



Studia Theologica Debrecinensis

*A Debreceni Református Hittudományi Egyetem
teológiai szakfolyóirata*



2011/1.

*Theological Journal of the
Debrecen Reformed Theological University*

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LECTORI SALUTEM!

HODOSSY-TAKÁCS ELŐD–JENEI PÉTER

Konferencia a keresztségről

A keresztyén teológiának mindig központi kérdése volt a sákramentumok teológiája és kiszolgáltatási gyakorlata. A II. Helvét Hitvallás szerint: „Isten egyházában csupán csak egy keresztség van (Eféz. 4,5) és elég is egyszer megkeresztelkedni, vagyis Istennek szenteltetni. Az egyszer elfogadott keresztség pedig az egész életen keresztül tart, és ez, az Isten gyermekeivé való fogadtatásunknak örök pecsété. Mert a Krisztus nevébe való megkeresztelkedés annyi, mint az Isten fiainak szövetségébe és családjába, tehát örökségébe való beírás, felavatás és befogadás, sőt már most, az Isten nevével való elnevezés, azaz hogy Isten fiának nevezés, úgyszintén a bűnök szennyétől való megtisztulás és az új és ártatlan életre Isten különféle kegyelmével való megajándékoztatás. (Zsid. 10,22–23; 1 Pét. 3,21) A keresztség e szerint emlékezetben tartja és megújítja Istennek a halandók nemzetsége iránt megbizonyított igen nagy jótéteményét. (Róm. 5,8–9) Mert mindnyájan bűnök szennyjében születünk (Zsolt. 51,7) és harag fiai vagyunk; Isten pedig, aki gazdag az irgalmasságban (Eféz. 2,4), megtisztít minket a bűnökből, ingyen, az Ő Fiának vére által (1 Kor. 6,11) és Ő benne minket fiaivá fogad és így minket szent szövetséggel magához csatol s különféle ajándékaival gazdagít, hogy

új életet élhessünk. (Tit. 3,5)” (XX. rész). A keresztség befogadás Isten családjába – akár be is fejezhetnénk minden további elmélkedésünket ezzel a megálapítással, csakhogy aligha találhatunk olyan gyakorlatot, ami az értelmezések előtt szélesebb kaput tárhatna, mint ez. Elvégre egy hétköznapi családba talán tucatnyi módon is bekerülhet az ember: a beleszületésen kívül adoptációval, házasság útján, netán új házas fél korábbi kapcsolatából született gyermekként, rokonként és idegenként, csecsemőként vagy felnőttként. Isten családjá (szerencsére) nem homogén klónok együttese; ahogy rettenetesen unalmas lenne egy egész nyájra való Dolly, vagyis klónozott bárány, úgy minden emberi közösség is különböző tagok együtteseként fejezheti ki összetartozását.

A keresztség teológiája olyan kérdés, amelyről nem lehet nem beszélni. Körül kell járnunk időről időre bibliai teológiai, dogmatikai és gyakorlati teológiai kérdéseit, a szövetség teológiájától a kiszolgáltatásig, netán az emlékezetbe idéző istentiszteletek elveinek megfogalmazásáig. Figyelniük kell a minket körülvevő világ rezdüléseire, a keresztyén családok elvárásaira, és azokra a hangokra is, melyek egyenesen a hitvallásosság próbakövének tekintik a sákramentum kiszolgáltatásának gyakorlatát. 2009-ben a DRHE és holland partnere

(PThU) megrendezte negyedik közös konferenciáját, melyet a keresztség kérdéskörének szentelt. Ennek a konferenciának az anyaga teszi ki jelen számunk gerincét. Reméljük, hogy a liturgiai megújulás időszakát élő magyar reformátuság számára használható szempontokat sikerül kínálnunk.

A konferenciaanyagon túl két figyelemre méltó vendégelőadás írásos anyaga is helyet kapott számunkban. A 2010. év őszi szemeszterében Fulbright-

ösztöndíjasként egyetemünkön oktató Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty utolsó előadásában egy amerikai szemszögéből tekintette át a magyarországi egyházak társadalmi szerepvállalását. Évenkénti rendszerességgel egyetemünkre látogató Hans Schwarz díszdoktorunk pedig 2010. tavaszi, legutóbbi előadásában a tudomány és teológia párbeszédén belül a tudományos kutatás emberi és teológiai határait járta körül. Végül most is néhány recenziót adunk közre.

TANULMÁNYOK

LEO J. KOFFEMAN

Baptism in Ecumenical Dialogue: Some Observations

ÖSSZEFOGLALÁS

A Hit és Egyházszervezet által kibocsátott Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry (Kereszttség, úrvacsora és szolgálat – Lima, 1982) nevezetű dokumentum fontos állomást jelentett a keresztység kölcsönös megértésének és elismerésének felekezeti közötti horizontján, az utóbbi évtizedekben azonban újabb kérdések és alternatív válaszadási kísérletek láttak napvilágot. Jelen tanulmány a legutóbbi One Baptism (Egy keresztység, 2008) nevezetű dokumentumot veszi vizsgálat alá, és különösen is az iránt érdeklődik, hogy a dokumentum miként beszél a keresztység kontextusában a hitfejlődésről, gyermek- és felnőttkeresztsegről, és a közösségbe való betagozódásról. A szerző vizsgálódásait saját egyházának gyakorlatára vetíti, és az egyházzsabályzatok revidálásának kérdésével is foglalkozik, melynek kapcsán a következő javaslatokkal él: a gyermek- és felnőttkeresztység az egyházi gyakorlatban egyaránt legitim státuszt élvezzen; a gyermekek keresztység nélküli megáldásának alternatív gyakorlata általánosabb elismerést kapjon. Szorgalmazza a nyilvános hitvallás helyének újragondolását az egyházban, továbbá egy olyan alternatív rítus bevezetését támogatja, amely lehetőséget teremt a gyermekkorban megkeresztelt egyháztagok számára, hogy keresztiségüket felnőttként is megtapasztalhassák. A szerző véleménye szerint egy „keresztységközpontú ekklézsiológia” az ökumenikus kapcsolatok fejlődését is előmozdítaná.

Introduction

I feel privileged to have been an appointed member of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission since 2007. As you may know, this Commission is the broadest international theological forum within the ecumenical movement, created in Lausanne in 1927, and one of the two constitutive movements in the founding of the World Council of Churches.

Currently three major study projects are on the agenda of F&O: (a) The Nature and Mission of the Church, (b) Moral Discernment in the Churches, and (c) Sources of Authority.

Part of the first project of the Commission is the issue of baptism, which seems to show a renewed urgency in present-day ecumenical life. However, baptism has been on the F&O agenda for decades.

To understand the importance of this issue, let me give you a quote from the F&O-webpage. Here baptism is characterized as a 'boundary issue', i.e. an issue

that needs to be addressed before churches can move towards communion, beyond their own boundaries. I quote:

Baptism into the death and rising of Christ is baptism into a reality which is both particular and universal. And yet the churches have found it difficult to appropriate the recognition of each others' baptism. Old tensions still exist between those who baptize on the basis of a personal confession of faith, and those who baptize infants; between those who see baptism as a once-off event, and those who see it as typical of the whole of the Christian life.

In recent work, it has been felt useful to not only explore the theology of baptism, but also to examine the liturgical services of the different churches to elicit what in effect each church does in practice, what meaning is attached to it, and how far baptism becomes the basis for ministry and for sharing in the community meal, and the recognition of ecclesial communities".¹

The *BEM-reports² (Baptism – Eucharist – Ministry)* until now by far the most well-known, translated and printed ecumenical report, mark an important stage in this process of mutual understanding and recognition of baptism. They seemed to witness to a major degree of consensus, and they actually have resulted in a range of new practical steps.³ However, new questions and new approaches towards responses to those questions have been presented over the last decades.

F&O itself took the issue up again as a consequence of its 1993 Fifth World Conference in Santiago de Compostela (Spain). Stimulated not least by the experience of worship at this world conference, Faith and Order has turned anew to the issue of baptism in the context of the study of worship, as an essential part of its work for the unity of the church. The mutual recognition of baptism has been at the heart of this process. The conference recommended that Faith and Order “put in process for consideration by the churches a way for the mutual recognition of baptism”.⁴

In a series of thematic consultations and F&O Standing Commission meetings new aspects of baptism were developed. Among them:

- the *ordo* (basic patterns or structures) of Christian life and worship; including the notion of the broader “*ordo* of baptism” as a life-long process of growth, within the Christian community, into Christ;
- different understandings of sacrament and/or ‘ordination’ as central to the differences among the churches in their understanding and practice of baptism;
- the churches’ current liturgical practice related to baptism;
- the churches’ current pre- and post-baptismal practice of catechism and Christian formation.

¹ <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/organization-structure/consultative-bodies/faith-and-order/fields-of-study.html> (2 December, 2009)

² *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper No. 111), Geneva 1982 (=BEM)

³ Cf. EEl, para 25–29 (see below, footnote 6).

⁴ *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia: Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, Santiago de Compostela, 1993*: Faith and Order Paper No. 166, Geneva, WCC, 1994, p. 252. Cf. for a detailed historical overview of the process between 1993 and 2006: OB (see footnote 5), Appendix II.

It is especially the first issue – the ‘ordo of baptism’ – that I want to deal with more extensively here, since this issue was at the heart of a specific study process, organized through a series of consultations and reports.

An important result of this process was the text *One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition of Christian Initiation* (from here: *One Baptism*, OB) as discussed by the F&O Standing Commission in 2006. However, the F&O Standing Commission has not formally adopted OB.⁵

Formally apart from that but in fact closely related, an important report was also issued by the Joint Working Group between the RCC and the WCC, on the *Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of a Common Baptism*.⁶ This study was presented to the WCC Assembly of Porto Alegre 2006, as an Appendix to the 8th report of the JWG. I will come back to it shortly at the end of this presentation.

The Report *One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition of Christian Initiation*

As the title of the F&O document already indicates, the objective of this report is to contribute to a process of mutual recognition of baptism. As BEM already said, “our one baptism into Christ constitutes a call to the churches to overcome their divisions and visibly manifest their fellowship”.⁷ The text is offered in the hope that it will help the churches (a) to clarify the meaning of the mutual recognition of baptism and to put its implications fully into practice, and (b) to clarify issues which prevent such recognition.⁸ The structure of *One Baptism* is presented in the box below.

⁵ ‘One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition’ (= OB), in: *Minutes of the Standing Commission on Faith and Order Cairo 2008* (Faith and Order Paper No. 208), Geneva 2009, 72–101. See for the discussion: *Minutes*, 28–31. At the time of the Kampen conference I was not aware of this fact. From 7–14 October 2009 the Faith and Order Plenary Commission met in Chania (Crete, Greece) to supervise its work. However, no actions either way were taken with regard to this report, mainly because the Plenary Commission has no authority to take such decisions. The Standing Commission is expected to decide on further steps in 2010.

⁶ ‘Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of a Common Baptism’ (= EEI), Appendix C in: Joint Working Groups between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, *Eighth Report 1999–2005*, Geneva-Rome 2005, 45–72 (from here: EEI). Also on: www.oikoumene.org

⁷ BEM/B, para 6, vgl. 15

⁸ cf. OB, para 4.

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- C. Baptism and faith

Let me give you a short clarification.

In the Introduction the notion of recognition is being considered more in general terms.

Section II explores the symbolic dimensions of baptism, the terminology of 'sacrament' and 'ordinance'.⁹ The Reformed tradition – like most of the main traditions – is used to the term 'sacrament', but for instance quite some Baptists prefer the term 'ordinance', in order to underline that it basically is a testimony of a person who has come to believe. To overstate it a bit: whereas sacraments focus on what God has done and is doing, ordinances focus on what man does in response to what God did. Section II further deals with the relation of the event of baptism itself to the continuing, life-long process of growth into Christ.

⁹ cf. EEI, para 21–24.

Section III reviews biblical imagery in relation to baptism, notes the function of baptism as the point of entry into the church, stressing the common dimensions of most churches' baptismal liturgies, explores the relation between baptism and the Eucharist, and raises issues about the relation of baptism to church membership.

Section IV addresses the questions of the believer's faith in relation to God's initiative and to the faith of the community, and offers some comments on the context and content of Christian formation.

Finally section V reviews these themes in close relation to the challenge now facing the churches, to deepen their mutual recognition of baptism and to put that recognition into more effective practice.

In the introductory section the term 'baptismal life' is introduced in order to present a very basic insight of this study: from the outset the event of baptism is not being dealt with as an 'event' in itself – which by the way might to a high degree correspond with the way many people nowadays see life anyhow, as a series of 'events'! –, but it is set within the larger pattern of Christian initiation: baptism is preceded by formation in faith and followed by an ongoing process of nurture within the Christian community, fostering a life-long process of growth into Christ. Central to the text is the attempt to place the event of baptism within that larger context, in the hope that this will offer new possibilities for churches to understand the baptismal theology and practice of others and thus foster greater mutual recognition.

Therefore I will not simply follow this text in its given structure, but I want first of all to focus on section II-C, on 'Baptism and life-long growing into Christ', in order to come to an assessment of the extent to which these thoughts could challenge and stimulate the historical churches – like the ones most of us belong to – to meet the questions raised by both ecumenical encounter with the RCC on the one hand and the growing movements of evangelical and Pentecostal communities on the other hand.

In a next step I will try and formulate some practical suggestions in the area of church policy which in my view result from these challenges.

Finally I will present some remarks regarding the issue of a broadening and deepening of the mutual recognition of baptism.

Baptismal life

"Baptism is related not only to momentary experience, but to lifelong growth into Christ".¹⁰ This statement from the BEM report on baptism has been a source of new ecumenical discussions on how to give baptism a place within this process of lifelong growth into Christ. *One Baptism* addresses this question in an interesting section. The report is aware of the fact that most churches tend to focus on the one-time, unrepeatable character of baptism, and sees this as an important aspect of ongoing misunderstandings within and between the churches.

¹⁰ BEM/B, para. 9; see for what follows OB, para. 33–41.

Baptismal life basically consists of three elements: (a) formation in faith, (b) baptism in water, and (c) participation in the life of the community. They may be discerned in some form in the baptismal practices of most churches, irrespective of the question if a particular church has a practice of infant baptism, of believers baptism, or both. However, different Christian traditions do have specific and distinct views as to the order of these three elements. Let me follow the report in more detail:

- a) The first element of baptismal life mentioned – although not necessarily the first element in terms of a temporal order within baptismal life – is formation in faith: it includes preaching and teaching, possibly in a formal shape in catechesis, intended to lead to conversion, appropriation of the faith in heart and mind, and trust in the triune God. The faith as expressed by the community of the church, including the parents in the case of an infant who is baptized, must be professed later on by that person himself or herself. In some traditions this profession may include the form of a formal rite. Nevertheless, formation in faith is a life-long process and does not come to an end by an act of profession.
- b) The second element is the rite of baptism itself, administered in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is interesting to see that the report identifies immersion or submersion in water as “the fullest imaging of death and rebirth to new life, although other uses of water (pouring or sprinkling) are attested in ancient Christian traditions, reflect other biblical images for the giving of life and the Spirit, and are authentic means of baptism”.¹¹ Nevertheless there are quite different modes of baptism in use in different churches, including churches which affirm baptism without water, or which understand baptism as an event without material signs, or which do not explicitly use the Trinitarian formula.
- c) The third element is participation in the life of the community. Those baptized will be admitted to the Eucharist, and will take their place in the community of the church, and so will exercise the spiritual gifts with which they have been endowed for service in the church and the world.

So far, so good. But *One Baptism* lists many questions that arise as to the way these three elements of lifelong growth into Christ are mutually connected.

One aspect is the relation between baptism and the Eucharist, or Holy Supper (to use a term more common in our tradition).

Baptism has been seen in many churches as a condition to be admitted to Holy Supper. Therefore, the report – in line with BEM¹² – strongly recommends that the celebration of baptism should take place in the midst of the congregation gathered in worship, preferably between a word-service and a table-service. This would also allow members of the congregation a further opportunity to remember, and reaffirm, their own baptismal vows. The presence of the community at the baptism also expresses its involvement in the whole process of initiation, and its

¹¹ OB, para 36, b.

¹² cf. BEM/B, para 23.

responsibility for the continued growth in Christ of the newly baptized. It would be fruitful to explore further ways in which Christian commitment can be affirmed corporately, like a more frequent practice of re-affirming baptismal vows.

In this framework special attention is being given to the issue of “moments of affirmation of Christian commitment”,¹³ like the practice of confirmation, understood as an affirmation of baptismal faith. Here different understandings and practices play a role. The main one is the difference between an act of anointing (the sacrament of confirmation in the catholic, orthodox and Anglican traditions) and confirmation as an act of mature public profession of faith expected of adolescents. If I am not mistaken, also the practices of the Reformed Church in Hungary and the Protestant Church in the Netherlands in this respect are different. Whereas the public profession of faith in the Netherlands usually is supposed to be given by young people from the age of at least 18 years, the Hungarian practice comes closer to the German use of ‘Konfirmation’ at the age of 13 or 14 years.

One Baptism points to the complicated and sometimes confusing discussions within the churches on this issue. For instance, there are – sometimes within one church! – on the one hand tendencies to restore the original close temporal link between baptism and confirmation, while on the other hand some people advocate confirmation to take place much later in life.

Some experiences from my own context may serve to present ongoing discussions in this area. If I only observe what happens in the congregation I belong to, I see different signs of confusion, or – to phrase it in a more friendly way – at least a certain need of re-orientation.

First, only very few people have given their public confession over the last years – as is the case also in many other congregations nowadays. This practice of recognizing and accepting one’s own infant baptism seems to be eroding quickly, albeit that the pace of this development is different in different congregations. It is certainly not understood as a welcome ‘event’, and the main argument probably is: ‘formation in faith is a life-long process; how could I take a one-moment decision for the rest of my life?’.

Secondly, the rite of baptism has changed in many respects, for instance to include an act of anointing. This might look like the orthodox tradition of combining the two sacraments of baptism and chrismation in the same ceremony, but of course this is not how it is understood.

Thirdly, a new rite of transition has found its place in our local church calendar. Somewhere in June every year, those children that will leave the primary school to enter secondary school after summer holidays are invited to come to church with their parents for a ‘step-over-worship’. After a kind of a ‘bar-mitswa’ ritual, the children stand in a circle around the baptismal font; the parents stand behind them, laying a hand on their shoulder; then the pastor anoints each of them, and the parents take their hands from their children’s shoulders and make a step backwards.

Fourthly, for about a decade now the commemoration of baptism and the re-affirmation of baptismal vows has been a highly appreciated aspect of the liturgy of

¹³ OB, para 40.

the Easter Vigil in this congregation. People will come to the baptismal font, touch the water, and then lighten a small candle with the light of the new Easter candle.

Now, let me be clear about this. Generally speaking, I welcome these changes – apart from the erosion of public confession. And I welcome the way *One Baptism* broadens perspectives by seeing baptism as an integral part of a process of lifelong growth into Christ. In fact I see many connections between this F&O view and these new developments. But at the same time, questions arise in terms of the possible need of new rules, in our worship books and maybe even in our church order. This is my next section.

Practical suggestions in terms of church policy

In my view we – and here I can of course only speak for the Dutch context – should consider several changes in our practices as to baptism.

1. We might give infant baptism and adult baptism an equal place in our practice and policy. In our Constitution – the basic part of the Church Order – we have formulated it seemingly on an equal footing: “Baptism is administered to those *for whom or by whom* baptism is desired after profession of faith has been made by and with the congregation”.¹⁴ The final words rightly point to fact that baptism is always embedded in faith. Of course ‘for whom’ (mentioned first) refers to infant baptism, and ‘by whom’ to adult baptism. But in the by-laws it becomes clear that there is a certain misbalance. The first article of the by-law on baptism clearly states: ‘In worship and pastoral care the congregation is encouraged to celebrate baptism, *especially baptism of the children of the congregation*’.¹⁵ I think that we should fully respect the responsibility of parents to make their own choices here, of course counseling them in that process towards the best option in their specific situation.
2. Those parents who don’t want to have their children baptized but who do favor the alternative of having their children blessed and prayed for in a worship service, should be accommodated more generously than we do now.¹⁶ In quite a few congregations we do know this practice, and our worship book offers some liturgical forms to do so, but the Church Order only once speaks – in a very general way – of ‘worship services of blessing’.¹⁷
3. We urgently need to reconsider the place of public confession of faith in our church. This is not a matter of liturgical forms and church order regulations, but most of all it requires a pastoral process. *One Baptism* rightly stresses that formation in faith is a life-long process and does not come to an end by an act of profession. How can we develop liturgical forms for younger – and why not

¹⁴ Kerkerde van de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland, art. VIII–2.

¹⁵ Kerkerde van de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland, ord. 6–1–1

¹⁶ Cf. BEM/B, para II: “Some of these churches encourage infants or children to be presented and blessed in a service which usually involves thanksgiving for the gift of the child and also the commitment of the mother and father to Christian parenthood”; cf. EEI, para 48.

¹⁷ Cf. Kerkerde van de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland, ord. 5–1–2.

also older – people in the church to commit *or recommit* themselves to the community and its faith tradition? Rites of transition could be further developed for several situations, like the ones I mentioned. Our church order already adopts the option of combining the public confession of faith with the baptism of one's children or with the acceptance of the office of elders or deacons. I could also imagine something like a practical year of orientation in all aspects of local church life for young adults, to be completed with a formal moment of committing themselves to this congregation.

4. Finally, we have to deal with the wish of church members who long for a rite to experience anew their being baptized as a child. Since Tjitte Wever is introducing this subject in a separate contribution in this volume, I don't go deeper into it now. Let me only give a quote from the JWG Report: "reaffirmation and remembrance of one's baptism, in acts that may include elements or 'echoes' from the baptismal rite itself, is a proper aspect of Christian worship and spirituality (as when in a baptismal liturgy those present are asked to remember and explicitly affirm their own baptismal confession)".¹⁸

Towards more mutual recognition of baptism?

Let me conclude with some remarks as to the ecumenical aspects of baptism, and more specifically the issue of mutual recognition of baptism.

One Baptism takes the issue up twice, both in its introductory section and in its concluding section.

The ecumenical picture regarding mutual recognition, as reflected in paragraph 9, is very complicated:

- for some churches mutual recognition of baptism is part of a full sharing in faith and life among the churches involved;
- for others there is mutual recognition of baptism, but no sharing at the eucharistic table; for instance, between roman catholics and protestants in the Netherlands;
- sometimes the mutual recognition of baptism is lacking, and churches require the (re-) baptism of all persons seeking membership, even if they have already been baptized in another church;
- finally, some churches leave it fully to the local congregations to decide on the recognition of baptism.

This survey leaves aside forms of one-sided recognition, like the recognition by the Protestant Church in the Netherlands of baptism in a Baptist congregation.

What exactly do we mean with 'mutual recognition of baptism'? *One Baptism*¹⁹ distinguishes at least three dimensions:

- recognizing one another *individually* as Christians;

¹⁸ EEI, para 101.

¹⁹ cf. OB, para 10.

- churches recognizing the baptism of a person coming from another faith community *who seeks entrance* into this church;
- and churches recognizing one another *as churches*, that is, as authentic expressions of the One Church of Jesus Christ.

As the report says: “recognition indicates that one party *acknowledges* an already-existing quality, identity or status which it has discerned in another. It does not mean that one party *grants* to another a status which is within its power to give”.²⁰ In other words: “Mutual recognition of baptism is a process of the churches’ discerning apostolicity in one another’s lives or, put more fully: of *discerning*, in one another, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church”²¹ Here again three stages can be distinguished, like three concentric circles:²²

- in the heart the discernment of the apostolicity of *the rite of baptism* itself: the elements of the liturgy of baptism are being recognized as signs of the common faith which Christians through the ages share (e.g. the Trinitarian formula, and the use of water);
- a wider circle implies discerning apostolicity in the larger pattern of Christian initiation of the other community;
- the widest circle entails discerning apostolicity in the ongoing life and witness of the ecclesial community that baptizes and forms the new Christian; here in many cases the problem of the mutual recognition of ministry forms a blockade.

Of course, here we are in the heart of present-day ecumenical problems and challenges. Recently the National Council of Churches in the Netherlands took the initiative to broaden and deepen the existing mutual recognition of baptism.

In fact, an explicit mutual recognition only exists between the RCC and the PCN and between the RCC and the Arminians. Here, three criteria are in place: the use of the Trinitarian formula, the use of running water, and the administration of baptism by someone who has been authorized by his/her own church to do so. So, basically the RCC has no problem to recognize a baptism administered by a female protestant pastor, and the PCN has no objections against the recognition of a baptism by a roman-catholic un-ordained church worker. At the same time, as you know, the RCC does not recognize our ordained ministry, but from the opposite perspective the PCN recognizes the ministry of a Roman Catholic priest. In the upcoming discussions under the auspices of the National Council of Churches we will certainly have to discuss the question how to deal theologically with this imbalance. This is also where the Report of the JWG might play a role.

In our relationship with the RCC it is clear that we mutually recognize the apostolicity of the rite of baptism itself, as well as apostolicity in the larger pattern of Christian initiation of the other community. But the RCC cannot recognize apostolicity in the ongoing life and witness of the PCN, in spite of the fact that – to quote the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council (1964) – “baptism (...) constitutes a sacramental bond of unity linking all who have been reborn by

20 cf. OB, para 11, italics LJK.

21 cf. OB, para 13, italics mine.

22 cf. EEI, para 90–97.

means of it".²³ As the JWG report rightly says: "If there is one church of Jesus Christ and if baptism is entrance into it, then all those who are baptized are bound to one another in Christ and should be in full communion with one another. There should not be a division among ecclesial communities; baptism should impel Christians to work for the elimination of divisions".²⁴ And: "When there are obstacles to full communion among different communities, baptism still provides a degree of communion that is real, if imperfect".²⁵

It is still a long way to go, but it might be worthwhile to take the mutual recognition of baptism as new starting point in ecumenical ecclesiological discussion. A 'baptismal ecclesiology' might serve us well in the present stage of ecumenical development.

²³ *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 22; cf. EEI, para 5

²⁴ EEI, para 31

²⁵ EEI, para 61

ELŐD HODOSSY-TAKÁCS

The Concept of Covenant in the Ancient Near East and in Biblical Theology

ÖSSZEFOGLALÁS

A szövetség fogalma elengedhetetlen az ókori Izráel teológiájának és identitásának megértéséhez. Jelen tanulmány a hettita és asszír vazallus-szerződéseket és a Héber Biblia szövetségi szövegeit vizsgálja. Az összehasonlítás eredményeképp a szerző a következő megállapításokat teszi: a Héber Biblia szövetségfogalma hosszú fejlődéstörténettel rendelkezik, amely számtalan ókori ember, kultúra és társadalom közös tapasztalatában gyökerezik, ehhez kötődik és innen is bontakozik ki. A bibliai szövetség fogalma így inkább a hétköznapi ember élethelyzetére épülő teológiai reflexió, mintsem egy olyan új koncepció, amely kifejezetten az ókori Izráel különleges helyzetéből és tapasztalatából származik.

The nature of the problem

The covenant situation in the Ancient World belonged to the political sphere. After military campaigns, conquerors either left the former enemy kings on their thrones as vassals or replaced the rulers with hopefully more loyal ones. In these cases, the vassal kings' positions were defined by *vassal treaties*. Those who were, became, or proved to be equal regulated their relationships by *parity treaties*. The relationship of the parties was built upon political trust, but, as we may experience even today, this phrase has a special meaning, since in the political arena trust is an extremely fragile phenomenon. So just for being sure they called on human and divine witnesses to testify whenever a treaty was broken, and the deities also punished the guilty. Probably even in the oral stage this methodology was applied, and later the written documents were used as witnesses in controversial cases.¹

In the Hebrew Bible, the term covenant describes the relationship between a particular divine being (YHWH) and a people (Israel). Before entering into covenant with the entire people through Moses at Sinai, we learn about certain individuals, Noah and the ancestor Abraham, with whom God established this specific relationship. The covenant should be two-sided, and can be understood as an arrangement between two individuals, between groups, or between a person and a group.²

¹ MATTHEWS: *Treaties and Covenants*, 300. See also: WALTON: *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 69. General bibliography: FLANDERS—CRAPPS—SMITH: *People of the Covenant*, 526.

² GOTTFALD: *The Hebrew Bible*, 115.

The scholarly consensus rests on the theory that Israel adopted the concept of covenant, especially its developed form (Deuteronomy, Sinai Covenant) from the Ancient Near Eastern treaty theory, and expressed her relationship with YHWH through its terminology.³ These vassal texts demonstrate a full dependence of the subject vassal upon the will of the imperial overlord. This idea fits perfectly with a theology that wanted to focus on the required obedience of the people towards God. The majority of the ancient treaty documents are dated to the Late Bronze Age, these are the Hittite vassal treaties, but we find similar texts from the 7th century as well, when the Neo-Assyrian Empire recorded some of the relationships with subject kings that way. Treaties were integral parts of ancient diplomacy, and although the Israelite concept of God making covenant with people is without direct parallel, the way it was utilized is worth noting.

Texts

a) Mari letter (Middle Bronze Age)

There are frequent references to different kinds of covenants in the Mari letters. Especially interesting is one of the letters (ARM II, No 37, 6–14) where two strange covenant-making ceremonies are mentioned. In the first case, a puppy and a plant (*lettuce*) are used; and, in the second case, the text mentions an ass. The covenant ceremony took place between two parties (presumably former enemies or at least rivals), Hanu and Idamaras, and in the presence of Ibal-Il, the representative of the king of Mari. The presence of this representative probably signs the fact that the king himself guarantees a longer term peace between the groups, but he is independent from both parties. Strangely enough the ceremony itself was rejected by the representative because they wanted to use the puppy and the plant. Instead of using the puppy and the plant, Ibal-Il forced them to kill a she-ass. The text:

“To my Lord say: thus Ibal-Il, thy servant. The tablet of Ibal-Adad from Aslakka reached me and I went to Aslakka ‘to kill an ass’ between the Hanu and Idamaras. A ‘puppy and lettuce’ they brought, but I obeyed my lord and did not give the ‘puppy and lettuce’. I caused the foal of an ass to be slaughtered. I established peace between the Hanu and Idamaras...”⁴

It is not clear why the *‘puppy and lettuce’* was so intolerable that the king had to command one of his officers to forbid the planned ceremony,⁵ but obviously in the West-Semitic world the use of animals and herbs during covenant-making ceremo-

³ For the debate over this statement see the still widely used textbook ANDERSON: *Understanding the Old Testament*, 98–101., MENDENHALL: *Ancient Israel’s Faith and History*, 57., GOLDINGAY: *Covenant, OT and NT*, 773., MENDENHALL—HERION: *Covenant*, 1183. The most recent evaluation of the available data: KITCHEN: *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 283–299., the present author’s opinion differs significantly from some of the conclusions of Kitchen, eg. the placing of materials of Deuteronomy to the late 2nd millennium (299).

⁴ ANET, 482, ANE I, 261 – date of the text: ca. 1730–1700 BC

⁵ Probably the *‘puppy and lettuce’* ceremony the would have *“imposed obligations upon Mari”*. MENDENHALL: *Puppy and Lettuce in Northwest-Semitic Covenant Making*, 30.

nies was a common practice. A similar custom existed in the Roman Empire,⁶ and the practice can also be compared to the Biblical Passover festival.⁷ G. Mendenhall states: “It is very tempting to regard the Passover as a continuation of the age-old custom connected with the establishment of a covenant relationship.”⁸

b) Hittite vassal treaties

The most ancient covenant documents already contain the central message: “my friends will be your friends, my enemies will be your enemies”.⁹ The largest treaty collection came from the Late Bronze Age Hittite archives; over three dozen texts have been discovered. These texts share a common and clear pattern. The most important elements are:

- (1) title;
- (2) historical prologue [can be a rather lengthy account about the events preceded the new relationship];
- (3) stipulations;
- (4) instructions for storing the text of treaty, in a shrine or other safe place;
- (5) reading instructions: periodically, publicly;
- (6) list of witnesses;
- (7) blessings and curses upon those who keep or break the terms;
- (8) oath-taking ceremony and affirmation of the sanctions.

There are minor changes and omissions in some cases.¹⁰ The treaty form was not an innovation of the Hittites themselves, since the previous example and some Early Bronze Age plates already show most elements of the Hittite treaty texts, but the above structure is most fully attested in this corpus of documents. We can look at the order in the following example.

The Hittite Emperor’s Treaty with the King of Amurru¹¹ (abbreviated)

TITLE/PREAMBLE

“these are the words of the Sun Musilis, the great king, the king of the Hatti Land, the valiant, the favorite of the storm-god...”

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

“Aziras was the grandfather of you, Duppi-Teshub. Aziras remained loyal to my father [as his overlord] ... my father was loyal toward Aziras and his country ... when my father became a god and I seated myself on the throne of my father, Aziras behaved toward me just as he had behaved toward my father ... Aziras, your grandfather and DU-Teshub, your father ... they remained loyal to me as their lord ... when your father died, in accordance with your father’s world I did not drop you

6 MENDENHALL: Puppy and Lettuce in Northwest-Semitic Covenant Making, 26.

7 See also some similar rites: Ex 12:21–23 (J, the oldest source); Lev 14:2–9, 48–53; Num 19:1–10.

8 MENDENHALL: Puppy and Lettuce in Northwest-Semitic Covenant Making, 29.

9 Treaty found at Susa, Iran, c. 2250 BC. MATTHEWS: Treaties and Covenants, 300.

10 MATTHEWS: Treaties and Covenants, 301.

11 ANET, 203–205; MENDENHALL: Ancient Israel’s Faith and History, 59.

... *I sought after you. To be sure you were sick and ailing, I the Sun, put you in the place of your father...*"

OBLIGATIONS

"but you, Duppi-Teshub, remain loyal toward the king of the Hatti land ... the tribute which was imposed upon your grandfather and your father ... you shall present them likewise ... do not turn your eyes anyone else!... if anyone utters words unfriendly toward the king or the Hatti land before you, Duppi-Teshub, you shall not withhold his name from the king..."

WITNESSES

[a list of over seven dozen gods] *"... all the olden gods, ... the mountains, the rivers, the springs, the great sea, heaven and earth, the winds and the clouds – let these be witnesses to this treaty and to the oath."*

CURSES AND BLESSINGS

"should Duppi-Teshub not honor the words of the treaty and the oath, may these gods of the oath destroy Duppi-Teshub together with his person, his wife, his son, his grandson, his house, his land and together everything that he owns. But if Duppi-Teshub honors these words of the treaty and the oath that are inscribed on this tablet, may this gods of the oath protect him together with his person, his wife, his son, his grandson, his house, and his country..."

c) Assyrian texts

With the coming of the Iron Age we have a smaller number of texts, the structure of the treaties change, and we see a sort of simplification of the pattern. The basic formula:

- (1) title;
- (2) stipulations;
- (3) curses;
- (4) witnesses.¹²

A few differences surface when comparing Hittite treaties with later Assyrian texts. The historical introduction, the instructions for storing and reading the text, and the requirement of the oath taking ceremony are central differences, all of them missing from the Assyrian versions.

