

# **COMMITMENT, BELIEF, KNOWLEDGE**

Celebratory volume on the occasion  
of the 475th anniversary of the  
Debrecen Reformed Theological University

# **Acta Theologica Debrecinensia**

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Celebratory volume on the occasion  
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Edited by Károly Fekete – Zoltán Kustár

Debrecen Reformed Theological University

Debrecen, 2014

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Editors:  
Károly Fekete – Zoltán Kustár

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Károly Fekete:

## GREETINGS

I would like to welcome the reader in the name of the Doctoral and Habilitation Council of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University. We compiled this book to inform everybody whom it may concern that in the ordinary course of the doctoral school ten new honorary doctors were added to its roll of *Doctor Honoris Causa* on the occasion of the 475<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of our institution.

Pál Gulyás, a 20<sup>th</sup> century poet, defined the role of Debrecen in cultural history as it follows: “*Debrecen, ancient harbour, joining regions*” (“*Debrecen, ó-kikötő, tájakat összekötő*”). The connections of the 475-year old Reformed College of Debrecen played a decisive role in connecting regions.

National commitment and the world of science spanning over borders have always coexisted in our institution. Just let me remind you of peregrination through which the students of the Reformed College of Debrecen have been present in Europe and all over the world throughout the centuries, and conversely, also the world has been present in Debrecen.

Years of jubilee succeeded each other: in 2012 we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of becoming a university; in 2013 we celebrated the 475<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Reformed College of Debrecen.

Looking back upon the beginnings of the doctoral school from the viewpoint of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University, we can state that it was 100 years ago that the Theological Faculty of the university was required to prepare its doctoral and habilitation regulations. They were modelled on the doctoral and habilitation regulations of the universities of arts and sciences in Budapest and Kolozsvár.<sup>1</sup> The work started in the autumn of 1914 and the regulations were finally accepted in 1917.<sup>2</sup> After the royal assent the

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1 Debrecen University – Faculty of Theology [DU FTH], minutes of meeting [mm] 1914/15. – 4 November 1914. vol. 38–39.

2 DU FTH mm. 1914/15. IV. session, 4 November 1914. vol. 38., 39. ; V. session, December 9. vol. 49.

Ministry of Education launched the doctoral and habilitation regulations of the Faculty of Theology of Debrecen University on 28 May 1917.<sup>3</sup> The attainment of the right to offer doctorate degrees was a significant milestone in the history of the faculty. Thus, the opportunity to obtain the doctorate degree in Reformed Theology presented itself for the first time in Hungary.

It was in 1917 that the Faculty of Theology, for the first time in its history, awarded the title *Doctor Honoris Causa* on the occasion of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Reformation.<sup>4</sup> It was then that the Memorial Book of Doctor's Diplomas in Theology was started.

The number of honorary doctors, which was 122 before 2013, increased to 132 in the year of jubilee because on the advice of the Doctoral and Habilitation Council the Senate of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University conferred the title *Doctor Honoris Causa* on outstanding scientists for their life-long dedication to research and cultivation of the science of theology and the spiritual values of Protestantism, further on, on leading personalities well-known in international church life and in Reformed circles in the Carpathian Basin.

Through this decision we wanted to guard the traditions established in the 400<sup>th</sup> and 450<sup>th</sup> year of life of the Reformed College and to turn explicitly and *simultaneously* to the Protestant scientists in the world and the outstanding personalities of the Hungarian Reformed people on either side of the frontier. A part of our tradition is that we appreciate the activity of non-theologian scientists who confess their Reformed faith in the course of their creative activity in their field of research; and we consciously integrate their work into our Reformed values.

It is our pleasure that the candidates accepted the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* and made their personal appearance at our university to receive it.

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3 DU FTH mm. 1916/17. –22 June 1917. XI. ordinary session, vol. 134.

4 DE HTK Jkv 1917/18. –10 September 1917. First extraordinary session, vol. 3. Twelve candidates were chosen for the title of *Doctor honoris causa*: Dezső Baltazár bishop from Debrecen, Count József Dégenfeld general superintendent of the Transtibiscan Church District, József Dicsőfi pastor from Debrecen, Imre Dóczi inspector of secondary schools of the church district, Dezső Prónay Lutheran general superintendent, director of the Lutheran Theological Academy in Pozsony, Sándor Raffay Lutheran pastor from Budapest, Kálmán Révész Reformed pastor from Kassa, Sámuel Szeremlei Reformed pastor from Hódmezővásárhely, Aladár Szilassy leading personality of internal mission and of the Association of Christian Youth, Count István Tisza general superintendent of the Transdanubian Reformed Church District and Jenő Zoványi professor of Theology from Debrecen.

*“Debrecen ancient harbour, joining regions”* the poet said. This time we can interpret these words as it follows: the Reformed College of Debrecen, and our university in it, joins continents, creates Protestant ecumenism, and holds together the heritage of church districts, thus, strengthening the gift of the five centuries of Reformation.

In the spirit of these thoughts I launch this volume on the documents of the November 2013 conferral session of the Senate.





*Károly Fekete – Zoltán Kustár:*

## DEBRECEN REFORMED THEOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY: PAST AND FUTURE

The Debrecen Reformed Theological University is a member institution of the Reformed College of Debrecen which was founded in 1538. Its aim is to train ministers as well as ecclesiastical intelligentsia for the Reformed Church. It has become a centre of education in Hungary.

By the middle of the 16th century the region called Tiszántúl (Transtibiscan Region which lies between the river Tisza and the eastern border of the country), where the city of Debrecen is situated, had become Protestant and Debrecen became a centre of theological education as well as that of teacher training.

The Reformed College soon became an institution of national importance due to its professors and students who had studied at famous Western-European universities, its extensive school network in the country, plus the protection and profuse support by the Princes of Transylvania and by the town of Debrecen.

As the school of the poor it provided education for the lower social layers and supported social elevation; former students include famous scientists, writers, poets, engineers, and philosophers.

In 1892 the Transtibiscan Church District of the Reformed Church of Hungary decided to establish an independent legal academy under the leadership of a dean and with a separate staff. The theological and the legal academies were active for 20 years (until 1912) when the government of the day established the University of Debrecen as it is called today.

In 1855 teacher academy was separated from the training of ministers and from 1959 teacher training continued in a new state institution. In 1976 the Teacher Training Institute was accredited and got the college rank and in 1990 it was named after Ferenc Kölcsey, one of the former students of the Reformed College. In 1992 the Teacher Training College became an ecclesiastical institution again run by the Transtibiscan Church District. In 2011 it was merged with the Reformed Theological University of Debrecen.

The state University of Debrecen that was established in 1912 was initially formed from three academies of the Reformed College of Debrecen and was situated in it until 1932, when it moved to the newly constructed main building. The Theological Academy responsible for the training of ministers was also moved into the new building at that time as one of the faculties of the state University.

With the establishment of the Faculty of Theology the church district established an institute in the building of the Reformed College, which was responsible for the practical training and ecclesiastical socialization of ministers. Due to the pressure by the communist government in 1949, the Faculty of Theology returned to the Reformed College and it was also separated from the state University in 1950. Thus, it became once again an independent institution known as Reformed Theological Academy and was funded by the Church. The Academy became a higher educational institution with university rank because of its right to issue doctorate and its history.

After the collapse of communism, since 1993 our institute has worked as the Debrecen Reformed Theological University, an ecclesiastical university acknowledged and accredited by the state and by the Hungarian Reformed Church.

The mission of our University is based on the call of Jesus Christ, who equips the called. Our educational principles are based on the Holy Scripture, and embrace the statement of faith of the Reformed Church of Hungary. The high standard cultivation of Biblical, Classical, Greco–Latin education, as well as the empirical and scientific thinking at the Reformed College has contributed to Debrecen's becoming one of the Eastern-European watchposts and lighthouses of arts and sciences.

Our university provides programmes in several fields of sciences, higher level vocational training, bachelor and master programmes, ungraded and also PhD programmes, further on, postgraduate programmes, students can take different degrees and diplomas in the following Programmes: Reformed Theology (MA, 10 terms – Minister Training Programme 12 terms), Cantor (BA, 6 terms), Christian Educator (BA, 6 terms), Religion Teacher (MA, 5 terms), Pastoral Counselling and Organisational Development (MA, 4 terms), Teacher Training (BA, 8 terms), Communication and Media Studies (BA, 6 terms), Librarian (BA, 6 terms). Our educational programmes are performed in accordance with the state law and the specifications of the

Hungarian Accreditation Committee. We respect the freedom of research; however, we demand professional accuracy and trustworthiness.

Our university offers teaching and education in the service of the Reformed Church in Hungary. Its mission is to serve the whole church and the whole society by interpreting and communicating the truths of the Christian faith in today's context. Our institution wishes to educate students to become experts committed to the Reformed Church, faithful to the Word of God, cherishing Reformed mentality and theological traditions and who are ecumenically open. The University contributes to the development of the universal Hungarian scholarship and to the enrichment of the values of the Hungarian national heritage, by offering teaching, education and doing research of high academic standards, and by the participation of its teachers in the academic, ecclesial and social forums. Being part of international academic networks, it contributes to the development of the study of theology in European and global contexts, too. We are ready to pursue ecumenical dialogues with other Christian denominations and enter into dialogue with non-Christian religions as well as develop brotherly community with them. Our university protects, promotes and further enhances the traditions of the Reformed College of Debrecen and it strives to develop a comprehensive cooperation with the University of Debrecen.

Our visitors enter one of the significant national memorial places in Hungary. Even today we stand for honouring the reformatory heritage of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the values of the Puritanism of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the spiritual ebullience of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. We try to keep alive the sacrifice of 1848/49 for the national independence from the Habsburgs and we will not forget the life and talent saving mission of the asylum-role of the institution in the vicissitudinary 20<sup>th</sup> century. We profess with Sándor Csikesz, the late theological professor of legendary reputation: *“The university is the spiritual mint of the nation. Every degree, behind which there is no adequate spiritual talent-cover, is a guilty counterfeiting of a dizzying scale, which is a crime against the nation's honour and spiritual-moral capital.”*

In terms of this we commit ourselves that our university prepares its students for their ecclesiastical and secular profession in such a way that they will be able to fulfil their position with expertise, faith and knowledge on behalf of the youth and the grown-ups on the pulpit and in professorship, at church and at school, in front of microphones and among books, in front of television cameras and computer monitors. We do all this according to our motto *Orando et laborando* (*In prayer and work*), to the glory of God and for the benefit of our students.





*Botond Gaál:*

REPORT ON THE RESOLUTION  
OF THE DOCTORAL AND HABILITATION COUNCIL

Highly Esteemed Open Conferral Session of Senate!  
Ladies and Gentlemen!

In the name of the Doctoral and Habilitation Council of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University I am pleased to announce that our Doctoral Council, in its extraordinary session in February 26, 2013, elected ten renowned scholars to be put on its rolls of *Doctor Honoris Causa*. They are as follows:

*Dr. Stewart Jay Brown*, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, works in Edinburgh, United Kingdom.

*Dr. Hans-Anton Drewes*, Barth-Researcher, the former Head of the Karl Barth Archives in Basel. He lives in Basel, Switzerland.

*Dr. László Imre*, Professor of Literary History, former Rector of Debrecen University, Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He works in Debrecen, Hungary.

*Mr. László Koncsol*, writer, literary critic, the former Lay-Moderator of the Reformed Church in Slovakia. He lives in Pozsony/Bratislava, Slovakia.

*Dr. Ulrich J. Körtner*, Professor of Christian Ethics, Chairman of the Institute for Ethics and Law in Medicine in Vienna, Austria.

*Dr. Gottfried Wilhelm Locher*, President of the Swiss Reformed Church Association, Co-President of the Community of the European Protestant Churches. He lives in Bern, Switzerland.

*Dr. Géza Pap*, former bishop of the Transylvanian Reformed Church-District, Ministerial Moderator of the Synod of the Reformed Church in Rumania. He lives in Kolozsvár (Clus-Napoca), Rumania.

*Dr. Jerry Pillay*, Professor of Systematic Theology, Ethics and Public Life, President of the World Communion of the Reformed Churches. He lives in Farrarmere, South Africa. *Dr. Zsigmond Ritoók*, Professor of Classical Philology, Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He lives in Budapest, Hungary.

*Dr. Zsigmond Ritoók*, Professor of Classical Philology, Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, Hungary.

*Dr. Herman J. Selderhuis*, Professor of Church History, Calvin-Researcher, Director of the Refo500. He lives in Hasselt, The Netherlands.

It is our distinct privilege that each of them accepted the *Doctor Honoris Causa* title awarded by our University on the occasion of the 475<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformed College of Debrecen and on the Day of Hungarian Science.

The election by the Doctoral and Habilitation Council was formally approved also by the University Senate.

Therefore, on the basis of the above considerations, I respectfully request our University to confer the title *Doctor Honoris Causa* on these ten eminent gentlemen and to bestow all proper rights upon them.

*Prof. Dr. Botond Gaál,*  
*President of the Doctoral and Habilitation Council*



## **PART I**

### Laudations for Prospective Honorary Doctors



## PROF. DR. STEWART JAY BROWN

I have the special privilege, as a former student of Edinburgh and late successor of Professor Balogh, who was one of the first international students at New College in 1865, to give Laudation for Stewart Jay Brown, who has been the professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Edinburgh, since 1988. So, in the next few minutes, I believe, that through Prof. Brown's personality, we can experience a '*spiritual-bridge*' not only between two institutions but also between the Scottish and Hungarian people, who have the same Reformed roots.

After having received various academic and scientific degrees (BA, MA, PhD), Professor Brown started his promising academic carrier in the USA, State of Illinois and Georgia. Then, in 1988, 25 years ago he settled in Scotland, where step by step he became a real Scot and one of the leading Church Historian.

Since 1988 professor Brown has not only been Chair of the Department of Ecclesiastical History, but has also been elected to high positions at the University of Edinburgh: he was Dean of the Faculty of Divinity between 2000 and 2004 and some years later he had the privilege to be Dean for the second time.

He gave university lectures on various periods of the Scottish, Irish and British History from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century was the focus of his interest. He has also published 54 scholarly articles, 34 shorter articles in scholarly dictionaries and 51 academic book reviews. During his quarter of a century's stay in Edinburgh, he was elected to be a fellow of several prestigious Scientific Societies such as: The Royal Society of Edinburgh (Scottish National Society of Arts and Sciences), Scottish Church History Society, Scottish Catholic Historical Society and so on.

Professor Brown has always been supportive of Hungarians since he succeeded my former professor and supervisor Alexander Campbell Cheyne in the chair of Ecclesiastical History. He stands in the line of Free Church of Scotland professors who had established the bursary scheme in 1865.

Even though the Church of Scotland could not provide scholarships for Hungarian students from 1999 onwards, he has always tried to provide support for our students. As head of the department, he supported bursars coming from Hungary, in particular students of Debrecen. Several Hungarian students

preparing themselves in various subjects for service of the church received an MA degree from New College, Edinburgh University. As a professor and often as head of the Divinity Faculty, he helped Hungarian students with their doctoral studies. Some of the Ph.D. students from New College enjoyed his scholarly advice and friendly support throughout their work and even long after. We are proud to tell you that those students became excellent academics not only in Debrecen, but also in Budapest and Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Rumania).

Professor Brown showed a special interest in developing stronger ties with our university. For the past 10 years, he closely cooperated with the departments of Church History and Systematic Theology of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University. Research projects into ecclesiastical, social and cultural relations between Scotland and Hungary have received hearty support from him being a member of the Royal Historical Society of Scotland. He also invited colleagues from Hungary to deliver lectures at New College, Edinburgh to share the research results with a Scottish audience. To strengthen the research ties between the respective universities, he participated in our conference held in Debrecen in 2008. The outcome of this special event, where he was one of the major speakers, was published with the title *Calvinism on the peripheries*.

Currently he is working together with one of our enthusiastic colleagues who received the prestigious European Visiting Research Fellowship of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

We are delighted to see that new scholars and students have benefited from his vast knowledge of History and Theology and we are thankful that he has exhibited a strong and sincere interest in our Reformed tradition which is a treasure for both religious traditions of the Calvinist faith.

So, ladies and gentlemen, here is a strong spiritual bridge between the Scottish and Hungarian Protestantism, whose massive pillar Professor Brown is because of his outstanding knowledge of science and the nature of his personality. Thank you for your attention!

*Prof. Dr. Richárd Hörcsik*

## DR. HANS ANTON DREWES

Hans Anton Drewes wurde am 10. Mai 1946. in Braunschweig (Deutschland) geboren. Er wuchs in Düsseldorf auf, lebte in Tübingen und nun ist er in Basel wohnhaft, wo er bis zu seiner Pensionierung in 2012 das dortige Karl Barth-Archiv leitete. Er ist verheiratet, seine Frau Mirjam Stritt-Drewes ist Sozialpädagogin.

Den ersten, entscheidenden geistlichen Impuls gewann Hans Anton Drewes im Haushalt seiner Pateneltern, die ihre christliche Pflicht ernst nahmen und ihn von seinem fünften Lebensjahr erzogen. Seine Pateneltern waren Buchhändler, und in deren Laden hat er den bereichernden Schatz niveauvoller Literatur kennen und lieben gelernt. Dort las er zum ersten Mal auch Karl Barths Kommentar zum Römerbrief von 1922. Das Buch hat auf ihn einen so grossen Eindruck gemacht, dass der 15-Jährige gleich beschlossen hat, Theologie zu studieren. Zwischen 1966–1968 hat er in Bonn evangelische und römisch-katholische Theologie studiert (entscheidende Lehrer waren: Heinrich Schlier, Herbert Haag und Karl-Hermann Schelkle). Gleichzeitig studierte er Philosophie und Germanistik. Jüngels *Gottes Sein ist im Werden* hat sein Interesse geweckt und so begann er mit seinen Studien zwischen 1968–1970 in Zürich, wo er neben Theologie auch Germanistik studierte. In Basel hatte er noch die Gelegenheit, an Karl Barths Seminar über Schleiermachers Reden teilzunehmen. Zwischen 1970–1973 studierte er evangelische Theologie bei Eberhard Jüngel und vertiefte sich auch in Philosophie. Im Frühling 1973 hat er das theologische Examen erfolgreich bestanden und arbeitete bis 1977 als Eberhard Jüngels Mitarbeiter im Hermeneutischen Institut. Hier war er für das Barth Projekt des Instituts verantwortlich. Während dieser Zeit hat er auch Seminare und Übungen im Bereich der Dogmatik, vorwiegend im Bereich der scholastischen Theologie und der zeitgenössischen evangelischen Theologie angeboten. Er promovierte 1979, der Titel seiner Dissertation war: *Das Unmittelbare bei Hermann Kutter. Eine Untersuchung im Hinblick auf die Theologie des jungen Karl Barth*. Zwischen 1988 und 1997 war er verantwortlicher Herausgeber der *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* und unterrichtete vorwiegend im Bereich der theologischen Hermeneutik weiterhin in Tübingen. Zwischen 1997–2002 war er Leiter des Karl Barth Archivs in Basel. Seine wissenschaftlichen Leistungen wurden 2005 mit dem Wissenschaftspreis der Stadt Basel gewürdigt.

Als Herausgeber veröffentlichte er selber 5 Bände der Karl Barth Gesamtausgabe, vervollständigte die grosse *Barth Bibliographie* von Hans Markus Wildi und während seiner Zeit als Archivar erschienen weitere 17 Bände der Gesamtausgabe. In dieser Zeit verarbeitete das Archiv cca. 92.000 Dokumente. Seine Publikationen erscheinen in diversen theologischen Zeitschriften und Monographien. Hans Anton Drewes, als Theologe, interessiert sich für das spezielle Verhältnis von evangelischer und römisch-katholischer Denkform der Theologie. Seine diesbezüglichen Studien sind Meilensteine im wissenschaftlichen Dialog beider Konfessionen. Mit unserer Universität steht er seit 2007 in intensivem wissenschaftlichem Kontakt, er ist Mitglied im Wissenschaftlichen Beirat des Karl Barth Forschungsinstituts unserer Universität und dank seiner Hilfe konnten wir das Projekt der Karl Barth ungarischen digitalen Bibliographie aufbauen.

Als Theologe bemüht sich Hans Anton Drewes den ewig unwandelbaren Anspruch Gottes vor Auge haltend die theologische Wissenschaft zu dienen. Er tut das mit viel Sachkenntnis und achtunggebietender Demut. Auf Grund des oben Gesagten und als Anerkennung seiner wissenschaftlichen Leistungen sowie seines Engagements für unsere Kirche und Universität bitte ich den Hochwürdigen Senat der Universität, Herrn Dr. Hans Anton Drewes die Ehrendoktorwürde unserer Universität zu verleihen.

*Dr. Árpád Ferencz*

## PROF. DR. LÁSZLÓ IMRE

It is with great pleasure that I can present to you the *Laudation* for Prof. Dr. László Imre on the occasion of bestowing the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* by the Debrecen Reformed Theological University. László Imre is professor emeritus of the University of Debrecen and ordinary member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Debrecen and his University has played an outstanding role in the course of László Imre's scientific career. From 1969 to 1992 he was here a full member of the Institute of Hungarian Literary History. Between 1992 and 1996 he was visiting professor at the Finno-Ugric Institute of the University of Helsinki. But from his return to Debrecen in 1996 till his retirement he was a professor of the Institute of Comparative Literary Studies again. He was elected Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts in 1989 (1989–1992), and then Deputy Rector (1998–2000) of the University of Debrecen. He became Deputy Rector (2000–2003), then Rector (2003–2004) and finally Pro-Rector (2004–2005) of the newly united University of Debrecen.

László Imre is the holder of prestigious professional awards like the Oltványi Ambrus Award, the Martinkó András Award, the Toldy Ferenc Award, and state awards like the Szentgyörgyi Albert Award. He obtained the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary which is the highest State Order of Hungary.

His main field of research is the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian and Russian literature. He has published nine books and more than four hundred articles.

