrated** to the place where thou dwellest.”⁵⁷ A word-

⁵¹ CEB

⁵² GWN GOD’S WORD translation, 1995 by God’s Word to the Nations. See: <http://www.godsword.org>

⁵³ CEB, בָּרַח – בָּרַח word-play.

⁵⁴ WTT, DRA *The Douay-Rheims*, 1899 American Edition, Very literal translation of the Latin Vulgate, BibleWorks 10.

⁵⁵ KJV, WTT

⁵⁶ KJV, WTT

⁵⁷ WTT, DBY *The English Darby Bible 1884/1890*, a literal translation by John Nelson DARBY (1800–1882), 1988–1997 by the Online Bible Foundation and Woodside Fellowship of Ontario, Canada. Licensed from the Institute for Creation Research, BibleWorks 10

play makes the message more effective here together with a name אִתָּי, a pronoun אִתָּךְ, and a preposition אִתְּ. The essence of the story is as follows: David's son rebels against his father. The king does have loyal supporters outside his family Ittai, the Philistine Gittite. He probably had to flee and leave his home so he went to David in order to be protected. David's purpose is most likely to range the fugitives. 2Sam 15,21, however, informs us that Ittai responded to the king's intention, "As ADONAI lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, your servant will be there too."⁵⁸ It is interesting that we find the same wording in Ruth 1,16-17: "But Rut said, 'Don't press me to leave you and stop following you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God. Where you die, I will die; and there I will be buried. May ADONAI bring terrible curses on me, and worse ones as well, if anything but death separates you and me.'⁵⁹ There are three main connections between the two texts: God – who controls the statement and knows how much is at stake, namely death or life, and the measure of loyalty – wherever you go, I will go. The central figure in the second story is Ruth and the keyword is the redeemer: "I'm Ruth your servant [says Ruth to Boaz]. Spread out your robe over your servant, because you are a redeemer [גֹּאֵל]." (Ruth 3,9)⁶⁰ Out of the 115 occurrences we find 21 in the book of Ruth. Only the Book of Isaiah overtakes Ruth with 25 ones, but there are only 4 chapters in the Book of Ruth and 66 in Isa.

It happens twice that the phrase within one vers occurs 5 times only in the book of Ruth. The results in percentage are the same: Isa 0.98, Ruth 10.85, Lev 1.18.⁶¹ It is not an accident that we meet Ruth in the Redeemer's Family Tree in Mt 1,5. She appears only here in the whole New Testament. She is connected to it more than likely through the thought of the redeemer – גֹּאֵל.

To conclude, if migration is a problem, there is always a solution. Migration is per se never an end of the line without future. Migration is not merely a feeling of wallowing in self-pity. Migration has a duty.

Duties

1) In Ex 23,9 the Lord said to Moses, "do not be hard on the man from a strange country who is living among you; for you have had experience of the feelings of one who is far from the land of his birth, because you yourselves were living in Egypt, in a strange land."⁶² Or as another translation interprets it: "Don't oppress an immigrant [גֵּר]. You know what it's like to be an immigrant [גֵּר], because you

⁵⁸ CJB

⁵⁹ CJB

⁶⁰ CEB, WTT

⁶¹ Accordance 11. 2. 5. 0

⁶² BBE *The English Bible in Basic English 1949/1964*, 1988–1997 by the Online Bible Foundation and Woodside Fellowship of Ontario, Canada. Licensed from the Institute for Creation research. Printed in 1965 by Cambridge Press in England. BibleWorks 10

were **immigrants** [גֵּרִים] in the land of Egypt.⁶³ The experience of a sort of migration entails the duty: do not oppress an **immigrant**! You know what it is like to be an **immigrant** because you were **immigrants** in the land of Egypt.

2) We can furthermore discover this phrasing of duty which comes from the experience of a kind of migration in Lev 19,34, where God said to Moses: “Any **immigrant** who **lives** [הַגֵּר וְהַגֵּרָה] with you must be treated as if they were one of your citizens. You must love [וְאַהֲבָתָם – ἀγαπήσεις] them as yourself, because you were **immigrants** [גֵּרִים] in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.”⁶⁴ The people of God must love the **immigrants** because they were **immigrants**, too, therefore their behaviour must be determined by their experience.

We find the same keywords in the New Testament in John 3,16: “God so loved [ἠγάπησεν – אָהֵב] the world [τὸν κόσμον] that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won’t perish but will have eternal life.”⁶⁵ According to the Lexicons of the New Testament the κόσμος embraces τὰ ἔθνη τοῦ κόσμου in rabbinic interpretation אֲמוֹת הָעֵלָם, that is humankind apart from Israel, the unconverted in the world which serves to beautify through decoration, adornment and adorning. The κόσμος is the sum total of everything here and now: the world, the (orderly) universe, the order, humanity in general and the planet earth as a place of inhabitation.⁶⁶

If it is so as it is mentioned above then God does not like blasting, firing, killing or stabbing, in one word, disorder, because the universe is an ordered structure.⁶⁷ The function of the universe is to reflect the beauty of God. This is the reason why disorder is opposed to the purpose of God. Disorder does not serve the purpose of creation.

God loves humankind. He loves all nations without exception but does not want disorder because the universe as an ordered structure serves his purpose, and it can only reflect God’s beauty and orders as an ordered structure. Only in these conditions can the universe correspond to its function commanded by God. From this it follows the blemish, disfigurement of the one solution of the one history. It is true according to John 3,16, that God loved the world and gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won’t perish but will have eternal life. The purpose of God’s embracing love of the whole universe is to offer everyone who believes in him not to perish. What is the flaw here in fact? Limitation, namely that everyone who believes in him. That is in order to receive this everlasting life one must believe in God’s only begotten Son.⁶⁸ This is bad news among the good: without faith in

⁶³ CEB, WTT

⁶⁴ CEB, WTT, BGT

⁶⁵ CEB, BGT, MHT

⁶⁶ BDAG *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 561, 562.

⁶⁷ Louw & Nida *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, (eds.) Johannes P. LOUW and Eugene A. NIDA, Editors, 1988, 1989 by the United Bible Societies, New York, NY 10023 Second Edition, 1. Accordance11. 2. 5. 0

⁶⁸ <http://calvinandcalvinism.com/?p=7693> 2017. 08. 15.

God's Son who is the Messiah, there is no redemption. Moreover, who believes, has to remain in faith.⁶⁹

Parenthetical conclusions

1. There is one history.
2. History has a purpose.
3. Nothing comes to pass without God.
4. God is everywhere.
5. There are problems during the history.
6. If migration is a problem it is inherently among other problems.
7. Migration as a problem is part of the one history.
8. Where there is a problem during the one history, there is without doubt a solution.
9. Regarding migration from the concept of one history, the solutions are as follows:
 - could not be integration per se
 - could not be economic
 - could not be political
10. God is the ruler of history.

There is therefore a solution exclusively in accordance with him.

What does it mean: in accordance with him? We read in Ex 23,12: “Work for six days and rest the seventh so your ox and donkey may rest and your servant and migrant [וְהַגֵּר] workers may have time to get their needed rest.”⁷⁰ The phrase גֵּר is translated here as migrant. Migrants have to get their rest.

In the same text – Ex 23,12 – other words are also emphasized besides the phrase “migrant” [גֵּר], e.g. “six days” [שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים]. We find the same phrase in an other text in Ex 20,9-10: “Six days [שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים] you may work and do all your tasks, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. Do not do any work on it, not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants, your animals or the immigrant [וְהַגֵּר] who is living with you.”⁷¹ It is remarkable here is that besides the six days [שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים], גֵּר is translated as **immigrant**.

We find the same keywords and translations of these words – six days – שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים – **immigrant** – גֵּר – in Deut 5,13-14: “Six days [שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים] you may work and do all your tasks, but the seventh day is a **Sabbath** [שַׁבָּת] to the LORD your God. Do not do any work on it – not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants,

⁶⁹ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν – „idereen die blijft geloven” – P. H. R. van HOUWELINGEN: *Johannes*, Kampen, Kok, 1997, 99.

⁷⁰ WTT, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, This edition issued by contractual arrangement with NavPress, a division of The Navigators, U. S. A. Originally published by NavPress in English as *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, 2002, by Eugene PETERSON. Version 2.0

⁷¹ CEB, WTT

your oxen or donkeys or any of your animals, or the immigrant [יְגֵרִי] who is living among you so that your male and female servants can rest just like you.⁷²

If after all, we want to seek the real reason of the Sabbath, we find two proofs for it.

We can read in Deut 5,15: “Remember that you were a slave in Egypt [מִצְרַיִם], but the LORD your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. That is why the LORD your God commands you to keep the Sabbath [הַשַּׁבָּת] day.”⁷³ It means that the slavery in Egypt is the basis for keeping the Sabbath. That is the reason for people not to do any work not even the immigrant or migrant (גֵּר).

According to Ex 20,11 the basis of keeping the Sabbath is consequently why people may not do any work not even the immigrant or migrant (the phrase גֵּר is used), is the creation and the rest of the Creator: “Because the LORD made [עָשָׂה יְהוָה] the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them in six days [שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים], but rested [יָנַח] on the seventh day. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath [הַשַּׁבָּת] day and made it holy.”⁷⁴

The different reasons of keeping the Sabbath are intentional, and they emphasize the same ellipse with two focal points in the center showing that there is one ruler of history against every lordship and power of the universe. This knowledge is the root of the real rest. Those who have experienced it, have the duty to make sure that even the immigrants, migrants (גֵּר is used) rest.

According to Gen 15,13, immigrants are purposely part of God’s covenant: “Then the LORD said to Abram, ‘Have no doubt that your descendants will live as immigrants [גֵּר – πάροικον] in a land that is not their own, where they will be oppressed slaves for four hundred years.’”⁷⁵

With reference to this text we can ask: Has God not paved the way of his covenant with Abraham for His descendants, who live as immigrants in a land that is not their own? Was being immigrant not intentionally part of God’s covenant in order that the people of his covenant would experience being immigrant so that they can handle the issue of migration (גֵּר is used)?

In the Hungarian church history, the name of the dwelling and vicarage of the minister in the local congregation is *parókia*, *παροικία* where the pastor, minister, he/she is aware of being stranger, sojourner, migrant, immigrant, of his/her existence in motion. This experience is the basis of building real communion. In this sense today no unions either social or political (EU) can be a solution but only a communion in the biblical sense.

The only problem or danger of not being a community in the biblical sense and of not being member or insider of this communion is, if – according to Luke 13,25 – once the owner of the house gets up and shuts the door, then people (in the text: you) will stand outside and knock on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open the door for us.’

⁷² CEB, WTT

⁷³ CEB, WTT

⁷⁴ CEB, WTT

⁷⁵ CEB, WTT, BGT

He will reply, 'I don't know you or where you are from.'⁷⁶ The danger is that insiders become outsiders.

Our only duty is in fact not to allow this to happen.

Let me remind you of the father who teaches his child to pray saying "This is why we need to prepare ourselves for meeting with God." Because it is written: dust you are and to dust you will return.⁷⁷ Then the child bowed down, picked a little dust up in his hand asking: Tell me, please daddy: does it here go or come?

Final conclusion

Our life is, in fact, a migration from dust to dust. This is the status of man. It is due to the creation.

Some years ago we had a cultural program, a monodrama in Hungary with the title: Being on the way is happiness, to arrive is death. The writer does not desire a mournful God but a God who will keep and protect players, hobos in their hoboism. Let me say at the end of my paper that I wish God could keep us in our migration on the way to him.

The last great question is about the death of Uzzah who had put his hand on the ark as the Israelites moved God's ark from Abinadab's house in order to take it later to Jerusalem, and 1 Chron 13,10 reveals that Uzzah died there in front of God. Why did he have to die? The one answer among others is that in a new situation people must not insist on old forms, and disobedience must not appear in the form of obedience.

Finally, I would like to ask three questions: Is there a new situation today due to migration or not? Can we look for new forms of biblical obedience together or not? Do we want an apparent, illusory solution or a real one today, if solution is needed at all?

⁷⁶ CEB

⁷⁷ NIV

Gyula Homoki

**WHERE TO LOOK
IN SUFFERING?
A FICTIONAL
ROUND-TABLE
DISCUSSION
WITH J.B., J.C.
AND J.T.**

Suffering is a universal human experience. Everyone experiences troubles, difficulties, pain and loss in life. Being a human simply means that we are under “curse”, we cannot avoid having certain storms in our lives. Some of them are small and almost insignificant such as a toothache yet some of them are tremendously overwhelming. This universal, widely known and experienced segment of our lives is the main topic of Archibald MacLeish’s great play, *J. B.* which is based on the biblical story of Job. Right at the beginning, he introduces this universality, he puts it into the mouth of Nickles: “*Job is everywhere we go / His children dead, his work for nothing, / Counting his losses, scraping his boils...*”¹ Job is everywhere and, at some points, we become Jobs as well. As I was reading through the play, the concept of ‘seeing’ had become more and more the center of *J. B.* MacLeish interprets the suffering as a way of learning or a school which we can never graduate from in this life. But what do we have to learn? The answer is ridiculously easy: “*See God*”.² This becomes the ultimate purpose of any tribulation in our lives. However, this does not come that easy. We cannot find comfort that easily in the dark hours of pain. In the moments of the valleys of our lives, we often feel miserable and we are unable to fulfill this ultimate purpose of our misery, namely to see God. We confess with J. B.: “*I go forward but He is not there, / Backward, but cannot perceive Him...*”³ In these darkest moments, it can be life-saving if some fellow men come and join us in our suffering. However, most of the time, we accept this comfort and counsel from the mouths of people who have suffered just as much or even more as we do. We don’t

¹ Archibald MacLeish: *J. B.*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The Riverside Press, 1958, 13.

² MacLeish: *J. B.*, 50.

³ MacLeish: *J. B.*, 128.

need false friends (kinds like Zophar, Eliphaz, and Bildad) who come only to say their own convictions and make us feel even worse. We need words that are truly spoken and legitimate. And there is only one way that it can happen: if someone has experienced the same affliction as we do. Experience of hardships gives authority to the words of comfort.

Therefore, in this short essay, I chose to present two extraordinary people of the past who knew suffering from firsthand experiences, thus their losses and troubles together with the biblical ideas they present give authority to their thoughts and words. I am trying to create a fictional round-table discussion where two great men come and say comforting words of direction to the all-time Jobs and can serve with an answer to the question: Where to look in suffering?

Two men of sorrows

It is not my intention to present their whole biography here, I would rather draw the attention to those certain happenings in their lives which make this authorization legitimate.

John Calvin (1509, Noyon – 1564, Geneva), after getting associated with a Protestant speech delivered by the new rector of the University of Paris, Nicholas Cop, had to flee the city since King Francis I started a general persecution of the followers of the new faith.⁴ The French refugee started to study in Basel, Switzerland, and by the end of the summer, he had finished the first edition of his masterpiece *Institutes*. The main reason for writing the book, as it becomes clear from the preface, is to inform the persecutor king about the new faith and prove that the French evangelicals were not heretics, but followers of the true faith.⁵ After he had to leave Geneva, he found rest in Strasbourg. He married Idolette de Bure, but, unfortunately, their first-born son Jacques died two weeks after he was born; later they got two more children, but they died again soon after their births. In 1549, Calvin had lost Idolette as well who most probably died of tuberculosis. His health didn't serve him well either, the weakness of his stomach, the constant migraines, and the huge kidney stones made his life sometimes unbearable. In addition to all these miseries, he had to face the many threats and enemies he had in the city of Geneva every day.⁶ The loss of his children and wife, the unbearable pain and health-condition, the enemies all around him make his words genuine on suffering.

The contemporary fellow-Reformer of Calvin, the Dutch Jean Taffin (1529, Doornik – 1602, Amsterdam) is one of the most applicable figures of the refugee pastors who had to flee several times in his life from the Catholic avengement. Taffin, after converting to the Calvinist faith in 1557, became one of the leaders of the

⁴ Anthony N. S. LANE: *A Reader's Guide to Calvin's Institutes*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Academic, 2009, 11.

⁵ John PIPER: *John Calvin and His Passion for the Majesty of God*, Wheaton, Illinois, Crossway Books, 2009, 30.

⁶ PIPER: *John Calvin*, 41.

“underground church” in Antwerp.⁷ But next year, in 1558, he had to flee for the first time in his life. He ended up in Metz (after spending some time in Aachen, Strasbourg, and Geneva), where he served as a pastor. There he got married, and a son called Samuel was born to them in 1564, but the baby died at young age. Some years later the Calvinistic worship got banned in Metz, and Taffin had to leave again, this time he settled in Heidelberg. From 1573 we find him in the court of William of Orange serving as the chaplain of the prince. In 1577, Taffin lost his wife. After leaving his position in the court of William of Orange, he put all his efforts into shepherding the Reformed congregation in Antwerp. But he didn’t have much rest. In less than a decade, in 1584, Antwerp fell into Spanish-Catholic hands and for the third time in his life, he had to become a refugee again. This time he went to Emden, the safe-haven for refugees. On this way, he wrote one of his most influential work, *The marks of God’s children*, which he dedicated to the persecuted Reformed people in the Low Lands and became a “sound counsel on spiritual and mental hygiene long before psychology and pastoral counseling became fields of study.”⁸

Loss of family, threats, poverty, persecution – the darkest valleys of suffering were the share of Calvin and Taffin. Therefore, we shall turn our ears even more eagerly to what they have to tell us. I summed up in five major points the directions where these two excellent minds in their most classical works (viz. Calvin’s *Institutes*⁹ and Taffin’s *The Marks of God’s Children*) turn our eyes in the midst of tribulations. In their thinking, we ought to look *ahead*, *away*, *back*, *up*, and *to Christ* when we face difficulties. Let us examine briefly these points in more details.

Look away! and Look ahead!

Our main focus determines everything. The thing we focus on necessarily results in defocusing on something else. Therefore, it is no little of importance what are we focusing on. Both Calvin and Taffin state that our corrupted human nature is in love with this world. It is earthly wealth, prosperity, comfort, fading glory and joy that we are pursuing. Very rarely do we think about the future. For this reason, God uses different kinds of tribulations to awake our sensitivity for the eternal things, to make us look *away* from this earth and look *ahead* – the more important things to come. Calvin puts it this way:

⁷ Jean TAFFIN: *The Marks of God’s children*, translated by Peter Y. DE JONG, edited by James A. DE YONG, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Academic, 2003, 11ff.

⁸ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God’s children*, 20.

⁹ In the case of Calvin, I restrict myself to the chapters where he is focusing on the topic of suffering in depth. Though, throughout the *Institutes*, he addresses the theme, more thoroughly he is dealing with it in the so-called “*The Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*”, chapters 6–10 of the third book. These chapters are sometimes published separately – Charles PARTEE: *The Theology of John Calvin*, Louisville-London, Westminster John Knox Press, 2008, 217ff. In the citations I used the translation of Henry Beveridge (John CALVIN: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, translated by Henry Beveridge, Albany, Oregon, SAGE Software, 1996).

In short, the whole soul, ensnared by the allurements of the flesh, seeks its happiness on the earth. To meet this disease, the Lord makes his people sensible of the vanity of the present life, by a constant proof of its miseries... For we must hold, that our mind never rises seriously to desire and aspire after the future until it has learned to despise the present life. (III.9.1)

In light of the eternal, the temporary is but nothing. The same is true for the time of suffering. If we are but citing and listing all the time the loss we suffered during the times of troubles, concentrating only on the recent horrors of life, looking only to the present state, then we give place to our flesh to talk and get even more troubled.¹⁰ We must hold on and see the finish of our race. In this regard, poverty, loss, exile, even death counts as nothing, rather it becomes “the longed-for haven after fearsome thunderstorms... , the end of a dangerous and painful journey... , the healing of every wound and disease...”¹¹ By looking away from this earth, Calvin can even say that we ought to long for death and despise this life in the light of the coming one.¹²

Taffin calls the eternal heaven “oceans of joy”,¹³ where the fullness of life will be accomplished and reached. He is using wonderful and dazzlingly beautiful language to describe the “blessedness” of the children of God, the eternal life which is ahead. There, we will enter into the “joy of our Lord”, and reach a state when we can see God face-to-face and enjoy the overflowing love and joy that this perfect knowledge provides. The reader can clearly sense that Taffin is struggling with the words, he is doing his best to describe this reality, to give a foretaste to the miserable people of a place that is prepared for them. Similarly, before discussing the issues of the present life, Calvin emphasizes the coming glory that is the inheritance of the children of God, by pointing at “the theological reality that hope in the future life provides for the present life.”¹⁴ He shows precisely that our life on earth is nothing but an exile, the body is nothing more than prison, this life is but a place of residence, not an eternal home.¹⁵ Therefore, the main point of suffering is to rise above, the only way to endure tribulations is first to look away from this present life and look ahead.