It is worth taking a closer look at these through the lengthy vassal treaties of Esharhaddon.¹³

The Treaty between Esharhaddon and Baal of Tyre

TITLE/PREAMBLE AND CENTRAL MESSAGE

"This is the treaty which Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, has established with you before the great gods of heaven and earth, on behalf of the crown prince designate Ashurbanipal, the son of your lord Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, who has designat-

¹² MATTHEWS: *Treaties and Covenants*, 301.

¹³ ANE II, 53–69.

ed and appointed him for succession. When Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, departs from living, you will seat the crown prince designate Ashurbanipal upon the royal throne, he will exercise the kingship and overlordship of Assyria over you.”¹⁴

STIPULATIONS

“If you will not be subject to this crown prince designate Ashurbanipal, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, so that he cannot exercise kingship and lordship over you ...if you hear any wrong, unseemly, improper plans, which are improper or detrimental to the exercise of kingship by the crown prince, ... whether they be spoken by his brothers, his father’s brothers, his cousins, or any other member of his father’s lineage, or by officials or governors, or by the court personnel, eunuchs or not, or by the army, or any human being whatsoever, and conceal it and do not come and report it to the crown prince...”

EXACT DATE

“the 16th day of the month of Ajaru, in the eponymy of Nabu-bel-usur, governor of Khorsabad.”

After examining the text above, several observations can be made about differences and similarities between this text and Hittite treaties:

- As it is visible, the historical background of the Assyrian text is not described; in the focus of this document we find a future obligation (“you will seat the crown prince upon the royal throne”). Interestingly enough, the reader has a strange feeling: the present king is pretty sure about his own position, but he is also a little bit worried about the future!
- At the beginning of the long list of stipulations we find the conditional statement (“if you will not be subject to this crown prince...”) followed by the exact details of all kinds of negative attitudes towards the future just ruler. It is obvious that whoever wrote this one lengthy sentence knew quite a lot about palace intrigues! More important to observe is the orientation of this text, from the beginning to the end the text deals with the future.
- In the case of the Esarhaddon text the instructions for storing and reading the text are missing. We find the exact date of composition instead, something we would expect when we deal with the composition of a well-trained bureaucrat. This is an important reminder and also an indirect evidence for the nature of this text as a scribal document. These texts were to be stored carefully, and it was likely the duty of the appointed officials to make the content of such texts available to all (or at least the concerned).
- This Assyrian text is written in a very direct, dictated way. We find a long list of deities in front of whom “the bidding” took place, that part is followed by the cases of non-loyal behavior, and after the detailed description of all possibilities of human unfaithfulness we go back to the gods, whom will wipe out the unjust. “May Shamash, the light of heaven and earth, not give you a fair and equitable judgment, may he take away your eyesight; walk about darkness! ... May Venus, the brightest among the stars, let your wives lie in the embrace of your enemy

¹⁴ ANE II, 55.

before your very eyes, may your sons not have authority over your house, may foreign enemy divide your possessions! ... May Belet-ili, Lady of all creatures, put an end to birth giving in your land, so that the nurses among you shall miss the cry of babies in the streets..." After statements like this, the oath-taking ceremony really seems unnecessary: the ruler, the great king simply declares the future in the style of a decree. He seems to be saying, "OK, my friend, the decision is yours, but you do not really have any options."¹⁵

d) Biblical texts

In the Hebrew Bible, covenant language is presented several times. Since Israel was never a world power, naturally the biblical examples describe different situations; the kings in Jerusalem had no vassals so we do not expect any vassal treaties in the Hebrew Bible. But whenever people found themselves in similar situations, they could behave in a comparable way. Pacts between individuals, groups, states were formulated as covenants.¹⁶ It should be no surprise that even among the patriarchs we find examples of covenant-making acts, e.g. when Jacob and Laban made a deal of separation. According to Gen 31 when Jacob decided to leave the territory of his father-in-law, he practically had to escape, and when they met again after a serious debate over the missing household gods they set up a heap of stones to mark the border between them. This text appears to be a story of family matters, but upon closer examination we find all the central elements of covenant-making.

From the sociological perspective, the story of Jacob and Laban can be explained as a story of a clan-division, something happens whenever the size of flock grows above the accessible grazing fields. From this point of view, the use of covenant language is especially fitting. Verse 44 reads: "*Come now, let's make a covenant, you and I, and let it serve as a witness between us*".

The covenant between Jacob and Laban [NIV]

INTRODUCTION; Jacob reminds Laban of his past two decades of service (vs. 38–42)
"I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks. I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was stolen by day or night. This was my situation: The heat consumed me in the daytime and the cold at night, and sleep fled from my eyes. It was like this for the twenty years I was in your household. I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times. If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked you."

¹⁵ For a detailed analysis of the Esarhaddon-treaties see FRANKENA: The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy, 122–154.

¹⁶ See the list of UNTERMAN: Covenant, 190.

STIPULATIONS (vs. 48–52)

Laban said, „This heap is a witness between you and me today.” ... „If you mistreat my daughters or if you take any wives besides my daughters, even though no one is with us, remember that God is a witness between you and me.” Laban also said to Jacob, „Here is this heap, and here is this pillar I have set up between you and me. This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not go past this heap to your side to harm you and that you will not go past this heap and pillar to my side to harm me.”

DIVINE WITNESS AND SACRIFICE (vs. 53–54)

„May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us.” So Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac. He offered a sacrifice there in the hill country and invited his relatives to a meal. After they had eaten, they spent the night there.

The above cited text is a covenant between two clan leaders; from the theological point of view more important is the adaptation of the covenant-terminology to relationship of God and his people. The previous example came from the everyday life, and the partnership of states is a similar situation (see the pact between Asa of Judah and Ben-Hadad of Aram, 1Kings 15,18–20). Behind the theological usage we find the experience of covenant between two unequal parties, like a suzerain and a dependant. God and humans, the divine sphere and the mortals are not cooperating as individuals, but according to the biblical notion God gifted his people with this particular relationship. Texts like the Decalogue, Joshua 24, or the Book of Deuteronomy as a whole reminds the reader that the receivers of the covenant have certain responsibilities, and the giver is just. The most important duty is simply to keep the covenant, based on acceptance. With all this in mind we can compare the structure and terminology of some biblical texts with Hittite and Assyrian documents.

Table 1. Treaty form – structural elements¹⁷

	LB Hittite treaties	IA Assyrian treaties	Hebrew Bible (some examples)
title / preamble	+	+	Ex 20:2a; Deut 5:6a; Josh 24:2a.
historical prologue	+		Ex 20:2b; Deut 1–3; Josh 24:2b–13.
stipulations (obligations imposed upon the vassal)	+	+	Ex 20:3–17; Deut 5:7–21, 12–26; Josh 24:14.
storing and reading instructions (the text is to be kept in a shrine or other safe place, the requirement of periodic public reading)	+		Ex 25:21, 40:20 Deut 10:5, 27:2–3, 31:1–10.
list of (divine) witnesses	+	+	Josh 24:22, 27
blessings and curses upon those who keep or break the terms (obedience / disobedience)	+	+	Deut 27–28
[oath of the vassal (pledge)]			Ex 24:3; Josh 24:24
oath-taking ceremony and affirmation of the sanctions	+		Ex 24:3–8

The visible similarities are striking. According to the well-known and generally accepted view, the structure of the Hittite vassal treaties compares well to and lies behind the covenants involving Moses and Joshua, in the lengthy accounts of the Sinai and Sikem events. Mendenhall argues: “*this treaty structure was likely a thousand years old by the time of Moses and was part of the common knowledge of people throughout the region.*”¹⁸

The usage of the parallels

The parallels and differences between Hittite and Assyrian treaties and covenants made in the Hebrew bible clearly show that the treaty form is evidenced in the biblical texts. Without a doubt, the biblical authors adopted the terminology from the common knowledge of their world. However, there is a point of debate here as well. At first glance the question may seem odd for those not specializing in the biblical studies, but biblical scholars must ask whether the Hittite or the Neo-Assyrian texts influenced the development of the biblical concept of covenant. The Hittite parallels as it was mentioned previously came from the 14th century context, and their proposed usage can be seen as a positive evidence for the an-

¹⁷ MENDENHALL: Ancient Israel's Faith and History, 57–59, 67–69, GOTTWALD: The Hebrew Bible, 117.

¹⁸ MENDENHALL: Ancient Israel's Faith and History, 57.

cient nature of the biblical notion.¹⁹ On the other hand, the Assyrian treaty forms emerge several centuries later, and theoretically we cannot reject the assumption of dating the formulation²⁰ of the covenant concept in the Bible to the eighth/seventh centuries B.C. In this case the concept of covenant is a *theological reflection* of the people's situation.

Ancient idea shaped through centuries of experience

In the Hebrew Bible, one may say, Moses is the figure who acts as the chief covenant mediator. However, the Moses traditions (according to Gottwald) themselves are poor in direct covenant references. The non-P references in Ex 19–24 and 32–34 are

*seen by some critics as simply a theophany. Indeed, some who claim a Deuteronomistic revision of the non-P Sinai units deny that there are any pre-D references to covenant in the Sinai texts, which they tend to read as theophanies throughout. Identifiable J and E traditions do not refer to the covenant, except for J's 'ark of the covenant' (Num 10:33, 14:44)."*²¹ ... "Some maintain, however, that the Israelite formulas are more closely correspond to the typical concepts and language of the suzerainty treaty form than they do to any other ancient Near Eastern forms of agreement. Moreover, the adoption by Moses is viewed as a highly effective way to assert that in the new community of equal families/clans (later tribes) of Israel there were to be no human overlords but simply a sovereign god who legitimate the familiar / clan-based (later tribal) social organization of the covenant people."²²

The idea of covenant is practically absent from the 8th century prophets, probably because of political reasons. The covenant between YHWH and the house of David in Judah was mainly a pledge to the dynasty, and in the northern tradition it was without any central importance.

We find clear references to the concept of covenant in the exilic period. The treaty model is clearly represented in the structure of Deuteronomy, where the entire book is formulated around the covenant form.²³ *Table 1* shows that aside from Deuteronomy the treaty forms' major elements are nowhere represented by any

19 According to the balanced evaluation of Hoffner, we must be aware of the distance between the Israelite and Hittite cultures both geographically and historically. He proposes a "channel of cultural influence in the late second and early first millennium that allowed influences from Anatolia to be felt in Palestine." HOFFNER: Hittite-Israelite Cultural Parallels, xxxiv.

20 The terminology of treaty and covenant is discussed briefly by FRANKENA: The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy, 138.

21 GOTTWALD: The Hebrew Bible, 115. See also the detailed description of CHILDS: The Book of Exodus, 354–360.

22 GOTTWALD: The Hebrew Bible, 116.

23 According to Dearman Deuteronomy contains elements from two Neo-Assyrian literary models: vassal treaties and law codes. DEARMAN: Religion and Culture in Ancient Israel, 1992. Goldingay states: „Deuteronomy as a whole can be seen as a covenant document.” GOLDINGAY: Covenant, 773.

single text, they must be gathered from different parts of Biblical books.²⁴ Joshua 24 is another text where the majority of elements can be seen – again, a relatively late and well-composed chapter.²⁵ We can state it was an important position to stress for the Deuteronomic author, because all covenants can be summarized in a very simple and brief statement: remain loyal to God.²⁶

Covenant theology helps to interpret Israel's life.²⁷ This is the basic aim of the large historic work of Joshua – 2 Kings. Deuteronomy, as a preamble underlines the conditional nature of the covenant, as it is made clear in Deut 28.²⁸ Through the evaluation of Israel's past, the authors looked for a relevant answer to the challenging questions raised from the national tragedy of the Exile. They realized that the centuries of unfaithfulness led to the destruction of the capital and the captivity of the royal family and nobility. The scribes focused on one term that was easy to apply – covenant.²⁹ In the book of Jeremiah, a composition of the same scribal group,³⁰ the term remains central. If YHWH abandoned the people the only solution for a restored relationship would be a new covenant (Jer 31:31),³¹ probably better to say a renewed covenant. Behind this notion there is the voice of hope and trust. YHWH wills to continue the way with the elected people. Abandonment is momentary (Is 54:7–8); the Exile can last for decades, but not forever. This new covenant will be everlasting, won't be broken or violated by disobedience (Ez 37:26).³²

Theological importance and conclusions

The present writer is not denying the ancient nature of the notion of covenant. Segmentary societies do not keep written agreements; in those communities the spoken word and the witnesses must take a central role. For them, a view that lays the emphasis on fidelity is an acceptable and meaningful idea. Behind the developed concept of covenant, visible in the book of Deuteronomy, in the historical

24 GOTTWALD: *The Hebrew Bible*, 116.

25 MCKENZIE: *Aspects of Old Testament Thought*, 1298.

26 The requirement of exclusive loyalty is the most obvious parallel between the quoted political covenants and the Biblical material. GOLDINGAY: *Covenant*, 770.

27 BRUEGGEMANN: *Reverberations of Faith*, 38.

28 The similarities of Deut 28 and the Assyrian treaty is strikingly presented by FRANKENA: *The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy*, 148–150. According to his analysis it is possible to understand Deuteronomy as a document of a renewed relationship: instead of being a vassal of the Assyrian king from now on the real and only king to serve will be Yahweh. After the death of Ashurbanipal the political power of Assyria declined, “consequently he (Josiah) and his people had no longer to serve the Assyrian king as their lord and to revere Ashur in addition to Yahweh, but could return to the religion of their fathers by removing from their midst all the hated vestiges of Assyrian influence and by abolishing the cults of foreign gods...” (152–153.)

29 For Deuteronomy as a scribal document: NELSON: *Deuteronomy. A Commentary*, 3–8., TOORN: *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, 143–172.

30 DEARMAN: *My Servants the Scribes*, 412–13. HODOSSY-TAKÁCS: *The Wrath of Jeremiah*, 94–113. For the scribal culture in general: TOORN: *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, 2007.

31 FLANDERS–CRAPPS–SMITH: *People of the Covenant* (Fourth ed.), 404.

32 BRUEGGEMANN: *Reverberations of Faith*, 39.

work of Joshua – 2Kings, and the prophetic book of Jeremiah, we most likely find the Neo-Assyrian treaties rather than the more ancient Hittite structure.

When compared to depictions of God's relationship with Israel in other contexts in the Hebrew Bible, the covenant as an analogy for the relationship of God to Israel is less intimate than the husband-wife image (Hos) or the picture of sheep and shepherd (Ps). The Lord as king and the people as the ruled is a familiar view of understanding the divine – human relationship. For those living in a kingdom ruled by a royal figure covenant language was easily understandable. The kingship as an experienced reality shaped the theological interpretation, the formulation of the texts, and should be seen today as the result of careful scribal activity.

The introduction of the covenant language to the biblical texts was a useful and innovative element.³³ In the immediate context of the Exodus traditions covenant language creates an obvious environment for the legal material, we even can say the laws themselves depend on the previously granted covenant.³⁴ The laws balance human superciliousness; they show the need for responsible behavior. Similarly, the covenant theology clarifies the fact of election that does not result a privileged position but through covenant it transforms into the election to responsibility. The gifts of election and covenant are not acts of favoritism.³⁵ One of the major strengths of applying the term theologically was its complexity. It can be seen in the private realm (eg. marriage contract), in the political life (eg. international treaties, or lord and ruled within a society); it can be seen collectively (eg. obligation of a city) and individually (eg. a particular person's relationship with someone else, credit / debt, etc.).

In sum, this term is inclusive, complex, and the major theological importance of using covenant language lays in its emphatic involvement of responsibility. This notion, at least in its developed form describes the partnership between people and God comprehensively; it is not necessarily an ancient, genuine element of Israelite thinking but rather seems to be a reflection. As such, due to its applicative character the covenant theology fulfills its role.

³³ The concept of covenant is seen by some scholars as the most distinguishing element of Yahwism. WALTON: *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 110.

³⁴ Of course this way of understanding and dating the material puts the understanding of Moses as a chief mediator into doubt. GOTTFWALD: *The Hebrew Bible*, 115.

³⁵ MCKENZIE: *Aspects of Old Testament Thought*, 1298.

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Baptism in Early Christianity

ÖSSZEFOGLALÁS

Noha a protestánsok a gyakorlat és a dogmatikai tanítás terén kizárólag a Szentírás szerinti megalapozást részesítik előnyben, a szerző megközelítése mentén az egyházatyáktól származó kiegészítő adalékok továbbra is szükségesek azokban a kérdésekben, amelyekben a Biblia nem szolgál kielégítő magyarázattal. A gyermekkeresztség kérdésében kifejezetten egy olyan jelenséggel állunk szemben, amiben az Újszövetség nem egyértelműen nyilatkozik meg. A vonatkozó újszövetségi szövegek vizsgálata nyomán kiderül, hogy a keresztséget első rendben a Krisztushoz téző felnőttek számára szolgáltatták ki, noha a keresztség a gyermekeket is magába foglaló teljes háznépre is kiterjedhetett. Az Iréneuszról, Tertullianusról, és Origenésztől származó bizonyágtételek mégis azt mutatják, hogy a 2. és 3. században a gyermekkeresztséget az apostoloktól vett tradíció gyanánt értelmezték. Kr. u. 200 körül Tertullianusz az első egyházatyá, akiről egyértelműen ismeretes, hogy a keresztség felnőtt korra való elhalasztását részesítette előnyben. Tertullianusz szokványostól eltérő álláspontja a szerző számára azt bizonyítja, hogy a gyermekkeresztség már a keresztyénség korai századaiban is általánosan elterjedt gyakorlat volt.

Before I come to the theme of this paper, I will start with two preliminary observations.

1. In the church and in theology, the New Testament is often used as a quarry (kőbánya according to my Hungarian dictionary), in which you can find stones for the house you wanted to build anyway, irrespective of the origin of the stones. So the question is always: what is the house we want to build? And is it the task of a New Testament scholar to provide us with the stones for the house we would like to construct anyway?

2. Furthermore, because of their slogan *Sola Scriptura*, traditional Protestants often have an ambivalent relationship with everything that comes after the Bible – although they do not want to ignore, of course, the creeds of the first centuries, the Church Father Augustine and the Protestant confessions of the sixteenth century that are considered the matrix of the interpretation of Scripture. Rarely, however, there is a special interest in the early Christian developments after the New Testament, since these are considered part of the Catholic ‘tradition’ that is not acknowledged by Protestants. Yet, this interest does exist with regard to those themes that are not fully clarified in the New Testament writings. Concerning our theme, baptism, this happens to be the case, for one of the most urgent questions regarding baptism is whether the tradition to baptize little children, even babies, can be based on the Bible. The New Testament is not quite clear about this, and for that reason in this case the testimonies of the Church Fathers are often taken into account.

Since among Protestants there is no unanimity about the practice of infant baptism, and also the members of Reformed congregations sometimes wonder whether they should baptize their children or even whether they should be rebaptized themselves as adults, the leading questions of this paper will be, 1. whether in the New Testament there are any cues for baptism of little children, and 2. how early patristic authors testify to the tradition of infant baptism. This implies that in the present paper I accept the function of a stonecutter in the quarry of early Christianity.

The New Testament Epistles

Let us look at the earliest Christian writings that have been preserved, the undisputed epistles of Paul. In his first epistle to the Corinthians Paul writes that he has not been sent to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, yet he admits that he baptized several of the Corinthians such as Crispus, Gaius, and Stephanas and his household (1:14–17). Later on he calls the household of Stephanas the first fruits, in other terms: the first converts of Achaia (16:15). In 1 Corinthians 6:11 Paul refers to the Corinthians' baptism when he reminds them that after their previous sinful lives they were washed, sanctified and justified in the name of Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of God. This clearly refers to their conversion and to the new life they received in baptism, which implies that Paul has adults in mind. Furthermore he reminds them that the Israelites were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the Red Sea and yet were struck down in the wilderness, which means to Paul that the Corinthian believers too may have no profit of their baptism if they do not live according to God's will (1 Cor. 10:1–12). In the first place this points to adult Christians who had converted recently, but did not live according to Paul's teachings.¹

A question that has puzzled many Protestants is, whether there may also have been children in Stephanas's household, children who were baptized together with the adults. Does the quarry of the New Testament provide us with some stones for this part of the Christian building, infant baptism? As a matter of fact, Paul did not write his epistle in order to answer this question, but in any case we may say that it cannot be excluded, or even that it is likely, that children were included in the household, although these children were not necessarily infants, that is, babies. However, admittedly this text does not *prove* that Paul administered baptism to children.

In his epistle to the Romans Paul mentions baptism only in passing. He reminds his readers that when they were baptized they had been buried with Christ into death, 'so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life' (Rom. 6:4). Paul explains that therefore sin may no longer exercise dominion in their mortal bodies (6:12). He does not say explicitly that those who were baptized have risen with Christ, but he says

¹ Another reference to baptism in this epistle can be found in 1 Cor. 12:13, 'For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.' For Biblical quotations in this paper I use the New Revised Standard Version.

that they might walk in newness of life. The reason of this subtle formulation is that, according to Paul, the resurrection will take place in the future, as he says in Romans 8:11, 'If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.'

Only in the deutero-Pauline epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, which have probably been written by one or some of Paul's pupils, we read that God raised up those who believe in Christ, as if spiritually the resurrection has taken place already. The epistle to the Colossians explicitly mentions baptism in this context: 'When you were buried with him [Christ] in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead' (Col. 2:12; cf. Eph. 2:4–6). It is often thought that in Romans 6 Paul already interprets baptism in terms of death and resurrection, as if the baptized person rises out of the water as being new-born and resurrected, but a careful reading of Romans 6 does not allow this interpretation. In any case, these texts suggest that the baptism to which they refer is administered to adults who consciously strove for the newness of life given and expected by God. There is no reference to children, and unfortunately it is not explained either how baptism was practiced. Was it done by immersion or by affusion? Since Paul refers to the Israelites as being baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, which obviously did not take place by immersion – even the Egyptians were immersed, but not baptized!² – we may probably conclude that for Paul the idea of baptism does not necessarily presuppose immersion.

The epistle to the Colossians not only interprets baptism in terms of burial and resurrection with Christ, but also says that it is related with circumcision. The text reads that, 'In him [Christ] also you were circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hand, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ' (Col. 2:11). The argument is that the 'circumcision not performed by human hand' refers to circumcision of the heart, which amounts to conversion.³ The text means that Christ brought about this spiritual circumcision; therefore it is called 'the circumcision of Christ'. The result of this spiritual circumcision is that one puts off the body of the flesh, which refers to moral and spiritual renewal. The reference to spiritual circumcision by Christ does not imply any comparison between the Jewish practice to circumcise the boys on the eighth day and Christian infant baptism. The denial of this comparison is implicitly confirmed by the Church Fathers, who – to my knowledge – do not interpret Colossians 2:11 as a proof text for baptism of little children⁴, and this is also true for John Calvin's *Commentary on Colossians*. In passing I note that even in the epistle to the Galatians, in which Paul extensively deals with circumcision, he does not say that for the church bap-

2 Cf. HOWARD MARSHALL: The meaning of the verb "baptize", in: Porter, Stanley E., Cross, Anthony R. (eds.): *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies* (JSNT.SS 234), London, New York, Sheffield Academic Press, 2002, 8–24 (20).

3 Cf. Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4; *IQpHab* 11:13; 1 QS 5:5; *Jubilees* 1:23; Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 1, 305; Rom. 2:29.

4 I checked this in the commentaries of Ambrosiaster, John Chrysostom, and Theodoret of Cyrus and in PETER GORDAY: *Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (ACCS NT 9), Downers Grove, Illinois, Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000, 31–33 (on Col. 2:11–13); furthermore, modern commentaries or monographs on baptism do not give such a reference.

tism took the place of circumcision; his single reference to baptism in this epistle (3:26–29) is only loosely related to circumcision.

Other references in the New Testament epistles do not clarify either whether children were included in the early Christian practice of baptism. On the contrary, they rather seem to refer to adult baptism. In this sense we may understand Titus 3:5, ‘the water of rebirth and the renewal by the Holy Spirit’, Hebrews 10:22, ‘let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water’,⁵ and 1 Peter 3:21, ‘And baptism (...) now saves you – not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.’ It might be considered whether a testimony to the baptism of children can be found in 1 Corinthians 7:14, where Paul calls the children of a mixed marriage of Christian and non-Christian parents ‘holy’,⁶ but since this text does not explicitly refer to baptism at all, it cannot be used as a proof that at that time children were baptized.⁷

The Synoptic Gospels and Acts

The Acts of the Apostles also inform us, as Paul does in 1 Corinthians 1:16, that several times someone became a believer or was saved or baptized with his or her household (Acts 11:14; 16:15; 16:31–33; 18:8). Just like Paul’s household text in 1 Corinthians, the book of Acts does not explicate that children were included in these households and were baptized as well, but this is certainly possible. In Acts 2:38–39 Peter invites the bystanders to repent and be baptized, and almost in the same breath he speaks about the promise that is ‘for you and for your children’. This text too may certainly allude to baptism of children, but it does not mention it explicitly.

The same conclusion has to be drawn from the synoptic passages of Jesus blessing the little children (Mat. 19:13–15; Mk 10:13–16; Lk. 18:15–17); Luke even tells that these children were ‘infants’ (*ta brephē*, Lk. 18:15). It is possible that the *Sitz im Leben* of this narrative is a dispute about infant baptism, and means that one should not prevent little children to be baptized, but this is not sure. In this case there are a few patristic testimonies to the use of this passage in the context of infant baptism. Around 200 C.E. Tertullian of Carthage, who himself was rather in favour of delaying baptism of children, admits that Jesus said, ‘do not prevent them to come to me.’⁸ This most probably implies that Tertullian knew people who appealed to this text as an argument in favour of infant baptism. The first

5 Cf. also Hebr. 6:2, ‘instructions about baptisms’, which are included in the ‘basis teaching about Christ’ (Hebr. 6:1), but unfortunately the content of these instructions is not given there.

6 See, e.g., JOACHIM JEREMIAS: *Die Kindertaufe in den ersten vier Jahrhunderten*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958, 52–56.

7 We will see, however, that Tertullian, *About the Soul* 39, 4 (CCSL 2), thought that children who had a Christian parent were holy (1 Cor. 7:14) because they were born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5). This clearly suggests that he interpreted Paul’s text with regard to baptism.

8 *About Baptism* 18, 5 (CCSL 1); cf. Mat. 19:14; Mk 10:14; Lk. 18:16.

patristic text that positively connects this Gospel passage with infant baptism is a section of the pseudepigraphic *Apostolic Constitutions*, from circa 380 C.E., where the apostles reportedly say, 'Baptize also the infants, and "bring them up in the discipline and the instruction of God", for he says, "Let the little children come to me and do not prevent them"' (cf. Eph. 6:4; Lk. 18:16).⁹ But even so, these two ancient texts do not prove that the synoptic passage really refers to the practice of baptism of little children; it is only a possibility. Other Church Fathers who quote one of these texts do not relate it with baptism, not even Augustine.¹⁰

Other Gospel texts that deal with baptism do not explicate anything about children. However, the risen Jesus' saying, 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Mat. 28:19), appears to reflect a broad view of baptism of the nations, which include children, of course. Yet, its counterpart in the longer ending of the Gospel of Mark rather points to adults who consciously believed the Gospel, for it reads, 'The one who believes and is baptized will be saved' (Mk 16:16).

Patristic Testimonies

However, in spite of the absence of definite New Testament proof texts about the practice of infant baptism, in my view we may still assume that in the first century C.E. baptism of children was practiced. The 'household texts' do not prove this, but they are implicit witnesses to this custom. We have to be aware that the New Testament texts have neither been written nor collected into the canon in order to describe all the details of the early Christian rituals. There are far more aspects of early Christianity that we do not know exactly, and the reason of this is that many of these aspects were simply known to the Christians of that time, so there was no need to describe all of them in detail. For that reason we are not sure either, for example, about the precise use of water in the ritual of baptism in the New Testament period. Were all candidates immersed, or was affusion of a large amount of water sufficient, or even the sprinkling of a little bit of water?¹¹ In later, non-canonical texts, however, we sometimes find explicit references to the traditions of the apostles, and in my opinion we have to listen carefully to these testimonies and should not dismiss them as being totally unreliable.¹² In any case, in the first centuries of Christianity the slogan *Sola Scriptura* would have been an anomaly. The church relied on its tradition, which could be found in the ultimate New Testament, but which was also transmitted orally.

9 *Apostolic Constitutions* VI, 15, 7 (SC 329); see DAVID F. WRIGHT: Out, In, Out: Jesus' Blessing of the Children and Infant Baptism, in: Porter, S. E.–Cross, A. R. (eds.): *Dimensions of Baptism: Biblical and Theological Studies* (JSNT.SS 234), London, New York, Sheffield Academic Press, 2002, 188–206 (194–195).

10 WRIGHT: Out, In, Out: Jesus' Blessing of the Children and Infant Baptism, 195–201.

11 The *Didache* 7 explains that immersion in running water is preferable, and immersion in some other water is acceptable too; only if this is not possible, the pouring out of water on the head is valid as well.

12 Cf. RIEMER ROUKEMA: *Jesus, Gnosis and Dogma*, London, T&T Clark, 2010, 134–135.

Although Irenaeus of Lyons (around 180 C.E.) does not explicitly mention infant baptism, he may still be considered the first witness to it, since he writes, 'for he [Christ] came to save all through means of himself – all, I say, who through him are born again to God – infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and elderly people'.¹³ In this context rebirth undeniably refers to baptism.¹⁴

The second witness to infant baptism is Tertullian, who preferred, as we saw, the postponement of baptism. In his short treatise *About Baptism* (from about 200 C.E.) he argues that the godparents (*sponsores*) would run the risk of not keeping their promises in case they would die prematurely or in case the children would not accept the faith in which they were educated.¹⁵ He writes, 'Let them know how to ask for salvation, that you may seem to have given to him who asks' (cf. Lk. 6:30).¹⁶ He therefore prefers that the children would come when they had grown up (*dum adolescent*), after having received instruction. Tertullian even suggests that, because of carnal temptations, youths defer their baptism until they marry.¹⁷ The fact that he has to defend his position confirms that in Christianity as he knew it children were baptized. In his later work *About the Soul* (from 208–212 C.E.) Tertullian allusively confirms that children who had a Christian parent were holy (1 Cor. 7:14) since they were born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5).¹⁸

An ancient text that briefly describes the rite of baptism can be found in a writing that is lost in its original shape and language, Greek, but has been reconstructed out of the translations into various languages and out of later Greek versions; I mean the *Apostolic Tradition* from the third or fourth century C.E., the beautiful church order that has erroneously been attributed to Hippolytus of Rome. It first prescribes how those who are to receive baptism at Easter have to prepare themselves.¹⁹ In the subsequent chapter, the text evokes the hour when the cock crows, and the pool (*kolumbēthra*) is to be filled with water. The neophytes have to put off their clothes, and the children have to be baptized first. Those who can answer for themselves should do so, but if they cannot, their parents or someone from their family is to speak for them. After that, the grown men, and finally the women are to be baptized.²⁰ This work pretends to transmit the 'apostolic tradition', so it is unlikely that it proposes tremendous liturgical and practical innovations. This implies that it describes the practice of the second century church, which in part may go back to the first century.

The next patristic testimony to infant baptism occurs in Origen of Alexandria's extensive *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, written in Greek about 243 C.E. Unfortunately, the Greek text is lost for the most part, so that for our knowl-

¹³ *Against Heresies* II, 22, 4 (SC 294); for the translation, cf. Ante-Nicene Christian Library 5, 200.

¹⁴ Cf., e.g., Titus 3:5; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I, 21, 1; III, 17, 1; V, 15, 3 (SC 264; 211; 153); *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 3 (SC 406).

¹⁵ *About Baptism* 18, 4, 'etiam aetate cunctatio baptismi utilior est, praecipue tamen circa paruulos' (CCSL I, 293).

¹⁶ *About Baptism* 18, 5. In *About Baptism* 18, 1, Tertullian had quoted those who invoked Lk. 6:30 as an argument that baptism was not to be refused to those who asked for it.

¹⁷ *About Baptism* 18, 5–6.

¹⁸ *About the Soul* 39, 4 (CCSL 2).

¹⁹ *Apostolic Tradition* 20 (translation Gregory Dix, London 1968, or Paul F. Bradshaw et al., Minneapolis 2002).

²⁰ *Apostolic Tradition* 21.

edge of this work we depend on the abridged and free Latin translation made by Rufinus of Aquileia in the first decade of the fifth century C.E. In general, we may assume that this translation is relatively reliable, except for some doctrinal matters for which Origen was criticized in Rufinus's time. In his interpretation of 'the body of sin' in Romans 6:6, Origen refers to the Mosaic command that sacrifices be offered for a newborn child: 'a pair of turtledoves or two young doves; one of which was offered for sin and the other as a burnt offering' (cf. Lev. 12:7-8; Lk. 2:22-24). Origen asks, 'For which sin is this one dove offered? Was a newly born child able to sin?' He then alludes to Job 14:4-5 (LXX), where it is denied that anyone is pure, even if his life should be one day long, and he quotes David in Psalm 50:7 (LXX; 51:7 MT), 'in sins my mother conceived me'. He adds that the biblical narrative does not relate any sin of David's mother, and comments,

It is on this account as well that the Church has received the tradition from the apostles to give baptism even to little children (*paruulis*). For they to whom the secrets of the divine mysteries were committed were aware that in everyone was sin's defilement, which needed to be washed away through water and the Spirit (cf. John 3:5). Because of this defilement as well, the body itself is called the body of sin; it is not because of sins the soul committed when it was in another body, as they who introduce the doctrine of *metempsychosis* [reincarnation] imagine. But because the soul was fashioned into the body of sin, and the body of death and lowliness (cf. Rom. 7:24; Phil. 3:21), and just as he said, 'You have lowered our soul to the dust' (Ps. 43:26 LXX, 44:26 MT).²¹

These comments show that Origen does not accept infant baptism because of an 'Augustinian' doctrine of original sin related to sexuality,²² but because the soul's sin is that it has fallen from its original bliss in heaven into a material body on earth, which is therefore called 'the body of sin' in Romans 6:6. This view of the fall of human souls derives from Platonic philosophy,²³ but Origen does not accept the Platonic anthropology to the extent that he also agrees with the possibility of sins in a previous body, as the gnostic teacher Basilides did.²⁴

This testimony to infant baptism is confirmed by Origen's *Homilies on Luke*, where he also writes that little children are baptized 'for the remission of sins' (cf. Acts 2:38), quotes some of the same Biblical texts (Job 14:4-5; John 3:5), and explains that by the sign (*sacramentum* in Jerome's translation) of baptism the stains of birth are taken away.²⁵

²¹ *Commentary on Romans* V, 9 (AGLB 33, 440; PL 14, 1047BC); translation THOMAS P. SCHECK: *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans Books 1-5* (FaCh 103), Washington D.C., 2001, 367.