Besides recognising the human and artistic values of the left-wing, revolutionary trend in Hungarian literature, he considered it his task to contribute to the interpretation of the non-revolutionary realm of values (Imre Madách, Zsigmond Kemény, and others). Among others he concentrated on the nationcentred Calvinism of the Arany–Gyulai circle, the moral revolution of László Németh, the geniuses of the Russian literature – mainly Tolstoy, Dostojevsky and the Russian symbolists who were at a time described as ideologically retrograde – and on the outstanding figures of the Transylvanian classicism: Károly Kós, Sándor Makkai, and Mária Berde. He was the first one to initiate the rehabilitation of Sándor Reményik (1890–1941) in the

1970s. After a series of refusals, in 1980 he managed to publish his first review on this Transylvanian-Hungarian Lutheran poet.

Professor Imre made the first official link with the Debrecen Reformed Theological University two decades ago when as the Deputy Rector of the University of Debrecen (1998–2000) he participated in launching joint programmes. He helped our University to launch the teacher training programme for primary and secondary school religion teachers. He represented the University of Debrecen in our Senate meetings as an external member for more than ten years, and helped to establish and nurture relationships between the two universities.

Besides his activities concerning our university and the Transtibiscan Reformed Church District we should also mention Professor Imre's other commitments and responsibilities. He is a Counselling Board member of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, and a member of the editorial board of the *Protestáns Szemle* (*Protestant Review*, a periodical of the Reformed Church). In 1991, he was the main speaker at the second meeting of the Hungarian Reformed Churches in the World. In 2010 his book entitled *Új protestáns kulturális önszemlélet felé* (*Towards a New Protestant Cultural Self-Image*) was published by the Kálvin János Publishing House. In this book he analyzed the religious self-expression of authors like Arany, Tompa, Ady, Reményik, and others. Also this work demonstrates that László Imre is deeply concerned about and serves the case of Calvinist spirituality through his unquestionable expertise and his high regard for the literary heritage of our church.

On the basis of all these, I strongly recommend that Professor László Imre be granted the title of Doctor Honoris Causa.

Prof. Dr. Zoltán Kustár

## LÁSZLÓ KONCSOL

László Koncsol is an intellectual-spiritual guard and a man of mark of the Hungarian cultural and church life in Slovakia. His life-work and over and above his human attitude and unshakable faith made him a competent authority in the field of literature, poetry, translation, book review, regional history, editing and publishing. He is characterized by workmanship, solid certainty and sensitive inner world. “He is the modern incarnation of our mutual ancestor who has always been a pastor considering people and nation, lower noble molding the Hungarian spirituality and history, and farmer surviving historical cataclysm”, his fellow-writer Árpád Tőzsér wrote.

László Koncsol was born on 1 June 1936 in Deregyő (Drahnov, Slovakia), in a pastoral family, as son of János Koncsol and Jolán Szeles. The three years between 1947 and 1950 that he illegally spent at the Reformed College of Sárospatak because of the forced closing down of Hungarian schools in Slovakia were determinative for his entire life. The lifelong effects the College made on him are mentioned in several of his writings and portrait films (*Patak vár [Castle Patak]*; *Ahonnán elindultam [From where I started]*) and were later supplemented with the intellectual fosterage of the Reformed College of Debrecen.

After graduating from Comenius University in Bratislava in 1959 (he became a teacher of Hungarian language and literature), he worked as a teacher for two years, and then he did his military service. Later he became managing editor for a literary publisher in Pozsony (Bratislava). He edited *Irodalmi Szemle (Literary Review)* between 1966 and 1975, and then he quit and became a freelance writer to work on his own writings.

His first writing was published in the *Új Szó (New Word)* in Pozsony in 1954 on Endre Ady. As a literary critic, he published an article on József Szőke's novels in the *Irodalmi Szemle (Literary Review)* in 1958. The first book written by László Koncsol – entitled *Kísérletek és elemzések (Experiments and Analyses)* – was published in 1978. He has made translations of literary works since 1965. His reviews and monographs deal mostly with Hungarian literature in Slovakia.

He set himself the aim to write the history of the Hungarian post-war literature in Czechoslovakia, but his endeavour was hindered by the fault-finding of the office controlling cultural life. Until now, his most outstanding

works are poetry analyses, in which he draws attention to the inner relationship between the architecture of pieces of music and that of poems of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. An important part of his life work is the book entitled *Ütemező (Time-keeper)*, in which he introduces the 22 Greek metrical feet (naturalized in Hungarian poetry by Kazinczy) in an amusing way.

Under the given circumstances his life turned out such a way, that he could continue neither his comparative activity nor his writing poetry. As a result of the activity of the Slovakian State Police the publishing of all of his writings was prohibited. At first, he could work for a press office in Pozsony, then in the cooperative in Diósförgepatony as the annalist and regional historian of the village. The *Csallóközi Kiskönyvtár (Booklets on Csallóköz)*, which includes 42 volumes up to the present day, is based on this semi-illegal research. The series comprises numerous – mainly Calvinist – church historical works and corpora. László Koncsol is proud that he could set up the series although he had no researcher's position.

His wife, Katalin Nagy passed away three years ago. Koncsol's son, László and his daughter, Katalin live in Hungary.

Up to the present day László Koncsol published 21 books and 16 translations of literary works. He was chairman of the Society of Hungarian Writers in Slovakia (2001–2003), and acted as the chief elder of the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia (2002–2006). He has been chairman of the Pro Patria Society of History since 1997. He is the holder of sixteen awards and numerous decorations, from which the Madách Imre-Prize (1979, 1991), the Fábry Zoltán-Prize (1993), the Gábor Bethlen Award (1994), Grand Prize (2003) and Life Achievement Award (2008) of Posonium, József Attila-Prize (2008), Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary (2001) and Külhoni Magyarságért Award (Award for the Hungarians outside Hungary) (2013) are especially remarkable.

The Debrecen Reformed Theological University grants the honorary doctorate to László Koncsol for his efforts for the preservation of the Hungarian culture, the Reformed Faith and for his rich literary and academic achievement. May the Lord bless him and keep him.

*Prof. Dr. Károly Fekete*

## PROF. DR. ULRICH H. J. KÖRTNER

Es ist mir eine große Freude, Ihnen einen „Theologen in dürftiger Zeit“, vorstellen zu dürfen. Meine erste Begegnung mit Ulrich H. J. Körtner ereignete sich nämlich vor mehr als 20 Jahren, vorerst nicht persönlich, sondern über die Lektüre eines Essays mit dem Titel: *Theologie in dürftiger Zeit*. Unter dieser Bezeichnung verstand der damalige Verfasser ein Übergangstadium in der Theologie und Kirche, die in ihrer Sache verunsichert ist, die an einer Sprachnot bzw. Sprachlosigkeit leidet und durch gesellschaftlichen Relevanzverlust gekennzeichnet ist. Um dieser Lage Herr zu werden, versucht die Theologie zu Gunsten der Kirche allerlei Ersatzaktivitäten, statt dieser Not allein durch eine „neue Ein-Sicht“ in die Schriften des Neuen Testaments und durch eine adäquate Kommunikation ihrer Ergebnisse zu begegnen. Diese Einsichten, die später in noch vertieften Formen in seinen Werken immer wieder vorkommen, haben nach wie vor Aktualität. Dann ergab sich später auch die persönliche Begegnung zwischen uns, wo er in einem kleineren Kreis bekannte: er käme zwar aus einem westfälischen evangelisch-lutherischen Pfarrhaus, aber einem mit großer Sympathie und Neigung für reformierte Theologie (und er selber sei inzwischen Reformiert geworden) – dann habe ich mir sofort gesagt: aha, jetzt verstehe ich; aus Westfalen also, von der norddeutschen Tiefebene, wo Theologie ernsthaft, bodenständig und auf keinen Fall ungezügelt experimentell betrieben wird. Durch diese Erfahrungen, die ich gerne als Optik oder Linse bezeichnen möchte, lernte ich seine theologischen Anliegen und die daraus resultierende erstaunlich breite und tiefe Leistung immer besser kennen, verstehen und schätzen.

Ulrich H. J. Körtner wurde 1957 in Hameln (Deutschland) geboren. Nach seinem Theologiestudium in Bethel, Münster und Göttingen folgten die Jahren des Vikariats und des Pfarramtes zwischen 1980 und 1990 zuerst in der Evangelisch-reformierten Kirchengemeinde, dann in der Lutherkirchengemeinde Bielefeld. 1982 erfolgte die Promotion und 1989 die Habilitation im Fach Systematischer Theologie an der Kirchlichen Hochschule Bethel. Eine Zeitlang arbeitete er als wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter am Lehrstuhl von Prof. Alfred Jäger, ab 1990 als Studienleiter für zwei Jahren an der Evangelischen Akademie Iserlohn. Seit 1992 ist er ununterbrochen als Ordentlicher Universitätsprofessor für Systematische

Theologie (H.B.) an der Evangelisch-Theologischen Fakultät der Universität Wien tätig. Im Laufe der Jahre erfolgten mehrere Berufungen, eine Professur an anderen Theologischen Fakultäten in Deutschland zu übernehmen, doch er hat diese Berufungen immer abgelehnt – der gebürtige Westfale wurde ein Österreicher, mit deutscher und österreichischer Staatsangehörigkeit, vor allem aber „zu einem geschätzten ökumenischen Dialogpartner und einem gefragten theologischen Experten nicht allein der innenprotestantischen Ökumene – nicht nur in Wien, in der eigenen Kirche oder im dem Gemischten römisch-katholisch/evangelische Kommission Österreich, sondern auch und besonders in der Gemeinschaft der Evangelischen Kirchen in Europa (GEKE), früher mit dem Namen *Leuenberger Kirchengemeinschaft*.

Ulrich Körtners Forschungsschwerpunkte zeigen ein breites Spektrum, von den Fragestellungen der Fundamentaltheologie, der Hermeneutik, der Ethik (besonders der Medizinethik und der Pflegeethik), der Diakonie, der Ökumenischen Theologie sowie der Eschatologie und der Apokalyptik. Über 1300 Publikationen, darunter 43 Monographien, 46 Lexikonartikel, über 500 Aufsätze und Buchbeiträge dokumentieren dieses umfangreiche wissenschaftliche Interesse und eine erstaunliche Produktivität. Erfreulicherweise liegen immer mehr seiner Arbeiten inzwischen auch in ungarischer Übersetzung vor. Körtner engagiert sich seit Jahren im Vorstand des Instituts für Systematische Theologie der Theologischen Fakultät (seit 1994) und im Vorstand des Instituts für Ethik und Recht in der Medizin der Universität Wien (seit 2001). Wir finden ihn in zahlreichen wissenschaftlichen Organisationen, beispielsweise seien erwähnt als Gründer und Vorsitzender der Rudolf Bultmann Gesellschaft, Mitglied in der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie, Mitglied in Herausgeberkreisen renommierter theologischer Zeitschriften, zurzeit geschäftsführender Herausgeber der *Zeitschrift für Evangelischen Ethik (ZEE)*, seit 2010 Mitherausgeber der Schriftenreihe *Arbeiten zur Systematischen Theologie* und Mitglied in verschiedenen nationalen und internationalen Ethikkommissionen, vor allem für Bio- und Medizinethik. 2001 war er „Wissenschaftler des Jahres“ in Österreich, 2010 erhielt er die Ehrendoktorwürde der *Faculté libre de Théologie Protestante de Paris*.

Hochachtungsvoll empfehle ich dem Senat der Universität, Herrn Professor Dr. Ulrich H. J. Körtner, als einem der leitenden evangelischen Theologen unserer Zeit, die Ehrendoktorwürde zu verleihen, und ihn dadurch in die Reihe der Ehrendoktoren der Reformierten Theologischen Universität Debrecen aufzunehmen.

Prof. Dr. Sándor Fazakas

## DR. GOTTFRIED WILHELM LOCHER

Gottfried Wilhelm Locher is a passionate preacher, an ecumenically open and even dialogue-provoking scholar and a Church politician always ready for confrontation and renewal, all in one person.

Between 1994 and 1999, Gottfried W. Locher as a young pastor had to experience in the Swiss congregation in London that “the Church must struggle for the attention of the people, and an empty Church cannot accomplish her mission.” By the nature of the Swiss community he could witness the fundamental truth, which he represents as a church leader even today, in three languages – in German, French and English i.e. the essential moment in the renewal of the Reformed church is ‘a theologically, and linguistically good sermon’, an ‘artwork’ – as he formulates it – which follows the example of the reformers. He was a vicar in London when he started working on his Ph.D. thesis whose topic has attended him as a theologian and a decision-maker ever since. In 2000 he received his Ph.D. degree in systematic theology published in 2004 as a monograph (*Sign of the Advent. A study in Protestant Ecclesiology*, Fribourg, Academic Press). In 2001 Gottfried W. Locher expanded his leadership skills by obtaining an MBA degree at the famous London Business School. Beyond professional interest in business administration, he was also inspired by the desire to better understand the life situation of the members of his congregation i.e. ‘addressees of the Gospel’ most of whom worked in leadership positions.

His theological activity is reflected in a number of different publications. He is the author of numerous scientific articles and reviews on systematic and ecumenical theology, in particular on church doctrine and church administration. I will emphasize only one paper on Reformed church government which was also published in Hungarian (*Református egyházkormányzat. Apalvetés kilenc tételben*, [*Reformed Church Government. Fundamentals in Nine Propositions*], in: *Confessio* 3/2008, 108–122.). This writing with its nine propositions reflects the theological interest and the typical working method of the author. He addresses his sometimes polemical topics, which are observed with interest both in ecumenical dialogues and within his church, in such a way, that he thereby builds bridges between the statements of the Reformed confessional writings, the theology of the Reformation, especially the doctrines of Calvin and Zwingli, and today’s ecumenical theological

discourse. He was ‘spokesman’ of Reformation theology characterized by dialogue, even when he basically dedicated himself to the scientific work as Managing Director of the Institute for Ecumenical Studies of the University of Freiburg between 2006 and 2010.

His career as a ‘Church politician’ started early. Between 2001 and 2005 he was already head of the Department for External Relations of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (SEK). Between 2008 and 2010, he returned to his ‘mother church’ and gained valuable experience as Synod Councilor in the leading board of the Reformed church of Bern-Jura-Solothurn (Switzerland). Since 2011 he is the President of SEK. Since then, as the ‘face’ of the Protestants in Switzerland he has consciously given voice to Protestant values in public life and in the media, further on, to the criticism by the ‘basis communities’ i.e. congregations of SEK because of his ‘unorthodox’ theological position concerning church reform, growing centralization of administration and church positions.

In the meantime he has continuously worked in the international ecumenical arena. In 2000, he was elected member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) for four years, while at the same time as European President (2002–2006) and later as a member of the Executive Board of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) he played an influential role in the ecumenical movement in Europe and all over the world. Since 2012 he has served as co-President of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE/GEKE), where he represents the ‘reformed voice’, which is so close to his heart, in the theological discussions of the Leuenberg community.

As European President of WARC, Gottfried W. Locher has devoted special attention to minority churches in Eastern–Central Europe. In the middle of the 2000s he had the chance to prove his well-known diplomatic skills on behalf of WARC in the Hungarian Reformed Church in Croatia.

This ‘patchwork’ of Gottfried W. Locher’s life in service is now enriched once again by the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* is a sign of recognition of his previous theological and church political achievements, but on the other hand, it is an incentive to encourage him to continue his work and service in all areas with the same sternness, dedication and straightforwardness for the benefit of the Protestant community in Europe and beyond. May God’s blessing be with him, his wife and their three children in this effort.

Based on the above, I recommend that the honorary doctorate be granted to Gottfried Wilhelm Locher by the Debrecen Reformed Theological University.

*Prof. Dr. Gusztáv Bölcskei*

## DR. GÉZA PAP

Géza Pap was born in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Rumania) on 20 January 1954. He studied theology at the Institute of Protestant Theology in Kolozsvár from 1974 to 1978. He was assistant minister in the Reformed Congregation in Bucharest from 1979 to 1981, and then in 1981 he became the parish pastor of Magyar Kiskapus. In 1988 he was elected parish pastor of the Reformed Congregation of Felsőváros in Kolozsvár.

In 1995 he travelled to Kampen in the Netherlands as a scholarship holder where he studied biblical eschatology under the guidance of professor Dr. Jakob van Bruggen. At that time his scientific interest was already in eschatology, and he regularly published his research results in the *Protestáns Szemle* (*Protestant Review*). He wrote his Ph.D. thesis entitled *Azok a napok és ama nap. Jézus és az utolsó idők Márk 13. fejezete alapján* (*Those Days and That Particular Day: Jesus and the End of Times on the Basis of Mark 13*) in the field of eschatology, too. He defended his thesis at the Institute of Protestant Theology in Kolozsvár on 13 January 2005, which was acknowledged by the state in the same year.

He publishes the results of his research in the *Protestáns Szemle* continuously. The most important norm of his research is the Bible, the humble research of the sacred texts. He focuses particularly on the return of Jesus Christ and on life after death. The only authentic message coming from the 'other world' is in the Bible, which lets us know in truth what we can expect 'out there'. We should not learn what is happening 'out there' from another person but from God's message, he declared in an interview.

So far he has published five books: in 1999 the Kálvin János Publishing House published his book entitled *Vigyázzatok! Tanítás az utolsó időkről* (*Beware! Teaching about the Last Times*), which summarizes the basic teachings of the Reformed faith about the main questions of Protestant eschatology: about the return of Jesus Christ, the judgement, the new sky and the new earth. He published four books in the series on *Eszkatológiai textusok* (*Eschatological Texts for Preaching*), his fifth one, entitled *A haláltól a parúziáig* (*From Death to Parousia*) is to be published soon.

Géza Pap, the head pastor of the Reformed Congregation of Felsőváros in Kolozsvár, was elected to be the 45<sup>th</sup> bishop of the Transylvanian Reformed District, which involves 16 presbyteries. In their program of renewal, he en-

deavours together with other pastors to reduce the bishop's scope of authority, believing that it is not a powerful bishop and an unimportant community but an unimportant bishop and a powerful community that is needed.

While serving as a bishop he took an active part in recreating the united Hungarian Reformed Church and in the making of the new Basic Law of the Reformed Church. The preparatory work, the activity of the General Convent, took several years and on May 22, 2009 it resulted in a significant event of church history: by signing the new Constitution the Hungarian Reformed Church was officially reestablished.

As a result of his activities in saving and strengthening the identity of the Transylvanian Hungarian national community and to acknowledge his scientific activity in theology, the President of the Hungarian Republic – following the nomination by the Prime Minister – awarded Géza Pap the Civil Ribbon Bar of the Cross of Merit of the Republic of Hungary. On completing his full time office as a bishop in 2012 he handed over the responsibility of church leadership to the newly elected bishop. However, he continues working for the church, his scientific work on theology promises more and more results to the glory of God and to the advantage of us all.

I respectfully recommend that the Senate bestow the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* of Debrecen Reformed Theological University on Reverend Dr. Géza Pap.

Dr. Sára Bodó

## PROF. DR. JERRY PILLAY

The Churches of the Reformed tradition honoured Professor Dr. Jerry Pillay with electing him president of their worldwide organization in 2008. He visited our University in this capacity in 2009 when we had the opportunity to listen to his lecture here. We are glad that he returned to us as our Honorary Doctor.

In the beginning Professor Dr. Jerry Pillay attributed great value to prepare himself for his scholarly career. His exceptional talent came to light gradually. At first he became an excellent student at Durban High school (Durban, South Africa) and graduated from ATTI College in Cape-Town (South Africa) with a Bachelor's Degree in Theology with top scores. He examined the topic of AIDS from the viewpoint of the Old and New Testament, history, missiology, Christian dogmatics, ethics and from the perspective of practical theology. He received his Masters degree from the University of Durban-Westville (South Africa) in 1988; his thesis was entitled *Mission in the Context of the Poor with Special Reference to the Isipingo Farm Community*. He became increasingly preoccupied with the shaping of the future of the church. In 2002 we find him again at the University of Cape-Town defending his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Church and Development in New South Africa: Towards a Theology of Development*. In the meantime he serves as a pastor in a number of South African Presbyterian congregations. He marries Sandra Pillay who is the National Secretary for the Women's World Day of Prayer. They have three children: Jesandra, Janice and Aaron Jerry.

This scientifically well-grounded pastor who had amassed a wealth of experience as a practical congregational minister attracted the attention of his church and was assigned to a number of leadership positions. During the years of 2004–2006 he was Moderator and then from 2009 General Secretary of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa. He has been elected President of the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Africa, after which he became the first President of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

Beyond the innumerable functions he holds at national church level, Dr. Pillay has published several writings. He published several studies and books during the past two decades on topics like Missiology, Ecclesiology, Church History, trends in Contemporary Theology, New Testament and Comparative Theology. He has been invited to lecture internationally at the

world's most prestigious theological centers and universities. The former excellent student is now a regular participant in various religious media outlets in South Africa. His talents, no doubt, are appreciated by the religious and secular domain. It doesn't come as a surprise that in 2011 the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa) elected him Extraordinary Professor in Systematic Theology, Ethics and Public Life.

In Dr. Jerry Pillay we can honour a person who serves his congregations faithfully, is blessed with excellent qualities in church leadership and is a highly regarded and accomplished theologian. I pay my most sincere homage to his spiritual achievements and recommend that the Debrecen Reformed Theological University bestow upon Dr. Jerry Pillay its highest award the title of Doctor Honoris Causa.

*Prof. Dr. Botond Gaál*

## PROF. DR. ZSIGMOND RITOÓK

I have the honour to present the laudation of Dr. Zsigmond Ritoók, professor emeritus, an outstanding scholar and promoter of early Greek epic poetry and drama, ancient aesthetics and antiquity on the occasion of conferring an honorary degree on him.

Dr. Zsigmond Ritoók was born in 1929 in Budapest. After graduating from the Budapest Reformed Secondary School (1940–1948), he studied at first Latin and Greek (1948–1952) at the Eötvös Loránd University (ELU) in Budapest and later Hungarian language and literature in a correspondence course (1960–1965) at ELU.