“When others rob us of earthly goods, God gives us the kingdom of heaven. When the world no longer tolerates us, heaven opens wide to receive us. When the men of this world drive us away, angels reach out a hand and embrace us as their companions in heaven. When people curse us, their words are blown away by the wind... When we are deprived of our offices and positions, Jesus Christ gives those that are far more excellent. He makes us kings and priests to God his Father. When our

¹⁰ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God's children*, 79–80.

¹¹ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God's children*, 130.

¹² CALVIN: *Institutes*, III.9.4.

¹³ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God's children*, 33.

¹⁴ PARTEE: *The Theology of John Calvin*, 220.

¹⁵ CALVIN: *Institutes*, III.9.4.

friends despise and disown us, Christ is not ashamed to receive us and call us his brothers. When men steal the inheritance of our parents, Christ acknowledges us as heirs of his Father and coheirs with him...¹⁶

Look back! and Look to Christ!

Another direction one shall look in in the hours of darkness is backward. Taffin dedicates quite some pages to demonstrate that suffering has always been the share of the true children of God. He recalls both Old and New Testament figures to illustrate that oppression and persecution took place in every age among the righteous. Starting from Abel murdered by Cain, through Israel's slavery in Egypt and the exile in Babylonia, the brutal Antiochus, Herod and other tyrants always caused much suffering to the children of God. Job and David, Peter and Paul all suffered serious trials and horrors for their faith. Therefore, Taffin concludes that suffering and persecution, the oppression believers have to face is real evidence that they are the true church: "Only if the world were to love, honor, and welcome us would we have reason to doubt God's Word as well as our election and adoption as his children."¹⁷

Calvin suggests also another aspect of looking back. He is turning our attention not to the past warriors of faith and their suffering, but to our past sins and errors. He puts it like this: "Therefore, whenever we are afflicted we ought immediately to call to mind our past life. In this way, we will find that the faults which we have committed are deserving of such castigation."¹⁸ However, he adds immediately that the reason for the troubles we had to face in the past is not that God would be cruel and enjoy giving punishment, but rather pedagogical: "that our most merciful Father requires not only to prevent our weakness, but often to correct our past faults, that he may keep us in due obedience".¹⁹ Therefore, suffering can also serve as an educational instrument by which God cleanses us from sins and prevents us from future faults.

However, the main reason that is worth looking back on is that we can see the story of the Calvary then, and the Precious Lord crowned with thorn, who accepted the suffering and became a partaker of our human experience in this way. However, in the thoughts of Calvin, the suffering of Christ and of humans are two distinct categories. While humans must suffer due to their disobedience, Christ had to suffer for he chose obedience.²⁰ The troublesome earthly life of Christ started with the incarnation and had its lowest point at the cross. What the fate of Christ was on Earth is the fate of Christians as well: "Having begun this course with Christ the first-born, he [God, the Father] continues it towards all his children."²¹ The whole concept

¹⁶ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God's children*, 116.

¹⁷ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God's children*, 86.

¹⁸ CALVIN: *Institutes*, III.8.6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Theodore MINNEMA: Calvin's interpretation of human suffering, in David E. HOLWERDA (ed.): *Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1976, 150.

²¹ CALVIN: *Institutes*, III.8.1.

of the Christian life is shaped by this *imitatio Christi* in the reasoning of Calvin. “Through Christ, the believer must undergo mortification. This process of mortification has two distinguishable dimensions: an outward and an inward one.”²² The inward one is the self-denial towards the fellows and God,²³ the outward one is the “bearing of the cross”, the different kinds of suffering.²⁴ The same notion is found in Taffin’s reasoning. While human suffering is universal, for the believers it is a process of becoming more and more like Christ or a clear sign that we are in fellowship with him: “It would indeed be strange if we, living under a Head crowned with thorns, would be treated sweetly and gently. Should we then doubt our adoption as children when we are called to the same way of life that he as the beloved Son of the Father has assumed?”²⁵ In this way, by looking back to the former times and seeing the lives of the heroes of the faith to whom the world was not worthy (Hebrews 11:38), we receive the comfort that we share the same faith with them and the same promise, and by looking at Christ we see not only a comforting example of the perseverance in suffering, but by looking at him we become sure that we belong to him and are being transformed more and more into His image.

Look up – to God!

Trust in the Sovereign God and his Sovereign will is a firm theological ground in the troublesome situations and times. Looking up to God, fixing our eyes on the Heavenly Ruler of everything, exclude all fortunate powers to play in our life. This trust is crucially important for Calvin and Taffin. Both Reformers use the same analogies describing the work of God in the human afflictions. For Taffin, as I have pointed out above, suffering serves as a mark that we are truly the children of God. By referring to Hebrews 12, he stresses that if God did not use chastisements (oppression, persecution) we would be bastards but not real sons. We must trust that the sufferings are “sharp and painful darts, shot by a gentle and loving hand”²⁶ and that “the righteous God never sends us suffering for any reason other than that we deserve them”.²⁷ Whatever we have to deal with, we must accept it and hold it as a “way that leads to everlasting glory”.²⁸ Calvin also speaks about the educating hands of the Father,²⁹ saying that the clear difference between believers and non-believers lies in the acceptance of the chastisement of God: “the latter, as the slaves of inveterate and deep-seated iniquity, only become worse and more obstinate under the lash; whereas the former, like free-born sons turn to repentance”.³⁰

²² Minnema, *Calvin’s interpretation of human suffering*, 154.

²³ CALVIN: *Institutes*, III.6–7.

²⁴ CALVIN: *Institutes*, III.8.

²⁵ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God’s children*, 98.

²⁶ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God’s children*, 107.

²⁷ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God’s children*, 111.

²⁸ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God’s children*, 125.

²⁹ CALVIN: *Institutes*, III.8.6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Besides the image of the Father, both of them describe God as the Physician who wants to heal us by the medicine of suffering.³¹ The terrible disease of our pride, our self-sufficiency, self-reliance, the wrong sense of security, our constant desire for the earthly things must be healed by a harsh cure. However, “the heavenly Physician treats some more gently, in the case of others he employs harsher remedies, his purpose being to provide a cure for all”.³²

Therefore, we must hold on to the great comfort of Romans 8:28: “And we know that in all things God works for the God of those who love him.” By looking up to God, we do not see a Cruel force that punishes us, but a True Father who chastises his children only for their good, and a Heavenly Physician who wants to heal the diseases in our lives.

Whether poverty, or exile, or imprisonment, or contumely, or disease, or bereavement, or any such evil affects us, we must think that none of them happens except by the will and providence of God; moreover, that every thing he does is in the most perfect order.³³

But what does this sound doctrine mean in our everyday life? – one may ask. Taffin makes it really concrete and practical at the end of his book. He concludes that we must remain steadfastly in connection with our Mother, which is the Church in order to remain in God, our Father.³⁴ By gathering for assembly, listening to the sermons, participating in the sacraments and above all, persevering in prayer we can also constantly look up to God. It doesn't matter what the enemy takes away from the people, the main desire of the believer even in the darkest hours of suffering must be to seek the Lord and to be in His dwelling place.

³¹ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God's children*, 104.

³² CALVIN: *Institutes*, III.8.5.

³³ CALVIN: *Institutes*, III.8.11.

³⁴ TAFFIN: *The Marks of God's children*, 134ff.



RESEARCH PAPERS

FORSCHUNGSMATERIALIEN

FERENC POSTMA
DÁVID PÁNDY-SZEKERES



Ferenc Postma

DAS TESTAMENT DES VERSTORBENEN UNGARISCHEN STUDENTEN JOHANNES / JÁNOS N. SZEPSI (FRANEKER, DEN 28. APRIL 1658) UND DIE ERFREULICHE ENTDECKUNG VON ETLICHEN BÜCHERN AUS SEINEM NACHLASS

„Mortuus in Domino“. Das meldet uns eine handschriftliche Notiz aus späterer Zeit – in der ältesten Matrikel des Sárospataker *Collegium* – bei der ursprünglichen Einschreibung von Johannes N. Szepsi als Student an der illustren *Schola Sárospatakensis*, den 17. Dezember 1652.¹ Und eine andere Quelle erwähnt zugleich – in einer weiteren Aufführung der Sárospataker Studenten – den Ort, wo Szepsi während seiner späteren *Peregrinatio* „ad Academias“ letztendlich „im Herrn entschlafen“ war: „obiit Franequae“,² d.h. verstorben in Franeker, in der friesischen Kleinstadt, wo er sich zuvor – am 8. Juli 1657 – offiziell als Student der Theologie an der örtlichen Universität hatte einschreiben lassen.³

Ein Anfänger in der Theologie war er zu dieser Zeit aber nicht. Schon einige Jahre befand er sich bereits als *Peregrinus* in den Niederlanden, wo er zuerst in Utrecht studierte (1655)⁴ und später seine Studien fortgesetzt hatte an der Universität Groningen (Immatrikulation am 30. September 1656).⁵ Auch in Franeker sollte er *in theologicis* gute Fortschritte machen, und – wie zuvor in Utrecht und Groningen – etliche theologische Werke, unter denen auch viele akademische Drucke (u.a. zahlreiche *Disputationes exercitii gratial* Übungsdisputationen), sammeln (siehe dazu unten: Appendix III). Als er dann dort am 3. Mai 1658 – „placide et beate in Domi-

¹ * Für ihre Hilfe bei der Analyse und der Deutung von Szepsis Testament danken wir hier im besonderen Herrn Piter van Tuinen (Harlingen) und Frau Dr. Judit Vásárhelyi (Budapest). Für die Korrekturen des Deutschen danken wir Herrn Dr. Péter Eredics (Rijswijk) an dieser Stelle recht herzlich. Siehe dazu: Richárd HÖRCSIK: *A Sárospataki Református Kollégium diákjai, 1617–1777*, Sárospatak, SRK Tudományos Gyűjteményei, 1998, 85: Johannes N. Szepsi.

² Siehe dazu: József GULYÁS: *A sárospataki főiskola diákjai (IV), Egyháztörténet, 1944/2*, 127–136, 129. – N. B.: Die spätere Notiz: „ubi obiit Franequae“ gehört hier zu Szepsi, nicht zu dem darauffolgenden – am 6. Januar 1653 immatrikulierten – Studenten Nicolaus O. Pataki, und statt 1657 sollte man hier 1658 lesen. Beide Korrekturen sollte man auch anbringen in: HÖRCSIK: *A sárospataki Református Kollégium diákjai*.

³ Siehe dazu: S. J. FOCKEMA ANDREAE – Th. J. MEIJER (Hrsg.): *Album Studiosorum Academiae Franekerensis, 1585–1811; 1816–1844.*, Band I, *Naamlijst der studenten*, Franeker, 1968, 170 (Nr. 5787): Johannes Szepsi, Ungarus, Theol.

⁴ Siehe dazu: *Album Studiosorum Academiae Rheno-Trajectinae, 1636–1886. – Accedunt nomina Curatorum et Professorum per eadem secula*, Ultrajecti, 1886, 45: Joannes Szopsi, Ungarus, S. S. Theol. Stud. – Vgl. aber dazu: Réka BOZZAY – Sándor LADÁNYI (Hrsg.): *Magyarországi diákok holland egyetemeken, 1595–1918. // Hongaarse studenten aan Nederlandse universiteiten, 1595–1918*, Budapest, ELTE Levéltár, *Magyarországi diákok egyetemjárása az újkorban 15*, 2007, 131 (Nr. 1337), wo Szopsi und Szepsi offensichtlich nicht identisch sind. (Trotzdem sollte dieser Szopsi seine Studien in Sárospatak [!] angefangen haben).

⁵ Siehe dazu: *Album Studiosorum Academiae Groninganae*, Groningen, 1915, 77: Joannes N. Szepsi, Ungar., Theol.

no“ – verstarb, hatte er bereits alle Prüfungen abgelegt, und war er inzwischen „Sacræ Theologiae Candidatus“ geworden: „S. Th. Cand.“ – wie uns Szepsis Grabstein meldet, der bis heute – wenn auch sehr beschädigt⁶ – in der großen Stadtkirche – der Franeker Martini Kirche – erhalten blieb.⁷

Leider kennen wir die genaue Ursache seines Todes nicht, die Archivalien der Universität schweigen darüber. Möglicherweise ist Szepsi den ungünstigen Witterungsverhältnissen in Franeker zum Opfer gefallen. Oder ist er vielleicht erst krank ja sterbenskrank geworden, als er – gerade nach seinem Ausflug übers Meer nach England – dort wieder zurückgekehrt war?⁸ Wie dem auch sei, fast eine Woche vor seinem Sterben, bereits am 28. April 1658, stellte er – „völlig bei Sinnen und urteilsfähig, körperlich aber schon schwach geworden“,⁹ und sich bewusst, „dass nichts gewisser sei als der Tod, nichts jedoch ungewisser als seine Stunde und sein Augenblick“¹⁰ – sein Testament auf. Letzteres geschah bei ihm zu Hause („in Musæo Testatoris“), in Anwesenheit von dem Professor für Philosophie Christophorus Munsterus,¹¹ von dem Franeker Bürgermeister („Consul“) Hiddius Fopma¹² und dem friesischen Rechtsanwalt Dr. Abelus Robijnsma,¹³ von dem dann amtierenden *Rector Magnificus*

⁶ Der Text seines Grabsteins ist nur noch zum Teil leserlich: *Quod mortale fuit / praestantis / D. Ioan: Sepsis Ungari / S: Th: Candi: / [Ao. 1658.] Maii. 3. [p]ie defuncti / [sub] [ho]c [mo]num: / [...] [co] mpar: / [...]*. – Der Stein wurde aus Szepsis eigenen Geldern bezahlt.

⁷ Höchstwahrscheinlich ist Szepsi jedoch in der Kirche der Universität – der sogenannten Akademiekirche – beerdigt, wo vorher und später auch die anderen verstorbenen ungarischen *Peregrini* zur letzten Ruhe gebettet wurden. Siehe dazu: Ferenc POSTMA: Das Franeker Bücherinventar des verstorbenen ungarischen Studenten Sámuel Vilmányi (Januar 1779), *Magyar Könyvszemle*, CXXIII, 2007/2, 233–241, 235.

⁸ Dass Szepsi auch England besucht hatte (vermutlich von Harlingen aus), bestätigt sein Testament. – Er blieb unerwähnt bei: Berta TRÓCSÁNYI: *Magyar református teológusok Angliában a XVI. és XVII. században*, Debrecen, *Debreceni Angol Dolgozatok* 11, 1944, und gleichfalls bei: György GÖMÖRI: *Magyarországi diákok angol és skót egyetemeken, 1526–1789. // Hungarian students in England and Scotland, 1526–1789*, Budapest, ELTE Levéltár, *Magyarországi diákok egyetemjárása az újkorban* 14, 2005.

⁹ Testament: « *judicii bene potens et memoriae, quamvis corpore debilis* ».

¹⁰ Testament: « *morte nihil certius, ejus vero hora et momento nihil incertius esse* ».

¹¹ Siehe über Christophorus Munsterus (1614–1660): W. B. S. BOELES: *Frieslands Hoogeschool en het Rijks Athenaeum te Franeker*, Band II, Leeuwarden, 1878–1889, 201–203, und gleichfalls: Sybrand GALAMA: *Het Wijsgerig Onderwijs aan de Hogeschool te Franeker, 1585–1811*, Franeker, 1954, 62–63. Er war 1651 als *Professor Logicae et Philosophiae* in Franeker berufen worden. – [Ferenc] POSTMA – J. van SLUIS (Hrsg.): *Auditorium Academiae Franekerensis, Bibliographie der Reden, Disputationen und Gelegenheitsdruckwerke der Universität und des Athenäums in Franeker, 1585–1843*, Leeuwarden/Ljouwert, *Minsken en Boeken* 23, 1995, 179. – Im Mai 1658 war er Mitglied des *Senatus Judicialis*–siehe dazu: Appendix I.

¹² Hiddius/Hidde Hessels Fopma. Im täglichen Leben war er Apotheker („Apothecarius“) in Franeker. – Gerne danke ich an dieser Stelle Herrn Martin Engels (Leeuwarden) für diese Informationen und auch für seine weitere sachkundige Beratung.

¹³ Abelus Robijnsma war Rechtsanwalt seit dem 2. Juni 1657, siehe dazu: M. H. H. ENGELS (Hrsg.): *Advocaten bij het (Provinciaal Gerechts)hof van Friesland. – Chronologische en alfabetische naamlijst, 1577–1849*, Leeuwarden, 1995, 14. – Er hatte zuvor Jura studiert in Franeker – vgl. dazu: POSTMA – SLUIS: *Auditorium*, Personenverzeichnis, s.v. – und hatte dort am 11. Mai 1657

Prof. Johannes Valckenier,¹⁴ und von fünf seiner Landsleuten („Populares“), nämlich Casparus Enyedi,¹⁵ Johannes Farkas Losonczi,¹⁶ Martinus Rima Szombati,¹⁷ Michael Dobrai¹⁸ und Stephanus Harsányi,¹⁹ die er – als Erblasser („Testator“) – alle dazu als Zeugen („Testes“) –höchstpersönlich („meo nomine et petitione“) eingeladen hatte. Dabei ernannte er zwei andere Landsleute – nämlich seine Lieblingskommilitonen

promoviert, siehe dazu: Th. J. MEIJER: *Album Promotorum Academiae Franekerensis, 1591–1811*, Franeker, 1972, 35.

¹⁴ Siehe über Johannes Valckenier (1617–1670): BOELES: *Frieslands Hoogeschool*, Band II, 215–217. Er war 1654–1668 Professor der Theologie in Franeker. – POSTMA – SLUIS: *Auditorium*, 191–194. Unter seiner Anleitung studierten viele ungarische *Peregrini*, und mehrere wurden von ihm finanziell unterstützt, vgl. dazu: Ferenc POSTMA: Warum Johannes Gele Debreceni bei Nacht und Nebel aus Franeker verschwunden ist: Die Franeker Inventarliste seiner dort hinterlassenen Bücher und Güter (1661), In: Judit NYERGES – Attila VERÖK – Edina ZVARA (Hrsg.): *MONOKgraphia, Tanulmányok Monok István 60. születésnapjára*, Budapest, Kossuth, 2016, 574–585.

¹⁵ Siehe über Casparus Enyedi [Enyedi R. Gáspár]: WIX Györgyné – Judit P. VÁSÁRHELYI (Hrsg.): *Régi Magyarországi Szerzők*, Band I: *A kezdetektől 1700-ig*, Budapest, OSZK, 2007 (s.v.). Er studierte Jura in Franeker, wie uns Szepsis Testament bezeugt, und zwar unter der Anleitung von Prof. Johannes Jacobus Wissenbach, vgl. dazu: FOCKEMA ANDREAE – MEIJER: *Album Studiosorum*, 172 (Nr. 5854), und gleichfalls: POSTMA – SLUIS: *Auditorium*, 155 (Károly SZABÓ – Árpád HELLEBRANT [Hrsg.]: *Régi Magyar Könyvtár*, Budapest, 1879–1898, Band III, 2055). – Am 30. März 1660 wurde er *Juris Utriusque Doctor* an der Universität Utrecht (SZABÓ – HELLEBRANT: *Régi Magyar Könyvtár*, III, 2119).