²² See, e.g., H. BAVINCK: *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, vol. 3, Kampen, 1929⁴, 70-73.

²³ See, e.g., JOSEPH W. TRIGG: *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-century Church*, London, 1985, 103-107.

²⁴ See *Commentary on Romans* V, 1 (AGLB 33, 378; PL 14, 1015A-C).

²⁵ *Homilies on Luke* 14, 5 (FC 4, 1). Apart from Greek fragments, a selection of these homilies has survived in Jerome's Latin translation of 392. Max Rauer's edition of 1930 (GCS 35), p. 25, also includes a Greek fragment about infant baptism which closely corresponds with the Latin text.

In Conclusion

To conclude, I will briefly deal with the question how it can be explained that baptism, which confirms one's conversion, was also administered to little children who could not yet be converted or ask for baptism themselves. Origen's argument concerning the fall of the souls into material bodies was clearly inspired by Platonic philosophy and cannot be considered as being traditional. Remarkably enough, we have no earlier testimonies that explain which reasons were given for infant baptism. The absence of any traces of a debate on infant baptism before Tertullian strongly suggests that from the beginning of Christianity children could be baptized with their parents. We may assume that this was done because baptism was considered the sign of salvation which guaranteed that the baptized person belonged to Christ and God and no longer to the devil. In the mid-third century (251 C.E.), such an argument is given by Cyprian of Carthage.²⁶ Only from Tertullian onward, we have testimonies to the view that parents or godparents should delay the baptism of their children.²⁷

On the basis of these texts from the New Testament *and* later patristic writings, we may conclude that the Reformed custom to baptize the children who grow up with Christian parents is in line with the primitive church.

²⁶ Cyprian, *Epistles* 64, 2–6 (ed. Bayard, vol. 2, 214–216).

²⁷ See HOLGER HAMMERICH: *Taufe und Askese: Der Taufaufschub in vorkonstantinischer Zeit* (doctoral thesis University of Hamburg), Hamburg, 1994.

JAN HOEK

‘Our children sanctified in Christ’ – a heavily debated pronouncement

ÖSSZEFOGLALÁS

Holland református körökben már a 17. századtól kezdve vitatott a kiválasztás és szövetség közötti kapcsolat kérdése. A tanulmány e vita négy lényeges állomását ismerteti, és egyben felmutatja, hogy a kiválasztás és szövetség teológiai koncepciói miként befolyásolják a keresztség értelmezését. Az áttekintés mentén a szerző azt is érzékelteti, hogy milyen ellentmondásos a református tradíció a gyermekkeresztség kérdésében mind az elméleti alapok, mind pedig a gyakorlat tekintetében.

Introduction

On September 28, 1905 the consistory of the Reformed Church at Gouda had to deal with a problem regarding pedobaptism. A member of the congregation who had recently given birth to a child, refused to baptise her child because she could not agree with the following words in the *Form of Baptism*: ‘Whether you acknowledge that although our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself; yet that they are sanctified in Christ, and therefore, as members of his Church ought to be baptised.’ She had no problem at all with the confession of hereditary sin and the state of condemnation in Adam, but she had difficulties with the words ‘*sanctified in Christ*’. How could she know and assert that this was true for her child if she could not verify that her child had already received the Spirit of regeneration?

The above mentioned passage from the *Form of Baptism* raised many debates in the history of the different Reformed denominations in the Netherlands as well as among the Puritans in Scotland and England. This essay outlines four stages of this ongoing debate and sketches some systematic and spiritual approaches to baptism in the Dutch Reformed tradition. A diversity of views about the exact relation between election and covenant was underlying the debates. The spiritual approach to baptism constantly moves between the poles of underestimation and neglect; high estimation and attention. It is even possible to speak of a certain overestimation of baptism in some cases.

1. Debate with the Labadists in the 17th century

Jean de Labadie (1610–1674) was a former Roman Catholic clergyman who converted to Protestantism. Upon his arrival in Holland from France, he impressed men like Gisbertus Voetius, Wilhelmus à Brakel, Jacobus Koelman and especially Jodocus van Lodenstein with his spirituality. But it soon became clear that his ecclesiology had a more Anabaptist than Reformed stamp. Although De Labadie and his follower Pierre Yvon did not reject infant baptism principally, they could not maintain it in practice. In their opinion, the sacraments must be administered only to people who have already received the inner grace of regeneration and show the signs thereof in a godly life. Baptism was destined for believers only. Now there was the possibility that already very young infants have been regenerated. But how to perceive this? A story was told about De Labadie baptising Yvon's child because the child did not cry at his birth. This circumstance led to the conclusion the child must be a real child of the kingdom because it was born without pain! Maybe this is only a legend. Probably Labadists would base the very rare instances of pedobaptism in their circles upon a direct revelation of God to the parents or the minister.

Among the opponents of De Labadie was the pastor of Sluis in Zeeuws-Flanders, Jacobus Koelman (1632–1695). He stressed the importance of pedobaptism and believed that parents would have good comfort if their baptised children died early. Baptism confirmed for them their reliance upon the grace of God for their children. Koelman did not contend that all the children who had not been baptised will eternally be lost, but without pedobaptism mourning parents would miss the consolation of the firm persuasion of the salvation of their children. In Koelman's view, the sanctity of the children as mentioned in the *Form of Baptism* was a 'covenantal holiness' (like in 1 Kor.7: 14), and must be discerned from an 'inherent holiness.' Common holiness separated the faithful from the heathen people, Turks (Muslims) and others considered unfaithful. Baptism must not be seen as a seal of grace already received by the children, but as a seal of the promise of God to save them *if* they will believe in God's Word. So God's covenant was understood to have a conditional aspect. Koelman believed that the first question to the parents in the *Form of Baptism* was not clear enough and could raise misunderstanding. The same was true for the words of thanksgiving after the administration of Baptism:

Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise Thee, that Thou hast forgiven us and our children all our sins, through the blood of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and received us through Thy Holy Spirit as members of Thine only begotten Son, and adopted us to be Thy children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism.

According to Koelman, these formulations were not careful enough. The *Form of Baptism* was going too far. Not all the baptised children were or could be truly regenerated Christians. The pronouncement that the children of the believers were sanctified in an inward, truly spiritual way could relate to the posterity of believers in common, but not to every individual child. In Koelman's view it was definitely

not a rule without exceptions that children of regenerated parents will be true believers.

Many theologians in Koelman’s time used the distinction between *external* sanctification and *internal* sanctification, corresponding with an *external* covenant and an *internal* covenant. G. Voetsius, H. Witsius and P. van Mastricht asserted that all children of faithful parents must be considered born again until eventually and unfortunately the contrary would appear when they have grown up. A. Walaeus, G. Amesius and F. Turretinus say that regeneration takes place in the children before, during or immediately after the administration of the holy Baptism. So they maintained a close connection between faith and regeneration and baptism.

2. A debate in the early 18th century

In 1720 Rev. J. R. Kelderman, minister at Utrecht, published a brochure written by the then already deceased Rev. G. Meijer under the title of “The Subjects of the Holy Baptism Strictly Defined” (*De onderwerpen van den H. Doop nader bepaald*). In this treatise it was stated that only the children of true believers may be baptised. The author and the editor advocated a much more strict practice of baptism than was the custom for the Dutch national church at that time. The word ‘sanctified’ in the *Form of Baptism* had to be interpreted as ‘renewed by the Holy Spirit’. There must be a *semen fidei*, a germ of faith, as the condition of admittance to baptism and the seal of the covenant of grace. Since many parents who asked for the baptism of their children did not seem to be really converted Christians, Kelderman c.s. emendated the First Question to the parents in the *Form of Baptism*. Kelderman adapted the question in this way to make the question conditional: “Do you acknowledge that *some* children are sanctified in Christ’ or ‘that the children *can* be sanctified in Christ’ or ‘*maybe* are sanctified’ or ‘*ought to be* sanctified.”

In contrast to Kelderman’s view, Rev. E. van Eerde and also Rev. H. Janssonius submitted that the sacraments sealed the promises of God only *in an objective sense* and that therefore every member of the church (reborn or not, churchgoing or not) had the right and plight to receive the sacrament of baptism for his or her children. The sacrament of baptism did not, in their opinion, seal a spiritual reality already present in the baptised, but marked the baptised as a member of the congregation and of the covenant. This act was a privilege indeed, but not in itself salvific unless the baptised personally believed in Christ as his or her Saviour.

Rev. J. C. Appelius took part in this discussion by defending the view that the sacraments seal the promises of God not only in an objective sense, but also as subjectively applied. According to Appelius, only true believers may partake in the Lord’s Supper and also in Baptism. But in his treatise ‘*De Hervormde Leer*’ (“The Reformed Doctrine”) (1769), he explained that baptism actually was not a sign and seal for the baptised child personally and particularly, neither for the parents in particular, but in general for the congregation of true believers as a whole. In fact the congregation received the sacrament of Baptism in the body of that particular child. Therefore, all the children belonging to the household of the congregation

may be baptised, but the holiness, the sanctification which was sealed, pertained to the community, not to that individual child as such. Only at the moment that the baptised children came to personal belief by the internal work of the Spirit, would the sacrament of baptism gain validity as a seal of grace for them personally.

3. Ongoing debates in the 19th and 20th century

E. Smilde described the period between 1880 and 1980 as tragic in his book *Een eeuw van strijd over verbond en doop* (*An Age of Contest About Covenant and Baptism*). The different accents and positions which always were typical for the Reformed view of baptism caused more and more division. Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) played a big role in this development. Kuyper was the well-known founder of the *Reformed Churches in the Netherlands* (ecumenically known as GKN) which were rooted in the movement of secession from the established church (*de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, ecumenically known as NHK) in 1886, the so called *Doleantie*.

Kuyper took the stand that baptism sealed particular, saving grace to the elect among the baptised children. He rejected the mere symbolic idea of the sacraments associated with Zwingli. Baptism was not only a sign of belonging to the Christian congregation, but Kuyper believed a great thing occurred in the administration of the sacrament. Baptism conferred grace. For Kuyper, there was an inseparable bond between baptism and faith. In fact, only believers could be baptised. This could be a position held by Baptists, but Kuyper added the following important consideration: though the young children cannot yet believe actively and consciously, it may be assumed that the children of the believers were already born again and so they may be baptised *on the supposition of regeneration*. Kuyper had indeed a great deal of sympathy with the Baptists of the time of the Reformation. As a matter of fact he preferred their position to the views of Luther and Zwingli! The only fault of the Baptists had been that they recognised faith only where it was consciously professed by people. In contrast, Kuyper pointed out that one had to discern between the root of faith (*habitus fidei*) and the act of faith (*actus fidei*). The root of faith was regeneration or spiritual vivification. The Holy Spirit brought the seed or root of faith into a human being at the moment of regeneration. This was a direct, unmediated work of the Spirit, which was performed regularly in the very early beginning of the lives of the children of the covenant, maybe already before they were born. This *semen fidei* could slumber years and years before at last it broke out into the conscious act of faith and a life in sanctity. This approach rested on the notion of God's covenant; God had elected God's people from eternity. No one could ever be fully certain that all the baptised children were among the elect. One should reach no further than the probability that they were reborn Christians, and consider the baptised as saved children of God by the judgment of love (*judicium caritatis*). For that reason, the sermon that accompanied baptism must summon the congregation to self-examination; the supposition of regeneration should not raise false rest and superficiality.

A closer examination of Kuyper's arguments reveals that what occurs at the very moment of baptism is not regeneration itself. Regeneration was an unmediated, direct work of the Spirit and this already existent regeneration *in nuce* was the basis for baptism. So baptism had no validity, no real significance without regeneration. Kuyper even spoke of a 'schijndoop' or pseudobaptism. Those who were not among the elect and so not regenerated baptised children had never really received the sacrament of baptism. Regularly the sacrament of baptism was *efficax*, it worked. Sacramental grace was infused into the baptised child. The *habitus fidei* was reinforced by this grace. Kuyper apparently had an ontological concept of grace instead of a relational concept. Grace was, in his view, an almost substantial reality. In this way, human beings were together transferred by regeneration and baptism from the kingdom of the devil, to which they belonged by their affiliation with Adam, into the kingdom of Christ which was represented by the faithful congregation. The full accent was upon inward grace. Baptism was especially connected with this arcane, internal, hidden work of the Spirit. For Kuyper, baptism was not in the first place a seal of the covenant and a seal on God's promises. For these promises were only real and complete when the inward work of the Spirit in the hearts of the children was already present. As a matter of fact God's covenant was made only with the elect. The reprobate were not really members of the covenant, even when they have been baptised and thus have become indeed partakers of the privileges connected with the *administration* of the covenant. The only basis for legitimate baptism was regeneration as the subjective grace realising the election.

It is interesting to compare this position with the view of G.H. Kersten (1882–1948) of the *Gereformeerde Gemeenten*, Reformed Congregations, a right-wing denomination in the Netherlands. Kersten held that baptism was destined only for the – not yet regenerated – elect. He did not recognise, as Kuyper did, an unconscious regeneration or slumbering *semen regenerationis*. In Kersten's view, the elect children participated *objectively*, not yet *subjectively* in God's particular grace and this objective participation was the ground for their baptism. However, Kuyper argued that his view was in accordance with that of the older Calvin. In fact, there is only one passage in the last edition of the *Institutes* of John Calvin that can be interpreted as pointing in this direction, viz. IV, 16, 20:

'In fine, the objection [against infant-baptism, J. H.] is easily disposed of by the fact, that children are baptised for future repentance and faith. Though these are not yet formed in them, yet the seeds of both lies hid in them by the secret operation of the Spirit' (transl. Henry Beveridge, Latin: *Baptizari in futuram poenitentiam et fidem: quae etsi nondum in illis formatae sunt, arcana tamen Spiritus operatone utriusque semen in illis lateſt*).

Frequently Calvin bases infant baptism clearly upon the covenant of God as erected with the believers and their posterity, and thus upon the validity of God's promises which concern the children no less than the adults.

Kuyper confronted his own view with the devaluation of baptism in the 'Volk-skirche', the established church of his time. His second front was the underestima-

tion of baptism in pietistic reformed circles, who held that baptism was no more than an outward sign of an outward covenant. A fair evaluation of the position of Kuyper must recognise his intention to reevaluate baptism. Kuyper rightly advocates in my opinion that pedobaptism and adult baptism are essentially the same. They are two different manifestations of one and the same sacrament.

Kuyper holds a positive, even optimistic view upon the congregation as the people of God, the elect. Nevertheless he always underscores the calling of the baptised to live up to this status of holiness. Discipline is necessary. The baptised must be brought to profession of faith and attendance of the Lord's Supper. This realistic view upon baptismal grace explains why Kuyper strongly supports early-baptism ('vroegdoop') of newborn children, even when the mother is not yet able to come to church.

The 20th century saw a heavy struggle within the *Reformed Churches in the Netherlands* regarding Kuyper's view of covenant, baptism, and presupposed regeneration, which resulted eventually in a new rupture in 1944. At that time the *Gereformeerde Kerken Vrijgemaakt* (Reformed Churches liberated) came into being after the suspension of the leader of the anti-Kuyperian opposition, Klaas Schilder (1890–1952), professor in dogmatics in Kampen. I will for the sake of brevity not go into the several positions taken in that regrettable struggle, but will end with a sketch of the view of a theologian within the *Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* (the Netherlands Reformed Church, NHK), viz. J. G. Woelderink (1886–1956). His insights were highly appreciated by Schilder c.s. Woelderink was critical of Kuyper's vision of the nature of grace. For Woelderink, grace was a relational category, not a substantial one. Not regeneration by the unconscious reception of a *semen fidei*, but the conscious act of faith must be the guiding principle in the way of belonging to the covenant of God. The ground of baptism was not internal grace, but the promises which the God of the covenant made to all the children of the congregation. Woelderink certainly acknowledged the positive aspects of Kuyper's doctrines, namely the centrality of the covenant, the positive view upon the congregation and the high value ascribed to the sacraments. But Woelderink regretted that many of Kuyper's followers mainly had taken over his debatable scholastic tendencies and not endorsed his positive contributions to the doctrine of the sacraments. Woelderink argued that the history of salvation was the history of promises. God's salvation has Word-character. The people did not *see*, but *heard* God's word. They encountered holiness by hearing God's promises, and, at the same time, saw that in reality all are yet sinners. This was the richness of the discovery of the Reformation, the *iustificatio impii sola fide*. The idea of the covenant was the essence of the Christian religion. The discernment between 'outward' and 'inward covenant' or the (more narrow) *essence* and the (broader) *administration* of the covenant was qualified as 'godless'. All the baptised children were really sanctified in Christ, cleansed by his blood, renewed by his Spirit, but in the way of God's promise, not in the way of some substantial mutation of their inner life. The baptised were called to accept the promises, which had been sealed in baptism, by the obedience of faith. Faith was not a condition to fulfil *a priori* in order to make the covenant and the promises of God valid and real. No, faith was only an answer

a posteriori upon the Word that God had spoken already to us when the baptised could not understand it. Faith allowed participation in God’s promise of salvation.

In Woelderink’s view, there remained a specific tension between the gift of God by God’s promises, which was really and fully the gift of salvation, and the necessity of the reception of this salvation in our hearts and lives by faith. The covenant which was made one-sided by God (*monopleuristic*) had to become two-sided (*dypleuristic*). Every reality of salvation was a reality of faith, not of observation. So the parents had to see their children in the light of God’s promises and consider them as adopted sons and daughters of God, real members of the congregation of Christ, and raise them up to become professing Christians. The promises of the covenant were real and rich. Baptism could hardly be underestimated. But the fruit of the promises was enjoyed only by the believers. This was the remaining tension between *donation* of salvation by God’s promises and *application* of salvation in the way of personal faith. The door of eternal life is opened wide for every baptised child, but it has to go in by faith. The worst case scenario would be that children of the kingdom remained outside the feast by their unbelief. For Woelderink, this would not be an effect of eternal reprobation by God, but must fully be imputed to the unwillingness and unbelief of these people.

4. A short conclusion

The different phases of this Dutch discussion concerning the significance and right interpretation of baptism are really intriguing. The Reformed tradition is ambivalent regarding the basis or foundation and also the effect of baptism. On one hand many Reformed theologians choose their starting point with election and place the covenant of grace under the domination of election. Baptism can only be real when regeneration or inward sanctity is postulated. This position can lead to an underestimation of the covenant as an outward administration of the real relation between God and the elect. Kuyper draws the consequence that only the elect are the real members of the covenant. G. H. Kersten follows in his own way in the footsteps of Kuyper, though he never admits his connection with him.

At the other end of the spectrum, we see that the making of the covenant not only with the elect, but with the whole posterity of the believers is the central viewpoint. The validity of God’s promises is without doubt and in this respect we can fully recognise all the children of the congregation as sanctified in Christ. We may and must in the raising of our children tell them of the great privilege they have of being recipients of God’s special promises. And, in connection with this, parents may and must appeal to them to accept faithfully God’s salvation.

I will not hide that my sympathy lies with the second approach and especially the view of Woelderink. But, at the same time, I wholeheartedly regret that representatives of both approaches in many cases have broken the communication with one another and that the debate has resulted in several schisms and splits. This is the more deplorable since baptism is together with the Lord’s Supper sacrament of the unity between Christ and his congregation and of the believers with each other.

GERT VAN KLINKEN

Opinions on Jewish baptism in Calvinist Holland, 1945–1965

ÖSSZEFOGLALÁS

A 20. század eleji Hollandia református egyházainak teológiai gondolkodásában az üdvösség szigorúan a Jézus Krisztusban való hittel párosult. A keresztség ebben a kontextusban az egyén megváltásának elengedhetetlen eszközeként került értelmezésre. A korszak kiemelkedő holland teológusa, Gerrit Marinus den Hartogh alapvető keresztyén kötelességként gondolt a zsidók megtérítésére és egyben megkeresztelésére. A holokausztot, a II. világháború utáni felszabadítást és Izrael államának megalakulását követő években azonban ez a fajta szemlélet gyökeres változáson ment keresztül. Miután a judaizmus az a forrás, ahonnan a keresztyénség is eredeztethető, a zsidó gyermekek megkeresztelésének és betérítésének gyakorlata már egyre kevésbé volt egyértelmű a holland protestánsok számára. A '60-as, '70-es években a keresztyének és zsidók közötti kapcsolat újszerű fejlődésen ment keresztül, így mára a holland protestáns teológiai gondolkodás elismeri és tiszteletben tartja a zsidók egyedülálló kapcsolatát Istennel és a Messiással. A zsidók megkeresztelésének gyakorlata a múltban csupán helyrehozhatatlan konfliktusokat generált, miután a megkeresztelt zsidókat elszakította saját közösségüktől. A gyökeresen új értelmezés széles körű elfogadásának ténye a szerző számára azt bizonyítja, hogy a holland református teológia nagymértékű változásra volt képes a 20. század folyamán.

A baptism in Kampen, after liberation

On the 13th of May 1945 Gerrit Marinus den Hartogh (1899–1959) administered baptism to Isidore Polak in the Burgwal-Church in Kampen. Dentist Isidore Polak was one of the very few surviving Jews in this city. During the later years of the German occupation he had been in hiding with the Reformed Bosma family, in their farm located on the Island of Kampen.¹

Den Hartogh was a predecessor of Hans-Martin Kirn as a professor of Church History, (and of Leo Koffeman as a professor of Ecclesiastical Law) in what was then the Theological School of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Den Hartogh's sermon, delivered during the service in the Burgwal-Church, gives us an insight into Dutch Reformed attitudes towards Jewish baptism, right after the Second World War. The title is as follows: *Life eternal in the knowledge of God and His Christ.*² This central theme is derived from the 17th chapter of John, verse 3:

'And this is eternal life, that they know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.'

1 See for Isidore Polak and his family: DAAN VAN DRIEL AND JAAP VAN GELDEREN (eds.): *Elly*, in: *Kinderen verhalen van de oorlog* (Children's stories about war). Kampen 1940–1945, Kampen, 1990, 126–128.

2 G. M. DEN HARTOGH: *Het eeuwige leven in het kennen van God en zijn Christus. Preek over Johannes 17:3, gehouden zondag 13 mei in de Burgwalkerk te Kampen* (Life eternal in the knowledge of God and his Christ. Sermon on John 17:2, delivered on Sunday the 13th of May 1945 in the Burgwal-Church, Kampen), Kampen, 1945.

Gerrit Marinus den Hartogh, Jewish baptism and Neo-Calvinism³

First of all, Den Hartogh addresses the situation of Holland right after the war. After the death of so many innocent people, the liberation by the allied forces is hailed as a redeeming act of God. The purpose of this act is perceived as regeneration, a goal that is interpreted in a specifically Christian way. For a believer, restoration of a free nation is not the highest aim. It is only as an individual that we can attain true salvation. In Den Hartogh's concept of baptism, the true moment of this regeneration is not identical to the moment of the sprinkling of water. The important thing is the knowledge of Christ, which of course we can only receive as a gift from God. Nevertheless, the signs of this knowledge can be seen by others and checked against the contents of the Bible and the Confession.

Some days before baptism on the 13th of May, the consistory of the Reformed Church of Kampen has ascertained itself that Polak indeed possesses a sound understanding of the Calvinist theology. During the following service the main elements in the ceremony are: the sermon by Den Hartogh, the confession of faith by Polak, and immediately after that his baptism. The service is concluded by a prayer of thanksgiving.

For a glimpse of the atmosphere in the Reformed Churches in Holland right after liberation the sermon delivered by Den Hartogh is very revealing. First of all, he tells his audience that God had been fully justified in the judgment that He had meted out during the preceding years of occupation and terror. For Polak (who, as we have seen, was one of the very few Jewish survivors in Kampen) this must have been a very real experience, or, as Den Hartogh calls it: 'a terrible truth'. According to him, affliction in this life is a result of sin, of our inability to fulfil the Law of the Lord. Salvation can only be found in Jesus Christ, or to be more specific: in the existential knowledge of Jesus Christ.

For the true believer this knowledge constitutes a Christian state of being in the present. This focus on the present, in Den Hartogh's perception of the baptism of Polak, is characteristic for Dutch Neo-Calvinistic theology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In earlier stages of the Reformation, it had been quite common for Dutch Calvinists to interpret the rare instances of Jewish baptism as a portent of the impending return of Jesus and the ushering in of a Messianic age. The most famous Jewish convert in the early nineteenth century, Isaac da Costa (1798–1860), had interpreted his own baptism in an eschatological context.⁴ One can hardly miss the deterministic element in this way of reasoning that was also present in the theology of Jan van Andel (1839–1910), who had been trained as a student in Kampen.⁵ God himself, according to St. Paul, had hardened the hearts of the Jews against the tenets of the Gospel. Only God Himself could reverse this situ-

3 See for Den Hartogh and his theology: THEO VAN STAALDUINE: *G. M. den Hartogh en de Vrijmaking van 1944* (G. M. den Hartogh and the Free Reformed Churches), Heerenveen, 2004.

4 See for this famous poet, polemist and exegete: JAAP MELIER: *Isaac da Costa's weg naar het christendom* (Isaac da Costa's road towards Christianity. Contribution to the historiography of Jewish problematic in the Netherlands), Amsterdam, 1941.

5 JAN VAN ANDEL: *Handleiding der Gewijde geschiedenis* (Vademecum of Sacred History)³, Leiden, 1903.

ation of being unable to believe, and thus 'all Israel would be saved' (Chapter 11 of the Letter to the Romans, verse 26). The thinking of Calvinists who were influenced by Dutch Reformed Pietism showed a strong tendency to link this future event to eschatology in general. Jewish baptism was linked to salvation history.

Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) however, one of the main architects of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, would have none of this. For him the Jew, like any other person, bore a personal responsibility before God. For those who had access to Scripture, such as both the Christians and the Jews, unbelief was an act of wilful disobedience. Kuyper attributed this attitude to Christian intellectual *hybris* but also to Jewish national pride, an unwillingness to be redeemed by grace alone. Thus, it was important that baptism was disconnected from any associations with an hypothetical restoration of the Jewish nation in the future. Den Hartogh follows in this track. During the service for Polak he stresses over and over again that baptism implies the presence of the saving knowledge of God and His Christ in the here and now, and that it is not identical to the guarantee of any future saving scenario for the Jewish people. Hope for the future is limited to the individual believer, who can face death without fear of punishment in the afterlife.

Prior to the baptism, Polak confesses his faith publicly. Den Hartogh compares the moment to the exclamation of Nathanael in the New Testament, saying about Jesus: 'Thou art the son of God, thou art the king of Israel'. The ceremony of baptism itself invokes the trinity.

Jews and Christians in Holland after the Second World War

Out of a pre-war population of about 140 000 persons, no less than 102 000 Dutch Jews had perished during the German occupation. Among the survivors was a relatively small number of recent converts to Christianity. Even so, they accounted for the highest number of Jewish baptisms ever to occur in remembered Dutch history. In the Reformed Churches alone in 1945, this concerned 126 adult persons out of 3500 Jews who had survived the war while hiding in the home of a Reformed family. Isidore Polak was one of them. The total number of Jewish converts, in all the Dutch Churches put together, amounted to a few hundred.

The wave of baptisms was unique. During the decades to come, the aim of conversion and baptism of the Jews became more and more questionable in the Dutch Churches. The first stimulus for an alternative way of thinking came from the Council for Church and Israel, established in 1942 by the Reformed Church in the Netherlands.⁶ The Council stated that the traditional Jewish Mission should be superseded by a debate between equals, based on arguments and mutual respect. Two reasons were given for this new course:

- First of all, recent insights in biblical exegesis had made it clear that Christianity had been born in a Jewish context. As the Council said, the child (Christianity) could

6 J. F. L. BASTIAANSE: *De Jodenzending en de eerste decennia van de Hervormde Raad voor Kerk en Israël* (The Jewish Mission and the First decades of the Reformed Council for Church and Israel. A generation in the service of Jewish-Christian rapprochement), Zoetermeer, 1995.

- not talk to the parent (Judaism) as if that parent was completely unaware of God;
- Secondly, the casualty numbers of the war were staggering. Apart from the military and victims of hunger and bombings, about 5000 non-Jewish Dutchman had died as political prisoners in the concentration camps – against 102.000 Jews. After such an event, the Christians lacked the moral superiority for the classical missionary approach.

To be sure, the aim of the required debate between equals, as far as the Christians were concerned, was unchanged: the acceptance by the Jews of Jesus as the Christ. In the coming years this was to remain so, even though the aim was put forward in far more modest terms than during the pre-war years.

The new programme was laid down by an elite of professional theologians, such as Arnold van Ruler and Kornelis Heiko Miskotte.⁷ The first change of attitude to be noted in the wider Christian community followed the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. This State was widely hailed as a resurgence of the Jewish nation. It received warm support from the Churches in the Netherlands, even though this implied a future for the Jews outside the context of Christianity.

Changing attitudes towards Jewish baptism after 1948

All of the major Dutch Protestant Churches (with the sole exception of the free Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) cooperated in the Inter-Church Contact Israel (ICI), established in 1946.⁸ Relations between Jews and Christians, based on a common support for the State of Israel, improved beyond recognition. ICI supported a policy of mutual understanding and respect. A major problem however, arose from the fact that baptized Jews such as Polak were considered interlopers by the Jewish community both in Holland and in Israel. As Justus Tal (1881–1954), the only surviving chief rabbi in the Netherlands, had made clear as early as 1945: by accepting baptism, Christian Jews were considered to have cut themselves off from the Jewish community, by their own free will. The organized Jewish community refused all contacts between itself and these converts to Christianity, unless they returned to Judaism.⁹

For the ICI in the years after liberation, it became more and more clear how grave the consequences of Tal's verdict could be for the Christian Jews: as much a victim of the Shoa as any other Jew, they were separated from their own people thereafter and in many cases felt themselves ill understood in the Churches. Only an absolute and exclusive truth, such as Den Hartogh had postulated in 1945, could justify such sacrifice of identity. This very exclusivity slackened by the gradual

⁷ Cf. *Fundamenten en Perspectieven van Belijden* (Fundamentals and Perspectives of Confession. Presented by the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church as a specimen of renewed Protestant testimony), The Hague, 1949.

⁸ GERT VAN KLINKEN: *Christelijke stemmen over het Jodendom* (Christian voices on Judaism. Sixty years Inter-Church Contact Israel (ICI), 1946–2006), Delft, 2009.

⁹ JUSTUS TAL: *Voor ons ons Jodendom en niet het Christendom* (For us our Judaism and not Christianity), Amsterdam, 1945.

Christian acceptance of Jewish faith as a legitimate way towards God, in the fifties and especially the sixties. *Israel and the Church*, a publication by the Council for Church and Israel of the Dutch Reformed Church, was typical of the new trend (1959).¹⁰ After the murder of six million Jews the Church had lost its claim of moral superiority. The State of Israel and the continuing existence of the Jewish people were sure signs that God had not renounced His old Covenant. In 1963 the Christian kibbutz Nes Ammim in Galilee in Northern Israel, in which the Reformed doctor Johan Pilon from Heemstede was a leading figure, renounced all efforts to convert the Jews.¹¹ Many of the Jewish converts to Christianity in Holland concluded that the time had come to rejoin the Jewish community. One of them was Mart Cohen. He consulted the representative of the Dutch Reformed Church in Jerusalem, Jacobus (Coos) Schoneveld. In his answer, Schoneveld replied that baptism for a Jew was unadvisable, as the resulting breach between him and the Jewish community would imply an unacceptable loss of identity. Moreover, there was no need for a Jew to be baptized, as the Torah was his ordained path towards God:

‘Whatever eloquent dogmatic theories one might argue about baptism, no baptismal water is able to wash away the bitter fact that baptism implies the exclusion of a Jew from the covenantal community of Israel. It is an irony that baptism, once intended to grant pagans access to the Covenant, now alienates the Jews from it.’¹²

Mart Cohen said farewell to his Church and rejoined the Jewish community. He was one of many converted Jews who did so. Their choice was respected by the ICI and the Churches that were represented in that platform. Isidore Polak however, remained a member of the Reformed Churches till the end of his life. He died in Kampen in 1974.¹³

10 *Israel and the Church. A study by order of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, written by the Council for the relation of Church and Israel*, The Hague, 1959.

11 SIMON SCHOON: *Nes Ammim. A Christian experiment in Israel*, Wageningen, 1976.

12 MART COHEN: *Afscheid van de houten broek en terugkeer naar de Joodse Gemeente* (Farewell to the pulpit and return to the Jewish community), Wateringen, 1981.

13 I thank Jaap van Gelderen (Kampen) for this information.

TJITTE WEVER

Celebrating your new life in Christ. Quest for a bridge ritual between baby-baptism and believer's baptism

Összefoglalás

A keresztség értelmezése és gyakorlata régtől fogva ütközőpont a különböző keresztyén tradíciók között, a tanulmány a nemzetközileg is érzékelhető dilemma legújabb kori hollandiai lecsapódását mutatja be, protestáns nézőpontból. A szerző érzékelteti a gyermekkeresztség teológiája, gyakorlata és a mai posztmodern kor emberének individualisztikus, élményközpontú elvárásai közt feszülő ellentétet. Mit tehetnek a protestáns, gyermekkeresztséget gyakorló tradicionális egyházak akkor, amikor a gyermekkorban megkeresztelt, majd szekuláris életet folytató emberek a visszatérés, megtérés után vágyat éreznek arra, hogy Krisztushoz tartozásuk a keresztség formájában most már érzelmi alapon is kifejeződjön? A tanulmány bevezet minket a hollandiai protestáns egyházak teológiai, egyházpolitikai küzdelmeibe, amivel a posztmodern kor egyháztagjainak igényére próbál alternatívát kínálni egy áthidaló (megemlékező) rítus keretében.

How can we celebrate renewal with people who were baptized as a baby and after a long time in “old life” only now found or returned to the new life in Christ, and show a desire to have a personal experience in a water-ritual commemorating their baptism?