He started his career as a teacher: he was an assistant lecturer at the Greek Philology Department of ELU (1952–1958), later he worked as a teacher at the Martos Flóra Secondary School (1958–1970). He worked as a research fellow at the Department of Antiquity of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1970–1986), as a university professor at the Latin Department of ELU until his retirement (1986–1999). In the meantime he also lectured at the Károli Gáspár Reformed University (Budapest) for a few years.

His first successes in his scientific career were a doctorate and a candidate's degree at ELU in 1968; and then an Academic doctorate in Literary Sciences in 1978 when he became an assistant professor. In 1990 he became an associate and in 1993 an ordinary member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He has been a member of the Academia Latinitati Fovendae in Rome since 1984, that of the Academia Europaea in London since 1991, and an associate member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences since 1997.

Dr. Zsigmond Ritoók has also been very active in the scientific public life, and has achieved significant success and results. He has been a founding member (1958), the general secretary (1980–1985), the managing Co-President (1985–1991) and the President (1991–1997) of the *Society for Classical Studies*. He was a member of the editorial board (1970–1992), and then the editor in chief (1993–2003) of *Acta Antiqua*. Between 1996 and 1999 he was the President of the Section of Linguistic and Literary Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

His outstanding teaching and scientific work has been acknowledged several times. The honorary doctor's degree was bestowed on him by the Budapest Reformed Theological Academy in 1990 and the Miskolc University

in 1998. The ELU awarded him the title of *professor emeritus* in 1998 and the honorary doctor's degree in 2009. Let me mention a few more of his most important awards: Ábel Jenő Medal (1984), Szent-Györgyi Albert Award (1992), the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary (1995), Péter Pázmány Prize (1997), Széchenyi Prize (2001), Bolyai Prize, the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary with Star (2009) and latest: Prima Prize (2013).

The main fields of research of Dr. Zsigmond Ritoók is early Greek epic poetry (Homer); Greek drama (especially tragedy); Greek aesthetic thought, problems of Classical Greek culture, of Classical and Post-Classical Roman poetry and the history of Classical Studies in Hungary. His intention is to promote Antiquity by all his efforts. He devoted a great number of studies, chapters and books to this purpose. He has also been committed to study the Bible, Old and New Testament as a source of faith and as a piece of ancient literature. He has never renounced his being a Christian who is a devout member of the Kálvin Square Reformed Congregation in Budapest. He acted there as an elder (1956–2001) and later a chief elder. Besides several church commissions and services (e. g. member, registrar of the Synod), he was also one of the founding members and for a short time also the president of the Elders' Federation.

His wife, Ágnes Szalay is his faithful partner. They have three children: Ágnes (1961), Judit (1963) and Zsigmond (1966).

Based on the facts stated, it is obvious that Dr. Zsigmond Ritoók – both as a scholar and as a Reformed Christian – has done a lot for the cultivation of Classical Studies in Hungary, for their propagation, for making people acquainted with and recognise Classical Studies both at home and abroad.

At the same time he did and does exemplary creative work, fought and fights by the power of faith, knowledge and science not at least for the growth of the Reformed faith and science. That is why Professor Dr. Zsigmond Ritoók has been found worthy to receive the *Degree Honoris Causa* awarded to him by our university as a sign of our appreciation and respect.

*Prof. Dr. Imre Peres*

## PROF. DR. HERMAN JOHAN SELDERHUIS

Herman Johan Selderhuis was born in Enschede, the Netherlands in 1961. He studied at the Theological University of the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in Apeldoorn. After graduation he worked as a minister in several congregations for ten years. He did his doctorate in 1994; the title of his dissertation was *Marriage and Divorce in the Thought of Martin Bucer*. Three years later he was appointed professor of Church History and Church Law and then director of the Institute for Reformation Research at the Theological University in Appeldoorn. Since then professor Selderhuis has continued his teaching and academic work with a larger research scope. His academic achievements are marked by numerous studies and edited volumes. His two monographies demonstrate outstanding results of his scientific activity. His monography entitled *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms* was published in 2004, and his Calvin biography entitled *John Calvin: Man between Confidence and Doubt* came out of press in 2009. In these works he endeavors to correct the prejudice-laden image of Calvin in the general public and scholarly circles.

Professor Selderhuis is member of several Dutch and international organizations and editorial boards. Three of these which have been run by Professor Selderhuis for a long time are especially worth of closer attention: since 2002 he has been president of the International Congress on Calvin Research. This corporation is situated in Zurich (Switzerland) and is essentially concerned with theological and historical research on Calvin, the history of the Reformed Church and its theological traditions in the 16th century.

The Calvin Congress meets regularly in alternating cities in the world every four years, its goal is to provide a platform for a scholarly discussion and demonstration of the latest results in Calvin research. Besides this, Professor Selderhuis is a scientific curator of the Johannes a Lasco Library in Emden (Germany) and is the foundation director of Refo500 whose goal is to reach a wide audience by giving broad attention to the meaning of the Reformation in the run-up to the year 2017.

Professor Selderhuis is married. His wife is Irene Selderhuis-Timmermann. They have six children and three grandchildren.

Our university greatly admires and appreciates Herman Johan Selderhuis' valuable activity, which he as professor, carries out in the field of ecclesiastical history at the Theological University in Apeldoorn, on the one hand. On the other hand, we acknowledge his manifold activities in academia, which he performs as member of several prestigious institutes, scientific societies of church history as well as member of editorial boards of prestigious scientific journals, further on, as responsible editor of church historical series and books of references.

It must be stated that his publications on Calvin's life and early Reformation as well as his research organizing activity have greatly contributed to reveal the theological heritage of Hungarian Reformed people and to understand our present through our past. The critical use of our theological heritage as a source can help us to formulate our confessional responses to the challenges of the modern age.

Based on the above, I recommend that the honorary doctorate be granted to Professor Dr. Herman Johan Selderhuis by the Debrecen Reformed Theological University.

*Dr. Béla Levente Baráth*



## **PART II**

### Compliments of the Honorary Doctors



## PROF. DR. LÁSZLÓ IMRE

It is said that hardly any conceited persons can be found among professional sportsmen. They are well aware that their career could have ended in failure in different ways. They are the ones who really know that their success “does not depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.” Therefore the person, who boasts of his results, unveils himself, i.e. he little knows or realizes that some general truths are stronger than us; as they have been stronger than us from the beginning. The values of general validity will be justified by time. They are e.g. values along which institutions are established and motivated like the Reformed College or the Debrecen Reformed Theological University whose confidence and hospitality the honorary doctors at the Conferral Session of Senate can enjoy.

I would like to quote a well-known passage. “Be not *like servants* who serve their master for the sake of *reward*.” (Bultmann quotes this sentence as a pre-Christian text. Bultmann: *Újszövetség teológiája [Theology of the New Testament]*, Osiris, 2013, 27.) Well, Protestant congregations – because of their circumstances – were not able to shower rewards on their members. Especially the Hungarian Reformed Church which had a fate of ups and downs could only encourage its members to accept hardships. In most cases, however, this notion did not weaken but rather strengthened the bonds. Also Sándor Petőfi justified his attachment to Hungary by recognizing that his nation was the lonliest among other nations.

The happy certainty of satisfaction and relief can really be felt after the tension of sufferings and efforts. Sándor Reményik writes in his poem entitled *Kegyelem (Grace)*:

“And then the sky flies open of itself  
Which did not open up when we cursed or prayed  
Power, will, despair  
Repentance besieged it in vain  
Then the sky opens up of itself  
And a little star is walking toward you  
And smiling beautifully it comes so close to you  
That you believe it will fall onto your palm“

[translation: P. P. Czeglédi]

It has never come into my mind that the honorable title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* will be bestowed upon me. However, it is an unexpected joy that makes sense if its inspiring power comes into action, just like the little star which you believe to fall onto your palms. Since you believe it, it is there already. The presence of this little star obliges me to longlasting gratitude.

## DR. GOTTFRIED WILHELM LOCHER

„Die grössten Wohlthaten empfangen wir von Gott und den Eltern. Gott aber geben wir die Ehre durch die Tugend der Religion, den Eltern entgelten wir durch die Tugend der Hingebung. Also ist da kein Platz für eine besondere Tugend der Dankbarkeit.“ (S.th. II–II q. 106, a. 1) So beginnt Thomas in der 106. Frage der *Summa* seine Diskussion über den Dank und die Dankbarkeit. Ich gestehe, das ist ein etwas missverständlicher Einstieg für eine Dankesrede. Der schroffen These des grossen Theologen kann immerhin zu Gute gehalten werden, dass er noch nicht mit dem Institut der Ehrenpromotion konfrontiert war. Gewiss hätte er dann andere Worte gewählt. Damit kann ich mich nach der Ehre, die Sie mir heute zuteilwerden lassen, selbstverständlich nicht herausreden. Aber eine scholastische Disputation endet nicht mit den *objectiones*, sondern dem *corpus articuli*. Und dort holt mir Thomas glücklicherweise meinen Absturz gefährdeten Dank vom Glatteis: „Demgemäss wird dadurch, dass man sich für Wohlthaten erkenntlich zeigt, die Freundschaft bewahrt“ (ebd.).

Natürlich hat es auch diese Bemerkung in sich. Sie rückt sowohl *Ihre* Wohltat mir gegenüber, als auch *meinen* Dank an Sie in einen besonderen Zusammenhang. Es geht um nichts weniger als um *unsere* Freundschaft. Ich weiß nicht, ob Sie bei Ihrer Entscheidung, mich zu ehren, Thomas im Blick hatten. Nun aber haben Sie ihn vor Augen und in den Ohren und ich verspreche Ihnen, ich halte mich an den Theologen. Die Ehrung, die ich von Ihnen empfangen habe, betrachte ich als das Geschenk von Freunden. Und mein tiefempfundener Dank ist der Dank Ihres Freundes. Ja, liebe Freundinnen und Freunde, ich danke Ihnen herzlich!

In einer mit der reformiert-reformatorischen Tradition so ausnehmend eng verbundenen Stadt und Universität wie Debrecen mag es eigentümlich erscheinen, dass ich meinen Dank unter Berufung auf einen scholastischen Theologen vorbringe. Das hängt nicht nur damit zusammen, dass ich Thomas als theologischen Lehrer schätze, sondern auch damit, dass die Reformatoren, allen voran die Reformierten den Dank in menschlichen Angelegenheiten eher stiefmütterlich behandeln. So sehr diese Konzentration theologisch ihre Berechtigung hat, so sehr wirkt sie menschlich manchmal karg und ernüchternd. Gewiss: *Solus Christus, Soli Deo Gloria* – Ja und aufrichtig: „Gott

sei Dank!“ – für Ihre Ehrung und mehr noch für Ihre, darin zum Ausdruck gebrachte Freundschaft.

Dank verbindet! Im Anschluss an Röm 13,8 – „Bleibt niemandem etwas schuldig, außer dass ihr einander liebt“ – hält Thomas fest: „Dass also nach dieser Seite hin die Dankbarkeit etwas Endloses ist, dies erscheint nicht unzulässig.“ (q. 106, a. 6) Sie haben sich also auf etwas eingelassen! Freunde wird man bekanntlich so leicht nicht los. Ich nehme Ihre Ehrung in diesem Sinne als Versprechen für einen langen Atem unserer freundschaftlichen Verbundenheit. Als Freund antworte ich Ihnen: Darauf freue ich mich! Herzlichen Dank, liebe Freundinnen und Freunde!

PROF. DR. JERRY PILLAY

It is my joy and pleasure on behalf of the laureates to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the University for bestowing upon us this unexpected honour in conferring upon us honorary doctorates. We are generally moved by the fact that you were able to identify each of us for our specific work and contributions, especially in the area of Reformed faith and theology. We are deeply moved by the thought that our work and contributions are being noticed and appreciated in such a beautiful and glorious way. This certainly instills in us a greater desire and joy to continue to do what we do with more enthusiasm, depth and dedication.

We are also mindful that this is a very special moment as you celebrate your 475<sup>th</sup> Anniversary since the founding of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University. In these many years you have trained pastors, produced academics and made immense contributions to the Reformed family at large. Some of us have had the pleasure to visit and lecture at the University at some time or the other. For me, it was a special delight to be here in 2011 and to draw a parallel between your experience as a people with that of South Africa as we looked at issues related to reconciliation, healing and forgiveness. That was a very special time for me and my memories are still very powerfully embedded. We wish to thank you for your work here at the University and for your dedicated service and contributions to Reformed theological thinking and engagement. We are deeply overwhelmed by your consistent endeavours to keep the Reformed movement alive, deeply rooted and powerfully expressed. I must say that this is one place in the world where I have seen and experienced the strong sense of belonging and appreciation for what it means to be Reformed. We would like to encourage you to hold the fort and to continue to help form and shape the rest of the world with the same. The University must continue to seek new and creative ways of exchanging ideas, forming new partnerships and working with other Reformed institutions in other parts of the world. Indeed, you have so much to offer and share with other Christians.

In concluding my brief response, let me once again say a great big thank you on behalf of all my colleagues here today who have been honoured and blessed in such an amazing and special way and for your kind hospitality given to us during our stay. We receive these honorary degrees with joy, hu-

mility and thanksgiving. Our prayer is that God will continue to sustain, grow and prosper you as you continue with the incredible and fabulous work you do in and through this University. We look forward to an ongoing relationship and contact with you in the years to come. Thank you for this day, for this celebration and for this honour. God bless!



### **PART III**

Inaugural Lectures of the Laureates on the  
Symposium “Commitment, Belief, Knowledge  
in scientific and public life”



*Stewart J. Brown:*

## THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND PUBLIC FAITH

It is a great honour to be awarded an Honorary Degree from the distinguished Reformed Theological University of Debrecen, and it is a further privilege to be invited to speak about my research in this Symposium. For some four decades now, my research has explored the European Enlightenment and its longer term impact on religion within the public sphere.

The European Enlightenment of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a multi-faceted cultural movement which fundamentally changed perceptions of the nature and destiny of humankind. It brought new conceptions of individual freedom, human capacity, and social progress. It contributed to the growth of democracy, human equality, human rights, free markets, universal education, the separation of Church and state, and toleration. In Europe, it was especially directed to achieving freedom from religious authority, whether of the Churches, the Bible or religious tradition. For the thinkers of the Enlightenment, humankind was at last entering the clear light of day. The natural world would no longer be an enchanted place of mystery, in which spirits, demons, hobgoblins, ghosts, and angels exercised power over events. Enlightenment thinkers also sought a new grounding for morality. For them, individual and social ethics were to be based, not on an infallible Scripture expressing God's commands, as these were interpreted by institutional Churches, but rather on conceptions of human psychology, the structuring of society, and what constitutes human flourishing in this world. Many thinkers became convinced that it was possible to live a moral life without religious faith or religious sanctions. This, in turn, formed a deep and profound challenge to the Churches' social influence in a modernising world. Let me reflect a little further on the Enlightenment and its religious impact.

### *The Enlightenment*

The European Enlightenment emerged in the early seventeenth century. It was in part a reaction to the religious warfare of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – the wars of the Reformation. The prolonged warfare between 1524 and 1648 culminated in the terrible bloodletting of the Thirty Years War of 1618–1648, which reduced the population in some regions by a quarter. In response, many thinkers became prepared to consider alterna-

tive forms of social organisation, other than those based on religious uniformity. It was not surprising that the Netherlands, with its large numbers of religious refugees, became the major centre of the early Enlightenment. The emergence of the Enlightenment was also connected to the rise of modern science, including the Copernican revolution and the Newtonian conception of the universe. The scientific revolution, which predated the Enlightenment, offered an alternative way of relating to the natural world, attractive to thinkers weary of the religious warfare. The scientific method, with experiments and demonstrations that could be repeated by any rational person, seemed a surer way to generally accepted truths than the disputations of the theologians or the study of often obscure ancient texts. Science, moreover, revealed a universe in which heavenly bodies moved and acted according to uniform natural laws. Finally, the Enlightenment was related to the growing European knowledge of the cultures, societies and beliefs of the non-European world. The voyages of discovery from the late fifteenth century, the colonisation of the Americas, the developing trade with Asia, and the growing body of writings of missionaries, merchants and colonial administrators – all contributed to an expanding knowledge of the wider world, including the thought and organisation of non-Christian societies.

Fundamental to the Enlightenment were new conceptions of social ethics that were independent of the authority of the Christian religion. Thinkers of the Enlightenment insisted that Christianity was not necessary to social morality, and they observed that there were non-Christian societies with viable systems of social ethics. Enlightenment thinkers looked to the pre-Christian civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome, and especially the Stoic philosophers, for moral examples; here the Enlightenment represented, in the historian Peter Gay's phrase, 'the rise of modern paganism'. Still other thinkers sought to root morals in human psychology. This was especially the case with the extraordinary group of eighteenth-century Scottish moralists, including Frances Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant carried the thinking of the Scottish moralists to higher analytical levels, especially with his famous 'categorical imperative', or the principle that individuals should always act as though their actions could constitute a universal moral law. A growing number of thinkers came to believe that while religion could support the ethical life, it was not necessary to social morality.

*The Enlightenment and Religion*

This did not mean that the Enlightenment was opposed to religion. On the contrary, scholars now recognise that the large majority of Enlightenment thinkers had a religious faith. One of the most important strands of recent Enlightenment scholarship has explored the religious dimensions of the movement. Scholars generally accept Jonathan Israel's view that there was a Radical Enlightenment and a Moderate Enlightenment. The Radical Enlightenment consisted of a small minority of thinkers, often regarded as dangerous subversives by the civil authorities. They often rejected belief in God, scriptural authority, notions of deliberate design in the universe, and ideas of providence in history. Thinkers of the Radical Enlightenment were influenced by the thought of Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza, with his view of a determinist, materialist universe.

However, it was the Moderate Enlightenment that represented the majority of thinkers, and these thinkers did not reject religion. While frequently critical of the clergy, the institutional churches, or popular religion, thinkers of the Moderate Enlightenment none the less professed veneration for scriptural teachings and the moral example of Jesus Christ. They believed that divine revelation in the scriptures would support and affirm what could be discerned through reason. Most Enlightened Christians sought to define a 'middle way' that would combine revelation and reason, scripture and science. They believed, with the German philosopher G. W. Leibniz, that the same God who had revealed Himself in Scripture had also created the universe, and that scientific knowledge and Christian revelation could never contradict one another, as both were 'gifts of God'. They advocated moderation in religion, and sought to diminish the religious zeal that too often led to wars, intolerance and oppression. Many Enlightened Christians questioned the occurrence of miracles, or insisted that the 'age of miracles' had ended in the first century after Christ's death.

Enlightened thinkers emphasised the ethical teachings of religion. In his influential treatise on *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, the English philosopher John Locke maintained that Christianity formed a system of moral teachings that would supplement natural reason. In Geneva, the eighteenth-century heirs of John Calvin, including the Calvinist ministers, Jean-Alphonse Turretin and Jacob Vernet, advocated a 'reasonable orthodoxy' with emphasis on moral teachings. According to Immanuel Kant, the Christian Church was an 'ethical commonwealth' and the essence of religion was the performance of moral duties. Enlightened thinkers, including Anthony Collins, Mathew Tindal and John Toland in Britain, and Herrmann Samuel

Reimarus and the dramatist and philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in Germany, endeavoured, through critical scholarship, to remove the elements of mystery and the miraculous from Scripture, in order to highlight what they viewed as its essential moral teachings.

This emphasis on the essential ethical content of religion led Enlightened thinkers to argue for the essential unity of all religions. European travellers were struck by how the different world religions had remarkably similar moral teachings. In the 'parable of the rings' in his play, *Nathan the Wise* (1779), Lessing suggested that the highest value of Christianity, Judaism and Islam would be found in their moral teachings. The different world religions, others concluded, must have had common roots in a natural religion, based on contemplation of the beauties and harmonies of the natural order and a common moral sense given by God. Debates over this natural religion contributed to anthropological studies of the primitive origins of religion, including works by Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger, Charles Dupuis, Baron d'Holbach, and David Hume. While this work was highly speculative, it did contribute to a view of religion as fundamental to the human condition. Ideas about the innate religious sense contributed to notions of a civil religion to unite societies around shared moral values; such ideas were promoted by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *The Social Contract* (1762).

### *The Legacy*

The moderate, rational religious views of the Enlightenment came under threat amid the revolutionary upheavals and warfare of the late eighteenth century. Amid the profound social dislocations, the 1790s witnessed revivalist movements across Europe and North America, with impassioned preaching that placed new emphasis on the evil of human nature and on eternal punishment by an angry God. These popular revival movements included visions of apocalyptic futures, with final confrontations between the forces of God and Satan, the bodily return of Christ in glory, and the beginning of the millennium, or the thousand-year reign of the saints on earth that would be followed by the last judgement and the end of the world. Many embraced an emotional religious life, expressed in passionate poetry, literature, music and painting, and in an infatuation with the mysterious; they became part of the Romantic Movement. Others linked religious fervour to popular movements of national liberation and assertion. This connection of religion and nationalism was especially pronounced in Spain, Russia and Germany. Accompanying the new religious fervour, there was also a revival of European Christian missionary activity in the 1790s; this renewed missionary activity

would transform Christianity into a truly global religion, but would also lead to growing confrontations with other world faiths – confrontations in which missionary activity would also be linked with Western economic expansion and colonialism.

Was the Enlightenment, with its views of a moderate, ethical religion and its vision of the essential unity of world religions, largely rejected amid the revolutionary upheavals and rise of Romantic nationalism that commenced at the end of the eighteenth century? Were the movements of religious awakening that swept through Europe and North America a response to deeper human passions, needs and aspirations that the Enlightenment had failed to meet? Or were there continuities between aspects of the Enlightenment, especially its emphases on the human passions and emotions, and the new priorities of the religious awakening and Romanticism? Did the religious Enlightenment play a part in the survival and expansion of religious motivations in the nineteenth century, including ideas of a providential national destiny, an imperial mission to spread Christianity and commerce, and the Christian critiques of industrialisation and urbanisation? These questions inform my current research agenda, which in the coming years will include a book on British national and imperial Christianity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the British mission to spread Christianity, commerce and ‘Enlightened’ civilisation to the world, a book on the religious thought of the eighteenth-century philosopher and politician, Edmund Burke, and a study of the movements of religious awakening in late eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe.