¹⁶ Siehe über Johannes Farkas Losonczi [Losonczi Farkas János]: WIX – VÁSÁRHELYI: *Régi Magyarországi Szerzők*, I (s.v.). Er studierte Theologie in Franeker, vgl. dazu: FOCKEMA ANDREAE – MEIJER: *Album Studiosorum*, 172 (Nr. 5836). – Seine Studien hatte er damals (1649) angefangen in Sárospatak, siehe dazu: HÖRCSIK: *A sárospataki Református Kollégium diákjai*, 80. – N. B.: Am 10. März 1657 verteidigte er eine *Disputatio theologica* in Leiden, unter dem Vorsitz von Prof. Abraham Heidanus (SZABÓ – HELLEBRANT: *Régi Magyar Könyvtár*, III, 1986). Szepsis Sammelband <Bo-24431> enthält ein Exemplar. – Vgl. dazu auch: BOZZAY – LADÁNYI: *Magyarországi diákok*, s.v.

¹⁷ Martinus Rima Szombati [Rimaszombati Márton] studierte Theologie in Franeker, vgl. dazu: FOCKEMA ANDREAE – MEIJER: *Album Studiosorum*, 171 (Nr. 5798). – Auch er hatte seine Studien damals (1651) angefangen in Sárospatak, siehe dazu: HÖRCSIK: *A sárospataki Református Kollégium diákjai*, 83. – Vgl. dazu auch: BOZZAY – LADÁNYI: *Magyarországi diákok*, s.v.

¹⁸ Michael Dobrai [Dobrai P. Mihály] – Student der Theologie in Franeker, vgl. dazu: FOCKEMA ANDREAE – MEIJER: *Album Studiosorum*, 171 (Nr. 5796) – hatte zuerst in Debrecen studiert, aber nachher (1651) seine Studien fortgesetzt in Sárospatak, siehe dazu: HÖRCSIK: *A sárospataki Református Kollégium diákjai*, 83. – Vgl. dazu auch: BOZZAY – LADÁNYI: *Magyarországi diákok*, s.v.

¹⁹ Stephanus Harsányi [Harsányi M. István] – Student der Theologie in Franeker, vgl. dazu: FOCKEMA ANDREAE – MEIJER: *Album Studiosorum*, 169 (Nr. 5732) – hatte 1651 seine Studien angefangen in Debrecen, siehe dazu: WIX – VÁSÁRHELYI: *Régi Magyarországi Szerzők*, I (s.v.), und gleichfalls: Jenő ZOVÁNYI – Sándor LADÁNYI (Hrsg.): *Magyarországi Protestáns Egyháztörténeti Lexikon*, 3. kiadás, Budapest, 1977, s.v. – Vgl. dazu auch: BOZZAY – LADÁNYI: *Magyarországi diákok*, s.v.

Gregorius Hernádnémethi²⁰ und Andreas Liszkai²¹ – in seinem Testament als Vollstrecker („Executores“) seines „Letzten Willens“, und zwar mit ihr beider Zustimmung und Bereitschaft („cum bono ipsorum consensu“).²² Zugleich bat er die dort Anwesende – individuell und alle gemeinsam – das Testament zusammen mit ihm zu unterschreiben, damit es sachlich von ihnen allen als Zeugen bekräftigt und so formell (*in forma*) rechtsgültig sei. Nachdem der ganze Text zuletzt – *in extenso* – vorgelesen worden war, so lesen wir, wurde das Testament dann gleich von Szepsi selbst („Manu propria“) und von all den anderen Anwesenden – voller Bereitschaft („libenter“) – unterschrieben.

Ohne Zweifel haben die beiden Vollstrecker seines „Letzten Willens“ sich sofort nach Szepsis Tod – wie gesagt, am darauffolgenden 3. Mai – gewissenhaft um seine Beerdigung gekümmert, und wohl mit Einverständnis des *Rector Magnificus*, der zuvor – wie wir gelesen haben – dessen Testament als Zeuge offiziell bekräftigt hatte. Wann genau Szepsi aber zur letzten Ruhe gebettet wurde, melden die Archivalien der Universität uns leider nicht. Jedoch soll die Begräbnis – so vermuten wir jedenfalls – noch vor dem 13. Mai stattgefunden haben. Gerade an diesem Tag wurde ja Szepsis Testament in einer Sitzung des *Senatus Judicialis*²³ von dem vorsitzenden

²⁰ Gregorius Hernádnémethi [Hernádnémethi Gergely] – Student der Theologie in Franeker, vgl. dazu: FOCKEMA ANDREAE – MEIJER: *Album Studiosorum*, 171 (Nr. 5793) – hatte, wie Szepsi selber, seine Studien damals (1652) angefangen in Sárospatak, siehe dazu: HÖRCSIK: *A sárospataki Református Kollégium diákjai*, 84. – In Franeker gehörte er zum Freundeskreis von Petrus Tsedreghius [Csedregi P. Péter], Paulus Jászberényi [Jászberényi P. Pál], Johannes Gele Debreceni [Debreceni Gele János] und Georgius Martonfalvi [Martonfalvi T. György], vgl. dazu: FERENC POSTMA: Die zwei Franeker Bücherinventare des siebenbürgischen Studenten Paulus Jászberényi (1670), *Magyar Könyvszemle*, Budapest, CXXII, 2006/4, 483–491, bzw. POSTMA: Warum Johannes Gele Debreceni bei Nacht und Nebel aus Franeker verschwunden ist – Vgl. dazu auch: BOZZAY – LADÁNYI: *Magyarországi diákok*, s.v.

²¹ Andreas Liszkai [Liszkai András] – Student der Theologie in Franeker – hatte sich dort am selben Tag wie Martinus Rima Szombati [Rimaszombati Márton] einschreiben lassen, vgl. dazu: FOCKEMA ANDREAE – MEIJER: *Album Studiosorum*, 171 (Nr. 5799). – Wie Szepsi hatte er seine Studien damals (1652) angefangen in Sárospatak, siehe dazu: HÖRCSIK: *A sárospataki Református Kollégium diákjai*, 84. – Vgl. dazu auch: WIX – VÁSÁRHELYI: *Régi Magyarországi Szerzők*, I (s.v.), und gleichfalls: BOZZAY – LADÁNYI: *Magyarországi diákok*, s.v.

²² Einige Jahre zuvor (1654) kümmerten sich Stephanus Katona Geleji d. J. [ifj. Geleji Katona István] und Johannes Jáz-Berényi [Jászberényi P. János] um den Nachlass des in Franeker verstorbenen Medizinstudenten Stephanus Némethi [Némethi István]. Siehe dazu: FERENC POSTMA – JUDIT P. VÁSÁRHELYI: István Geleji Katona der Jüngere und seine drei ungarischsprachigen Gedichte aus dem Jahre 1654, in GÁBOR KECSKEMÉTI – RÉKA TASI (Hrsg.): *Bibliotheca et Universitas, Tanulmányok a hatvanéves Heltai János tiszteletére*, Miskolc, Miskolci Egyetem BTK Magyar Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományi Intézet, 2011, 273–284, 276–277.

²³ Der *Senatus Judicialis* war das eigene *Forum academicum* der Universität, unter dem Vorsitz des dann amtierenden *Rector Magnificus*. Neben ihm gab es dabei vier *Assessores* (d.h. vier Professoren: die Vertretung der vier Fakultäten). Siehe darüber und namentlich über die Befugnisse dieses Gerichts: BOELES: *Frieslands Hoogeschool*, Band I, 250–279, und gleichfalls: FERENC POSTMA: Warum der ungarische Student Thomas Gyarmati [Gyarmati Tamás] im Februar 1669 aus der Provinz Friesland verbannt wurde, oder: Das recht peinliche Ende seiner Studienzeit an der friesischen Universität in Franeker, in RÉKA BOZZAY (Hrsg.): *Történetek a mélyfö-*

Rector Magnificus Professor Valckenier vorgelesen, und wurden dabei Szepsis Komilitonen Gregorius Hernádnémethi und Andreas Liskai formell mit der weiteren Vollstreckung seines „Letzten Willens“ beauftragt.

Beim Versterben eines ausländischen Studenten war der *Senatus Judicialis* – als das eigene Gericht der Universität – für die korrekte Abwicklung der Erbschaft zuständig,²⁴ und deshalb wurde noch in derselben Sitzung beschlossen, vorsorglich eine vollständige Abschrift („Apographum integrum“) von Szepsis Testament in die offiziellen *Acta* der Universität aufzunehmen. Vorsorglich, damit es nachher – bei eventuellem Verlust des Originals (z.B. durch Schiffbruch, Brand oder sonst wie) – niemals Anlass zu einem Rechtsstreit („litis ansa“) geben würde.²⁵

So wurde dann fast eine Woche später – am 19. Mai 1658 – letztendlich eine Abschrift („Copia authentica“) von Szepsis Testament in die *Acta* aufgenommen,²⁶ verifiziert – und amtlich autorisiert – von dem *Rector Magnificus* und dem derzeitigen Sekretär der Universität, Dr. Meinardus de Walricheim.²⁷

Dank dieser Abschrift sind wir jetzt – inhaltlich – völlig informiert über Szepsis „Letzten Wille“. Selbstverständlich spricht er darin zuerst über seine Beerdigung,

dról, Magyarország és Németalföld kapcsolata a kora újkorban, Debrecen, Printart-Press, 2014, 82–115, 83–89.

²⁴ Vgl. dazu: BOELES: *Frieslands Hoogeschool*, Band I, 266. – Die Beerdigung eines ausländischen Studenten, die Abwicklung seiner Erbschaft, die Begleichung von seinen Schulden etc., war eine Sache des *Senatus Judicialis*. – In diesem Fall sollte also der *Rector Magnificus* dafür sorgen, dass Szepsis Testament (d.h. das Original!) nach Ungarn (Sárospatak) geschickt wurde, zugleich mit einem Inventar seiner hinterlassenen Güter und Bücher. Leider ist keine Abschrift dieser Inventarliste in die *Acta* der Universität aufgenommen worden. Auch fanden wir darin keine Hinweise, dass Szepsis Zimmer zuvor versiegelt wurde, wie es damals üblich war („obsignatio“). Siehe dazu auch: POSTMA: Das Franeker Bücherinventar des verstorbenen ungarischen Studenten Sámuel Vilmányi, bzw. POSTMA: Warum Johannes Gele Debreceni bei Nacht und Nebel aus Franeker verschwunden ist.

²⁵ Siehe dazu: Appendix I. – Die Universität möchte also keineswegs große (juristische) Risiken eingehen.

²⁶ Siehe dazu: Appendix II. – Soviel wir wissen, betrifft es hier einen Einzelfall. – Auch als am 20. Juni 1721 der Theologiestudent Stephanus G. Komáromi [Komáromi Gellért István] in Franeker verstarb, wurde von dem *Senatus Judicialis* beschlossen, ein „Apographum“ von Komáromis Testament in den Archiven der Universität aufzubewahren („in Archivis asservandum“), aber diese Abschrift blieb nicht erhalten. Siehe dazu: „Tresoar“, Leeuwarden, *Archief Universiteit Franeker*, Inventar Nr. 26, 46 verso (den 1. Juli 1721).

²⁷ Meinardus de Walricheim, Meinardus Aitsema a Walricheim, Meinardus van Walrichem oder – schlichtweg – Meinardus Walrich, war seit dem 9. Mai 1657 Sekretär der Universität. Siehe dazu: A.P. VAN NIENES e.a. (Hrsg.): *De archieven van de Universiteit te Franeker, 1585–1812*, Leeuwarden, Rijksarchief, 1985, 200 (Nr. 2151) und 331. – Er hatte zuvor Jura studiert in Franeker, unter der Anleitung von Prof. Johannes Jacobus Wissenbach, vgl. dazu: POSTMA – SLUIS: *Auditorium*, Personenverzeichnis, s.v. – N. B.: ENGELS: *Advocaten*, 14, meldet aber, dass er erst am 20. Dezember 1662 als Rechtsanwalt – „Curiae Supremae advocatus“ – eingeschrieben wurde.

„more Christiano“, wofür er zugleich Geld zur Verfügung stellt: „Quadraginta Daleoros Imperiales“ (40 Reichstaler), was für die Kosten reichen sollte.²⁸

Danach folgt sofort das, was für ihn als Erblasser von größter Wichtigkeit sei: Die *Illustris Schola Sárospatakiensis*²⁹ – also seine Heimatschule, wo er früher seine Studien angefangen hatte – sollte die Erbin („Haeres“) all seiner irdischen Güter sein, einschließlich seiner eigenen Wohnung in der königlichen Freistadt Kassa,³⁰ welche er damals von seiner Mutter – Margareta Nehéz³¹ – geerbt hatte.

Dorthin – in die Bibliothek dieses illustren *Collegium* – sollte man auch all seine Bücher bringen, und zwar „omnes meos Libros, qui in Patria, Belgio, et Anglia extant“, aber dazu noch viele andere, welche man alle zuletzt in Franeker von seinen eigenen – noch übrig gebliebenen – Geldern („meos nummos omnes, qui supererunt“) ankaufen sollte, gar so viele wie sein ungarischer Reisekoffer („arca“) bergen konnte. Und wenn am Ende noch etwas Geld übrig sei, dann sollte auch das bestimmt sein für seine *Alma Mater*.

Und am selben Reformierten *Collegium* in Sárospatak wünscht er sich, sollte man sich später auch ernsthaft kümmern um seinen jetzt noch jugendlichen Verwandten („Consanguineus“) Johannes, der Sohn von Matthias Cothurnarius³² – angenommen, dieser sei dann noch am Leben, und wäre dort tatsächlich Student geworden.

Aber nicht nur in Sárospatak, sondern auch in Tokaj sollte man aus seinem Nachlass etwas vermacht bekommen. So sollte der dortige reformierte Pfarrer, Johannes Gönczi,³³ seinen Reisehut („petasus“) und seine Reisebürste („penicillum“)

²⁸ Die beiden „Executores“ – Hernádnémethi und Liszkai – sollten sofort nach Szepsis Beerdigung all die dazugehörigen Kosten bezahlen, u.a. auch die Kosten der öffentlichen Kundgebung seines Versterbens (und seiner Beerdigung) durch die beiden Pedelle der Universität. All die dafür ausgestellten Quittungen sollten sie darauf dem *Rector Magnificus* übergeben. Vgl. dazu: POSTMA: Das Franeker Bücherinventar des verstorbenen ungarischen Studenten Sámuel Vilmányi. – Höchstwahrscheinlich hat es dann auch eine offizielle – von dem *Rector Magnificus* abgefasste – gedruckte *Invitatio* zu Szepsis Beerdigung gegeben, bzw. ein gedrucktes *Programma funebre* – wie es später z.B. der Fall war beim Versterben von Stephanus G. Komáromi [Komáromi Gellért István] (1721) und Michael K. Pataki [Pataki K. Mihály] (1735).

²⁹ Siehe über die Geschichte des Reformierten *Collegium* in Sárospatak: Dénes DIENES – János UGRAI: *History of the Reformed Church College in Sárospatak*, Sárospatak, Hernád, 2013.

³⁰ Kassa, heute Košice (in der Slowakei). – Die Wohnung befand sich gleich neben der Stadtmauer, so lesen wir. An der anderen Seite lebte der Nachbar, Stephanus Ibrányi [Ibrányi István], ein „Generosus Dominus“, wie Szepsi schreibt. Hatte er sich großmütig um Szepsis Wohnung gekümmert, während dessen Abwesenheit im Ausland? – N. B.: Am Ende seiner *Voluntas ultima* erwähnt Szepsi seine Wohnung „in Civitate Cassoviensi“ nochmals. Es war ihm wichtig, dass seine Heimatschule diese erben sollte.

³¹ Sein eigener, vollständiger Name lautete also: Johannes Nehéz Szepsi [Szepsi Nehéz János]. Vgl. dazu auch: Appendix II (Die Überschrift des *Rector Magnificus*).

³² Cothurnarius bedeutet: Schuhmacher, oder Schuster. – Um welchen – jungen – Verwandten von Szepsi es sich hier genau handelt, wissen wir nicht.

³³ Handelt es sich hier um Johannes Gönczi [Gönczi János], der Ende Juni 1642 Student geworden war in Sárospatak? Vgl. dazu: HÖRCSIK: *A sárospataki Református Kollégium diákjai*, 73. – Siehe über die Geschichte der reformierten Kirche in Tokaj: Dénes DIENES: *A tokaji református*

empfangen,³⁴ und ein gewisser Michael Czeh seine Weinkiste („theca lagenaria“),³⁵ aber dazu noch ein besonderes Souvenir aus England: Ein Set von neun silbernen Löffeln.³⁶ Und auch für den Ökonom („Provisor“) der Burg in Tokaj, mit Namen Andreas Gönczi, sollte ein ähnliches, wertvolles Souvenir bestimmt sein.

Zuerst aber sollte man in Franeker noch bei all seinen Gläubigern („Creditores“) die Schulden tilgen.³⁷ Und auch seine – wichtigsten – Kleider sollten noch verkauft und zu Geld gemacht werden: Zwei Obergewänder („pallia duo“), Wams („thorax“) und Hose („bracca“). Aus dem Ertrag dieses Verkaufs und aus seinen restlichen Geldern sollten zunächst noch etliche Legate bezahlt werden. So sollte die Kasse der Universität („aerarium hujus Academiae Frisicae“) zehn Caroli Gulden empfangen (zur finanziellen Unterstützung von armen Exulanten),³⁸ das Waisenhaus in Franeker vier Caroli Gulden, sein Kommilitone Gregorius Hernádnémethi sechs Caroli Gulden (und dazu noch sein Messer,³⁹ das er aus England mitgebracht hatte), und sein Kommilitone Andreas Liszkai neun Caroli Gulden. All seine anderen Landsleute, d.h. alle neun *Peregrini* die sich zurzeit („impraesentiarum“) für das Studium in Franeker aufhielten,⁴⁰ sollten – jeder für sich – einen Caroli Gulden vermacht

egyház története, In: János BENCSIK – István OROSZ (Hrsg.): *Tokaj, Várostörténeti tanulmányok*, Band III, Tokaj, 2002, 231–257.

³⁴ Wir vermuten also, dass Szepsis *Peregrinatio academica* mit Geldern aus der reformierten Gemeinde in Tokaj unterstützt worden war. Dass er dem *Pastor loci* seinen Reishut und seine Reisebürste vermacht, sei u.E. ganz symbolisch zu verstehen – als Zeichen, dass seine Reise hier auf Erden jetzt zu Ende ist.

³⁵ War dieser Michael Czeh [Csúzi Cseh Mihály ?] vielleicht ein wohlhabender Weinbauer in Tokaj, und - bzw. oder - dort der Vorsitzende des *Presbyterium* der reformierten Kirche?

³⁶ So deuten wir *Speculum unum cum novem cochlearibus Anglicanis*. Ein Set, mit möglicherweise einem größeren Löffel in der Mitte, und mit vier kleineren an den beiden Seiten – alles aus plattiertem Silber. – Szepsi hatte das zuvor aus England mitgebracht. Jetzt vermacht er es als Zeichen seiner Dankbarkeit.

³⁷ Die Gläubiger wurden nicht nur durch die öffentliche Kundgebung informiert, dass Szepsi verstorben sei, sondern auch durch – überall in der Stadt – angeschlagene Zettel („schedulae monitoriae“). Für die Begleichung der Schulden sollten sie sich innerhalb von dreimal 24 Stunden bei dem *Rector Magnificus* melden. Vgl. dazu den Fall Komáromi (1721): „Tresoar“, Leeuwarden, *Archief Universiteit Franeker*, Inventar Nr. 26, 46 verso. – Dann waren Paulus Uri [Uri Pál] und Michael Sallai [Sallai Mihály] die beiden „Executores“: *ibidem*.