Impulses from the Evangelical Movement

Since the sixties, seventies and the eighties of the 20th century the Evangelical Movement showed an enormous growth almost everywhere in the world. Pentecostals, Baptists and other evangelical denominations founded new congregations and organizations. Revival Movements did not only affect people outside the traditional and mainline churches, also many believers within mainline churches received new impulses for their faith. Many evangelical para-church-organisations like Youth for Christ, Youth with a Mission, Operation Mobilisation, Navigators and IFES were meeting-places for Christians from all traditions.

Many of them found renewal of faith in these evangelical circles. They were baptized as a baby, but many others had let go all connections with the church and even lost their faith. Some have lived a life full of all the things that the Lord has forbidden. In some of them faith had faded away through liberal theology. Others simply were too busy with career, family life or simply enjoying all the good things of life.

They felt that never before now they really had found new life in Jesus Christ. Of course, meeting Christians of all traditions, they got acquainted to other concepts

of baptism too – in evangelical circles believer's baptism is the most common practice. And reading the New Testament accounts of the Early Church in the book of Acts, and Paul's commemoration of Baptism in Romans 6, the renewal of faith they had experienced raised the desire for an immersion...

A romans-six-experience ...or re-baptism?

This desire finds no answer within their traditional churches, which maintain the infant baptism doctrine and practice, and reject any form of "second" water ritual, out of fear for Anabaptism. So they have to look for that answer elsewhere.

They go to the evangelical congregations in their neighborhood, often the church of other evangelical Christians, with whom they share the new found faith and with whom they desire to grow into a deeper relationship with God, and a richer experience of the Holy Spirit in their lives. These churches will tell them, that it is the true doctrine of Scripture to be baptized as a believer, and invite them to be baptized by immersion without recognition for their 'first', infant baptism, which they received when they were a little baby.

Subsequently it often happens that they leave their old mainline church and become a member of an evangelical, charismatic, Pentecostal, or Baptist community. Not all of them stay there for long, but as the years go by some roam from one to another congregation or no congregation at all. They become the Rolling Stones of Evangelical Christianity, or become part of the "liquid", or "emerging" church.

Of course, they are not lost for the Kingdom of God, and if they find a new home in their new community we are happy when they follow Christ there and use the gifts that the Spirit gave them.

But for the mainline churches it is a form of *"FAITH DRAIN"*. While these churches are already weakening through the loss of many members, who leave the Church because their faith has faded away in the process of secularization, the loss of these very conscious believers, who really want to follow the Lord, is an extra painful one.

Evangelisch werkverband (ewv): request

In 1995 many evangelical members and ministers of the Hervormde Kerk and the Gereformeerde Kerken founded an Evangelical Association, in which they tried to contribute to spiritual renewal in the traditional church. Since 2004 the Hervormde Kerk, the Gereformeerde Kerken and the Lutherans (Evangelisch Lutherse Kerk in Nederland) came together in one church, the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland. The Evangelisch Werkverband has been rather successful in bringing issues from the evangelical wing on the agenda of the Protestant Church, and the Church more and more has an open mind for these issues.

One of those issues since 1995 has been: *to find a way to stop the faith drain, especially the tendency that (young) people leave the church by the door of re-bap-*

tism. Their “vision book” *Vurig Verlangen*¹ contained two chapters on the subject. Infant baptism and believer's baptism were portrayed as complementary. They don't exclude each other. Each of them emphasizes different aspects of baptism. Infant Baptism is stressing the Covenant, and marks the continuity of God's grace through the generations. Believer's Baptism marks the discontinuity, the death of the old life and the passing through to the new life in Christ. It marks the call for conversion. The different aspects belong together, they both have deep roots in Scripture. So there must be a way to find a bridge, a ritual in which the two traditions on baptism can meet in true recognition towards each other.

In that ritual it is possible to use water, to have a new “water act”, that does not deny or neglect the infant baptism that has been administered long ago, but by its formula is a confirmation, a commemoration or renewal of that baptism. From the perspective of the Jewish ritual bath, the *Miqwa*, a chapter of the book showed that a water act like that only was a confirmation of the covenant.

Later on the EWV published its view on this issue under the title: *Celebrating the Renewal of the Covenant*.²

In 2002 the EWV turned to the Church Commission on Worship (Werkgroep Eredienst) of the Church with the request to open the door for such a bridge ritual with water.

But the process towards the union of the Protestant Church in 2004 was one of the reasons that the request remained unanswered for two of three years. I was a member of the Board of the EWV from 1995–2005. Within the EWV I have had the possibility to contribute to a liturgical concept for this ritual. I found it in the new *Dienstboek (Schrift, Maaltijd, Gebed)*, a new liturgical “Book of Common Prayer” for the Protestant Church, which had been published in 1998. The basis for the ritual can be found in the revival of the old Commemoration of Baptism on the Eve of Easter. In this liturgy water can be used in different ways. So it can also be used in a special form of Commemoration, for people who want to celebrate their passing through from the old to the new life. The difference is made in the formula, which keeps itself far from the idea that this could be another baptism, or the one and only good baptism. The formula can be a confirmation of all that God has promised in baptism. Examples of such a ritual and formula already existed.

1 HANS ESCHBACH (ed.): *Vurig Verlangen, Evangelische Vernieuwing in de traditionele kerken*, Zoetermeer, Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1995; chapter 7, by dr. G. H. Cohen Stuart; chapter 8 by rev. M. J. Koppe.

2 This was meant to help church councils in starting reflections in the congregation on this subject. By taking a starting point in Covenant Theology and the biblical examples of Covenant Renewal a ritual of confirmation of baptism was brought home in a for Calvinists familiar line of thinking. The idea was good, but it turned out that it was difficult to design a *liturgical* model from this starting point. Later on the starting point was found in the already existing liturgy for Commemoration of Baptism. I already hoped that this would happen since I suggested it in an address on the problem of baptism to ministers of the Free Evangelical Congregations, in 1998: *Warmte voor ijzige wateren* (Warmth for freezing waters).

In New Zealand there have been experiments with such a ritual of renewal as early as the seventies of the 20th Century.³

Werkgroep eredienst

When I left the board of the EWV, I was asked to become a member of the Werkgroep Eredienst, the Committee on Worship of the Protestant Church in 2006. So I was in time to participate in the search for that bridge ritual in answer to the EWV request of 2002. In fact the lead for the ritual ever since has been the tradition of Commemoration of Baptism which already has its roots in the old, pre-medieval Church. It finds its biblical roots in Romans 6, exactly the lesson from Scripture which is so important for the group of Christians who want that immersion: baptism means we have died with Christ, we are buried with Him in Baptism, we rise with Him to a new life in the power of resurrection.

There was much hesitation and even resistance to the idea, that such a ritual was possible within our Protestant Church. And would it ever meet the desires of those who ask for it? Will it be enough? But more and more the awareness was growing, that we had to meet the needs of the people who their desire to experience renewal in a “water act”. The Synod wanted to have a liturgical advice on it and the Werkgroep Eredienst received the request to give it.

At the same time three theologians were asked to give advice from the viewpoint of our theological, doctrinal tradition.

The result was that the theologians and the liturgists found each other. The theologians on one side showed great hesitation – would not the use of a bigger amount of water put the earlier infant baptism in the shade? The commemoration ritual should not be administered with more water than normally in this used in an infant baptism in this congregation. And the words renewal and confirmation of Baptism were to be avoided. On the other side they were deeply concerned about the present practice of infant baptism in our church – they fear that exactly the Romans Six aspect, the drama of passing through the death of the old life to the new life in Christ, often is far away in it. So infant baptism could turn into “a fine celebration at the beginning of life”. And so they even pleaded, that the church should use *more* water – emphasizing that baptism is more, bigger, that it is the drama of Romans 6. Baptize in fact means ‘to immerse’. Sprinkling makes the symbol too small.

3 SAMUEL JAMES DANIEL McCAY: *Celebrating Renewal by Appropriating Baptism*, submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Master of Theology at the University of South Africa, 1986 (The reason for this study was the approval in 1977 by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand of renewal services which uses footwashing and immersion as a celebration an appropriation of baptism.) In a liturgy for a Service of Renewal on side 174 the following formula accompanies the immersion by the officiating minister: “As you were baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, I confirm to you the cleansing, the forgiveness, new life and the promised gift of God’s Spirit which are in this covenant...”

So Werkgroep Eredienst wrote a series of liturgical models for a Commemoration of Baptism, one of them even with “much water”.⁴

Synod's first session on the issue

The moderamen (executive committee) of the Synod presented a memorandum on the subject on the basis of the advice that the three professors had given, and along with it the members could read the liturgical models which the Werkgroep Eredienst had added.

When in September 2008 the General Synod of the Protestant Church had its first plenary orientation session on the subject, many members reacted with repudiation and anxiousness. Much resistance came from the Lutheran members, who emphasized that baptism cannot be renewed. And a special ritual could be a surrender to the trend of our time: an overrated “experience culture”. Many of the Synod members were not even aware of the problem itself, and not ready to face it. So they were not open to the concept that was presented as an answer to it. One of the professors of the theological advice, dr. Kees van der Kooij, had an explanation for the fact that so many had no knowledge of the problem. “They who ask for such a water-ritual can smell from a distance that you don't have an open heart or mind to their desire, so they don't come to you with such a request at all....” Only few synod members had a personal experience of this issue in their family or congregation. A son of one of them decided to have a new baptism by immersion and as his father he spoke with much respect about that event – he saw the step taken by his son as proof of his deep intention to follow Christ, and not as a rejection of his baby baptism. Of course the confrontation with such a re-baptism can also evoke different feelings – of rejection and pain; in parents, who in heartfelt faith have brought their child to the baptismal font.

The Synod did not decide on the issue in this session; the executive committee promised to come with a new memorandum, taking up all the criticism to the first proposals that had been pronounced.

⁴ Werkgroep Eredienst after lively discussions presented three liturgical models:

1. In the Commemoration of Baptism on the Eve of Easter a testimony of a person who wants to commemorate his baptism in a special way can take place, his name can be named in prayer
2. In the liturgy of Public Confirmation, which contains a commemoration of baptism in the same way as in 1.
- 3.1. Commemoration at the baptismal font: (Romans 6:1–11 before and 6:11–14 at the end)
The believer signs himself with a cross with water from the font (in a congregation where baptism is administered by sprinkling). The believer pours water from the font over his face/head (in a congregation where baptism is administered by pouring the water.)
- 3.2. Commemoration in baptismal bath/swimming pool: Rom 6:1–11 before and 11–14 after. The believer bows down/kneels down in the water.

Characteristics of the concept

What are the characteristics of the concept that was proposed to the Synod?

- The *liturgical lead* and framework for the ritual is to be found in the already existing Commemoration of Baptism at the Eve of Easter. The 1998 *Dienstboek, een proeve; Schrift, Maaltijd, Gebed*, the liturgical “reference book” already restored this old tradition in the liturgies for the Eve of Easter, and later on in de liturgies for Baptism and Confirmation, in Part II, *Dienstboek een proeve, Leven, Zegen, Gemeenschap*, published in 2004. This commemoration of Baptism for the whole community has become an important element in these liturgies.
- The important *biblical lead* is the Romans Six understanding of baptism and its call live the new life with Christ in the power of his resurrection.
- The *believer* who desires this Commemoration will be asked if he/she accepts the infant baptism and Gods promises that are testified in it.
- For the *name of the ritual* itself we should not use words like “renewal” of “confirmation” of infant baptism; it should have the character of a *commemoration*.
- The *formula* has to be a confirmation and affirmation of the preceding infant baptism; the baptismal formula itself cannot be used.⁵
- *The amount of water*: The ritual can only be administered by immersion in or the pouring on of water when the infant baptism also can be administered with ‘more water’. (this part of the concept raised a lot of resistance)
- The *link* to the preceding infant baptism can be symbolized by lighting the own baptism candle; if the case that an immersion is possible, the link can also be taking water from the font to the immersion bath.
- The *administrator*, not necessary a minister, maybe even better a deacon, will not stand in the water nor immerse by him/herself. He/she only pronounces the formula. So every thought that this could be a second baptism can be avoided.
- If an immersion is possible, the believer should *immerse him/herself* (as an act of surrender to Gods grace)
- The *other believers* can partake in the special commemoration by an act, in remembrance of the baptism (and confirmation) of all who are gathered in the service.

Urgency of the issue

1. More and more believers “*evangelisch angehaucht*”

Of course it seems that the quest for this bridge ritual only has a pastoral urgency for a small, very special group of believers in the mainline Protestant Churches. But we should not underestimate the amount of believers who receive impulses for renewal of their faith from the Evangelical Movement. So the chance that they will ask for a “Romans Six Experience” only is growing day by day.

⁵ The formula pronounced by the leader of the service is: *As a child you were baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Today we confirm: You have died and were buried with Christ ...*

(– then: signing a cross/pouring out of water or immersion –)

...You have risen with Christ, you may live with Him as a new human being, every day He will give to you.

The greater number of young people has to be found in the more orthodox wings of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. Other wings of the Church lose more of their young people in the secularization process. The young people of the old Calvinistic, Reformed congregations and groups more and more find new impulses for faith in evangelical circles. On the one hand they are very loyal to their church and tradition. On the other hand more and more of them will pronounce the desire for that ritual, in which they can personally experience Romans Six. Nowadays re-baptisms of (young) believers from traditional circles raise a lot of upheaval especially in a number of these traditional congregations. We need instruments like this to keep them in our midst.

If we do nothing to answer their needs, they will disappear out of the Protestant Church. We will miss them, their faith and spiritual gifts in our congregations. We should not let this happen any longer. This young generation of young people may be among the most vital groups of believers for the future of our shrinking Church.

2. We need a bridge ritual for the ecumenical encounter with Baptist denominations

Not long before this September session of 2008 the Synod had started a new dialogue with the Pentecostal Churches. From both sides the Protestants and the Pentecostals have confessed their arrogance and rejection towards each other in the past as guilt, so they found their way to reconciliation and cooperation. A new kind of oecumene has been born. The problem of anabaptism and the issue of a bridge-ritual as an alternative for it will be an important subject in this dialogue.

The secretary of the Church ('scriba' in fact the public speaker; now: Arjan Plaisier) has started a continuing dialogue with Peter Sleebos, chairman of the biggest Pentecostal denomination in the Netherlands, the VPE (Verenigde Pinkster – en Evangelie Gemeenten). In this dialogue, and maybe new dialogues with other churches of the Baptist tradition and practice, the issue of baptism cannot be neglected. Maybe the Evangelical Alliance (Evangelische Alliantie) can also be a forum for this dialogue on baptism, re-baptism and the alternatives.

We need to stop the practice of re-baptism for believers from the infant baptism tradition, in which their earlier infant baptism is neglected.

Blessing of Children on their way to Baptism already exists as a bridge ritual for parents, who want to postpone baptism for their children to a later age.⁶

We need also a Commemoration of Baptism from the perspective of Romans Six – maybe with much water – as a second bridge between the two traditions.

The bridge rituals could bring the baptismal war between the traditions to an end and pave the road to mutual recognition of baptism; if infant baptism itself is "not enough" for the brothers and sisters from the Baptist tradition, it could be enough when the bridge ritual – maybe with much water – could be administered

⁶ *Dienstboek, een proeve II, Leven, Zegen, Gemeenschap*, Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2004. This second part of the liturgical "manual" of the Protestant Church contains a special service: *Zegening van zuigelingen op weg naar de doop* (Blessing of infants on their way to baptism), *side 75*. There is also a liturgy for the baptism of a child from the age of 6 years onward.

in their congregations as a *Romans Six affirmation of infant baptism*. So the bridge ritual could be used in the Protestant Church as well as in e.g. Pentecostal communities in the same way.

If we were able to reach mutual recognition of baptism with the Roman Catholic tradition, why should it not be possible to do so with the Baptist tradition?

The deep separation of the followers of Jesus Christ jeopardizes the credibility of the Gospel itself. So we will have to bridge the clefts that separate the denominations. We cannot afford to maintain our isolation in the strongholds of our (baptismal) traditions.

3. For the sake of Israel: abolish Replacement Theology

The urgency of our issue has also to do with the relationship between Israel and the Church. In the 20th century the Shoa, the fate of the Jews in old Christian Europe, and the Aliyah, the return of millions of Jews to their old home land, the rise of the modern state of Israel have confronted us with our historical, corporate guilt and debt towards Israel.

Infant Baptism always has been based on Covenant Theology. The most compelling thesis from this framework is: *Baptism has taken the place of Circumcision*.

As it is an obligation of the Covenant for Israel, to circumcise every Jewish boy as he is eight days old, so also infant baptism was an obligation of the Covenant to (Calvinist) Christians.

But in fact the thesis: *Baptism has taken the place of Circumcision* is a sacramental counterpart of the ecclesiological thesis: *The Church has taken the place of Israel*.

This is the Replacement Theology, which has caused that the Church through the centuries developed an attitude of arrogance, neglect, rejection towards the Jews. Replacement Theology cannot possibly be maintained. We have to cleanse our traditional theology of all elements of it.

New study of the New Testament, e.g. in circles of the Messianic Jews (who believe Jeshua indeed is the Messiah of Israel), shows that baptism and circumcision were functioning together in the Church of Jerusalem.⁷ But “Auschwitz” is already enough reason to reconsider our infant baptism theology. We cannot build a new relationship with Israel, if we do not abolish Replacement Theology.

⁷ Evidence to this can be found in Acts 21:15–26. Paul never had the intention to abolish circumcision for the Jewish believers in Jesus. Then the Jews would have been right: Paul teaches us to forsake Moses. In fact Paul only firmly rejected the *obligation for heathen believers in Jesus to be circumcised*. Non-Jews were not forced to become Jews before they could come to the Jewish Messiah. They could come to Jeshua simply as they were, *as heathens, without becoming a Jew*. But as Paul had to decide whether Timothy had to circumcise or not, he decided to do so, because Timothy according to the Jewish tradition was a full Jew, he had a Jewish mother and grandmother (Acts 16:1–3, 2 Tim.1:5). So according to the Jewish halacha he had to be circumcised. Paul respected the halacha on this point. On the other side Titus, who was a full heathen, never was compelled to be circumcised (Galatians 2:3).

So in the Jerusalem congregation all the Jewish followers of Jesus had their baby boys circumcised at the eighth day, and at some other occasion – maybe not before the age of Bar/BathMitswa? – they were baptized. The Jewish Messianic Church never felt that baptism had come to replace circumcision. And as Paul shows in Acts 21, he agreed with the leaders of the Jerusalem Church.

If baptism was never meant to replace circumcision (of Jews), then Scripture knows nothing of a Covenant *obligation* to baptize babies. Infant baptism theology will become 'softer'. It will loose its arrogance towards Israel, but also towards the Baptist tradition.

So there is more than one world to win, and more than one debt to be paid off (if ever possible) in this quest for a bridge ritual between infant and believer's baptism.

Second session and decision of the synod, november 2009

The new memorandum that de executive committee of the Synod presented for the session of November 2009 was called: *Starting Points for Commemoration of Baptism*. Again there was a lot of criticism during the meeting of the Synod. But at the end a decision could be made,

The memorandum opens the door for a special Commemoration of Baptism, in which believers who have a desire for it can "feel" the water of Baptism. *In this framework it seems that immersion will not be allowed or possible*. But there is a new start. A first step to a bridge ritual has been taken. And Commemoration of Baptism for the *whole* congregation – in which the words of Romans 6 can be heard again and again – will become a more regular practice in the Protestant Church.

The Synod considers:

- Baptism is once for all time
- Infant Baptism will be of permanent significance
- The Sacrament of Baptism is cannot be repeated or renewed
- It is important to commemorate Baptism
- In the congregations there is need for a pastoral manual for the dialogue with those, who desire a re-baptism or who already have been baptized again.
- The quest for forms (of liturgy) that actualize Baptism which once was received is important in the missionary situation of the Church

The Synod decides:

- The national Service Organization of the Church will produce – within the framework of the memorandum *Starting Points for Commemoration of Baptism* – liturgical manuals for the congregations that can help to shape their praxis of Baptismal Commemoration.
- The national Service Organization will also write a pastoral manual for the congregations, which help them in the dialogue with those who desire a second baptism of already were baptized again.

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JOOST VAN DEN BRINK

The One Baptism and the Two Traditions of Baptismal Practice and Theology. An Ecumenical, Systematic Proposal

ÖSSZEFOGLALÁS

A tanulmány a gyermek- és a felnőttkeresztség körül kialakult elméleti és gyakorlati dilemmákba vezet be, továbbá bemutatja a tradicionális és evangélikai egyházak és teológiák ellentmondásos kapcsolatát a legújabb kori Hollandiában. A szerző véleménye szerint a kieléztet problémára egyedül a két teológiai tradíció közelítése nyomán születhet meg a kielégítő megoldás; ezáltal a kétszeri megkeresztelkedés lehetővé válna, és a teológiák közötti feszültség is csökkenne. A szerző megfogalmazása szerint az „álom” szintjén működő megoldás gyakorlatba való átültetése még várat magára.

We have a problem. And I have a dream.

In the following I will explain these two little sentences with regard to the baptismal practice and theology of both the traditional churches and the evangelical communities.

1. The problem

In the Dutch reformed churches there is a tendency to take believer's baptism more seriously. As a result of individualization and the explosion of communication media etc., reformed church members are more than ever aware of the possibility of being baptized by immersion in evangelical communities. This possibility corresponds to the growing desire to experience faith more deeply within church services. The official baptismal theology leaves no room for a second baptism, but this doctrine has no natural authority anymore since in the post-modern era people seek their own reasons and believe only what convinces them. In addition to the desire for experience, immersion underlines their intention of the profession (confession) of faith. With a quick regard to some Bible verses it is easy to understand the attraction of immersion as a symbol of being buried and risen with Jesus Christ. For these reformed church members, being baptized as a little child, the problem is that they cannot be baptized again in their own church. This arouses feelings of jealousy towards people which have been baptized in an evangelical community. Their problem remains when they decide to remain in their own church but when they switch to an evangelical community, this causes another problem. In evangelical communities infant baptism is not acknowledged as a valid form of baptism, so implicitly this rebaptism denies the validity of the

baptism theology of the reformed churches as well as the sincere intentions of the parents who presented their child at the font. And by this baptism one often becomes a member of this evangelical community too. In this situation emotions take a high flight and arguments about baptism easily injure many relationships, despite the many good arguments that may be brought into discussion.

Now the problem is no longer an individual one since many members leave the traditional churches. The result is more polarization between both denominational families. Both the evangelical communities and the traditional churches defend their own baptismal practice and tradition against the other one. The interests are high: The evangelicals want to grow in number and the traditional churches want to keep their flock. In the ongoing baptismal dispute, defending the own practice demands not only a sound theoretical basis, but also the ability to convince people that the own practice is better than the other's. Traditional churches have a comprehensive baptismal theology, but it is a traditional one and the arguments are rather repeated statements than refutations of the arguments of the evangelical baptismal theology. Now what is for example the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PKN) doing to turn the tide? Many ministers and synod members try to hold on to the traditional baptismal theology and repeat this as loud as possible. But it becomes clearer and clearer that this is not enough. In the latest official liturgical service book the church leaves room for parents not to let their child being baptized but instead to have it ritually blessed. The goal of this possibility is to baptize the children after all when they will have reached the age of being conscious of what happens when they are baptized. But in practice it clears the way for postponing baptism until profession of faith, and by doing so copying the baptismal practice of the evangelical communities. Other solutions use liturgy in a creative manner to give the rite of profession of faith more liturgical body. By doing this, the church meets the desire for enrichment of the experience of this decisive moment in the Christian life. Among other solutions for example the Evangelical Movement within the Protestant Church in the Netherlands wants to give room for a special rite of renewing the covenant. By immersion along with profession of faith, the believers renew their baptism received as a child. In fact this rite copies the practice of believer's baptism, but just renames it and uses another formula. The PKN synod however has recently decided that this 'covenant renewing rite' cannot be ministered with the use of water so that in practice only a covenant remembrance is allowed.

2. The 'we'

In the first part I have outlined the problem of the traditional churches regarding believer's baptism and some actual developments within the Dutch context. But are the loss and altering needs of individual church members the real problems in a church with a rich theological heritage? Of course the scholars of protestant universities have a supporting task towards the church. But they must not lend themselves to repeat the own theology and carefully give in to the wants of individual

members. This is not a very convincing way of averting what denies confessions of the church. I think by doing this we fight the symptoms instead of delving into the heart of the problem. Indeed we fail to revive the traditional baptismal theology convincingly and to unmask the practice of believer's baptism as a theologically false one. But still this is a defensive way of using theology against brothers and sisters in Christ. Protestant baptismal theology should be in service of not only the own church but Christendom as a whole. For baptism is a sign of belonging to Christ who is the Lord not only of protestants but of all Christians. So the problem is not an intra-protestant one nor are the discussed solutions real solutions because they do not deal with the heart of the problem.

In my opinion the heart of the problem is a theological one which should be solved together with evangelicals. The problem is a *Christian* one. Compare it to the United States of America. Every state has its own laws. In the one state homosexual marriages are legal, in the other they are not. In the one state there is capital punishment, in the other there is not. But all states have the same president, and everyone who joins the army has to swear allegiance to the same flag and the same president. A single state cannot alter the ceremony by altering the flag or the anthem on its own and rival with the others. But this is precisely what is the situation in Christendom for centuries: Fellow Christians do not acknowledge each other's baptismal practice and regard only their own as attested in biblical scriptures and theology. As a result there are two different initiation rites within Christendom which compete with each other more and more. Just as every country has only one head of state, Christendom has only one Lord: Jesus Christ. And as every country has a uniform rite of allegiance to the head of the army, we should have a uniform rite of initiation into the body of Christ. The fact that this is not the case is not a reason to accuse the other tradition of being false but a reason to solve this problem of disunion together. In spite of earlier attempts to solve the problem, for example the 1982 BEM-report of Lima, until now baptism is a universal problem. The title of the 1960 Faith and Order paper 'One Lord, One Baptism' is still misleading. True, the unity in Christ transcends all disunity. But this unity is invisible. The one Christian baptism, the very sign of our unity, has become a sign of discord within Christendom. This surely is not the situation that Jesus had in mind when He prayed for the unity of his followers. But does the current situation trouble *us* too? It should trouble all Christians. Moreover, it not only confuses Christians themselves but non-Christians even more. If Christians cannot even acknowledge each others' sign of allegiance to Christ, how then should the world believe in Christ because of our unity? *We* are part of the problem.

3. The 'I'

I always tell people: "Baptism is my favorite subject." But as I have tried to show baptism should not only be a subject in which people are less or more interested but should be the very sign of unity in Christ. In this part I will tell you briefly how I got to this conviction and how my dream came to life. I have been baptized as

a child in an orthodox protestant community. As I grew up I attended several services in which people professed their faith and then got baptized for the first or second time. Because I wanted to profess my faith too, I started to wonder which of the two baptismal traditions was the most biblical. In the end I concluded they were both built on a sound biblical theology and from that moment on I started to seek ways to connect and combine the two baptismal theologies. I asked the church council of my community whether I could receive baptism along with my profession of faith, even though I was baptized as a child. This request could of course not be complied with. I decided not to get my baptism elsewhere because I did not want to switch to an evangelical community and did not want to deny implicitly my baptism. But my conviction became stronger that the mode of baptism should not divide churches because I could not and still cannot see why one of the two baptism traditions is unbiblical. So from then on I began to seek a way to connect the two traditions in a *theological way*. The following is a first draft towards that aim.

4. The dream

In this final part I will launch my dream and seek ways of getting closer to a sound theological basis for the fulfillment of this dream. My presupposition is that the traditional and evangelical baptism theologies are not incommensurable but can be complementary. This would clear the way to the possibility of the following proposal, the practical consequences of this presupposition. My dream is that Christians who have been born within a Christian church or community can be baptized twice: as well as a child as later on along with profession of faith.¹

The two main objections against a practice of a double performance of baptism are the following. One: This practice cannot be found in the Bible. Two: Baptism presupposes a single, once-only performance. First, there are many rites in ecclesiastical practice which are not attested in the Bible but have nevertheless a sound biblical foundation. Moreover, there are many practices which are attested in the Bible but which are nowadays performed in another context, for example the eucharist. Jesus did command his apostles to baptize, but did *not* tell them in which context, other than (maybe) the formula (Matthew 28.19). He did not tell them at what situation baptism should take place (also as a baby of believing parents or exclusively by one's own profession of faith) nor that it should be a once-only performance. Now the Bible is the most important reference work in both baptism traditions. The *spiritual and biblical meaning* of baptism is surprisingly very much the same in both traditions. But the main differences of both traditions are the *age* at which the baptism is administered to Christians of Christian parents and the theology about the preconditions which support this practice. The only thing we can say with certainty about the receivers of the Christian baptism in the

¹ Where I refer to the rite of 'profession of faith' you could also read 'confirmation' although this of course evokes more questions because of the differences of the age at which both rites take place.

Bible is that they converted to Christianity, whether there were children among them or not. This is still in use in *both* baptismal traditions. The problem with biblical reference with respect to the age of the receivers of baptism is that there are no examples of people who have been baptized while they were born within an *already* Christian family. So *both* the performances of infant baptism and the baptism after profession of faith by someone who is raised within a Christian community are not found in the Bible. In sum, the objection against my proposal that there is no biblical example applies also to the rites of both baptismal traditions. Both traditions are founded in a biblical and doctrinal *theology* instead.

The second objection, that baptism should be a single, once-only performance, is frequently defended by quoting Ephesians 4.5. But here again it is no prescript with regard to the universal context of baptism. This verse is part of the context of an appeal to seek the visible unity of the community of Christians who just converted and who indeed all received just one baptism. All of them? No, about twelve (courageous) disciples in Ephesus were baptized twice (Acts 18.24–19.7).² And no one would dare to accuse Paul of illegal rebaptism here. Of course the first baptism was the baptism of John the Baptist and the second the Christian baptism, but both of them referred to Jesus the messiah and still the second baptism did not diminish the first one at all. To quote Ephesians 4.5 to preserve the discord within Christianity would be a neglecting of the intention of the writer of the letter. Instead, legitimizing two performances of baptism to make visible the Christian unity would be a better way to take this verse seriously. Finally, the objection that baptism should be a single performance is also a theoretical one. It implies often that baptism signifies the death and resurrection of Christ which took place only once. Although the latter is true and baptism indeed refers to Christ, it signifies rather *the participation of the Christian* in the death and resurrection of Christ, which is not a momentary experience but a lifelong process.³ Moreover, when baptism can have different meanings that are differently applicable to the Christian in time, baptism also could take place in different contexts in the same Christian life. When both baptismal traditions and contexts are genuinely complementary, then there is no question of *rebaptism* or any denial of the first baptism performance.⁴

Despite a thorough dispute in the fifties and sixties of the last century about the emergence of infant baptism, the origin of infant baptism as well as the baptism of adults who have been raised in a Christian community, cannot be traced with certainty. So we can state that both present-day baptismal traditions are fully based on biblical and doctrinal *theories* which of course make use of the biblical material but both use it to build up their own paradigms. Both paradigms of baptismal theology have their own characteristics. The theological foundation of infant baptism is based on the connection between baptism and the conceptions of covenant and

2 Just like probably many Jews were baptized for the second time after being baptized by John the Baptist with Pentecost in Jerusalem.

3 Cf. the WCC report *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, 1982, Baptism par. 9.

4 That is why I am very critical about id., par. 13: “Baptism is an unrepeatable act. Any practice which might be interpreted as ‘re-baptism’ must be avoided.” This statement has a commentary in the text, but no (theological) argumentation.

promise and the continuity between the old and new covenant. Like the Jews became included into the covenant of God with Israel, signified by the circumcision of the little boys, the children of the Christians become included into the new covenant signified by infant baptism. This taking up of the Christian children into the covenant is the initiative of God and later on they can answer to this initiative by professing personally their faith. The theological foundation of believer's baptism is based on the connection between baptism and the conceptions of faith and discipleship. Profession of personal faith is the condition for being baptized. Baptism is the symbolical start of the new life of discipleship which has begun by rebirth and faith and this means participation in Jesus' death and resurrection.

In my opinion the meaning of baptism is more comprehensive than just the covenant or just the faith theology. These two concepts restrict the meaning of baptism to only one moment: birth in a Christian family or the rebirth by faith. But these two concepts can be complementary in a more comprehensive meaning of baptism. I propose to formulate the more comprehensive root meaning of baptism as the *application of salvation*. This formula 'application of salvation' needs some explanation. By salvation I mean the reconciliation between God and man by the remission of sins that became possible through the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By application I mean the relational process between God and man in which God offers this salvation and man accepts it. In the baptismal practice then, the offering of salvation by God is signified by infant baptism and the acceptance of salvation is signified by believer's baptism. This does not mean that the application is complete with the profession of faith. Of course this process takes a lifetime of sanctification which ends with the baptism in death. Further, this model does not imply that the offering of salvation by taking up the child into the covenant is only the responsibility of God and the acceptance of salvation is only the responsibility of man. God is in some way dependent of the believing parents for offering his salvation effectively and man is dependent of the Holy Spirit for believing effectively. So the application of salvation is not complete in the offering alone and neither it is in the acceptance. Moreover, the acceptance is dependent on the offering. When the application of salvation is an appropriate root meaning of baptism, it does not clear the way to an endless number of baptisms. Birth and taking up responsibility for one's own faith are objective and once-only moments in the life of the Christian just as Christ's death and our own death are. Only two decisive moments in the Christian life are considered in the application of salvation and therefore suitable for a twofold ritual signification in baptism.

In summary, with application of salvation as the root meaning of baptism and the significance thereof in two baptismal performances, there is no question of rebaptism because of the complementary but still different meanings of each performance. The difference of meaning can be illustrated by the different modes of baptism, namely the sprinkling and the immersion. Still, the unity of baptism is maintained in that both baptism performances refer to Jesus Christ who acquired the salvation for us. God the Father offers his children this salvation by his promise and God the Spirit renews us to accept this salvation by faith. So in my opinion the traditions of infant and believer's baptism can be complementary instead of

incommensurable. We have to take them as two different signs of the one application of salvation. Both baptismal rites are unified by the referring to Christ, who shares the salvation He acquired with all of us, protestants as well as evangelicals and Christians of all other denominations. What could better visualize our unity in Christ than a unified baptism practice?

Statements:

1. The problem regarding baptismal theology and practice is that both traditions (traditional and evangelical) fail to see that they have a problem *together*, e.g. disunity in the practice of the very sign of universal unity in Christ: baptism.
2. Both baptismal traditions have no knock-down arguments to unmask the other tradition and theology as a false one.
3. Both the mutual excluding rites of infant baptism and baptism along with profession of faith of believers who have been raised within a Christian community have no precedents in the New Testament and can therefore only be based on a biblical and doctrinal *theology*.
4. Both the traditional and evangelical baptismal theologies need no longer to be incommensurable but can be complementary in a theology which elaborates a more comprehensive root meaning of baptism: application of salvation.
5. A twofold baptism performance for Christians who have been born within an already Christian community is a better visualization of the one baptism than two separate and competing baptism traditions within the one Body of Christ.