László Imre:

## ON ZSIGMOND KEMÉNY'S DENOMINATIONAL PARADOX, IN SIX PROPOSITIONS

It was Sándor Makkai who declared ninety years ago that Bálint Balassi and Endre Ady were two epoch-making Protestant lyricists, and our most outstanding religious poets. This settled the Ady-debate at one stroke. The fact that János Arany's Calvinism is a model for a nation, and that Jókai's novels gain their appealing spirituality from a 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal Reformed spirituality, is widely accepted and well-known. Up to now, however, Zsigmond Kemény has hardly been considered from the viewpoint of Protestant cultural self-image. Recently János Győri commented on him with great insight, though within a narrow compass: "Kemény's notion of destiny and his anxiety, which consider Kossuth's politics a tragic default, are deeply rooted in the experiences of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Transylvanian Calvinist soul, and are transmitted from generation to generation."<sup>1</sup>

Yet, it is still difficult to interpret that Kemény, in his historical novels, illustrates negative examples of fanaticism (in his words: infatuation) in Protestant characters (the most famous one being Mrs. Tarnóczy in *Özvegy és leánya* [*Widow and her Daughter*]), and why, in the same novel, his most amiable character the Jesuit Móric Mikes is. Kemény was namely not only a Protestant, but he also studied in the famous Nagyenyed College, and his first and best teacher was Károly Szász the elder, whose son was a trusted man, an outstanding writer, critic and translator of the Arany–Gyulai Circle, and who became the bishop of the Transdanubian Church District later on. It is true that Zsuzsanna Lorántffy, the representative of active love and understanding virtue, is the most positive character in his novel *Rajongók* (*Fanatics*). By and large, however, in Kemény's novels the characters representing meanness, hypocrisy, cowardice and even evil are mostly lay persons and pastors of the Calvinist denomination and rhetoric.

This enigmatic but hardly accidental phenomenon has neither been explained nor researched by literateurs. We are attempting to answer this question in six statements of different weight.

1. It can be claimed that Kemény was not concerned with the demand for historical truth, and even less with that for proportionality and equity in

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1 Győri L. J., *A magyar reformáció irodalmi hagyományai*, Budapest, 1997, 143.

matters of negligence and offence, but rather, he took illuminating examples from the events of the Calvinist past he had a better knowledge of.

2. It can also be turned over in our mind that Kemény may have been irritated by the prejudiced Calvinist view of the past of his time, which emphasized the cruelty of counter-Reformation on the one hand, but hushed up Reformed narrow-mindedness and occasional impatience on the other hand. Throughout his life Kemény was irritated by the one-sidedness of the Hungarian self-image in the broadest sense of the word. He condemned Kossuth because he sought cheap popularity by stressing the excellence of Hungarian people; and because he shifted responsibility on others i.e. on the court and on non-Hungarians. Thus, he reduced the chance that a self-critical view of the Hungarian self-image – like that of Széchenyi – would make an unbiased and strict nation-building possible, instead of the constantly stressed martyr role. Kossuth, the genius of mass manipulation, recognized indeed that he could win the not too intelligent majority if he encouraged them to join forces against the nation's enemies. He willingly assigned his audience the role of innocent victims, lest they should feel the burden of their responsibility and of their own failure.

3. The approach to the past in Kemény's novels could have been motivated by the negative experiences in contemporary circles. At the time of Károly Szász's conflicts and isolation Kemény obviously took his favoured teacher's part.

4. All these might have been caused by the variety of Kemény's experiences and the 'Zeitgeist' (spirit of the age). During his journey in Italy Kemény must have been thrilled by Rome and the Italian art, the culture creating values of Catholicism. Not to mention the fact that as a reaction against the anti-religious nature of Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the overwhelming Romantic Movement at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was definitely Catholic in Europe, and to a certain degree also in Hungary, considering Széchenyi or Eötvös. In contrast to this the puritanity of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestantism might have seemed to be mechanical, or even boring.<sup>2</sup>

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2 AGÁRDI L., *Kemény Zsigmond és a papság*, in: *Katolikus Szemle* 1916, 250; IDEM, *Kemény Zsigmond és a vallásfelekezetek*, in: *Katolikus Szemle* 1921, 403–425.

5. However, an explanation for the paradoxical denominational tendentiousness must be looked for in Kemény's wish to model characterological and community faults. So he did not focus on the characteristics of Calvinism at that time or in the past, but rather on the self-destructive behaviour models typical of all Hungarians. This self-critical, moreover self-reproaching view of the past, which – as a Jewish-Hungarian parallelism – had been a several hundred-year-old heritage by that time, might have had roots in the Old Testament. The Jews gathered the essence of their history even from the victory of their enemy.<sup>3</sup> They took their defeat as punishment, and this repentful punishment enabled them to survive. Of course, this self-critical view did not do good to Kemény's popularity. László Ravasz referred to it saying that "he surpassed his epoch, walked higher and deeper than his contemporaries with average erudition."<sup>4</sup>

6. And finally, there is a final and possibly more important reason. According to the evidence of his pamphlets *Forradalom után, Még egy szó a forradalom után* (*After the Revolution, One More Word After the Revolution*) written at the turn of the 1840s and 1850s Kemény considered the spreading of republican and socialistic ideas (in Europe rather than in Hungary) the main danger. Therefore he did not think that denominational antagonisms in Christianity proved timely. Reconciliation and joining forces were timely, to which only self-criticism and goodwill for the other party can lead. To this recognition ahead of his age Kemény might have been led by the humane and tolerant principles of Protestantism from his early education, from which his sense of security can be traced. That is why he can even use humour when talking about the weaknesses of Reverend Csulai in his novel *Özvegy és leánya*. When Ferenc Papp, Kemény's monographer talks about Károly Szász Sr, he characterizes the religious-ethical conviction that serves as the fundamentals of this humane and rational explanation of the world as follows: "A glance into the mysterious life of the universe and the respect for the lord of infinity opened a road for the noblest ideas in Károly Szász's soul. When in his essays he despised all the pearls and gold of the earth as compared to the quarry of the human heart and mind, [...] he condemned denominational hatred and glorified the champions of light, the unselfish workers of the coming era, [...] he preached God's word on real Christian love."<sup>5</sup> Rapprochement and under-

3 KOSSELECK, R., *Elmúlt jövő*, Budapest, 2003, 156.

4 RAVASZ L., *Kemény Zsigmond*, in: *Protestáns Szemle* 1914, 130–131.

5 PAPP F., *Báró Kemény Zsigmond I*, Budapest, 1922, 67–68.

standing between Christian denominations became realized in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mostly in the spirit of Protestant impartiality and enlightenment. This phenomenon will be parallel with the dialogical remembrance culture at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, about which Aleida Assmann spoke precisely here in Debrecen in 2011. Reconciliation has to be based on the mutual acknowledgement of our sins. Dialogical remembrance cannot be based exclusively on pride; this is why Kemény considered Kossuth's rhetoric useless on the long run. We need to recognize our gloomy heritage as well.<sup>6</sup> Zsigmond Kemény's denominational paradox is a performance of this dialogical remembrance, which has not been recognized so far.

To sum up: True to his Catholicism which was not exempt of mysticism, Géza Gárdonyi wrote his novel about Blessed Margaret entitled *Isten rabjai* (*God's Captives*), at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Kemény dared to and could take a stand from an intellectual and moral high ground at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Through this he can be looked upon as a forerunner of denominational unpretentiousness which started to be appreciated at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is proper to involve his self-criticism and his unpretentiousness open to dialogue in our noblest traditions.

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6 ASSMANN, A., *Az emlékezet átalakító ereje*, in: *Studia Litteraria* 2012/1–2, 18–19.

Ulrich H. J. Körtner:

## RELIGION, THEOLOGIE UND KRITIK

Die Debatte zum neuen Atheismus hat eine neue Runde neuzeitlicher Religionskritik eingeläutet. Die Wortführer eines naturalistischen und militanten Atheismus setzen sich allerdings erstaunlicherweise kaum oder nur oberflächlich mit den einschlägigen religionskritischen Positionen des 19. Jahrhunderts auseinander. Nietzsche und die Folgen, die bei Vertretern eines Atheismus mit Trauerflor allgegenwärtig sind und auch bei Walser neben Karl Barth im Zentrum stehen, spielen für Dawkins und Co. praktisch keine Rolle. Das Zutrauen zur Evolutionstheorie als naturalistischer Supertheorie ist immens, die darauf gründende Theorie aber philosophisch dürftig. Kaum beachtet wird auch, dass sich die moderne Theologie intensiv mit der historisch-genetischen Religionskritik, mit Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche und Freud seit dem 19. Jahrhundert intensiv befasst hat. Die Theologie des 20. Jahrhunderts und ihre Suche nach Möglichkeiten, Gott nachmetaphysisch oder auch jenseits der Alternative von Theismus und Atheismus zu denken, ist doch ohne die fortlaufende Auseinandersetzung mit der modernen Religionskritik gar nicht zu verstehen. Religionskritik ist ein wesentlicher Grundzug von Theologie in der Moderne. Allerdings handelt es sich dabei um eine religiöse Form der Religionskritik, die im Folgenden näher beschrieben werden soll.

Kritik ist ein Moment aller Religion, jedenfalls aller Religionen, die prophetischen Charakter tragen oder doch ein prophetisches Moment aufweisen. Man denke nur an die Schriftprophetie Israels in alttestamentlicher Zeit. Immer wieder haben Israels Propheten, verbunden mit scharfer Sozialkritik, massive Kritik am religiösen Kult geübt.<sup>1</sup> Deuterocesaja, der zweite Jesaja, ergießt seinen beißenden Spott über die selbstgemachten Götterbilder und diejenigen, welche sie anbeten.<sup>2</sup>

Wenn wir über religiöse Religionskritik nachdenken, gilt es zu beachten, dass die Bibel – das Alte Testament nicht minder wie das Neue Testament – „nicht nur ein religiöses, sondern auch ein antireligiöses Buch“<sup>3</sup> ist, wie Paul

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1 Siehe z.B. Amos 5,21–27; Mi 6,6–8; Jes 1,11–15; 58,1–12.

2 Vgl. Jes 44,9–20.

3 TILLICH, P., *Das Christentum und die Begegnung der Weltreligionen* (GW 5), Stuttgart, 1964, 51–98, 94.

Tillich urteilt. „Die Bibel kämpft für Gott gegen die Religion“<sup>4</sup>, d.h. gegen Mythos und Kultus. Die „Entmythologisierung“, die von Rudolf Bultmann zum theologischen Programm erhoben worden ist,<sup>5</sup> gibt es schon in der Bibel selbst *avant la lettre*. Man denke nicht nur an die bereits erwähnte ätzende Kritik Deuterocesajas an den Göttern der Umwelt Israels, sondern auch an die Schöpfungsgeschichte in Genesis 1. Die Gestirne sind keine Gottheiten mehr wie in anderen altorientalischen Schöpfungsmythen, sondern lediglich Leuchten, die Jahwe an den Himmel gesetzt hat. Auch das Neue Testament ist von scharfer Kritik an bestehenden Religionen durchzogen, und schon Jesus selbst kritisiert immer wieder die Praxis des Judentums seiner Zeit. Aber auch das Christentum selbst, sofern es Züge einer mythischen und kultischen Religion annimmt, ist schon im Neuen Testament Gegenstand der Kritik. Nicht nur, dass etwa Paulus an bestimmten Formen des Judenchristentums und seiner Forderung nach der Beschneidung von nichtjüdischen Christen oder an einem enthusiastisch-spiritualistischen Christentum in Korinth Kritik übt. Man kann auch wie Tillich oder Bultmann in der johanneischen Theologie kultus- und mythoskritische Züge erkennen.<sup>6</sup> Die Sakramente von Taufe und Abendmahl treten deutlich in den Hintergrund, und die futurische Eschatologie, welche die Wiederkunft Christi, Weltende und Jüngstes Gericht in mythischen Bildern ausmalt, wird von einer präsentischen Eschatologie marginalisiert, nach welcher sich Gericht und Auferweckung zum ewigen Leben bereits hier und jetzt im Akt des Glaubens ereignen. Doch auch wenn das Christentum, um noch einmal mit Tillich zu sprechen, „mehr sein will als eine Religion“<sup>7</sup>, ist seine fundamentale Kritik an aller Religion doch selbst eine Erscheinungsform von Religion. Sie bedient sich auf paradoxe Weise religiöser Mittel, religiöser Sprach- und Denkformen, um die Religion zu bekämpfen.

Immer wieder sind Religionen aufgrund neuer religiöser Erfahrungen oder theologischer Einsichten aus der kritischen Auseinandersetzung mit bestehenden Religionen entstanden. Das gilt für das Christentum ebenso wie für den Islam, aber auch für den Buddhismus. Reformbewegungen und religiöse Neuaufbrüche kommen in der gesamten Christentumsgeschichte bis in die Gegenwart vor. Immer wieder haben sie auch zu Kirchenspaltungen

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4 Ebd.

5 Vgl. BULTMANN, R., *Neues Testament und Mythologie. Das Problem der Entmythologisierung der neutestamentlichen Verkündigung* (BEvTh 96), München, 1988.

6 Vgl. BULTMANN, R., *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (KEK 2), Göttingen, 1968, Nachdruck 1978; TILICH, *Christentum*, 95.

7 TILICH, *Christentum*, 94.

geführt, verbunden mit scharfer Kritik an jenen, welche den neuen Lehren nicht folgen wollten. Nicht zuletzt sind die Kirchen der Reformation aus einer religiösen Freiheitsbewegung und aus der Kritik an bestehenden kirchlichen Verhältnissen und Lehren hervorgegangen. Das protestantische Prinzip der *ecclesia semper reformanda* stellt die aus der Reformation hervorgegangenen Kirchen unter den Anspruch permanenter Selbstkritik, und das heißt, religiöser Religionskritik.

Religiöse Religionskritik begegnet uns einerseits in der Form der Kritik, die von einer bestimmten Religion an anderen Religionen geübt wird, andererseits aber auch als Kritik innerhalb einer bestimmten Religion. Im Unterschied zu areligiösen Formen der Religionskritik nimmt die religiöse Religionskritik keinen Standpunkt außerhalb jeglicher Religion ein, sondern kritisiert die eigene oder fremde Religion von einem religiösen Standpunkt aus und unterscheidet zwischen wahrer und falscher Religion. Sie stellt also nicht die Sinnhaftigkeit von Religion überhaupt in Frage, wohl aber die Sinnhaftigkeit oder Angemessenheit einzelner Erscheinungsformen von Religion.

Seit der Aufklärung sind nicht nur Formen der Religionskritik entstanden, welche konkrete Religionen, ihre Lehren und ihre Praxis radikaler Vernunftkritik unterziehen, um zum Konstrukt einer natürlichen Religion vorzustoßen, deren Wesenskern moralisch vernünftiger sein soll, sondern auch Formen einer noch radikaleren Kritik, welche Religion überhaupt als Irrtum, als Wahn und als etwas zu Bekämpfendes und zu Überwindendes ansieht. Religionen können darauf reagieren, indem sie entweder diese Spielarten radikaler Religionskritik ihrerseits mit allen Mitteln als Form des Irrtums oder der Bosheit bekämpfen oder aber, indem sie Wahrheitsmomente solcher Religionskritik in die eigene religiöse Sicht auf die Religion zu integrieren versuchen. Tatsächlich gibt es dafür aus der Geschichte des Christentums in der Moderne genügend Beispiele.

Eine wesentliche Rolle spielt dabei die Theologie. Theologie im christlichen Kontext ist die Selbstprüfung des christlichen Glaubens in einer wissenschaftlichen Form. Auch wenn moderne Theologie religionswissenschaftliche Elemente enthält, ist die Theologie als Ganze doch von Religionswissenschaft zu unterscheiden, weil sie die eigene wie fremde Religionen nicht von einem neutralen oder a-religiösen Standpunkt aus betrachtet, sondern explizit einen religiösen Standpunkt einnimmt. Sie beschreibt eben nicht nur die eigene Religion oder fremde Religionen, sondern sie bezieht Stellung. Sie verfährt nicht nur deskriptiv, sondern sie argumentiert normativ und somit kritisch, mag dies auch noch so zurückhaltend geschehen. Theologie

als Selbstprüfung des christlichen Glaubens unter historischen, systematischen und praktischen Gesichtspunkten ist ein unaufgebbares Moment des Glaubens. In ihr verhält sich der Glaube kritisch zu sich selbst. Nicht nur gibt es eine explizite theologische Religionskritik,<sup>8</sup> sondern Theologie als Wissenschaft ist insgesamt als Religionskritik zu verstehen. Es handelt sich bei ihr um die institutionalisierte religiöse Religionskritik des Christentums, die sich in der Moderne ihrerseits zu a-religiösen oder antireligiösen Formen der Religionskritik verhalten muss. Jedenfalls gilt das für die evangelische Theologie in der Moderne.

Wenn Theologie als religiöse Religionskritik charakterisiert wird, fragt sich allerdings sogleich, welcher Begriff von Religion und welche Maßstäbe für die Kritik von Religion zugrunde gelegt werden. Ich möchte die These vertreten, dass Fundament und Maßstab von Theologie nicht ein allgemeiner Begriff von Religion ist, sondern das Evangelium von Jesus Christus als Bezeugung der letztgültigen Selbstoffenbarung Gottes. Zwar kann auf den Religionsbegriff theologisch nicht verzichtet werden, doch ist zunächst zwischen Religion und Gottesglaube zu unterscheiden. So kann auch die viel diskutierte Wiederkehr der Religion, besser gesagt das neu erwachende Interesse an Religion, im Einzelfall ebenso sehr Ausdruck der Gottsuche wie des Gottesverlustes sein. Umgekehrt kann ein Gewohnheitsatheist Gott näher sein als so mancher, der sich für religiös hält. Insofern ist Religion in theologischer Hinsicht ein ambivalentes Phänomen.

Der Glaube an Gott und die Rede von ihm sind ebenso wenig unabdingbar wie die Frage nach Gott.<sup>9</sup> Wohl mag es sein, dass der Mensch nicht umhin kann, nach Sinn zu fragen. Die Frage nach dem Sinn des Lebens ist aber nicht einfach mit der Gottesfrage identisch. Und nicht alle Antworten auf die Sinnfrage lassen sich als religiös bezeichnen. Religion ist eine Möglichkeit neben anderen, aber nicht die einzige, Sinnfragen und Erfahrungen von Sinnwidrigkeiten zu bearbeiten.

Es ist nun aber nach biblischem Zeugnis Gott selbst, der alle Religion der Kritik unterzieht, weil auch jede Form der Religion oder der Frömmigkeit Gegenstand seines endzeitlichen Gerichtes ist. Das Kommen Gottes in diese Welt führt zur fundamentalen Krise aller Religion einschließlich des Christentums und einschließlich aller Theologien. Kurz: am

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8 Vgl. KRAUS, H.-J., *Theologische Religionskritik*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1982; HOFF, G. M., *Religionskritik heute*, Kevelaer, 2010, 119ff; KÖRTNER, U. H. J., *Gottesglaube und Religionskritik* (ThLZ.F 30), Leipzig, 2014.

9 Siehe dazu ausführlich KÖRTNER, U. H. J., *Der verborgene Gott. Zur Gotteslehre*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2000.

Christusgeschehen orientierte religiöse Religionskritik ist letztlich eschatologisch begründet.

Christliche Theologie muss es auch heute wagen, von Gott zu reden, nicht nur über irgendwelche „Gottesgedanken“ als Restbestände einer Religionskultur, deren Schwundstufen offenbar die ganze Hoffnungeiner neuen Generation von „Kulturprotestanten“ sind.<sup>10</sup> Sie unternimmt das Wagnis, menschliche Lebenswelt im Licht der Gottesrede zu interpretieren, und versetzt damit potentiell alle Menschen in die Teilnehmerperspektive, insofern sie ihrer aller „Betroffenheit“ durch die biblisch begründete Gottesrede einsichtig zu machen versucht. Das aber wird nicht schon dadurch erreicht, dass überhaupt und allgemein von Gott gesprochen wird, sondern dadurch, dass – ausgehend von den biblischen Texten – das Angegangensein des Menschen und seiner Lebenswirklichkeit durch Gott konkret beschrieben wird.

Theologie als religiöse Religionskritik besteht nun freilich in der selbstkritischen Prüfung christlicher Gottesrede. Diese hat sich nicht nur gedanklich zu bewähren, sondern vor allem in der gelebten Solidarität mit den anderen, insbesondere den Leidenden und Entrechteten, soll der Glaube etwas anderes als eine Form des Heilsegoismus sein. Zu dieser Solidarität gehören aber auch das Gebet, die Fürbitte und die Klage als elementarste Form der Gottesrede. So verortet, ist alles Reden von Gott wenn nicht schon wahr, so doch im besten Fall wahrhaftig. Und es sollte von Gott nicht mehr gesagt werden, als sich angesichts seiner Strittigkeit und der sich immer wieder einstellenden Anfechtung des Glaubens redlich vertreten lässt. Daher mündet auch das theologische Nachdenken über Gott am Ende in das Gebet, welches zu allen Aussagen über Gott das Amen spricht: „Amen, das ist: es werde wahr“ (Luther).<sup>11</sup>

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10 Vgl. dazu auch KÖRTNER, U. H. J., *Hermeneutische Theologie. Zugänge zur Interpretation des christlichen Glaubens und seiner Lebenspraxis*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2008, 19–33; DERS., *Mut machen, von Gott zu reden. Gute Theologie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Wort Gottes und gelebter Religion*, in: Huber, W. (Hg.), *Was ist gute Theologie?*, Stuttgart, 2004, 77–87.