³⁸ Bestätigung der Einkünfte: „[Accepta.] 15. Maij [1658] – Accepi viginti quinque Carolinos, quos Johannes Sepzi Ungarus aerario nostro legaverat 25-0-0.“ Siehe: Fundort: „Tresoar“, Leeuwarden, *Archief Universiteit Franeker*, Inventar Nr. 83, Fol. 84. Vgl. dazu: VAN NIENES: *De archieven van de Universiteit te Franeker*, 44 (Nr. 83). Der Finanzverwalter der Universität bestätigt bereits am 15. Mai 1658, dass die Universitätskasse („aerarium“) insgesamt 25 Caroli Gulden (25 Karlgulden) aus dem Nachlass von Johannes/ János N. Szepsi empfangen hatte. In Szepsis Testament ist von 10 Caroli Gulden („decem imperiales“) die Rede, aber dieses Geld sollte ausschließlich als finanzielle Unterstützung von armen Exulanten dienen („in usum Exulum pauperum“).

³⁹ „cum cultello meo Anglicano“. Ein kleines Messer („cultellus“), das Szepsi zuvor in England gekauft hatte.

⁴⁰ Fünf von Szepsis Landsleuten kennen wir schon (siehe dazu oben). Möglicherweise handelt es sich bei den übrigen vier um: Paulus Jasz-Berenyi [Jászberényi P. Pál: FOCKEMA ANDREAE – MEIJER: *Album Studiosorum*, Nr. 5790], Stephanus Sellyei [Sellyei M. István: *Ibid.*, Nr. 5844], Stephanus

bekommen, und seine Hospita Anna sollte zwei Caroli Gulden als Legat empfangen. Und wenn sein ganzes Geld im letzten Moment für das alles unzureichend sei, so lesen wir, dann sollten all diese Legate völlig bezahlt werden mit den Geldern, welche er bald ja baldigst („quamprimum et proxime“) aus seinem Heimatland Ungarn („ex Patria“) erwartet.⁴¹

Damit endet inhaltlich Szepsis *Voluntas ultima* – und genauso sollte man seinen „Letzten Wille“ auch – in jeder Hinsicht („omnimode“) – erfüllen, so betont er. Deshalb spricht er noch zum Schluss sein *Anathema* („maledictionis poena“) aus über all diejenigen, die das alles stören ja Gewalt antun wollen.

Wie klar aus seinem Testament hervorgeht, hatte Szepsi sich während seiner Studienzeit besonders Mühe gegeben, sich viele Bücher zu erwerben – und war er offensichtlich dazu finanziell auch in der Lage gewesen:⁴² Nicht nur in seinem Heimatland Ungarn, sondern auch in den Niederlanden (Utrecht, Groningen, Franeker), und letztens noch in England.⁴³ Sogar nach seinem Versterben in Franeker wurde sein Besitz – wie Szepsi selbst es wollte – noch um mehrere Bücher bereichert, finanziert von seinen hinterlassenen Geldern. All diese Bücher sollten also für die Bibliothek seiner Heimatschule in Sárospatak bestimmt sein, wie er es in seinem Testament

Carolyi [Károlyi L. István: Ibid., Nr. 5845] und Franciscus Szaki [Száki P. Ferenc: Ibid., Nr. 5855]. Diese vier hatten – wie Szepsi – alle vorher am illustren *Collegium* in Sárospatak studiert, siehe dazu: HÖRCSIK: *A sárospataki Református Kollégium diákjai*, s.v. – Vgl. dazu auch: POSTMA: Die zwei Franeker Bücherinventare des siebenbürgischen Studenten Paulus Jászberényi. – Siehe über die *Peregrini* in Franeker (und ihre Anwesenheit dort) im Allgemeinen: Ferenc POSTMA: De Hongaren en het onderwijs aan de Friese universiteit te Franeker, in *Acta Neerlandica, Bijdragen tot de Neerlandistiek*, DE, Debrecen, X, 2015, 33–80.

⁴¹ Offensichtlich gab es dann für den regulären Geldverkehr noch keine Probleme. – Es sollte sich aber bald ändern. Vgl. dazu: POSTMA: Warum Johannes Gele Debreceni bei Nacht und Nebel aus Franeker verschwunden ist.

⁴² Szepsi war bestimmt kein armer Student. In Ungarn hatte er eine eigene Wohnung, und auch zuletzt in Franeker verfügte er noch über etliche Caroli Gulden, wie uns sein Testament deutlich zeigt. Von einem Mangel an Geld war offensichtlich bei ihm nie die Rede. – Völlig anders war – einige Jahre später – die Lage bei Johannes Gele Debreceni [Debreceni Gele János]. Er konnte sich finanziell kaum etwas leisten, und sich deshalb auch nur relativ wenig Bücher erwerben, vgl. dazu: POSTMA: Warum Johannes Gele Debreceni bei Nacht und Nebel aus Franeker verschwunden ist. – Siehe dazu im Allgemeinen auch: István MONOK: The Readings of Hungarian Students during their Studies in the Netherlands in the Early Modern Period, in Margriet GOSKER – István MONOK (Hrsg.): *Peregrinus sum, Studies in History of Hungarian-Dutch Cultural Relations in Honour of Ferenc Postma on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, Budapest/Amsterdam, 2015, 93–120.

⁴³ Hat Szepsi vielleicht das Buch von Thomas Morton <Bo-5924> in England gekauft? In diesem Fall sollte er dort 1657 gewesen sein, vgl. dazu seine eigene handschriftliche Eintragung (*Ex libris*).

nachdrücklich festgelegt hatte – alles zugunsten der dort studierenden *Alumni*.⁴⁴

Dass man Szepsis Bücher auch tatsächlich dorthin gebracht hat, zeigen uns die heute noch existierenden Exemplare aus seinem Nachlass, welche wir – gerade in diesen letzten Jahren⁴⁵ – in Sárospatak selbst auffinden konnten. Weitaus die meisten fanden wir jedoch in Marosvásárhely,⁴⁶ in der „Teleki“ Bibliothek, in welchem Gebäude (1962) auch die reichhaltige Büchersammlung des ehemaligen Reformierten *Collegium* in Marosvásárhely untergebracht wurde, die wohlbekannte „Bolyai“ Sammlung.⁴⁷ Dass die Mehrheit von Szepsis Büchern sich gerade hier – in dieser Sammlung – befindet,⁴⁸ hat alles damit zu tun, dass das ganze Sárospataker *Collegium* (d.h. die Professoren, Studenten und Bibliothek) – damals dazu von den Jesuiten gezwungen – im Jahre 1672 nach Siebenbürgen auswanderte, und dort eine Zeitlang seine Unterkunft hatte,⁴⁹ zuerst in Gyulafehérvár,⁵⁰ aber später (seit 1716) in Marosvásárhely. Gerade dort blieben also letztendlich zahllose Bücher aus Sárospatak – wie auch diese Exemplare aus Szepsis Nachlass – als wichtige und wertvolle Bestandteile der Büchersammlung des dortigen – dann neu gestalteten⁵¹ – Reformierten *Collegium*.⁵²

⁴⁴ So wurde die Bibliothek des Sárospataker *Collegium* um viel mehr Bücher bereichert als Szepsis – seiner Heimatschule gegenüber – verpflichtet gewesen war, vgl. dazu: POSTMA: Das Franeker Bücherinventar des verstorbenen ungarischen Studenten Sámuel Vilmányi, 235.

⁴⁵ Unsere Suche nach Szepsis Büchern fing schon im Sommer 1986 an, als wir zum ersten Mal Sárospatak besuchten. Derzeit aber gab es dort in der Nagykönyvtár noch keine Kartei, worin die früheren *Possessores* der Bücher vermerkt wurden. Erst in den letzten Jahren wird daran ständig gearbeitet. – Herrn Dr. Áron Kovács und Herrn Dr. Dávid Csorba (Sárospatak) möchte ich gerne an dieser Stelle für ihre ständige Hilfe recht herzlich danken.

⁴⁶ Marosvásárhely, heute Târgu Mureș (Rumänien). – Siehe im Allgemeinen über den großen Auszug von Büchern aus den Niederlanden nach Ungarn/ Siebenbürgen (*Peregrinatio librorum*): Ferenc POSTMA: *Peregrinatio librorum*. – Der große Auszug von Büchern aus den Niederlanden nach Ungarn und Siebenbürgen seit der Gründung der nordniederländischen Universitäten, In: August den HOLLANDER – István MONOK – Ferenc POSTMA (Hrsg.): *Studiosorum et librorum peregrinatio. – Hungarian-Dutch Cultural Relations in the 17th and 18th Century*, Amsterdam / Budapest, 2006, 15–18., bzw. MONOK: *The Readings of Hungarian Students*.

⁴⁷ Die „Teleki“ Bibliothek und die „Bolyai“ Sammlung wurden dann – im Jahre 1962 – unter dem Namen „Teleki–Bolyai–Bibliothek“ vereint (Biblioteca Teleki–Bolyai Könyvtár). – Vgl. dazu auch: Ferenc POSTMA: *Franekeri akadémiai nyomtatványok nyomában, Három romániai tanulmányút élményei (1991–1993)*, in *Könyv és Könyvtár*, KLTE, Debrecen, XX, 1998, 113–133., 116–118.

⁴⁸ Bereits im Jahre 1994 fanden wir hier einige Bücher aus Szepsis Nachlass, siehe dazu: Ferenc POSTMA: *Franekeri akadémiai nyomtatványok nyomában. – Negyedik erdélyi tanulmányutam élményei (1994)*, In: *Könyv és Könyvtár*, KLTE, Debrecen, XXI, 1999 (233–256), 239–240. – Gerne danke ich an dieser Stelle Herrn Dr. László Marác (Amsterdam) für die vielen Fotos, welche er dort bei seinem Besuch (Ende Juni 2008) für mich gemacht hat.

⁴⁹ Siehe dazu: DIENES – UGRAI: *History of the Reformed Church College in Sárospatak*, 48–52.

⁵⁰ Gyulafehérvár, heute Alba Iulia (Rumänien). – N. B.: Einige von Szepsis Büchern sind dort auch tatsächlich eine Zeitlang gewesen, vgl. dazu: <Bf-53: Liber Illustr[is] Collegii S. P. Albensis.>, <Bf-196: [possidet Sch[ola] S. Patach. Albana].> und <Bo-998: Illustris Collegii Patachino-Alb.>.

⁵¹ Die dort um 1557 gegründete Grundschule – die *Schola Agropolitana* – wurde dann 1718 neu gestaltet als ein *Collegium*.

⁵² Siehe dazu vor allem: Mihály SPIELMANN-SEBESTYÉN: *A sárospataki (-gyulafehérvári) Református Kollégium Marosvásárhelyen őrzött könyvei*, in Anikó DEÉ NAGY – Mihály SPIELMANN-SEBESTYÉN –

Zum Schluss: Dass es sich hierbei in allen Fällen wirklich um Bücher aus Szepsis Nachlass handelt, bestätigen die konkreten – handschriftlichen – Formeln, welche wir in all diesen Exemplaren antrafen, wie z.B.: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi*, bzw. *Ex D. Joh. Szepsi Testamentali Legatione*, oder sogar *Ex D. Joh. Szepsi Testamentali Legatione Scholae Patachinae*.⁵³ Ob wir bis jetzt tatsächlich all seine Bücher zurückgefunden haben, bleibt jedoch ganz fraglich. In mehreren Fällen wurden ja diese ursprünglichen, handschriftlichen Notizen in Marosvásárhely später überklebt mit einem gedruckten *Exlibris* des dortigen Reformierten *Collegium*.⁵⁴ Trotzdem machen all die heute schon entdeckten Exemplare sichtbar, wie sehr Szepsis sich seinerzeit angestrengt hatte, sich eine reiche – *in theologicis* gar breit orientierte – Büchersammlung zu erwerben.⁵⁵ Dabei war ihm auch der dann aktuelle Stand der Wissenschaft im Allgemeinen besonders wichtig, wie uns sein Exemplar von Apáczais *Magyar Encyclopaedia* (1655) deutlich zeigt.

APPENDIX I.

Das Testament von Johannes/ János N. Szepsis – der am 3. Mai 1658 in Franeker „b[eate]“ verstorben war – wurde den 13. Mai vorgelesen in einer Sitzung des *Senatus Judicialis*: Prof. Johannes Valckenier (*Rector Magnificus*, Vorsitzender), Prof. Johannes Jacobus Wissenbach (Vertreter der juristischen Fakultät) und Prof. Christophorus Munsterus (Vertreter der *Artes*- Fakultät), beide Mitglieder – übrigens in Abwesenheit von dem Sekretär der Universität (und von dem Vertreter der medizinischen Fakultät).

Szepsis Landsleute bzw. Kommilitonen Gregorius / Gergely Hernádnémethi und Andreas / András Liszkai wurden dann – wie es von ihm selbst, als Erblasser („Testator“), in seinem Testament voraus bestimmt worden war – von dem *Senatus Judicialis* formell als „Executores“ mit der Vollstreckung seines „Letzten Willens“ beauftragt. Beide versprechen, diesen Auftrag anständig und würdig („probe et digne“) zu erfüllen.⁵⁶

Szilárd VAKARCS (Hrsg.): *Emlékkönyv a Teleki Téka alapításának 200. évfordulójára, 1802–2002*, Marosvásárhely, 2002 (272–289), 280–289. – Merkwürdigerweise erwähnt er in seiner Liste – mit insgesamt um 150 (!) ehemaligen Sárospataker Büchern – weder das Buch von Thomas Morton: <Bo-5924> noch Szepsis reichhaltigen Sammelband: <Bo-24431>.

⁵³ Diese Formeln waren gerade die Kriterien unserer Suche. Bücher ohne diese handschriftlichen Notizen blieben also außer Betracht. – Dabei war der (digitale) Katalog der Drucke des 17. Jahrhunderts in der Teleki-Bolyai-Bibliothek eine Fundgrube, weil darin auch die ehemaligen *Possessores* dieser Bücher auffindbar sind. – Gerne danke ich an dieser Stelle Frau Bibliothekarin Réka Bányai und Herrn György G. – Kovács für ihre großzügige Hilfe bei meinem letzten Besuch (Juli 2017).

⁵⁴ Siehe dazu z.B. Szepsis Exemplar von Apáczais *Magyar Encyclopaedia* <Bo-22457>.

⁵⁵ Eine Sammlung von Büchern, vor allem in den größeren Formaten, mit vollpergamenten Einbänden, und verfasst von z.B. dänischen, deutschen, englischen, niederländischen und schweizerischen Autoren – Vertretern sogar unterschiedlicher theologischer Ansicht.

⁵⁶ Fundort: „Tresoor“, Leeuwarden: *Archief Universiteit Franeker*, Inventar Nr. 17, S. 194. Vgl. dazu: VAN NIENES: *De archieven van de Universiteit te Franeker*, 37 (Nr. 17).

A[nn]o 1658. 13. Maij in Senatu Judiciali praelectae tabulae testamentariae D[omi]ni Joh. Sepzi Hungari b.m., ac ab eodem Senatu D[omi]nis Gregorio Herna[d]nemethi et Andreae Liskaj, constitutis a testatore testamenti executoribus, concessa facultas adeundi illam provinciam, qui se probe et digne isthoc munere functuros promiserunt. Actum in Curia ut supra.

Abs. Secretario Joh. Valckenier, Ac. R.⁵⁷
Praes. D.D. J. Wissenbachio et D. Munstero.

In derselben Sitzung des *Senatus Judicialis* wurde dann zugleich beschlossen, vorsorglich eine vollständige Abschrift („Apographum integrum“, oder „Copia“) von Szepsis Testament in die *Acta* der Universität aufzunehmen. Das originelle Testament („Autographum“) war bereits am 28. April 1658 aufgestellt.⁵⁸

Eadem sessione decretum ut ipsius testamenti apographum integrum inseratur actis publicis, ne si forte ipsum autographum naufragio, incendio, aliore modo periret, litis ansam copiae authenticae defectus aliquando praerberet. Actum ut supra.

Abs. Secret. J. Valckenier, Ac. R.
Praesent. ijsdem qui supra.

APPENDIX II.

Die vollständige Abschrift („Copia authentica“) von Szepsis Testament, wie diese – von dem Rektor und dem Sekretär der Universität verifiziert („facta collatione“) und amtlich autorisiert – nachher in die *Acta* der Universität aufgenommen wurde.⁵⁹

[195] Copia authentica Testamenti D[omi]ni Johannis Nehez Sepzi Hungari, S. Th. studiosi, placid et beate in Domino mortui 3. Maij 1658.⁶⁰

In nomine Dei ter maximi Amen.

Anno Domini nostri Jesu Christi Millesimo Sexcentesimo Quinquagesimo Octavo, die vicesimo octavo mensis Aprilis. Ego Johannes Sepsi Ungarus in Almâ Frisiorum Academiâ, quae est Franequerae, ubi et domicilium pro tempore habeo, SS. Theologiae Studiosus, mecum

⁵⁷ Weil der Sekretär der Universität in dieser Sitzung fehlte, stammt dieser Text aus der Feder des Vorsitzenden, Prof. Valckenier, zu der Zeit *Rector Magnificus* („Ac[ademi]ae R[ector]“).

⁵⁸ Fundort: „Tresoar“, Leeuwarden, *Archief Universiteit Franeker*, Inventar Nr. 17, 194. Vgl. dazu: VAN NIENES: *De archieven van de Universiteit te Franeker*, 37 (Nr. 17).

⁵⁹ Fundort: „Tresoar“, Leeuwarden, *Archief Universiteit Franeker*, Inventar Nr. 17, 195–197. Vgl. dazu: VAN NIENES: *De archieven van de Universiteit te Franeker*, 37 (Nr. 17) bzw. 189 (Nr. 1974).

⁶⁰ Diese Überschrift: Handschrift von Prof. Valckenier, dem *Rector Magnificus*.

reputavi morte nihil certius, ejus vero horâ et momento nihil incertius esse, ideoque ne intestatus morerer ex libero et pleno animi proposito (iudicii bene potens et memoriae, quamvis corpore debilis) Hoc meum Testamentum ordinavi et condidi, ordinoque et condo, volens, ut illud omnino et inviolabiliter effectum sortiatur et obtineat, si non tanquam Testamentum solenne, ad minimum tanquam Codicillus, donatio causâ mortis, vel alia aliqua ultima voluntas minores solennitates requirens, prout hoc secundum jura vel etiam iuxta hujus regionis consuetudines et statuta optime executioni mandari poterit, cujus rei curam Dilectissimis meis Popularibus D[omi]no Gregorio Nemethi et D[omi]no Andreae Liskai cum bono Ipsorum consensu impono: Decrescetque infractori hujus portio ipsi relicta, accrescetque benevolentibus observatoribus.

Primo igitur Animam meam Clementissimo nostro Salvatori, meumque Corpus, post illorum separationem, more Christiano terrae commendo. Exinde procedens ad Dispositionem meorum temporalium bonorum Haereditatem instituo Illustrem Scholam Saros Patakinae, eidemque specialiter relinquo domum meam in liberâ ac regiâ Urbe Cassoviensi sitam, cui ab una parte Generosus Dominus Stephanus Ibranijs vicinus existit, ab altera murus civitatis proximus est, quamque à matre mea Nehez Margareta in Haereditatem accepi. [196] Legata autem haecce sequentibus Personis et conditionibus relinquo. Legoque Alumnis dictae Scholae Patakinae omnes meos Libros, qui in Patria, Belgio, et Angliâ extant; voloque et peto, ut dicti Alumni Johannem Matthiae Cothurnarij filium, meum consanguineum, in tutelam recipiant et sustentent donec adoleverit, idque hac cum conditione, si ille Johannes in vivis sit et Scholam frequentet.