HEYE HEYEN

„Taufen kann ja nicht schaden, oder?“ – Was kirchenfernen Menschen in Deutschland die Taufe bedeutet

ABSTRACT

Statements of young mothers on a German internet forum are analyzed. These women want their children to be baptized though they are no church-goers themselves. At first sight, these mothers seem to be interested in extrinsic aspects like a nice feast and a nice baptismal cloth only. This is why the pastor may be disappointed or even feel offended. At second sight, however, the motives of these mothers appear to be more religious than it might seem. Asking for baptism is their way to ask for God's blessing to their children. Understanding this and taking it seriously, the pastor will not hastily refuse the desire of these parents. He will rather try to meet them and to accompany them with an attitude of acceptance. That can be the basis for discussions in which the parents learn more about the significance of baptism from a Christian theological view.

ÖSSZEFOGLALÁS

A tanulmány egy német internetes fórum fiatal anyukák általi bejegyzéseit veszi vizsgálat alá. Ezek az anyukák szeretnék gyermekeiket megkeresztelni, noha ők maguk nem templomba járók. Első látásra ezek az anyukák csupán a külsőségek iránt mutatnak érdeklődést; a kellemes ünnepség és a díszes keresztelési öltözék iránt. Az ilyen viszonyulás csalódásként, sértésként hathat a szolgáltató lelkészre. Mélyebben megvizsgálva az anyukák motivációja azonban sokkal vallásosabbnak tűnik, mint azt gondolnánk, hiszen a keresztség igénylése tulajdonképpen annak a vágynak a kifejezése részükről, hogy gyermekük Isten áldásában részesüljön. Ezt megértve és komolyan véve a lelkésznek már nem olyan egyszerű visszautasítani ezeknek a szülőknek a kérését, ehelyett inkább megpróbálhat velük kapcsolatba lépni és elfogadó magatartást gyakorolni irányukban. Egy ilyen magatartás lehet az alapja ezután egy olyan beszélgetésnek, amely során a szülők keresztyén nézőpontból is egyre jobban megismerhetik a keresztség jelentőségét.

Ich bin geboren und aufgewachsen in Deutschland, und das heißt u.a.: in einem Land, das in viel stärkerem Maße als die Niederlande durch eine volk-kirchliche Tradition geprägt ist. Ähnlich wie in Großbritannien oder in den skandinavischen Ländern gehört dort von alters her die große Mehrheit der Bevölkerung der Kirche an – auch wenn die meisten von ihnen am kirchlichen Leben nicht teilnehmen.

Um das einmal an einem Beispiel anschaulich zu machen:

Meine erste Gemeinde, in der ich als Pfarrer tätig war, bestand aus zwei Dörfern. Jedes Dorf hatte eine eigene Kirche. Insgesamt hatten die beiden Dörfer zusammen etwa 1800 Einwohner. Abgesehen von etwa 5 Zeugen Jehovas, 10 Katholiken und 15 Konfessionslosen gehörten diese alle der lutherischen Kirche an. Ich hatte also etwa 1770 Gemeindeglieder. Die Sonntagsgottesdienste fanden nur 14-tägig statt: den einen Sonntag in dem einen Dorf und den anderen Sonntag in dem anderen. Dabei besuchten die Kirchgänger jeweils nur den Gottesdienst im eigenen Dorf, in der eigenen Kirche. Und wie viele Menschen saßen dort an einem

durchschnittlichen Sonntag in der Kirche? Am Sonntag nach einer Taufe, einer kirchlichen Trauung oder einer Beerdigung hielten die Familienangehörigen ihren Kirchgang. Außerdem waren die Konfirmanden verpflichtet, an den meisten Gottesdiensten teilzunehmen. Wenn man aber einmal von den Konfirmanden absieht (z.B. während der Schulferien kommen sie auch nicht zur Kirche) und wenn in der Woche zuvor keine Taufe, Trauung oder Beerdigung stattgefunden hatte, blieben in dem einen Dorf etwa fünf bis zehn übrig und in dem anderen etwa 10 bis 20. Das sind noch nicht einmal 1,5%, und das auch nur jeden zweiten Sonntag.

Die Amtshandlungen aber: Taufe, Konfirmation, Trauung und kirchliche Beerdigung wurden von so gut wie allen mit der größten Selbstverständlichkeit in Anspruch genommen. Bei Beerdigungen z.B. hatte ich jedes Mal eine volle Kirche. Und im Konfirmationsgottesdienst reichten meistens die Plätze nicht.

Das als ein Beispiel für eine volkswirtschaftliche Situation im ländlichen Bereich. Die Situation in den Großstädten unterscheidet sich davon auf den ersten Blick dadurch, dass dort ein großer Bevölkerungsanteil keiner Kirche mehr angehört. Allerdings: wenn man dort die Gruppe der Kirchenmitglieder, die nicht am Gemeindeleben teilnimmt und die Gruppe der Nicht-Mitglieder mit einander vergleicht, kann man auf den zweiten Blick feststellen, dass die Unterschiede so groß nicht sind: ob und in welcher Weise das Leben religiös gedeutet oder gestaltet wird, hat nur wenig damit zu tun, ob jemand formell einer Kirche angehört oder nicht.

Auch die Attraktivität einer religiös-rituellen Begleitung an den Knotenpunkten des Lebens wird keineswegs nur von Kirchenmitgliedern empfunden. Jeder Pastor kennt die Auseinandersetzungen mit Hinterbliebenen, die ihn bedrängen, er möge ihr verstorbene Familienmitglied doch bitte kirchlich beerdigen, obwohl die betreffende Person kein Kirchenmitglied war. Der Pfarrer kann sich darauf berufen, dass das Pfarrerdienstrecht ihm das verbietet. Plausibel machen kann er es aber den Angehörigen in den meisten Fällen nicht.

Nach dem Gesagten wird es nun vielleicht niemanden mehr wundern, wenn ich hinzufüge: nicht nur entfremdete Kirchenmitglieder, sondern auch manche Nicht-Mitglieder empfinden es als eine sehr attraktive Option, dass ihr neugeborenes Kind doch getauft werden möge.

1. Ich habe mich neulich im Internet in zwei verschiedenen Foren¹ umgeschaut, in denen junge Mütter sich über verschiedenste Fragen im Zusammenhang mit Schwangerschaft, Geburt und Kindererziehung austauschen. Dort wurde auch die Frage eingebracht: Lasst ihr eigentlich euer Kind taufen? Und, wenn ja, warum?

Ich habe sieben der dort gegebenen Antworten ausgewählt, die mir bezeichnend scheinen für die Gruppe der jungen Eltern, die zwar selbst zum kirchlichen Glauben ein distanzierendes Verhältnis haben, die aber dennoch für ihr Kind die Taufe wünschen.

¹ <http://www.adeba.de/discus2/fragen-rund-um-taufe/15172-kindertaufe-lasst-babys-tau...> und http://forum.gofeminin.de/forum/bebeestla/___f47904_bebeestla-Warum-taufen-lassen... (beide aufgesucht am 26. 3. 2009)

[1] „Ich habe meine Tochter taufen lassen, sie hatte ein wunderschönes Taufkleid, ein Fest, zu dem alle Verwandten kamen, sie hat zwei Taufpaten... Auch habe ich natürlich schöne Fotos gemacht von ihr im Taufkleid, klar, sie soll sich an ihren Taufbildern mal genauso erfreuen wie ich an meinen. Und sie soll sogar ihr Taufkleid mal bekommen, damit sie ihre Kinder auch darin taufen lassen kann. Ich finde das sehr schön. Sie soll sich eines Tages selbst entscheiden können, was sie tun will. Ich erziehe sie nicht besonders nach dem Glauben, ich werde ihr alle Fragen dazu soweit wie es mir möglich ist, selbstverständlich beantworten. Aber da ich selbst nicht allzu gläubig bin, wird es mir womöglich schwer fallen, da hoffe ich natürlich auch auf den Unterricht in der Schule, der einem nicht getauften Kind ja verwehrt wird. Und selbstverständlich später der Konfirmandenunterricht, in dem sie sich dann eingehend mit Gott und Kirche befassen kann. Hiernach kann sie dann hoffentlich entscheiden, was sie machen will, ich werde alles akzeptieren. Vielleicht entscheidet sie sich dagegen, ist auch okay, oder vielleicht dafür, und vielleicht möchte sie von da an sehr gläubig leben, ich werde sie unterstützen so oder so, soweit ich es kann.“

Insgesamt denke ich, wir sollten uns nicht alle Traditionen nehmen lassen, Hochzeit und Taufe gehören dazu. Es sind schöne Feste, und die Kirche gehört nun mal dazu.“



[2] „Ich bin nicht wirklich gläubig, und wenn, denke ich nicht, dass man zwangsläufig in der Kirche sein muss, um an Gott zu glauben. Unser Kind wird ohne Bibel aufwachsen. Trotzdem werde ich Tim taufen lassen. Ich finde es einfach schöner, dem Kind Gottes Segen zukommen zu lassen, die Zeremonie und die Taufpaten sind uns sehr wichtig. Tim hat keine Tanten und Onkel – so soll er wenigstens Patentanten und Patenonkel haben.“



[3] „Bei uns gibt es mehrere Gründe:

Tradition / ich mag Feste, wo die ganze Familie zusammen kommt, denn meistens nimmt man sich ja doch keine Zeit dafür / zu 1% auch der Glaube.

Kurzum: wir finden es einfach schön.“



[4] „... Ansonsten muss natürlich jeder selbst entscheiden, ob man sein Kind taufen lässt. Uns war es einfach wichtig, dass unser Kleiner von Gott durch die Taufe angenommen ist. Natürlich ist auch jedes nicht getaufte Kind angenommen...“



[5] „Hallo,

wir werden unsere Kleine auch taufen lassen. Das kommt allerdings nicht von meiner Seite, sondern von meinem Freund. Er ist evangelisch und glaubt an Gott. Das akzeptiere ich, aber er konnte mich bisher selber nicht richtig davon überzeugen. Das wird auch noch so'n Problem zur kirchlichen Hochzeit... Naja, aber eine Taufe schadet ja dem Baby nichts, kann ja nur Glück bringen.“



[6] „Ich habe meinen Sohn Anfang Oktober taufen lassen. In meiner Familie ist jeder getauft... Mir war es jetzt nicht so wichtig, aber meiner Oma schon. Und eigentlich ist es doch egal, ob man getauft ist oder nicht, oder?“

[7] „Wir haben Philipp taufen lassen, weil wir seit der Frühgeburt so viel Glück hatten und er alles gut überstanden hat. Es war direkt nach der Geburt eine sehr schwere Zeit für uns. Philipp hatte einige Probleme, wegen der Frühgeburt. Ich hab jeden Tag für ihn gebetet, dass er es überlebt.“

Ich bin auch getauft, mein Freund allerdings nicht, und wir waren uns einig, Philipp taufen zu lassen, weil wir glauben, dass da oben jemand die Hand über ihn gehalten hat und er jetzt ein super fittes, gesundes Baby ist.“

2. Ich weiß nicht, was für Gefühle es in Ihnen auslöst, wenn Sie diese Aussagen auf sich wirken lassen.

Ich spreche bewusst als erstes die Gefühle an und nicht die Gedanken. Denn manchmal ist es ja so, dass unseren Gedanken und unseren Handlungsstrategien zunächst einmal Gefühle zugrunde liegen. Darum halte ich es für sinnvoll, die zunächst einmal zuzulassen und sich ihrer bewusst zu werden.

Wenn ich an meine Zeit als Gemeindepastor zurückdenke, und zwar an Situationen, in denen mir Taufeltern solche Sätze sagten wie: *„Eine Taufe schadet ja dem Baby nichts – eigentlich ist es doch egal, ob jemand getauft ist – ich werde mein Kind nicht besonders nach dem Glauben erziehen – aber es ist ein schönes Fest“*, dann hat mich das sicher nicht froh gestimmt. Im Gegenteil: was ich in der Situation mir möglichst nicht habe anmerken lassen und vielleicht auch vor mir selbst nicht so ganz wahrhaben wollte: irgendwo tief in mir hat es mich auch gekränkt.

- Da möchte ich etwas bringen, das mir selbst kostbar oder heilig ist – und ein anderer sagt: *„Na ja, schaden wird's ja nicht“*.
- Da habe ich mit viel Zeit und Mühe ein theologisches Verständnis erarbeitet, habe auf den Aussagen meiner verehrten theologischen Lehrer weitergebaut – und ein anderer sagt: *„Ach, das ist doch eigentlich völlig egal!“*.
- Da zeige ich etwas von meiner eigenen persönlichen Frömmigkeit und mache mich damit auch verletzlich – und ein anderer sagt: *„Na, Hauptsache: es wird ein schönes Fest!“*

Das tut schon weh.

Und die Frage ist: was mache ich damit? Wie gehe ich mit einer solchen Kränkung um? Ich kann damit ja nicht „nicht umgehen“. Alles, was ich daraufhin tue oder unterlasse, wird in irgendeiner Weise auch eine Reaktion auf die erlittene Kränkung sein.

Was möchte ich denn eigentlich tun, wenn mich jemand gekränkt hat? Nun, am liebsten würde ich dann den anderen schütteln. Und ihn dann gleichsam zwingen, das, was mir wichtig oder gar heilig ist, nun auch einzusehen. Oder auch ihn abweisen, um mich vor weiteren Kränkungen zu schützen. – Natürlich weiß ich, dass das nicht wirklich in Frage kommt.

Aber ich finde es sinnvoll, mir meine Gefühle bewusst zu machen – und auch die Impulse, die ich aufgrund der Kränkung fühle. Das scheint mir der beste Weg,

um zu verhindern, dass sie unbemerkt mein Handeln als Pastor und die Rolle, die ich dabei einnehme, bestimmen.

Wie verstehe ich denn selbst meine Rolle als Pastor?

Manchmal möchte ich eine solche Rolle einnehmen wie sie der Lehrer in der Grundschule hat. Der weiß, wie man ein Wort richtig schreibt. Und wenn der Schüler das Wort falsch schreibt, streicht der Lehrer es an und sagt ihm, wie es richtig geht. Dazu ist der Lehrer schließlich da: den Schüler dazu zu bringen, dass er es richtig macht. So wie er, der Lehrer, weiß, dass es richtig ist.

Aber darf ich meine Rolle als Pastor so verstehen?

Nein, ich verstehe meine Rolle als Pastor anders: nicht in erster Linie als den Lehrer.

Vielmehr sind es zwei andere Bilder, mit denen ich mein Verständnis umschreiben möchte: das Bild des *Begleiters*² und das Bild des *Zeugen*³.

Zunächst einmal bin ich *Begleiter*, Reisegefährte⁴. Einer, der sich auf den Weg des anderen einlässt und ihn ein Stück mitgeht. Der nicht den Kurs des anderen bestimmen möchte. Sondern der sich dafür interessiert, wo der andere hin möchte.

Dabei bin ich zugleich der *Zeuge*. Ein Zeuge redet nur, wenn er gefragt wird. Und er sagt nur das, was er selbst gesehen oder erfahren hat. Was für ihn selbst wahr ist. Ohne damit den Anspruch zu erheben, dass der andere das genauso sehen muss.

Aus einer solchen Haltung heraus möchte ich jetzt noch einmal die Aussagen der Mütter aus dem Internetforum anschauen.

Also nicht unter dem Blickwinkel: Was ist an diesen Aussagen falsch und wie kann ich diese Mütter am besten überzeugen?

Sondern zunächst einmal in einer akzeptierenden Grundhaltung unterstellen: hier teilen Menschen etwas sehr Persönliches von sich mit, das mit ihrem Glauben zu tun hat. Und darauf bin ich neugierig, das möchte ich gern verstehen.

3. Als erstes fällt mir auf, dass in diesen Aussagen nicht weniger als sechsmal das Wort „schön“ begegnet. Es wird also mit der Taufe als ganzer sowie mit einzelnen Aspekten offenbar ein hoher emotionaler Wert verbunden, der mittels einer ästhetischen Kategorie ausgedrückt wird: es ist einfach „schön“. Wer sich einer ästhetischen Kategorie bedient, der braucht nicht zu begründen oder zu erklären, warum er gerade dieses „schön“ findet. Wahrscheinlich kann er das auch gar nicht. (Vielleicht ist deshalb für persönliche Glaubensaussagen die Kategorie der Ästhetik gar nicht so unangemessen.)

2 „Begleitung“ ist in der Seelsorgebewegung eine zentrale Metapher. Siehe z.B.: R. GESTRICH: *Hirten für einander sein. Seelsorge in der Gemeinde*, Stuttgart, 1990, 36.

3 Das Bild des „Zeugen“ ist hier anders gefüllt als etwa in der Beschreibung von M. JOSUTTIS: *Die Einführung in das Leben: Pastoraltheologie zwischen Phänomenologie und Spiritualität*, Gütersloh, 1996, 12–15. Mir geht es hier vor allem um den Aspekt des Nicht-Direktiven: der Zeuge bevormundet nicht und redet nur, wenn er gefragt ist.

4 Vgl. H. C. VAN DER MEULEN: *De pastor als reisgenoot. Pastoraal-theologische gedachten over geestelijke begeleiding*, Zoetermeer, 2004.

Es ist nicht davon die Rede, dass das Kind in die Kirche hineinwachsen soll. Das liegt allerdings nicht an einem grundsätzlichen Vorbehalt gegen die Kirche als solche, sondern vor allem daran, dass man unbedingt die Entscheidungsfreiheit des Kindes respektieren möchte. Aber es ist sehr wohl die Rede davon, dass das Kind aufgenommen wird in eine größere Gemeinschaft: in die Familie, die zur Tauffeier zusammenkommt, es bekommt Paten, gleichsam eine Erweiterung der Familie. Und es wird eingereiht in die Gemeinschaft der Generationen, auch der schon gestorbenen und der noch ungeborenen. Darauf deutet das Wort „Tradition“ und auch die Vorstellung, dass das Taufkleid an die kommende Generation weitergegeben werden soll.

Auch wenn eine Mutter sagt, dass man „*nicht zwangsläufig in der Kirche sein muss, um an Gott zu glauben*“, so ist doch von Gott sehr deutlich die Rede. Das Elternpaar, das um ihr zu früh geborenes Baby gebangt hat, hat sich in der Situation in täglichen Gebeten an Gott gewandt. Und es empfindet große Dankbarkeit gegen Gott dafür, dass das Kind überlebt hat. Ohne das Wort „Gott“ auszusprechen, sagen sie: „*wir glauben, dass da oben jemand die Hand über ihn gehalten hat*“. Es ist ihnen ein Bedürfnis, das Kind ausdrücklich mit diesem Gott in Verbindung zu bringen. Darum die Taufe.

Eine andere Mutter sagt, es sei ihr wichtig, *dass ihr Kind von Gott durch die Taufe angenommen sei*. Sie macht deutlich, dass das nicht magisch gemeint ist, so als seien die nicht getauften Kinder nicht angenommen. Aber offenbar ist ihr wichtig, dass die Annahme dieses Kindes durch Gott gleichsam mit der Taufe inszeniert wird.

Eine andere Mutter redet davon, *dass ihrem Kind Gottes Segen zukommen soll* und sagt in dem Zusammenhang deutlich, dass ihr die Taufzeremonie sehr wichtig ist.

Auch den Satz, *die Taufe könne ja nur Glück bringen*, mag in die Nähe der Rede vom Segen gehören.

Und was hat es auf sich mit den Sätzen: „*eine Taufe schadet ja dem Baby nichts*“ und „*eigentlich ist es doch egal, ob man getauft ist oder nicht*“? – Nun, zunächst einmal: so ganz egal scheint es der Mutter doch nicht zu sein, auch wenn sie sagt, dass es ihr nicht so wichtig war wie ihrer Großmutter.

Beide Sätze dürften zu verstehen sein als ein Argument, mit dem gegenüber einem fiktiven Gegner das Recht der Taufe verteidigt werden soll: Es gibt keine durchschlagenden Gründe, die dagegen sprächen, unser Kind taufen zu lassen. So verraten auch diese beiden Sätze indirekt, dass diesen Müttern die Taufe sehr wichtig ist.

Schließlich möchte noch die eine Mutter zitieren, die sagt, *für sie gebe es mehrere Gründe, darunter auch zu 1% den Glauben*. Eine Formulierung, die mich ungewollt denken lässt an Matthäus 17,20: „Wenn ihr Glauben hättet wie ein Senfkorn ...“

4. [zie onderaan een alternatieve versie van dit laatste stuk voor de publicatie]

Ich werde hier jetzt bewusst nicht mehr eingehen auf die Frage: „Wie kann oder soll ich als Pastor damit umgehen?“

Mir ging es hier zunächst einmal nur um die Frage:

Was bedeutet für diese kirchenfernen Menschen die Taufe? Was ist ihnen daran wichtig – und warum?

Wie sich das zu dem verhält, was wir selbst vielleicht systematisch-theologisch darüber denken, das wird uns vielleicht in dem einen oder anderen Gespräch im Laufe dieser Konferenz noch beschäftigen.

Ich hoffe allerdings, dass ich in dem letzten Teil habe zeigen können, dass die Motive dieser *kirchen-fernen* Menschen, ihr Kind taufen zu lassen, vielleicht doch weniger *glaubens-fern* sind als es auf den ersten Blick den Anschein haben könnte.

Ich danke für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit.

[alternatieve versie van het laatste stuk:]

4. Ich werde in diesem Artikel nicht mehr eingehen auf die Frage: „Wie kann oder soll ich als Pastor damit umgehen?“ Es ging mir hier vor allem um die Frage: „Was bedeutet für diese kirchenfernen Menschen die Taufe? Was ist ihnen daran wichtig – und warum?“

Die Frage, wie sich das zu dem verhält, was wir selbst vielleicht systematisch-theologisch darüber denken, überlasse ich den Kollegen, die die folgenden Artikel verfasst haben.

Ich hoffe allerdings, dass ich in dem letzten Teil habe zeigen können, dass die Motive dieser *kirchen-fernen* Menschen, ihr Kind taufen zu lassen, vielleicht doch weniger *glaubens-fern* sind als es auf den ersten Blick den Anschein haben könnte.

VENDÉGELŐADÁSOK

ELIZABETH L. HINSON-HASTY

Finding the Little Gate: A U.S. Theologian's Reflections on the Public Role of the Church in Hungary¹

ÖSSZEFOGLALÁS

Az esszé kiindulópontja négy olyan történelmi léptékű esemény számbavétele, amelyek az utóbbi két évszázad során jelentős mértékben alakították Magyarországot. A szerző hangsúlyozza, hogy a magyarországi keresztény egyházakra az felelősség hárul, hogy ebben a sajátos kontextusban fel tudják ismerni a társadalmi szerepvállalás legalkalmasabb formáit. A tanulmány célja, hogy ösztönzőleg hasson egy olyan dialógus kialakulásában, amely a kontextuális teológiák jelentőségét a magyarországi egyházak és a társadalom számára is körültekintően átgondolná. Teológiai szempontból nézve a kontextuális teológiákból eredő perspektívák és gyakorlati alkalmazások új megközelítési lehetőségekkel szolgálhatnak az egyházaknak a társadalmi szerepvállalás értelmezésének kiterjesztésében, továbbá az egyházak és az állam közötti partneri viszony és megbékélés elmélyítésében.

*“Oh, if I had but wings,
like a dove I would fly;
if the Good Lord had only let me,
In this place I would no longer be.”*

Psalmus Hungaricus, Zoltán Kodály²

During the fall semester of 2010 I taught as a Fulbright scholar at Debreceni Református Hittudományi Egyetem (DRHE) and lived with my family in Debrecen for almost five months. The Fulbright program prepared us for our semester in Hungary with a weeklong orientation meeting in Budapest in late August. Several scholars gave presentations at the orientation meeting intended to help U.S. Fulbright grantees understand the differences in cultural contexts, the economic situation in Central Europe, and the history of Hungary. Attila

¹ This essay was originally a lecture given on December 8, 2010 for students and faculty at DRHE. I am indebted to students and faculty who responded to the lecture or met with me on other occasions over the course of the semester to help me to better understand the context in which Hungarian churches serve and the Hungarian language.

² As quoted by FARKAS: Break Up Your Fallow Ground: An Alternative Theology, 28.

Melegh, a senior researcher at Demographic Research Institute and Professor at Corvinus University, was one of the presenters. Melegh observed that because of a variety of cultural dynamics and Hungary's distinctive history the most readily apparent and obvious means of accomplishing something, what he described as "the biggest gate" through which one could address a problem or create change, may be closed. However, he continued his observations by saying that for the Hungarian people there is almost always another way, a "little gate" that one must seek and through which one can find the means to solve a problem. If "the big gate" is closed in front of you, you have to always look for "the little gate" to find your way. I encountered two Hungarian sayings related to this concept; "kicsi kapu" (the little gate) and "meg kell találni a kerülő utat" (you need to find the way around it). The sociologist's comments stuck with me throughout our time in Debrecen. We passed through many "little gates" as we entered people's homes where we could enjoy sips of homemade palinka while sitting by tiled oven furnaces built to heat the family living room. Some were locked at first until we had built strong enough relationships to trust one another. "The little gate" also took on a much larger meaning while we were living there and became a metaphor through which I began to shape my understanding of the culture, the circumstances in which peoples were living, and the role of the church in Hungarian society and the larger Central and Eastern European context.

I must admit that writing for a primarily Hungarian and European audience is a bit intimidating and I will not pretend as a U.S. citizen and foreigner to have all of the answers to the problems that Hungarian churches are facing. Rather, I have two goals this essay. First, I will underscore key historical events in the last two hundred years³ that shape the distinctive context in which the churches must examine and self-consciously reflect upon their larger public role. Second, I hope to encourage a more intentional dialogue surrounding the significance of contextual theologies for the people and the churches of Hungary. My conviction is that Hungary's tumultuous history warrants a careful examination of theologies emerging from struggles for justice around the globe. Moreover, I think developing theologies that self-consciously reflect upon the historical and cultural factors that shape communities of faith in Hungary will begin to provide access to the "little gate," the "way around," the problems Hungary is facing today.

³ There are many other historical events that could be considered. One that should be mentioned is the Turkish invasion of Hungary and Turkish rule over Hungary for more than one hundred and fifty years. This period made a tremendous impact on the culture, customs, and language. However, I have chosen not to discuss the Turkish influence as one of the four pivotal historical events because I want to emphasize the way in which modernization, industrialization, and globalization has changed and continues to influence Hungarian identities and culture.

“Nehéz az élet”

“Nehéz az élet” (life is difficult) is a common expression among Hungarians and represents not only a commentary on the challenges of performing daily tasks, but also refers to the many places where reconciliation is greatly needed in Hungarian society. The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 is often remembered as a nonviolent end to the build-up of nuclear arms that characterized the Cold War era and tense relationships between the East and West. However, a radical shift from state socialism to capitalism resulted in a collapse of the social conditions within Hungary that is difficult to describe in terms of nonviolence. At that time, Hungary lost 1.5 million jobs⁴ along with a great deal of the social support provided for elderly people and minority populations. Hungary has never been able to fully replace those jobs or state-sponsored social support networks and continues to have one of the worst labor markets in the world. In 2010, unemployment statistics were hovering around 12%, but that statistic did not reflect the percentage of the population who did not work because they were elderly, women who bore the burden of domestic and care-giving responsibilities, or racial-ethnic populations who encountered difficulty entering the labor market and are often not counted within statistics due to lack of documentation. Only 54%⁵ of Hungarian people in 2010 were considered “employed.” Economic problems represent just one dynamic of Hungary’s contemporary situation. Sociologists and historians alike observe that Hungary has been frustrated with and disappointed by its global position for the last two hundred years; this frustration and disappointment has been felt socially, politically, economically, and within the churches.

Four key historical events remain pivotal when considering Hungary’s current situation: the quasi-colonization of Hungary by the Habsburg dynasty; the creation of what historian Miklós Molnár calls “two Hungarys” as a result of the 1920 Treaty of Trianon; the interruption and reframing of Hungarian churches and society by the Soviet Communist regime; and the emergence of the post-communist Hungarian society within an era of globalization. Scars inflicted by these events are visible almost everywhere. Understanding the impact of these four key historical events is essential to identifying the Hungarian churches’ role in reconciliation and social change.

From a Peasant Society to the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy

For 4,700 years Hungary’s economy was based upon local agrarian production. In the middle ages, the Kingdom of Hungary was a world “super power” in animal husbandry and known for producing delicious wines as well as salt and silver. Hungary’s peasant heritage lives on in the people’s favorite foods, primarily savory soups, stews, and meat dishes that you can imagine being cooked over an open fire. A great deal of diversity existed within the borders of the Kingdom of Hungary; only half of the population identified as Magyars, the other half identified as

4 See KEUNE: Youth Unemployment in Hungary and Poland, Geneva, International Labour Organization, 1998.

5 This statistic is based upon figured included in the *Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 2009* published by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

Germans, Romanians, Croats, Serbs, Slovenians, Slovaks, and Ruthenians.⁶ At least these are the groups most often named by historians. Another presence is elusive within historical texts; the so-called “gypsies” or Roma peoples.⁷

The identity of Hungary’s peoples as farmers and peasants and their ability to be able to successfully maintain an agrarian-based economy has radically changed over time. There are many reasons for the changes in the peasant and multicultural identity of Hungarians, but the period between the years of 1867–1919, the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy, accelerated the process of change. Historians use different terms to write about the centuries-long strained, yet strong ties between Austria and Hungary.⁸ Among those terms is “quasi-colonization” which emphasizes the fact that there was never a true balance of power between the two countries. There were many efforts to resist Austria’s power over Hungary. For example, Lajos Kossuth declared Hungary’s independence from Austria in 1849, just a few years prior to the compromise which became the dual monarchy. Diplomatic efforts failed to secure Hungary’s independence because politicians were unable to garner successfully the support of powerful Western European nations. The dual monarchy in that context was a compromise made with the Habsburgs that was intended to enable Hungary to maintain some of its own identity while existing under the Austrian monarchy.

Historian András Gerő writes,

The most important aspect of the legacy (and the memory) is that the era of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was one of embourgeoisement of the nations in the region. Significant social, economic and political changes took place over a relatively short period of time: peoples’ daily lives changed and what is now referred to as modernity became a defining factor for an increasing number of people.⁹

6 See MOLNÁR: *A Concise History of Hungary*, 222–3.

7 The naming of Roma peoples is a significant and complex issue historically and in contemporary discourse. There are many different types of “gypsies” even within the boundaries of Hungary. Ethnographer Péter Szuhay gives examples groups of Roma peoples with reference to the regions in which they are living in Hungary, their dialect, their tribal names, and their clan names. Examples of the tribal names of Vlach Roma living in Nógrád County include Lovari (horse-traders: horse-dealers), Post’ari (pick pockets), Kherari (casual laborers), Colari (carpet dealers), Kelderari (coppersmiths), Cerhari (tent dwellers), Eurari (knife-grinders), etc. The language of the Vlach Roma is Vlax, a dialect of Romani language. However, in Hungary, most (95%) of the Roma peoples speak Hungarian and those whom I met considered themselves to be part of Hungary, not a separate and distinct group. Among Hungarian speaking Roma peoples are the Cigány. Europeans who are part of the dominant cultures in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe have yet to agree with Roma peoples on names that are chosen by the Roma themselves or upon a common history. For a fuller discussion of this issue and list of references to different Roma communities see SZUHAY: *Ethnographic and Anthropological Research on Hungary*, 229–232.

8 The kingship of Hungary was tied to the Habsburg dynasty as early as the 15th century.

9 GERŐ: *The Heritage of Empire*, 209.

While the compromise had benefits there were also some costs for larger society and for religious communities. A more centralized government was created with Hungarian as the official language. Other languages could be preserved in local communities and in schools, but it could be argued that this centralized government came at some expense to Hungary's multicultural and multiethnic identity. The Hungarian economy shifted toward industry to keep in step with the rapid industrialization of the world market at the expense of the agrarian economy. By 1910, "[m]odern factories, with less than half a million workers, produced twice as much as the workshops of 2 million small artisan entrepreneurs."¹⁰ Between 1890 and 1913 the number of credit and banking institutions increased from 634 to 1,842, not including the addition of 39 Austro-Hungarian Banks. National banks began to account for 39% of all banking and credit activities.¹¹ The level of education increased and illiteracy decreased as a state-run system of education was founded, including universities in Debrecen and Kolozsvár. Beautiful public buildings and homes were constructed in cities and towns to represent modernization and identification with Austria, but dramatically and visibly changed the traditional buildings and the thatched roof Hungarian family dwellings. The reach of the monarchy extended into churches and synagogues. Religious services were often translated into the German language to show ties with Austria; this policy significantly impacted the nature of the weekly prayers or services. A lifetime resident of Budapest and member of the Dohány Street synagogue explained to me that in the synagogue rabbis delivered sermons in Yiddish and were required to translate them into German.

Much more could be said, but the examples above illustrate the dramatic changes in Hungarian life, culture, education, religious practice, and peasant identity occurring during this era. The Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy "provided a stable institutional framework, more or less reliable overall conditions and a strong currency."¹² These were obvious successes. However, this observation is also incomplete. The "peace" and stability that Hungary experienced was uneasy. There was a prevalent feeling among the people living as Hungarians under the "dual monarchy" that "the empire that they were living in was not their own."¹³ Andras Géro puts it bluntly, "almost everybody hated everyone else within the Habsburg Empire. There was a sense of fear behind almost everything. With the enduring influence of memory, the various national movements all pleaded with equal veracity that they were somehow being oppressed by one another."¹⁴ Moreover, historians underscore the kind of passive resistance used by the Hungarians to respond to changes and policies that were enacted to "modernize" the nation. Molnár suggests that "the appearance of a new form of opposition to authority and to Germanification ... became a way of life and an ethical code."¹⁵ He offers

10 MOLNÁR: *The Concise History of Hungary*, 220.

11 *Ibid.*

12 GERÓ: *The Heritage of Empire*, 222.

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*, 210.

15 MOLNÁR: *The Concise History of Hungary*, 202.

some instructive illustrations. In a popular novel of the time written by Mór Jókai, a character responded in this way to a tobacco tax imposed upon the Hungarian people with a large percentage of the proceeds being channeled to Austria: "I'll stop smoking!" In response to a tax imposed upon wine: "I'll quit drinking!" Throughout the dual monarchy Hungarians felt a tension with the monarchy, maintained a fascination with the thousand year old past, and experienced continued tensions between minorities.