11 LUTHER, M., *Vater unser im Himmelreich* (EG 344,9).



*Zsigmond Ritoók:*

## EPIC PROEMS

It is a fact of common knowledge that a classic epic proem consists of two elements: a proposition and an invocation. A proposition (introduction of the subject) communicates what the poet is to speak about and in the invocation he calls on the Muse to assist him with his performance. Why is it like this? In oral poetry each performance is more or less a re-drafting. It always remains uncertain, whether the right expression will occur to the performing poet at the right moment, whether he can complete a poorly begun sentence and whether he forgets to say something he needs to refer to and which would be difficult to complement later. The Muses, the daughters of Remembrance can avert the danger. Neither the singer nor his audience had been present at the events recounted in the song. How can a poet persuade his audience that everything had happened in the way he recounted? The omnipresent and omniscient Muses guarantee this. How can a poet enthral his audience with his performance so much that he can take them anywhere he will? The Muse has taught him how to do it. How is he able to compose poems at all? There is something about it that cannot be learnt and exceeds all diligence and intellect. That is why he invokes the Muse.

The research on oral poetry has already dealt with these questions. However, an important change evolved Greek culture in the 4th century B. C.: Written literature more and more superseded oral tradition as the mode of existence of poetry. As a consequence the earlier coincidence of production and reception of poems pulled apart: the book came between the poet and the recipient. The text had to be elaborated so that it could assert itself on its own without the poet's accent, mimicry and authority. And no matter how careful a poet elaborated his text, he could not be certain of its favourable reception forever, and in all circumstances.

This is what Apollonius Rhodius took into consideration when he ended the proem of his *Argonautica* by entreating the Muses to be his interpreters. Once again there is something inexplicable about it i.e. when and why recipients like a poem (irrespective of its author's personality), why they feel addressed and fascinated by it. The poet calls on the Muse to help him to fascinate the recipient. Or to put it more simply: he asks for intelligent readers.

Poets made various attempts to find receptive readers and restore the direct relationship between source and recipient to some extent. One of these might have been e. g. the choice of subject: to devote an elegy, an ecomium or a whole epos to the prospective reader. Another way might have been to dedicate the poem to someone. The most interesting procedure becomes for the first time in Virgil's *Georgica* tangible for us: no invocation of the Muse, but the invocation of the gods of Sun, Moon and of agriculture passes over to the invocation of the divine power, numen of the monarch Octavian. So the monarch himself becomes a source of inspiration and by this concealed dedication a prospective reader.

This is flattery for sure, but not just that. The faith in the reality and empowering character of the Muse wore off, the invocation of a 'present deity' (*praesens deus*) instead of an 'absent' one must have been a well-timed transformation of the old insight that an inexplicable element is implicated in the creative activity and a sentiment that there is such an interaction between poet and reader as between a bard and his audience in oral tradition. The prospective reader is also a source of inspiration.

The epic of the Flavian era abandons the invocation of the monarch, but replaces it with an encomium on the monarch and brings back the traditional invocation of gods, although it does not usually mention the Muse, and uses 'goddess(es)' as a more general address which can be interpreted in several ways. The Muse is just a symbol or ornamentation. A proem consists of three elements: proposition, invocation, encomium on the monarch (dedication). I cannot go now into any more detailed structural analysis.

At the end of Antiquity the proems of two epic poems are worthy of our attention: *The Rape of Proserpine*, an unfinished poem by Claudianus and *Dionysiaca*, an epos by Nonnos. Both of them portray themselves in the possessed state of a poet, though not in the same way. Claudianus says in the proposition what his shaken soul commands him to say, and this is followed by a vision: there are god figures whirling in front of him that are somehow related to the subject of his poem, finally he calls on the gods of Hades to be told how Amor tamed Pluto. There is no word of the Muse or a recipient, just the poet is there all alone. Nonnos, in his virtuoso style, begins with a proposition embedded in a traditional invocation of the Muse, and then he talks about how he gradually reaches the state of Dionysian ecstasy together with other followers of Dionysus. Therefore the poem is a matter of the initiated.

Early mediaeval epic poems do not know of a proem of Classical structure. Petrarch was the first to begin his epos *Africa* on Scipio with a traditional, large proem. The work starts with a proposition embedded in an

invocation of the Muse in a traditional manner. And then something entirely new follows: another invocation of someone unnamed who must unmistakably be the Saviour according to a comprehensive paraphrase. The third element is an encomium on the monarch dedicated to Robert of Anjou just like in the Silver Age of Roman epics. So Petrarch transformed tradition in so far as he set a real figure for the Christian faith of his time i.e. the Saviour next to a traditional figure whose importance faded and who lost his strength-giving reality. However, the real figure can be expected to give real help, real strength even if he has little in common with poetry – which also Petrarch recognised.

The way leads from here in two directions. One direction is the complete omission of invocation; or the invocation of the Muse as a different, non-religious entity, as a symbol with a real value at least for its time. The former solution was chosen by Boiardo and Ariosto, whose propositions were immediately followed by the dedication and by Camoes, respectively, who invoked the nymphs of the river Tejo of his homeland, actually his most beloved country. The other direction is to invoke a real figure of Christian faith as a Muse. So did Tasso and Spenser, who invoked the Virgin Mary with the crown of stars who gave non-perishable Heliconian laurel. This was the refusal of the traditional ('pagan') Muse, on the one hand, and it referred to the iconography of Mary, on the other hand. So did Milton who as a Puritan did not invoke Mary but the heavenly Muse who inspired the shepherd on the mountain Horeb (thus dissociating himself from the shepherd on the mountain Helicon, Hesiod and his Muses) and the Spirit of God who was sitting as a dove over the depth connecting Gen 1,2 with the iconography of the Holy Spirit. No dedication – of course. To whom could a man of a fallen regime have dedicated his work?

At first sight the proem of another great Biblical epos Klopstock's Messiah – barely read, of course, today – is similar: a proposition, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, no dedication: actually this is again a modern transformation of the tradition. The poem begins with "Sing" – but it does not proceed with "heavenly Muse" or something like that as in the poem by Milton: but with "oh, immortal soul". The poet addresses and invites himself to sing of "the redemption of the sinful man". This is something new, this has been an emphatic difference from the recurring formula since the Iliad and it is about something more than what *arma virumque cano*: I sing this and that means. The song does not come from the outside, but it springs up from the soul of the poet who calls on the 'Creator Spirit' (creator Spiritus) to guide poetizing as her imitation.

We are in the period after Shaftsbury (the artist as a creator), at the threshold of Romanticism. There is no formal dedication, but the poet addresses the “few noble souls”: “Hear me and sing”. The poet does not turn to princes but to those of his kind. Poetry is a matter of an initiated community: not that of a Dionysian ecstatic, but of a civil Christian community.

I do not know whether Vörösmarty knew Klopstock, but he certainly knew Claudianus, and under his influence he might have begun his epos, *Zalán futása* (*Zalán's Flight*) with no formal proposition and invocation of the Muse like the epigones of his time (which is, in regard to Hungarian prehistoric times and in an age of rationalism, at least strange), but he transformed his proposition into a powerful vision and addressed no princes but his homeland he wanted to arouse. Also Arany followed in his steps: “... I seem to see his robust stature”, and introduced the vision to the reader using a metaphor. To the reader? It is better to say to the listener, the person addressed who listens to him as to a story-teller in the spinning room – to be gradually led from the world of experience to a different reality of poetry.

I have attempted to outline the history of a topos, which was active from the beginning of the European literature to the 19<sup>th</sup> century because (and in so far as) it was formed and reinterpreted according to the faith and ideas of the changing times. Insofar this is also an example of how the heritage of Antiquity can remain alive. In the course of changing times the poet always gave in the proem a relevant answer to the question where his unlearnable capability for poetizing came from, how he could win and fascinate others so that both poet and reader experience the magic of poetry alike even if not together.

Herman J. Selderhuis:

## WAS IST REFO500?

Refo500 ist die internationale Plattform zum Jubiläum der protestantischen Reformation. Refo500 ist ein Projekt der niederländischen Stiftung Refo500, an dem sich inzwischen 120 Institutionen aus allen Kontinenten als Partner beteiligen. Ziel der Plattform ist es, in Vorbereitung auf den 500. Geburtstag der Reformation 2017 diesem Ereignis und ihrer Bedeutung als Auslöser der Erneuerung und Veränderung in der Vergangenheit, der Gegenwart und der Zukunft, nationale und internationale Beachtung zu schenken.

### *500 Jahre Reformation: 1517–2017*

1517 schlug Martin Luther 95 Thesen, in denen er die Missstände in der Kirche anprangerte, an die Schlosskirche zu Wittenberg. Diese Handlung wird allgemein als Beginn der Reformation gesehen. Im Folgenden fanden überall in Europa und von der Zeit an auch weltweit große Veränderungen, deren Auswirkungen auch noch heute zu spüren sind, in verschiedenen Bereichen statt. Für Refo500 ist das der Anlass, sich von 2010 nicht nur bis zum 500. Geburtstag der Reformation 2017, sondern auch darüber hinaus in neun Themengebieten der Reformation, als Bewegung von Erneuerung und Veränderung anzunehmen.

Die Themengebieten sind:

- Bildung und Wissenschaft
- Bekenntnis und Zeugnis
- Geld und Macht
- Lehre und Kirche
- Leben und Sterben
- Kunst und Kultur
- Freiheit und Verkündigung
- Erneuerung und Frömmigkeit
- Bibel und Sprache

### *Zielsetzung von Refo500*

Wegen des 500. Geburtstags der Reformation 2017 soll diesem und ihrer Bedeutung als Auslöser der Erneuerung und Veränderung in der

Vergangenheit, der Gegenwart und der Zukunft, nationale und internationale Beachtung geschenkt werden. Dabei liegt der Fokus u.a. auf historischen, theologischen, religiösen, politischen, sozialen und kulturellen Bereichen.

### *Projektpartnern*

Refo500 arbeitet mit Projektpartnern zusammen, die sich über einen Vertrag mit einander verbunden haben, um die Plattform gemeinsam zu unterstützen und ihre Tätigkeit möglich zu machen. An Refo500 nehmen u.a. protestantische und katholische Organisationen, Universitäten, Städte, Verlage, Kirchen, Museen usw. teil. Das Projekt steht natürlich auch gegenüber anderen Partnern offen.

### *Refo500, ein Projekt das verbindet*

Refo500 möchte Verbindungen zwischen den Themen der damaligen und der heutigen Zeit entwickeln. Die zentralen Punkte sind hierbei Erneuerung, Veränderung und Relevanz. Als Projekt verbindet Refo500 sowohl die Parteien, sowie die Parteien und die jeweiligen Netzwerke innerhalb des Projekts, als auch die Projektinhalte und deren Zielgruppen miteinander.

### *Programm*

Das Programm von Refo500 wird von den vielen Projektpartnern realisiert. Refo500 bietet ein abwechslungsreiches Programm u.a. mit Reisen, Tagestouren, Studientagen, Konferenzen, Büchern, Unterrichtsmaterialien, Konzerten und Ausstellungen. Zur Information stehen eine Webseite in vier Sprachen und ein monatlicher Newsletter in drei Sprachen zur Verfügung. Dazu gibt es innerhalb von Refo500 das Projekt *Refocities*, in der die Städte von Refo500 sich vernetzt haben.

### *Konkretisierung:*

- zeitliche, inhaltliche Einschaltung in die Veranstaltungen, die im Projekt stattfinden. Das bedeutet z.B., dass Bildungs- und Forschungseinrichtungen frühzeitig Kongresse, Buchprojekte u.a. ankündigen können, und sich dabei der innerhalb des Projekts vorhandenen Kenntnisse und Kontakte bedienen können. Damit können die Partner ihren (wissenschaftlichen) Output und ihre Ausstrahlung für mehrere Jahre garantieren und ausbauen;
- feste PR mit einem Logo und einem Link auf den Webseiten; da diese Seiten alle notwendigen Informationen über Veröffentlichungen,

Konzerte, Lesungen, und andere Aktivitäten auf lokaler, regionaler, nationaler und internationaler Ebene enthalten, werden sie häufig aufgerufen;

- indem Refo500 mit ähnlichen Webseiten auf der Welt verlinkt wird, wird der Nutzen der Partner noch weiter vergrößert;
- auch wenn Partner an einigen Aktivitäten nicht beteiligt sind, wird die gegenseitige Verwendung des Logos und des Namens „Refo500“ einen öffentlichkeitswirksamen Effekt haben;
- die Partner werden über Refo500 neue Zielgruppen ansprechen.

#### *Akademische Einrichtungen in Refo500*

Von Bedeutung ist Refo500 vor allem für akademische Einrichtungen. Die Vielseitigkeit von Refo500, die Qualität der Projektpartner und das internationale Ausmaß dieses Projekts haben zur Folge, dass eine Partnerschaft viele Möglichkeiten zur Profilierung der eigenen Einrichtung bietet. Das ist der Grund, dass zum Beispiel die Universitäten von Amsterdam, Leuven, Warschau, Boston, New York, Oslo, Berlin, Tübingen, Bologna, Zürich usw. als Partner von Refo500 mitmachen.

#### *Spezifisch für akademische Einrichtungen*

- Teilnahme an einem wachsenden und qualitativ hochwertigen internationalen akademischen Netzwerk;
- Verstärkung der interuniversitären und interdisziplinären Forschung;
- Effektiverer Planung von Researchmaster-Programmen;
- Vergrößerung des Angebots für Studenten und Dozenten;
- Größere Attraktivität des Programms der eigenen Einrichtung für Studenten und potentielle Studenten;
- Einsatz von Mitteln anderer Disziplinen und Organisationen innerhalb von Refo500, u.a. akademische Reisen, Ausstellungen, Buchprojekte;
- Finanzielle Vorteile: Kostenersparnisse und Vergrößerung der Möglichkeiten bei Subventionsanträgen;
- Akademische Einrichtungen haben die gleichen Privilegien und Vorteile wie die anderen Projektpartner.

Innerhalb von Refo500 haben die akademischen Partner die Forschungsprojekte im Reformation Research Consortium (RefoRC) miteinander verbunden. RefoRC organisiert Sommerkurse, Buchprojekte und Kolloquien. Jährlich findet die internationale und interdisziplinäre RefoRC-Konferenz statt, wo sich Forscher aus verschiedenen Fakultäten treffen und über Kurzvorträge ihre Projekte und Ergebnisse vorstellen.

*Ergebnis*

Refo500 ist ein faszinierendes und wachsendes Netzwerk, das gerade für Forschungs- und Bildungseinrichtungen attraktiv ist, aber das für jeden der sich irgendwie mit der Reformation des 16. Jahrhunderts und deren Bedeutung für heute beschäftigt, unendliche Möglichkeiten bietet.

László Koncsol:

## HUNGARIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN THE CSALLÓKÖZ REGION

As a Hungarian writer in Slovakia I was banned from publishing in the autumn of 1985. A Hungarian village, Diósförgepatony on Csallóköz (Great Rye Island) requested me to write the chronicles of the village, and research its history. In the course of my research I realized the deficiency of our knowledge both of the historical region Csallóköz – which has been part of Slovakia since the Treaty of Trianon (1921) – and of the past of the Reformed Presbytery in Komárom. Books on these topics have been washed away in the storms and national crises of history; they are available only in few academic libraries. After I had thoroughly studied the Kisalföld (Little Hungarian Plain) – which is located in the partial territories of four former counties: Pozsony (Bratislava), Komárom (Komarno), Nyitra (Nitra) and Győr – with Csallóköz, the largest eyot in Europe, I was impelled to start a periodical called *Csallóközi Kiskönyvtár (Booklets on Csallóköz)* in 1993 (published by Kalligram Publishers in Pozsony), with the long term goal of framing the profound, complex history of the region. The periodical comprised – among others – volumes on the history of the Reformed church in the region. Most of the volumes were reprints, usually supplemented with introduction, epilogue, appendix and notes; others were formerly unpublished archival sources. Up to the present day 42 volumes instead of 30 as originally planned have been published in the *Kiskönyvtár* series. 19 books deal totally or partly with issues on the past of Calvinists in the region. If the Lord sustains me, gives me strength and keeps also the publisher and we get financial support, 22 volumes of the periodical will authentically deal with the Calvinists of the Hungarian minority in the northwestern part of historical Hungary within some years. Of course, this comprises only a small part i.e. a quarter or one-third of the whole material. Because of my limited opportunities, however, the exploitation of the full subject-matter will have to be performed by others. It is not at all proper to mention in this place that at the same time church history constitutes a part of the general history of the region.

The Reformed Presbytery (Tractus) in Komárom – comprising 51 congregations and seven curacies and Diasporas, respectively – constituted a part of the Transdanubian Reformed Church District from the beginnings to the Treaty of Trianon, then from the Vienna Awards to the Paris Peace Treaties.

The region of our presbytery covered five historical counties: Pozsony, Komárom, Győr, Nyitra and Esztergom. According to detailed statistics from 1841, it was inhabited by 14.465 noblemen and 25.000 commoners. So according to a professedly inaccurate calculation, the population of the presbytery consisted of 38.465 Calvinists. (“...but the number of Calvinists was 39.000 5 or 6 years ago, so today it can be as high as that or even higher i.e. 40.000, because despite of the decree the census was performed hit-or-miss in several places – namely, also in Komárom”, the summary at the end of the visitational record says.) According to the statistics quoted 3.932 children (2.209 boys and 1.723 girls) went to school in the Presbytery. The moderator who performed the canonical visitation and his assistant, took only the students into consideration who were in the school-building, and merely referred to the number of those absent. Besides this, to increase the number of school-children, they urged the leaders of the congregations to perform family visitations, especially that of noble families. They did the same to make people fully accept the vaccination against small pox. In one of my presentations (*A Komáromi Református Egyházmegye iskolái 1815–1848-ban az egyházlátogatási és közgyűlési jegyzőkönyvek tükrében* [Schools in the Komárom Reformed Presbytery in the Light of Records of Canonical Visitations and General Assemblies between 1815 and 1848], in: 1000 éves a magyar iskola. Nemzetközi művelődés- és neveléstörténeti szimpozionum, Győr, 1996, 56–65.) I took the types of settlements and the landowners in the Presbytery into account, so I will not list them here. There lived fewer Calvinists in Pozsony i.e. in the county of the Catholic Pálffy family, which was the holder of the Lord Lieutenant for Life title. The number of Calvinists was higher in Csallóköz (Komárom, Győr, Esztergom), it was almost completely inhabited by Calvinists. Even in the properties of Esztergom Archdiocese there were mansions and serf villages that professed the Helvetian confession. The resettlement after the Turkish era accounts for the situation: at that time economic interests overwrote denominational ones. In my experience Elek Fényes, statistician of the Hungarian Reform Era made – in his two books – an accurate report about denominational relations in the Presbytery (*Magyarország geographiai szótára I–IV.* [Geographical Dictionary of Hungary I–IV.], Pest, 1851; *Komárom vármegye leírása* [Description of Komárom], Pest, 1848, and then Pozsony County, 1994), thus, I just want to refer to it. In the Hungarian settlements in the Presbytery concerned the majority of the population was Roman Catholic, however, a smaller portion of the population was Lutheran, and in some places (Pozsony, Somorja-Tejfalú, Komárom, Nagymagyar and mainly in the market town Dunaszerdahely) there lived Israelites in the

protection of the Pálffy family. The book by Alfred Engel *A dunaszerdahelyi zsidó hitközség emlékkönyve* ([*Jewish Community in Dunaszerdahely*], Tel-Aviv, 1975) is about the strong and populous synagogues which existed also in these places. The Hungarian text of the bilingual book was published again in the series *Csallóközi Kiskönyvtár* in 1995 and it was supplemented with my introduction and substantial briefing notes.

I started to publish the historical sources of the Presbytery in 1992. My first work on this subject is a book entitled *Kacsá, Kacsá, boszorkány vagy* (*Duck, Duck, You are a Witch*), which is based on the reports of nine criminal cases or on the records of inquiry of the district administrator, which are kept in the archives of the former Pozsony County Court of Law. Three of these writings open window to the life of the Presbytery in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The recorded scenes are vivid and dramatic enough to be adapted into prose, stage or screen.

In the autumn of 1985 the Lord led me to Diósförgepatony, and after a short inquiry, I visited the Collections of the Transdanubian Reformed Church District in Pápa (Hungary) where a small part of the reports on canonical visitations and minutes of general assemblies from 1858 are preserved. Unfortunately, a considerable part of the records is lost or lurks somewhere. Neither József Czibor, youth pastor of the congregation and church historian (*Viharok szárnyán* [*On the Wing of Storms*], 1935 and Kalligram Publishers, 2006), nor Géza Kúr who deliniated the past of the Presbytery from the beginnings to the Edict of Tolerance (*A Komáromi Református Egyházmegye* [*Komárom Reformed Presbytery*], 1937 and Kalligram, 1994) knew the relatively extensive material. This is excusable and also accounts for the scantiness of systematic region historical research if we remember that as a result of the Treaty of Trianon we did not only lose our scholars, but also the possibility of research. Both of our authors, whose books I republished in my periodical, used easily accessible sources to be found in presbyteries and parochies. Géza Kúr, pastor in Csicsó, used mostly Volume One of the outstanding synthesis by Etele Thury (*A Dunántúli Református Egyházkerület története I.* [*History of the Transdanubian Reformed Church District. Vol. I.*] Pápa, 1908), but he did not use Volume Two, because the latter one remained a manuscript for different reasons. This manuscript is available in the Archives in Pápa, and it was me who had the task to publish it together with Volume One in my periodical *Kiskönyvtár* in 1998. Prefaces were written by Mihály Márkus, bishop of the Transdanubian Reformed Church District, Géza Erdélyi, bishop of the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia, and Etele Thury, the author.

Géza Kúr and Etele Thury: The latter one was a church historian and a professor of theology at Pápa Theological Seminary, who performed a narrow study of the history of galley slaves, and probably found and revealed every lurking piece of information about the topic. But a few years ago László Köntös, director of the Transdanubian Collections handed me over a previously unknown booklet entitled *Short Memorial of the Most Grievous Sufferings of the Ministers of the Protestant Churches in Hungary*, subtitled *By the Instigation of the Popish Clergy there*. The booklet was published in London, in 1676. The English author worked on the basis of the accounts of preachers who had been galley slaves before they immigrated to England. I am going to finish the translation of the booklet this year, so it can be published as a bilingual edition next year.