Porro ego Testator lego D[omi]no Johanni Gonczy, Pastori Ecclesiae Tokaianae, Petasum cum penicillo; D[omi]no Michaeli Czeh speculum unum cum novem cochlearibus Anglicanis et thecâ lagenariâ, et D[omi]no Andreae Göncki, Arcis Tokaiensis Provisori, speculum unum cum novem cochlearibus Anglicanis. In honestam meam sepulturam et exequias relinquo quadraginta Daleros Imperiales. Ex residua pecunia omnibus meis Creditoribus satis fiet. Vestes meae, nempe pallia duo, unus Thorax, unaque bracca, vendentur et pretium inde redactum, ut et reliqui mei nummi, convertentur in usum hic specificandum, nimirum in aerarium hujus Academiae Frisicae conferentur decem Imperiales, qui in usum Exulum pauperum erogabuntur; Orphanotrophio Franequerano quatuor Imperiales tradentur; D[omin]us Gregorius Nemethi supra memoratus sibi habebit sex Imperiales cum cultello meo Anglicano; Et D[omin]us Andreae Liskay novem Imperiales. Reliquis novem Popularibus meis, qui impraesentiarum Franequerae studiorum gratiâ commorantur singulis do donoque Imperialem; Meaque hospita Annae duos Imperiales. Quodsi autem mei nummi, qui praesentes sunt, nec non vestium suprelatarum pretium non sufficet hisce solvendis, tum explebuntur ista legata ex pecuniis, quas quamprimum et proxime ex Patriâ exspecto. Caeteros meos nummos omnes, qui supererunt, in usum Scholae Saros Patakinae, quam haereditatem feci, constituentur. Ementurque Libri, praestantissimi tot, quot mea arca, quae hic mecum est, capere potest, eique una cum reliquis Libris meis indictae Illustris Scholae Saros Patakinae Bibliothecam deferentur. Haec est mea voluntas ultima, quam omnimode observari volo, addoque maledictionis poenam in eum vel eos, qui saepius memoratam Illustrem Scholam Saros Patakinae, ipsiusque Alumnos, tam quoad haereditatem, quam quoad Legata relicta,

praesertim quod attinet ad dictam domum meam in Civitate Cassoviensi, inturbent, vel illa violare conentur.⁶¹

Atque in hujus mei Testamenti confirmationem, hi honesti viri meo nomine et petitione convocati sunt et tam separatim quam pariter rogati, ut huic meae voluntati, tamquam testes, nomina sua subscriberent, [197] nimirum Clariss. Vir D. Christophorus Munsterus Philosophiae Doctor et Professor Ordinarius, Ampliss. D. Hiddius Fopma Consul Franequeranus, D. Casparus Enjedi Jurisprudentiae studiosus, D. Johannes Losonczy, D. Martinus Zombathi, D. Michael Dobraj et D. Stephanus Harsanyi, omnes mei Populares et SS. tae Theologiae in hac Universitate studiosi, nec non Abelus Robijnsma J.U.D. et juratus Supremae Frisiorum Curiae Advocatus. Estque subscriptio libenter à Testibus simul cum Testatore facta, postquam totum Testamentum tum ipsis, cum huic totum erat praelectum. Actum uno contextu in Musaeo Testatoris, praesente Magnifico D. Rectore Johanne Valckenier, Theologiae Doctore et Professore Ordinario.

Erat subscriptum C. Munsterus Ph. Doct. et Prof., Hiddius Fopma, Johannes Sepsi M[anu] p[ro]p[ri]a, Casparus Enyedi J. U. cultor, Johannes F. Losonczy SS. Theolog. stud., Martinus R. Szombati, Michael Dobraj, Stephanus Harsanyi, Abelus Robijnsma cum consuetis lineis et subscriptionibus.

Convenit cum principali, quod factâ collatione testamur Nos Infrascripti die XIX. Maij 1658.

Joh. Valckenier S. Th. D. et Prof., Acad. p. t. R.
Meinardus de Walricheim J. U. D. et Acad.
S[ecreta]rius, Curiae Supremae advocatus.⁶²

APPENDIX III.

Die Liste der – in der Bibliothek (Nagykönyvtár) des Reformierten *Collegium, Sárospatak* – zurückgefundenen Bücher aus dem Nachlass von Johannes/ János N. Szepsi. N.B.: Alle drei Bücher mit pergamenten Einbänden. Aufgestellt: Sárospatak, im April 2016.

B 412

Samuel MARESIUS, *Hydra socinianismi expugnata [...]. Tomus primus*, Groningae, apud Joannem Nicolaum, 1651, 4^o.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi*; Titelblatt: Liber Scholae III[ustris] S. Patakinæ 1739.

C 438

Robertus ROLLOCUS, *Tractatus de vocatione efficaci*, Herbornae Nassoviorum, Christophorus Corvinus, 1600, 8^o.

⁶¹ Hier endet formell Szepsis Testament.

⁶² Dass diese „Copia authentica“ völlig identisch ist mit dem Text des Originals, bestätigen sowohl der *Rector Magnificus*, Prof. Valckenier, als auch der Sekretär der Universität.

Poss.: fliegendes Vorsatzblatt 1.: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi.*; fliegendes Vorsatzblatt 2.: Liber Illustris Coetus S. Patakini etc.; Titelblatt: Liber Ill[ustris] Scholae S. Patak. 1739.

coll. 1. Conradus VORSTIUS, *Apologia pro ecclesiis orthodoxis*, Steinfurti, Theoph. Caesar, 1607, 8°.

coll. 2. Fr[anciscus] JUNIUS, *Examen enunciationum et argumentationum, quas Gratianus Prosper adversus doctrinam salutarem de Deo [...] adduxit in libello suo [...]*, Lugduni Batavorum, ex officina Plantiniana, apud Franciscum Raphelengium, 1596, 8°.

coll. 3. Ders., *De politiae Mosis observatione*, Lugduni Batavorum, ex typographeio Christophori Guyotij, impensis Joannis Orlers, 1602,² 8°.

D 34

Johannes CROCIUS, *Antibecani [...] justa vindicatio. Tomus I [– Tomus alter]*, Marpurgi, typis Salomonis Schadewitzii, impensis Sebaldi Köhlers, 1654, 4°.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi.*; fliegendes Vorsatzblatt: Liber Illustris Collegii S. Patak.

Die Liste der – in der Teleki–Bolyai–Bibliothek, **Marosvásárhely/ Târgu Mureș** (RO) – zurückgefundenen Bücher aus dem Nachlass von Johannes/ János N. Szepsi. All diese Bücher mit einem eingeklebten – gedruckten – *Exlibris* des ehemaligen Reformierten *Collegium* in Marosvásárhely: *A' Maros Vásárhelyi é. r. Fő Oskola könyve* (meistens: Vorderdeckel/ Innenkante). Einige Bücher mit einem – handschriftlichen – *Exlibris* von Johannes / János N. Szepsi selbst, bzw. aus 1656 und 1657 (siehe dazu unten). Alle Bücher mit pergamenten Einbänden. Aufgestellt: Marosvásárhely, im Juli 2017.

Bf-53

Novum Testamentum Graecum, cum vulgata interpretatione latina [...]. Accesserunt et huic editioni libri Graece scripti, qui vocantur Apocryphi ; Miqra. – Biblia Hebraica, eorundem latina interpretatio Xantis Pagnini [...], [hrsg. Benedictus ARIAS MONTANUS], [Genevae], Petrus de la Rouiere, 1609, fol.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Johannis Sepsis.*; Titelblatt 1.: Liber Illustr[is] Collegii S. P. Albensis.; Titelblatt 2.: *Ex Libris Joannis N. Sepsis. A[nn]o 1656.*; Titelblatt 3.: Liber Illustris Scholae S. Patachinae.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 281 (Nr. 15).

Bf-165/3-4

Johannes PISCATOR, *Commentariorum in omnes libros Veteris Testamenti tomus tertius [– tomus quartus]*, Herbornae Nassoviorum, [Rabel/ Corvinus], 1644–1645, fol.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Johannis Sepsis.*; Titelblatt *Tomus tertius*: Liber Illustris Scholae S. Patachinae.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 286 (Nr. 69).

Bf-196

Andreas RIVETUS, *Catholicus orthodoxus, oppositus catholico papistae, in quatuor partes seu tractatus*

distinctus [...], Tomus primus [– Tomus secundus], Genevae, sumptibus Jacobi Chouët, 1644, fol.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Johannis Szepsi* [possidet Sch[ola] S. Patach. Albana].;

Titelblatt: Liber Illustr[is] Scholae S. Patakinae.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 287 (Nr. 79).

Bo-997

Samuel MARESIUS, *Hydra socinianismi expugnata [...], Tomus secundus*, Groningae, apud viduam Joannis Nicolai, 1654, 4°.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi*.; Titelblatt: Liber Illustris Scholae Sáros-Patachinae.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 285 (Nr. 57).

Bo-998

Samuel MARESIUS, *Theologiae elenchticae nova synopsis [...], Tomus primus [– Tomus secundus]*, Groningae, apud Joannem Nicolaum, 1648, 4°.

Poss.: T. 1. Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione Do[mi]ni Joh. Szepsi*.; Titelblatt: Liber Illustris Scholae S. Patachinae.; T. 2. Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi*.; fliegendes Vorsatzblatt: Illustris Collegii Patachino-Alb.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 285 (Nr. 58).

Bo-1087

Gisbertus VOETIUS, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum pars secunda*, Ultrajecti, apud Johannem a Waesberge, 1655, 4°.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi*.; Titelblatt: Liber Illustris Scholae S. Patachinae.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 288 (Nr. 97).

Bo-1131

Casparus SIBELIUS, *Meditationes catecheticae, in quatuor partes divisae*, Prostant Amstelredami, apud Joannem Janssonium, 1650, 4°.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione Do[mi]ni Joh. Szepsi*.; Titelblatt: Liber Illustris Scholae S. Patachinae.

coll. 1. Casparus SIBELIUS, *Meditationum catechetiarum pars prima*, Daventriae, apud Conradum Thomaeum, sumptibus Joannis Janssonii, 1646, 4°.

Ders., *Pars secunda* (1647).

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Te[stame]ntali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi*.; Titelblatt: Liber Illustris Scholae Sáros-Patachinae.

Ders., *Pars tertia* (1649).

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testame[ntali] Legatione Do[mi]ni Szepsi*.; Titelblatt: Liber Illustr[is] Scholae S. Patachinae.

Ders., *Pars quarta* (1650).

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testa[mentali] Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi*.; Titelblatt: Liber Illustris Scholae S. Patachinae.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 287 (Nr. 85).

Bo-1191

Johannes FOCCO, [*Gluku-Pikron, sive Conciones solemnes [...] Pars prima*], [Franekerae, typis Idzardi Alberti, ejusdemque et Johannis Arcerii impensis, 1643], 4°.

Poss.: Es fehlt u.a. das Titelblatt. Hinterdeckel: Liber Illustr[is] Coetus S. Patachien[is].

Ders., *Pars altera*.

Poss.: 1. fliegendes Vorsatzblatt: Illustris Coetus S. P.; 2. fliegendes Vorsatzblatt: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi.*; Titelblatt: Liber Scholae Ill[ustris] S. Pata[chinae] Anno 1666.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 285 (Nr. 54).

Bo-1326

Henricus ALTING, *Scriptorum theologicorum Heidelbergensium tomus primus [- tomus tertius]*, Amstelodami, apud Joannem Janssonium, 1646, 4°.

Poss.: fliegendes Vorsatzblatt: Liber Scholae SPatachinae.; Titelblatt 1.: *Ex D. Joh. Szepsi Testamentali Legatione.*; Titelblatt 2.: Liber Scholae S. Patakiniae.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 280 (Nr. 4).

Bo-1337

Johannes HIMMELIUS, *Memoriale biblicum*, Spira, typis Heliae Kembachii, 1617, 4°.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi.*; Titelblatt: Liber Ill[ustris] Scholae S. Patachinae.

coll. 1. Robertus BELLARMINUS, *Contradictiones doctorum nunc Romanae ecclesiae*, Argentorati, apud haeredes Bernhardi Jobini, 1597, 4°.

* Siehe dazu: Spielmann, *Catalogus*, Band I (2001), S. 75–76 <B 66>; Ders., S. 284 (Nr. 50).

Bo-2453

[Dudley FENNER (?)], [*Theologiae sacrae loci communes* (?)].

Poss.: Es fehlt u.a. das Titelblatt. Fliegendes Vorsatzblatt: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi.*

coll. 2. Henricus ALTING, *Methodus theologiae didacticae [...]*, Amstelodami, apud Joannem Janssonium, 1650, 12°.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 284 (Nr. 43).

Bo-2517

Casparus Erasmus BROCHMAND, *Universae theologiae systema. Tomus primus*, Hafniae, typis Martzianianis, sumptibus Joachimi Moltken, 1633, 4°.

Poss.: Vortitel: *Ex D. Joh. Szepsi Testamentali Legatione Scholae Patach.*

Ders., *Tomus secundus*.

Poss.: Titelblatt: *Ex D. Joh. Szepsi Testamentali Legatione Scholae Patachinae.*

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 281 (Nr. 18).

Bo-5306

Joh[annes]. BRANDMYLLERUS, *Conciones funebres CC. Editio sexta, prioribus XX integris concionibus auctior [...]; Conciones nuptiales C. Editio sexta* [hrsg.: Jacobus Brandmyllerus], Basileae, typis Conradi

Waldkirchii, 1608, 8°.

Poss.: fliegendes Vorsatzblatt: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi.*; Titelblatt: Liber Illustr[is] Scholae S. Patachinae.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 281 (Nr. 16).

Bo-5590

Fridericus SPANHEMIUS, *Disputationum theologicarum miscellaneorum pars prima*, Genevae, sumptibus Petri Chouët, 1652, 4°.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Szepsi.*; Titelblatt: Liber Ill[ustris] Scholae S. Patachinae.

Ders., *Pars secunda*.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 287 (Nr. 87).

Bo-5924

Thomas MORTONUS, *Totius doctrinalis controversiae de eucharistia decisio [...]*. Cantabrigiae, ex officina R. Danielis, 1640, 4°.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Johan. Szepsi.*; Titelblatt 1.: *Ex Libris Johannis N. Szepsi. A[nn]o 1657*; Titelblatt 2.: Liber Illustr[is] Scholae S. Patachinae.

Bo-6063

Christianus MATTHIAE, *Historia patriarcharum [...]*. Lübecae, impensis Alberti Hakelmanni, [typis Johannis Meieri], [1642], 4°.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joannis Szepsi.*; fliegendes Vorsatzblatt: Liber Bibliothecae Collegii Reformatorum MVásárhelyensis. A[nn]o MDCCLXXXIV.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 285 (Nr. 60).

Bo-22457

APÁCZAI CSERE János, *Magyar Encyclopaedia*, Ultrajecti, ex officina Joannis a Waesberge, 1653 [1655], 12°.

Poss.: Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione D. Joh. Sze[pe]si.*; fliegendes Vorsatzblatt: Liber Ill. Scholae SPatachinae.

coll. 1. KOMÁROMI CSIPKÉS György, *Hungaria illustrata*, Ultrajecti, ex officina Joannis a Waesberge, 1655, 12°.

* Vgl. dazu: Spielmann 2002, S. 280 (Nr. 6); *RMNy* 2617 und *RMNy* 2618.

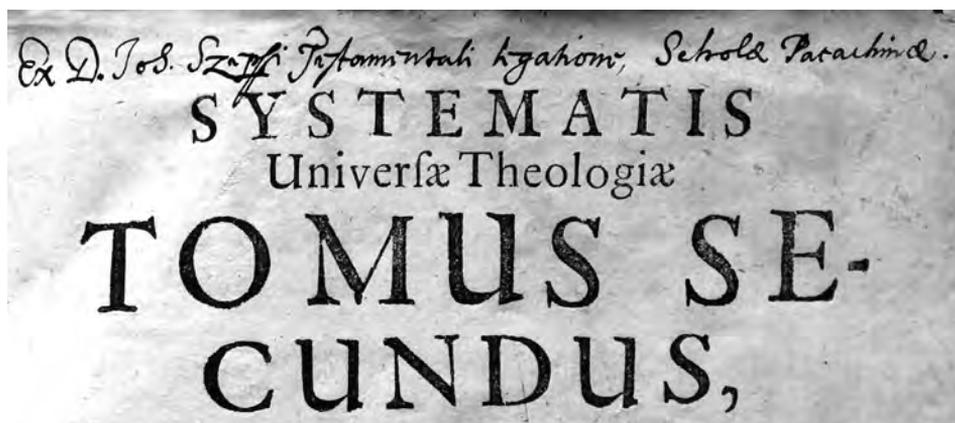
Bo-24431

Enthält mehr als 120 akademische Drucke in 4°, vor allem *Disputationes exercitii gratia* / Übungsdisputationen, verteidigt in den Jahren 1634–1657 an den Universitäten in Frankfurt an der Oder, Utrecht, Groningen, Franeker und Leiden, durchaus im Bereich der Theologie. Weitaus die meisten theologischen Übungsdisputationen stammen aus Utrecht, und wurden dort verteidigt unter dem Vorsitz von z.B. Gisbertus Voetius, Johannes Hoornbeeck, Andreas Essenius und Matthias Nethenus. Bei 34 (!) philologischen Disputationen war der dortige Professor für Hebräisch, Johannes Leusden, der

Praeses. Um 10 Disputationen stammen aus Groningen, und wurden dort unter der Anleitung von bzw. Samuel Maresius und Matthias Pasor verteidigt. Siehe für die Franeker Disputationen in diesem Sammelband: *Auditorium*.

Poss.. Vorderdeckel: *Ex Testamentali Legatione Do[mi]ni Joh. Szepsi.*; fliegendes Vorsatzblatt: Liber Scholae Illustris S. Patachinae.; Titelblatt des ersten eingebundenen Druckes: Liber Ill[ustris] Scholae S. Patachinae.

ILLUSTRATIONEN



<Bo-2517> – Teleki–Bolyai–Bibliothek:

Casparus Erasmus Brochmand, Systematis universae theologiae tomus secundus.

Titelblatt (Hs.): Ex D. Joh. Szepsi Testamentali Legatione Scholae Patachinae.

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Copia aut fentica testamenti
Dni Johannis Nchez Szepi
Hungar. S. B. P. d. r. s. i. g. l. a. t. u. s.
et beate in Domino mortui; 3. Maij
1658.

In nomine Dei ter maximi Amen.

Anno Domini nostri Jesu Christi Millesimo Sex-
centesimo Quingagesimo Octavo, die Vicesimo
octavo mensis Aprilis. Ego Johannes Szepi Vngarus
in Alma Frisiorum Academia, quae est Franquera,
ubi et domicilium pro tempore habeo, s. s. Theologiae
studiosus, mecum respitavi morte nihil certius ejus
vero hora et momento nihil incertius esse, ideoque ne
intestatus morerer ex libero et pleno animi proposito
iudicii bene potens et memoriae, quamvis corpore
debilis, hoc meum Testamentum ordinavi et con-
didi, ordinavi et condo, volens, ut illud omnino et
inviolabiliter effectum sortiatur et obtineat, si
non tanquam Testamentum solemne, ad minimum
tanquam Codicillus, donatio causa mortis, vel
alia aliqua ultima voluntas minores solennitates
requirens, prout hoc secundum iura vel etiam
iuxta hujus regionis consuetudines et statuta optime
executioni mandari poterit, cuius rei curam di-
rectissimis meis Popularibus D. no Gregorio Nemethi
et D. no Andrea Liskai cum bono ipsorum consensu
impono; Decretisq; infractori hujus portio ipsi
relicta, accrescetq; benevolentibus observatoribus.
Primo igitur Animam meam, Clementissimo nostro
Salvatori, meumq; Corpus, post illorum separationem,
more Christiano terrae commendo. Exinde proce-
dens ad dispositionem meorum Temporalium bonorum
haeredem instituo Filius Drem Scholam Sáros
Pataknam, eidemq; specialiter relinquo domum
meam, in libera ac regia Urbe Cassoviensi sitam,
cujus ab una parte Generosus Dominus Stephanus Abranji
vicinus existit, ab altera murus civitatis proximus
est, quam a matre mea Nchez Margareta in hereditatem accepit.
Layaba

Das Testament von Johannes/ János N. Szepsi (28.04.1658), oder besser:
Die komplette Abschrift in den Acta der Universität Franeker (19.05.1658).