"Have you heard about the Treaty of Trianon?"

Being part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire also meant that Hungary would be on the losing side of the First World War. After the war, the victors sought to punish Germany, Austria, Hungary and their allies. The Versailles Treaty with Germany is remembered in the West for its harshness and the way in which it contributed to the economic conditions and social attitudes that led up to the Second World War. However, in Hungary, the Treaty of Trianon took center stage. On many occasions we found ourselves confronted with the question: "Have you heard about the Treaty of Trianon?" It took some time for us to understand the importance of this question or the true impact of this treaty on Hungary.

Molnár suggests that "the conditions imposed upon Hungary by the Treaty of Trianon ... were more draconian than those imposed on Germany. Even Austria, also severely punished, received a part of the Hungarian kingdom ..."¹⁶ Third in a series of treaties after the war, the Treaty of Trianon was written with little or no input from the Hungarians and reduced Hungary's geographical territory by about two thirds to 93,073 square kilometers and its' human population by 3,425,000 inhabitants. Historically, Hungary had always dealt with many national minorities, but with the loss in population the multicultural identity shifted. Loss in population and land meant a shift in the identity of Hungarian religious communities. Molnár writes, "Denominational homogeneity ... increased. Catholics now constituted around two thirds, Protestant 27 per cent, Uniates [Greek Catholics] and Orthodox 2.8 per cent and Jews 5.1 per cent."¹⁷ Hungarian Reformed churches were significantly impacted by the treaty, particularly in the northeast where the Reformed church was the strongest. Béla Levente Baráth underscores the fact that "1023 [Hungarian Reformed] congregations out of 2073 were excluded from the country by these new borders."¹⁸ For the church as a whole, this meant loss of members, properties, and a reconfiguration of regional church structures.

After Trianon, the borders of Hungary were in flux for at least two and a half decades. The treaty that was partially intended to punish Hungary for its' own extremism had the reverse effect and exacerbated the situation. Trianon created unrest by separating self-identified Hungarians from their home country, increasing nationalism, fueling new forms of extremism, later contributing to the Hun-

¹⁶ Ibid., 262.

¹⁷ Ibid., 268.

¹⁸ BARÁTH: Changes in the Situation of the Reformed Hungarian Minority, 271.

garian leaders' openness to collaborate with Hitler,¹⁹ and escalating tensions with surrounding neighbors, especially those that benefitted from the treaty – Romania, Croatia, and Slovakia.

The society that emerged after Trianon was essentially “two Hungarys,” to use Molnár's words: “one in the process of modernization and of becoming a middle-class, liberal society the other stuck in the past.”²⁰ Many people who spoke Hungarian and claimed Hungarian traditions and identity now found themselves living in the “diaspora” outside the boundaries of their home. In the Northeastern part of Hungary the significant changes in borders during the 20th century levied a heavy toll on the Reformed churches. The Hungarian Reformed churches were forced to reorganize their structures and mission to those living in the “diaspora.” Nostalgia for the church of the past and for what Hungarians call “historic Hungary” persists today. Many Magyar maps highlight territories lost and emphasize the much larger boundaries of the nation that once existed.

The Communist Regime's Interruption and Reframing of the Hungarian Churches and Society

Charles West, Stephen Colwell Professor of Christian Ethics Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary, observes that: “[t]he memory of Communist society still influences ... European colleagues in ways that many of us in the west cannot fully understand. For the older generation it was personal experience; for the younger it is social history with which they still live, even if subconsciously.”²¹ Neither U.S. churches nor U.S. society has ever experienced what it is like to be interrupted, reframed, and suppressed by a totalitarian regime, therefore U.S. understandings of the impact of the communist past on the people of Hungary will be extremely limited. U.S. perspectives will also be tainted by our own government's propaganda from the 1950's through the 1980's. The U.S. had its own “Un-American Activities Committee” which was created to monitor “un-American” and “subversive” political groups and used as a government watchdog for U.S. citizens with socialist sympathies. Communism was seen as a direct challenge to our civil religion, “democracy.” Citizens of countries once part of the former Soviet Union are still sometimes assumed by many members of the U.S. public, to be godless communists. Admittedly, this is a remnant of our own limited view, but nonetheless it is a view that exists even today. There is very little knowledge, except among specialists, of the long history of the churches in this region, the formative role of faith even during the communist era, or regarding the diversity that exists here in terms of multicultural identities.

19 On different occasions Hitler and Mussolini ceded land to Hungary, including parts of Romania and what was then Czechoslovakia. At one point, Hungarian territory once again reached 172,000 square kilometers. From a Hungarian perspective, the injustice of the Treaty of Trianon had been put right by Hitler and Mussolini and it left Hungary with a horrible debt to fascist leaders; a debt Hungary would regret having to pay. See MOLNÁR: *The Concise History of Hungary*, 282.

20 *Ibid.*, 271.

21 WEST: *Public Theology in Central Europe*, 2.

It has been made clear to me in these last few months that faith was a strong source of support for many people as the Soviets transformed Hungarian society in the years following World War II. László Gonda described key theological positions that emerged after World War II in his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Service of Evangelism, the Evangelism of Service*. Gonda draws upon the work of Jos Colijn to name four key theologies: the official theology of church leadership, Barthianism, historical Calvinism, and revivalism.²² In addition, Gonda argues that the theology of the “serving church” represents a fifth position. The theology of “the serving church” was developed from a ruling ecclesiastical position and characterized by a dialogue between Marxism and Christianity. Communism in this theological system was accepted as God’s “instrument” and a “means of discipline” even within the church.²³ This type of union of church and state is deeply problematic, but represents just one position of the time. There were also people, including pastors and other religious leaders, who established themselves as resisters and refused to collaborate with the communist regime.²⁴ Some resisters were sent to forced labor camps, killed by torture, inhumane treatment, or disease. Clerical status offered no immunity. Ministers were arrested and imprisoned if they spoke out. Overall, the communist regime succeeded in interrupting and diminishing the public voice of the churches by keeping ministers under constant surveillance, impoverishing ministers’ families by ensuring that they were paid the lowest salaries, preventing religious education from being taught in nationalized schools and limiting the number of theological training schools, and seizing church properties for public use.²⁵ I have heard it explained that silence was used a weapon by the state to lord its power over people, including religious leaders. At this point, it is not entirely clear to me how this use of silence also impacted the life of the church itself.

Social ethicist Sándor Fazakas suggests that the communist past manifests itself in Hungarian society and churches today in “a mentality of sacrifice, hate, silence, mistrust, and the inability to make decisions ...”²⁶ Fazakas argues that “[u]nder communism, the churches of the East Bloc developed different strategies for negotiating the difficult path between accommodation and resistance. As a rule they sought to legitimize their accommodation theologically and to cover up the sinful failures of ecclesiastical leaders.”²⁷ Throughout the communist years little or no public theology existed with the church. Now churches have the opportunity to reclaim and reconsider their work in the public forum.

22 GONDA: *The Service of Evangelism, the Evangelism of Service*, 52.

23 *Ibid.*, 58.

24 It is important to make the observation that many Hungarians would also add the 1956 revolution as one of the most important historical events shaping Hungarian identity today.

25 Baráth discusses the impact of Soviet policies on religious education and church related institutions. In Hungary and Romania theological faculties were forced to form one institution. Many charitable institutions were also confiscated. Ministers could only teach young people on Sunday morning. There were church members in every congregation who “reported” to state authorities the content of Sunday sermons.

26 FAZAKAS: *Justification and Reconciliation: Considerations from the Churches in Eastern and Central Europe*, 232.

27 *Ibid.*

Many contemporary missiologists are encouraging Central and Eastern European churches to reexamine their mission in the post-communist era. The questions and context for the work of the church have changed. Peter Zvagulis points out that “[i]n the Central and East European context reconciliation is becoming one of the most important priorities of our time, both in politics and mission work. Because this new direction does not require crossing geographic boundaries but rather crossing perceptual division lines within the same society, it requires new approaches to the concept of mission.”²⁸ The primary questions placed before the churches can no longer be framed in terms of the survival of the church as an institution in a hostile political environment or as apologies for the Christian faith in response to political ideologies. Wojciech Kowalewski argues that the questions confronting churches today concern “the relationship between proclamation of the gospel and loving service rooted in solidarity with the hurting world.”²⁹

Emergence of the Post-communist Hungarian Society within an Era of Globalization

As a society, Hungary has the unenviable position and arduous task of strengthening its young democracy and economic position in an era in which we are more conscious of globalization than ever before. The impact of globalization in this context can be seen in positive and negative ways. In a positive sense, there is the possibility for interchange – trading of goods, cultures, ideas, etc. – across borders that would either have been closely monitored or not permitted in the communist era. One pastor with whom I met observed that there has not been a study done regarding the effects of cultural exchanges within the last twenty years. Such research would be timely. In the negative sense, Hungary doesn't enter into the global market on a level playing field with so-called First World nations and is forced to compete for its own survival with markets that are much stronger even during an economic recession. Fazakas articulates the challenges that Hungary is facing in this way: “The fight for survival among the new players on the economic scene has led here in Hungary and in other Central and Eastern European countries, to polluted waters and soils, dying forests, cheap storage of chemicals and radioactive waste.”³⁰ The October 2010 toxic spill near Kolontár reinforces this prophetic point.

Some theologians and historians have expressed their longing for a more unified Europe, but the current context has made clear that unity in Europe won't result solely from the opening up of borders to the East and by strengthening of economic ties through the European Union. Gérő argues,

All in all, it appears that while there exists a European Union in the way of thinking and manifested in practice, there is also an historical reality which is not

28 SVAGULIS: *Countering the Impact of Hate Speech: A Mission of Peacemaking and Reconciliation*, 92.

29 KOWALEWSKI: *Towards and Integrative Approach in Post-Communist Missiological Thinking*, 84.

30 FAZAKAS: *Covenanting for Justice*, 485.

even remotely connected to that of the Union. There is a supranational language and mode of thinking as well as an actual historical process that realises the self-interest of individual nations.³¹

Ideological conflicts are not the only reason for structural differences and economic disparities between Western and Eastern Europe. The different historical development of each of the European nations and their regions as well as populations composed of very different multiethnic and multicultural realities must also be carefully examined for the impact upon European unity.

Histories of Hungary give attention to a variety of ethnic groups (Magyars, Germans, Ruthenians, Romanians, Serbs, Croats, etc.), but few of the most known historical studies include references to Roma peoples prior to the twentieth century.³² Nowhere in Europe today, does the need for reconciliation seem to be greater than between dominant, more widely recognized cultures and the Roma peoples. The naming of Roma people and finding a common history is a significant problem for Europe. In Romani language “Roma” means “human being.” The word for gypsy in German is “Ziguener” and is derived from a Greek root which originally meant “untouchable.”³³ There are many different names found among Roma peoples that usually have origins related to their work. According to the World Bank, 7–9 million Roma people live in all of Europe; approximately 6 million live in Central and Eastern Europe. Hungary has the fourth largest population. In some countries, Roma people lack adequate documentation to claim their citizenship which limits their access to full employment, health care, and social services. Child poverty is higher in Hungary than the EU average and the highest poverty rate is experienced among Roma children. 29–30% of Hungarian children live in poverty; 50% of Roma children in Hungary live in poverty. Nicole Fiore, a former Fulbright grantee to Hungary, writes that some say that Roma peoples are the “biggest ‘losers’ in the change from Communism to capitalism because of the loss of governmental welfare programs.”³⁴ A study conducted by István Kemény, Gábor Havas, and Gábor Kertesi between October 1993 and February 1994 concluded that among Roma peoples, “[m]ore than 40 percent of today’s inactive workers had lost their jobs before the end of 1990.”³⁵ More recent statistical surveys show that Roma peoples continue to be disproportionately affected by high unemployment rates when compared to non-Roma peoples. Add to that the racism and discrimination against the Roma peoples that persists all over Europe.

31 GERŐ: *The Heritage of Empire*, 214.

32 This is partly due to a lack of documentation. There are some early references to Roma peoples, including references to resettlement in Maria Theresa’s writings in the 18th century.

33 See the U.S. Holocaust Museum website at <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005395>.

34 FIORE: *Roma in Hungary: A Look at Government Initiatives*, 251–266.

35 As quoted in *Rights Denied: The Roma of Hungary*, New York, Human Rights Watch, 1996, 78.

The fall of the Iron Curtain also meant that people could migrate to the West, including Roma peoples. Initiatives to create systemic and structural change that will lead to full inclusion are fairly new in this region and the need is great.³⁶

Finding the Way Around Hungary's Tragic and Difficult History

Hungary's tragic and difficult history greatly influences the contemporary conversation about church involvement in social change and the circumstances in which systemic and structural change can emerge. Fazakas writes, "the situation of countries of Eastern and Central Europe offers a special horizon of experience (*Erfahrungshorizont*) ... as these countries struggle with issues of historical guilt and reconciliation since the end of communist domination."³⁷ However, Hungarian churches and religious people also have a special opportunity to articulate their own distinctive public voice theologically and within the larger society. Fazakas also discusses the importance of partnership models between church and state that are found in the West. Theologically, the perspectives and practices growing out of liberationist and contextual theologies will be of value to Hungarian churches because of the model of partnership and reconciliation they provide for religious communities themselves.

I am still seeking the "little gates," the ways around and the means to solve, the problems stemming from the historical events that I named above. Social gospel theology, liberation theologies, and other contextual theologies continue to provide "the big gates" in the U.S. and many other countries through which communities of faith have addressed economic, social, and political injustices. The language of "liberation," "solidarity," and "cooperation" is freighted with heavy baggage in a part of the world that has experienced more than its fair share of extremism, violent revolutions, and terrorism sponsored by fascist and communist regimes. As I understand it, the term "liberation," "felszabadítás" in Hungarian, bears a negative connotation because of its association with the Soviet occupation of Hungary.³⁸

36 There are some important government initiatives underway including the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015. I also visited some initiatives in Budapest that were making important strides. One project, the Magdolna Project, is an example. The Magdolna Project was established in 2005 within an economically deprived, predominately Roma area. Their goals include: ensuring livable conditions for residents, increasing knowledge about social diversity, supported individual alternatives of a different way of life, supporting cooperation among different actors, enhancing social cohesion, reducing the rate of segregation, and transforming the image of their neighborhood. Mission projects within and among the Roma peoples have been sponsored for some time by the Hungarian Reformed Church. While attention given to addressing immediate needs through charity is important, the missions that I visited did not appear to involve the Roma people themselves in a significant and a meaningful way in establishing initiatives, creating the agenda for them, or managing their work.

37 FAZAKAS: *Justification and Reconciliation: Considerations from the Churches in Eastern and Central Europe*, 231.

38 The root of this word in Hungarian is "szabad," meaning to be freed and has a much longer history and a less negative connotation.

“Liberation” as a term appears to have been colonized. I wonder, however, if there is alternative language that could be used and whether or not a new word, a new concept, could be created to convey the kind of sacred freedom known as one names and claims his or her own creation in the image of God. I have encountered some terms that I will continue to research and ponder.³⁹

While the terminology is a problem in the Hungarian language, the basic ideas associated with liberation and contextual theologies remain significant for this part of the world. Contextual theologies invite further reflection on and stimulate discussion of the historical and cultural factors that shape narratives, customs, and traditions of communities of faith. Attention to contextual theologies emerging from other areas of the world will be an important aspect of this conversation. Contextual theologies emerge from distinctive contexts and empower groups who have experienced oppression to name their own histories and to claim their own narratives. Contextual theologies underscore the struggles of particular peoples against oppression and highlight the ways in which individuals and communities claim the fullness of their own humanity as a reflection of the *imago Dei*. In this region, resistance to liberation and contextual theologies is due in part to a fear of violence and the way in which cultural identities are defined and claimed with respect to geographical territory. However, it is possible to cultivate *active* forms of non-violent resistance to economic, social, and political oppression. Consider just a few of the heroes and sheroes of the West: Sojourner Truth, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Desmond Tutu, Dorothy Day, Nannie Helen Burroughs, and Gordon Cosby. Perhaps, most important within this particular context, is that contextual theologies resonate well with Reformed thought. The Reformers of the sixteenth century emphasized the concept of a priesthood of all believers to assert that individual believers themselves had direct access to the divine and to empower Christians to act upon their faith. The membership of the churches was composed of parents, teachers, doctors, bakers, farmers, and many others, each with the task of embodying their faith in the world.

While in Hungary, I found few examples of theologies being *written* from liberation or contextual perspectives. This may be a limitation of my own language abilities. But I did encounter important examples of religious people empowering people from the margins. I visited a church in Budapest where Eszter Karsay serves as pastor. Behind the pulpit of the church a biblical text from John chapter 6 is painted on the wall. The text reads, “Whosoever comes to me I will never cast out.” Karsay described to me some of the ways that this text has formed and continues to inform her own congregation and the way that they challenge themselves to provide hospitality for people who are homeless, people who are called Roma, and many others. As I continue to reflect on this experience of living, teaching, and conducting research in Hungary, the biblical passage from the gospel of John will remain with me. I wonder how the people of Hungary will consider its mean-

39 It is my understanding that “egy” (one) is associated with that which is sacred, especially in terms of the church, “egyház.” I wonder if there is a way of speaking about sacred freedom that combines the oneness associated with the church and the freedom experienced by claiming and naming one’s creation in God’s own image (combining “egy” – “szabadság”).

ing in light of Hungary's history, disappointments, frustrations, multicultural and multiethnic identity as well as hope for the future.

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HANS SCHWARZ

A tudomány határai¹

ABSTRACT

Where are the limits of science? How far can our knowledge still be expanded? Are we allowed to transform our knowledge in action or are there limits for knowledge and its practical application? These are the questions which this paper raises and tries to answer from a Christian theological point of view. According to the author of this paper slowly we encounter both the external and internal limits of the scientific knowledge and even so science has become more and more a bearer of hope and is competing with religion, we must know, as Christians that eternal life is only an option in religion.

Hol húzódnak a tudomány határai? Milyen messzire terjeszhető ki még a tudásunk? Szabad-e a tudásunkat a gyakorlatba is átültetnünk, vagy vannak a tudásnak és gyakorlati alkalmazásának bizonyos korlátai? Ezek azok a kérdések, amelyek mindnyájunkat érintenek vagy elkerülhetetlenül érinteni fognak. A tudomány azonban egy egészen egzisztenciális szinten is érint minket és találkozik velünk. Tudományos áttörésben reménykedünk, a tudományos megismerés gyakorlati alkalmazásának áttörésében, legyen szó a nem megújuló erőforrások lecseréléséről, vagy éppen olyan betegségek gyógyításáról, amelyekre eddig nem ismertünk ellenszert. De a reménykedésnek vajmi kevés köze van a tapasztalati tényekhez, hiszen inkább a hittel és a bizalommal áll kapcsolatban. Ez azt jelenti, hogy a tudomány egyre inkább reményhordozóvá válik – valamivé, ami azzal kecsegtet, hogy a reményeinket betöltheti – és ilyen értelemben a vallással versenyez.

1. A tudomány mint a modern kor vallása

A filozófus és egyben tudós Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker az 1959-es giffordi előadásának a következő címet választotta: *A tudomány relevanciája*. Már az első mondatban azt a megállapítást teszi, hogy „korunk a tudomány kora”². Ez az állítás máig is érvényes. Von Weizsäcker ezt követően további két tételt bocsát előre: „1. A tudományba vetett hit korunk első számú, uralkodó vallása. 2. Legalábbis saját korunkra nézve a tudomány jelentőségének leírása csak olyan fogalmakkal lehetséges, amelyek kétértelműek.”³

1 Előadás a Debreceni Református Hittudományi Egyetemen, 2010. április 19-én

2 CARL FRIEDRICH VON WEIZSÄCKER: *Die Tragweite der Wissenschaft*. Volume I: *Schöpfung und Weltentstehung. Die Geschichte zweier Begriffe*, Stuttgart, S. Hirzel, 31964, 1.

3 VON WEIZSÄCKER: *Tragweite*, 3.

Az amerikai rendszeres teológus, Langdon Gilkey a tudomány vallásos dimenzióját jellemezve emlékeztetett az emberiség ellentmondásos arculatára, az egyik oldalon a kórházi betegágyon fekvő elesett pácienssel, a másikon pedig a „szakrális fehér köpenybe öltözött csodatevő orvossal”, akitől a páciens a betegségből való „megváltást” várja.⁴ Valóban, a tudomány gyakorlati technológiába ültetett változtatástól azt várjuk, hogy minden egyes problémánkra megoldást találjon, legyen szó az egészségügyről, vagy akár tágabb környezeti kérdésekről. Egyáltalán nem meglepő, hogy az úgynevezett Zöld Párt vagy Zöld Mozgalom nem tanúsít elítélő magatartást az alkalmazott tudományokkal szemben, csupán egyes felhasználási gyakorlatok ellen szólal fel, eközben viszont támogat másfajta alkalmazásokat, például a megújuló energiaforrások használatát az atomenergiával szemben. A filozófus Karl Jaspers már jóval ezelőtt felhívta a figyelmet a tudomány úgynevezett babonájára. Ez alatt a tudományba vetett határtalan bizalmat értette, ahol a tudomány „a mindenről való tényszerű tudás utópiáját jelenti; a mindenre való képesség, hogy bármilyen kihívás kiküszöbölhető technikai tudással, és a teljes jólét mindnyájunk számára lehetséges és elérhető általa”⁵.

Ha a mobiltelefonunk nem működik, akkor nem azt feltételezzük, hogy a technológia maga a rossz, hanem inkább azt, hogy vagy mi használtuk helytelenül a telefonunkat – ami azt jelenti, hogy önnön képességeinket vonjuk inkább kérdőre –, vagy pedig a mobiltelefonban keressük a hibát, hogy ti. az akkumulátor lemerült. Azonban semmi esetre sem keressük a hibát magában a technológiában, ami létrehozta a mobiltelefont. Az alkalmazott tudományokba vetett hit továbbra is megmarad. A beteg ember és az orvos példája viszont éppen azt mutatja, hogy a tudomány egy bizonytalan és ellentmondásos helyzetbe taszított minket. A modern orvostudomány sok ember életét meg tudja menteni, de vajon milyen céllal és milyen értelemmel? Ha valakit visszahoznak az életbe, az tényleg bámulatba ejtő. De ha ugyanez az ember ezután hónapokig kómában fekszik, eszméletlen állapotban, teljes mozdulatlanságban, lélegeztetőgépre kapcsolva, gyomorba vezetett csővel – nem beszélve az összes többi csőről –, akkor már nem érezzük, hogy ez olyan bámulatos. A tudomány papjai sem tévedhetetlenek. Az orvostudomány emberéleteket tud megmenteni, de sok esetben nem tud választ adni arra, hogy mi az értelme az így visszanyert életnek.

Az alkalmazott tudomány ellentmondásossága más vonatkozásokban még ennél is nagyobb mértékű. A modern higiénia bevezetése számos ember életét mentette már meg, ugyanakkor sok országban óriási problémákat is okozott a túlnépesedésen keresztül. A fogamzásgátlás már számtalan nőt szabadított meg a nem kívánt terhesség végzetétől, de másrészről több országban súlyos népességcsökkenéshez vezetett. A tudományos előrehaladás más területein is rámutathatunk hasonló ellentmondásokra. A gépjárművek elterjedése váratlan mobilitással ajándékozott meg minket, azonban éppen az egyik főbűnös a környezetszennyezés és olajtartalékaink drasztikus felélésének tekintetében. Nem meglepő hát, hogy több területen etikai bizottságokat hoztak létre – túlnyomórésztben kórházakban,

4 LANGDON GILKEY: *Religion and the Scientific Future. Reflections on Myth, Science, and Theology*, New York, Harper & Row, 1970, 85.

5 KARL JASPERS: *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1960, 138.

de politikusok közvetlen tanácsolására is – a tudományos fejlődésre hatással bíró döntések meghozásában. Ne feledkezzünk meg arról, hogy eddig kizárólagosan az alkalmazott tudományosságról beszéltünk, ez alatt magát a technológiát értve. Mit mondhatunk azonban a szintiszta tudományról, mint olyanról?

2. A tudományos megismerés belső korlátai

A jénai egyetem zoológusa, Ernst Haeckel 1899-ben tette közzé *Az univerzum titka* c. munkáját, amelyben konklúzióként a következőt állítja: „A 19. század folyamán az igazi tudományos megismerés előrehaladásának következtében az univerzum titkainak száma lecsökkent, tehát végül egyetlen átfogó titka marad az univerzumnak, ez pedig a szubsztancia problémája: az anyag és a lényeg problémája.”⁶ De még ez a végső titok sem tényleges probléma Haeckel számára, hiszen a 19. század minden előrehaladását és felfedezését áthatja „a nagy jelentőségű, mindent magába foglaló anyag törvénye, az »energia és az anyag megmaradásának törvénye«. Az anyag sötét problematikájából világlik ki az anyag kristálytisztá törvénye.”⁷ Tehát Haeckel szerint a 19. század végére az univerzum minden titka megfejtésre került, és végső soron a tudományos előrehaladást már csak a további, részletesebb megismerés foglalkoztathatja. Azonban ennek az érvelésnek a mentén haladva figyelmen kívül hagyta azt, amit a német fiziológus és orvostudományi szakember, Dubois-Reymond (1818–1896) már 1872-ben leírt: „a világban lévő dolgok titkaival szembesülve a tudós már régtől fogva arra kényszerül, hogy férfiuí önuralommal felismerje önnön »ignoramus«-át, tudatlanságát, a tényt, hogy nem tudjuk. Visszatekintve arra az útra, amelyet a tudomány és a tudósok már győztesként bejártak, a tudós magában hordozza azt a megszerzett tudást, amelynek birtokában – legalábbis bizonyos körülmények között – tudhatja, hogy most még mit nem tud, és azt, hogy a jövőben esetleg mi az, amit még megtudhat. Azonban az anyag és az erő rejtélyeivel szembesülve, és azzal, hogy hogyan kell ezekről gondolkodnunk, a tudósnak most az egyszer vissza kell vonulnia egy sokkal nehezebb beismerés mögé; ez pedig az »ignorabimus«, ti. hogy nem fogjuk megtudni.”⁸ Dubois-Reymond a természetről alkotott ismeretet tudományos módszerrel határozza meg. Haeckelhez hasonlóan ő is a 19. századi mechanikus fizikával dolgozik, azonban kétségbe vonja, hogy ontológiai természetű kérdésekre – úgymint az anyag lényege, az erő, vagy az emberi tudat – a tudomány valaha is választ tudna adni.

Azóta a tudomány már óvakodik attól, hogy ontológiai természetű kérdésekben nyilatkozzon. A mai tudományos kutatás csupán a dolgok működését vizsgálja, azt, hogy egy meghatározott reakció hogyan vált ki egy másikat, és hogy milyen törvények vezérlik ezeket a reakciókat, továbbá, hogy hogyan lehetséges bizonyos anyagokat másfajta anyagokká változtatni. Ezért is írja Richard Schwartz pedagógiai professzor a következőket: „A tudomány modern fogalmát egyfajta *pozitivizmus* határozza meg. Jellemző a logikai, matematikai módszer abszolutizálása

6 ERNST HAECKEL: *Die Welträtsel*, Bonn, E. Strauß, 1899, 390.

7 HAECKEL: *Welträtsel*, 391.

8 EMIL DU BOIS-REYMOND: *Über die Grenzen des Naturerkennens*, Leipzig, Veit, 1872, 464.

és ennek tudományos-technológiai applikációja. A tudományt csakis az érdekli, ami megtapasztalható, bizonyítható vagy cáfolható. A tudomány csupán a kvantitatívra, a mérhetőre korlátozódik.⁹ Minden, ami megtapasztalható, ami igazolható, avagy cáfolható, a tudományos érdeklődés potenciális tárgyává válhat; minden, ami körülvesz, a talajtól kezdve, amin állunk, a csillagokig, amelyekre feltekintünk, még a saját belső működésünk is a kutatás tárgyává válhat. Így beszélhetünk tehát Öszövetség-tudományról, vagy a természettudományok fizikai alapjairól. A német nyelvben még mindig megkülönböztethető a természettudományok és humán tudományok területe a tudományon, mint olyanon belül, míg az angolszász nyelv már teljesen különböző kategóriákat használ a humán területekre: „arts” (művészetek, humán tárgyak) és a tudományokra: „sciences,” ahol a tudományok alatt általában a természettudományokat értik. Ez azt jelenti tehát, hogy a művészetek, vagy a humán és társadalomtudományok nem tudományként vannak elkönyvelve.

A különböző humán tudományok minden bizonnyal érzékelték ezt a veszélyt, ti. hogy tudományos jellegük megkérdőjeleződik, hiszen azzal kísérelték meg ezt elhárítani, hogy egyre inkább a kvantitatívra, a mérhetőre koncentrálnak a kutatásukban. Példaként említhetjük itt a pszichológia területét. Saját elnevezése szerint a pszichológia az emberi psziché és lélek iránt érdeklődik. Pár évvel ezelőtt láttam egy hirdetést az újságban, amelyben egyetemünk pszichológiai intézete ácsot keresett. Ez azt jelentené, hogy az emberi lélek fából készül? Természetesen nem, de a modern pszichológia majdnem kizárólagosan az emberi egzisztencia mérhető összetevőiről érdeklődik, például, hogy hogyan reagál a szemünk bizonyos színek együttesére, hogy ennélfogva a jelzőlámpák színei jobban érzékelhetőek legyenek, vagy hogy milyen érzelmek vannak hatással a rövid távú memóriára. Amikor naivan megkérdeztem egy pszichológust, hogy mennyire érdekli még a pszichológiát Freud vagy Jung, a válasz az volt, hogy a modern pszichológiában nincs már idő az elméleti kérdésekkel hosszasan vesződni. Hasonló folyamat figyelhető meg a filozófia területén is. Egyrészt a formális logika absztrakt matematikai nyelvezetet használ, míg másrészt a gyakorlati filozófia olyan témákkal foglalkozik, amelyek más tudományterületekhez kötődnek, úgymint a biológia vagy gazdaság. Még a teológiában is szükséges az együttműködés a természettudományokkal, hiszen a bibliai archeológia is radiokarbonos kormeghatározási módszerrel azonosítja a kéziratok és archeológiai leletek korát, vagy a valláspedagógia is statisztikai kiértékeléssel dolgozik. Tehát a humán tudományok is egyre inkább a gyakorlatiasság és a mérhetőség felé fordulnak.

Figyelembe véve a tudományos módszer széles körű alkalmazását, észlelhető egy növekvő összekapcsolódás a különböző tudományterületek között, mert mindnyájan arra koncentrálnak, ami mérhető. Ezzel szemben egy növekvő szétválás, távolodás is megfigyelhető. Még egészen önálló, jól körülhatárolható kutatási területeken belül is, mint pl. az egyháztörténet, vannak specialisták, akik külön Luther Mártonra vagy Aquinói Tamásra összpontosítanak, míg az egyháztörténet más szereplőit és korszakait csupán részlegesen érintik. Az ilyenfajta specializáció oka

9 RICHARD SCHWARZ: Wissenschaft und menschliche Existenz, in: Schwarz R. (ed.): *Menschliche Existenz und moderne Welt*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1967, I:89.

nem az, hogy a kutatók lusták, éppen ennek az ellenkezője az igaz. Csak hogy egy példát említsünk, minden évben több mint ezer tanulmány jelenik meg akadémiai folyóiratokban, tanulmánykötetekben és könyvek formájában, ami Luther Mártonnal foglalkozik. Ez azt jelenti, hogy még egy specialista számára is nehéz feladat, hogy csupán a legjelentősebb tudományos szakirodalmat áttekintse saját területén, saját kutatása előrehaladásának érdekében. Számos területen a tudományos kutatás olyan differenciálttá vált, hogy az információ áradata, amit mindenképp szükséges figyelembe venni, nemhogy segíti, hanem éppen hogy akadályozza az újabb kutatásokat. Némely területen ez az információáradat tulajdonképpen az új tudományos felfedezésre jutást korlátozza. Még ha az a veszély nem is fenyeget, hogy úgyszólván a kereket másodjára is sikerül feltalálni, gyakran egészen minimális a merőben új ismeret megragadása.

A tudományos előrehaladás egy másik korlátja a mikrokozmosz és makrokozmosz dimenziókkal áll összefüggésben. A Sputnik idejében még minden világhatalom önálló űrprogrammal rendelkezett az űrkutatás előrehaladása érdekében, ma azonban nemzetközi együttműködés figyelhető meg Oroszország, Európa és Amerika között. A kedvezőbb nemzetközi politikai trendeken kívül ennek a helyzetnek a kialakulásában az elsődleges ok az, hogy egyetlen nemzet már nem képes anyagilag támogatni egy újabb űrprogramot. Lassan megközelítjük azt a határt, ami még anyagilag finanszírozható. A mikrokozmosz dimenziókban végzett kutatásokkal szintén hasonló a helyzet, hiszen a svájci Genf mellett a Nukleáris Kutatások Európai Tanácsa (CERN) által 2008-ban átadott nagy hadronütköztető és részecskegyorsító (Large Hadron Collider) jóval meghaladja egyetlen nemzet agyagi teherbíró képességét, beleértve ebbe akár az Amerikai Egyesült Államokat is. Az anyagi korlátokon kívül lassan felismerhető egy kozmosz térbeli korlát is. Amíg az ember vezette űrexpedíció a Holdra nem jelentett áthidalhatatlan térbeli nehézséget, addig egy expedíció a Marsra már sokkal nehezebb, ha figyelembe vesszük azt az időkeretet, ami a visszaúthoz szükséges. Olyan bolygók esetében, amelyek sokkal messzebb vannak, az ember vezette expedíció szinte lehetetlen. Távirányítású űreszközök esetében is létezik egy határ, hiszen a Naprendszer elhagyása után a kommunikációs idő túlzottan hosszúra nyúlik az űreszköz és a Földön lévő kommunikációs központ között. Ebből kifolyólag a világegyetem tudományos megismerése, úgy tűnik, hogy az űr roppant terjedelme miatt áthatolhatatlan korlátokba ütközik. Valamelyest kiterjeszhetjük ugyan ezeket a határokat, de soha nem győzhetjük le teljesen.

A mikrokozmosz dimenziókban sokkal biztatóbbak a feltételek, hiszen az anyagi keretek megteremtésének függvényében továbbra is folytathatjuk a kutatást. Felvetődik azonban a kérdés, hogy mit is fogunk felfedezni valójában? Vajon tényleg a természetet magát vagy csupán a magunk által előidézett mesterséges utánzatát? Már több mint nyolcvan évvel ezelőtt az angol csillagász, Sir Arthur Eddington ezt írta: „Rájöttünk, hogy a tudomány legmesszebbmenő előrehaladásával az elme azt nyerte vissza a természetből, amit éppen maga az elme helyezett oda. Egy egészen furcsa lábnymra akadtunk az ismeretlen határainál. Mélyreható elméleteket alkotunk, egyiket a másik után, hogy meg tudjuk határozni eredetét. Abban legalább sikerrel jártunk, hogy rekonstruálni tudtuk a teremtményt, aki a lábnymot hagyta.