Géza Kúr referred to the manuscript of János Antal Valesius, a Czech-Moravian preacher in the Csallóköz several times. He attended the Reformed College in Debrecen, and mastered the Hungarian language. The manuscript was in the possession of Géza Kúr, and got to the USA when its owner emigrated there. At the time of Carolina Resolutio, then under Maria Theresa, Valesius was pastor in Réte, then in Csallóközarányos and Nagykeszi, and later became the moderator of the Csallóköz Presbytery. Valesius as a moderator preserved his whole outgoing correspondence (1725–1740), and took it down in a large sized note-book. Only after many years of research was I able to obtain the photostat of the manuscript, and publish it in *Kiskönyvtár*, supplemented with complementary remarks and an epilogue by Lajos Csémy, professor of Theology in Prague. Géza Kúr's son, Csaba donated the manuscript to the Transdanubian Reformed Collections at my request. As far as I know, some traces of Valesius in Debrecen are available also in the Archives of the Transtibiscan Reformed Church District. His life and work can contribute to the understanding of Czech-Hungarian Reformed relations (Comenius, etc.) after the Battle of White Mountain (Czech Republic).

A few additional digressive details to the topic: The bronze statue of Lajos Kossuth in Cleveland was restored by Csaba Kúr. One of the English language dailies of the city published a photo of a crane hoisting the statue, which was made by András Tóth, the father of the poet Árpád Tóth, from its pedestal. According to the caption the statue in the sky cried out *Visszatérek!* (*I shall return!*) It was also Csaba Kúr who made the plaque of Lajos Gulyás, the martyr pastor of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution for the wall of his parish. He was born in Upper-Hungary, and lived later in Levél, Transdanubia. A copy of the bronze relief of the man tightly embracing the hanged man's body can be seen on the wall of the corridor at the Reformed College of Pápa.

Zsolt Kövy, a former school mate, a friend from Losonc (a north-eastern town) wrote a booklet on the martyr (“*Hazádnak rendületlenül.*” *Gulyás Lajos emlékezete.* [“*Stand beside your land, unshaken...*” *In memory of Lajos Gulyás*]). It was published by the Kálvin János Publishing House (Budapest, 1999). It was Csaba Kúr again who not without adventures, though, brought home his parents’ ashes to put them to rest in the cemetery of their congregation in Csicsó. These are some of the connections in the past of the Upper-Hungary presbytery within the homeland and beyond the sea.

But let us return to the reports of presbyteries kept in the Archives of the Transdanubian Reformed Church District! The box contains reports on the canonical visitations and minutes of tractual general meetings between 1815 and 1848. The whole subsisting though scanty material makes up five long, printed books. The reports serve as sources for several historical disciplines in numerous aspects. Just one example! Daniel Lossontzi’s (Losonci) life after graduation from the College can be of interest especially here in Debrecen. In the *Csokonai Emlékek* (*Csokonai Memoires*, Balázs Vargha, Akadémia, 1960) he appears as Csokonai’s fellow student who was punished with a four-day detention on 7th September 1793 together with Samuel Teleki and Csokonai because of transgression. The register of names at the end of the book says: „Daniel Losonci, student in Debrecen in 1794, teacher in Nagykároly, then pastor in the market town Somorja.” Losonczi is amply represented in the reports, he served in Csilizradvány (Győr county), then in Somorja (Pozsony county), after that he was invited to Jóka (in Mátyusföld) near the River Danube where he passed away on 23rd September 1838 at the end of a life full of confrontations. His daughter’s tomb with the preacher’s heart-stirring epitaph is also to be found in the graveyard in Jóka

The line of reports in the archives in Pápa discontinues in February 1848, and it starts again with the material from 1858. It will take me one more month to make the latter one ready for printing preparation. I have to complete the contents of the Appendix, indices, preachers’ biographies, Hungarian–Hungarian and Latin–Hungarian dictionaries, further on to document the walk of life of the Borza preacher-dynasty. It is the preparation of the registers between 1815 and 1826, what is left. After I have sent the whole material to the Short Memorial Press in Pozsony or in Pápa, I on my part shall consider the case of the church historical booklets *Kiskönyvtár* finished. The investigation of the history of Csallóköz, the region, the Tractus (Presbytery) and other Reformed Presbyteries in Upper-Hungary will probably be continued by a theologian of the Komárom Reformed Theological Seminary or principally by a literateur in the organizational framework of Forum Institute in Somorja.

As far as my limited opportunities allowed me, I helped with the publication of Roman Catholic materials, too. Monographs on the history of two Catholic villages were written from church perspective. One of them is the *Csütörtök mezőváros története (History of Country Town Csütörtök)* written by the historian Ferenc Aba Sill from Szombathely (Hungary), the other one was written by two vicars from Nagyfödémes and its title is *A nagyfödémesi plébánia múltjából (From the Past of Vicarage of Nagyfödémes, 1999)*. The latter one consists of *Historia domus* from 1812 written by János Szabó, and supplemented by Mihály Borsos in 1945. In both monographies we can find instructive and vivid details about the relationships between the two denominations in the time of Reformation and Counter-Reformation.

Not to mention further publications related to our topic by Mátyás Bél, Arnold Ipolyi, Péter Püspöki Nagy, and also Borovszky's series on the history of counties. And the original minutes of the 1674 galley-slave trial in Pozsony, which turned up in Esztergom, was published in a bilingual edition with the childish cartoon-like illustrations of an anonymous galley-slave. (*Vitetnek ítélőszékre... [Being Taken to the Court of Justice...]*, translated by S. Varga Katalin, Kalligram, Pozsony, 2002). I hope this amount of work will be inspiring enough for the scholar who wants to continue research and write its synthesis later on.

May the Lord's blessing be upon all of us.

Hans-Anton Drewes:

## THEOLOGIE, POLITIK UND SOZIALISMUS BEI KARL BARTH

Der Archivar und Herausgeber spricht meist auf fremde Rechnung, er lebt ja von den und für die Texte anderer. So nehme ich ein wenig bekommen das Wort. In dieser Verlegenheit ist es mir tröstlich, dass Immanuel Kant die „Polyhistoren“, wie er sie nennt<sup>1</sup>, in Schutz nimmt: „Auch solche Lastesel des Parnasses sind nötig“, sagt Kant, „die, wenn sie gleich selbst nichts Gescheutes leisten können, doch Materialien herbeischleppen, damit andere etwas Gutes daraus zu Stande bringen können.“<sup>2</sup>

Freilich ist es nicht überall unumstritten, ob wir es im Werk Karl Barths tatsächlich mit einem Parnass, mit einem der Gipfel der Theologiegeschichte zu tun haben. Ausgerechnet nach der Abschiedsvorlesung Karl Barths am 1. März 1962 hat der Prorektor Edgar Salin in seiner Laudatio<sup>3</sup> die Zweifel in schöner Klarheit zum Ausdruck gebracht. Einer der Hauptkritikpunkte lautet<sup>4</sup>: Barth hat seinen „Standpunkt jenseits der Zeit gewählt“, nicht „in der Zeit, in der Geschichte“. Er ist „kein Politiker“. So ist es als ein glücklicher „Zufall“ anzusehen, dass Barths „unbeugsamer Einsatz“ gegen den Nationalsozialismus den Widerstand der evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland und später die Selbstbehauptung der Schweiz stärkte. Barth hat jedoch nach dem 2. Weltkrieg „als a-historischer<sup>5</sup> und a-politischer<sup>6</sup> Theologe nicht scharf geschieden“ „zwischen dem Liebeskommunismus der Heiligen [...] und dem sehr materialistischen Kommunismus der Unheiligen.“ Darum ist ihm der „Vorwurf des Kryptokommunismus“ nicht erspart geblieben.

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1 KANT, I., *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, in: Werke, hg. von Weischedel, W., Bd. VI, unveränderte Auflage, Darmstadt, 2011, 489.

2 KANT, I., *Über Pädagogik*, a.a.O., 731.

3 SALIN, E., *Laudatio für Karl Barth*. hg. von Peter, N., in: Zeitschrift für neuere Theologiegeschichte 1 (1994), 305–312.

4 A.a.O., 310, vgl. 309.

5 Bemerkenswert ist Salins grundsätzliches Urteil, Barths „ganzes Werk“ sei „restlos a-historisch“ (a.a.O., 308, Anm. 12).

6 Bemerkenswert ist, dass Gerhard Ebeling, einer der gründlichsten Kritiker Barths, genau entgegengesetzt urteilte: In seinem Tagebuch notierte Ebeling, Barth sei ein „von Anfang an und durch und durch [...] politischer Denker“, woraus sich „alle problematischen Seiten seiner Theologie und Wirksamkeit“ ableiten ließen; vgl. BEUTEL, A., *Gerhard Ebeling. Eine Biographie*, Tübingen, 2012, 505.

Der Vorwurf, Barths richtige Haltung gegenüber dem Nationalsozialismus sei durch sein mangelndes Urteil gegenüber dem Kommunismus kompromittiert, weist auf den noch grundsätzlicheren Einwand zurück, dass sein Verständnis von Theologie und Politik im ganzen fragwürdig sei. Barth war in der Tat der Überzeugung, in der ihn wesentlich Calvin geprägt hat, dass Theologie und Politik nicht grundsätzlich zu trennen sind. Nicht den politischen, gerade den unpolitischen Theologen ist zuzurufen: Schuster, bleib bei deinem Leisten! – d.h. bleibe bei Gott und deshalb bei den Menschen, bleibe bei Jesus Christus, in dem die Gemeinschaft Gottes mit den Menschen und die Gemeinschaft der Menschen untereinander wirklich und wahr ist.

In diesem Sinn hat Barth in seiner letzten öffentlichen Äußerung 1968 bekannt: „das letzte Wort, das ich – auch als Theologe und letztlich als Politiker – zu sagen habe, [...] ist ein *Name*: Jesus Christus“.<sup>7</sup> Ganz gleich ist schon die Orientierung Barths in dem Vortrag, mit dem der neue Pfarrer von Safenwil 1911 erstmals öffentlich politisch das Wort nimmt. Er trägt den Titel: „*Jesus Christus und die soziale Bewegung*“, der gleich im Eingang programmatisch korrigiert und präzisiert wird: „Jesus *ist* die soziale Bewegung und die soziale Bewegung *ist* Jesus in der Gegenwart.“<sup>8</sup> Diese Stellungnahme stützt sich wesentlich auf Hermann Kutter<sup>9</sup>, den Barth aber an dieser Stelle nicht mit Namen nennt.

Dagegen beruft sich Barth ausdrücklich auf Hermann Kutter in einer viel späteren politischen Aussage. Barth war in einer Diskussion am 14. März 1954 in Stuttgart<sup>10</sup> nach „Christentum und Kommunismus im christlichen Urteil“ gefragt worden. Und er antwortete: „Ich glaube, dass wir in diesem Kreis wenigstens wahrscheinlich dahingehend einig sind, dass wir sagen: Diese beiden politischen Systeme sind unerträglich! Man kann nur Nein zu diesen beiden Gestalten moderner neuzeitlicher Verirrung sagen, ungefähr mit gleicher Lautstärke. [...] Beide Systeme sind unmenschlich, bedeuten eine Unterdrückung des Menschen.“ Nach dieser unterschiedslosen Absage an

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7 BARTH, K., *Gespräche 1964–1968*, hg. von Busch, E. (Karl Barth-Gesamtausgabe, Abt. IV), Zürich, 1997, 607 und 542.

8 BARTH, K., *Vorträge und kleinere Arbeiten 1909–1914*, in Verbindung mit H. Helms und Fr.-W. Marquardt, hg. von H.-A. Drewes und H. Stoevesandt (Karl Barth-Gesamtausgabe, Abt. III), Zürich, 1993, 378f.

9 Kutter ist heute in den deutschsprachigen Ländern ein vergessener Name. Vielleicht ist es in Ungarn anders, wo *Mária Pilder* gewirkt hat, die nicht nur Barths, sondern zuerst Kutters kluge Übersetzerin und Interpretin gewesen ist. Vgl. GEIGER, M./LINDT, A. (Hg.), *Hermann Kutter in seinen Briefen 1883–1931*, München, 1983, bes. 491.

10 Eine wörtliche Wiedergabe der Diskussion liegt in einer Hektographie im Karl Barth-Archiv Basel vor.

den „Hitlerischen Atheismus“ und an den „Stalinschen Atheismus“ kommt die Differenzierung, die uns beschäftigen soll. Barth führt aus: „Wenn ich Nationalsozialismus und Kommunismus vergleichen soll, würde ich einen Ausdruck von Hermann Kutter sagen – ein Mann, der in meiner Jugend viel bedeutet hat –: Der Nationalsozialismus ist die Gottlosigkeit im Bösen und der Kommunismus ist die Gottlosigkeit im Guten.“

Der Unterschied zwischen der Gottlosigkeit im Guten und der Gottlosigkeit im Bösen ist eine erste Erklärung dafür, dass Barth nicht generell Totalitarismus als Totalitarismus behandeln und dass er deshalb auch nicht in genau der gleichen Weise wie 1933 gegen den Nationalsozialismus 1948 gegen den Kommunismus auftreten wollte.<sup>11</sup> Denn die Gottlosigkeit im Guten ist mindestens gleich abscheulich, aber sie ist nicht dasselbe wie die Gottlosigkeit im Bösen. „Jetzt kann man streiten, was schlimmer ist. Ja, man kann jetzt sagen, die Gottlosigkeit im Guten ist noch schlimmer. Das Gute wird ins Böse verwandelt, das Gute in den Dienst der Gottlosigkeit gestellt, man will das Gute tun mit Hilfe des Bösen!“

Dieses Urteil Barths entspricht der scholastischen Regel: *corruptio optima pessima* – die schlimmste Verderbnis ist die Verderbnis des Besten. Die Sentenz ist eine Verallgemeinerung des scholastischen Grundsatzes: *principii corruptio pessima*<sup>12</sup> – die schlimmste Verderbnis ist die Verkehrung des *Prinzips*. Damit sind wir bei dem Verständnis, das Hermann Kutter selber mit den beiden Gottlosigkeiten verband und das auch Barth voraussetzt.<sup>13</sup>

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11 Vgl. dazu v.a. den Austausch Offener Briefe mit Emil Brunner im Jahr 1948: BARTH, K., *Christliche Gemeinde im Wechsel der Staatsordnungen. Dokumente einer Ungarnreise 1948*, Zollikon-Zürich, 1948, 59–70; wieder abgedruckt in: BARTH, K./BRUNNER, E., *Briefwechsel 1916–1966*, hg. von Busch, E. (Karl Barth-Gesamtausgabe, Abt. V), Zürich, 2000, 347–365, und in: BARTH, K., *Offene Briefe 1945–1968*, hg. von Koch, D. (Karl Barth-Gesamtausgabe, Abt. V), Zürich, 1984, 148–166.

12 Vgl. Thomas von Aquin, S.th. II–II, q. 154, a. 12 c.

13 Vgl. dazu die weiteren Bezugnahmen Barths auf die Kuttersche Unterscheidung in: *Der Römerbrief (Erste Fassung)*. 1919, hg. von Schmidt, H. (Karl Barth-Gesamtausgabe, Abt. II), Zürich, 1985, 493; IDEM, *Der Römerbrief (Zweite Fassung)*. 1922, hg. von van der Kooij, C./Tolstaja, K. (Gesamtausgabe, Abt. II), Zürich, 2010, 457; IDEM, *Predigten 1918*, hg. von Schmidt, H. (Gesamtausgabe, Abt. I), Zürich, 2002, 39; IDEM, *Predigten 1919*, hg. von Schmidt, H. (Gesamtausgabe, Abt. I), Zürich, 2003, 203; IDEM, *Predigten 1921*, hg. von Schmidt, H. (Gesamtausgabe, Abt. I), Zürich, 2007, 45; IDEM, *Vorträge und kleinere Arbeiten 1922–1925*, hg. von Finze-Michaelsen, H. (Gesamtausgabe, Abt. III), Zürich, 1990, 196; IDEM, *Konfirmandenunterricht 1909–1921*, hg. von Fangmeier, J. (Gesamtausgabe, Abt. I), Zürich, 1987, 288.

Die Frage, die Kutter erörtert, ist die alte Frage nach dem, was das Böse ist und woher es kommt – *unde malum et qua re*.<sup>14</sup> Diese schwere Frage wird noch schwieriger, wenn das Wort Jesu ernst genommen wird: Niemand ist gut als allein Gott (Matthäus 19,17). Dann gibt es nämlich nicht nur das Böse, das aus dem „Sein wie Gott – ohne Gott!“ folgt. Dann gibt es auch das Gute, das böse ist, weil es sozusagen aus dem „Sein wie Gott – neben Gott“ hervorgeht – daraus, dass der Mensch das Gute gleichsam Gott aus der Hand nimmt und zu seinem eigenen Maßstab macht. So schiebt der Mensch zwischen sich und seinen Gott „das Gute“ hinein, „ein totes, neutrales Gute“. In dieser Inthronisation des Guten als eines unpersönlichen Prinzips wird das Gute – böse.<sup>15</sup>

Barth hat in seiner Ethik von 1928/1929 den qualitativ-relationalen Aspekt der Persönlichkeit des Guten, den Kutter herausgestellt hatte, durch den temporalen Aspekt der „strengen Jeweiligkeit“ des Spruchs des Gewissens aufgenommen und präzisiert: es ist „ein persönlich gesprochenes Wort Gottes, also ein Ereignis und nicht eine Sache. Es ist nicht da, sondern es geschieht.“<sup>16</sup> Die Gefahr, dass wir uns statt auf den Ruf des Gewissens in jedem „unwiederholbaren Heute“ auf einen „Schatz von aufbewahrter Gewissenswahrheit“ beziehen wollen – das ist die „immer drohende Gefahr der Gottlosigkeit im Guten“.<sup>17</sup>

In einem anderen Zusammenhang hat Barth die gleiche Gefahr knapp und klar als die Gefahr der „Verbürgerlichung des Evangeliums“ bezeichnet.<sup>18</sup> Barth hat dieses Stichwort „Verbürgerlichung“ nicht nur im streng theologischen Zusammenhang der Kirchlichen Dogmatik bei der Erörterung der „Erkennbarkeit Gottes“ (§ 26) gebraucht, sondern auch im politischen Kontext: Im November 1919 ruft Barth in einer Festrede vor einem sozialdemokratischen Ortsverein den Zuhörern zu: „Wir müssen Sozialisten bleiben. Wir dürfen nicht bürgerlich werden.“<sup>19</sup> Nichts kennzeichnet das Wesen des Bürgertums kürzer und präziser als die bekannte Mahnung: „*Ruhe* ist die

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14 TERTULLIAN, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 7.

15 KUTTER, H., *Das Bilderbuch Gottes für Groß und Klein, I. Römerbrief. Kapitel 1–4*, Basel, 1917, 194.227f.

16 BARTH, K., *Ethik II. Vorlesung Münster 1928/29 und Bonn 1930/31*, hg. von Braun, D. (Karl Barth-Gesamtausgabe, Abt. II), Zürich, 1978, 417.

17 A.a.O., 418.

18 KD II/1, 157f.182f.

19 BARTH, K., *Vorträge und kleinere Arbeiten 1914–1921*, in Verbindung mit Marquardt, Fr.-W., hg. von Drewes, H.-A. (Karl Barth-Gesamtausgabe, Abt. III), Zürich, 2012, 618.

erste Bürgerpflicht“.<sup>20</sup> Dagegen ist das „Wesen des Sozialismus“ „Unrast“ und „Protest“, weil „Glaube an das Unmögliche“.<sup>21</sup> Die Sozialisten zielen auf etwas, das nur als „Frage“, als „Rätsel“, das nur in einer „fremden Sprache“ zur Geltung zu bringen ist, von der sie selber „nur die paar ersten Worte“ kennen.<sup>22</sup> Wenn der Sozialismus in seinem Wesen so zu beschreiben ist, dann ist die Warnung ganz ernst zu nehmen, die Barth 1919 an die Genossen richtet: „In dem Moment, wo wir *das ganz andre* vergessen, das wir eigentlich meinen, ist unser Sozialismus tot.“<sup>23</sup>

Mit dem Hinweis auf „das ganz andere“, von dem und auf das hin der Sozialismus lebt, wird unmittelbar klar, dass Barth, wenn er von Sozialismus spricht, mindestens *auch* ein ursprünglich theologisches Phänomen meint. „Das ganz andere“, das Barth seit 1916 so oft in theologischen Zusammenhängen beschworen hat, ist ja mit Recht zu einem Kennwort für die Dialektische Theologie geworden.

So wird deutlich, dass wir in Barths Stellungnahmen zum Sozialismus und zum Kommunismus immer mit zwei Motiven zu rechnen haben, die zusammenhängen und doch zu unterscheiden sind: Zum einen das politisch-historische Urteil, zum anderen der theologische – fast möchte man sagen: der biblische Blick auf den Ursprung, auf das Feuer, das, auch wenn es längst verloschen ist, in der Asche noch das eigentliche Wesen des Sozialismus zu erinnern gibt. Kommunismus – das ist eben auch das komplexe Paradox einer Gottlosigkeit im Guten, während der Nationalsozialismus und der Faschismus die einfache Gottlosigkeit im Bösen darstellen.

Noch einmal die Frage: Was ist das größere Übel? Auf diese Frage ist nun zu antworten: Das Einschließen der Wahrheit in das Gefängnis der Ungerechtigkeit und der Lüge (Römer 1,18) ist das Schlimmste – und doch ist es als Fesselung der *Wahrheit*, als Verkehrung des *Guten* nicht so hoffnungslos wie das Böse, das als solches nicht verkehrt werden kann, weil es immer schon verkehrt *ist*.

Es kommt also gegenüber der Gefahr der Gottlosigkeit im Bösen darauf an, für den Ruf des Wortes in die Verantwortung wach *zu sein*, und gegenüber der Gefahr der Gottlosigkeit im Guten darauf, für diesen Ruf *immer neu wach zu werden*. Barth hat dieser umfassenden Forderung im September

20 Ebd.

21 Ebd.

22 A.a.O., 612.

23 A.a.O., 619.

1968 in einer Antwort auf zwei Fragen eine sehr knappe und einfache Formulierung gegeben:

„1) Was halten Sie für das Wichtigste und Wesentlichste im Leben eines Menschen? Daß er sich so seines eigenen Verstandes bedient, daß er lernt, verantwortlich zu leben!