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Legata autem haec sequentibus Personis et
 conditionibus relinquo. Legoq; Alumnis dictae
 Scholae Patakinae omnes meos Libros, qui in Patria,
 Belgio, et Anglia extant; voloq; et peto, ut dicti
 Alumni Johannem Matthiae Colburnati, filium
 meum consanguineum, in tutelam recipiant et
 sus teneant donec adoleverit, idq; hac cum conditio-
 ne si ille Johannes in vivis sit et Scholam frequentet.
 Porro ego Testator lego Dno Johanni Goneri Pastori
 Ecclesiae Tokaiane Petasum cum fenicillo: Dno
 Michaeli Czeh speculum unum cum novem cochlea-
 ribus Anglicanis et theca Lageraria et Dno
 Andree Goneri Arcis Tokaiensis Provisori speculum
 unum cum novem Cochlearibus Anglicanis.
 In honestam meam sepulturam et exequias re-
 linquo quadraginta Daleros Imperiales. Ex residua
 pecunia omnibus meis Creditoribus satisfiet. Vestes
 meae, nempe pallia duo, unus Thorax, unaq; braccia,
 vendentur et pretium inde redactum, ut et reliqui
 mei nummi convertentur, in usum hic specificandum;
 nimirum in erarium hujus Academiae Frisicae con-
 vertentur decem imperiales, qui in usum Exulium
 pauperum erogabuntur; Orphanotrophio Franekerano
 quatuor imperiales tradentur: D. Gregorius Hemelthi
 supra memoratus sibi habeat sex Imperiales cum
 cubello meo Anglicano; et D. Andreas Lisbay novem
 imperiales. Reliquis novem popularibus meis, qui
 impresentiarum Franekerae studiorum gratia commo-
 rantur singulis do donosq; Imperialem. Itaq; hos pitae
 Anna duos Imperiales. Quodsi autem mei nummi
 qui praesentes sunt, nec non vestium supra relatorum
 pretium non sufficet hinc solvendi, tum expletuntur
 ista legata ex pecuniis, quas quamprimum et proxime
 ex Patria expecto. Caeteros meos nummos omnes,
 qui supererunt, in usum Scholae Saros Patakinae, quam
 haereditem feci, constituentur. ~~Quod~~ mentiorq; Libri
 praestantissimi tot, quot mea arca, quae hic mecum
 est, capere potest, eiq; una cum reliquis Libris
 meis indite Illustri Scholae Saros Patakinae Bibliu-
 thecam deferentur. Haec est mea voluntas ultima
 quam omnimode observari volo, ad hoc maleditionis pa-
 nam in sum vel eos, qui saepius memoratam Illustrem
 Scholam Saros Patakinae, ipsiq; Alumnos tam quoad
 haereditatem, quam quoad legata relicta, praesertim
 quod attinet ad dictam domum meam in Civitate
 Cassoniensi interturbent, vel illa violare conentur.
 Atq; in hujus mei Testamenti confirmationem, si
 honesti viri meo nomine et petitione convocati, sunt
 et tam separatim quam pariter rogati, ut huius meae
 voluntati, tamquam testes, nomina sua subscriberent.

nummum

Das Testament von Johannes/ János N. Szepsi (28.04.1658), oder besser:
 Die komplette Abschrift in den Acta der Universität Franeker (19.05.1658).

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nimirum Clariss: vir D. Christophorus Münsterus¹⁹⁷
Philosophia Doctor et Professor Ordinarius, Amplius:
D. Hadrius Popma Consul Franegueranus D. Casparus
Ejnedi Jurisprudencia studiosus, D. Johannes Lesonexi,
D. Martinus Zombati, D. Michael Dobraj, et
D. Stephanus Harsanyi, omnes mei Populares et s^{te}
Theologie in hac Universitate studiosi, nec non
Abelius Robynsma F. V. D. et juratus Suprema Frisio-
rum Curia Advocatus: Es h³ subscriptio, libenter
a Testibus simul cum Testatore facta, postquam
totum Testamentum tum ipsis, cum huic totum
erat praecedum. Actum uno contextu in Museo
Testatoris, presente magnifico D. Rectore Johanne
Valkenier Theologiae Doctore et Professore Ordinario.
Erat subscriptum C. Münsterus Do. Doct.
Hadrius Popma re., Johannes Sepsi supra, Cas-
parus Ejnedi F. Mentor, Johannes F. Lesneci s^s. Theolog
stud., Martinus Roszombati, Michael Dobraj,
Stephanus Harsanyi, Abelius Robynsma cum
consuetis lineis et subscriptionibus.
Convenit cum principali, quod facta
collatione testamur nos Infrascripti
die XIX. maj. 1658.
Joh. Valkenier F. V. D. et Prof.
Acad. jt. R.
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Die komplette Abschrift in den Acta der Universität Franeker (19.05.1658).



Der Grabstein von Johannes/ János N. Szepsi (03.05.1658).

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**ELEMENTS OF A TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP:
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA, ETHNIC HUNGARIAN
CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA
AND THE REFORMED CHURCH OF HUNGARY¹**

The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) traces its origins to communities of faith established in a region of the New World which was later to be called Canada. The first such communities, or congregations, which eventually organized themselves into what today is known as the PCC, were established by immigrants from the British Isles, a majority of these immigrants being from Scotland, and from the United States. Emigration to Canada, however, was by no means limited to men and women of exclusively British heritage. Individuals, families and even groups from many of the other European countries had also been making the long and difficult move across the Atlantic Ocean to settle in this same new land in order to begin a new life, all carrying the hope that the new life would prove to be better than the one left behind.

The pace of immigration accelerated somewhat when efforts were made by the Canadian government to encourage the opening up of the regions lying to the west of Ontario, the major enticement being offered to new settlers in the late 1800s was free land in the form of an allocated homestead of a “quarter section”, this being equal to one hundred sixty acres. It was at this time that the first settlers of Hungarian ethnicity made their way to Saskatchewan and established various communities, some of which were more lasting than others. Subsequent waves of Hungarian immigrants to Canada would settle mostly elsewhere, mostly in urban settings anywhere from Montreal to Vancouver. Each successive wave of Hungarian immigrants brought with it different political and cultural views and perspectives which in themselves are an important part of the mosaic of Hungarian-Canadian communities, but, for the purposes and inherent limitations of this study, these aspects will not be discussed except to occasionally provide needed clarification. A study of these Hungarian-Canadian communities reveals that the most significant and influential institution in their midst was the church, especially in the case of the earlier settlements.

“From the early days of Hungarian settlements on the Canadian Prairies to the present, Hungarian Canadians have maintained a great variety of institutions. The most important of these have been the churches, which have rendered invaluable spiritual and practical services to their congregations and, through them, to the Country as a whole. Hungarian-Canadian history has many heroes, and most of

¹ The use of the term “Reformed Church of Hungary” is understood to extend, in this case, to all the church bodies physically belonging to this church until the post-war treaties of 1921. At present, the church bodies separated from the mother church in 1921 function as independent Reformed churches within the political boundaries of countries bordering on Hungary.

them are unrecognized. They include the men and women who worked tirelessly to serve their churches and their people. They have given hope to the disappointed, eased the pain of the homesick and the lonely, and encouraged many to persevere in the struggle of a new existence. Although the Hungarian-Canadian churches can be faulted for fostering ethnic disunity, there can be little doubt that without them Hungarian community life would have been poorer and the loneliness of the individual Hungarian immigrant more painful.”²

The overall denominational demographics of the Hungarian population in Europe indicate that, since the counter-Reformation, the proportion of Roman Catholics to Reformed Church members is approximately three to one. Given that emigration from Hungarian areas in Europe was not sparked by religious persecution, it follows that the emigrant Hungarian population in Canada reflects roughly these same denominational proportions. Having already noted the important role attributed to the church community in the lives of Hungarian settlers, it comes as no surprise that these settlers established faith communities in their new environment as soon as they were able to. This paper will attempt to explore the history and characteristics of the relationship which was to evolve among three distinct communities: the Hungarian-Canadians of the Calvinist tradition, the already-established PCC and the Reformed Church of Hungary (RCH). The scope of the study is limited to an analysis based on the principal sources of the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC (selected years between 1895 and 2006) and the *Presbyterian Record* (years 1956–59, 1974–75, 1989–2007).

The first phase of this discussion will focus on the role and evolution of locally established Calvinist church communities within the Hungarian-Canadian community and the character of the relationship which these local ethnic church communities maintained with the PCC. The discussion will subsequently be expanded to include the RCH and will trace the events whereby the PCC was able to establish the presently-existing partner relationship with this church.

Although the very first Hungarian-Canadian congregation established within the framework of the PCC was the one in Otthon³ (Saskatchewan) in 1895, the most important early settlement of Hungarian Calvinists emerged after 1900 near Kipling (Saskatchewan). The core of the population of this community, which the settlers called Békevár,⁴ came directly from the Hungarian village of Botrágy⁵ in northeastern Hungary. The community of Otthon, on the other hand, was established by

² N. F. DREISZIGER – M. L. KOVÁCS – Paul BÖDY – Bennett KOVRIG: *Struggle and Hope: The Hungarian-Canadian Experience*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982.

³ Equivalent in English to “Home”.

⁴ Equivalent in English to “Fortress of Peace”.

⁵ The village of Botrágy was within the political boundaries of Hungary, in the northeast, until 1921 and later also in 1939–1945. From the end of the Second World War until 1991, it was within the Soviet Union, and since 1991, it is within Ukraine, near its western border.

Hungarians who, under the leadership of Rev. János Kovács, had made the decision to transmigrate from the coal mines of the Pittsburgh area to western Canada. János Kovács was instrumental in organizing the PCC congregations in both Otthon and Békevár and served as minister for several years in both at different times. The reason that these first Hungarian Reformed Church communities became associated with the PCC is due to the simple fact that the PCC was, at that time, the largest, if not only, church body in Canada of the Reformed doctrine. Other similar congregations were established at various sites in the early 1900s, but the picture soon became somewhat fragmented in the wake of the Act of Union of 1925. Some established Hungarian-Canadian PCC communities chose to enter into the United Church of Canada (UCC), while others chose not to. Of the congregations established after 1925 as a result of the arrival of a new wave of immigrants or because of the relocation of Hungarians already residing in Canada, some chose to enter the UCC, some became associated with Hungarian Churches in the United States and some joined the PCC. In view of the magnitude of the task were this topic to be treated in its entirety throughout its one-hundred-year span, this study will restrict itself to the period between 1955 and 2006, using only selected sources.⁶

Having at least three larger waves of emigration from Hungary to look back upon, by 1955, the PCC counted among its ranks fifteen ethnic Hungarian congregations with a total communicant membership of 2,176.⁷ All of these congregations had been launched, at their outset, as mission fields or mission charges within the PCC and been supplied with ministers who were able to conduct worship services as well as the activities and business of the congregation in the Hungarian language. Some of these ministers were trained by the PCC while others had received their training elsewhere.⁸ Finding suitable ministers was often difficult and there were times when stated supply, in English at times, was the only solution. Because most of the members of these congregations were immigrants and in generally lower-paying jobs, it was never an easy task for a congregation to acquire its own church building, but by 1955, most of these congregations were conducting their worship services in their own church buildings. This was achieved by a concerted community effort often involving many hours of voluntary labour as well as many years of careful stewardship. Presbyteries of the PCC were generally sympathetic to these efforts and, if asked for a loan to help a church building or acquisition project move forward,

⁶ In addition to secondary sources, the primary sources consulted were the *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly*, the *Presbyterian Record* (monthly periodical of the PCC) and the personal correspondence [available at the archives of the PCC] of a few of the individuals directly involved with events pertaining to the study at hand.

⁷ See Table 1 in Appendix A.

⁸ Most of the pastors serving in the Hungarian ethnic congregations of the PCC had received their training in seminaries of the Reformed Church of Hungary while a few had been trained in the United States. All who served on an official basis were certified by the PCC.

they were willing to comply, provided that funds were available for such purposes.⁹ It was perhaps only in such matters – which were very few and far between – that ethnic Hungarian congregations, or news concerning them, ever entered into the consciousness of the collective body or the lifestream of the PCC. This situation was furthermore evident in that ministers and elders of these congregations participated in rather minimal ways at presbytery, synod, General Assembly or national board levels.¹⁰ The obvious difficulty was the language barrier, the first priority of these congregations in this question being that their worship services, Christian education and other activities be conducted in their mother tongue. The fact that the minister knew insufficient or minimal English was never perceived as a liability. The PCC as such rarely wandered into this territory, partly because it wished to respect the “autonomy” of the ethnic congregations and partly because, in certain ways, this was unfamiliar territory. Except for the times when their paths crossed to deal with official or administrative duties, these congregations and the main body of the PCC lived in their separate worlds.

For those who had voluntarily left Hungary before 1946, emigration brought with it a physical separation from the home church. The RCH, furthermore, was not particularly good at providing ministers for the immigrant communities in Canada. This situation even took a turn for the worse, when, in 1948, a Soviet puppet government in Hungary summarily dismissed the leaders of the RCH and backed the church into a corner. The Iron Curtain had descended, the Cold War had begun and all communication between the emigrant community and the home community moved to its lowest ebb. Like most organizations and churches in the free world, the PCC also registered its general and principled disapproval of the plight of the Eastern European countries and Christian churches under the Soviet yoke, but as a church having in its midst ethnic Hungarian congregations and members gravely affected by these developments, it rarely gave voice to this nor did it actively seek to establish any contact with the RCH, a church under duress but one with which it could claim having an innate relationship. For the next ten years, little was heard within PCC circles of the churches behind the Iron Curtain.

The year 1956 was to change all of this, at least for a few years, and it is at this point that the RCH makes an appearance, if only in a very peripheral way: through its fleeing members.

The unrest in Poland in the late spring of 1956 inspired an article in the *Presbyterian Record* in June,¹¹ but despite the events of the Suez canal crisis and the Hungar-

⁹ A good example of this co-operation and assistance was demonstrated in the organization of the congregation in Welland, Ontario and in the construction of the church building: Jenő Ruzsa: *A Kanadai Magyarság Története*, Toronto, C. K. Publishing, 1940.

¹⁰ There, of course, were exceptions to this but only in the later years of the period under study. Rev. Dr. László Pándy-Szekeres, for example, served as member and executive member of the Board of World Mission from 1969 to 1974 and also on various other central committees of the PCC.

¹¹ Mikhail Tulin: *Has Russia Religious Freedom?*, *Presbyterian Record*, June 1956, 4– 6.

ian revolution of October which rocked the world, the only apparent acknowledgement of this to appear in the *Presbyterian Record* was an article in the December issue entitled *Christmas Still Lives Behind the Iron Curtain*.¹² By January 1957, however, the PCC had caught its stride and found itself in the midst of welcoming thousands of Hungarian refugees who were arriving in the country at different ports of call as a result of the Canadian government's unprecedented act of waiving certain requirements of the usual immigration process.

“In the late weeks of 1956 the Government of Canada arranged to accept from refugee camps in Europe a considerable number of Hungarians. These began to arrive in numbers in December. The Churches of all denominations in Canada were stirred by the story of the refugees and considerable sums of money were raised to give assistance to the »Freedom Fighters« who were no longer permitted to live in their own land. Our congregations across Canada, along with congregations of other denominations, sent an unknown sum of money through the Red Cross and other agencies to assist these people. \$22,000 was contributed for the Overseas Relief of Hungarians in camps and \$8,000 was made available for work amongst the refugees by our Church in Canada through the Treasurer's Office. Much more was given locally.

With the promise by the Government of one of the largest of movements of people in 1957, our Church will need to expand its staff considerably. It is expected that in addition to the Hungarian refugees yet to be brought from Europe, 200,000 immigrants will enter this country: 100,000 of them from the British Isles. It has been possible to add to the staff of Hungarian workers since the refugee movement started and it now becomes a matter of urgency to add to the staff of English-speaking workers. It is felt, too, that we must be much more alert in providing literature for people who intend to make Canada their home.”¹³

The members of the PCC Hungarian congregations volunteered countless hours of service in the assistance of the newly arrived refugees. Many of them opened up their homes and provided lodging and some were even able to provide jobs. Many of the ministers of these congregations were on hand to offer counselling and many of them helped set up and man Hungarian Relief Committees in the different centres to which the refugees were directed. Despite the original information provided by sources in Austria and France,¹⁴ it was soon discovered that many of the refugees were in fact of the Reformed faith, as an extensive article by the minister of the Hungarian PCC congregation in Toronto laid out these matters to readers in the February 1957 issue of the *Presbyterian Record*. Another article in the same issue, addressed

¹² Glenn D. EVERETT: *Christmas Still Lives Behind the Iron Curtain*, *Presbyterian Record*, December 1956, 6–7.

¹³ *The Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC*, 1957, 201–202.

¹⁴ Kálmán D. TÓTH: *Hungarian Refugees in our Midst*, *Presbyterian Record*, February 1957, 4–5.

to school-aged children, gave advice on how to welcome refugee Hungarian children. An advertisement made clear the PCC's effort to help:

“Appeal for Hungarian Relief: To meet the needs of Hungarian relief, the Board of Administration has granted \$5,000. In addition, the Moderator of Assembly, Dr. Finlay G. Stewart, has called upon the congregations of the church, rich and poor, to take a special offering to help the thousands of Hungarian refugees pouring into Canada.”¹⁵

The March 1957 issue, with five different entries referring to Hungarians, reflected well how the PCC had immersed itself in providing assistance in the refugee situation and how it was even extending a probing look at the causes and consequences of this situation. The Hungarian minister Ferenc Metzger was despatched to Vienna to help better organize the assistance being extended to Protestant refugees.¹⁶ ¹⁷ Two other persons representing the PCC were already working there. One of the articles described the many ways in which the PCC was welcoming new settlers. Perhaps one of the more exhausting tasks in this flurry of activity was the one shouldered by deaconesses of the church who were assigned to the different ports of entry to welcome and assist the refugees. At the time, the PCC even maintained a position for a director of immigration whose headquarters was in Montreal but whose oversight extended to all the ports.¹⁸ In the meantime, news arrived from overseas that the Soviet-installed government had consolidated its re-organization of the RCH.¹⁹ Six more entries touching on the Hungarian topic appeared over the remainder of 1957 in the *Presbyterian Record*, three of these were short reports on the difficulties of the church in Hungary and the continued flight of refugees; two reports referred to events in Canada. The one lengthier piece²⁰ summed up the perception of international church leaders on the status of freedom of religion in the world, with special attention directed to the Eastern Bloc. Interest remained relatively high throughout 1958 as ten entries dealt directly with Hungarians, Hungary or the Eastern Bloc. Of these, two were significant pieces describing the essence, the practice and the consequences of Communism for the churches and the populations within the Soviet sphere of influence.²¹, ²² Information of this nature offered to PCC readers the possibility of becoming acquainted with the issues faced by a church behind the Iron Curtain which was being persecuted and whose refugee members were now members in

¹⁵ *Presbyterian Record*, February 1957, 28.

¹⁶ Metzger Returns from Austria, *Presbyterian Record*, March 1957, 5.

¹⁷ *The Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC*, 1958, 204.

¹⁸ J. A. B. DE VLEESCHOUWER: The Church Welcomes New Settlers, *Presbyterian Record*, March 1957, 24–25.

¹⁹ Religious World News: Religious Situation in Hungary, *Presbyterian Record*, March 1957, 29.

²⁰ John McNAB: Protestant Leaders to Confer with Vatican on Religious Freedom, *Presbyterian Record*, May 1957, 3 and 32.

²¹ Watson T. KIRKCONNELL: The “Inside” of Communism, *Presbyterian Record*, March 1958, 6–7, 35.