De lám, a saját lábnymunkra találtunk.”¹⁰ A természet rendje és szerkezete nem eleve adott, hanem részben mi vetítjük bele a természetbe. Albert Einstein emlékeztetett minket erre, amikor így elmélkedett: „Hogyan lehetséges, hogy a matematika, ami az emberi elme produktuma, tapasztalatunktól függetlenül igazán megfeleljen a valóság tárgyainak? Képes-e az emberi ész tapasztalat híján, csupán a gondolon keresztül felfogni, megérteni a valós dolgok birodalmát, tulajdonságait? Erre az én meglátásom szerint röviden így lehet válaszolni: amennyire a matematika tételei a valósággal kapcsolatosak, addig sosem bizonyosak, és amennyire bizonyosak, annyira nincs köztük a valósághoz.”¹¹

Einstein ezekkel a megállapításokkal azt hangsúlyozta, hogy a matematika egy axiomatikus, megdönthetetlen rendszer, amit arra használunk, hogy a tárgyak, létezők világában fellelhető összefüggéseket leírjunk vele. Mégis ezek az összefüggések különböző fokú bizonyossággal bírnak, és nem olyan bizonyosak, mint maga a matematika, mert a tárgyi világból származnak. Még ha a lehető legpontosabb módon írjuk is le tárgyunkat a különböző tudományok segítségével, sosem zárhatjuk ki teljesen a bizonytalansági faktort, hacsak nem vonatkoztatunk el végleg a természettől, és nem vonulunk vissza a puszta gondolat birodalmába. Különösen a mikrokozmosz dimenzióban igaz az, hogy nem észlelhetjük direkt módon a folyamatokat, hanem feltevésekre kell támaszkodnunk. Még ha teljesen igazak is sejtéseink, végül mégis nyitva kell hagynunk őket, még akkor is, ha felruházuk őket egyfajta valóságjelleggel. A folyamatok, amelyeket matematikai formulák segítségével írunk le, formális értelemben korrektek lehetnek ugyan, az viszont, hogy ezek a tárgyak, amelyeket matematikai nyelvvel leírtunk, valóban léteznek-e, már merőben nyitott kérdés kell, hogy maradjon.¹² Ebben az esetben az elvonatkoztatás (absztrakció) problémájával találkozunk, amit szükségképpen minden vizsgálat folyamán használni kell. Ezáltal egy kutatási tárgy vagy tárgyak csoportja egy nézőpontból kerül vizsgálat alá, mialatt a tárgy/tárgyak minden más tulajdonságától elvonatkoztatunk, tehát figyelmen kívül hagyjuk. Nem együttesen kérdezzük rá a teljességként létező élőlényre úgy általában, hanem bizonyos biológiai funkciók után érdeklődünk, mint pl. a növekedés vagy anyagcsere. Ez utóbbit aztán kémiai reakciók összefüggéseiben értelmezzük, amelyeket bizonyos kémiai formulák által le is írhatunk. A minden más tulajdonságtól való függetlenítés eredményeként egy speciális jellemző ezután összevethető más élőlények hasonló összetevőivel.

Hogy miért fontos ez az eljárás, az akkor mutatkozik meg, amikor egy bizonyos betegség gyógyszeres kezelését elsőként egereken próbálnak ki. Miután a hatást az emberre is kivetítik, az embereknél is alkalmazni kezdik. Az előfeltevés az, hogy ugyanaz a reakció figyelhető majd meg. Ha olyan összetett szervezetekről beszélünk, mint az élőlények, akkor a hasonlóság csakis az absztrakció, az elvo-

10 ARTHUR S. EDDINGTON: *Raum, Zeit und Schwere. Ein Umriss der allgemeinen Relativitätstheorie*, Braunschweig, Friedrich Vieweg, 1923, 204.

11 ALBERT EINSTEIN: *Geometrie und Erfahrung*, in: *Sitzungsberichte der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Berlin, 1921, 123f.

12 Cf. WERNER HEISENBERG: *Die Abstraktion in der modernen Naturwissenschaft*, in: *Schritte über Grenzen. Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze*, München, R. Piper, 1977, where he cites an alleged statement made by Bertrand Russell: „Die Mathematik handelt von Dingen, von denen sie nicht weiß, was sie sind, und sie besteht aus Sätzen, von denen man nicht weiß, ob sie wahr oder falsch sind.“

natkozttatás mentén lehetséges, ami persze soha nem fordul elő a valóságban ilyen kézenfekvő módon. Ez tehát azt jelenti, hogy végső soron ennek az újfajta gyógykezelésnek az alkalmazása az embereknél mindig magában foglal egy bizonyos fokú kockázatot. Még ha egy adott embernél igazolható is a pozitív hatás, tudjuk, hogy egyetlen emberi lény sem egyezik meg teljesen egy másikkal a gyógykezelések hatásainak tekintetében. A leírás csupán a valószínűsíthető mellékhatásokat tudja megadni, de a valóságban megjelenőt nem tudja teljes bizonyossággal megragadni. Egy egészen egyszerű példával élve minden egyes doboz cigarettán ott van a figyelmeztetés a dohányzás egészségkárosító kockázatáról. Ezzel a figyelmeztetéssel szemben Henry Kissinger, a Német Szövetségi Köztársaság előző kancellárjának, Helmut Schmidtnek a 90. születésnapja alkalmából mondott laudációjában megjegyezte, hogy a láncdohányzás és a Coca-Cola fogyasztása úgy tűnik, hogy növeli az életkor hosszúságát.¹³ Miután a tudományos megismerésnek mindig el kell vonatkoztatnia az ember/emberek teljességétől, hogy biztos tudásra jusson, ezáltal mindezek az eredmények tartalmazznak bizonyos fokú bizonytalanságot. Ahogy a közmondás is mondja: A kivétel erősíti a szabályt. A tudományos megismerés ezen belső korlátai mellett meg kell neveznünk a külső korlátokat is.

3. A tudományos megismerés külső korlátai

A külső korlátokról szólva nem a tudományos tevékenység korlátozottságát vagy a tudományos eredmények publikálásának korlátozottságát értjük. Cenzúra és tudomány kölcsönösen kizárják egymást. De a tudomány mindig is egy emberi tevékenység. A középkori alkímiával ellentétben a modern tudomány nem titokban történik, habár a tudósok gyakran megpróbálják elrejtetni az előzetes vizsgálati eredményeiket a kotnyeles versenytársaik elől. Azonban a tudomány mindig társadalmi kontextusban helyezkedik el. Társadalmi ellenőrzés alá van vetve, nemcsak a nyilvános finanszírozást illetve, de a társadalmi trendek által is. Ha valaki ma alternatív energiaforrások után kutat, akkor sokkal könnyebben tud finanszírozáshoz jutni, mint az, aki egy atomreaktor felállításához keres támogatást. Noha a tudomány önmagában is értékes, hiszen előmozdítja a megismerést, mégis valamilyen formában a társadalmi értékeket is megtestesíti. A lyssenkoizmus, ez alatt értve azt a marxista elméletet, miszerint a környezet és nem az ontológiai-genetikai összetétel, alkat határozza meg az embert, sajnos mindmáig érvényes a tudományra nézve. Még a tudósokat is meg lehet venni, hiszen pénz nélkül semmilyen tudományos kutatás nem végezhető. Ezen a ponton a társadalomnak vigyáznia kell, hogy ne azokat a tudományos eredményeket kapja meg, amelyeket önmaga vetített a tudományba, hanem azokhoz az eredményekhez jusson hozzá, amelyek elősegítik az igazabb megismerést a társadalom egésze számára.

A tudományos megismerés egy másik külső korlátja legalább ilyen jelentős. A tudomány, különösen a természet megismerésének tekintetében, de a történe-

¹³ Helmut Schmidt köztudottan kemény dohányos volt, és a laudáció ideje alatt éppen egy Coca-Colával teli pohár állt előtte az asztalon.

lemtudományban is, egy speciálisan nyugati jelenség, ami ebből a kulturális régióból származik. A mi kultúránkat mélységesen a zsidó-keresztény tradíció és az antik görög-római kultúra határozza meg. Ahogy Cicerónál és Marcus Aureliusnál is láthatjuk, a római világszemlélet nagyban követi a hellenizmus hagyományát. A görög világszemléletet mindig is az örök létező érdekelte, aminek, Platón kifejezésével élve, minden mulandó csak pusztá tükörképe. Ez a beállítódás az örök visszatérésébe vetett hittel együtt ellenhatást gyakorolt egy történetileg haladóbb gondolkodással szemben. Még Kopernikusz számára is, akinek a nevéhez a kopernikuszi fordulat kapcsolódik, elsődleges fontosságú volt a *körök, szférák megővése*.¹⁴ Tehát még Nap-orientált gondolkodásában is központi jelentőségű volt számára a szférák harmóniájának fenntartása. Csak Kepler volt az, „aki a harmónia elérése iránti törekvést hagyta megújulni a megfigyelés által, amit matematikai leírásában is követett, és amiből forradalmi csillagászati megismerése is táplálkozott”¹⁵. A 17. század kezdetéig az antik gondolkodás tehát gátló hatást gyakorolt a tudományos előrehaladásra. Csakis ettől kezdve kapott központi szerepet a megfigyelés mint olyan, az eszméket ezzel háttérbe szorítva. Mindazonáltal az antikvitás hatása felbecsülhetetlen a tudomány számára, hiszen egy olyan szemléletben működött közre, ami a világról matematikai terminusokban gondolkodik. De hogyan tekintünk a zsidó-keresztény tradícióra a tudomány kontextusában?

A történelemben először a zsidó-keresztény tradíció az egy Istenbe vetett hittel egy olyan világgépet vezetett be, ahol a világ és a történelem egységes és egyöntetű, mert az egy Istenre úgy tekintettek, mint ennek a világnak a teremtőjére, fenntartójára és megváltójára. Nem létezett többé részleges történelem, mint Róma esetében, ahol a történelmet Róma városának alapításától kezdve – *ab urbe condita* – számolták és ilyen szemszögből értelmezték. Ahogy a zsidó naptár máig is mutatja, az időszámítást a világ kezdetétől számolják. Az egy Isten nem a világ része, de a világot a semmiből teremtette, és ezzel azt is leszögezi, hogy nem Istentől magából teremtett. A világ nem rendelkezik isteni tulajdonságokkal, használatra adatott az embernek, és nem csupán az uralkodás kitételével (1Móz 1:28), hanem a „műveld és őrizd” parancsával is (1Móz 2:15). Noha már Izráel korai történetétől kezdve a prófétákon keresztül kijelentették, hogy eljön majd az Úr napja, mégis csak a judaizmus és különösen az újszövetségi hit számára válik egyértelmű bizonyossággá, hogy a történelem nem fog örökké tartani; beteljesedését egy új világban és az új Jeruzsálemben nyeri el (Jel 21:1ff). Ez egy célorientált történelemszemlélethez vezetett, ami az üdvtörténet koncepciójában teljeseedik ki. Egészen a kései középkorig a világ üdvözítésére közelgő eseményként tekintettek, ezért az emberiség és a világ tudományos felfedezése másodlagos jelentőségű volt. Ez gyökeresen megváltozott a reformáció időszakában. A Kálvin által megalkotott predestináció-tan egy félreértelmezett változata az e világi sikerben az örök élet ígéretének csíráját vélte felfedezni. A világi tehetséget, elhivatottságot Luther is úgy értelmezte, mint Istennek való szolgálatot. Nem véletlen tehát, hogy a reformáció országaiban a tudomány és annak gyakorlati applikációja egyaránt virágzott.

¹⁴ HAROLD P. NEBELSICK: *Circles of God. Theology and Science from the Greeks to Copernicus*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1985, 233.

¹⁵ NEBELSICK: *Circles of God*, 254.

Napjainkra a tudomány behatolása a világ legkülönbözőbb területeire és ennek gyakorlati következményei már szinte a teljes emberiséget utolérték. Sok ember számára ez tagadhatatlan fejlődést jelent, mert úgyszólván a világot egészen a sajátunkká tettük. Ha körülnézünk magunk körül, a padlótól kezdve, amin állunk, a mennyezetig, ami felettünk van, az ablakig, amin keresztül nézünk és a székig, amin ülünk, akkor tudnunk kell, hogy mindezek a tárgyak végső soron a tudományos megismerés eredményei. De valamit elfelejtettünk: a folyamatos fejlődés utópia, hiszen a történelem egyenes, lineáris fejlődése nem fedezhető fel az üdvtörténetben, ami lehetővé tette magát az egyenes irányú fejlődést. Ahogy a filozófus Karl Löwith ötven évvel ezelőtt *A történelem értelme* c. könyvében kijelentette: „A modern történelemszemlélet az önnön haladó beállítottságából eltávolította a teremtés és beteljesülés keresztyén elemeit, mialatt átvette az antik világszemléletből a határtalan és folyamatos mozgás eszméjét anélkül, hogy a körkörös, visszatérő szerkezetet is átvette volna.”¹⁶ Fel kell tennünk a kérdést önmagunknak, hogy vajon egy ilyen fajta gondolkodásnak van-e értelme? Ha nincs beteljesülés, ha nincs végső cél, akkor vajon mi az értelme a folyamatos fejlődésnek és tudásnak? Vajon ez nem csupán tudás a tudás kedvéért? Továbbá elfelejtettük, hogy véges természetű lények vagyunk, és a világunknak is korlátai vannak. Emberi vállalkozásunk a tudomány növekedéséért és fejlődéséért önnön korlátainkba ütközik. Legyőzhetjük a betegségeket és áthidalhatjuk az anyagi szükségleteket, de a halál korlátját nem számolhatjuk fel. Minden tudományos előrejelzés az érvényesség tekintetében tehát korlátozott, és az örök élet csupán a vallásban jelenhet meg, mint opció. Vajon túlzottan vallásos végkövetkeztetés az, hogy az ember nem hunyhat szemet akkor, amikor szembesül a tudományos megismerés ez újabb külső korlátjával?

Langdon Gilkey teológus jelentette ki a következőket egy találkozáson, ahol olyan Nobel-díjasok voltak jelen, akik mindnyájan természettudósok voltak: „Úgy hittük, hogy az empirikus, tapasztalati tudás elégséges ahhoz, hogy ellenőrzése alá tudja vonni azokat az erőket, amelyek a világot irányítják; a természet erőt, a genetikai és pszichológiai felépítésünket és társadalmi formáinkat. A tudáson keresztül és az ellenőrző-képességen keresztül, amit tudásunk eredményez, úgy hittük, életünket végtelenül jobbá tudjuk tenni. A történelem azonban gorombán felrázott minket felvilágosult álmunkból, mert a világ technológiával való ellenőrzése tulajdonképpen visszaélésben, környezetszennyezésben és a föld kizsákmányolásában öltött testet.”¹⁷ Valóban, a tudományos megismerés és ennek technológiai alkalmazása már rég elvesztette ártatlanságát, ezért hát sokkal nagyobb mértékben is felelősek a föld élőközösségéért, mint ezelőtt bármikor. De hogyan lehetnének felelősek azért, amit tesznek, és amit lehetővé tesznek, ha az elkerülhetetlen absztrakcióval és elszigetelt specializációval kendőzik el széles látókörüket?

A tudományos kutatás lefolytatásához elengedhetetlen az absztrakció és az elszigeteltségbe való visszavonulás. A kutatóknak laboratóriumaikba és könyvtáraikba kell visszavonulniuk, és sajátos szakmai nyelvezetet kell használniuk.

¹⁶ KARL LÖWITH: *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen. Die theologischen Voraussetzungen der Geschichtsphilosophie*, Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer, 1961, 189.

¹⁷ LANGDON GILKEY: *The Future of Science*, in: Robinson, T. C. L. (ed.): *The Future of Science. 1975 Nobel Conference*, New York, John Wiley, 1977, 117.

A média reflektorfényében nem várható el érdemi kutatás, legjobb esetben is csupán rövid életű géniuszok felvillanása az, ami megtörténhet, de villongó fényükből kifolyólag a folytatás általában sötétebb, mint az feltűnésüket megelőzően volt. Miután a tudósok saját szakterületükön az előrehaladás érdekében a valóságot redukálva érnek el eredményeket, valakinek meg kell vizsgálnia ezt a tudást, hogy fel lehessen becsülni azok széles körű hatását. Ha figyelmen kívül hagyjuk ezt az ontológiai természetű vizsgálatot, az súlyos következményekkel járhat a teljes egészre nézve, érve ez alatt az emberiséget és az egész környezetünket. Ezért tehát a tudománynak mindig figyelembe kell vennie a hatást, amit az egészre gyakorol. Persze ez meghaladja egyetlen tudós képességeinek határait. Ezért a tudományos ismeret bárminémű technológiai alkalmazása előfeltételezi a következmények interdiszciplináris jellegű felbecsülését. Ami technológiai értelemben megvalósítható, azt előbb meg kell vizsgálni, hogy kívánatos-e az emberiségnek; vajon az újabb technikai vívmány segíti-e vagy inkább gátolja az embereket egyéni szabadságukban, társadalmi, közösségi és környezeti kötődéseikben? Nem felelkezhetünk meg arról, hogy az emberek nem szigetelhetők el környezetüktől, érve ez alatt az egész teremtettséget. Miután az egyén önmaga tudásában is korlátozott, a hibák ugyan elkerülhetők, de teljesen sosem zárhatóak ki. Mint minden emberi vállalkozásnak, a tudománynak is szembesülnie kell önnön korlátaival, hiszen miáltal a jó eléréseért küzd, öntudatlanul éppen a rosszat is elősegítheti. Ha azonban ki akarjuk zárni ezt az ellentmondásosságot, akkor tulajdonképpen minden emberi törekvést, tehát az életet magát kellene megszüntetnünk a földön.

(ford. Jenei Péter)

RECENZIÓK

ERIC A. SEIBERT

Disturbing Divine Behavior

Troubling Old Testament Images of God

Szerző: Eric A. Seibert

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A könyv az ószövetségi elbeszélő irodalom azon helyeinek értelmezéséhez kíván segítséget nyújtani az olvasóknak, amelyeknek Isten-ábrázolása markánsan eltér a Szentírásban általában, de még inkább az Újszövetségben megjelenő Isten-, illetve Atya-képtől. Úgy vélhetjük, feltétlenül igazként fogadhatjuk el, egy hívő ember számára meghatározó, hogyan képes feldolgozni, értelmezni és Istenről alkotott képébe integrálni azokat az elbeszéléseket, amelyekben a Mindenható úgy jelenik meg, mint aki az emberek halálát kívánja kihágásaikért, vagy Ő maga gyilkosként, esetenként tömeggyilkosként jelenik meg. Ezen a helyzeten pedig még az sem segít, ha mindezt harcosként követi el, főképpen, ha ez egy egész nép genocídiumával végződik. Hasonlóan nehezen értelmezhetőek azok a történetek, amelyekben Isten vezeti félre az embereket, vagy sújtja őket kivédhetetlen csapásokkal. Az első fejezetben a szerző ezeket a problémás elbeszéléseket gyűjti csokorba, majd fogalmazza meg ehhez kapcsolódóan általános problémáinkat. A helyzet egyértelmű, a hívő embereket meglehetősen zavarba ejti, amikor arról olvasnak, hogy Isten nem igazságos,

etikátlanul cselekszik, tömegesen irt, irtat ki embereket (asszonyokkal, gyerekekkel és csecsemőkkel egyetemben), esélyt sem adva a menekülésre.

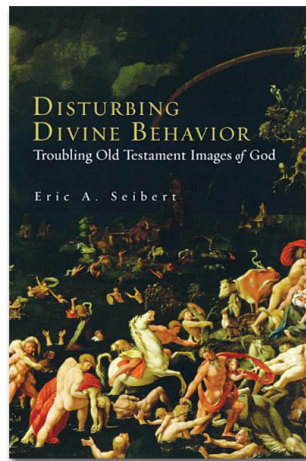
De nem csupán a hívő embereket zavarhatja ez a kép, noha leginkább nyilván ők szenvednek ettől, számos más csoport is megfogalmazza fenntartásait egy ilyen Istennel szemben. Ezen csoportokat sorolja fel Seibert a második fejezetben, kezdve a sort a vallásos pacifistákkal, a keresztyén nevelőkkel – akik, akárcsak a lelkészek, inkább átugorják ezeket a helyeket –, és jut el a feministákon, a jogfosztottakon keresztül az ateistákig, agnosztikusokig, míg a sort a hívőkkel zárja. Azt mondhatjuk tehát, hogy gyakorlatilag mindenkinek problémája adódhat Isten ilyen jellegű ábrázolásával, aki csak egyszer komolyan veszi a Szentírás egyéb kijelentéseit, vagy mélyebben elgondolkodik az ember sorsáról.

A téma tehát sokakat érint, éppen ezért nem meglepő, hogy számos javaslat született arra nézve, miként lehetne feloldani ezt az ellentétet, mint ahogyan azon sem csodálkozhatunk, hogy már az egészen korai időkben történtek erre kísérletek. Esetleg úgy, hogy a kényes helyeket átírták, akár beiktatva Isten

helyére a sátánt (lásd pl. 2Sám 24,1 – 1Krn 21,1), vagy a teljes Ószövetséget elvetették, mondván, az abban megjelenő Isten nem lehet Jézus kegyelmes Atyja (pl. Marcion), de elfogadott módszernek minősült egykoron a szöveg feloldása is tipológia vagy allegória által. A modern kor kísérletei közül Delitzsch, von Harnack és Avalos gondolatait tekinti át röviden a könyv. Természetesen nem csak olyan elméletekkel találkozunk, amelyek elvetik, vagy módosítják az Ószövetség problémáinak vélt helyeit, de olyanokkal is, amelyek védelmére kelnek, kísérletet téve ezeknek a szövegeknek az értelmezésére. Ezen módszereket csoportokba szedve rendszerezi a szerző. Olyan kategóriákat meghatározva, mint: Isten immunitásának elve; Isten cselekedetei jogosságát igazolók csoportja; a nagyobb jó elve; az „Isten másként cselekszik az Ószövetségben” elve; végül a megengedő akarat elve. Ezen magyarázatokban közös, mindegyik abból indul ki, hogy Isten pontosan úgy szólt és cselekedett, ahogyan az megjelenik az Ószövetségben. Ezt az alapvetést a szerző kontroll hitnek nevezi és Kolumbusz történetével világítja meg, miként kell ezt érteni: az ember előfeltevéseit igaznak fogadja el. De mi van akkor, ha már eleve ez a kontrollhitünk téves, vagyis eleve rossz kérdéseket teszünk fel, amiből egyenesen következik, válaszaink is rosszak lesznek és India helyett Amerikában szállunk partra.

Ezt a kérdést igyekszik megválaszolni a könyv második nagy egysége, amely

az ószövetségi narratíva természetét kutatja. Ezen vizsgálat első pontja nem lehet más, minthogy valóban minden úgy történt-e, ahogyan az előttünk áll? Ezt a kérdést megvilágítandó két jól ismert történetet tárgyal a mű, Jónás könyvét és a zsidó honfoglalás elbeszélését Józsué könyvéből. Miután erről a két elbeszéléstről beláttatja a szerző, hogy az abban foglaltak teljes mértékben történetileg nem igazolhatóak, logikusan merül fel az olvasóban, akkor pontosan mit jelent az Ószövetségben belül a történeti elbeszélés műfaja. Megállapítható, hogy a történeti elbeszélések ebben az időszakban gyakorta többet árulnak el a szerző koráról, annak viszonyairól, mint a tárgyalt történelmi korról, ahogyan az is egyértelművé válik, hogy az irodalmi és a teológiai cél is fontosabb, mint a történeti objektivitás. Ezeket a ténymegállapításokat el-



fogadni viszont messze nem olyan könnyű egy hívő embernek, mint amennyire logikusan felépíti érvelését a szerző. A könyv erénye, hogy ezzel ő is tisztában van, így a következő fejezetben éppen azon vélekedéseket gyűjti össze, melyek elodázzák ennek a kérdésnek a megválaszolását. Majd hasonlóan rendszerezett módon azokkal a meggyőződésekkel és ezek veszélyével is szembesíti az olvasót, amelyek mindenáron védeni akarják az Ószövetség történeti hitelességét.

Ha ennyi kérdést és problémát vet fel a történeti elbeszélések tartalma, akkor mégis miért volt olyan lényeges az ilyen típusú szövegek megírása? Az ószövet-

ségi narratíva funkcióiról szólva Seibert szerint a következő megállapítások tehetők. Az események újbóli elmondásával vált lehetségessé megmagyarázni a nemzet hibáit és bukásait, mint ahogyan a régmúlt eseményeire való emlékezés kiváló alkalmat adott a jelen uralkodó elitjét támogatni, politikáját népszerűsíteni is. Ami az egyént illeti, a régmúlt szereplők példája rávilágíthatott bizonyos tettek és meggyőződések pozitív voltára, felerősítve azokat az olvasókban. Persze önmagában az a tény, hogy a történeti elbeszélésekre ezen állítások igazak, még csak az érvelés egyik felét képezhetik, a másik tartópillére Izrael teológiai meggyőződése kellett legyen. Ezzel viszont alapvető probléma, hogy az Ószövetség nem egy rendszerezett teológiai mű, aminek az lett volna a célja, hogy bemutassa ezt a világgépet, ezért csupán részinformációkból vonhatunk le olyan következtetéseket, mint pl. Isten irányítja a természeti világot; Ő az oka az egyén szerencséjének, szerencsétlenségének; megjutalmazza az engedelmességet, bünteti az engedetlenséget és ez a viszonyulás jelenik meg a háborúkban is, a győztes és elvesztett csatákban. Végignézve ezeket teológiai alapvetéseket, jogosnak tűnhet a szerző által felvetett kérdés: ezek közül vajon melyik adoptálható minden további nélkül saját teológiai világgépünkbe?

Seibert, miután számos szempontot megvizsgál, gyakorlatilag könyve harmadik nagy egységében jut el az általa javasolt értelmezési módszerhez. Ennek kiindulási pontját az a megállapítás képezi, miszerint az Ószövetség elbeszéléseit olvasva különbséget kell tennünk a szövegben megjelenő Isten-ábrázolás („textuális Isten”) és a valóságos („aktuális”) Isten között. E kettő nyilvánvalóan nem állhat szemben egymással.

A szerző szavaival kifejezve, meg kell különböztetnünk a szöveg ábrázolásától, karakterizálásától Isten valós karakterét. Ha ezzel az előfeltevéssel egyetértünk, akkor következhet a valódi hermeneutika alkalmazása, amit Seibert krisztocentrikus hermeneutikának nevez. Ez az értelmezési módszer nem azt jelenti, hogy az Újszövetség önmagában lenne a feloldása a problémának, mivel annak Isten-ábrázolása is számos problémát okozhat – példaként hozza erre az ApCsel 12,21–23 és a Jel 20,11–15-öt. Sokkal inkább azt kívánja jelölni ez az elnevezés, hogy „az Ószövetség azon ábrázolása, amely megfelel a Jézus által kijelentett Istennek, megbízhatóan tekinthető... amelyek nem felelnek meg ennek, azok torzulásnak tekintendők” (185. o.). Ezt a módszert azért tekinti elfogadhatónak, mivel Jézusban Isten öltött testet, vagyis tetteiben és tanításában az Ószövetségben is cselekvő Isten jelenik meg. A krisztocentrikus hermeneutika első alapvetése tehát a Szentháromság-tan komolyan vétele. A második alapvetés pedig Isten változatlanságának elfogadása, hiszen csak abban az esetben tekinthető értelmezési kulcsnak Jézus tanítása, ha Isten nem változik az idők folyamán. Igazán érdekes lenne ezen a ponton többet olvasni arról, hogy pontosan mi tekinthető a történeti Jézus kijelentéseinek, de sajnos erről csupán egy aprócska alfejezet szól, amiben azért kifejti a szerző, hogy ugyanúgy meg kell különböztetni a történeti Jézust az Újszövetségben megjelenő Krisztustól, mint amit az Ószövetség esetében Isten ábrázolásához kapcsolódóan ő is szorgalmaz. Ami viszont felette áll ennek a kérdésnek, az a tény, hogy Jézus tanításában egészen más Isten jelenik meg, mint ahogyan azt a kortársai elképzelték. Erről az Istenről

pedig legalább ugyanekkora bizonyossággal állítható, hogy nem más, mint az Ószövetség Mindenhatója. A Jézus által megjelenített és tanított Isten kedves a bűnöshöz, távol áll tőle az erőszak, nem bünteti az embert történelmi vagy természeti katasztrófát előidézve, és nem sújtja betegségekkel. Egy szóban összefoglalva: Jézus a szeretet Istenét hirdeti.

Persze önmagában ez a hermeneutikai módszer még nem fogja megválaszolni az összes felmerülő kérdést, amikor az Ószövetséget olvassuk. Mindazonáltal ennek segítségével szert tehetünk egy olyan segítségre, amely által helyesebben leszünk képesek megítélni az Ószövetségben leírtakat. Ha pedig egy olyan szövegbe ütközünk, amelyet nem tudunk minden további nélkül beleilleszteni ebbe a rendszerbe, ez sem jelenti azt, hogy ezt a szöveget negligálnunk kellene, csupán még inkább megerősíthet bennünket abban, hogy ennél sokkal alaposabban kell kutatnunk annak értelme után. A szerző, miután ezeket megállapította, gyakorlati példákon keresztül mutatja be, hogyan alkalmazható módszere egy-egy konkrét szöveg tükrében – ez utóbbit nevezi Seibert duális hermeneutikának. „A krisztocentrikus hermeneutika ... segít meghatározni, hogy az Ószövetség Istenről mutatott képe mennyiben felel meg és mennyiben ellenkezik Isten karakterével. A duális hermeneutika ... pedig lehetővé teszi számunkra kideríteni, mitévők legyünk Isten eltorzult képével és azokkal a szövegekkel, amelyek tartalmazzák azt.” (221. o.) Végül a könyv utolsó fejezetében a szerző gyakorlati tanácsokat fogalmaz meg, hogyan lehet alkalmazni felvázolt módszerét.

Az általunk bemutatott könyv nem egyedülálló a maga nemében, számos műben igyekeztek választ adni arra a kérdésre, hogyan lehet értelmezni azokat a bibliai helyeket, amelyekről inkább nem beszélünk, csak hogy ne kelljen magyaráznunk. A szerző kiváló áttekintést ad a problémáról, a mű nyelvezete egyszerű, jól érthető az átlagember számára is. Didaktikailag nagyon jónak tarthatjuk, hogy rövid fejezetekben és alfejezetekben fejt ki egy-egy témát és alapos bevezetés után jut el megoldási javaslatához. Ugyanakkor nem hallgatható el, hogy az általa javasolt krisztocentrikus hermeneutika nem sokat segít a problémánkon, hiszen éppen az Újszövetségben megjelenő Istenről, mint Atyáról szóló tanítás alapján érzünk ellentmondásosnak bizonyos ószövetségi – és tegyük hozzá, újszövetségi – helyeket. Vagyis azt javasolja megoldásnak, ami a probléma okozója. Ami az általa dualisztikus hermeneutikának aposztrófált módszert illeti, arról pedig megállapítható, hogy semmi újat nem mond a reformátori alapelvhez képest, amely a teljes Írást kívánja megérteni és magyarázni, azokkal a helyekkel együtt, amelyek első olvasásra talán meg is botránkoztatják az olvasót. Akkor mégis hol a probléma – tehetjük fel a kérdést. Alapvetően ott, hogy ennek ellenére kényelmesedünk el és ugorjuk át nagy előszeretettel a nehezen értelmezhető részeket. Ha ez a könyv csak abban segítene, hogy ezen részek létezésére felhívja a figyelmünket, már érdemes elolvasni, de ennél többet is tesz, mivel ha megoldást nem is, de a probléma felvázolásában számos segítséget ad az Ószövetség értelmezéséhez.

Kókai Nagy Viktor

GERÉB ZSOLT

A kolosséiakhoz és a Filemonhoz írt levél magyarázata

Szerző: Geréb Zsolt
ISBN 978-973-7971-46-3

Kiadó: Kolozsvár, Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület, 2010 (274 oldal)

Négyévi munkája után örömmel tette közzé és örömmel fogadhatjuk mi is az egyházban *A kolosséiakhoz és a Filemonhoz írt levél magyarázatát*, amit dr. Geréb Zsolt, a Kolozsvári Protestáns Teológiai Intézet professzora készített. Ezzel azok sorába lép, akik a magyar újszövetségi teológiaművelés területén az írásmagyarázathoz való segítséget kommentárok formájában próbálták nyújtani, kifejezetten a Kolosséiakhoz, ill. Filemonhoz írt levél anyagához. A felsorolás nem hosszú: Méliusz Juhász Péter (Kol: 1561), Garzó Gyula (Filem: 1896), Masznyik Endre (Filem: 1900), Kecskeméthy István (Filem: 1905), Rédey Károly (Filem: 1905), Varga Zsigmond (Kol: 1953–1954), Tőkés István (Filem: 1957), Békési Andor (Kol, Filem: 1974), Cserháti Sándor (Kol, Filem: 1978), Gál Ferenc (Kol, Filem: 1992), Szathmáry Sándor (Kol: 1995), Várkonyi András (Filem: 2004). Református talajon a Kolosséi levéllel a közelmúltban főleg Bolyki János, Herczeg Pál és Takács Zoltán foglalkoztak behatóan. Ezeket természetesen Geréb Zsolt ismeri, utal is rájuk. Tudvalevő róla, ahogy ő maga is megemlíti, hogy a Kol-Filem-kommentár írásához nagy előkészületek után lépett, amelyeket nemcsak otthon, hanem nemzetközi szinten is folyamatosan folytathatott. Ezt bizonyítja többek között legutóbbi

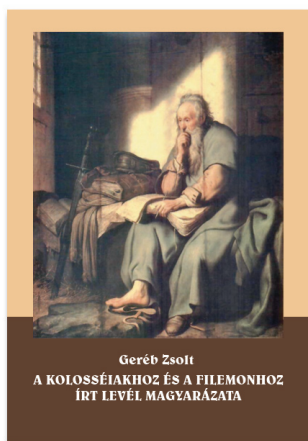
tanulmánya is egy éppen a Kolosséi levél problematikájával foglalkozó gyűjteményes kötetben (Paulus als Diener der Kirche. Die Vorstellung des Apostels in Kolosser 1,21–2,5. In: *Kolosser-Studien*. Hg. Peter Müller, Biblisch-Theologische Studien 103, Neukirchener Verlag, 2009, 33–54). Az SNTS-ben tömörülő újszövetséges professzorok évenkénti tanácskozásain ott volt ő is, hogy Peter Müller professzor szekciójában pont a Kolossé-levél sokoldalú elemzését végezzék. A kommentár tehát ennek a munkának is szép gyümölcse, megbízható eredménye.