2) Was halten Sie für das Wichtigste und Wesentlichste im Leben eines Theologen? Daß er damit seine Verantwortung wahrnimmt, daß er lernt, nach-zudenken!“<sup>24</sup>

Die Auszeichnung, die mir zuteil geworden ist, ist eine hohe verpflichtende Ehre. Wie könnte ich Ihnen anders als dadurch danken, dass ich mit Ihnen und von Ihnen weiter zu lernen versuche, *nachzudenken*!

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24 BARTH, K., *Briefe 1961–1968*, hg. von Fangmeier, J./Stoevesandt, H. (Karl Barth-Gesamtausgabe, Abt. V), Zürich, <sup>2</sup>1979, 495.

Gottfried Wilhelm Locher:

## LEIBHAFTIG FEIERN

Zum Abendmahlsverständnis des Heidelberger Katechismus  
diesseits und jenseits der Worte

### 1. Feierliche Anlässe

Es gibt Grund zum Feiern! Anfang Oktober 2013 fand in Zürich ein grosser internationaler Kongress zum Reformationsjubiläum 2017 statt. Die GEKE schnürte auf ihrer 7. Vollversammlung in Florenz im Herbst 2012 ihr Paket „Europa reformata: 500 Jahre Reformation in Europa“. Grosse Jubiläen werfen ihre Schatten voraus. Dadurch verdecken sie manchmal, was direkt vor uns liegt. Das 475-jährige Bestehen des Reformierten Kollegiums und der Reformierten Theologischen Universität zu Debrecen 2013 ist allemal ein festlicher Anlass und es ist mir eine Ehre, mitfeiern zu dürfen. Im gleichen Jahr blicken wir auch auf 450 Jahre *Heidelberger Katechismus* und immerhin 40 Jahre *Leuenberger Konkordie* zurück: zwei wichtige Wegmarken unserer Kirchen, vielleicht bedeutender, als die eher dezenten Anlässe ihrer Vergegenwärtigung vermuten lassen. Beide Ereignisse verbindet das Anliegen, theologische Streitigkeiten, die die reformatorischen Kirchen schwer belasteten, zu überwinden: der *Heidelberger* die Kontroversen zwischen der deutschen und schweizerischen Reformation, die *Konkordie Leuenberg* die (kirchentrennenden) Lehrunterschiede innerhalb der protestantischen Konfessionen.

Erinnern wir uns: „[D]ie Aufspaltung und Trennung der reformatorischen Kirche im 16. Jahrhundert in zwei Lager“ war nicht die Folge von Uneinigkeiten in „der Frage der Stellung zu »Gesetz und Evangelium«, zu »Rechtfertigung und Heiligung«, zum Verhältnis der beiden Testamente oder von »Kirche und Staat«, auch nicht in der Frage der Prädestinationslehre, übrigens nicht einmal in der Tauflehre. Zum Bruch kam es im Grunde allein durch die Divergenz in der *Abendmahlslehre*.“<sup>1</sup> Die ökumenische Tragik des Konflikts besteht im Kern nicht in irgendwelchen theologisch-dogmatischen Fachkontroversen, die reformatorische Kirchen und Theologie seit jeher kennzeichnen, sondern in der praktischen Verweigerung gelebter

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1 BUSCH, E., *Consensus Tigurinus 1549. Einleitung*, in: Faulenbach, H./Busch, E. (Hg.), *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften*, Bd. 1/2: 1535–1549, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2006, 467–480, 467.

Gemeinschaft. Lassen Sie mich zuspitzen: Am Zankapfel ‹Abendmahl› zerbricht nicht weniger als das *gemeinsame kirchliche Feiern!*

Das gemeinsame kirchliche Feiern – das ist gleichzeitig ‹roter Faden› meines theologischen Nachdenkens und Motivation für meinen kirchlichen Auftrag! In der Geschichte Debrecens finde ich dafür eine treffende Überschrift: den Titel der – kurz vor dem Heidelberger Katechismus – von Péter Melius und Gregor Szegedis verfassten *Confessio Catholica*.<sup>2</sup> Die Aufmerksamkeit für das Thema ‹Katholizität der Kirche› hat in Debrecen eine lange Tradition. Meine Frage nach dem Abendmahl vor dem Hintergrund der ekklesiologischen Einsicht von der Einheit *der* feiernden Gemeinde ist bei Ihnen, verehrte Damen und Herren, also gut aufgehoben. Natürlich sind die Diskussionen um das Abendmahl seit der Reformation *theologisch* vielfältig vorangegangen. Aber: sind sie auch *ökumenisch* weitergekommen? Und sind sie in den Kirchen auch angekommen? In den reformatorischen Auffassungen zum Abendmahl spiegeln sich in besonderer Weise auch die politischen Konfliktkonstellationen jener Zeit wieder. Es wäre deshalb naheliegend, die historischen Altlasten vergangener Kontroversen als unzeitgemäss zu entsorgen. Ich gehe im Folgenden den umgekehrten Weg und lese die Reformatoren als kritisches Regulativ zu unseren gewohnten Rezeptionsmustern reformatorischer Theologie.

## 2. Zur Verortung des Abendmahls im Heidelberger Katechismus

Der *Heidelberger Katechismus* von 1563 eignet sich für einen solchen Versuch in doppelter Hinsicht: Einerseits wurde er selbst gewissermassen als innerprotestantisches Dialog- und Versöhnungsprogramm konzipiert und andererseits haben die sekundären Einfügungen der berüchtigten FA 80 einen garstigen ökumenischen Graben aufgerissen, an dem sich (nicht nur) die Reformierten bis heute abarbeiten.<sup>3</sup>

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2 Das ungarische Bekenntnis ist weitgehend in Vergessenheit geraten, auch weil es bereits fünf Jahre später offiziell durch das *Zweite Helvetische Bekenntnis* ersetzt wurde. Zur besonderen Bedeutung der Katholizität von Kirche und Theologie in Ungarn vgl. PÁSZTOR J., *Zukunft und Katholizität der reformierten Theologie*, in: Welker, M./Willis, D. (Hg.), *Zur Zukunft der Reformierten Theologie. Aufgaben, Themen, Traditionen*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1998, 39–62.

3 So wurden von kirchenamtlicher Seite zwei offizielle Fussnoten zur brisanten, nachträglich in den *Heidelberger Katechismus* eingefügten FA 80 formuliert. Das Moderamen des Reformierten Bundes in Deutschland hat 1977 in einer ersten Fussnote erklärt, dass die Unterschiede zwischen Messe- und Abendmahlsverständnis zwar nach wie vor bestünden, die Polemik des 16. Jahrhunderts allerdings dem ökumenischen Gespräch gewichen sei. Inhaltlich ergiebiger ist die 1994 beschlossene Änderung dieser Fussnote. In ihrer Neufassung hält sie fest, dass die FA 80 dem nicht gerecht werde, was im ökumenischen Gespräch bereits erreicht worden sei. Vgl. BEYER, U., *Ein Schritt nach vorn – Die neue Fussnote zur 80. Frage des Heidelberger Katechismus*, in: *Reformierte Kirchenzeitung* 135 (1994), 230–233.

In Übereinstimmung mit vielen reformatorischen Katechismen des 16. Jahrhunderts<sup>4</sup> behandelt der *Heidelberger* neben Apostolikum, Dekalog und Herrengebet auch die Sakramente. Die Antwort auf Frage 65 zur Eröffnung des Sakramentsabschnittes bietet auf den ersten Blick Bekanntes: „Der heilige Geist würckt denselben in unsern hertzen durch die predig des heiligen Evangelions.“<sup>5</sup> Im Duktus des *Heidelberger Katechismus* erscheint die Predigt nicht bloss als ein, sondern als *der* Ort der „verheissung des Evangelions“ (FA 66).<sup>6</sup> Die Predigt hat primäre, ja singuläre Bedeutung für die Stiftung des Glaubens. In einem präzisen Sinne sekundär erscheinen dagegen die Sakramente. Sowohl in theologischer als auch in liturgischer Hinsicht führen sie die geistgewirkte Bewegung der Predigt fort, behalten dabei aber ihre spezifische Funktion als gemeinschaftlich vollzogene Vergewisserung des Glaubens (vgl. FA 65–67).

Der *Heidelberger* bestimmt in FA 66 die Sakramente in zweifacher Weise: „Gott hat sie eingesetzt, um uns durch ihren Gebrauch den Zuspruch des Evangeliums besser verständlich zu machen und zu versiegeln“. Sakramente sind Wahrzeichen *und* Siegel.<sup>7</sup> Die Zeichenfunktion wird mit den Ausdrücken „Zeichen“ und „Wahrzeichen“ wiedergegeben. Das geschieht ganz auf der Linie der augustinischen Unterscheidung zwischen *signa* und *res*.<sup>8</sup> Das Abendmahl veranschaulicht, was doch schon geschehen ist: das Heilsgeschehen des Gründonnerstags zuerst, in dessen Perspektive dann das ganze *triduum paschale* und schliesslich die in Ostern gegründete Ansage des kommenden Reiches Gottes. Vielfältiger sind die Bezeichnungen für die

4 Vgl. REU, J. M., *Quellen zur Geschichte des kirchlichen Unterrichts in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands zwischen 1530 und 1600. 10 Bände*, Gütersloh, 1904–1935; COHRS, F., *Die evangelischen Katechismusversuche vor Luthers Enchiridion*, Hildesheim/New York, 1978.

5 Der *Heidelberger Katechismus* wird zitiert nach NEUSER, W. H., *Der Heidelberger Katechismus von 1563*, in: Mühling, A./Opitz, P. (Hg.), *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften*, Bd. 2/2: 1562–1569, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2009, 167–212.

6 Darin entspricht der *Heidelberger Katechismus* ganz der Kirchenordnung der Kurpfalz, in die er ursprünglich eingebettet war; vgl. NIESEL, W. (Hg.), *Bekenntnisschriften und Kirchenordnungen der nach Gottes Wort reformierten Kirche*. Im Auftrage des Reformierten Bundes und des Reformierten Konventes der Bekenntnissynode der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche unter Mitarb. von Wilhelm Boudriot et al., München, 1938, 142.

7 PLASGER, G., *Glauben heute mit dem Heidelberger Katechismus*, Göttingen, 2012, 159, hat darauf hingewiesen, dass die 1997 revidierte Ausgabe des *Heidelberger Katechismus* die Pointe an dieser Stelle aufs Spiel setzt, wenn sie das ältere „desto besser zu verstehen“ durch „den Zuspruch des Evangeliums besser verständlich zu machen“ ersetzt.

8 So auch BEINTKER, M., *Die Tauflehre des Heidelberger Katechismus in ökumenischer Perspektive (Fragen 69–74)*, Online: <http://www.reformiert-info.de/daten/File/Upload/doc-2467-1.pdf> (15.01.2014).

Siegelfunktion: Neben dem Begriff des „Siegels“ finden sich die Vorstellungen der „Bestätigung“ (FA 67), der „Versicherung“ (FA 69.73.75.78) und des „Pfands“ (FA 73.78.79). Die Siegelmetapher ist keine Erfindung der Autoren des *Heidelberger Katechismus*, sondern begegnet – mit unterschiedlichen Konnotationen – etwas in der *Confessio Helvetica posterior* (1566),<sup>9</sup> in der *Confessio Scotica* (1560)<sup>10</sup> und prägend bei Calvin bereits in der ersten Ausgabe der *Institutio* (1536)<sup>11</sup> oder im *Genfer Katechismus* (1545).<sup>12</sup> Der *Heidelberger* steht hier also in einer breiten Tradition, genauso wie mit seiner kategorischen Unterscheidung zwischen dem äusseren und inneren Geschehen des Abendmahls (vgl. FA 75 und 76).

Bis hierher also nichts Neues unter der theologischen Sonne. Aber es lohnt sich, genauer hinzusehen. Aufmerksamkeit verdient bereits eine kompositorische Eigenart des *Heidelbergers*: Der Abschnitt zu den Sakramenten befindet sich nicht im dritten Kapitel, wo „Von der danckbarkeit“ die Rede ist, sondern – eigentlich unerwartet – im zweiten Teil, der „von des Menschen Erloesung“ handelt. Die Soteriologie bildet also den theologischen Hintergrund, vor dem das Sakramentsverständnis zur Diskussion steht. Das Abendmahl wird sachlich dem Thema ‚Erlösung‘ zugerechnet. Als blosses Gedächtnis- oder erinnerndes Dankritual bliebe es – aus Sicht des *Heidelbergers* – unterbestimmt.

### 3. Die heilskonstitutive Funktion des Abendmahls

Die spezifische Verortung des Abendmahls im *Heidelberger Katechismus* lenkt den Blick auf die Siegelmetapher. Das Abendmahl *besiegelt* den in der Predigt – vorgängig – gewirkten Glauben, indem es ihn in der liturgischen Handlung vergegenwärtigend bestätigt. Und das Abendmahl *versiegelt* den Glauben, indem es diesen vergewissert, schützt und bewahrt. Die Funktion der Versiegelung besteht – mit Walter Kreck – „in einer »Versicherung« durch eben diese Handlung, die also nicht nur veranschaulicht, sondern das hier

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9 Vgl. BULLINGER, H., *Das zweite helvetische Bekenntnis (1566). Confessio Helvetica posterior*, Zürich, <sup>5</sup>1998, 100f. (Kap. XIX).

10 Vgl. *Confessio Scotica von 1560*, in: PLASGER, G./FREUDENBERG, M. (Hg.), *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften. Eine Auswahl von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, Göttingen, 2005, 124–150, 143.

11 Vgl. SAXER, E., ‚Siegel‘ und ‚Versiegeln‘ in der calvinisch-reformierten Sakramentstheologie des 16. Jahrhunderts, in: *Zwingliana* 14 (1977), 397–430, 397.

12 Vgl. CALVIN, J., *Genfer Katechismus von 1545*, in: PLASGER, G./FREUDENBERG, M. (Hg.), *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften*, 57–106, 96.

Veranschaulichte und Gelehrte *verbürgt*.<sup>13</sup> Das Abendmahl ist gleichzeitig Zeichen und mehr als Zeichen. Diese Qualität macht es neben der Predigt des Evangeliums – mit den Worten Karl Barths – zum „zweiten Woher des Glaubens“<sup>14</sup>. Der Basler Theologe erkennt im *Heidelberger Katechismus* ein „göttliches *confirmare*, das nicht etwa weniger dringlich und notwendig ist wie das Wirken des Glaubens“.<sup>15</sup> Der Glaube ist kein ein für alle Mal gesichertes *datum*, sondern bedarf der gemeinsamen Feier des Abendmahls, um den „glauben zu stercken“ und das „leben zu bessern“ (FA 81).

Hat das Abendmahl damit eine über seine *regulativ-bewahrende* Funktion hinausgehende *konstituierend-performative Funktion* für den Glauben? Der *Heidelberger* formuliert nicht eindeutig. In FA 75 betont er die Erinnerung an das in Christus offenbarte Heil: „Wie wirstu im heiligen Abendmal erinnert und versichert, dass du an dem einigen opffer Christi am Creutz, und allen seinen gütern gemeinschaft habest?“ (FA 75) In FA 66, der Schlüsselfrage zur Sakramentsdefinition, geht die Siegel-Metapher darüber hinaus: Das Abendmahl ist von Gott dazu eingesetzt, dass er uns „die verheissung des Evangelions desto besser zu verstehen gebe, und versiegele“. Es geht nicht nur um die Erinnerung an schon geschehenes Heil, sondern auch um ein besseres Verständnis jenes Heils. Die Versiegelung schafft in den Gläubigen eine neue, tiefere Glaubenswirklichkeit. Der *Heidelberger* versteht die Versiegelungsfunktion nicht nur reflexiv – erinnernd rückbezüglich –, sondern auch performativ – wirklichkeitsverändernd.

Dem entspricht das – geradezu moderne – performative Siegelverständnis in Calvins *Institutio*: „Die Siegel, die man an Amtsurkunden und anderen öffentlichen Schriftstücken befestigt, sind an und für sich betrachtet nichts, weil sie ja vergebens daran aufgehängt wären, wenn auf dem Pergament nichts geschrieben stünde; und doch ist es so, dass sie das Geschriebene bekräftigen und versiegeln, wenn sie solchen Schriftstücken zugefügt werden.“<sup>16</sup> Der Genfer Reformator beschreibt präzise, was wir heute unter die sprachphi-

13 KRECK, W., *Die Abendmahlslehre in den reformierten Bekenntnisschriften*, in: IDEM/BIZER, E. (Hg.), *Die Abendmahlslehre in den reformatorischen Bekenntnisschriften. Referate für die Darmstädter Tagung der „Kommission für das Abendmahlsgespräch“ in der EKid am 13./14. April 1955, München, 1955, 43–71, 45, Hervorhebung G. W. L.*

14 BARTH, K., *Die christliche Lehre nach dem Heidelberger Katechismus. Vorlesung gehalten an der Universität Bonn im Sommersemester 1947, Zollikon-Zürich, 1948, 88.*

15 Ebd.

16 CALVIN, J., *Unterricht in der christlichen Religion. Institutio Christianae Religionis*, Nach der letzten Ausgabe von 1559 übersetzt und bearbeitet von Otto Weber. Im Auftrag des Reformierten Bundes bearbeitet und neu herausgegeben von Matthias Freudenberg, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2009, IV,14,5.

losophischen Begriffe ‹performative Sprechakte› oder ‹konstitutive Regeln› fassen: Der Text der Urkunde wird erst gültig durch die Versiegelung. Das Zeichen beschreibt Geschehenes, das Siegel aber verändert es und wird damit selbst zum Geschehen. Es belässt den Gehalt des Versiegelten, verändert aber dessen Status: Es schafft eine neue Wirklichkeit.

Angesichts des einmaligen Vorkommens im *Heidelberger* sollte die Wirklichkeitsverändernde Funktion des Siegels und – daran anschliessend – die performative Funktion des Abendmahls nicht überbetont werden. Sie gänzlich zu negieren, würde dem Text jedoch auch nicht gerecht, denn vom Versiegeln ist an einer für das Sakramentsverständnis entscheidenden Stelle die Rede. Dabei darf nicht das Subjekt des Handelns übersehen werden: „[D]er heilig Geist lehret im Evangelio, und bestetiget durch die heiligen Sacrament ...“ (FA 67). Gottes Geist wirkt, so der *Heidelberger Katechismus*, auf zweifache Weise: durch die Verkündigung des Heils in der Predigt und durch die Bestätigung des Heils im Abendmahl, und beide Wirkweisen des Geistes sind aufeinander verwiesen. Das Abendmahl wird verständlich im Licht der Predigt, die Predigt aber gründet auf der Wirklichkeit des Abendmahls.<sup>17</sup> Beide sind keiner konstruktivistischen Idee geschuldet, sondern ganz und ausschliesslich Wirkungen des Handelns Gottes durch seinen Geist.

Der zweifachen Wirkweise des Geistes in Predigt und Abendmahl entspricht eine doppelte Performanz des Abendmahls selbst. Zum einen verändert es die Wirklichkeit der feiernden Gemeinde, indem es sie je neu auf Christus ausrichtet. Das gefeierte Abendmahl *bewirkt* Christuszentrierung. Zum andern findet in dieser Feier eine Vergewisserung im Glauben statt. Das Abendmahl *bewirkt* Glaubensgewissheit. Als Zeichen und als Siegel verändert es die Welt der feiernden Gemeinde. Der Transformationsprozess hat nicht nur periphere oder akzidentielle Bedeutung, sondern ist unmittelbar heilsrelevant. Darin besteht eine weitere Pointe der Abendmahlstheologie des *Heidelbergers*: Die Bestätigung des Heils ist gleichermassen *Verwirklichung* des Heils. Gott selbst handelt im Sakrament, indem er die Heilsbotschaft

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17 Vgl. dazu aus der Perspektive kirchlichen Handelns DALFERTH, I. U., *Wirkendes Wort. Handeln durch Sprechen in der christlichen Verkündigung*, in: Heimbrock, H.-G./Streib, H. (Hg.), *Magie. Katastrophenreligion und Kritik des Glaubens. Eine theologische und religionstheoretische Kontroverse um die Kraft des Wortes*, Kampen, 1994, 105–143, 128: „Sachgemäss ist menschliche Verkündigung vielmehr, wenn sie von Gott selbst so redet, wie Gott selbst von sich redet: in Evangelium und Gesetz. [...] Wirksam ist sie eben nur deshalb, wenn sie selbst nicht verhindert, was sie intendiert: dass den Hörern Gottes Gegenwart so gewiss wird, dass sie ihre eigene Lebenssituation im Licht der Wirklichkeitsverändernden Nähe Gottes verstehen ...“

‹bestätigt› (FA 67) und ›versiegelt› (FA 66). Insofern sind Sakramente in einem präzisen Sinn Heils-Mittel. Als Zeichen verweist das Abendmahl auf *geschehenes Heil*, als Siegel ist es selbst *heiliges Geschehen*. Schon geschehenes Heil trifft im Abendmahl auf neu sich ereignendes Heil. Hier liegt die Spitze der Siegel-Metapher: *Abendmahl ist Heilsgeschehen*, denn Abendmahl ist Wirklichkeit schaffendes Heilshandeln Gottes. Im *Heidelberger Katechismus* wird beides erkennbar: die Vorordnung des Heilsgeschehens in der Evangeliumsverkündigung *und* die heilsrelevante Funktion des Sakraments.