²² Zeljko KUJUNDZIC: East of the Iron Curtain, *Presbyterian Record*, November 1958, 20–22.

PCC congregations. By 1959, there was little that appeared in the PCC press which touched on Hungarian matters, either in Europe or in Canada. The “noise” of 1956 had abated. And although, for the next several years, the paths of the three communities of our study did not intersect in any notable way, the events in Hungary of 1956 not only left lasting marks on the world but also on the PCC, even if this would bear fruit only many years later in the future.

The first subsequent stirrings of the ethnic Hungarian congregations of the PCC came in the late sixties when their representatives successfully forwarded a motion to the General Assembly that the Heidelberg Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession be recognized as parallel secondary standards of the PCC. These were the historic standards of the RCH and their adoption by the PCC was interpreted by the Hungarian congregations as a recognition of their presence and contribution to the PCC. In this the PCC had taken another important step to welcome the communities which still suffered from the knowledge of the persecution of their brothers and sisters within the RCH. In order to address this latter question in some form and gain certain special dispensation to strengthen themselves for this task, an overture concerning “co-operation with ethnic groups” issuing from the Presbytery of Paris was forwarded to the 96th General Assembly in 1970.²³ The response of the Assembly was: “Recommendation: That the prayer of this Overture, be granted. – Adopted.” In the wake of the recommendation above, on the surface, there seemed to be little movement within this in-Canada relationship during the next few years but behind the scenes there was a vision for the taking of a bold step and somehow extending a hand across the ocean. The tireless and compelling representation of the Hungarian lobby in this matter finally came to fruition when it was decided by the PCC committee to advise the moderator that the Reverend Dr. Hugh Davidson, acting moderator of the 100th General Assembly, would travel to Europe in the company of a PCC Hungarian minister in order to pay an official visit to the RCH in September 1974. Historically this marked a very important event in that it was the first visit ever of a PCC moderator to Eastern Europe and it was also the first attempt of the PCC to establish any contact with a church locked behind the Iron Curtain. Although, in the wake of this visit, hope of establishing some type of relationship between the two churches was sparked, this was only realized more than three decades later. The *Presbyterian Record* published a short account²⁴ of the official visit to which the moderator soon received a dissenting letter²⁵ from a Hungarian minister contesting the impression conveyed by the article that “all is well with the RCH” and in his letter the Hungarian minister went on to outline what was not well. And indeed things were not well, much as the moderator himself noted in his “reminiscences of his perambulations as a moderator”:

²³ *The Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC, 1970: Overture no. 34.*

²⁴ DeCourcy H. RAYNER, *News, Presbyterian Record*, November 1974, 20.

²⁵ The Reverend Dr. Hugh DAVIDSON's correspondence 1975, Archives of the PCC.

“The Reformed Church in Hungary, for example, is wrestling with the age-old problem of Church and State in a context which we in Canada know nothing about. [...] Over a hundred years ago our ancestors had a taste of it [...] but in those early days the contest was not so much church versus state, as between Church versus church contesting for support from the state. Perhaps we are so cosy in our relations with the State of Canada as to render ourselves weak if not powerless to minister to the State.”²⁶

Communication between the two church bodies had in short order returned to the non-existent status of pre-visit times.²⁷ It is not known if the RCH was disappointed in there not being any follow-up on its part to the opening overture of the PCC, but for the clergy and elders of the Hungarian PCC congregations, the lack of any response from the RCH was a source of grave frustration, given that they had been instrumental in helping the PCC leadership to its decision of approving such a visit. Having perceived their own PCC as the church not overly interested in taking initiative in establishing a relationship with the seemingly embattled RCH, the Hungarian PCC congregations, for the most part, hereafter abandoned their vision of outreach via the official channels of the PCC towards the RCH and concentrated on their service closer to home, most often within their own ethnic community. The PCC itself took the lack of response in stride and carried on as before.

For close to the next fifteen years nothing much in the progress of events in Eastern Europe caught the attention of the PCC. The Hungarian PCC congregations, however, had been voicing great consternation – since the early eighties – at the extensive persecution being methodically administered to Hungarian minorities in Rumania and in Czechoslovakia. Because these minorities identified strongly with their churches, the majority population state authorities did not hesitate in harassing churches and their

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid. Except for the very occasional exchange of personal letters between Rev. Dr. Hugh Davidson and Rev. Dr. József Pungur, there was no further official communication. Having freshly returned from studies in Edinburgh and therefore competent in English, Rev. Pungur was given the task by the host RCH of being the principal local escort of the moderator's party in September 1974. Subsequent to the moderator's visit, Rev. Pungur was eventually officially entrusted with a teaching position at a seminary in Kenya. After serving a term and facing an unexplained recall to Hungary full of multiple uncertainties in 1983, he decided to accept a call to the Hungarian PCC congregation in Edmonton, Alberta. For this move the RCH decided to defrock him and strip him of his doctoral degree (he was reinstated in 1990 by the RCH after the collapse of the Communist government). It was Rev. Dr. László Pándy-Szekeres, Rev. Davidson's travelling companion in 1974, who provided the inspiration to Rev. Pungur to accept the call to Edmonton. When asked about the reason for the RCH's not responding to the PCC's overtures for partnership in 1974, Rev. Dr. Pungur was uncertain, citing even favourable articles reporting the moderator's visit in the RCH's national church weekly at the time. Without having consulted the archives of neither the RCH nor of the Hungarian state, the best guess would be crediting the disruption to the persuasive intervention of the Hungarian state authorities.

members. By 1988, the PCC had also become sensitized to the tension in Eastern Europe and the General Assembly in June 1989 issued the following recommendations:

“»In the light of our particular ties of fellowship with the Reformed churches in Hungary and Rumania and the natural concerns of the many Canadian Presbyterians of Hungarian origin, we make the following recommendations:«

Recommendation 17 (adopted)

That the government of Canada be asked to protest in the strongest terms the well-documented repressive policies of the Rumanian government in relation to political expression, religious freedom and discrimination against ethnic minorities.

Recommendation 18 (adopted)

That the PWS&D Committee be asked to monitor the needs of the Hungarian churches as they care for the refugees, with a view to drawing their needs to the attention of Canadian congregations as seems necessary.”²⁸

Immediately following the General Assembly, an informative article²⁹ penned by a PCC Hungarian minister etching the same situation appeared in the *Presbyterian Record*. Things came to head in Rumania just before Christmas 1989 when Reformed Church minister László Tőkés’ defiant stand sparked a series of events which within days toppled the totalitarian regime which had kept the country in its grips since the end of the Second World War. The upheaval came about in the wake of Rev. Tőkés having demonstrated courageous resistance to months of intensive harassment by church authorities and state police for having voiced, in a taped interview by a Canadian television crew, his protestation against –among other things– the discriminative practices of the Rumanian state and its authorities vis-à-vis the Hungarian minority. In the January 1990 and February issues of the *Presbyterian Record* the editor and one of the columnists focused their remarks on the rapid rate of change in the Eastern Bloc countries, attributing much of it to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev’s new style of leadership.^{30, 31} This same month Nelson Mandella’s release captured the headlines but by April the *Presbyterian Record’s* editorial column had something to say:

“But none of these reasons justified our silence and inaction, nor can they remove the appropriate guilt that as Christians we should feel for our neglect over the long history of repression in Rumania. Christians have not been called to back winners... If nothing else, these events should call us to a new awareness of others in our world who suffer in obscurity, without hope. We are called to identify with

²⁸ *The Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC, 1989, International Report.*

²⁹ Péter SZABÓ: *Darkness in Transylvania*, *Presbyterian Record*, July–August 1989, 16–18.

³⁰ John CONGRAM: *From the editor: Welcome to the 90s*, *Presbyterian Record*, January 1990, 6.

³¹ Lloyd ROBERTSON: *Perspective: The New Revolution*, *Presbyterian Record*, February 1990, 6.

them, to make their cause our cause, even when prospects for Easter seem dim and the only future visible remains a continuing procession to Golgotha.”³²

In the May issue editor Congram went to great lengths to encourage his readers and the PCC to get involved in trying to help Rev. Tőkés and others like him. He called for a visit to Rumania by an official church delegation, going to the extent of saying: “I hope that our ‘Moderator Designate’ will give serious consideration to visiting Rumania and other Eastern Bloc nations during his term of office.”³³ In the same issue a three-page spread written by PCC Hungarian minister Dr. József Pungur is dedicated to recounting the events surrounding Rev. Tőkés’ ordeal and eventual escape to freedom and the subsequent collapse of an evil regime.³⁴ Rev. Tőkés’ visit to Canada to the Hungarian PCC congregation of Toronto with PCC moderator Rev. Harold Morris moved the decades-long quest for a triangular relationship giant strides forward, to as great an extent as had his courageous actions in Rumania. One concrete step was in place already that spring in May when acting moderator Rev. John F. Allan took editor Congram’s exhortations to heart³⁵ and together they embarked on an official visit of the RCH in Eastern Europe, a place where they were warmly welcomed and ably guided to RCH mission fields, congregations, schools and church head offices by RCH members and a voluntary PCC missionary³⁶ who had already been working there for years. The visit and the experience totally charged³⁷ the official two-man delegation. On their return, an extensive account of people, places and events encountered was duly prepared and published in three successive issues of the *Presbyterian Record* in both editorials and in a three-part “travelogue”.³⁸ In riding the coattails of these two PCC travellers on their

³² John CONGRAM: From the Editor: The Strange Silence of the Church, *Presbyterian Record*, April 1990, 4.

³³ John CONGRAM: From the Editor: Climbing on Board, *Presbyterian Record*, May 1990, 4.

³⁴ Joseph PUNGUR: A Modern Hero of Faith, *Presbyterian Record*, May 1990, 14–16.

³⁵ The Reverend John F. ALLAN, personal correspondence, 2007: “John Congram, the Editor of the Record, voiced his strong opinion that the Moderator should visit the Hungarian Reformed Churches in Eastern Europe, especially the Church in Rumania. John was very taken with the Reformed minister, László Tőkés, who spearheaded the revolt that brought down the government in Rumania. [...] Congram thought the Moderator should go to Hungary and Rumania and show support, etc. I said I’d be delighted to go if the Editor of the Record would come with me.”

³⁶ Dávid Pándy-Szekeres had been studying, travelling and working in Hungary and Rumania full-time since 1984 and served as guide for the visit to Rumania; RCH lay officer Rev. Dániel Szabó served as guide in Hungary and for the historic first ever visit of PCC representatives to RCH congregations functioning within sub-Carpathian Ukraine.

³⁷ John CONGRAM: From the Editor: Answering Questions, *Presbyterian Record*, July–August 2002, 3.

³⁸ John CONGRAM: From the Editor: A New Mission Opportunity, *Presbyterian Record*, July–August 1991, 3;

(I) *With the Moderator in Eastern Europe, Two Days in May*, July–August 1991, 15–19; *From the Editor, Strength to Teach Again, Unpaid Missionaries*, September 1991, 3; (2) *With the Moderator in Eastern Europe, Romania, Not Yet Free*, September 1991, 14–17; *From the Editor, Getting History Right*, October 1991, 3; (III) *With the Moderator in Eastern Europe, A Reformed (Presbyterian) Church With Bishops*, October 1991, 12–16.

return to Canada and by having ensconced itself in the heart of each, the world of the RCH, in these pages, had entered, in its full brokenness and in its strength, into the drawing-rooms of the PCC collective conscience.

Even before these enthusiasm-charged accounts were able to reach the general readership of the PCC, they had no doubt already reached the governing body of the PCC, for the General Assembly in June 1991 had determined the course on which it wished to set the PCC in this matter:

“The enormous changes in Eastern Europe present new opportunities and challenges for the churches. There are many signs of religious renewal across the whole area. But the churches may also have an important public role to play. Because of their good nationalist credentials, the churches are in a position to play an important mediating and reconciling role in the midst of the divisions of the newly emerging Eastern Europe. This is a situation where a genuine ecumenism might be an important influence for peace and justice.

Recommendation 6 (adopted)

That members, congregations and church courts be urged to strengthen their ties with the Christian churches of central and eastern Europe.

Recommendation 7 (adopted)

[second half:] that the government of Canada be asked to convey to the government of Rumania the continued concern for the security and freedom of the ethnic and religious minorities within Rumania.

Recommendation 8 (adopted)

That churches of central and eastern Europe be assured of our prayerful support as they work for the peace and reconciliation in a difficult time of transition; and that Bishop Tőkés and Bishop Csiha of the Reformed Church in Romania be sent a message of encouragement and fellowship.”³⁹

Despite these initiatives, the only subsequent and apparent “strengthening of ties” for the next few years consisted of a re-affirmation of the PCC’s position in this matter⁴⁰ and a signalling of problems of discrimination⁴¹ in this geographic area. By 1996, however, the beginnings of a true triangular relationship were becoming discernable. In that year, the *Presbyterian Record* reports⁴² on the North American tour of the choir from the RCH College of Sárospatak and the E. H. Johnson Award is conferred on a leader of the RCH.⁴³ By 1997, there were three voluntary PCC missionaries working with the

³⁹ Report on the situation in Eastern Europe, *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC*, 1991.

⁴⁰ Report on the situation in Eastern Europe, *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC*, 1992.

⁴¹ Report on the situation in Eastern Europe, *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC*, 1993.

⁴² Other News: Hungarian Choir Raises Voices to Raise Money, *Presbyterian Record*, June 1996, 37.

⁴³ *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC*, 1996.

RCH in Eastern Europe, and one of the leaders of the RCH was an official guest of the General Assembly.⁴⁴ Coupling the openly declared policy of the PCC vis-à-vis the RCH to their own vision of a renewed effort to become active partners specifically focusing on the RCH's need to rebuild, the Hungarian PCC congregations submitted an overture to the 123rd General Assembly in 1997:

“Overture no. 14 from Presbytery of Hamilton:
to allocate fifty percent of the Hungarian congregations' Presbyterians Sharing contributions for the next five years for the re-establishment of the schools of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Hungary and to distribute such funds among the schools of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Rumania, Slovakia and Ukraine, or to do otherwise as the General Assembly, in its wisdom, deems best.”⁴⁴

The overture above was re-submitted at the General Assembly of 1998 but did not receive the recommendation sought.⁴⁵ The interpretation of this decision in the context of the declared policy was mixed among the Hungarian PCC congregations. The declared awareness of the PCC that some form of relationship with the RCH was desirable was seen as a positive signal. The decision taken on the submitted overture – although understood and accepted in its context – still left the impression that guaranteed support for the RCH on an annual basis [for at least five years] would not be forthcoming, despite the fact that support was promised by the PCC in other forms.

In the subsequent years, the support did come, and it seemed to gather momentum from year to year. The Reverend Dr. William J. Klempa, moderator of the General Assembly in 1998, visited the RCH in 1999,⁴⁶ as did the Reverend Richard Fee, director of Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D); by 2000, there were two full-time International Ministries staff working with the RCH; in 2001, the first PCC group study tour of Eastern Europe took place, the E. H. Johnson Award was conferred on a PCC missionary working with the RCH, the choir of the RCH seminary in Kolozsvár/Cluj undertook a tour visiting PCC congregations, the groundwork was laid for a year-long Sunday school program in PCC congregations aimed at helping support the work of the RCH, a PWS&D–Canada Foodgrains Bank project was undertaken to provide relief in the flood-damaged areas of Ukraine, a third International Ministries staff member joined the RCH field and a Youth in Mission team spent six weeks participating in various RCH programs. Another significant event in 2001 was the visit of the associate-secretary of PCC International Ministries to seek out church leaders of the

⁴⁴ *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC, 1997*. Two of the voluntary missionaries were members of Hungarian PCC congregations.

⁴⁵ *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC, 1998*: “Overture no. 14 (1997) and Overture no. 2 (1998) from First Hungarian Church, Toronto. Overture is not adopted in its form. Help will be given to these schools through other means, ie. funding of International Ministries staff working here.”

⁴⁶ William KLEMPA, „God Moves in a Mysterious Way”: The Hungarian Reformed Church, *Presbyterian Record*, October 1999, 28–31.

different sections of the RCH in order to initiate formalities for agreements pertaining to an official church partnership.⁴⁷ In the autumn of 2003, acting moderator Rev. P.A. McDonald⁴⁸ and the newly-installed associate-secretary of International Ministries undertook an official visit to the different countries where the RCH functions. Exchanges such as these and others in the ensuing years greatly reinforced the bonds between the PCC, the Hungarian PCC congregations and the RCH and eventually culminated in the signing of the official partnership covenant between the RCH and the PCC at the General Assembly in 2005:

“A covenant⁴⁹ between the Reformed Church in Hungary and The Presbyterian Church in Canada was signed by the ecumenical guests, the General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency and the Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Dr. Bölcskei offered blessings and peace and brought greetings from the Reformed Church in Hungary. He expressed thanks for The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s support for Hungarians in Canada. The covenant is a sign of this co-operation and mutual support. As a symbol of our unity in Christ, he then presented a chalice inscribed with the words, Covenant between the Reformed Church in Hungary and The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 131st General Assembly, Edmonton, Canada, June 6, 2005.”⁵⁰

While by 2005 the PCC had been able to establish a partnership with the RCH and thus had strengthened its international ties, on the home front, the Hungarian-Canadian PCC churches had weakened over the years. For many years, there had been no newer waves of Hungarian immigrants to shore up the ranks of the aging and diminishing congregations.⁵¹ These congregations were not only experiencing the same general decline in membership as most other mainline churches throughout

⁴⁷ The Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC 2002, 322: listed as partners of the PCC are the sections of the RCH which are in Ukraine (Reformed Church of sub-Carpathian Ukraine) and Rumania (Reformed Church of Rumania).

⁴⁸ P. Alex (Sandy) McDONALD: From the Moderator: Ukraine Needs Our Support, *Presbyterian Record*, February 2004, 7–8; Ibid, From the Moderator: Following Jesus’ example in Romania, *Presbyterian Record*, March 2004, 9–10. As a point of interest: Rev. A. P. McDonald, who is the nephew of Rev. Dr. Hugh Davidson, the first PCC moderator to visit the RCH in Eastern Europe, was assisted in his visit by David Pándy-Szekeres, staff member of International Ministries and the son of Rev. Dr. László Pándy-Szekeres who was the Hungarian PCC minister who had assisted Rev. Davidson in his visit in 1974.

⁴⁹ Formal “covenants” indicating the establishment of a partner relationship between the PCC and another church are not always the rule. Although the PCC has scores of such covenants dating from previous decades, it also maintains partner relationships without ever having formally put onto paper the establishment of such a partnership. There exists no such covenant with the Bhil church in India even though the partner relationship was established over one hundred years ago.

⁵⁰ *The Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCC*, 2005, 15.

⁵¹ See Appendix A.

the Western world but were also affected by the negative demographics of their own ethnic group. Looking back on these one hundred ten years, it would have seemed reasonable and possible for the PCC and the RCH to have entered into some type of partnership at an earlier date. That it only happened recently is a result of missed opportunities fueled most likely by the inability of the PCC to look beyond its own cultural framework, this being dominantly rooted in the Scottish or even British tradition. There were, of course, many other factors and circumstances interspersed throughout this period which did not always favour such an undertaking, such as the First World War, the events leading up to the Union of 1925 and its aftermath, the Depression, the Second World War and then the Cold War. The number of Hungarian PCC congregations was never very great and might not have merited any more special attention than other new and struggling congregations. But beyond all these, there was, first of all, a persistent blind spot in the vision of the PCC, something which it shared with many other North American churches having their roots in Western Europe, especially of the Anglo-Saxon tradition. This resulted in a failure to recognize the fact that there existed a world to the east of Western Europe, that there existed an Eastern Europe, where the RCH –which looked back on a history dating from the time of the Reformation – was the last bastion of the Reformed tradition in the eastern reaches of this continent. To this blind spot was added another over-riding and lingering factor which hobbled the vision of the PCC until most recently. For despite its best intentions in its experiments of engaging other cultures, the bottom line in determining mission policy, at home or abroad, was the perception that to be Christian was to have the same cultural values as the PCC. It was this perception which determined how – for many decades – it engaged the native North American culture, and it was this same perception – albeit at a slightly different level – which determined how it engaged its own Hungarian PCC congregations,⁵² and this, naturally enough, limited its interest in the RCH. The number and extent of opportunities missed in this question over a period of time encompassing more than one hundred years is surely to be regretted, but the fact that the partnership has now been established is something which is to be celebrated.