Geréb Zsolt a Kolossé- és Filemon-levél magyarázatánál a ma általánosan használt magyarázati sémát választja: a Kolosséi levélnek szánt megfelelő bevezetések (5–28.) után, amelyekben tárgyalja a levél szerzőségét, címzettjeit, szövegeit, felépítéseit, tartalmát és teológiáját, kitér még a levél jelentőségére (28–29.). Majd ezek tisztázása után végzi a szövegelemzést és annak tényleges magyarázatát (30–205). A Filemonhoz írt levél elemzése szintén ebben a sémában alakul, talán azzal a kiegészítéssel, hogy az irodalomtörténeti bevezetőt (206–223.) megtoldotta még két érdekes exkurzussal a rabszolgaság ókori vallástörténeti megítélésével (214–219.), ill. a levél értelmezésének távlatáival (222–223.) kapcsolatban. Majd a

levél exegézise (234–256.) után közli a rövidítések (257–258.) és a felhasznált irodalom jegyzékét (259–272.).

Minden kommentárnak van néhány gázlója, amelyen a szerző fennakadhat, vagy kisebb-nagyobb bajjal/hibával átmehet rajta. A Kolosséi levélnek is vannak problematikus kérdései. Geréb Zsolt előre leszögezte (6.), hogy ő a kommentár írásánál a történetkritikai módszer vonalában halad, és hogy ennek szempontjai szerint igyekezett figyelembe venni a szöveg keletkezésének körülményeit, a szerző szándékát, a befogadó gyülekezet körülményeit és a levél egyetemes teológiai üzenetét. Ezek voltak számára a történetkritikai módszer leghasznosíthatóbb előnyei. Természetesen nem mindenütt és egyforma intenzitással lehet ennek eleget tenni. A kommentárból azonban kilátszik, hogy Geréb Zsolt tapasztalt exegéta, és amilyen óvatos a problematikus helyek magyarázatánál, legalább annyira bátor hitvalló is, ahol erre számára mód nyílt. A vitatott kérdéseket vita szintjén tárgyalja, bár a munkából kiérződik, hogy milyen állásponthoz áll közel. Így állapíthatjuk meg, és ez nagyon szimpatikus, hogy maximálisan nyitott a mai exegetikai munka és kutatás számára. Viszont nem mozdul el könnyelműen az aránylag klasszikus felfogástól a ma még forrásban levő, kereső vagy negligáló megoldási javaslatokhoz, amelyek több tisztázatlan kérdést hoznak fel, mint megnyugtató választ. Ez azonban nem jelenti azt, hogy Geréb Zsolt nem kész tudományos vitára a vallott meg-

állapításait illetően. Ilyen pl. a Pál személyéhez fűződő kolosséi kapcsolatok is, amelyekben a szerző szerint a Kollevél átmenetet képez a korai és a késői levelek között (7). Mint olyat, a fogsági levelek csoportjában javasolja számon tartani. Véleménye szerint a gyülekezet tagjai nem ismerhették személyesen Pál apostolt, mert nem látogatta meg a városban élő tanítványokat, de a kapcsolatot fiatal munkatársai (Epafrász, Tükchikosz, Onézimosz és Arkchipposz) által tartotta. Ezért a szerző feltételezhetőnek tartja, hogy a Kollevél titkár segítségével született, még Pál életében, kevéssel a Filemonhoz írt levél után (25). Ezt történeti indokkal és intertextuális kapcsolódásokkal (a Kolossélevél és a Filemonhoz írt levél között) véli igazolhatónak, úgyszintén a Kolosséi és Efézusi levél között fennálló intertextuális kapcsolattal. Főleg az utóbbi két levél közti számos szövegyezést (a Kolossélevélnek több mint a fele) a szerző úgy magyarázza, hogy „az Efézusi levél szerzője igénybe vette a Kolosséi levelet, mely már apostoli tekintéllyel rendelkezett, és melyet egy kis-ázsiai városban írt Kr. u. 70–90 között. Ha pedig ez így van, akkor a kolosséi gyülekezetnek címzett levél még a Kr. u. 60-ban bekövetkezett földrengés előtt keletkezett, amikor a város, ill. a keresztyén gyülekezet még a maga megszokott életét élte” (27–28.). Hasonló az a megállapítása is, hogy az igehirdetőkön és tanítókon kívül az egyházi tisztségek még nem alakultak ki a gyülekezetben (10), nyilván még



korainak tartja a gyülekezet életét a levél írásakor. Lényeges a szerző véleménye a levél sajátosságairól, ill. a Kolossében jelentkezett tévtanításról (19–22.). Ezt három csoportba sorolja: a világ elemeiről szóló elképzelés, az angyalok tisztelete és az aszketikus életvitel. Itt szakszerűen tárja fel az útkeresési variációkat (gnosztikus hatások, misztériumvallások, vallási szinkretizmus, újpitagoreusok, heterodox zsidóság). Ő maga a kumráni beütésű judaista csoport hatását valószínűsítheti a Kolossében jelentkező tévtanításban. Ezzel szemben az apostol Krisztus uralmát hangsúlyozza, és pedig nemcsak a kozmosz, hanem az egyház dimenziójában is. Így Krisztus jelen idejű Úr, de egyben parúziális Megváltó is: viszont az egyház eszkatológiai reménye az apostol idején inkább térbeli eszkatológiai kategória (Isten mennyei birodalma, az Atya jobbján), amely majd az üdvtörténet további fázisában válik sürgetőbbé. Ezzel jól mutat előre a későbbi korszakra, arra az átmenetre, ami majd az Efézusi levél, ill. a Pásztori levelek keletkezésénél még jobban formálódik, és nyer további sajátos jelleget.

Természetesen, Geréb Zsolt nem zárkózik el azoktól a kritikus nézetektől sem, amelyek a Kol-levél mai kutatásában és kommentárírásában erőteljesen megjelentek (Eduard Schweizer,

Petr Pokorný, Joachim Gnilka, Hans Conzelmann, Cserháti Sándor, Adreas Lindemann, Ulrich Luz stb.). Imponáló a mód, ahogy ezeknek a szerzőknek a nézeteit hol receptuálja, hol pedig szóval vagy hallgatásával is illedelmesen, kollegiálisan opponál.

Megnyugtató, ahogy a szerzőről egyébként is közismert, hogy jól kezeli a Kol-levél mitikus nyelvét, szakszerűen bontja ki pl. a házitáblák jelentőségét nemcsak a kolosséi gyülekezet, hanem az egész apostoli és posztapostoli egyház számára, úgyszintén és főleg a levél krisztológiáját (elsősorban a különös szépségű Krisztus-himnuszt) vagy éppen az ekkleziológiát. A példák sokaságát lehetne folytatni. Azokét is, ahol a szerző kérdések szorításában óvatosan keres megfelelő tudományos, ill. kérügmaticusan is helytálló magyarázatot. Ilyen szempontból is a szerző tudományos munkájával, hitével és írásából jól kiérezhető egyházszeretetével őszinte tiszteletet érdemel.

Örülhetünk, hogy egy szimpatikus, jól használható kommentárt vehetünk kezünkbe Geréb Zsolt tollából. Őszinte köszönet érte a szerzőnek, és dr. Adorján Zoltánnak is, aki nem kis munkával igyekezett a kommentárt lektorálni, ill. olvasmányosságához, kiadásához hozzásegíteni.

Peres Imre

ANTON A. BUCHER

Psychobiographien religiöser Entwicklung Glaubensprofile zwischen Individualität und Universalität

Szerző: Anton A. Bucher
(Unter Mitarbeit von Micha Brumlik und K. Helmut Reich)
ISBN 3-17-018225-0

Kiadó: Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer, 2004 (333 oldal)

ANTON BUCHER könyve, *Psychobiographien religiöser Entwicklung: Glaubensprofile zwischen Individualität und Universalität* (Vallási fejlődés pszichobiográfiái: Hitprofilok individualitás és univerzalitás között), a Kohlhammer Kiadó gondozásában, 2004-ben jelent meg Stuttgartban. A könyv magyar nyelven nem hozzáférhető, és a maga nemében németül is hiánypótló kiadvány. Recenzióm célja, hogy legalább főbb vonalaiban magyarul is megismerhető legyen mindazok számára, akik a pszichobiográfiák iránt érdeklődnek.

A könyv bevezetésre és hét fejezetre oszlik. Az első három a mélylélektani iskolák hagyományait ismerteti és elemzi, a negyedik a szerepelmélet nézőpontjából közelít, az ötödik fejezetben két társszerző, Micha Brumlik és K. Helmut Reich írását is olvashatjuk, kognitív lélektani megközelítésben, két élettörténetet a vallási nézetek Oser-Gmünder-féle fejlődési modellje alapján. A hatodik fejezetet James W. Fowler pszichobiográfiai modelljének szenteli a szerző, majd a hetedikben összegez és kitekintést nyújt. A történetkutatás modern irányzata a pszicho-

lógia eszköztárával próbál választ találni a történetkutatás megválaszolatlan kérdéseire. Ezek közé a pszichohistóriai megközelítések közé sorolhatjuk a történeti személyiségek életéről készült *pszichobiográfiákat*.

A pszichobiográfia az irodalmi biográfia népszerű műfajával és a pszichológiai gyakorlatban szokásos életút-elemzéssel rokon. Kialakulása a pszichoanalízis kezdeteire tehető, és – amint ez a könyvből is kiderül – számtalan módszertani problémát vet fel. A könyv elsősorban a vallási, ill. hitbéli fejlődés leírhatósága szempontjából vizsgálja ezeket a próbálkozásokat.

A bevezetésben a fogalmak definiálásával, a problematika körülhatárolásával – a pszichobiográfia kapcsolata a történelemmel, a pszichológiával – és módszertani kérdésekkel találkozunk.

Az első fejezet: Apáról Istenre: Pszichobiográfiák a pszichoanalízis kontextusában. A fejezet bevezetőjében történeti keretbe illeszti a pszichoanalízist, majd az azt megelőző időszak Jézus jellemrajzaiból idéz¹ különböző „tévedhetlen” diagnózisokat, Albert Schweitzer kritikájával zárva e részt², állást foglalva eme „Életrajzok” dilettantizmusa és

1 DE LOOSTEN: *Jesus Christus vom Standpunkt des Psychiaters*, Bamberg, 1905; RASMUSSEN, E.: *Jesus: eine vergleichende psychopathologische Studie*, Leipzig, 1905; HIRSCH, W.: *Religion und Civilisation vom Standpunkte des Psychiaters*, München, 1910; BINET – SANGLÉ: *La folie de Jésus*, Paris, 1908.

2 SCHWEIZER, A.: *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, Tübingen, 1906; A. SCHWEIZER: *Die psychiatrische Beurteilung Jesu Darstellung und Kritik*, Tübingen, 1913.

jogosulatlansága mellett. Már a kezdeteknél is megjelennek a műfaj fő problémái; a pszichobiográfia nem lehet precízebb, mint forrásai, valamint fellép a modern értelmezések történetetlen visszaprojektálásának veszélye.

Sigmund Freud – itthon is jól ismert – tanulmánya Leonardo da Vinciről 1910-ben már a pszichoanalízis főbb irányvonalainak kidolgozása után jelent meg. Ekkortól számíthatjuk a pszichobiográfia mint önálló műfaj kezdetét. Bucher könyvének érdeme, hogy amellet, hogy az egyháztörténet számára fontosabbakat ismerteti, az azokkal kapcsolatos kritikákat hozza, közli további harminchétnek „absztraktját” irodalmi vonatkozásaikkal³.

A részletesen ismertett tanulmányok: Sigmund Freud: Leonardo⁴, Mózes⁵, K. Abraham: Echnaton⁶ O. Pfister: Margaretha Ebner⁷, graf Ludvig von Zinzendorf⁸. Ezután több különböző szerzőtől származó elemzés összegzése következik: Swedenborg (1688–1772), Therese von Lisieux (1873–1897), Anton Unternährer (1759–1824), Karl Huber (1889–?) Pál apostol, Martin Luther, Vincent van Gogh, Sigmund Freud és Augustinus életéről, mind a klasszikus pszichoanalízis szemszögéből. (Itt terjedelmi okokból ezek irodalmát nem idézem).

A lábjegyzetben következő tanulmányok pár soros (absztrakt jellegű) ismertetése vezet át a kritikai részbe⁹.

3 Nem csoda, ha ebben az első fejezetben szinte több a lábjegyzet, mint a szövegtest: 62 oldalon 434 hivatkozás.

4 FREUD: *Studienausgabe*, hg. Mitscherlich Frankfurt, 1969. Bd. X., 87–159.

5 FREUD: *Studienausgabe*, hg. Mitscherlich Frankfurt, 1969. Bd. IX., 455–581.

6 ABRAHAM, K.: Amenhotep IV. Psychoanalytische Beiträge zum Verständnis seiner Persönlichkeit und den monotheistischen Aton-Kultes, in: *Imago* 1 (1912), 334–360.

7 PFISTER, O.: Hysterie und Mystik bei Margaretha Ebner (1291–1351), in: *Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse und Psychotherapie* 1 (1911), 468–485.

8 PFISTER, O.: *Die Frömmigkeit des Grafen Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Eine Psychoanalytische Studie*, Leipzig-Wien, 1925.

9 ACHELIS, W.: *Die deutung Augustins, Bischofs von Hippo*. etc. Prien am Chimsee, 1921; ALLWOHN, A.: *Die Ehe des Propheten Hosea in psychoanalytischen Beleuchtung*, Giessen, 1926; BAUDOUIN, C.: La sublimation ces images chez Huysmans, lors de sa conversion, in: *Psyche* 4 (1950), 378–385; BERGUER, G.: *The life of Jesus. From the psychological and psychoanalytical point of view*, London, 1923; BERKELEY-HILL, O.: A short study of the life and character of Mohammed, in: *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 2 (1921), 31–53; BUSHMAN, R. L.: Jonathan Edwards and Puritan consciousness, in: *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 5 (1966), 383–396; DARROCH, J.: An interpretation of the personality of Jesus, in: *The British Journal of Medical Psychology* 21 (1948), 75–79; EVANS, W. N.: Notes on conversion of John Bunyan, in: *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 24 (1943), 176; HITSCHMANN, E.: New varieties of religious experience. From William James, to Sigmund Freud, in: ROHEIM, G. (ed.): *Psychoanalysis and social sciences*, New York, 1947 (többek között Gottfried Keller, Artur Schopenhauer, Franz Werfel élete); JUVA, S.: *Monsieur Vinzenz. Evolution d'un saint*, Bourges, 1939; KLIGERMAN, C.: A psychoanalytic study of the confessions of St. Augustine, in: *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 5 (1950), 469–484; KIELHOLZ, A.: *Jakob Böhme. Ein pathographischer Beitrag zur Psychologie der Mystik*, Leipzig-Wien, 1919; KIELHOLZ, A.: Die Versuchung des Heiliger Antonius. Ein Beitrag zur Hagiopathographie, in: *Der Psychologe* (1954), 18–24, 66–70; LAUGHLIN, H.: King David's anger, in: *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 23 (1954), 87–95; LOMER, G.: *Ignatius von Loyola. Vom Erotiker zum Heiligen. Eine pathographische Geschichtsstudie*, Leipzig, 1913; LOWTZKY, F.: Bedeutung der Libidoschicksale für die bedeutung religiöser Ideen, in: *Imago* 13 (1927), 83–121; PASCHE, F.: Kierkegaard et la psychopathologie, in: *Évolution psychiatrie* (1949), 61–69; PFISTER, O.: *Das Christentum und die Angst*, (Jean Calvin), Zürich, 1944; POVAH, J. W.: *The new psychology and the Hebrew Prophets*, London, Reik, Flaubert und seine „Versuchung des Heiligen Antonius”. Ein Beitrag zur Künstlerpsychologie, Minden, 1912; SUNDÉN, H.: *Die Religion und die Rollen. Eine Psychologische Untersuchung der Frömmigkeit* (Lars Levi Laestadius), Berlin, 1966.

Először az 1970-ig megjelentek, majd pszichobiográfiák az egyháztörténet személyeiről 1970 után.¹⁰ A fejezetet a pszichoanalitikus megközelítések kritikája zárja.

Minden pszichohistóriai próbálkozás érvényessége szorosan függ a források megbízhatóságától. Az életrajzok, önéletrajzok azonban torzítanak.

A pszichoanalízis munkamódszere, a személy indulatáttétele az analízist végzőre az elhunyt személyek esetében nyilván nem valósulhat meg. E helyett azok (feltételezett) gyermekkori élményeinek a szerző általi értelmezéseit taglalják.

A pszichobiográfiák nem bővítik a pszichológia ismeretrendszerét, tudományos megalapozottságát, csak bizonyos elméletek alátámasztására, megerősítésére szolgálnak. Általában kevés információ, ellenőrizetlen forrás, esetenként szándékos ferdtítés jellemzi őket.

A tudományos módszertan első szabályának, az ökonómiának (ha egysze-

rűbb magyarázóelv létezik, ne keressünk bonyolultabbat) figyelmen kívül hagyása jellemzi a tanulmányokat. A kritika a priori tagadása egyetlen elméletet sem támaszthat alá, sőt! A tudományos gondolkodásnak örömmel kell fogadnia a kritikát, hiszen ez fejlődésének kulcsa. Kritikával kell nézünk, hogy megkérdőjelezhető konstrukciókat projektálnak különböző korok személyeinek élettörténetébe.

Probléma, hogy hithűsök életét a pszichoanalízis bizonyítására használják, mindenkinek Ödipusz-komplexust tulajdonítva, mivel Freud a vallást kollektív kényszerneurózisnak tekintette (ami az Ödipusz-komplexus talaján fejlődik) ezért kritikátlanul mindenkinek, aki vallásos vagy hívő, Ödipusz-komplexust kell tulajdonítani.

Gyakori a belemagyarázás, téves következtetés. Hiba a felnőtt szexualitás gyerekbe projektálása. Lásd „Kis Hans” vagy „Wolfsman” eseteit (ökonómia tanulás-



- 10 DUNDES, A.: *The hero pattern and the life of Jesus*. Colloquy 25, Berkeley, 1977; HUTCH: *Religious leadership. Personality, history and sacred authority* (Különböző vallási vezetők, Blavatsky, Aurobindo, Kübler-Ross, Ramakrishna), New York u.a., 1991; KLESSMANN, M.: Zum Problem der Identität des Paulus. Psychologische Aspekte zu Theologischen und biographischen Fragen, in: *Wege zum Menschen* 41 (1989), 156–172; MEISSNER, W. W.: *Ignatius von Loyola: The psychology of a saint*, New Haven, 1992; RANCOUR-LEFFERIERE, D.: *Tolstoy on the couch. Misogyny, masochism and the absent mother*, Hampshire-London, 1998; SAFFADY: The effects of childhood bereavement and parental remarriage in Sixteenth century England: The case Thomas More, in: *History of childhood Quarterly* 1 (1973), 310–336; SCANULLO, F. M.: Leonard Feeney: The priest, who was more Catholic than the Pope, in: HALPERIN, D. A. (ed.): *Psychodynamic perspectives on religion, sect and cult*, Boston et al, 1983, 105–111; SIMO, J.: On Christianity and the Oedipal winner, in: *Psychoanalytische Review* 70 (1983), 321–329; THILO, H. J.: Paulus – Die Geschichte einer Entwicklung psychoanalytisch gesehen, in: *Wege zum Menschen* 37 (1985), 2–14; TROSMAN, H.: After the Waste Land: Psychological factors in the religious conversation of T. S. Eliot, in: *Revue Psychoanalytische* 4 (1977), 295–304; ULONSKA, H.: Die Krankheit des Paulus und die ritualisierte christliche demut, in: *Wege zum Menschen* (1989), 356–367; WEIGERT, E.: Sören Kierkegaards Gemütschwankungen, in: Mitscherlich, A. (Hg.): *Psychopatographien I. Schriftsteller und Psychoanalyse*, Frankfurt, 1972, 214–226; ZELIGS, D. F.: *Psychoanalysis and the Bible. A study in depth of seven leaders*, (Ószövetségi bibliai személyek), New York, 1974; YAROM, N.: *Body, blood and sexuality*, New York, 1992 (Franz von Assisi).

elméletek). A pszichoanalízis számára a vallási cselekedetek szexuális cselekmények szimbólumai. (A szexszimbolizmust Eysenk kísérlete cáfolja.)

Ezeknek a pszichobiográfiáknak hibájuk, hogy redukcionista, nagyon sokféle szempontból hiányosak, túlegyszerűsítők.

A pszichogenezist a legkorábbi gyerekkorból vezeti le, amiről általában nincs információ, így csak találgatás tölti ki az űrt. A kauzalitás azonban még a feltételezett „tények” és „következményeik” között sem kerül igazolásra. A „neurotogen” anya elmélete rég megdőlt (tanulásmélet, kognitív pszich. stb).

A történelmi kontextusok figyelmen kívül hagyása. A lelki fejlődést meghatározza a társadalmi struktúra stb. A vallásos, hitbeli megnyilvánulásokat a libidóra vezeti vissza, azzal magyarázza. Az apakép projektálása az Isten-képbe. Nem minden vallás „apa-Isten képű”.

Miután mindezeket a – jogos – kritikai észrevételeket elének tárta, felteszi a kérdést: Mi lehet mégis érték ebben a megközelítésben?

A pszichoanalitikus megközelítés az erosz szerepére hívja fel a figyelmet. Arra, hogy a szexualitás egy személy központi magvához tartozik, szerepe van a vallási fejlődésben, és szublimációja által a személy kreatívabb és stabilabb állapotba juthat. Másik jelentősége

abban áll, hogy patológikus kegyességi gyakorlatokra mutat rá. A démonizált Isten-képből fakadó szorongás lelki betegségekkel való kapcsolata érthetővé teszi, hogy a pszichoanalitikusok miért éppen a kirívó vallási nézetekkel, kegyességi gyakorlattal rendelkező személyek életútját elemzik.

Ez után C. G. Jung mélylélektanával és az ide tartozó pszichobiográfiákkal foglalkozik. Ilyen fejezetcímek következnek itt: Óskép és individualizáció; A szentháromságtól a „négyességig” az Árnnyék; Vallási fejlődés és individualizáció. Négy tanulmány: Jézus, az individualizáció prototípusa; Pál, az archetípus által legyőzött; Perpetua, magára találás az arénában; Swedenborg és Grundtvig: életközép utáni individualizáció. Jung legfontosabb témája a vallásosság, és annak szükségességét, valamint a dogmák létezésének szükségességét minden teológusnál inkább védelmezte, terminológiája könnyen alkalmazható vallási tartalmakra, viszont bizonyos értelemben ellentmondásos és kissé definiálatlan. (További mélylélektani pszichobiográfiák a lábjegyzetben találhatóak¹¹.)

A szerző továbblépve bemutatja a pszichoanalízis talaján kialakult iskolák megközelítéseit. A pszichoanalízis alapjain kiindulva alakította ki Erikson ún. életútmodelljét, amelyet nyolc szakaszra bontott.

11 BAUMANN, G.: *Der archetypische Heilsweg*. Hermann Hesse, C. G. Jung und die Weltreligionen, Reinfeld, 1990 (Augustinus, Buddha, Hesse, Jézus élete); HARK, H.: *Religiöse Neurosen. Ursachen und Heilung*, (Hesse), Stuttgart, 1988; FRICK, E.: Bewusstwerdung des typologischen Umschwungs in der „Exerzitien” des Ignatus von Loyola, in: *Analytische Psychologie* 27 (1999), 89–118; RIKLIN, F.: Franz von Assisi, in: *Wissen und Leben* 7 (1914), 45–59; SUNDÉN, H.: *Religionspsychologie: Probleme und Methoden*, (Szent Brigitta), Stuttgart, 1982; SUNDÉN, H.: *Die Religion und die Rollen. Eine psychologische Untersuchung der Frömmigkeit*, (Johannes vom Kreuz 1542–1591), Berlin, 1966; WEHR, G.: *Tiefenpsychologie und Christentum*, (C. G. Jung), Augsburg, 1990; WILKSTRÖM: Raszkolnyikov, in: HOLM, N. G.: *Einführung in die Religionspsychologie*, Basel, 1990.

Szakaszok	Pszichoszociális krízisek	Pszichoszociális modalitások	Pszicho-szexuális fázisok	Releváns személyek
I. A korai csecsemőkor	Alapvető bizalom – bizalmatlanság	Kapni – adni	Orális	Anya minősége
II. Kisgyermekkor	Autonómia – szégyen, kételkedés	Megtartani – elengedni	Anális	Szülők
III. Játszókor	Kezdeményezés – Bűntudat	Tevékenységek, játék	Infantilis genitális	Család
IV. Tanulókor	Szorgalom, megelégedettség – kisebbségség	Valami igazit alkotni, együttműködés	Latencia	Iskola, barátok
V. Pubertáskor	Szilárd identitás – identitásdifúzió	Ki vagyok én? Identitás	Pubertás	Példaképek
VI. Ifjúkor	Intimitás, – Izoláció	Önmagunk tükröződése a másokban	Genitális	Partnerek, riválisok, barátok
VII. Felnőttkor	Generativitás – kudarc	Alkotás, gondoskodás		Család, Társadalom
VIII. Időskor	Integritás – kétségbeesés	Lenni, önmaga – kételkedni		Emberiség

Ezek a kategóriák a vallási nézetek fejlődése szempontjából is relevánsak. Ennek segítségével végezte Luther, Gandhi, Wesley életének pszichológiai feldolgozását. Ezek közül különösen híressé vált a Luther életéről írott műve¹². Ennek a műnek, és rajta keresztül az életútmodellnek ismertetésével folytatódik a könyv. Az élet új feladatai válságokat idéznek elő. Ezek megoldásától függ a további életút.

A negyedik fejezet (A vallási nézetek fejlődése) a vallási szerep átvételével foglalkozik (Ávilai Szent Teréz élete), majd a kognitív iskolák eredményeit is-

merteti. Itt kap helyet Piaget fejlődéslmélete, majd Kohlberg modellje a morál fejlődéséről, amely „A morál legfelsőbb szintje a vallás kezdete?” című alfejezettel zárul.

Ezután ismerteti a vallási nézetek, ill. ítéletek (Urteil) fejlődését Oser és Gmünder nyomán.

1. fokozat: A személy egy végérvényű elvhez (Letztgültigem) tartja magát akár jutalmazó, vagy büntető is ez. A személy passzív és fenyegetett.
2. fokozat: A személy egy végérvényű elvhez ragaszkodik, a „megteszem, hogy megtedd” elve alapján.

¹² Magyarul hozzáférhető: ERICKSON, E.: *A fiatal Luther és más írások*, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 1991.

3. fokozat: A személy önmaga határoz és felelős a cselekedeteiért.

4. fokozat: A személy szabad akaratából dönt a végérvényű elvvel összhangban.

5. fokozat: Vallási autonómia univerzális perspektívában. A vallásos létezésnek nincs szüksége külső megerősítésekre.

Majd James W. Fowler hitfokozatai következnek.

0. fokozat: *Első hit. Beszédelőttes.* A gyermek bizalma a környezethez.

1. fokozat: *Intuitív – projektív hit.* A gyermek hitvilága fantáziákból és intuíciókból áll, érzelmeket és vágyakat projektál mágiikus szimbólumokra.

2. fokozat: *Mitikus – szó szerinti hit.* A realitásérzék megerősödik, a vallási szimbólumokat szó szerint érti, antropomorfizál.

3. fokozat: *Szintetizáló, konvencionális hit.* A fiatal hitét a közösség tagjainak hitéhez méri, igazítja, saját identitást alakít ki.

4. fokozat: *Individuális reflektáló hit.* A kialakított identitás alapján átvizsgálja korábbi hitállapotait, kritikát gyakorol.

5. fokozat: *Elköteleződő hit.* Felnőttként átértékeli hitbeli meggyőződését, elismeri mások álláspontjának létjogosultságát

6. fokozat: *Univerzalizáló hit.* A hit átfogja az egész létezést, a „mennyekek országára” tekint.

Ezt követi a könyvben a hitbeli meggyőzések különböző tartamai ellenére azonos hitfokozaton álló személyek biográfiái: Merton, Bonhoeffler, Hutchinson, Moser.

A hetedik fejezetben érkezünk el a könyv lényegi kérdésfeltevéséhez, hogy vajon magyarázzák-e a pszichobiográfiák a vallási/hitbeli fejlődést? Tehetünk-e valamit a ránk bízott fiatalok hitbeli fejlődéséért? Hogyan támogathatjuk ezt a folyamatot?

A szerző véleménye szerint az ismertetett módszerekből és pszichobiográfiákból levonhatunk néhány következtetést.

1. A vallási, hitbeli meggyőződés a krízishelyzetekben (kognitív konfliktusok) alakul. A fokozatok meghaladása krízist okoz, a megoldás következő fokozatra juttatja a személyt.

2. A vallási, hitbeli fejlődés interperszonális kontaktusokban interakciók során jön létre. A szociális hatások döntőek.

3. A korai gyermekkor élményvilága a döntő abban, hogy a hitbeli fejlődés megindul-e. A kisgyermekkorai érzelmi töltés, a vallási élmény hangulata fontos, ekkor dől el, hogy a személy számára a vallás egyáltalán téma lesz-e. Ebben ugyanis kontinuitás figyelhető meg.

4. A hitbeli fejlődés nem lehet kívülről normatívan meghatározott, sem kor szokása, divatja, vallási kényszerek következménye, mivel Isten maga az alapja, a célja és bevégezője ennek a fejlődésnek. Ez a fejlődés annyi-féleképpen mehet végbe, ahányan csak útján elindulunk. Bizonyos, hogy kríziseken keresztül, kétségekkel küzdve, csalódások között, de mindannyiunknak magunknak kell bejárnunk az utat.

Vincze Piroska

ADRIAN HASTINGS (ED.)

The World History of Christianity

Szerző: Adrian Hastings (ed.)

ISBN 0-8028-4875-3

Kiadó: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids,
1999 (594 pages)

This book caught my attention since I have long wished to get acquainted with the history of Christianity around the globe and not just in Europe. Where can one learn about the history of Christianity in Africa? Where can one learn about the history of Christianity in the world without having to read a whole book about each continent?

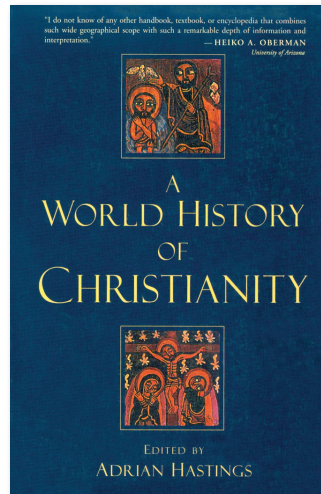
This volume consists of thirteen chapters penned by university teachers from Australia, Great Britain, and the United States. The book is organized territorially. The sections devoted to China (and its neighbours), Africa, Australasia and the Pacific are divided according to continents. South and North America are dealt with in two individual chapters. The largest number of chapters covers the history of Christianity in Europe and Euroasia; the emergence of Christianity, 150–550; the Orthodox Church in Byzantium; the medieval West; the Reformation and Counter-Reformation; Eastern Europe since the fifteenth century; and, Christianity in Western Europe since the

Enlightenment. One chapter is devoted to India, but this denotes the area that today includes the countries known as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

Individual chapters give the general lines of the development of Christianity, but they also present necessary details and concrete information. In some cases, the subject is presented more chronologically (as in Latin America), while in other cases it is developed more thematically (as in the long history of the Medieval West).

The breadth of the book's focus invites readers to encounter the great diversity of Christianity as different expressions have evolved

in the course of time and in various geographical contexts (e.g., the section on India starts with the legend of St. Thomas because it is there that the origins of Christianity are rooted). Readers will also observe common traits (e.g., the development of evangelised countries; the coming of Roman Catholic and Protestant missions; the encounter of Christianity and Christian culture



with local indigenous religions and cultures; the coexistence of Catholic and Protestant missions; etc.). In Europe and Byzantium the relation between the Church and political power loomed large and one can follow the course of these relations.

Although the editor announces his pursuit of the non-Eurocentric perspective in processing the world history of Christianity, the largest number of chapters is devoted to Europe (four plus the Slavonic period of Byzantium). It would probably be detrimental to the treatment of the whole subject if the history of Christianity in Europe was limited to only one section—solely for the sake of adhering to the letter of the editor's own law. The development of Christianity in Europe was the longest, and it distinguished itself by the most stages and diverse forms of Christianity. With respect to the space devoted to Europe, a Czech reader would hope—especially in the chapter on the Reformation and Counter-Reformation—to come across at least a mention of the Bohemian pre-reformation Utraquist movement.

There is an apparent disproportion in the number of footnotes. Whereas some chapters contain 40 (Africa 43) or 50 (China 51), some have only a minimum. In the case of the Medieval West (zero footnotes) it is understandable, as Professor Hastings explains in his Preface; but, in the case of India, it is less so (four footnotes).

The editor himself also recognizes some of the book's deficiencies in omitting the history of the Caribbean, Sri Lanka, and Madagascar. But this

does not substantially detract from the book's value.

Knowledge of the history of Christianity is crucial to developing an understanding of global history, since Christianity played an important part in the history of most of the continents and countries of the world. In addition, a grasp of global Christianity – not just that of Europe or the Americas – is a precondition for diverse theological thinking, so that a theologian can be fully engaged in the research on Christianity and Christian theology. An additional pleasant fact about this volume is that one can dip into it at random, not necessarily reading from cover to cover.

To conclude, we concur with the words of one of the reviews on the book's back cover: "It is rare to find a single volume that holds together the history of two thousand years of Christianity with the diversity of political, social, cultural, and theological climate that has accompanied it from the very beginning" – John Mbiti.

Marek Říčan (Český Těšín)

Rev. Adrian Hastings (1929–2001) was professor of theology at the University of Leeds, England (1985–1994). His foremost scholarly interest was the history of Christianity in Africa. He spent several years on that continent as parish priest in Uganda and as professor of Religious Studies at the University of Zimbabwe (1982–1985). Among numerous books he penned are *The Church in Africa 1450–1950* (700 pp) and *The Construction of Nationhood* (1997).