#### 4. „Der wesentlich Leib Christi“

Das ökumenische, auf Katholizität hin angelegte Abendmahlsverständnis im Heidelberger Katechismus ist bekanntlich schnell von den kirchenpolitischen Realitäten, wie sie in der FA 80 zum Ausdruck kommen, eingeholt worden.<sup>18</sup> Das ändert nichts an der sachlichen Einheit von reflexivem, auf die Evangeliumsverkündigung rückbezogenem Zeichen und performativem, wirklichkeitsschaffendem Handeln als dem Charakteristikum der Abendmahlslehre im *Heidelberger Katechismus*. Die kategorische Unterscheidung zwischen innerem Vorgang (der Glaubenswirkung durch den Heiligen Geist) und äusserem Vollzug (der Feier des Abendmahls) macht die Komplementarität von Reflexion und Performance zu einer spannungsreichen Einheit. In der Spannung kommt das theologische Ringen um die Frage zum Ausdruck, wie das Abendmahl, analog zur theologisch offensichtlich weniger kontroversen Taufe, als *medium salutis* begriffen werden kann. Dass den Sakramenten keine über die Evangeliumsverkündigung hinausreichende Heilsrelevanz zukomme, lässt sich unter Berufung auf den *Heidelberger Katechismus* jedenfalls nicht ohne weiteres behaupten. Richtig ist, dass der *Heidelberger Katechismus* das *initium fidei* vom Sakrament unterscheidet. Der primäre Ort des (liturgisch) vermittelten Heils ist die Predigt.<sup>19</sup> Und

18 Die kurfürstliche angeordnete Ergänzung wird üblicherweise als Reaktion auf das Tridentinum gedeutet. Zur fragwürdigen Plausibilität dieser These vgl. STROHM, Ch., *Entstehung des Heidelberger Katechismus, theologisches Profil und Forschungsgeschichte*, in: *Evangelische Theologie* 72 (2012), 406–419, 415f.

19 Vgl. BARTH, K., *Menschenwort und Gotteswort in der christlichen Predigt*, in: Karl Barth Gesamtausgabe, Abt. III: Vorträge und kleinere Arbeiten 1922–1925, hg. v. Finze, H./Stoevesandt, H./Drewes, H.-A., Zürich, 1990, 426–457, 431: „Die Reformation hat es gewagt, das Verhältnis von Sakrament und Predigt umzukehren. Genau auf dem Höhepunkt des christlichen Gottesdienstes, auf dem in der katholischen Kirche die eucharistische Wandlung vollzogen wird, wird im Protestantismus gepredigt. Genau den ernstesten, beziehungs-vollen, aber gegenüber dem eigentlichen kirchlichen Zentrum dogmatisch und kultisch unverkennbar nur supplementären Charakter, den dort die Predigt hat, haben bei uns die Sakramente.“

doch hält der *Heidelberger Katechismus* unmissverständlich fest: Es gibt einen zweiten – nicht alternativen, sondern konstitutiven – liturgischen Ort, an dem das eine Heil durch den einen Geist vermittelt wird. Deshalb behandelt der *Heidelberger Katechismus* die Sakramente – sachlich zutreffend – unter dem Titel „Von des Menschen Erlösung“.

Unabhängig davon, ob und wie weit den eben skizzierten Überlegungen im und zum *Heidelberger* gefolgt wird, kann nicht bestritten werden: Der *Katechismus* bietet ein kritisches Regulativ gegenüber einer leibentfremdeten, rhetorischen Überhöhung des reformatorischen „solus“. *Sein* Wort bleibt im *Heidelberger* nicht in *unseren* Worten gefangen. Im Abendmahl verändert sich *tatsächlich* die Wirklichkeit der Menschen, die in der Mahlgemeinschaft miteinander Brot essen und Wein trinken. Der *Heidelberger* denkt nicht in der Kategorie der Wandlung der Gaben, aber er kennt sehr wohl eine Kategorie der Verwandlung der Menschen. Im Abendmahl werden Menschen *lebensverändernd* erneuert. Diese Kraft des Abendmahls, genauer: die Kraft des Heiligen Geistes im Abendmahl, gilt es im *Heidelberger Katechismus* bewusst wahrzunehmen, bewusster vielleicht als bisher. Wer der Theologie des *Heidelbergers* folgt, dem begegnet ein Abendmahl, in dem Erinnerung, Vergegenwärtigung und Erneuerung eine Einheit bilden. Im Mittelpunkt steht Christus, an den sich die Gemeinde handelnd erinnert, den sie feiernd als Wirklichkeit erfährt und auf den hin sie sich hoffend ausrichtet. Der *Heidelberger Katechismus* räumt nicht alle theologischen Probleme vom Tisch, aber er eröffnet den Blick für die *katholische Mahlgemeinschaft* als Zeichen geschehenen, als Ort vergegenwärtigten und als Quelle kommenden Heils.

Géza Pap:

## THE CONSCIENCE OF THE LITERATE

An old Hungarian folk saying teaches us that “even a pastor should be learning till his death”. In my understanding this means that having graduated from the Debrecen Reformed Theological University, each pastor should choose a field of study within Christian theology in which they get trained and which could be their field of research later on. I, on my part, chose the last chapter of dogmatics i.e. eschatology which focuses on the details of prophetic utterances on the basis of which the teaching about the End of Times can be formulated. In other words eschatology deals with the prophetic utterances concerning the last period of human history, the return of Jesus Christ, and the fulfilment of promises.

In the fifteen minutes I have at my disposal I'd like to share my thoughts with you on the teachings of eschatology with special respect to their congregational importance.

I presume we all agree that theologians should do intensive Bible study not only to enhance their knowledge but rather to be able to teach their congregation. The Bible has namely a message and a promise for the future that should not be withheld; and whose recognition obliges you to speak about them. Sir Isaac Newton – mathematician, physicist, astronomer, the founder of modern science – studied the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse of John thoroughly, and put the following remarkable question: “If God was so angry with the Jews for not searching more diligently into the Prophecies which he had given them to know Christ by: why should we think he will excuse us for not searching into the Prophecies which he had given us to know Antichrist by?”<sup>1</sup> Even if we do not entirely agree with the above statement – it is namely not our task to find out the time of the appearance of the Antichrist –, yet we must not allow ourselves to neglect the utterances about our future for whose recognition God found us accountable. The church cannot leave the satisfaction of natural curiosity about the future to notions of sects, futurological calculations or prophetic oracles. We have the duty to disclose God's

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1 MCGINN, B., *Anti-Christ: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination With Evil*, Columbia University Press, 1999, 14.

utterances about the end of time to our congregations. This is our task and no one will do it instead of us.

For various reasons, however, eschatological texts are not easy to preach about. The first difficulty is that the Bible does not provide an unambiguous lesson here. We should be able to construct a homogeneous picture from tell-tale words of various verses and from statements made in special life situations – and that is not an easy venture. Our wordly trained mind, logic, and imagination are challenged when we try to perceive a heavenly reality which is entirely different from our down-to-earth reality, and which we try to imagine by means of scraps of messages. You can often have the feeling that you play with a puzzle some pieces of which just do not fit in the seemingly complete picture no matter how hard you try to match them. It is like peeping through a keyhole into a dark room to find out what is there inside and waiting for a lightning to shed light in the room. And truly, we sometimes become enlightened and we can even see something but we can never see the fullness, because we can only perceive a keyhole-sized section, and even that “through a glass, darkly”. (conf. 1Corint 13,12)

Another difficulty is the variety of models that can be constructed from the fragments scattered in the different Books of the Bible. Here I would like to refer to three of them. The first one is the so called history critical model nurtured by liberal theology. This model discards all principles of dogmatism, treats the Bible as one of the ancient texts that can be studied with scientific methods and to which no faith is necessary. Consequently, this model sometimes draws conclusions against faith. The second one is futurist eschatology, which was developed by fundamentalists. Some of its hair-raising conclusions are far from our Protestant faith. The third model holds on to our Protestant legacy, yet it cannot unite some basically different views. As all these schools claim to have the philosophers’ stone, thus, pastors cannot easily decide to which one to commit themselves, and they choose to preach about something else.

It is difficult to interpret eschatological texts because the “marshland” of prophecies and visions is full of pitfalls where it is easy to make a mistake and fall into a trap. A typical phenomenon is indicated by the very fact that one of the most popular authors of the cold war decades of the last century was the American Hal Lindsey, whose lectures on the third world war were followed with keen interest by the officers of the Pentagon as well. In his lectures Lindsey claimed that the Soviet Union was the equivalent of the

Biblical Gog, who would attack Israel.<sup>2</sup> The interwovenness of millennialism and politics was verified when in 1971 Ronald Reagan as the then governor of California claimed in a speech that Ezekiel's prophecy about Gog and Magog perfectly corresponded to the atheist Russia.<sup>3</sup> This indicates to what extent the later president's "star wars" policy was influenced by millennialism. However, all this is not by chance as even respectable theologians supported this supposition. Some of them even heralded that the battle of Armageddon and the return of Jesus would happen before the end of the 20th century.<sup>4</sup> Today theologians raise the idea that Russia should be apologized for the false imputation. The danger of false doctrines is bigger than one would expect.

Further on, it is especially difficult to preach on the basis of eschatological texts because hardly any comprehensive studies are available in Hungarian, which would survey the diversified problems or provide guidelines or an easy to follow model. It is worth observing that earlier books on theology published in Hungarian treated eschatology as a neglected part of dogmatics in the full sense of the word. It is true that in foreign theological journals there are enormous discussions about certain eschatological questions but they are out of scope of congregations as well as pastors. Pastors have neither time nor chance to perform a comprehensive study and play the role of a judge who decides between different trends. A pastor has to preach, so he relies on the literature available in his library. The result of these difficulties is that most pastors avoid eschatological texts, thus, they deprive the congregation from God's promises concerning the future. G.R. Beasley-Murray resignedly comments in his book that he has not heard anyone preaching about Jesus speaking to the disciples on the Mount of the Olive Trees.<sup>5</sup>

God's utterances as treasure are entrusted to the Literate. God endows responsibility on those who research, explain, and preach his words. And one must not select from His utterances neglecting the more difficult passages and leaving some details unsaid. We all can perceive that our eschatological teachings need reconsideration. We all need guidelines that our Reformed

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2 LINDSEY, H., *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Bantam, 1973.

3 BOYER, P., *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern Culture*, Cambridge, 1992, 162.

4 So for example LINDSEY, H., *Planet Earth - 2000 A.D.*, Atlantic Books, 1996.

5 BEASLEY-MURRAY, G. R., *Jesus and the Future*, London, 1954, Introduction.

preaching practice can rely on without doubts. We must get rid of false patterns which are against the spirit of the Bible. We must send centuries old endeavours to the museum of efforts of the human mind to liberate God's words from the patina of distortion of meaning so that they could shine freely for those who research and preach them to those who hopefully wait for the fulfilment of God's promises.

Jerry Pillay:

## REVIVAL AND UNITY OF REFORMED CHURCHES: HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS CHALLENGE?

### *1. Introduction*

Let me begin by expressing my sincere thanks and appreciation to all those at the Debrecen Reformed Theological University responsible for awarding me this honorary Doctorate. I consider this a special honour and privilege to receive this degree and I receive it in humility and appreciation of all those who have served and continue to contribute to Reformed theological thinking, engagement and ministry worldwide. As President of the WCRC, it gives me great joy to receive this degree and I would like to use this opportunity to say something about the work we do as the World Communion of Reformed Churches. One of my serious concerns as President of the WCRC relates to the future of Reformed Theology and Christians across the world. In Hungary, I have personally experienced Reformed Christianity at its strongest. You have so much to offer to the rest of the world on how we can continue to build, strengthen and even preserve the Reformed tradition yet this is not true for many other parts of the world where we are present. In this brief address I want to focus on the revival and unity of Reformed churches and how we can deal with this challenge.

### *2. Challenges of Revival and Unity among Reformed Churches*

The concept of revival and unity is not strange to Reformed churches. In fact, at the heart of the Reformation there was the intention to reform, revive and renew the church. It is vital for the understanding of ecumenism that the Reformers did not intend to found a new church but sought reform for the whole church. In their minds the church did not stand up to the realities of its time in confronting financial corruption, sexual immorality and political power. Reformers such as Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and the others called for the 'reawakening' of the Church to address these issues. In doing so they did not hesitate to point out the inadequacies and corruption of the church which made an impact on its life, work, witness and theology. These, for example, are reflected in Luther's *95 Thesis* and Calvin's *The Necessity of Reforming the Church* (1543). This renewal was to make an impact on the structure, polity, theology, mission, worship and witness of the church.

It is sad that even in our days and age the Christian church is faced with similar challenges as we have to deal with corruption, political turmoil, sex-

ual immorality, secularization, spiritual apathy, religious factions, violence, abuse against children and women, etc. In most of these situations the church itself is not exempt from these challenges but, in fact, may even be responsible for, or silent in the midst of these occurrences. It seems that what we need at this time is a revival of Reformed churches which brings transformation within the church and in our world at large. We need to ask whether our structures and theological emphases are relevant for people in the world today. It must be recognized that many of our younger generation of Reformed people are not interested in the Reformed tradition, its confessions and its polity as such, but rather in a Church which is effectively and imaginatively addressing the challenges of mission and outreach in our time.

Whilst the Reformed tradition seems to grow in some parts of the world, it is true to say that in other parts it is declining and diminishing in significance and impact. We are mostly surrounded by churches that are aged, financially struggling, and irrelevant and have lost or are losing their place in impacting the community in which they are found. Whereas at one time Reformed churches were quite seriously involved in community transformation, economics and politics – and accused of the social gospel – today we seem to retreat from society largely because of financial challenges and a lack of vision and focus to make a difference in the world. We are being overtaken by other charismatic and Pentecostal churches which once advocated a distancing from the engagement of the ‘this-world’ focus and have now become the champions of what Reformed Christians have been saying all along. They are able to succeed in this, no doubt, because of their financial resources and growing membership. The tragedy is that many Reformed churches have become stuck in a maintenance mode rather than becoming a *missional* church. Perhaps, added to this is the ongoing fragmentation that Reformed churches continue to suffer today.

Reformed churches easily succumb to divisions. The history of the Reformed churches since the Reformation is a history of multiple divisions, and unfortunately the trend continues. Reformed churches have a tendency to split. In almost all countries in the world there is more than one Reformed church. Whilst this may be in some places the result of church planting by different missionary efforts, these are usually brought about by divergences over doctrinal or ethical issues or over aspects of church government or political options. In recent times the issues of the ordination of women and sexuality has led to further divisions and strife. In such a context we need to hear afresh the need for Reformed churches to be driven by the agenda of unity and tolerance. Whilst diversity may be one of the strengths which keep

the Reformed family together, it is becoming increasingly apparent that it may also be its weakness.

### 3. *How can Reformed Churches seek Revival and Unity?*

In the midst of these given realities we ask: How can Reformed churches seek revival and unity? We recognize the need for these but what can be done to appropriate these ideals? In attempting to answer this question, I shall refer to the insightful work of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and its attempts to address the same. One of the clear objectives of the WCRC is to promote renewal and unity.

#### 3.1. *Mission Renewal*

It is my personal belief that revival and unity of Reformed churches will come about more solidly and effectively by focusing on mission. The purpose of the Church is to proclaim the Good news of salvation and life in Jesus Christ. It does so in both Word and deeds. In this we embrace the holistic understanding of mission which includes: (a) propagation of the faith, (b) expansion of the reign of God, (c) conversion of the heathen, and (d) the founding of new churches.

If we want to see the revival of Reformed churches we need to put more focus and energy into the development of *missional* congregations. Mission happens essentially through local congregations and not in the bureaucratic structures of the denomination. We need to equip and empower local churches for mission in their given communities and beyond. People join churches that are alive and making a difference in their communities not ones that are insular and disconnected with the world. The key interest of young people today is not faith-tradition but faith-encounter. They are not so much interested in the tradition of their parent's church in as much as they are about a church that is 'doing' God's mission. They are keen to know about Jesus and what he means for the world today. This is the cutting-edge of mission: Who is Jesus for me today? If Reformed churches are to experience revival and unity, it is abundantly clear that it has to ask a new set of questions which relate to God and what is happening in the world. Its focus must not be exclusively internal but consciously and intentionally external as it focuses on the world. In the time of the Middle Ages and the Reformation issues of doctrine and ecclesiology were crucial to the church. Today, whilst these may still be important yet we do not go to such extent, of greater significance is the matter of Christian mission in the world.

We therefore need to ask whether Reformed churches are structured to meet the challenges in the world or are we going on with business as usual when the world around us is fast-changing?

### 3.2. *Communion and church Renewal*

If Reformed churches are to experience revival and unity then what is needed is a biblical and fresh understanding of what it means to be a communion and community of Christians working together in the name of the Triune God. Recognizing this, the WCRC provides a platform to bring Reformed churches together. We believe that communion (*Koinonia*) is a *gift* of God that implies the commission to Christians to shape their lives as *Koinonia*, and acknowledge this gift in their *koinonia* with one another (John 17). It is this use of *Koinonia* as a relational concept, integrating the different dimensions of the life of the Christian community that accounts for its significance for contemporary ecclesiological reflection and ecclesial practice.

### 3.3. *Justice and church Renewal*

If Reformed churches want to experience revival and unity then this has to give greater consideration to the quest for its relevance in the world today. One of the key focal points for relevance is related to the issues of justice, struggles and sufferings in the world and how the Christian church is attempting to address these. People in the pews want answers to their questions and they are not merely content with avoidance or spiritualization of these issues. They want to engage and understand them as they wrestle with their beliefs and faith. The social realities of our world have created a spiritual crisis that causes many youth to lose hope, and avoid our relationship with God and with each other. In this sense, the matter of justice becomes crucial if we want to experience revival and unity.

I get the impression sometimes that we don't mind talking about church unity but we get slightly irritated when we talk about justice. We need to understand that the God of justice and peace expects us to work towards these as well. We cannot have communion (unity) without justice or justice without the desire for communion (unity). Justice is a necessary part of building a communion. We cannot have *true unity* without addressing issues of injustice.

### 3.4. *Renewal of Reformed Theology*

As we speak about revival and unity we must recognize that everything we believe, say and do needs to be theologically and biblically based. There are

many emerging trends practiced among churches today that are biblically questionable and even untenable. Nevertheless, for some reason or the other they tend to flourish. Here I am thinking about the rise of the churches that focus on the “prosperity gospel” and motivational speeches for sermons and yet they seem to draw hundreds and thousands of people. Whilst Reformed Christians should not be driven by fads and trends, it is imperative that we ask fresh questions in terms of our theological emphases and priorities. Instead of seeking to be critical and judgmental on these developments, would it not be more appropriate to ask what we can learn from them and why they are growing at a rate that we do not usually see among Reformed churches, at least in Africa?

Allegiance to the authority of the Bible as God’s word is central to the 16<sup>th</sup> century Protestant Reformation; continuing recognition of that authority is basic to our identity in Christ as guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3. 16-17). In Reformed theology, we affirm our focus on the sovereignty of God, covenantal theology, the priesthood of all believers, sola scriptura, sola fide, etc. In our evolving context we need fresh understandings of Reformed theology and new expressions of Reformed identity. We need to take all that we have in the pool of Reformed theology, tradition, practice and spirituality and embed it in a contextual theology which reflects on our current realities, if we are to encourage revival, growth and unity. The WCRC is doing this in the Global Institute of Theology (GIT) in which young Reformed theologians are asking new questions, and giving new shape to Reformed theological thinking and engagement. These are wonderful signs of hope and life that we must continue to encourage as we seek to “pour new wine into old wineskins.”

### *3.5. Spiritual and Worship Renewal*

Reformed churches have experienced/are experiencing conflicts, divisions and splits around the area of worship. What constitutes a proper liturgical style and basis for Reformed worship? It is true that some of the Reformers, like Calvin, had much to say about worship and particularly music and singing in church. However, we need to realize that what was said in their time has to be relooked at in this new century. The matter of fact is that most young people prefer more contemporary songs and music, visuals, lights, loudness, etc. It is imperative that we seek to find ways in integrating young people into the church; they are not just the church of tomorrow but, indeed, the church of today. It is okay to change our styles and approaches as long as we are able to maintain and teach in and through all of

these mediums, the substance and essentials of our faith. There are many Reformed churches that are providing a balanced worship which caters for the needs and preferences of the variety of its members.

### *3.6. Renewal of ecumenical engagement*

We have often said that to be Reformed is to be ecumenical. This has, no doubt, been clearly visible in the history of Reformed churches worldwide. Reformed churches have strengthened ecumenical movements in their participation, desire and efforts for unity among churches. If Reformed churches want to experience revival and unity, it is necessary for them to continue to sustain ecumenical engagement and involvement.

Reformed churches need to reawaken to this call and realize the significance for engagement and participation. God calls us to be a community and to work in community to build community. We are not called to be lone rangers on a mission for God. We are called to be God's people working with others led by the presence and power of God's spirit to bring transformation, healing, reconciliation and peace in the world. We do this best when we join with other churches and organisations.

### *4. Conclusion*

We live in a day and age where the Christian church faces many challenges and contradictions. In order to address these challenges, we are called as Christians to witness and work together as we proclaim the good news of salvation and life in Jesus Christ. In this context, we are also alarmed by how Reformed churches continue to experience splits, breakaways, divisions and conflicts instead of seeking unity in our witness and mission as we bear witness to the saving love and grace of God in Jesus Christ. It is no wonder then that in some parts of the world the Reformed church is diminishing in significance and declining in numbers. In other parts of the world though they seem to grow in numbers yet they continue to divide and fragment, weakening their base and sending mixed messages to the people around them. How much more effective would they be if they maintained unity and worked together? Mindful of this and of our given realities, the WCRC continues to work for the revival and unity of Reformed churches by seeking renewal in mission, communion, justice, theology, spirituality and worship, and ecumenical engagement. My hope and prayer is that the Debrecen Reformed Theological University would be able to contribute to these discussions and help us to revive and unite Reformed churches across the world. Thank you for conferring this Degree on me and congratulations on your 475<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



## **APPENDIX: PHOTOS**



*Presidium of the Doctoral and Habilitation Council*



*Laureates G. W. Locher, G. Pap, J. Pillay, Zs. Ritoók, H. J. Selderhuis*



*Laureates S. J. Brown, H.-A. Drewes, L. Imre, L. Koncsol, U. J. Körtner*



*Dr. Stewart Jay Brown*



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*László Koncsol*



*Dr. Ulrich J. Körtner*



*Dr. Gottfried Wilhelm Locher*



*Dr. Géza Pap*



*Dr. Jerry Pillay*



*Dr. Zsigmond Ritoók*



*Dr. Herman J. Selderhuis*



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