⁵² J. A. JOHNSTON (ed.), *No Small Jewel*, Toronto, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1995, 176. Found in a report prepared by Dr. Rev. László Pándy-Szekeres for the Presbytery of Paris: "Canadian Presbyterians can conceive of integration if and when the members of other ethnic groups join them individually, relinquishing completely their ethnic background."

Appendix A.

Statistics concerning the Hungarian ethnic congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Canada

Table 1.

	Town – location	name	1956		1959		1965		1975		1985		1995		2006	
			hb	mb	hb	mb	hb	mb	hb	mb	hb	mb	hb	mb	hb	mb
1	Montreal, Quebec	Hungarian	-	-	-	-	-	-	118	41	62	112	50	64	40	47
2	Brantford, Ontario	Pleasant Ridge Hungarian	46	70	64	80	66	110	62	92	60	70	28	28	0	0
3	Delhi, Ontario	Calvin	159	237	169	194	137	178	137	157	133	183	71	113	42	102
4	Hamilton, Ontario	John Calvin	360	620	276	416	314	381	177	246	198	304	140	137	80	96
5	Mount Brydges, Ontario	Hungarian	68	53	70	70	64	53	48	56	43	46	0	0	0	0
6	Oshawa, Ontario	Hungarian							39	26						18
7	Ottawa, Ontario	Calvin	-	-	-	-	89	61	78	56	33	53	48	77	40	51
8	Toronto, Ontario	First Hungarian	141	161	380	310	249	254	315	320	250	264	110	233	-	173
9	Welland, Ontario	Hungarian	108	206	119	231	144	276	130	169	93	133	85	104	42	61
10	Windsor, Ontario	Hungarian	125	187	128	194	138	203	84	105	63	34	38	51	23	37
11	Winnipeg, Manitoba	Hungarian	-	-	-	6	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Békevár (Kipling), Sask.	Hungarian	166	271	155	182	174	205	180	251	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	Edmonton, Alberta	Calvin	36	30	43	36	80	50	61	48	70	83	-	56	32	46
14	Calgary, Alberta	Calvin	119	149	129	127	166	143	149	139	100	151	107	73	50	72
15	Lethbridge, Alberta	Bethlen	87	86	86	110	86	95	51	76	55	55	8	18	10	10
16	Lethbridge, Alberta	Taber	14	13	16	23	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Abbotsford, B.C.	Calvin	80	78	110	86	87	90	90	103	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	Vancouver, B.C.	Calvin	112	15	206	47	150	100	80	91	75	101	-	94	65	88
		totals:	2 176			2 112		2 199		1 976		1 589		1 048		801

Legend: hb = number of households
mb = number of communicant members

1. all figures from the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada

years 1956, 1959, 1965, 1975, 1985, 1995 and 2006

2. all figures given are the figures for the preceding year: figures in the 1956 column are the figures pertaining to 1955, etc.

Relevant excerpts from The Act and Proceedings

1957

Mention of events of 1956 in Hungary (201-2): In the late weeks of 1956 the Government of Canada arranged to accept from refugee camps in Europe a considerable number of Hungarians. These began to arrive in numbers in December. The Churches of all denominations in Canada were stirred by the story of the refugees and considerable sums of money were raised to give assistance to the "Freedom Fighters" who were no longer permitted to live in their own land. Our congregations across Canada, along with congregations of other denominations, sent an unknown sum of money through the Red Cross and other agencies to assist these people. \$22,000 was contributed for the Overseas Relief of Hungarians in camps and \$8,000 was made available for work amongst the refugees by our Church in Canada through the Treasurer's Office. Much more was given locally.

With the promise by the Government of one of the largest of movements of people in 1957, our Church will need to expand its staff considerably. It is expected that in addition to the Hungarian refugees yet to be brought from Europe, 200,000 immigrants will enter this country: 100,000 of them from the British Isles. It has been possible to add to the staff of Hungarian workers since the refugee movement started and it now becomes a matter of urgency to add to the staff of English-speaking workers. It is felt, too, that we must be much more alert in providing literature for people who intend to make Canada their home.

- [5635] candidates to the ministry at the Presbyterian Training School, Medicine Hat: László Györkös (English not good enough, needs to take language courses); Charles Komlós (making progress with preliminary studies in English)
- new applicants as candidates for reception of ministers, etc.: László Fejes (Presbytery of Montreal)

1958

(204) "27,000 Hungarian refugees came to this country with an estimated one-third being Presbyterian. This immigration movement, unannounced at the time our estimates were being prepared and approved, made our financial burden substantially more difficult.... Our Hungarian magazine »New Life« was published by Rev. Fred Metzger, Vancouver, in Austria where he had been sent to assist the refugees and us. The many responsibilities devolving upon the church at that time were accepted willingly, and though there have been failures and disappointment, the witness of our Church has been good."

1970

Overture no. 34 — PRESBYTERY OF PARIS

Re: CO-OPERATION WITH ETHNIC GROUPS

To the Venerable the 96th General Assembly:

WHEREAS, the Presbyterian Church in Canada has accepted the validity of other secondary standards in addition to the Westminster Confession of Faith, such as, the Second Helvetic Confession, the Confessio Gallica, etc., and so makes this Church a very suitable spiritual home for various ethnic groups within our country from different Reformed and Presbyterian backgrounds, and

WHEREAS; these various ethnic groups can keep their own language, customs, liturgy, confession, organization, etc., within the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and

WHEREAS, our General Board of Missions has had a long and successful encounter with these various ethnic groups in our land,

THEREFORE, the Presbytery of Paris humbly overtures the Venerable, the General Assembly,

1. to encourage on every level close co-operation with these ethnic groups, making use of the background of information which our General Board of Missions has, and
1. to direct the General Board of Missions to appoint a sub-committee, composed of a majority of persons working in ethnic congregations within our Church, to advise the General Board of Missions on problems pertaining to ethnic situations, and
2. to direct Presbyteries to consult with the General Board of Missions before issuing in matters concerning ethnic work, such as, the opening or closing of a mission field, etc., buying or selling of property, erecting new buildings, calling a minister, or severing the pastoral tie, or
2. to do otherwise for this matter as the General Assembly may deem best. Extracted from the Records of the Presbytery of Paris by

Simcoe, Ont.

April 27th, 1970.

10th Sed.- Fri., June 13, 1970 — Aft.

DONALD C. MACDONALD,

Clerk of Presbytery.

Recommendation: That the prayer of this Overture, be granted.— Adopted.

1989

Report on the persecuted situation of the Hungarian minority in Rumania, the refugee situation in Hungary, an estimated 40,000 having arrived by the end of 1988. WCC makes appeal for support for these refugees, PWS&D contributes [\$2000] as well as Hungarian communities in Canada.

“In the light of our particular ties of fellowship with the Reformed churches in Hungary and Rumania and the natural concerns of the many Canadian Presbyterians of Hungarian origin, we make the following recommendations:”

Recommendation 17 (adopted)

That the government of Canada be asked to protest in the strongest terms the well-documented repressive policies of the Rumanian government in relation to political expression, religious freedom and discrimination against ethnic minorities.

Recommendation 18 (adopted)

That the PWS&D Committee be asked to monitor the needs of the Hungarian churches as they care for the refugees, with a view to drawing their needs to the attention of Canadian congregations as seems necessary.

1991

Report on the situation in Eastern Europe. [last paragraph:] The enormous changes in Eastern Europe present new opportunities and challenges for the churches. There are many signs of religious renewal across the whole area. But the churches may also have an important public role to play. Because of their good nationalist credentials, the churches are in a position to play an important mediating and reconciling role in the midst of the divisions of the newly emerging Eastern Europe. This is a situation where a genuine ecumenism might be an important influence for peace and justice.

Recommendation 6 (adopted)

That members, congregations and church courts be urged to strengthen their ties with the Christian churches of central and eastern Europe.

Recommendation 7 (adopted)

[second half:] that the government of Canada be asked to convey to the government of Rumania the continued concern for the security and freedom of the ethnic and religious minorities within Rumania.

Recommendation 8 (adopted)

That churches of central and eastern Europe be assured of our prayerful support as they work for the peace and reconciliation in a difficult time of transition; and that Bishop Tőkés and Bishop Csiha of the Reformed Church in Romania be sent a message of encouragement and fellowship.

1992

Report on situation, economic hardships, etc. [paragraph:] At the same time the churches of eastern Europe are experiencing a remarkable re-awakening, after

decades of operating underground, often as the only bodies with an enduring faith in social justice based on the love of God.

1993

Report mentions discriminatory actions against Roma and minority religious groups such as members of the Hungarian Reformed Church within Rumania.

1996

E.H. Johnson award granted to Rev. Dániel Szabó who also addresses the General Assembly.

1997

Rev. Géza Erdelyi, bishop of Reformed Church of Slovakia is a visitor and speaker at General Assembly.

International Ministries: overseas partners and staff: short-term volunteer Anita Kmecz from First Hungarian, Toronto to Reformed Church of Hungary; new appointment (1996-97), volunteer appointment of Brian Johnston to Reformed Church of Rumania.

Overture no. 14 from Presbytery of Hamilton: overtures to the 123rd General Assembly to allocate 50 percent of the Hungarian congregations' Presbyterians Sharing contributions for the next five years for the re-establishment of the schools of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Hungary and to distribute such funds among the schools of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Rumania, Slovakia and Ukraine, or to do otherwise as the General Assembly, in its wisdom, deems best.

1998

International Ministries: working through with: Anita Kmecz from First Hungarian, Toronto to Reformed Church of Hungary; Brian Johnston from Knox Church, Waterloo, to Reformed Church of Rumania.

Overture no. 14 (1997) and Overture no. 2 (1998) from First Hungarian Church, Toronto Overture is not adopted in its form. Help will be given to these schools through other means, ie. funding of International Ministries staff working here.

1999

Flames Initiative, Focus on Mission: mission tour planned for Eastern Europe (Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine).

International Ministries working with Hungarian Reformed Church.

Richard Fee (PWS&D) visits Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine.

2000

International Ministries staff appointment of David and Anna Pándy-Szekeres to Ukraine.

International Ministries working with Hungarian Reformed Church in Rumania and Ukraine.

2001

Hungarian Church Schools and Peace Education, pp312-314.

Choir from seminary in Kolozsvár/Cluj (Rumania), under the direction of Brian Johnston to perform in 23 locations in Ontario in the fall of 2001.

Successful Flames mission tour to Eastern Europe (Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine, Croatia).

PCC and IM works with Hungarian Reformed Church in Rumania and Ukraine.

E.H. Johnson award to Dr. David Pándy-Szekeres, PCC IM missionary working in Ukraine.

Dorothy Henderson (Education for Discipleship) visits Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine.

Four-membered Youth in Mission team spends five weeks in Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine

Mark Gordon (PWS&D) visits Ukraine to help prepare Seed Bank project.

Partners program Ministry with Children contributes \$42,961,41 (Bread fees for school children) to Christian schools in sub-Carpathian Ukraine.

2002

Dr. Marjorie Ross, associate secretary of International Ministries visits Hungary, Rumania and Ukraine.

PCC and IM works with Hungarian Reformed Church in Rumania and Ukraine:
Sonya Henderson voluntary appointment to Romania with Reformed Church.

Youth in Mission team spends seven weeks in Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine.

PWS&D support (2001): Ukraine flood relief \$16,253; Ukraine Seed Bank Project (CFGB) \$14,110

PWS&D congregational initiatives support (2001): Montreal Hungarian, First Hungarian Toronto

2003

PCC and IM works with Hungarian Reformed Church in Rumania and Ukraine.

Karen Plater (PWS&D) visits Ukraine.

General Assembly moderator Rev. P.A. McDonald and Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace, associate secretary of International Ministries visit Hungary, Rumania and Ukraine.

Zoltán Balázs of Reformed Church of sub-Carpathian Ukraine attends Canada Youth 2003.

PCC clergy “study tour” visits Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine and Croatia (May)

2004

PCC and IM works with Hungarian Reformed Church in Romania and Ukraine. Youth in Mission team spends seven weeks in Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine (Steve Ross, Sonya Henderson of IM).

Report by Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace, IM, on his visit (2003) to Eastern Europe (p361) to formalize inter-church partnerships with churches in Hungary, Rumania and Ukraine.

International Ministries new staff members: Steve Ross in Ukraine; Mary Görömbey in Rumania

2005

International Ministries personnel and partnerships: Hungarian Reformed Church in Rumania and Ukraine; Ms. Sonya Henderson transferred from Rumania to Ukraine (1 September 2004).

Bishop Dr. Gusztáv Bölcskei and Rev. Bertalan Tamás (Reformed Church of Hungary) attend General Assembly: A covenant between the Reformed Church in Hungary and The Presbyterian Church in Canada was signed by the ecumenical guests, the General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency and the Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Dr. Bölcskei offered blessings and peace and brought greetings from the Reformed Church in Hungary. He expressed thanks for the Presbyterian Church in Canada's support for Hungarians in Canada. The covenant is a sign of this co-operation and mutual support. As a symbol of our unity in Christ, he then presented a chalice inscribed with the words, "Covenant between the Reformed Church in Hungary and the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 131st General Assembly, Edmonton, Canada, June 6, 2005" (p15).

Two separate mission workteams (First Church, Collingwood – Emmanuel Church, Nottawa – Wasaga Beach Community Church, Wasaga Beach, and Oakridge Church, London visit (2004) Hungary, Rumania and Ukraine.

A group of fifteen participates in study tour of Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine and Croatia.

Youth in Mission team spends seven weeks in Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine (Steve Ross, Sonya Henderson of IM)

Rev. László Tőkés, bishop of Királyhágómellék diocese, Oradea Nagyvárad, Rumania visits PCC

2006

International Ministries personnel and partnerships: Hungarian Reformed Church in Hungary, Rumania and Ukraine.

Visit by Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace, IM, to Hungary.



TIMELINE • ZEITLINIE



Gabriella Rácsok

LAUDATION OF ROBERT EDSON BAILEY

The Sárospatak Reformed Theological Academy is part of a wider spiritual community. Several outstanding scholars and church personalities have committed their lives to this institution. It is a privilege for the academy to honour and appreciate this commitment by granting honorary professorships. On 10 September 2017, at the opening ceremony of the new academic year, Dr. Robert Edson Bailey (Presbyterian Church, USA) was awarded this title. What follows below is his laudation:

“In different parts of the world, we try to live our faith as Christians in different countries and cultures, in different denominations. We know about this fact, but this idea is not necessarily present in our everyday lives. Sometimes, however, it does happen that people find ways to one another, for example, Hungarian Reformed people to North American Presbyterians. Not just in general, but person to person, community to community. These are very special, mutually enriching, constructive encounters, especially when a person is open-minded, as Robert Edson Bailey, a minister not being afraid to make sacrifices, and willing to serve others, is one of the partners in such an encounter.

His willingness and dedication is well characterized by the fact that near the age of 90, he undertook all the troubles and pains of this long trip. This is at least the twentieth time that he has visited us, not only to attend this ceremony but also to visit those here in the Carpathian Basin who have become important to him and to the Church he represents. He is not here just for a holiday, but he has immediately attached working days to his visit, which days will be real feasts for the hosting communities (whether they are congregations or other church institutions). He still and again contributes to the lives of our communities.

And this is not an exceptional case in Robert Edson Bailey's life. Looking through his biography, we see that he was always there where he was needed. His ministry has never been determined by the desire to rise above others, to increase his wealth ensuring a safe earthly existence, or to increase his authority. Instead, his ministry has been determined by the needs of others: the needs of communities, educational institutions, and churches. Thus, it can happen that someone who has been in the ministry for almost 65 years, has most of the time been replacing others and has served churches that no one else wanted to serve.

Let us take a very short look at the main stages of his life, including his relationship with the Cistibiscan Church District.

1. Robert Edson Bailey completed his higher educational studies between 1950 and 1962:

- In 1950, he got his B.A. degree in history from Grove City College, Pennsylvania.
- In 1953, he got his B.D. degree from the Theological Seminary, at University of Dubuque, Iowa, which later was made into an M.Div degree. In the same year (1953), he was ordained by Pittsburgh Presbytery, Pennsylvania.
- In 1962, he completed his Ph.D. in New Testament studies at New College, University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

2. He had the opportunity to share his knowledge at various universities and colleges:

- Between 1956 and 1965, he was a faculty member at the University of Dubuque and was appointed Professor in 1963.
- Between 1965 and 1983, he was a faculty member at Park College, near Kansas City, Missouri, where he also held the Chair of the Philosophy and Religion Department. While he was a faculty member at Park College he served as visiting professor of New Testament at the Methodist Seminary in Kansas City two separate times, altogether for two academic years.
- In 1984, he was an assistant professor of Sociology, at Missouri Southern State College (now University), in Joplin, Missouri.

3. Ministers usually start their career serving in congregations. This is then followed, and actually crowned by teaching at a seminary, a college or a university. In the case of Robert Edson Bailey, this happened differently. After nearly three decades of teaching, he returned to ministry when he saw the needs of church communities.

- In 1983 and 1984, he was an installed Pastor, at the Presbyterian Church, El Dorado Springs, Missouri;
- He provided stated supply pastoral services:
 - between 1991 and 1999 at Warrendale Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minnesota;

- between 1999 and 2002 at Rockford Presbyterian Church, Minnesota.
- In August 2002, they moved to Jefferson City, Missouri, from where he further supplied the pulpits of several churches:
 - In 2003 and 2004, he served as interim Pastor at Big Creek Presbyterian Church;
 - between 2006 and 2010, he was interim Pastor at Palmyra Presbyterian Church;
 - from April 2010 to June 2016, he served as Temporary Supply (temporary for six years!) at Bethel-Salem Presbyterian Church.

Currently, he is serving on Missouri Union Presbytery General Council, Trustees, the Administrative Commission and the Hungarian Mission Team.

He began visiting Hungary in 1995 as head of a group of three minister members of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, Minnesota, to explore the possibility of creating a relationship with the Reformed Church of Hungary. As a result, the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, Minnesota joined with the Transdanubian Reformed Church District to form a partnership. He started organizing partnerships between churches in the Presbytery and congregations in the Transdanubian Reformed Church District. When Rev. Bailey and his wife moved to Jefferson City, Missouri, in 2002, they got involved in the relationship between the Missouri Union Presbytery and the Cistibiscan Reformed Church District, which started in the 1980s. Between 2010 and 2016, due to Rev. Bailey's initiative and careful organizing activity, the relationship between the Missouri Union Presbytery and the Cistibiscan Reformed Church District was complemented by a church-to-church partnership program. During that period, I had the privilege of working with him for a few years as a program coordinator. Last year I received a letter of farewell from him, which I did not respond to. But I had good reasons for doing so; namely, I wanted him to receive the official notification about our senate decision, approved by the Cistibiscan Church District. The senate decided to confer the title of honorary professorship on Reverend Bailey. That is why he is here with us, enabling us to express our gratitude and appreciation to him in our own special way.

We are sorry that his dear wife, Annel was unable to accompany him due to her state of health, but we think of her with love and keep her in our prayers.

As a summary, I would like to recall a picture from the past of the Academy, more closely from the village-seminar movement of the 1930s, when the Academy made significant efforts to understand and recognize what the villages and village life were like, where most of our churches lived and worked. This took place in a time when the Academy was also trying to stay on its feet among the storms of history and to think responsibly about the future of the church. If I am rightly informed, an idea was born in that period which also became the motto for seminary training: send the best to the hardest places. Robert Edson Bailey's life and ministry fit in well with this picture."

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